

Legal Service for Independent Media (LSIM)

The Legal Service for Independent Media (LSIM) aims to empower journalists, newsrooms and media freedom focused non-profits to build their awareness of relevant legal frameworks, mitigate operational vulnerabilities and defend themselves against harassment and ‘lawfare’ attacks safely and effectively.

NEWSROOMS

The provision of our legal service to **newsrooms** is subject to the following eligibility criteria:

- The newsroom must not be owned, controlled, affiliated or associated with government, political entities or politically exposed persons.
- The newsroom must be editorially independent, regardless of ownership. This means that editors have the freedom to make decisions without interference from the owners of the publication, business interests and/or other non-editorial actors.
- The newsroom must focus on producing original public interest journalism. This means their journalism should aim to inform the public about matters of relevance to their lives, well-being, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- The newsroom must strive to produce balanced, fair and accurate journalism, which explores all sides of an issue and presents those findings accurately.
- The newsroom must have no history of illicit connections or, illegal activities of the entity, its owner, senior management and/or key staff.
- The editorial standards or policies of the newsroom include the following principles (or similar): correcting errors transparently, not fabricating or plagiarising content, not accepting bribes, seeking the right of response where appropriate, not altering still images or video footage beyond methods normally used to prepare content for editorial use.
- A newsroom must be registered as a legal entity in compliance with local requirements or authorities and may be structured as a for-profit corporation or non-profit organisation.
- If for-profit, a newsroom must demonstrate that payment of commercial legal fees would make it difficult to maintain their critical work, or significantly deplete their economic resources.

We understand that there are some contexts which make it difficult to meet all criteria. For this reason, the Foundation reserves the right to make exceptions to the criteria when our team determines it is warranted. We encourage newsrooms to submit an application and provide detail as to why relevant criteria points are unable to be met for our team to make this assessment.

Please submit your application through this [online application form](#).¹

¹ Please note that the online application form is being updated in 2025. In the interim, when completing the online application form non-profit newsrooms should register as a NGO and for-profit newsrooms should register as a social enterprise.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

The provision of our legal service to **media freedom focused NGOs** is subject to the following eligibility criteria:

- The NGO must be registered as a legal entity in compliance with local requirements or authorities.
- The NGO must be non-discriminatory, apolitical and non-proselytizing.
- The NGO must be working towards a social mission that seeks to address social, humanitarian, or environmental challenges.
- The NGO is able to clearly express their social objectives, including the impact they are trying to achieve, who they aim to help and how they plan to do this.
- The NGO is able to share at least one annual report detailing their finances, activities and programmes.
- The NGO is able to demonstrate their sustainability with evidence of funding or support for the 12 month period following the application; and
- The NGO is self-governing, with a Board that manages the activities of the organisation.

Please submit your application through this [online application form](#).

INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS

The LSIM team can support **individual journalists** (i.e. independent freelance journalists who may not be affiliated with a particular newsroom) with referrals to the [Legal Network for Journalists at Risk](#), which offers a single-entry point into an ecosystem of legal support from a network of media-focused organisations ranging from legal fees to representation. Individual journalists are also encouraged to view our [range of publicly available legal tools and resources](#), and may be eligible to apply for specific customised training programmes delivered by the Foundation.