

Africa needs more advertising investment

Africa is the continent with the youngest and fastest growing population in the world, with some of the fastest growing economies in the world, but it is still not attracting significant advertising investments.

By [Federico de Nardis](#) 6 Jun 2019



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

Sub-Saharan Africa hosts 17% of the world's population, but represents only 2% of the world's gross domestic product. In terms of advertising investment it represents only 0,47% of global investments.

This is mainly because Africa is made up of many different countries with many different cultures and languages, unstable rules and regulatory environments, and a historic lack of data to help understand the marketplace.

The Africa Media Index, which comprises data from 14 African countries, aims to provide consistent and reliable information which gives a clear understanding of the media landscape across Africa. The countries include Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana, Angola and Ethiopia.

The index, produced in collaboration with In On Africa (IOA), highlights differences and similarities between the markets and provides a comparative view in terms of five specific dimensions, relevant to understanding a country's media environment – Economy and Business, Media Landscape, Media Consumers, Technology, and Governance and Legislation.

South Africa tops each of the five categories and is first in the overall rankings. Ghana comes in second in the overall rankings, followed by Botswana. Mozambique is last in the overall rankings.

The African media landscape is a whirlwind of change and activity, and its power can be harnessed by knowledgeable investors and advertisers.

The Index Dimensions

The score and rankings assigned to each country are informed by statistical calculations that combine each country's performance in the five dimensions.

Firstly, economy and business, various economic and business factors are weighed to achieve a country score that best reflects the status of economic performance.

For media landscape a country score combines the availability of media and Internet penetration with its prevalence geographically, to reflect how diverse and influential the media sector is in that country.

The third dimension is a measure of a country's media consumer population in terms of access to and integration with local and international media. Technology's availability and penetration is ascertained to quantify a country's capacity to provide the necessary infrastructure for media dissemination. Governance and legislation is a numeric representation of a country's governing and legislative framework and its interaction with media consumers, commerce, technology and the media landscape.

Improving conditions bode well for media industry

Africa as a whole is seeing improved economies and rising standards of living, which bode well for the consumer driven media industry. Nevertheless, the old cliché, that Africa is not one country, should be repeated. There is no one-size fits all approach.

Each country differs from the others, even radically from its next-door neighbours, with governance, societal conditions and economies weighing heavily on the growth of its media industry, and each country presents opportunities and challenges.

Sweeping change occurring in the media landscape, propelled by the digital revolution, is the only common factor amongst the 14 markets. While mobile and internet penetration are both the triggers for economic growth and diversification, Africa is probably the only continent where all media still growing, even print media.

One conclusion, however, stands out from the index: Africans are diverse as individuals, but tend to have uniform tastes in what they wish to receive from their media services. Enabled by the latest technology, investors can meet consumer needs and advertisers can tap into consumer desires.

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