

# INTERNEWS INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

## A human-centered approach

*In the constant quest of human beings to connect with information, the ways in which they consume, produce, contribute to, interact with, and behave around their information supply are what makes information ecosystems dynamic, diverse, and sometimes quirky and unpredictable.*

The Information Ecosystem Analysis framework seeks to capture all dimensions of the relationship between information supply and information demand. The multi-phase human centered research exercise aims to understand how people and communities find, share, value, and trust information in their own local contexts, whether it comes from the media or not.

We aim to gain an intimate understanding of the ways in which the people in our target communities access and behave around their information supply so that we propose and design projects that are tailored exclusively to deliver for each unique context.

Internews maps information ecosystems by establishing first an overview of the quantity and quality of media available to the populations we are interested in. We call this the Supply Side of the ecosystem and we document at it the national and provincial levels of the country in question. We capture the reach, content and professional capacity of media outlets, mobile/internet penetration and usage costs, social media platforms, the economy of the media sector and the media legal frameworks that govern it.

Next, we want to know about the different ways that people behave around all this information supply including that which comes from informal and non-media sources. To understand this behavior, we work with people from the communities we are interested in and have them interview others to find out about the “Demand Side” elements of the information ecosystem.

**Information Need:** The information that people value enough for them to seek it out.

**Access:** The ways in which people typically gain access to the information they seek, and the level of risk they undertake to do so through all channels: TV, Radio, print, digital and social media, word of mouth.

**Sourcing:** The preferred or most frequently consulted specific sources that people seek out for the information they need: media sources, community sources, specific online groups, or individuals.

**Sharing:** The ways in which people pass on sourced information results in patterns of information flow and exchange back and forth between individuals and groups and sets up a landscape in which certain actors and groups gain significance for better or worse

**Trust:** The consumer’s belief in the relative reliability and truthfulness of different sources as an indicator of their trust in the information itself.

**Influence:** The influence that is given to and comes from being a trusted source, and how that influence is used by influencers and experienced by consumers.

**Information Literacy:** The extent to which consumers can discern false information in their information ecosystem, how vulnerable or predisposed they are to rumor and misinformation.



## PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

- 1) We do not propose or conduct an IEA as an end-product in itself, but as the first stage of our project design, and the first step in building a trust relationship with the community we hope to work with.
- 2) The most important and unique part of Information Ecosystem work is the human-centered research that explores the demand side of the ecosystem.
- 3) IEA work needs to involve members of the community themselves in creating questionnaires and having conversations with participants.



## EXAMPLES

**Port-au-Prince, Haiti:** In collaboration with the NGO Panos Caribbean, the IEA explores community relationships with traditional and new information sources as well as issues of unmet information needs and disinformation.

Link: <https://internews.org/resource/port-au-prince-information-ecosystem-assessment>

**Thailand:** The assessment the information ecosystem of migrants in Thailand in the time of Covid demonstrates the need for more accessible and timely information on migrant livelihoods, treatment options, and government COVID-19 policies.

Link: <https://internews.org/resource/information-ecosystem-assessment-migrants-thailand-during-covid-19>

**Mindanao, Philippines** The IEA provides recommendations for improved collaboration between government, community media, and humanitarian actors to adequately overcome misinformation related to COVID-19.

Link: <https://internews.org/resource/disconnected-information-dynamics-barmm-during-covid-19-pandemic>

**Fresno, CA:** The assessment highlighted the role of local news and community information bearers in meeting information needs and the importance of expanding linguistic diversity and representation in local media.

Link: <https://internews.org/resource/information-ecosystem-assessment-fresno-california>

**Myanmar:** Leading up to Myanmar's 2020 election, an IEA seeking to understand the information needs and access of First Time Youth Voters.

Link: <https://internews.org/resource/information-ecosystem-assessment-first-time-youth-voters-myanmars-2020-election>