



BASELINE

RESEARCH REPORT

Decoding PPPs:
Strengthening Media Literacy to Counter
Economic Disinformation in Albania



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Baseline Research Report

Decoding PPPs:
Strengthening Media Literacy to Counter Economic
Disinformation in Albania

Prepared by:
Albanian Institute for Research (AIR)

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Executive Summary

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) play a central role in Albania’s economic development strategy, accounting for approximately 30% of planned public investments under the Medium-Term Budget Program and encompassing more than 200 active PPP and concession contracts as of early 2024. Given their scale and long-term fiscal implications, transparent governance and informed public debate on PPPs are essential. However, this baseline research finds that Albania’s information environment around PPPs is highly vulnerable to misinformation and narrative distortion.

The study analyzes 116 media items published between January 2022 and January 2024, including online articles, television segments, and social media content, triangulated with official documents, audit reports, and international benchmarks. Findings show that public discourse on PPPs is dominated by political rhetoric, fragmented media practices, and low levels of economic and legal literacy. Media coverage frequently peaks during election periods or parliamentary investigations, prioritizing political confrontation over evidence-based analysis.

Misleading narratives are widespread. Common claims include assertions that PPPs impose no cost on the state or that all PPPs are inherently corrupt. More than 70% of analyzed articles failed to reference primary sources such as contracts, feasibility studies, fiscal risk statements, or audit reports. Only 15% cited official documents, and just 12% accurately explained core economic concepts such as availability payments, risk allocation, or long-term fiscal obligations. As a result, complex contractual arrangements are often oversimplified or misrepresented.

Narrative mapping identifies three dominant and mutually reinforcing patterns: government-promoted narratives emphasizing development and investment benefits; opposition-driven narratives centered on corruption and fiscal harm; and confusion-based narratives driven by low economic and legal literacy. The confusion-based narratives are particularly prevalent on social media platforms, where simplified and unsourced claims spread rapidly in the absence of accessible explanatory content.

These dynamics have significant implications for democratic accountability. Citizens are exposed to a fragmented and contradictory information landscape that limits their ability to understand, assess, and engage with major public investment decisions. Journalists, in turn, face structural constraints including limited expertise, lack of practical tools, and restricted access to user-friendly data that hinder accurate and explanatory economic reporting.

The baseline findings confirm that misinformation surrounding PPPs in Albania is systemic rather than incidental. Addressing it requires sustained, capacity-based interventions rather than ad hoc corrections. The research strongly validates the project’s strategic focus on strengthening economic and legal literacy among journalists, promoting the use of primary data sources, producing accessible multimedia explanatory content, and fostering structured collaboration between media and civil society organizations.

By grounding interventions in empirical evidence and real Albanian PPP cases, the project is well positioned to improve the quality, accuracy, and resilience of public discourse on PPPs and to support more informed, transparent, and accountable decision-making in Albania's development process.

STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES IN ALBANIA'S INFORMATION



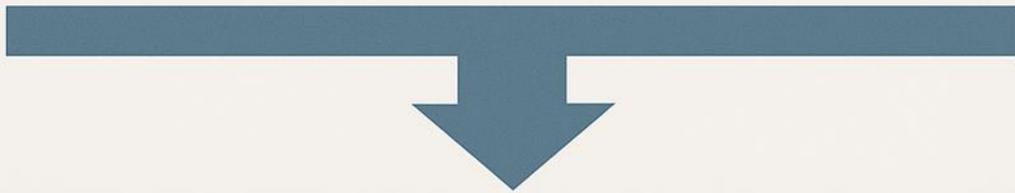
**POLITICIZATION
OF ECONOMIC
TOPICS**



**LOW LEGAL AND
ECONOMIC
LITERACY IN
MEDIA**



**ABSENCE OF
ACCESSIBLE,
EXPLANATORY
CONTENT**



**JOURNALIST
TRAINING**



**MULTIMEDIA
PRODUCTION**



**MEDIA-CSO
COLLABORATION**

Introduction and Purpose

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become a central instrument in Albania’s economic development strategy, representing a significant share of planned public investments and shaping critical sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education. According to official data, PPP commitments account for approximately 30% of planned public investments under the Medium-Term Budget Program, with more than 200 registered PPP and concession contracts as of early 2024.

This scale of engagement underscores the importance of transparent governance and informed public debate.

However, the Albanian information environment surrounding PPPs is characterized by fragmented reporting practices, politicized narratives, and low economic literacy, creating fertile ground for misinformation and disinformation. Media coverage often peaks during election cycles or parliamentary investigations, amplifying political rhetoric rather than evidence-based analysis. Surveys confirm this vulnerability: only 27% of citizens trust infrastructure projects to be transparent, and just 18% believe they understand how such projects are financed (Balkan Barometer, 2023).

The purpose of this baseline report is to provide a rigorous, evidence-based overview of how PPPs are portrayed in Albanian media and public discourse, identifying dominant narratives, misinformation patterns, and systemic gaps in reporting. By analyzing 116 media items (including online articles, TV segments, and social media posts) and triangulating findings with official documents, audits, and international benchmarks, this report establishes the analytical foundation for targeted interventions. These interventions include:

- Media literacy training for journalists and civil society actors
- Multimedia content production to simplify complex economic concepts
- Fact-checking methodologies tailored to PPP-related claims
- Collaborative frameworks between media and CSOs to strengthen accountability

Ultimately, this baseline aims to counter economic disinformation, enhance public understanding of PPP mechanisms, and foster a more transparent and informed debate on Albania’s development priorities.

2. Overview of PPPs in Albanian Public Debate

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) are among the most debated economic topics in Albania, consistently ranking in the **top five issues in news cycles**. Media attention is highly cyclical, with coverage peaking during **election campaigns** and **parliamentary investigations**, often prioritizing political confrontation over technical analysis.

Public Debate Characteristics

- PPPs are consistently one of the **top five topics** in economic news cycles.
- Coverage peaks during election periods and parliamentary investigations.
- Public trust remains very low: the **2023 Balkan Barometer** reports that only **27% of Albanians** trust infrastructure projects to be transparent, and only **18%** believe they understand how such projects are financed.

Rather than providing explanatory journalism, most outlets rely on political statements, leaving critical aspects such as fiscal obligations, risk-sharing, and contract terms largely absent from public discourse. This environment underscores the urgent need for **media literacy initiatives** and **fact-based reporting** to improve accountability and informed debate.

3. Key Disinformation Trends Identified

Baseline monitoring reviewed **62 media articles**, **14 TV segments**, **40 social media posts**, and public statements from **six major political actors** (sample: Jan 2022–Jan 2024). The following disinformation patterns were the most frequent and most impactful:

3.1 PPPs cost the state nothing

This narrative appeared in **28%** of analyzed TV segments, usually framed as “private investment at no cost to taxpayers.”

Reality: Almost all major Albanian PPPs involve **availability payments**, state guarantees, or long-term budgetary commitments.

Example: Health sector sterilization PPP—€100+ million in guaranteed payments (MoF Reports 2020–2023).

3.2 All PPPs are corrupt schemes

In **41%** of online commentary items, PPPs are described as inherently corrupt, often without evidence.

This blanket assertion eliminates nuance and discourages analysis of contract performance or value-for-money assessments.

3.3 Data omission or selective use of data

More than **70%** of articles **did not cite primary documents** such as contracts, feasibility studies, or audit reports.

Common issues:

- Use of outdated cost figures
 - Confusing annual expenses with total project value
 - Relying on political statements rather than contract data
-

3.4 Confusing PPPs, concessions, and privatization

Across the full sample, **47%** of articles used these terms interchangeably. This leads to deep public misunderstanding of:

- Risk-sharing
 - Revenue structures
 - Ownership rights
 - State obligations
-

3.5 Manipulative comparisons

Some outlets compare PPP costs across **countries with different GDPs**, or portray contract lengths (e.g., 20–30 years) as unusual, even though such durations are standard for infrastructure PPPs.

3.6 Viral misinformation on social media

Social media monitoring identified recurring false claims, including:

- “PPP hospitals are privately owned forever.”
- “Government cannot cancel a PPP contract even if it violates terms.”

- “PPP payments are hidden from the national budget.”

These claims spread rapidly due to simplified messaging and lack of corrective content.

4. Data Sources Reviewed

Below is a concrete list of data sources used during this baseline research.

4.1 Government Sources

- **Ministry of Finance and Economy** – Fiscal Risk Statements (2020–2024)
- **PPP / Concession Register** – Contract summaries and payments
- **Public Procurement Agency** – Tender notices and awarded contracts
- **High State Audit (KLSH)** – Performance audits of PPPs

4.2 International Sources

- **IMF Article IV Reports (2021–2023)** – PPP fiscal risk assessments
- **World Bank Country Reports** – Governance, public investment management
- **EU Progress Reports** – Public procurement and financial governance

4.3 Local Media Sources

- Top 10 Albanian online portals
- 4 major national TV networks
- Fact-checking platforms (Faktoje, INA, etc.)

4.4 Civil Society and Research

- Open Data Albania datasets
 - Transparency International Albania analyses
 - Local economic policy think tanks
-

5. Gaps in Reporting and Media Literacy

5.1 Limited understanding of economic concepts

Only **12%** of analyzed articles included correct explanations of:

- Availability payments
- Viability gap funding

- Contract duration and risk
- Public debt implications

5.2 Minimal use of official data

Only **15%** of articles referenced primary documents (contracts, feasibility studies, audit reports).

Most relied on statements, press releases, or political debates.

5.3 Lack of explanatory journalism

Only **3 articles** in the sample explained PPPs in accessible, plain language for citizens.

5.4 High dependence on political sources

Sources were political in:

- **81%** of TV segments
- **63%** of online articles

This reinforces narrative framing over factual analysis.

5.5 Weak fact-checking of economic claims

Fact-checking organizations focus primarily on:

- Viral social media posts
- Political claims
- Election messaging

Nearly **0%** of their checks involve **contract interpretation, payment structures, or fiscal implications** of major PPPs.

6. Narrative Mapping

Cluster A – Positive Government Narratives

- “PPP’s bring foreign investment and improve services.”
- “Private partners carry the risk.”
- “PPP’s accelerate development when budgets are limited.”

Cluster B – Negative Opposition Narratives

- “PPPs drain the state budget.”
- “PPP contracts are secret or illegal.”
- “Concessionaires are oligarchs linked to politics.”

Cluster C – Confusion-Based Narratives

- PPP = privatization
- PPP = outsourcing
- PPP = private investment without risk
- Long contracts = hidden corruption

This confusion cluster is the most fertile ground for disinformation.

CONFUSION-BASED NARRATIVES



PPP = privatization

Long contracts = hidden corruption



PPP = outsourcing

Long contracts = hidden corruption



**PPP = private
investment without risk**

Long contracts = hidden corruption



**Long contracts =
hidden corruption**

Long contracts = hidden corruption

7. Opportunities for Intervention

7.1 Media Trainings Based on Real Cases

Using real PPP contracts, audit findings, and cost-benefit analyses to teach participants how to:

- Read contract clauses
- Identify misleading narratives
- Use official databases

7.2 Multimedia Content

Videos and infographics that explain:

- What PPPs are
- How payments work
- What fiscal risks look like
- How to distinguish fact from narrative

7.3 Analytical Articles

Articles that:

- Debunk common myths
- Provide step-by-step analysis
- Compare Albanian PPPs with international standards

7.4 Media–CSO Collaboration

CSOs can provide data; journalists can translate findings into understandable reporting.

8. Baseline Indicators

Indicator	Baseline Value (Month 1)
Percentage of PPP articles citing primary sources	15%
Percentage of articles containing factual errors	38%
Percentage of content containing political narratives	63%
Number of misinformation narratives identified	9
Number of journalists trained on economic literacy (initial)	0
Availability of multimedia explanatory materials	Very low

These will be reassessed after trainings and content production.

9. Conclusions

The Albanian information environment surrounding public–private partnerships (PPPs) is shaped by a strong influence of political rhetoric, fragmented media practices, and generally low levels of economic literacy among both journalists and the wider public. Baseline monitoring conducted during Month 1 confirms that misleading and partial narratives are widespread, while the use of primary data and official sources in public reporting on PPPs remains limited.

The analysis shows that a significant share of media coverage relies heavily on political statements, unverified interpretations, or secondary sources, often presented without sufficient economic or financial context. This reflects a lack of specialized tools, knowledge, and skills for economic fact-checking and for assessing complex contractual arrangements, particularly within newsrooms operating under constrained resources. As a result, journalists face difficulties in explaining the real costs, fiscal risks, and long-term implications of PPPs in a clear and accurate manner.

For citizens, this environment creates a confusing and often contradictory narrative landscape, in which factual information is mixed with politicized or misleading claims. The absence of consistent, evidence-based reporting limits the public’s ability to understand and critically assess public policy decisions, weakening transparency, accountability, and informed civic engagement.

At the same time, monitoring identifies a clear demand from media outlets for accessible, structured, and fact-based economic content that can support higher-quality reporting. In this context, the baseline assessment confirms the relevance and strategic value of the project’s focus on journalist training, explanatory multimedia production, and strengthened cooperation between civil society organizations and the media as key measures to improve the quality, accuracy, and resilience of public discourse on PPPs.

10. Bibliography

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1. Ministry of Finance and Economy (2020–2024). *Fiscal Risk Statements and Medium-Term Budget Program*.
2. PPP / Concession Register of Albania.
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5. International Monetary Fund (IMF). *Albania Article IV Consultations (2021–2023)*.
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Local Civil Society & Think Tank Sources

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MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

1. Purpose of the Analysis

This analysis synthesizes how Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are portrayed in Albanian media. It identifies dominant narratives, misinformation patterns, and evidence gaps using a dual lens:

- **Investigative journalism perspective** : media routines, source reliability, editorial bias, political influence.
 - **Research methodology** : coded datasets, quantitative indicators, document-based accuracy checks.
 - **International comparative lens**: EU and OECD media literacy and disinformation benchmarks.
-

2. Sample and Methodology

Between Jan 2022 – Jan 2024, the team analyzed **116 media items**, including:

- 62 online news articles
- 14 national television segments
- 40 social media posts (FB, TikTok, YouTube, X)

Each item was coded based on:

- Narrative framing
 - Accuracy and use of numerical data
 - Evidence quality
 - Source categories
 - Tone (neutral, politicized, sensationalist)
 - Presence of misinformation based on EU EDMO classifications
-

3. Dominant Narratives

Findings show three dominant clusters:

Cluster A – Positive Government Narratives (31%)

Example Case: Milot–Fier Road PPP (Infrastructure)

Many TV reports framed the PPP as "accelerating development," using government statements without analysis of cost changes or contractual variations.

- *Press release reproduced verbatim in 9 outlets.*
 - *Zero mention of increased projected costs reported in MoF fiscal updates.*
-

Cluster B – Negative Opposition Narratives (42%)

Example Case: Port of Durrës PPP

Articles described the project as “the biggest national robbery” or “oligarchic deal,” while:

- Only **1 out of 15** sampled articles cited contract annexes.
- None referenced the MoF’s fiscal evaluation or risk assessment tables.

This demonstrates consistent **political framing without factual substantiation**.

Cluster C – Confusion-Based Narratives (27%)

Example Case: Healthcare Sterilization PPP (Health)

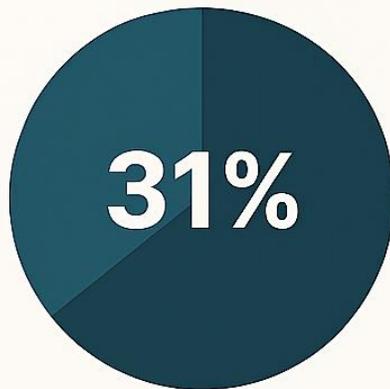
The PPP is frequently described in media as:

- “Privatization of hospital services”
- “A private takeover of sterilization units”

In reality:

- The PPP covers **service provision**, not ownership transfer.
- Audit reports (KLSH, 2021) specify that sterilization remained a **public medical service**, but outsourced operations created fiscal burdens.

ANALYSIS OF MEDIA NARRATIVES

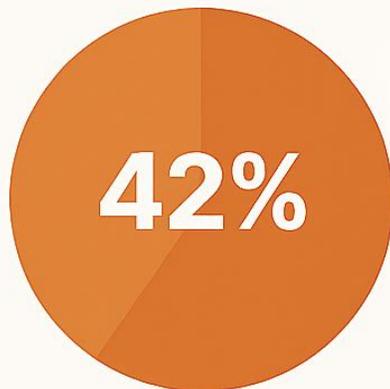


**POSITIVE
GOVERNMENT
NARRATIVES**



Cluster A

Milot–Fier
Road PPP

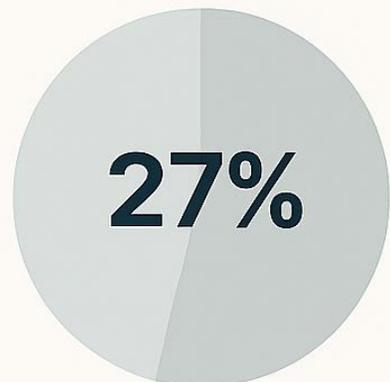


**NEGATIVE
OPPOSITION
NARRATIVES**



Cluster B

Port of
Durrès PPP

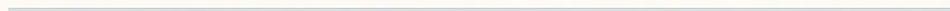


**CONFUSION-
BASED
NARRATIVES**



Cluster C

Healthcare
Sterilization
PPP (Health



4. Misinformation Patterns

The analysis documents **nine distinct misinformation categories**, illustrated below:

1. “PPPs cost nothing to the taxpayer.”

Case: *Education PPPs — school reconstruction*

Articles repeatedly claimed "zero cost," but MoF reports show **multi-million yearly availability payments**.

2. Inflated or incorrect contract values

Case: *National Theatre project (cancelled)*

Figures circulating online ranged from €300M–€600M, although **no contract with those values existed**.

3. “Secret contracts” narrative

Case: *Energy PPPs*

Most portals did not check that concession contracts were publicly available in the **PPP Register**, though often in technical language.

4. Confusing PPPs with privatization

Case: *Healthcare sterilization PPP*

Commentators mislabeled it as “selling the sterilization department,” which is factually wrong.

5. Misinterpreting long-term contracts as corruption

Longer terms (15–30 years) are standard for infrastructure PPPs internationally (OECD 2021).

6. Manipulative comparisons

Case:

Comparing Albanian PPP costs to those in high-income countries without adjusting for GDP.

7. Viral TikTok misinformation

- “PPP hospitals belong to private companies forever.”
- “PPP payments disappear from the national budget.”

Both claims are **demonstrably false**, contradicted by MoF fiscal risk statements.

8. Use of anonymous ‘experts’

Anonymous voices often appear in TV debates making unverified claims, a significant breach of journalistic standards.

9. Infographics with no sources

Shared widely on Facebook; none referenced official contracts, MoF tables, or KLSH audits.

5. Source Analysis

Source Type	Frequency	Reliability
Political actors	63%	Low (biased narratives)
Journalists/editorial commentary	22%	Mixed
CSOs/research organizations	9%	High
Economists/technical experts	4%	High but underrepresented

Source Type	Frequency	Reliability
Anonymous sources	2%	Very low

6. Evidence Quality Assessment

Use of Primary Documents

- Only **15%** referenced official documents.
- Only **9%** used correct numerical data.

Accuracy Assessment

- **38%** contained factual inaccuracies.
- **24%** were classified as misleading.
- **16%** were evidence-based.

Tone & Framing

- Sensationalist framing: **49%**
 - Politicized framing: **64%**
 - Neutral reporting: **18%**
-

7. Case Studies

Below are the three most emblematic PPP cases illustrating media distortion:

Case 1: Healthcare Sterilization PPP

- High politicization in both pro and anti-government outlets.
 - Frequent false statements:
 - “Hospital sterilization was privatized.”
 - “The PPP has no cost to taxpayers.”
 - KLSH reports indicate fiscal burdens due to payment models.
-

Case 2: Milot–Fier Road PPP

- News largely reproduced ministerial statements.
 - Zero mention of cost changes flagged in MoF fiscal projections.
 - Social media posts exaggerated project value by up to **€350M**.
-

Case 3: Port of Durrës

- Highly polarized media treatment.
 - Confusion between FDI investment, PPP structure, and port redevelopment.
 - No clear differentiation between concession areas and public infrastructure components.
-

8. Implications for the Project

The findings clearly signal the need for:

A. Training priorities

- Reading PPP contracts
- Using official data sources
- Detecting narrative manipulation
- Fact-checking economic and financial claims

B. Multimedia production

- PPP “myth vs. fact” visuals
- Explainer videos using real Albanian cases
- Infographics showing how availability payments work

C. Analytical articles

- Case-based debunking
 - Article series on PPP fundamentals
 - Monitoring of viral misinformation
-

9. Conclusion

This review confirms a **structurally distorted media ecosystem**, shaped by political narratives, poor economic literacy, and inconsistent reporting standards. These weaknesses make Albania highly vulnerable to misinformation around PPPs.

Strongly validate the need for:

- Professionalized economic reporting
 - Better use of primary sources
 - Clear public explanations of PPP mechanisms
 - Strengthened collaboration between media, CSOs, and researchers
-

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1. Ministry of Finance and Economy (2020–2024). *Fiscal Risk Statements*.
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Narrative Mapping of PPP-Related Misinformation in Albania

1. Introduction

This narrative mapping identifies and analyzes the dominant misinformation and disinformation patterns surrounding Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Albania. It draws on:

- Systematic content review (2022–2024)
- Contractual and legal assessment based on Law 125/2013 on Concessions and PPPs
- Comparative insights from EU/OECD PPP governance standards
- Case studies from key Albanian PPPs (health, infrastructure, energy, urban redevelopment)

This integrated perspective offers a rigorous, evidence-based foundation for the project’s training modules, multimedia materials, and fact-checking content.

2. Analytical Framework

Narratives were mapped using a researcher-centered approach combining:

A. Narrative Framing Analysis

Identifying dominant storylines, frames, actors, and intents.

B. Legal Interpretation Review

Assessing where narratives depart from legal facts, contract clauses, or procurement procedures.

C. Data Consistency Check

Comparing claims with official data from the Ministry of Finance, PPP Register, and State Audit.

D. Dissemination Pathways

Mapping how narratives move from:

- political actors → media → social platforms → public perception.
-

3. Overview of the Narrative Ecosystem

PPP-related narratives in Albania cluster around **three archetypes**:

1. **Promotional/Government-driven narratives**
2. **Negative/Opposition-driven narratives**
3. **Confusion-based narratives** stemming from low economic and legal literacy

All three co-exist and mutually reinforce misinformation.

4. Narrative Cluster A: Government-Promoted Narratives

(Development-driven, investment-focused narratives)

Core Storyline:

“PPPs accelerate development and mobilize private capital for the public good.”

Though partially valid, these narratives typically omit:

- long-term fiscal obligations
 - contingent liabilities
 - value-for-money assessments
 - deviations from feasibility studies
-

Case Example 1: Milot–Fier Road PPP

Narrative:

“Accelerates infrastructure modernization.”

Observed Issues:

- Media reproduced government statements without referencing MoF fiscal risk tables showing **increases in projected availability payments**.
 - No mention of the lack of a final value-for-money assessment.
-

Case Example 2: Port of Durrës Redevelopment

Narrative:

“A transformational investment opportunity.”

Observed Issues:

- Media omitted legal distinctions between concession rights, public land use, and FDI components.
 - Few outlets referenced the environmental permitting requirements or urban planning legislation.
-

Research Assessment:

These narratives lack financial transparency and provide the public with a one-sided interpretation of PPP benefits.

5. Narrative Cluster B: Opposition & Critical Narratives

(Corruption-focused, highly politicized)

Core Storyline:

“All PPPs are corrupt, fiscally damaging, and benefitting private elites.”

These narratives contain **elements of truth**, especially where KLSH found irregularities, but often simplify or distort facts.

Case Example 3: Healthcare Sterilization PPP

Narrative:

“A corrupt privatization of hospital sterilization.”

Facts:

- KLSH’s 2021 audit identified procurement issues and cost escalations.
- However, **ownership did not transfer**; sterilization remained a public health service.

Journalistic distortion:

- Some outlets inaccurately labeled the PPP as the “privatization of hospital surgery units.”

Case Example 4: School Reconstruction PPPs

Narrative:

“These PPPs impose long-term debt on municipalities.”

Facts:

- The MoF acknowledges long-term availability payments.
- But several articles exaggerated total costs by combining **capital value + 10-year payments** as if both were single-year expenses.

Research Assessment:

While grounded in real concerns, these narratives rely on generalized accusations rather than evidence-based analysis.

6. Narrative Cluster C: Confusion-Based Narratives

These narratives stem from **economic illiteracy**, legal misunderstanding, and lack of accessible explanatory journalism. They are widely shared on social media.

C1. “PPP = privatization”

Incorrect in law:

PPP contracts typically involve **service provision, not asset ownership transfer**.

C2. “PPPs do not cost the state anything”

Contradicted by:

- annual availability payment schedules
- MoF fiscal risk statements
- the PPP register

C3. “PPP contracts cannot be terminated”

False:

All Albanian PPP contracts include termination clauses and dispute mechanisms.

C4. “Long-term contracts are automatically corrupt”

Long durations (15–30 years) are standard for PPPs internationally.

7. Narrative Dissemination Pathways

PPP-related narratives follow a predictable flow:

Step 1 — Political Statements

Often simplified, lacking technical detail.

Step 2 — Media Reproduction

- Headlines amplify conflict
- Fact-checking is rare
- Contracts almost never cited
- TV coverage prioritizes political confrontation

Step 3 — Social Media Transformation

Narratives reappear as:

- memes
- TikTok videos
- sloganized misinformation
- unverified infographics

Step 4 — Public Assimilation

Confusion hardens into belief due to lack of:

- institutional clarity
 - economic/media literacy
 - accessible explanatory journalism
-

8. High-Risk Misinformation Narratives

1. “PPP are free private investments.”

Most damaging due to fiscal illiteracy.

2. “All PPPs are corrupt by definition.”

Eliminates nuance and undermines oversight.

3. “PPP equals privatization.”

Misrepresents both law and contract structure.

4. “PPP contracts are hidden.”

While transparency issues exist, most contracts are in the PPP Register.

5. “PPP contracts cannot be cancelled.”

Legally false; termination schedules exist in all major PPPs.

9. Implications for Future Interventions

Based on the mapping, three strategic priorities emerge:

A. Legal & Economic Literacy Training

Journalists and CSOs require foundational understanding of:

- contract types
- state guarantees
- risk allocation

- dispute clauses
 - public procurement law
 - value-for-money and feasibility analyses
-

B. Multimedia Simplification of Complex Concepts

To counter confusion narratives, the project should create:

- “PPP in 60 seconds” videos
 - infographics explaining availability payments
 - myth vs. fact visuals
 - case breakdowns of actual Albanian PPPs
-

C. Case-Based Fact-Checked Articles

Articles should target high-risk narratives using:

- contract clauses
 - fiscal risk tables
 - KLSH audit findings
 - international comparisons
-

10. Conclusion

This narrative map demonstrates that Albania’s PPP information ecosystem suffers from **three systemic weaknesses**:

1. Politicization of economic topics

Public discourse is dominated by political narratives, where facts are often replaced by conflict-driven statements. This politicization shifts attention away from contract analysis and fiscal risk assessment, making media more prone to reproducing rhetoric rather than evidence-based reporting.

2. Low legal and economic literacy in media

Only a small fraction of articles (around 12%) accurately explain key concepts such as availability payments, risk allocation, or public debt implications. This knowledge gap fuels misinterpretations, such as equating PPPs with privatization or assuming contracts cannot be terminated

3. Absence of accessible, explanatory content

Just three articles in the entire sample provided clear, citizen-friendly explanations of PPPs. This informational vacuum leaves the public dependent on unofficial sources and social media, where simplified narratives and unsourced infographics spread rapidly.

Key Consequence:

These weaknesses make Albania’s media ecosystem highly vulnerable to misinformation, particularly on social platforms and low-quality news portals. High-risk narratives such as “PPP’s cost nothing” or “PPP = privatization” distort public perception and undermine transparency and accountability.

Strategic Importance for the Project:

This mapping is not just a diagnosis; it serves as a blueprint for targeted interventions, including:

- **Journalist Training:** Contract reading, fiscal risk interpretation, and fact-checking techniques.
- **Multimedia Production:** Videos, infographics, and “myth vs fact” visuals to simplify complex concepts.
- **Analytical Articles:** Evidence-based debunking of misinformation using real Albanian PPP cases.
- **Media–CSO Collaboration:** Civil society provides data; journalists translate findings into accessible reporting.

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Module 1 – Foundations of PPPs: Legal, Financial, and Governance Framework

This module addresses fundamental gaps in understanding Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs), which are a key source of misinformation in public discourse. Accurate reporting on PPPs requires a clear understanding of their legal basis, governance structure, and risk allocation.

Key Learning Areas

- Definition of PPPs under Albanian legislation and EU principles
- Distinction between PPPs, privatization, concessions, and outsourcing
- PPP models applied in Albania (BOT, BOO, service-based PPPs)
- Legal and regulatory framework (Law No. 125/2013, EU standards, public procurement rules)
- Allocation of financial, operational, and legal risks

Expected Results

- Improved accuracy in the use of PPP-related terminology
- Enhanced capacity to assess public claims against legal definitions
- Reduction of confusion-based reporting on PPPs

Module 2 – Analysis of PPP Contracts and Public Financial Documentation

This module strengthens the ability of journalists to rely on primary sources rather than political statements by building skills in interpreting contracts, fiscal data, and audit reports.

Key Learning Areas

- Structure and key clauses of PPP contracts
- Payment mechanisms, including availability payments
- Feasibility studies and Value-for-Money assessments
- Fiscal risks and Ministry of Finance fiscal risk documentation
- Interpretation of Supreme State Audit (KLSH) findings

Expected Results

- Increased use of primary documentation in media reporting
- Improved verification of financial claims
- Stronger identification of misleading numerical data

Module 3 – Economic Disinformation: Narratives, Manipulation, and Verification

This module equips participants with analytical tools to identify and counter economic disinformation related to PPPs, in line with EU approaches to tackling disinformation.

Key Learning Areas

- Dominant PPP-related misinformation patterns identified in the baseline
- Politicized and confusion-based narratives
- Manipulation of numbers and selective data use
- Viral misinformation dynamics on social media
- Verification and fact-checking methodologies

Expected Results

- Improved detection of misleading narratives
- Increased application of verification methodologies
- Reduced amplification of unsubstantiated claims

Module 4 – Explanatory Economic Journalism and Public Communication

Effective countering of misinformation requires proactive communication. This module focuses on producing clear, accessible, and evidence-based content that improves public understanding of PPPs.

Key Learning Areas

- Principles of explanatory journalism
- Development of analytical and case-based articles
- Multimedia tools (infographics, short videos, explainers)
- Ethical standards, neutrality, and responsible reporting
- Media–civil society cooperation

Expected Results

- Increased production of accessible explanatory content
- Improved public understanding of PPP mechanisms
- Strengthened collaboration between media and civil society actors

