



Dabanga - Radio TV Online

Strategic Plan

January 2025 to January 2029



Index

Executive Summary

1. Vision & Mission Statement

2. Business Environment Analysis

3. Media Landscape Sudan

4. Funding

5. Objectives

Executive Summary – Kamal Elsadig, Editorial Director, and Nigel Ballard, Managing Director

Since 2008 Dabanga has led the way as an independent media house for Sudan, providing professional and ethically produced news and information. Its shortwave, radio/TV and online broadcasts reach distant and marginalised populations and are the only independent local Arabic language news and service for millions of listeners. Alongside the broadcast output Dabanga's online and social media content reaches diverse audiences across Sudan and its diaspora.



VISION

A democratic Sudan where there is freedom, peace & justice, and where human rights are enshrined particularly the right to free speech and access to information.

MISSION

To be a public service media house for all Sudanese that enables people in all states and regions to participate in the exchange of knowledge, news, and information

VALUES:

Accuracy - in our reporting of facts and opinion

Fairness - representing all angles and views in our reporting and providing an open platform for all.

Independence - in all of our activities, we are not influenced by outside bodies or partisan interests.

Reliability - striving to ensure consistent reporting on multiple platforms available at all times.

Dabanga was established to provide news and information in an authoritarian country where subjugated people had no voice and no access to independent news and information. Throughout Sudan's recent protracted period of violence and human rights abuses, Dabanga was recognised as an independent provider of news and information. In recent years Dabanga has strengthened its editorial policies and procedures to ensure all output is accurate, fair and independent. Program schedules and online platforms ensure a diverse range of opinion and expertise is included in all output. Dabanga's radio and online platforms are securely based outside Sudan and can provide a consistent service to audiences across the whole country.

At the time of writing this plan Sudan is amid a 16-month internal conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). This war was preceded by a period of significant change in Sudan, after the 2019 revolution overthrew the dictatorship of Omar Bashir and replaced it with a civilian/military transitional government. In 2021 Dabanga was positioned to play a role as part of a democratic transition following the 2019 revolution. It's strategy for 2024 was to become a professional independent public/community service media¹ house for Sudan. The military coup in October 2021 removed the civilian element of the transitional government and was followed by widespread and prolonged civilian protests and resistance across Sudan. In April 2023 a disagreement between the ruling Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led to conflict, which in 2024 continues. So far, peace efforts and democratic forces have failed to make progress in ending the fighting and resuming a civilian led democratic transition.

¹ Professional independent public/community service media is defined as "made, financed, and controlled by the public, for the public. It is neither commercial nor state owned, free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces" – UNESCO.

The media landscape in Sudan changed following the 2019 revolution, when the restrictions imposed by the former regime both informally and formally started to be dismantled. At the same time traditional media and news consumption was changing. Through social media, traditional audiences within Sudan sourced and created their own news and information content. Dabanga identified there was a lack of quality news and information, and a need for improved standards in journalism and media production across both traditional media and social media. Specifically, there was a need for a national professional independent public/community service media organisation providing news, information, and a platform for diverse communities who are socially, economically, and geographically marginalised. By revising and updating its editorial guidelines and content policies Dabanga worked to fulfil this role and provide audiences with information that better reflected their perspective, that included their voices and could provide platforms for audiences to play a role in shaping Sudan in areas such as peace, justice, reconciliation, social and democratic development. Dabanga continues to play a leading role in Sudan's development by providing a platform for the discussion and dissemination of information in areas such as peace, humanitarian support, justice, civil society, and re-establishing a democratic transition. However, to continue to be effective Dabanga will need to adapt its strategy to the needs of a fluid political situation and continually revise and update its content for the changing needs of its broad and diverse audiences:

- Dabanga's role as an exiled media house provides the only independent Sudanese media service that fully covers Sudan through its shortwave, satellite TV, and internet services. It is vital that Dabanga continues and strengthens this professional independent public service media role, as an accurate, fair (balanced) and independent source of news and information. Dabanga will work to ensure its programming focuses on peace, justice, reconciliation, humanitarian information as well as social and democratic development.
- As part of its independent public service media role, Dabanga will support other independent Sudanese news & information producers and media houses by opening its broadcast and online platforms. Making available space within its existing programmes and platforms to publish their content.
- Dabanga must continue to develop and strengthen its journalistic standards to counter widespread misinformation and disinformation across Sudan, which also manifests in Sudan as hate speech. Sustaining Dabanga as a trusted ethical source of news and information across all platforms will be done primarily through the application of its editorial guidelines, along with media literacy within its content (showing in how it verifies its journalism), and by publishing fact checking content from Dabanga's own verification team.
- Dabanga will continually adapt, refine, and strengthen how it engages with its audiences. Building audiences is vital in ensuring Dabanga continues to deliver its editorial objectives in the most effective way. This includes content that reaches and attracts the maximum number of listeners, viewers, and readers; but equally as important is content that increases time spent engaging and better serves certain demographics (e.g. youth and women).
- As an independent media house Dabanga will actively work to ensure the role of ethical independent news and information media is recognised and included as part of Sudan's democratic development. Dabanga will work with other independent Sudanese media to advocate and lobby for media laws that enshrine free speech, and legislation that enables financial sustainability for professional independent public/community service media in Sudan.

Dabanga is already responding to political and social democratic developments and changing audience needs and will continue. Dabanga's existing shortwave radio service is available online, with extended schedules and improved content. This is in response to changing media market conditions and in anticipation of moving to additional broadcast platforms. The Dabanga satellite TV/radio service has improved visuals designed to compete with other TV/radio channels and appeal to younger audiences. Dabanga's website has been redesigned and will be continually revised to raise the profile and reach of news and information for growing online audiences inside and outside Sudan. There are plans for Dabanga to have a significantly increased social

media presence which reflects how sites such as Facebook, X, and potentially TikTok are becoming the 'go-to' platforms for news consumers. With the rise of misinformation and disinformation in Sudan, driven by social media, there is a need for Dabanga to counter 'fake news' and hate speech by providing a trusted alternative. Therefore, Dabanga will work to increase social media audiences by optimising language, diversifying content, and developing a more contemporary visual appeal to engage more users and for longer periods of time.

One essential element in becoming a Sudanese public service media house has been the establishment of Dabanga as an independent organisation. In 2021 Dabanga became a non-profit organisation based in the Netherlands. Previously, since 2008 Dabanga had been run under the umbrella of an international media development NGO, Free Press Unlimited (FPU). The long-term goal is to be an independent public service media house operating fully within a democratic Sudan.

Dabanga - Radio TV Online's leadership and strategic direction is led by its executive board comprising of a managing director and editorial director who provide strategic editorial and business support to ensure audience needs are fully catered for and that the network is fully resourced and operating efficiently.

Dabanga's running costs represent good value for money, with an estimated yearly cost of less than 1 EUR per listener/reader. Annual running cost for the media house are 2.7 million EUR. The political and economic situation in Sudan means that Dabanga is dependent on international donor funding, and its main priority is to secure the funding needed for operations as an exiled media house.

The only sustainable solution is for Dabanga to move away from its reliance on international donor funding. Dabanga will continue its strategy to develop commercial income streams from airtime sales and sponsorship, alongside developing methods of fundraising from private and community ownership schemes. One area that Dabanga has potential to benefit is indirect donor support, whereby the media house can incorporate information, educational material and programming paid for by development and humanitarian organisations. However, due to the economic conditions in Sudan, a free to air public news and information service cannot be fully supported by a commercial business model. Dabanga will work to lobby democratic forces so that they incorporate policies and mechanisms to provide independent funding that supports free to access professional public/community service media across Sudan.

Dabanga envisions a mixed funding business approach that could include independent public service media subsidy and commercial revenue, as well as income from independent donors and voluntary public subscription.

At its HQ in Amsterdam Dabanga has a sound administrative base that can access potential funding from multiple sources (in partnership with FPU). Dabanga's executive management is supported by a supervisory and advisory board that includes a broad range of skills and experience from the media, academia, Sudanese politics, and civil society. Both boards include members based in Sudan, from the diaspora, and representing Dabanga's target audience. This is a critical time for the Sudanese people who need peace, an end to the current humanitarian crisis, justice, and stable representative government. Dabanga believes freedom of speech and democratic accountability has a key role to play in making this happen; and that Dabanga can play a significant role. This plan sets in place how Dabanga will work to develop a sustainable business model to continue its operations as a professional independent public service media house, currently in exile and one day in Sudan.

1. Vision & Mission

Vision Statement

Dabanga - Radio TV Online was established as an independent foundation in 2021. Dabanga started out as an NGO supported radio station in 2008, that then developed a news website with an additional social media and satellite TV presence. The organisation is established to provide news, information, and entertainment to communities across Sudan. Dabanga - Radio TV Online's vision is '*a democratic Sudan where there is freedom, peace & justice, and where human rights are enshrined particularly the right to free speech and access to information*'. Dabanga's primary role and mission is to be a free to access professional independent public/community service media house for all Sudanese, that enables people in all states and regions to participate in the exchange of knowledge, news, and information. As an independent media organisation, Dabanga is committed to journalistic professional values and due impartiality through:

Accuracy - in reporting of facts and opinion

Fairness - representing all angles and views in reporting and providing an open platform for all.

Independence - in all activities, we are not influenced by outside bodies or partisan interests.

Reliability - striving to always ensure consistent reporting on multiple platforms available.

Through its broadcast and online platforms, Dabanga's aim is to be a trusted national professional independent public/community service media provider of news and information with a potential adult (age 15- 64+) audience of 27 million². Dabanga has strong editorial policies, its editorial guidelines and style guide include provisions to ensure facts are thoroughly checked, opinion is clearly identified, different views and opinions are represented within each item, and partisan interests do not affect editorial decision making.

- Shortwave radio - 11650 kHz and 15550 KHz.
- Satellite TV – Eutelsat 11354GHz.
- Website and online radio – www.dabangasudan.org.
- Social media (Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, and Soundcloud).

Over the next 4 years Dabanga will continue to ensure news and information is accessible to a wide audience initially as an exiled media house and (when conditions allow) working within Sudan. It will provide a platform for all Sudanese to be represented and participate in the ongoing efforts to restore peace, a democratic transition, social and economic development to Sudan. It will improve services for women and youth who are particularly underserved by ethical and independent Sudanese media. To support its operations Dabanga needs to continue developing its mixed source income/funding model – as a professional independent public service media house providing free to access news and information. This will include (as mentioned in the executive summary) continued donor funding to enable Dabanga to serve as an exiled media house and to grow and develop income models for potential operations within Sudan.

2. Business Environment Analysis

The Political and economic situation in Sudan is in a dire state due to the 2023 conflict between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)³. There are already signs of famine and disease because of a destroyed infrastructure, failed harvest, collapsed economy, and massive population displacement. The democratic transition following the 2019 revolution was weakened by the military coup in 2021. Many of those who resisted that coup during 2022 are now occupied in supporting the civilian population in what is a serious humanitarian crisis. Other democratic forces are now in exile and have not yet fully developed a united effort to bring peace and a democratic transition. Sudan's nascent independent media and the established media (from the former Bashir regime) is no longer operational, much of its production and distribution infrastructure has been destroyed. Dabanga is now the only independent Sudanese media house that can broadcast radio news and information across the whole of Sudan. Its shortwave service reaches parts of the country that do not have access to online or television services. Dabanga's online, social media, and TV/radio

² https://countrymeters.info/en/Sudan#dependency_ratio

³ <https://immap.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Risks-Analysis-Report-21-March-2024.pdf>

content has the potential to connect with younger audiences, as well as diaspora and refugees - playing an important role providing independent information and providing a means by where Sudanese can be heard.

The key takeaways from the current business situation in Sudan are:

1. Dabanga has an important role to play serving audiences in Sudan, but it can only continue to attract donor support and income by building audiences.
2. To achieve its editorial objectives and sustainability Dabanga has a role to play in ensuring that there is both a legislative framework to protect a free press and an organisational plan for a rapid switch to operations in Sudan (when conditions allow).
- 3.

Political Situation

Since April 2023, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by General Mohamed Hamed Hamdan 'Hemeti' Dagalo have waged a violent war. The conflict has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions, and put half of the population in acute food insecurity. More than 10 million people have been displaced and 2.1 million have been forced to leave, 25 million face acute hunger - with 750,000 on the brink of famine⁴. The war has devastated Sudanese aspirations for a democratic and peaceful Sudan following the overthrow of the Omar al Bashir regime.

The recent background to this situation starts in 2019, when non-violent protests of the Sudanese people ended the authoritarian regime that ruled the country for more than thirty years, bringing down former president Omar Al-Bashir and dismantling – though only partially – the repressive armed structures that the regime relied on. The popular pressure led to a negotiated emergence of a transitional political structure with a mixed military-civilian sovereign branch, which was expected to govern the country until the first democratic elections. However, in October 2021, a military coup orchestrated by parts of the transitional government led to the dissolution of the power-sharing agreement, and various armed factions took control of the country's transitional government. More than one year later, in December 2022, an internationally brokered agreement between the ruling military and several civilian groups under the umbrella of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) Central Council promised to put Sudan back on its path to transition. However, the process stalled on the issue of security sector reform and the integration of the RSF paramilitaries into the SAF. In mid-April 2023, the SAF publicly warned of escalating tensions as the RSF reportedly mobilised troops across the country; and in the early hours of 15 April, violent clashes erupted between the two forces in Khartoum and Merowe. The conflict quickly spread to other parts of the country sparking a humanitarian catastrophe in Sudan.

Currently (estimates differ by assessment of different UN bodies) almost 80% of Sudanese citizens are affected by the war and are in dire need of assistance. Local resistance committees are trying to fulfil a humanitarian capacity, but more is needed. At the same time, various peace initiatives including those brokered by international and regional forces have had no success, except for short-lived ceasefires during the early months of the war, and some locally brokered temporary agreements. Various civilian forces, mostly based outside Sudan have come together, and present a current glimmer of hope for a roadmap to peace and civilian leadership.

Even if an end to the conflict can be achieved shortly, Sudan's infrastructure is destroyed. Less than 30% of the country's hospitals are currently functional, telecommunications systems have been bombed, 20 million children are out of school and large parts of cities including Khartoum, Omdurman, El Geneina, Misterei, and El Fasher are demolished. Even before the 2021 military coup, Sudan's path to democracy had only just begun,

⁴ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/>

and there is little to build on in terms of laws, policy, and governance processes in a post-conflict Sudan. Economically, Sudan was already in a precarious situation with inflation rampant prior to the outbreak of conflict in April 2023.

Although the nascent independent media sector within Sudan has been destroyed by the conflict, what remains strong and united is the resolve of independent Sudanese journalists and media in exile to continue their work in reporting what is going on within Sudan. As well as provide a platform for all Sudanese and helping them understand and participate in the peace process that is required to end the current crisis. The Sudanese media organisations that comprise the Sudan Media Forum (including Dabanga) recognise that in the news and information sphere they have a vital role to play. There is a hunger for quality trusted information and independent Sudanese media is uniting as the Sudan Media Forum to strengthen the reporting of and verification of facts, better provide humanitarian information, and provide support for journalists exile and within Sudan⁵.

Economic Situation

“The situation in Sudan has been characterised by escalating conflict since April 15th [2023] with significant consequences for the population. The unrest has affected individuals, social structures, infrastructure, and economic conditions. The ongoing tensions have triggered a humanitarian crisis by displacing, injuring, or causing the death of thousands of people... The state of Sudan's hospitals is dire, with most of them out of service, which is exacerbating the deteriorating situation. Furthermore, the protracted conflict has all but demolished the economic bedrock of Sudan, obliterating the strides the country had made in its development. The destruction has been so profound that it has thrown the country's progress back by decades and severely impeded any prospects for future growth. The once-emerging economic potential of Sudan now lies in ruins, casting a long shadow over the nation's ability to recover and rebuild in the aftermath of these devastating events” – World Bank ⁶. The UN's humanitarian response plan for Sudan, valued at \$2.7 billion, is a part of the efforts to mitigate the crisis. This fund currently stands at \$883.7 million, 33% of what is required⁷.

Even if there is a return to peace, the economic situation is not conducive for establishing Dabanga as a media house within Sudan and over the next four years the Sudanese economy will not generate enough capacity to commercially sustain a self-supporting independent public service/community media sector. This means Dabanga will remain heavily dependent on non-commercial sources of income. This could include public service subsidies (not statutorily available now), continued international donor income, and in-direct donor income through the production of development and humanitarian information. However, Dabanga's traditional sources of international donor income are constrained by changing international political and economic priorities with a pivoting of development policy away from funding media development

3. Media Landscape Sudan

“The media landscape in Sudan is dire and no independent media is working within the country as the armed conflict deepens the suffering of the Sudanese people. Disinformation by both fighting parties creates a lot of

⁵ See for references for this paragraph e.g. Dabanga, “Journalists become vendors on the streets of Darfur cities”, (27 February 2024), <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/journalists-become-vendors-on-the-streets-of-darfur-cities>; UNESCO and MICT, “In the Shadow of Violence” (8 November 2023), <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/shadow-violence-pressing-needs-sudanese-journalists>; Reporters Without Borders (RSF), “Sudan's belligerents are targeting journalists” (5 July 2023), <https://rsf.org/en/sudan-s-belligerents-are-targeting-journalists>. Free Press Unlimited (FPU), “The Sudan war is also a crisis for the safety of journalists” (20 June 2023), <https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/current/sudan-war-also-crisis-safety> Formation of the Sudan Media Forum April 2024 <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-media-forum-launches-standwithsudan-campaign-to-address-famine-and-human-rights-abuses>

⁶ World Bank April 2024 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sudan/overview>

⁷ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/>

confusion and are attempts to divide the public and cause hesitation in the international community to intervene at the scale necessary” – Free Press Unlimited⁸. A UNESCO/MICT survey⁹ indicates most journalists have left the country or wish to do so, with a minority still operating under grave danger. “With the unclear outcome of the war, the entire information ecosystem is in a state of collapse, allowing for grave human rights abuses to go unnoticed. It allows the public to be exposed to massive disinformation efforts by the warring parties, fostered by hostile foreign agents” – Free Press Unlimited¹⁰.

Dabanga is the only Sudanese broadcast media house that can reach audiences across Sudan, primarily via its shortwave radio service which has national coverage alongside its national satellite TV/radio service, website, social media platforms.

Legislation

It is now clear that any advances made in media freedom during the transitional government no longer exist. Any future successful transition to peace and democracy will need to include within its founding documents special priority to freedom of speech. For Dabanga this would need to include the drafting and implementation of legislation to ensure the sustainability of professional independent public/community service media that include: media laws to safeguard free speech and an independent media; regulations that define professional independent public/community service media in Sudan which is accessible to and representative of all Sudanese and publishes news and information based on ethical editorial guidelines and values; and an independent system of technical and financial support for media that fulfil a professional independent public/community service media role as part of a democratic state.

In line with its vision, Dabanga is and will continue to lobby all democratic forces for freedom of the press and legislation to ensure the sustainability of professional independent public/community service media.

Dabanga’s Place in the Media Landscape

Dabanga is currently the only Sudanese provider of independent news and information about Sudan that can broadcast daily across the whole of Sudan, via shortwave radio and satellite TV. A broadcast audience survey was planned for 2023/4, but the current crisis makes it impossible to gather reliable data. According to a survey carried out in 2019, Dabanga’s daily radio audience reached around 2 million people through shortwave radio and around 1 million through satellite television. In 2023 Dabanga’s website and social media audiences were close to one million. In terms of trust Dabanga scored well, in 2019 it was placed with Aljazeera and CNN as the three most trusted sources of news and information, and its radio output was ranked in the top 5 stations, despite its restricted broadcast time (then 90 minutes)¹¹. A study done in 2022 notes that Sudanese people across all genders and age groups perceived Dabanga content as trustworthy¹². Dabanga has a strong brand identity –



⁸ <https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/current/sudan-war-also-crisis-safety-journalists>

⁹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/shadow-violence-pressing-needs-sudanese-journalists>

¹⁰ <https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/current/sudan-war-also-crisis-safety-journalists>

¹¹ IPSOS. 2019/20. Media Survey Sudan. Free Press Unlimited.

¹² Forcier research for Dabanga 2022

audiences have heard of it, but some are split on if it provides trusted content. There are still widespread beliefs that Dabanga is only for Darfur audiences and that it is a partisan media house.¹³

Since 2020 Dabanga has been working to develop and consolidate a unique role that distinguishes Dabanga from its competitors and build audiences. There is a gap in the market and a need for a Sudanese news organisation that is independent, serves all people - particularly those who have in the past not been catered for by Sudanese media, and is trusted for its ethical journalism. Dabanga's revised mission and values reflect this. In addition, there is the role ethical independent media must play in developing a peaceful democratic Sudan, the 'fourth estate' role. Dabanga's editorial guidelines, style guide, audience and content policies have been developed to inform and include audiences and to hold those in positions of power to account. This is reflected in Dabanga's vision for a Sudan where there is freedom of speech and democracy.

Dabanga Mission:

To be a public service media house for all Sudanese that enables people in all states and regions to participate in the exchange of knowledge, news, and information

Dabanga Values:

Accuracy - in our reporting of facts and opinion

Fairness - representing all angles and views in our reporting and providing an open platform for all.

Independence - in all our activities, we are not influenced by outside bodies or partisan interests.

Reliability - striving to always ensure consistent reporting on multiple platforms available.

4. Funding

Dabanga operates as an exiled media house providing an independent public/community service online and broadcast news and information service. This requires a high level of non-commercially generated funding, due to commercial market conditions and the costs required produce news and information content. The current international donor funding environment is uncertain, in 2023 Dabanga started to develop a mixed funding mechanism that decreases its reliance on donor funding from development organisations. The mixed funding model comprises:

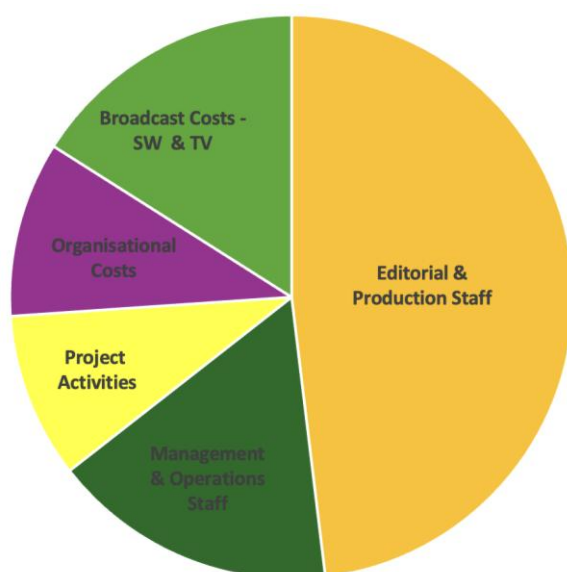
- Content airtime and online sales and sponsorship generated revenue; this funding is in the form of:
 - Program material paid for by educational, health, and development organisations.
 - Commercial airtime and online sales, advertising for products and services.

In 2024 Dabanga started selling airtime and online space for commercial adverts, public service announcements and factual programmes. As a first stage, by 2026 it is hoped that 10% of running costs could come from earned income.

- Public donations (crowdfunding) and non-profit share ownership is another source of funding for Dabanga. This may have limited revenue generation given the economic situation in Sudan. Through 2024 and 2025 Dabanga will need to review and strengthen this approach to raise the fundraising profile and in to appeal to diaspora communities.
- Dabanga believes that as part of any mixed funding model there needs to be a transition away from international development grant aid, towards an in-country system of subsidy and funding, that supports professional independent public/community service media. In 2024 Dabanga developed and implemented a strategy to lobby Sudanese democratic forces, with the aim of shaping their policies to include legislation to safer guard and fund independent public/community service media. This will need to continue, supported by Dabanga's Supervisory and Advisory Boards.
- Continued international donor income will be essential for the medium term, particularly during the current fighting and if Dabanga establishes operations in Sudan. In the short to mid-term 90% to 100% of funding is required from international donors.

¹³ Forcier research for Dabanga 2022

Budget Breakdown



2024 Costs ¹⁴	%
Editorial & Production Staff	48%
Management & Operations Staff	16%
Project Activities ¹⁵	10%
Organisational Costs	10%
Broadcast Costs – Shortwave & TV	16%

5. Objectives

- **Source funding and develop financial sustainability for the period 2025 to 2029.**
- **Diversify funding through development of business activities, particularly non international donor income streams such as commercial activity and philanthropy.**
- **Maintain and build audiences by strengthening Dabanga’s editorial leadership and management capacity and procedures, to implement Dabanga’s editorial and target audience policies to fulfil the organisation’s vision and mission.**

1. Source Funding and Develop Financial Sustainability for the Period 2025 to 2029

Dabanga will work to secure operational funding beyond December 2024. Most urgently, discussions are ongoing with potential and current funders, supported by Dabanga’s INGO partner (Free Press Unlimited). Additionally, Dabanga will need to source capital investment to meet its strategic objectives of operations within Sudan when conditions allow. The main priorities:

- Secure continued funding that matches current budget projections to maintain existing online and broadcast platforms.
- Source additional funding from international and Sudanese donors that will support operations within Sudan when conditions allow, with an objective of becoming a national media house that serves the needs of local communities across Sudan and that plays its role in securing peace and democratic development.

2. Diversify funding through development of business activities, particularly non international donor income streams such as commercial activity and philanthropy

¹⁴ Actual as of June and projected costs for 2024.

¹⁵ Project Activities refers to donor project objectives outside Dabanga’s media role such as media advocacy and training course development.

Dabanga has been operating as an independent organisation since 2021, with 3+ years audited accounts and managing direct funding from some donors. Dabanga is now ready to source commercial income from content sponsorship and advertising (airtime and online sales). In 2024 the website and broadcast schedules were redesigned to accommodate space for advertising, commercial editorial guidelines are in place, along with pricing and contract templates. Dabanga has recruited a salesperson to generate and manage its sales and by the end of 2024 existing technical staff will have been redeployed to create and manage advertising content. While remaining free at point of use, Dabanga will also look at ways audiences and the wider Sudanese community can fund its operations.

In the area of business development Dabanga will now:

- Develop its commercial sales operations to appeal to a wide range of advertisers, sponsors, and content creators. This includes marketing airtime for information content creators, such as development organisations and other independent Sudanese media houses. By 2026 Dabanga will aim for sales that match 10% of operational costs, and by 2028 20% of operational costs.
- Reduce reliance on international donor funding through public fundraising efforts including developing Dabanga's existing crowd-sourced funding and looking at additional ways of cultivating philanthropic support
- Lobby Sudanese democratic forces and contribute towards the establishment of media laws and mechanisms that enables Sudan to have a sustainably funded professional independent public/community service media (that includes Dabanga), that protects and ensures everyone's access to fair and independent news and information (when conditions allow).

3. Maintain and build audiences by continuing to implement Dabanga's editorial and target audience policies to fulfil the organisation's vision and mission.

Dabanga will work to secure a leading position in the media market so that it achieves its mission by reaching the maximum audience. That will entail providing **added value** content that is unique from that being provided by both traditional and new media competitors. By providing unique content, Dabanga will establish itself as a trusted broadcaster and publisher in an increasingly busy media landscape.

Editorial Treatment

Dabanga recognises that improving content and editorial standards will ensure trust, high audience figures and satisfaction, which in turn will lead to sustained donor/grant funding and increased revenue from airtime and online sales. This means applying the existing editorial guidelines and style guide consistently across all content. It means creating content that is written and produced in a manner that engages with and is of interest to Dabanga's target audience - vital in a media landscape that is increasingly dominated by mis and disinformation which is spread via popular content providers and platforms. Dabanga will also work to become accredited with the **Journalism Trust Initiative**, which is an initiative set up by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and identifies ethical media houses that have values and procedures that align with professional public/community service media¹⁶

Editorial Content

Dabanga will work to develop its content to reflect the changing national situation and to reflect audience needs. This means stories that are sourced from and reflect the lives of Dabanga's audiences and when required, new content that supports and plays a role in bringing peace, justice, and a resumption of a democratic transition. Dabanga journalists will report, investigate, and explain issues

¹⁶ <https://www.journalismtrustinitiative.org/about1>

and stories; and in addition, create content that works to connect individuals with those in positions of power and those who aspire to positions of power. Thereby creating an information loop between those striving to bring peace to create a democratic Sudan and those for which a future government will serve. This is a key area of Dabanga's vision and mission and will cover the provision of independent news and information across all areas, including: economics, business, social reform, economic reform, health, education, gender, culture, and entertainment.

Building Audiences

Dabanga's strength is in serving marginalised audiences, but there are still potential new audiences that are underserved by media in Sudan, that will be receptive to new or improved content from Dabanga – particularly women and youth. Dabanga will work to:

- Introduce new content that involves audiences in the transition to peace and democracy.
- Continually revise and develop broadcast schedules and programmes to increase audience share and ensure news and information content is more widely distributed.
-
- Develop a broadcast and online branding and promotion strategy that builds recognition and trust of Dabanga's editorial values and promotes content to encourage new audiences and time spent engaging
- Continually refine and optimise social media and online sites to build audiences so that news, information, and entertainment output created and published by Dabanga is trending every week across Sudan.
-
- Develop programming and online content specifically targeted at sections of Sudanese society where there is room for audience growth, e.g. women and youth audiences
- Build commercial relationships to introduce new programming such as sports coverage and entertainment programming.