Copia pública revisada (noviembre de 2026). Propuesta narrativa original de la iniciativa Artículo 37, presentada en inglés al National Endowment for Democracy (NED) el 21 de diciembre de 2021. No fue aprobada. Para esta copia se omitieron los antecedentes institucionales de la organización solicitante, una frase de contexto sobre gremios periodísticos, las referencias personales y la lista de la junta directiva. El resto del texto se mantiene como se presentó, con sus errores de tipeo. No implica respaldo vigente de ninguna organización ni persona.

Sección 1: resumen y antecedentes

1. RESUMEN DEL PROYECTO

Article 37 refers to the 37th article of the Panamanian Constitution, which protects freedom of expression. This initiative is born from the need to honor and protect that Freedom guaranteed by the constitution but trampled by the justice system. Journalists, especially independent and digital, are constantly under the harassment of the government and political actors for doing their job: exposing fraud, corruption and felonies. Most of these journalists do not have the means or the support to defend themselves against judicial harassment, depending on friends and family to cover defense costs. These lawsuits often do not have any legal grounds and are used to distract the journalists from doing their job, and as a warning to other journalists to refrain from doing theirs. What this initiative intends on doing is providing free legal advice or representation so journalists can keep focusing on their job.

Journalists are victims of threats via phone calls, emails and social media. It is our purpose to monitor those threats to compile an annual report that includes all threats to freedom of expression and freedom of the press in Panama.

Women Journalists are a minority in the profession, but are victims of threats that include women violence and they face challegnes that their male peers do not face, such as discrimination and gender based violence, which requires further legal protection.

2. ANTECEDENTES DEL PROYECTO

Journalists in Panama do not have access to legal defense unless they work for big media outlets. This leaves independent journalists, cartoonists, citizen reporters and digital reporters completely

defenseless. Article 37 will be the first project to address this situation and to bring a gender sensitive perspective to the defense of journalism.

Sección 2: Objetivos, actividades y plan de evaluación

4. OBJETIVOS

Objective 1: Journalists have access to free legal advice or representation in cases involving freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

Baseline: 0 (Currently there are no organizations that provide free legal advice or representation to journalists)

Indicators:
• I1: Number of journalists who access free legal advice or representation.

Target I1: 10

Objective 2: Panama improves national legislation and jurisprudence on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press.

Baseline: 0 (Currently there are no organizations that promote legislation or engage in strategic litigation in matters of freedom of expression).

Indicators:
• I2: Number of legislative proposals promoted by the Center for the Defense of Journalism.

ACTIVIDADES

Activity 1.1.1 Hiring of a Senior Lawyer with experience in legal assistance of journalists and media.

Activity 1.1.2 Hiring of two Junior Lawyers to assist the Senior Lawyer and follow the designed defense strategy.

Activity 1.1.3 Establishment of an office for the CDP.

Activity 1.1.4. Organizing a monthly meeting with national journalistic associations.

Activity 1.1.5 Organizing a monthly meeting with independent journalists.

Activity 1.1.6 Organizing biannual meetings with similar organizations in the region to discuss best practices in the protection of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press.

Activity 2.1.1 Hiring of a technological consultant to develop the OPP platform.

Activity 2.1.2 Hosting a launch event for the OPP with relevant actors within the journalistic Panamanian community.

Activity 2.2.1 Hiring a consultant for the *Annual Report on the state of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press in Panama*, based on the information gathered by the OPP and the CDP.
Activity 2.2.2 Launch event for the annual report with relevant actors of the journalistic community, legal community, Ombudsperson's office, and relevant judiciary stakeholders.

5. PLAN DE EVALUACIÓN

The project will be monitored through a results-based approach.

The project manager will be responsible for monitoring the project based on the established indicators and the objective and output level. Narrative and financial monthly donor reports will be prepared and will include verification mechanisms for each indicator (legislative recommendation reports, case reports and case-progress reports, number of meetings sustained with beneficiaries, etc.)

Verification methods for Indicator 1.1: Report of the represented case, number of meetings sustained with beneficiaries, and a signed representation agreement per case.

Verification methods for Indicator 2.1: Functioning domain for the observatory, monthly reports detailing the new information input into the observatory website.

Verification methods for Indicator 2.2: Donor report will include the published annual report.

Beneficiaries will receive an evaluation survey during their representation process and at the end of their legal process, for them to anonymously asses the CDP services. The evaluations will not be conducted by any of the lawyers involve in a beneficiary´s case.