

The logo for ARTICLE19, featuring the text "ARTICLE19" in white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a black, stylized arrow or chevron shape pointing to the right.

ARTICLE19

Stronger for Expression

Eastern Africa
Strategic Plan
2024–2027

May 2024

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Executive summary

ARTICLE 19 EASTERN AFRICA's (ARTICLE 19 EA) mandate is drawn from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since its establishment in Eastern Africa in 2007, its mandate has been to promote and protect the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and access to information. We believe the full enjoyment of these rights is central to the realisation of other fundamental rights and individual freedoms.

This strategic plan presents ARTICLE 19 EA with a unique opportunity to focus on its core mandate amid the dynamic landscape of Eastern Africa, a region characterised by democratic regression and increased attacks on freedom of expression and access to information. Besides the political challenges, the region also faces huge economic hurdles in which large populations are still struggling for access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, affordable healthcare, and quality education. This situation is further exacerbated by states' diminished capacity to provide public goods, often due to huge debts, bloated public sectors, and corruption and waste. What this means is that we will locate our freedom of expression and access to

information programming in the context of people's day-to-day struggles for dignified livelihoods.

In this strategic plan period, we will maintain our focus on Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia. While Kenya has been our primary focus to date, we will strategically increase engagements across Eastern African countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia, through partnerships with national actors.

We seek to build on our proven track record as a thought leader on freedom of expression and access to information in Eastern Africa. We will leverage our deep expertise in championing legal and policy issues and frameworks on freedom of expression and access to information at the national, regional, and international levels to ensure progressive laws and policies are enacted. We are a capacity-building organisation, and we work in partnerships to support grassroots organisations, journalists, citizen groups and human rights defenders claim their rights safely.

ARTICLE 19 EA strategic pillars and goals

ARTICLE 19 EA will focus on five priority pillars: digital space, media freedom, civic space, access to information, and institutional strengthening, under the overall goal of enabling ‘amplified, inclusive, and resilient voices that reflect diversity of human experiences in Eastern Africa’.

The following five strategic goals will anchor our work:

- **GOAL 1:** A safe digital space that reflects human rights principles and values, inclusion, and the diversity of human experiences in the region.
- **GOAL 2:** A protective and enabling environment that enables the media to be bold, amplify diverse voices, and hold those in power accountable.
- **GOAL 3:** Strong, resilient, and inclusive civic movements on freedom of expression.
- **GOAL 4:** Informed and empowered citizens demanding transparency and accountability from open, transparent, and responsive public and private institutions.
- **GOAL 5:** A stronger, resilient, and sustainable organisation.

Turning point

This strategic plan marks an important turning point for ARTICLE 19 EA. Our reinvigorated board, strengthened by new members with diverse expertise and experience, is well-positioned to lead us in executing this strategic plan while ensuring oversight of the organisation.

The strategic plan requires a commitment to mobilising the right financial resources and diversifying them for the organisation’s sustainability. We look forward to our funding partners and other stakeholders, both current and new, partnering with us in the execution of this strategic plan.

ARTICLE 19 EA sees this novel strategy as the beginning of a journey informed by history but enlivened by future possibilities. Acknowledging the dynamic nature of our work and volatility of the context, we recognise that this strategy cannot be a static signpost, rather it is an evolving ambition that can be sculpted and altered without compromising its core principles.

Who we are

2.1 Vision

All people everywhere can freely express themselves and engage in public life without fear or discrimination.

2.2 Mission

In our digital era, ARTICLE 19 EASTERN AFRICA is a regional think-do organisation that propels the freedom of expression movement locally and globally to ensure all people realise the power of their voices.

2.3 Core values

ARTICLE 19 EA's core values are integrity, transparency, diversity, accountability, resilience, and solidarity.

2.4 Why ARTICLE 19 EA?

Our raison d'être is anchored in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom of expression and the right to access information are fundamental human rights recognised in international and regional human rights instruments and in national laws in Eastern African countries.

Our work is founded on these beliefs:

- Freedom of expression and access to information are critical facilitative rights for the enjoyment of other fundamental rights.
- A democratic and vibrant society is one where anyone can speak and express themselves freely without fear and without infringing on others' expression.
- Positive political, economic, and social changes are only possible in a world with plurality of ideas and opinions.
- The enjoyment of freedom of expression and access to information restores power to the people because citizens' interests and priorities are reflected in critical policies and decisions.
- Freedom of expression should be protected in both offline and online spaces.

2.5 Identity and contribution of ARTICLE 19 EA

In our new strategic framework, we aim to consolidate, sustain, and strengthen our position within the rights and governance ecosystem as we continue to enhance freedom of expression and the right to access information.

- We are a thought leader in Eastern Africa on matters relating to freedom of expression and access to information. We bring national and regional perspectives into global and continental platforms.
- ARTICLE 19 EA is a strong advocate for freedom of expression and access to information nationally, regionally, and globally.
- ARTICLE 19 EA employs public interest litigation as an advocacy tool to promote the implementation of laws and policies and foster the growth of standard-setting jurisprudence that is informed by global best practices.
- At ARTICLE 19 EA, we strengthen the capacity of grassroots organisations, journalists, citizen groups, and human rights defenders, enabling them to claim their rights safely.
- We engage with legal and policy issues and frameworks at the national, regional, and international levels, ensuring progressive laws and policies are enacted that facilitate and safeguard freedom of

expression, the right to information and transparency, digital rights, and media freedoms.

2.6 Who we will work with

Diversity, equality, and inclusion is the lens through which ARTICLE 19 EA advocates for change. We will engage stakeholders and craft strategies that resonate with the needs and aspirations of marginalised communities across the region.

Communities at risk: ARTICLE 19 EA will work with human rights defenders, journalists, activists, and political dissidents – even more so with those in situations of greater vulnerability such as women, youth, indigenous and racialised people, religious and ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) communities and the diaspora.

Infomediaries: ARTICLE 19 EA will work with intermediaries such as journalists, social communicators, whistleblowers, and other media workers; independent and community media outlets, particularly those reporting on corruption, human rights, and the environment.

Digital Activists: The work on technology standards is rooted in collaborating with actors typically missing from technology discussions, such as women, LGBTQI+ and activists speaking on pertinent issues affecting their communities.

Civil society, community networks and movements:

We will work with those who hold the powerful accountable, particularly those in vulnerable situations, including youth, women, minority groups, LGBTQI+ people, those fighting corruption and environmental defenders, particularly in rural and remote areas.

State actors:

We will engage with policymakers, parliaments, constitutional and statutory commissions, relevant ministries and departments, law enforcement, and the judiciary on the development and implementation of national, regional, and international policies, laws, and standards.

Private sector actors:

Companies in sectors such as telecommunications and technology are driven by a profit motive and have a great influence on freedom of expression and access to information due to their technological and market dominance. ARTICLE 19 EA will work to build bridges with these private sector actors to advance shared values while also continuing to

hold them to account for policies and practices that violate human rights.

Media regulators:

ARTICLE 19 EA will engage with communications commissions, media councils, editor guilds, journalists' trade unions, correspondents' associations, freelance journalists' associations, media owners' associations, data protection authorities (such as data commissioners), and competition authorities.

Regional and international standard

setters: We will work with from the African Union, East African Community, African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, to multilateral bodies like the UN, special rapporteurs and special mechanisms, and international technical standard-setting bodies such as human rights treaty bodies.

Context of ARTICLE 19 EASTERN AFRICA

Our context informs the strategic choices we need to make. Continuous scanning and analysis of the context will also enable ARTICLE 19 EA to remain responsive and relevant. The ‘Power of Our Voices,’ which is the current overarching strategic framework for the ARTICLE 19 family, notes that ‘We are at a global inflection point, where attacks on freedom of expression and information are driving a decline in democracy and human rights, at a moment when technology and youth-led movements open more avenues for expression. People traditionally excluded or under attack in the most vulnerable contexts find their rights restricted the most’.

In this section, ARTICLE 19 EA explores how these developments are taking shape in Eastern Africa.

3.1 External context

The context within which ARTICLE 19 EA will implement its strategy is fluid and will require adaptive programming to address emerging issues. Specific national contexts can vary, sometimes markedly from one country to another, and detailed country-focused analyses that are updated from time to time will be necessary for countries where ARTICLE 19 EA will have deepened focus. Below are key governance indicators for Eastern Africa.

‘We are at a global inflection point, where attacks on freedom of expression and information are driving a decline in democracy and human rights, at a moment when technology and youth-led movements open more avenues for expression. People traditionally excluded or under attack in the most vulnerable contexts find their rights restricted the most’.

	South Sudan	Rwanda	Ethiopia	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania
Corruption (Transparency International, 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index , out of 180 countries from least to most corrupt)	177	49	94	126	141	94
Press freedom (RSF, 2023 World Press Freedom Index , 1 the best score out of 180 countries)	118	131	130	116	133	143
Freedom of expression (ARTICLE 19, Global Expression Report 2023 , with the higher the ranking the better the score)	4	12	24	69	24	46
Rule of Law (World Justice Project, 2023 Rule of Law Index , ranking 34 Sub-Saharan countries)		1	30	13	28	12
Population (World Bank, in millions)	11	13.7	123	54	47	65
GDP per capita (World bank, GDP per capita in current USD)	1,071.8	966.2	1,027.6	2,099.3	964.4	1,192.8

From the analysis above, it is evident that much remains to be done to improve human rights and good governance in Eastern Africa.

The struggle for dignified livelihoods is straining positive civic engagement.

Eastern Africa's economies are struggling due to global and regional factors like the Ukraine–Russia and Israel–Palestine wars and climate change, which comes with drought and floods. The states' ability to provide public goods is diminished, leading to privatisation with the further exclusion of the poor.

The cost of living is high, with unemployment and underemployment putting pressure on families. The rising cost of basic food commodities has led to more people struggling to feed themselves or their families.¹ We will rethink our approach to engaging with the hungry, unemployed, and underemployed, who are the majority in the region. In this strategic framework, we will align our focus on freedom of expression and access to information with the peoples' struggles for dignified livelihoods, including access to clean water, sanitation, affordable healthcare, quality education, and safety and security.

Democracy is not delivering but people still have faith in it.

According to the Open Society Barometer survey, people still have faith in democracy even though it has come under attack recently. Eighty-six percent of respondents say they want to live in a democracy. Only 20 percent believe that authoritarian countries can deliver 'what citizens

want'.² Freedom of expression and access to information facilitate the realisation of democracy that delivers for people, and governance institutions that are accountable, so the mandate of ARTICLE 19 EA is critical.

Democratic reversals are shrinking civic space.

The Eastern Africa region has experienced a surge in democratic reversals, for example in recent elections in Ethiopia (2021), Uganda (2021), and Kenya (2022). These democratic reversals are seen in the form of shrinking civic space, which in turn is expressed through erosion of the rule of law, weaponisation of the law, weakening of state institutions, restrictions on freedom of expression, and state capture, among others. To illustrate, 42 percent of the population in Eastern Africa live in countries categorised as being in crisis in terms of freedom of expression.³ Civic space is especially strained during elections. The political, ethnic, and economic elites seek to control the state and its institutions to win elections and thereby access, control, and profit from the nation's economic resources. In the duration this strategic framework spans, there will be elections in five countries: South Sudan in 2024, Tanzania in 2025, Rwanda and Uganda in 2026, and Kenya in 2027. ARTICLE 19 EA needs a proactive strategy for engaging with shrinking civic space particularly during elections.

¹ Open Society Foundations, [Open Society Barometer](#).

² Open Society Foundations, [Open Society Barometer](#).

³ ARTICLE 19, [Global Expression Report 2022](#).

Press freedom remains endangered in Eastern Africa.

The [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#) by RSF shows that press freedom in Eastern Africa deteriorated between 2022 and 2023. The rankings for Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, and Ethiopia fell,⁴ while Rwanda and South Sudan rose.⁵ Press freedom in Kenya fluctuates based on political and economic dynamics. While the constitution guarantees freedom of the press, there have been instances of government interference and harassment of journalists. Tanzania's promises of constitutional and legal reforms that would have advanced press freedom have remained unfulfilled. Ethiopia's recent gains under Prime Minister Aby Ahmed have been eroded by the violent conflict between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, with recurrent widespread propaganda and misinformation. In Uganda, some independent media coexists with pro-government outlets, and constitutional and legal protections on media freedoms and access to information are ignored by state agents.⁶

Governments have been criticised for suppressing opposition voices and restricting access to information, particularly during elections. The arrest of opposition figures and shutdowns of social media platforms have been observed as tactics to control information flow.⁷

The toolkit of restricting press freedom includes overt and covert unlawful internet shutdowns; physical intimidation and harassment of journalists; arrest and prosecution on trumped up charges; denial of government advertising to 'unfriendly' media houses; misinformation and disinformation campaigns, and cyberbullying.

We will need to utilise our toolkits to safeguard press freedom, including through policy advocacy, strengthening the capacity of journalists, protection of those at risk, and building alliances with media and civil society.

Climate change. Climate change has become a brutal reality for the people of Eastern Africa. Western countries bear great responsibility for climate change, yet they have not been sufficiently forthcoming in addressing its consequences. Disinformation and misinformation on climate change abound, clouding peoples understanding and responses to this critical issue. At the same time, climate justice activists continue to face systematic repression at the hands of extractive private and public actors. Addressing disinformation and misinformation and supporting and defending climate justice activists is increasingly critical.

Freedom of expression and access to information are particularly critical to climate change interventions.

⁴ The survey covered 180 countries. Kenya's rank fell from 69 to 116, Uganda's from 132 to 133, Tanzania's from 123 to 143, Somalia's from 140 to 141, Rwanda's from 130 to 131, and Ethiopia's from 114 to 130.

⁵ South Sudan went from 128 to 118 and Rwanda from 136 to 131.

⁶ RSF, [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#).

⁷ Human Rights Watch (2023), [World Report 2023](#).

Sexual and gender minorities are facing significant threats and are being silenced.

Sexual and gender minorities in Eastern Africa are increasingly under siege. In 2023, Uganda passed one of the most draconian anti-LGBTQI+ laws in the world, driving many members of the community underground or into forced exile. Kenya might follow suit and the situation is no better in Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Across the region, the LGBTQI+ community has been criminalised, brutalised, and excluded. The community has been used as a convenient platform for mobilisation by politicians and conservative religious activists. Protecting safe exercise of freedom of expression by members of the community in online and offline spaces is critical to their safety and ability to organise.

Funding for civil society is shrinking.

Globally, funding to civil society organisations, such as ARTICLE 19, which are engaged in human rights and governance advocacy has been shrinking, and competition for what remains is increasing. Declining foreign aid due to the shifting policy priorities of Western governments more concerned with the migration crisis, Russia–Ukraine war, and the Israel–Palestine conflict, in addition to rise of the anti-rights agenda and shrinking economies, have reduced funding from bilateral agencies that previously prioritised human rights and governance. Some large private foundations that have been very strong in

human rights and governance funding for civil society organisations have been going through internal mission reviews and reorganisations, resulting in changing priorities that have left significant funding deficits for civil society.

Raising funds from non-traditional sources has become an even more pressing issue for ARTICLE 19 EA and other civil society organisations in the Global South at a time when the rise of authoritarianism and ever-shrinking civic space demands that they engage even more to stem democratic reversals. In Eastern Africa, especially in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania, there is a growing trend among states to suppress the voices and impact of civil society by imposing excessive regulations and controlling their access to foreign funding, which serves as their lifeline. This is often done through anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering laws.

Raising funds from non-traditional sources has become an even more pressing issue for ARTICLE 19 EA and other civil society organisations in the Global South.

Online and offline voices of courage abound, taking advantage of technological advances.

Voices of courage and resistance abound across the region in online and offline spaces. These voices can be heard in both communal and national spaces. While the situation can differ markedly from one country to another, coverage by telcom companies and access to the internet have increased. These have been key drivers in expanding platforms for expression and access to information.

These developments notwithstanding, many are still left behind by these advances, and disinformation and misinformation remain a big challenge. For instance, in Kenya's 2022 elections, Mozilla Foundation⁸ found that digital platforms were perpetuating misinformation and disinformation causing the spread of hate speech, incitement and manipulated content.⁹ Increased online and offline mass surveillance by states has huge negative implications for privacy and affects freedom of expression due to the resultant self-censorship. This has been evident in Rwanda and Uganda, where journalists and opposition voices have experienced surveillance, harassment, and even prosecution. Harassment and intimidation by state and non-state actors against activists are also being enabled by technological advances, and the financial and emotional cost of staying safe is rising.

3.2 Internal Context

ARTICLE 19 EA has a strong brand as an international advocacy organisation with an Eastern Africa presence.

We are known for consistently advocating for freedom of expression and the right to information. We aim to tap into and benefit from the immense technical expertise and networks of the global organisation, while ensuring our work is deeply rooted in the Eastern Africa context. Our understanding of regional and national contexts has been important in shaping relevant strategic interventions previously and will remain so as we transition into a new strategic period.

Internal organisational development needs to be scaled up for greater resilience.

ARTICLE 19 EA needs to strengthen its human resources capacity and internal systems and processes. The board is increasingly engaged on strategy reviews and oversight on financial and human resource management and is more regionally representative. ARTICLE 19 EA seeks to bring into the board additional specific expertise, for example, on fundraising. Continually strengthening the board through training and other interventions will remain an important priority. ARTICLE 19 EA has a young, diverse, and passionate team under the leadership of

⁸ Freedom House (2023), [Freedom on the Net](#).

⁹ Odanga Madung (2022), [From Dance App to Political Mercenary: How Disinformation on TikTok Gaslights Political Tensions in Kenya](#), Mozilla Foundation.

the regional director. Reviewing the organisation's structure to optimally deliver on the strategy, ensure strong leadership, and enhance succession management is also an important priority.

ARTICLE 19 EA will need to put more effort into ensuring that there is greater synergy across its programmatic interventions and eliminating programme silos. We aim at a cohesive delivery of the strategy. We will also incentivise greater integration between the programme team and finance and administration teams. We must also develop robust information management systems.

Increasing external visibility is crucial to scaling up impact.

ARTICLE 19 EA conducts numerous impactful programmatic interventions, yet our efforts remain largely unknown to both stakeholders and the public. It is imperative for us to increase visibility on a broader scale. We will also need to strengthen internal capacities on communication and provide the resources required. There is a range of tools that can be used, such as social media platforms and opinion pieces. Visibility is also important in fundraising. ARTICLE 19 EA's contacts with the media have us well-placed to realise our external communication ambitions.

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Our strategic framework

4.1 Our strategic choices and priority areas

Our strategic framework is guided by ARTICLE 19 EA's mandate and strengths as an institution, and consideration of the context in which we operate. The strategic framework will optimise our existing core work as we look to gradually expand.

We will be guided by the following strategic approaches:

Deepening ARTICLE 19 EA's core work on promoting and protecting freedom of expression and access to information.

Sustaining and strengthening the offering of ARTICLE 19 EA to our stakeholders through consistent and rigorous thought leadership, capacity-building and education, evidence-based advocacy, and campaigning, bolstered by improved visibility and communication.

Enhancing ARTICLE 19 EA's presence in other Eastern Africa countries (beyond Kenya) through increased programming, informed by opportunities and resources.

Anchoring ARTICLE 19 EA's work in a vibrant, diverse, passionate, and motivated staff and board; strong and resilient internal policies and systems; consistent and sustainable financial resources; and the cultivation of a culture that espouses the organisation's values as well as open communication and collaboration.

In this strategic period, we will focus on Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. Depending on need and opportunities, we will also engage in Somalia and Burundi. Our commitments at the continental and global levels remain unchanged.

We are cognisant that for this strategic framework to be actualised, there has to be an organisation-wide commitment to mobilising the right financial resources to deliver the strategy. This will also be accompanied by a dedication to diversifying and protecting these resources for the sustainability of the organisation. The financial viability plan will accompany to this strategy.

4.2 Our overarching goal

Premised on our strategic choices and priority areas, our overall goal is to have 'amplified, inclusive, and resilient voices that reflect diversity of human experiences in Eastern Africa.'

A key part of our work will be in the continuation of evidence-based advocacy, awareness, and campaigning on freedom of expression online, focusing on protection of the marginalised communities using digital space.

4.3 Goal 1: A safe, inclusive, and diverse digital space anchored in human rights values and principles.

Digital rights is an emerging and fast developing area. ARTICLE 19 EA has already started engaging on digital rights and there is more to be explored and done.

ARTICLE 19 EA will focus on infusing human rights values and principles into legislation and regulations as well as governance of digital content and infrastructure. We seek greater accessibility to close the digital divide, greater affordability, and greater inclusion.

We will explore digital public goods, specifically the use and regulation of artificial intelligence models in surveillance, general and algorithm biases, and the power and agency of people in the access and use of these technologies. We will also deepen our engagements on data governance particularly in the development and implementation of data protection frameworks across Eastern Africa.

A key part of our work will be in the continuation of evidence-based advocacy, awareness, and campaigning on freedom of expression online, focusing on protection of the marginalised communities using digital space.

4.3.1 Objective 1: To provide thought leadership on embedding human rights values and principles in digital governance transformation and reform processes in Eastern Africa

To realise digital rights in Eastern Africa, there is still need for rigorous, contextually relevant research and evidence to inform digital governance. ARTICLE 19 EA sees this as an opportunity to embed human rights values and principles in the existing discourse on legislations, regulations, policies, and practices as well as to participate in and contribute to regional and international mechanisms.

- i.** Developing and sharing consistent research, opinion pieces, and media statements to inform and advocate for human rights-centered approaches in the development and implementation of regulations, legislations, or policies.
- ii.** Engaging in relevant regional and global multi-stakeholder digital rights dialogue and forums.
- iii.** Providing technical assistance and advice to governments and government agencies on human rights-based thinking on digital governance.

4.3.2 Objective 2: To increase the voice and participation of minority and marginalised groups, including LGBTQI+ people, safely in digital spaces.

This objective focuses on strengthening the capacity and voice of minority and marginalised groups to safely participate and engage in digital spaces. Awareness creation, partnerships, and evidence generation will be key approaches in the realisation of this objective.

- i.** Strengthening capacities of identified minority and marginalised groups for safe and resilient engagement in digital spaces.
- ii.** Facilitating strategic and safe interventions and platforms for the amplification of identified minority and marginalised groups voices and their participation online.
- iii.** Collaboration with human rights organisations in protection of minority and marginalised groups whose freedom of expression is at risk.
- iv.** Research and analysis on the role of digital media in misinformation and disinformation targeting minority and marginalised groups.

4.3.3

Objective 3: To improve the accountability framework for digital rights, governance of digital public goods, and online governance by private and public sector actors.

This objective requires ARTICLE 19 EA to participate in the national, regional, and international discourse on digital public goods, digital rights, and online governance and lend its voice using grounded evidence and research on these issues. There is an increasing interest in having a better understanding of these issues and there is potential to collaborate with academia. There is also an advocacy opportunity with the private sector, specifically big tech companies, and governments on regulations, policies, and practices. This may also include strategic litigation or collaborations where need be.

- i.** Evidence-building on the extent to which big tech companies violate digital rights and on online governance.
- ii.** Convening dialogues and learning spaces to interrogate digital public goods – for instance artificial intelligence (use, surveillance, and algorithm biases) and data sets – and their implications for freedom of expression and right to information in Eastern Africa.
- iii.** Collaboration and partnerships to counter fake news, misinformation, and disinformation.

- iv.** Strategic litigation on internet freedoms.

4.4 **Goal 2: A protective and enabling environment that emboldens the media, amplifies diverse voices, and holds those in power accountable**

The goal focuses on media freedom and protection. This is a traditional strength and niche of ARTICLE 19 EA. In this new strategic framework, we will deepen our work in ensuring protection of press freedom. We seek an enabling regulatory and legislative framework and the space for infomediaries such as journalists, social communicators, whistleblowers, and other media workers to do their work. We also seek to foster independent community media outlets, particularly those reporting on corruption, human rights, and the environment. We will work with traditional as well as new media.

4.4.1

Objective 1: To enable journalists, online communicators, and media workers to increase their knowledge and skills for greater security, safety, and protection.

We will focus on capacity-building of infomediaries to enable them to undertake their work safely.

- i.** Capacity-strengthening of journalists at risk for their work on security, safety, and wellness.

ii. Collaboration with human rights organisations, the African Union and the United Nations for protection of journalists.

iii. Convening media dialogues on protection, ethical standards, and professionalism.

4.4.2

Objective 2: To increase knowledge of innovative strategies to enable a strong and resilient media.

ARTICLE 19 EA will explore innovative approaches that strengthen media actors to undertake their work boldly and creatively. Supporting the media community of practice would also be under this objective.

i. Research fellowship on enabling a strong and resilient media.

ii. Advocacy for media fund(s) in the region to support innovative initiatives and alternative business models.

iii. Hosting the Eastern Africa Community Media Awards.

4.4.3

Objective 3: Evidence-based campaigning and advocacy on the protection and promotion of free media.

As a thought leader in media protection, ARTICLE 19 EA will collaborate with the media and academia to develop evidence-based campaigns and advocacy on protection and promotion of free media.

i. Strengthening platforms that bring together media and civil society organisations to advance media freedom.

ii. Supporting campaigns and advocacy to influence laws and policies on media freedom, anchored in human rights.

iii. Supporting media networks and media-sector working groups through convening, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing.

iv. Supporting evidence and data generation on protection and advancement of media freedoms.

v. Knowledge and information sharing on media freedoms and the role of the media at the grassroots and national levels.

vi. Analysis and recognition of the critical role of legacy media in preventing and addressing conflict.

4.5 **Goal 3: Strong, resilient, and inclusive civic movements on freedom of expression**

This goal focuses on strengthening and enhancing the capacity of citizens and citizen groups, especially minorities and the marginalised, to organise and freely articulate their issues. We will work with citizen groups and infomediaries to hold open the civic space, protecting it from shrinking or attack.

4.5.1

Objective 1: To advocate for an enabling (accessible, transparent, and accountable) legal and policy environment that upholds freedom of expression.

ARTICLE 19 EA will push for legal and policy frameworks that uphold freedom of expression and will seek collaboration with likeminded individuals, groups, and institutions to do this.

- i.** Advocacy for development and implementation of freedom of expression laws and policies anchored to human rights principles and the rule of law.
- ii.** Developing freedom of expression monitoring frameworks with national actors.
- iii.** Developing freedom of expression country reports in partnership with national actors.

4.5.2

Objective 2: To strengthen civil society organisations, particularly grassroots organisations and marginalised and minority groups (indigenous communities, LGBTQI+), to organise, campaign, and advocate for freedom of expression.

We will strengthen the capacity of CSOs to safely organise, campaign, and advocate for their rights.

- i.** Capacity-strengthening on movement-building, campaigning, and advocacy on freedom of expression.
- ii.** Collaborating with human rights defenders to protect organisations and individuals in need.
- iii.** Providing and facilitating platforms for civil society organisations, particularly grassroots organisations and marginalised and minority groups (indigenous communities, LGBTQI+), to amplify their voices and be heard.

4.6 **Goal 4: Informed and empowered citizens demanding transparency and accountability from open, transparent, and responsive public and private institutions**

Access to information and transparency will continue to be a niche area for ARTICLE 19 EA. We will explore links and integration between information and

transparency and key issues such as climate change, health, education, water and sanitation, public finance management, taxation, and debt. We will enhance the utility of citizen-generated data in official public reports and accountability mechanisms.

4.6.1

Objective 1: To promote the integration of freedom of expression and access to information principles into critical national and regional issues, such as access to education and health, climate justice, elections, disability rights, public finance management, debt, and others.

ARTICLE 19 EA seeks to galvanise more people on issues of access to information and transparency. The approach allows for organisations to leverage access to information and transparency in their existing programming. We seek to position ARTICLE 19 EA as the go-to institution on access to information and transparency for sector-wide actors that do not traditionally work on these issues.

- i.** Analysis and research on opportunities for integration of freedom of expression and access to information principles into key national concerns.
- ii.** Collaborating and engaging with sector actors to integrate freedom of expression and access to information principles into key national concerns.

- iii.** Developing information-sharing products on access to information and transparency.

4.6.2

Objective 2: To strengthen access to information frameworks.

We will continue to deepen and expand engagements on access to information with government, civil society organisations, and regional and international bodies.

- i.** Convenings on transparency in the Open Government Partnership.
- ii.** Monitoring access to information using the monitoring matrix in ARTICLE 19 EA's focus countries and in the broader region, including Somalia and Burundi.
- iii.** Developing annual Eastern Africa or country-level government openness report(s).
- iv.** Engaging countries on developing and implementing access to information frameworks.

4.6.3

Objective 3: To strengthen the capacities of public institutions on access to information.

We will support public institutions on how to respond to increased demand for access to information by citizens and

work with national public institutions and regional mechanisms to enhance the utility of citizen-generated data in official public reports.

- i.** Knowledge-sharing and capacity-building of communities on access to information.
- ii.** Capacity-strengthening of key public institutions on access to information.
- iii.** Collaborating with regional mechanisms, national public institutions, and civil society organisations on citizen-generated data in official public reports.

4.7 **Goal 5: A stronger, resilient, and sustainable organisation**

This goal is foundational and anchors all the others. It speaks to the engine of ARTICLE 19 EA operating optimally, efficiently, and effectively to deliver on the organisation's mandate.

4.7.1

Objective 1: To strengthen recruitment and retention of skilled staff as well as management of talent, improving welfare, and creating a healthy working environment.

ARTICLE 19 EA seeks to provide a conducive professional environment for staff by (1) ensuring that staff wellbeing is enhanced and protected, (2) by having robust, equitable and clear policies and procedures, and (3) by supporting staff

professional and personal growth. This should result in a motivated, healthy, growing, and passionate team. Having the right organisational culture is critical to all these other ambitions.

- i.** Conducting an organisational culture assessment and implementing its recommendations.
- ii.** Strengthening people management policies and systems.
- iii.** Job evaluation and job analysis.
- iv.** Conducting a staff training-needs assessment and implementing staff training programs.

4.7.2

Objective 2: To enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of the board and leadership to achieve individual and organisational goals.

Leadership is critical in driving strategy and ensuring that the organisation realises its goals and objectives.

- i.** Developing an annual board work plan, implementing it, and assessing performance periodically.
- ii.** Reviewing ARTICLE 19 EA's constitution and the board charter, and amending them as necessary to meet the organisation's governance needs.

iii. Board and management capacity strengthening.

iv. Designing and implementing succession plan at board and management level.

v. Reviewing and implementing Conflict of Interest policy for board and staff.

4.7.3

Objective 3: To improve the organisation's sustainability and resilience through a fundraising framework that enables diverse revenue streams.

ARTICLE 19 EA needs more long-term, flexible, and diverse funding.

i. Implementing ARTICLE 19 EA's financial viability/fundraising strategy.

ii. Strengthening the fundraising team.

iii. Building strong relationships with donors, supporters, and stakeholders to foster long-term commitment and financial backing.

iv. Implementing effective fundraising campaigns.

v. Communicating impact effectively to maintain donor trust and attract ongoing support.

4.7.4

Objective 4: To implement financial management practices designed to ensure effective and efficient use of financial resources within the organisation and deliver the greatest value to stakeholders.

We seek to strengthen and update financial management policies, procedures, and practices and to ensure all internal stakeholders are aware of and compliant with them.

i. Developing annual and multi-year budgets.

ii. Periodic financial reviews.

iii. Undertaking annual external financial audits and implementing recommendations in the management letters.

iv. Strengthening finance and procurement policies and processes.

v. Develop and implement risk management.

We seek to strengthen and update financial management policies, procedures, and practices and to ensure all internal stakeholders are aware of and compliant with them.

4.7.5

Objective 5: To enhance ARTICLE 19 EA's brand through targeted and innovative internal and external communication about the organisations' work.

We will work to improve the visibility of our work to the board, staff, stakeholders, and the wider public.

- i.** Strengthening the communications team.
- ii.** Developing an appropriate information management system.
- iii.** Developing and implementing internal and external communications strategy.
- iv.** Revamping and continuously updating the website and other social media platforms.

We will work to improve the visibility of our work to the board, staff, stakeholders, and the wider public.

4.7.6

Objective 6: To establish a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework that fosters continuous reflection and improvement, and ensures the delivery of impactful and sustainable outcomes in alignment with the strategy.

- i.** Establish a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, assessment, and learning framework that measures effectiveness and facilitates continuous learning and adaptation.
- ii.** Regularly monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing the strategic plan and financial viability plan.
- iii.** Capacity-strengthening of staff on learning, monitoring, and evaluation.

Risks and risk mitigation strategies

Risk	Risk Mitigation Strategies
<p>Legal and regulatory risks: Increased legal restrictions or adverse changes in regulations or legislation can affect freedom of expression and media freedom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regularly monitor and stay informed about legislative and policy changes. ■ Collaborate with private sector or organisations with legal expertise to support in navigating the legal landscape (if need be). ■ Advocate for legal reforms that align with the organisation’s goals.
<p>Political risk: Political pressure or interference may undermine the organisation’s advocacy efforts. Continued shrinkage of civic space in the region may constrict the ability of the organisation to mobilise partners and engage in planned interventions if the authorities take a negative view of such activities. Onerous regulatory frameworks increase compliance burden and costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Build alliances with like-minded organisations and networks. ■ Maintain a non-partisan stance and emphasise the importance of issues over political affiliations. ■ Develop strong communication strategies and campaigns to counter misinformation or political attacks. ■ Collaborate with other organisations working on civic space to push back on shrinkage of the space. ■ Continuous scanning of the environment to assess threats to civic space to enable the development of proactive strategies.
<p>Security risks for activists and journalists: Increased threats and attacks on activists, journalists, and the organisation’s staff may impact mission accomplishment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide continuous security training for staff and partners. ■ Collaborate with security experts and organisations supporting human rights defenders to enhance the safety of individuals. ■ Establish emergency response and communication protocols.

Risk	Risk Mitigation Strategies
<p>Funding risks: Declining funding in the civic space sector may impact the ability of the organisation to achieve its mission. An additional risk is dependency on a limited number of donors or sudden funding cuts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diversify funding sources to reduce dependency on a single donor. ■ Build long-term relationships with donors and maintain transparent communication about the organisation’s financial needs and challenges. ■ Develop sustainable fundraising strategies, including building a base of individual supporters.
<p>Fiduciary risks: Financial mismanagement and conflicts of interest could occur, impacting the organisation’s credibility and ability to implement its programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design and implement robust financial controls with oversight by management and the board. ■ Undertake periodic internal audits and annual external audits. ■ Develop and enforce comprehensive conflict of interest policy. ■ Promptly investigate and take decisive action against those involved in financial mismanagement and related actions. ■ Keep donors and other external stakeholders promptly and fully informed on any fiduciary issues that arise and the actions being taken to address them.
<p>Technological risks: Cyberattacks, data breaches, or technological disruptions could impact the organisation’s operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Invest in robust cybersecurity measures and regularly update technology systems. ii. Train staff on cybersecurity best practices. Develop contingency plans for technology-related disruptions.

Risk	Risk Mitigation Strategies
<p>Public relations and reputational Risk: Negative media coverage or public perception could undermine the organisation’s credibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain transparent and ethical communication. ■ Proactively address any issues and correct misinformation. ■ Develop and implement a strong public relations strategy.
<p>Capacity-building risk: Insufficient organisational capacity to effectively carry out programs and advocacy initiatives may slow down implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in staff training and professional development. ■ Foster a culture of learning and adaptability within the organisation. ■ Collaborate with external partners or consultants to address specific capacity gaps.
<p>International relations risk: Strained relations with international partners or governments could occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain open lines of communication with governments (where applicable) and international partners. ■ Engage in diplomatic efforts to address concerns and misunderstandings. ■ Leverage diplomatic and international advocacy networks for support. ■ Ensure compliance and documentation of compliance with the laws and regulations of the countries we are operating in.

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning

To successfully implement this strategic framework, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning will be fundamental. The organisation will consistently monitor the effectiveness of the strategic interventions and pause to reflect on what is working and what is not. These opportunities to stop and reflect on the strategy ensure that the organisation is agile and responsive to the changes in the environment that have an impact on our work. Where these reflections influence the direction of the strategy and programmatic interventions, a learning culture is embedded in the organisation.

We will endeavour to hire dedicated staff to support the monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning process.

ARTICLE 19 EA's monitoring, evaluation, assessment, and learning strategy has the following elements:

An annual work plan with a budget:

Annually, a comprehensive work plan will be developed, anchored on the strategy and current contextual analysis. The work plan and budget will be reviewed and

approved by the board. Programmes will have their plans as well, and these will cascade further into individual work plans for members of staff.

Quarterly progress reviews:

The whole of the ARTICLE 19 EA team, including programme, finance, and administrative teams will convene quarterly to review progress. External stakeholders relevant to ARTICLE 19 EA's work will be invited to participate. Progress reviews will include an analysis of what is working well and what is not. These joint review sessions should also facilitate integrated programming and better cohesion between programmes and support departments such as finance, monitoring and evaluation, and communications.

Annual progress report:

The annual report serves several purposes. It documents progress in implementation, communicates internally and externally on progress, and acts as a form of accountability for the board, members, staff, funders, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

Mid and end-term evaluation:

This will be done halfway through the strategy period and when it ends. The midterm evaluation can be done either by an external evaluator or by the team. The end-term evaluation should be done by an external independent evaluator to review the extent to which the strategy has been executed and to inform us of corrective actions and suggestions for the next strategic plan.

To successfully implement this strategic framework, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning will be fundamental. The organisation will consistently monitor the effectiveness of the strategic interventions and pause to reflect on what is working and what is not.

Budget and resource mobilisation

Through engaging current, previous, and new funders, ARTICLE 19 EA seeks to raise, to the fullest extent possible, diversified, long-term, and unrestricted funding that is anchored to the strategic plan. Furthermore, the organisation will also initiate and grow reserves. Robust implementation of the resources mobilisation and financial sustainability plans will be critical to the realisation of ARTICLE 19 EA's long-term impact.

The organisation's critical mission, niche, and track record will help us achieve our funding targets.

A financial viability and sustainability strategy will accompany this strategic framework.

Robust implementation of the resources mobilisation and financial sustainability plans will be critical to the realisation of ARTICLE 19 EA's long-term impact.



ARTICLE 19