



# STRATEGIC PLAN

— MEDIA FOUNDATION FOR WEST AFRICA —



**JANUARY 2022 – DECEMBER 2025**

# The Context & Approach

This strategic plan has been developed to provide clear programmatic and operational directions for the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) over the next four years (January 2022 – December 2025). Informed by the prevailing context and emerging issues, the plan is framed to help the organisation appropriately respond to the Freedom of Expression (FOE), governance and development challenges in the West Africa region. The plan will also guide the organisation to channel resources and staff efforts towards clear agreed outcomes and targets.

The strategy was developed through a stakeholder participatory process. The processes included an initial stakeholders' survey. Respondents to the survey included funders, national partners, development experts and board members. There was also a joint three-day strategic planning meeting of board members, staff and expert resource persons; separate staff meetings to review initial drafts; and solicitation of inputs from expert resource persons. These processes were used to review and assess the performance of the MFWA over the past five years; analyse strengths and weaknesses of the organisation; identify prevailing opportunities that the organisation can take advantage of; and determine the real and potential threats to the organisation and its work going forward.

The process also involved a thorough review and discussion of the prevailing governance and freedom of expression challenges in the region and identifying appropriate strategies the MFWA can adopt to contribute significantly in dealing with those challenges.

Based on the analysis, the following were identified as the key contextual issues:

## Contextual issues

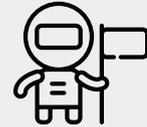
- Democratic backsliding in the region
- Growing and deepening inequality
- Overt intolerance of the media and free expression
- Existence of legal provisions that criminalise various aspects of speech offences
- New laws aimed at managing COVID-19, terrorism and cybercrimes being used as tools to crack down on expression (online and offline)
- Exorbitant libel damages which threaten the survival of media and deter critical reporting
- Inadequate funding and sustainability challenges (for media organisations and media support organisations)
- Weak investigative journalism and accountability reporting
- Dwindling public trust and confidence in the media
- Falling professional standards in media
- Proliferation of misinformation/ disinformation
- Shrinking civic spaces and decreasing civic participation in governance
- Clamping down of protesters with brute force by state security agents
- Uncertainties about the COVID-19 pandemic and its overall impact
- Increasing gender gap (both online and offline) and growing disempowerment of women



## Our Vision

A West Africa in which all persons enjoy the right to freedom of expression without fear or threat by any actors.

## Our Mission



To promote and defend the right to freedom of expression of all persons particularly the media and human rights defenders in West Africa.

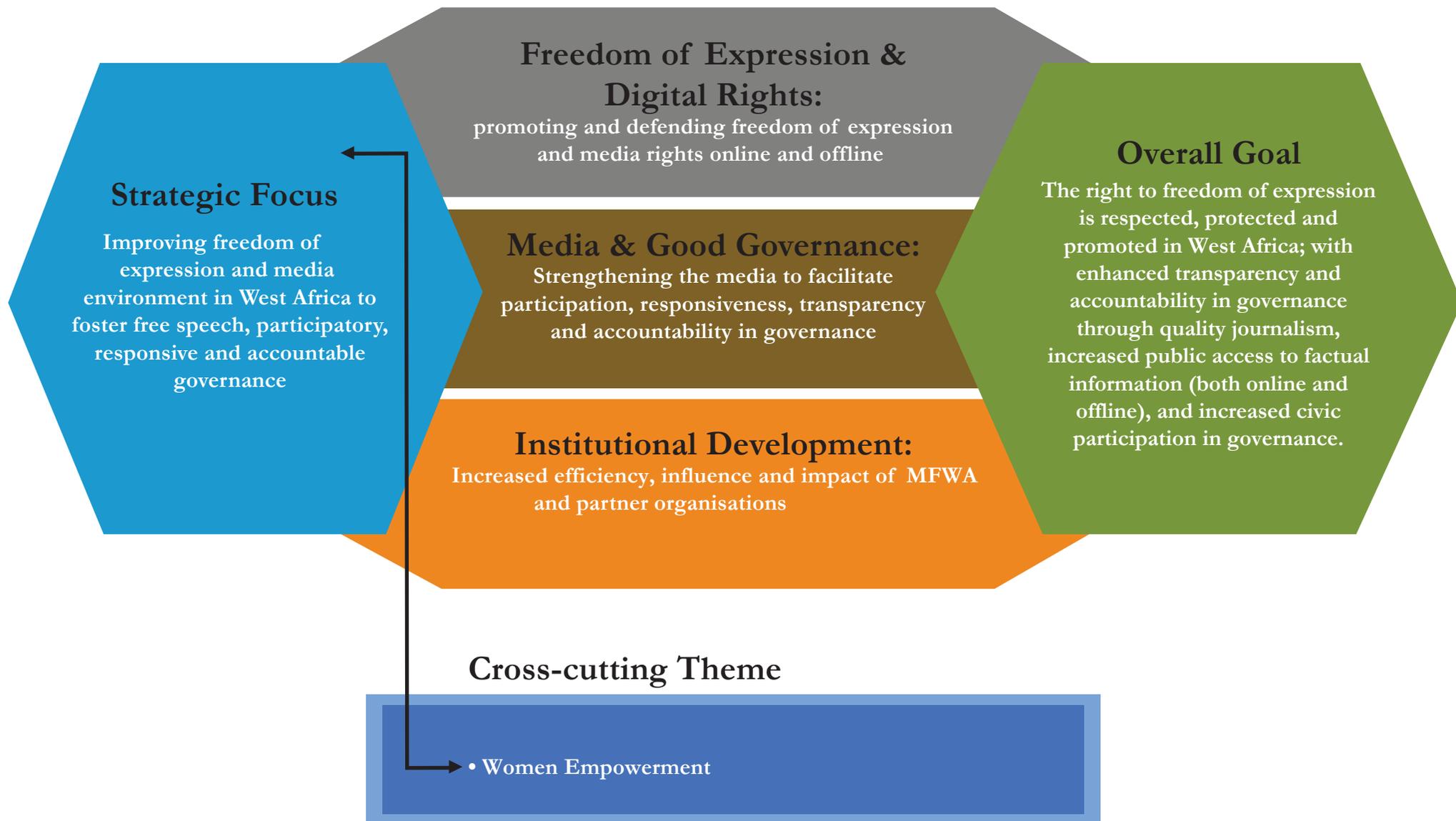
## Values

In pursuit of our overall goal and programmatic objectives, the following core values will guide the organisation's work:

- Equality, liberty and social justice irrespective of belief, race, ethnicity, or sex.
- Independent, non-partisan and non-sectarian
- Excellence and professionalism
- Accountability, transparency and good stewardship
- Teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, partnership and solidarity

# Programmatic Response

Over the strategy period, the organisation will respond to the contextual challenges through three programmatic interventions with an overall strategic goal as outlined in the diagram below



# Strategic Issues to be Addressed

## Freedom of Expression

- Safety of journalists
- Press Freedom
- Digital rights
- Civic Expression

## Media and Good Governance

- Access to Information and civic participation in governance
- Media sustainability and professionalism
- Independent journalism and investigative reporting
- Public-Authorities engagement

Women  
Empowerment

## Institutional Development

- Institutional strengthening
- Support for national partner organisations
- Knowledge management

## Objectives

Over the strategy period, the focus will be on the following three objectives:

**Freedom of Expression** A freer and safer environment for independent journalism and expression (offline and online)

**Media and Good Governance** Strengthened media capacity that enables participatory, responsive, transparent and accountable governance

**Institutional Development** Increased efficiency, influence and impact of MFWA and its partner organisations

## Strategies

- Engagements with governments and other stakeholders
- Strategic partnerships, coalition building and collaborations
- Campaigns and advocacy
- Meetings, seminars, workshops, forums and conferences
- Capacity strengthening for journalists, media organisations and media support organisations
- Investigative journalism and fact-checking
- Research, documentation and knowledge sharing
- Adapting, responding and taking advantage of new developments and emerging issues
- Prioritisation and mainstreaming of women empowerment in all operations

## Assumptions

- That COVID-19 and other public health crises will not significantly disrupt operations and implementation of work
- That there will be political stability that enables engagements and interventions
- That state and non-state actors will be committed to addressing media and FOE challenges
- That there will be public support for advocacy against FOE and media rights violations
- That there will be an increased commitment of journalists to do investigative fact-based reporting
- That state institutions will be more responsive to making information available
- That media support organisations in the region and beyond will contribute to efforts to improve press freedom and freedom of expression
- That there would be a safer and more tolerant environment for critical investigative journalism

# Theory of Change



## Below is a summarised logframe for each of the programme areas:

### Freedom of Expression

**Programme Objective: A freer and safer environment for independent journalism and civic expression (offline & online)**

Specific Objective		Specific Objective		Specific Objective	
Strengthened regional advocacy for improvements in media rights and FOE issues in the region		State and non-state actors take action to fight against offline and online FOE violations as well as other acts that constrict spaces for civic participation		Strengthened regional collaboration to improve digital rights, particularly among women	
Indicators	Indicative target	Indicator	Indicative target	Indicator	Indicative target
Number of collaborative initiatives undertaken to improve the exercise of FOE and media rights at national and regional levels	At least 30 collaborative initiatives undertaken with media and FOE actors in the region	Number of actions taken by state and non-state actors to secure and expand spaces for civic participation and enable the exercise of offline and online FOE rights	At least 30 redress actions taken by state and non-state actors	Number of women supported to build capacity in digital rights and % who indicate capacity and confidence to assert their digital rights	At least 450 women trained and 80% of them indicate ability to assert digital rights
Number of engagement and collaboration with ECOWAS and other intergovernmental bodies on media and FOE issues	At least 10 engagements and collaborations with ECOWAS and other intergovernmental bodies			Level of engagements among trained women on digital rights issues	At least 50% of trained women actively engaged on digital rights advocacy

## Media and Good Governance

**Programme Objective: Strengthened media capacity that enables participatory, responsive, transparent and accountable governance**

Specific Programme Objectives		Specific Programme Objectives		Specific Programme Objectives	
<b>Enhanced investigative journalism and information integrity</b>		Increased access to information held by public institutions		Increased citizens-authorities' engagements	
Indicators	Indicative target	Indicator	Indicative target	Indicator	Indicative target
<p>Number of journalists trained in investigative reporting and number of investigative reports supported</p>	<p>At least 150 journalists (including at least 60 female journalists) trained on investigative reporting and at least 75 critical investigative reports (including at least 10 reports that highlight women rights and women empowerment issues) supported</p>	<p>Number of initiatives undertaken to promote citizens' (especially women's) access to governance information</p>	<p>At least 150 Initiatives (including training programmes, citizen groups mobilization, advocacy statements, etc.) undertaken to facilitate and increase access to information by members of the public, especially women</p>	<p>Number of initiatives/ platforms created to promote engagement between members of the public and authorities. These platforms include town hall meetings, state of district broadcasts, community forums and other media. programmes)</p>	<p>At least 150 citizens-authorities engagement initiatives/ platforms created</p> <p>At least 40% participants in engagement platforms are women</p>
<p>Number of journalists trained on fact-checking and number of fact-checked reports produced</p>	<p>At least 60 journalists (including at least 20 female journalists) trained on fact checking and at least 50 high quality fact-checking reports produced</p>			<p>Number of dedicated platforms for amplifying women's voices and contributions to governance and policy formulation</p>	<p>20 dedicated women's platforms (townhalls, conferences, forums etc)</p>

# Institutional Development

## Programme Objective: Increased efficiency, influence and impact of the MFWA

Specific Objectives		Specific Objectives		Specific Objectives	
Strengthened systems to enhance institutional efficiency and mainstreaming of women empowerment in all operations		A broad network of efficient and resilient national partner organisations and media support institutions		Strengthened communications and engagements with stakeholders	
Indicators	Indicative target	Indicator	Indicative target	Indicator	Indicative target
Number of policy documents developed, updated and fully complied with	At least three policy documents developed/ updated, including human resource policy	Number of joint interventions with national partner organisations and other media support groups	Joint interventions with at least eight partner organisations	Level of uptake and citations/references to MFWA and its materials	20% increase from baseline
Extent of mainstreaming of women empowerment in organisational operations and programming	At least 2 capacity building sessions on mainstreaming of women empowerment in programming	Number of national partner organisations supported through capacity development, networking opportunities, etc.	At least six partner organisations supported	Level of traffic to the website and social media following	20% increase from baseline
				Number of key stakeholders engaged (governmental/non-governmental) who can contribute to the goals of the MFWA and its partners	At least 50 engagements by 2024

### Notes: Baseline figures for indicative targets for communications

- Baseline for level of uptake and citation/references to MFWA and its materials: About 30 citations/ references annually
- Baseline for traffic to MFWA website: About 3,500 visits a month
- Baseline for following on Twitter as at January 2022: 12,700
- Baseline for following on Facebook as at January 2022: 35,113