



Memorandum

CIM is advocating for...

Self-Regulation as the Key to Reliable Audience Measurement

CIM advocates for the Flemish, French-speaking, Belgian, and European authorities to rely on self-regulation through CIM, which is fundamental to transparent, reliable audience measurement.

Developing Codes of Conduct for the Belgian Market

CIM requests the EU authorities to be assigned the responsibility for drafting codes of conduct tailored to the Belgian media and advertising market, with due respect for the local ecosystem.

A Leading Role in Auditing and Certifying Digital Platforms

CIM proposes to play a key role in supervising audits of digital platforms and data, furthering its pursuit of greater transparency and quality in the digital advertising market.

Participation of International Platforms

CIM invites international players such as YouTube, Amazon Prime, Netflix and Meta to join its organisation and create a level playing field alongside the local media. This would foster fair competition and ensure complete transparency regarding media usage and reach.

Innovation Through Collaboration with Belgian Companies

CIM encourages innovative Belgian companies to co-develop new technologies to enhance the audience measurement ecosystem. Government support for innovation can be instrumental in achieving this goal.

Support for French-Speaking Cross-Media Measurement

CIM requests the French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region to support the French-language cross-media measurement (XMM) plan. By analogy with the Flemish XMM, this initiative will enhance media reach measurement in Wallonia and Brussels.

A thoroughly new approach to measuring

CIM is undergoing drastic change. Its medium-by-medium approach is evolving toward cross-media audience measurement, tracking media consumers across all media platforms. From 2026, all its current separate studies will merge to become a single research framework: CIM ONE.

To map all online media behaviour (everything that is watched, heard and read), CIM is setting up a new panel that will also map media behaviour outside the home. Additional meters will capture all digital media consumption, including the use of social media and streamers that do not wish to be measured by CIM. In the case of video materials, this method could yield evidence of up to 40 per cent of additional reach, including for local content running on such platforms.

In addition to audience measurement panels, we will also use more 'big' data. Media behaviour has, after all, become super-diverse. Integrating data from the media, so-called 'census' data, allows us to obtain a complete overview. We are already counting audio and video streams and investigating the use of return path data from the operators' decoders (RPD).

Greater utility for the advertising market

CIM strives to bring greater added value to the advertising market. About €1.4 billion of advertising revenues is currently split among the media service providers and the advertising agencies, allocated based on CIM figures. Yet, CIM is still irrelevant for most digital transactions.

Greater utility thanks to auditing and certification

And yet, particularly regarding digital media, greater transparency and higher-quality ad placement and billing are urgently needed. According to several studies by advertisers' associations, 3% of digital transactions are fraudulent. No less than 21% of advertising runs on sites with hardly any informational value, intentionally set up as traps for advertising by luring users with 'clickbait'. As many as 69% of advertisers experience a lack of visibility of the quality of data traded in programmatic online ad space buying.

CIM wishes to take on the role of auditor and certifier of digital systems and data. To this end, CIM has joined the Media Rating Council, which audits US platforms such as Google, Meta and Amazon. Its insights into the US market will help CIM and its fellow Joint Industry Committees (JICs) take on an auditing role in Europe. Jointly with the French auditor CESP, CIM has already developed an audit offering for Drive To Store solutions.

Creating value by measuring digital advertising instead of just counting it

The reach of digital advertising is currently counted, not measured. Ad servers count how many times they have shown or played a commercial. But these devices do not know who saw or heard this spot. Research panels show that when digital advertising is delivered on a large, 'connected' screen, 35 to 60% more contacts are realised than are recorded by the ad server.

The Total Video Advertising (ToVA) project, which creates cross-platform campaign reviews that include linear television and digital video platforms (Post-Buy Reports), will allow these extra contacts to be co-sold and charged for.

Integrating international platforms

By participating in the World Federation of Advertisers' (WFA) Halo project, CIM also hopes to obtain data from platforms like YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime, TikTok and Facebook/Instagram and integrate these into campaign reviews.

CIM's current media 'stakeholders' are not afraid to compete directly with global players but wish to play on an even field. They can achieve this by participating in our JIC. CIM represents the entire sector, and our working methods ensure transparency and trust. About a hundred specialists active in the industry monitor our performance every day. Buyers, sellers and direct competitors are ready and able to transcend their self-interest to achieve common standards that guarantee comparable results.

Last year, CIM amended its statutes and prepared to expand its Board with new players, such as international platforms.

The European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) has created a new legal environment

All these innovations have allowed CIM to help implement the EMFA, the new European Media Freedom Act. This is the first European legislation aspiring to regulate audience measurement. Europe recognises that many media and advertising policy objectives can only be monitored or enforced with verifiable measurements.

The EMFA stresses the importance of self-regulation, as applied by institutions such as the JICs. The latter are encouraged to integrate the rules they elaborated in the 'Codes of Conduct'. According to the European Commission's initial interpretation, these codes may also have consequences attached regarding non-compliance. In case of systemic risks, the European Commission would have the authority to invite large international platforms (called Very Large Online Platforms - VLOPs) to comply with the codes based on yet another EU directive: the Digital Services Act (DSA).

How CIM intends to cooperate with the EMFA

CIM wishes to assume responsibility for further developing rules the entire industry supports. We intend to translate these rules into formal codes of conduct, as envisaged by the EMFA. Each country should establish its own codes of conduct to preserve the diversity within the local media and communication ecosystems. A second step will consist of finding ways to harmonise these national codes.

The EMFA also imposes audits of 'providers of proprietary audience measurement systems'. As the neutral body with the greatest in-depth experience in audience measurement methods and standards, CIM is the institution most suitable to take ultimate responsibility for these audits.

To smooth the path to further agreements with the European authorities on this matter, CIM has joined the Audience Measurement Coalition (AMC), a union of research institutes and JICs set up to act as a permanent interlocutor for the European authorities.

Innovation for a more resilient and efficient ecosystem

CIM is going through a major transformation. Certain specific challenges raised by this process will only be solved through deep innovation: CIM hopes efficient new systems will become available that allow access to its results using direct delivery to the in-house systems of ad agencies and media service providers. Belgium has a tradition of setting up innovative workflow systems and developing ditto software for media reporting and analysis. For instance, Peaktime and MediaXim software were developed in Belgium before they were acquired by top global players Telmar and Nielsen, respectively. CIM now hopes some Belgian innovative companies will similarly respond to its needs and, by doing so, further expand and strengthen the ecosystem.

Innovation subsidies from the various government levels would help. The XMM project supported by the Flemish government allowed the Flemish media players to take a big step forward in cross-media measurement, in association with CIM. The French-speaking media groups and CIM have worked out a joint plan for a similar project for the French-speaking market. CIM hopes this project will gain similar support from the Walloon and Francophone governments in Belgium.