



Global Forum for Media Development

Constitution

Title and Headquarters

The name of the organisation is the Global Forum for Media Development. Its secretariat is based in Rond Point Schumann 6 Box 5, 1040 Brussels, Belgium.

I. DEFINITION AND GOALS

1.1. The Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) is a voluntary affiliation of media development organisations set up at world and at regional level to highlight the importance to human and economic development of free, independent, pluralistic and viable media. It aims to bring greater linkages and sustainable impact to the work of the media development sector.

II. FUNCTIONS

2.1. To provide an international forum for the discussion of ideas, information and strategies in the field of media development and to facilitate communication between and among GFMD members, through the support of the GFMD international secretariat in Brussels.

2.2. To create a platform for media development practitioners to interact with donors, governments, opinion leaders and the wider public making the case for media development as a primary pillar for advancing social, economic, and political development.

2.3 To promote and disseminate research and analysis on the impact of media development assistance on governance, civic participation, poverty alleviation, emergent crises, and markets worldwide.

2.4 To promote the establishment of common standards and ethics for media development work that encourage cross-sector cooperation.

2.5 To advance best practice methods in the media development sector through shared learning, training and evaluation.

2.6 To educate members, policymakers and the general public on the importance of free, independent, pluralistic and viable media to human and economic development.

2.7 To support the activities of the Regional Forums for Media Development in promoting joint advocacy and cooperation between media development practitioners in the regions and to ensure the GFMD's functions are performed in accordance with local needs.

III. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

3.1. GFMD does not substitute for, or replace, existing organisations, nor does it detract from the autonomy or initiatives of its members, but exists to support them.

3.2. GFMD shall facilitate co-operation by:

- a) circulating proposals amongst members;
- b) bringing people together to coordinate actions;
- c) preparing and disseminating information in line with the functions of GFMD;
- d) providing organisational support if available;
- e) promoting the case for the importance of media development to human, social and economic development; and
- f) advocating increased support to media development in line with the functions outlined in Article 2.

3.3 Annual dues must be paid by May 1st each year. GFMD members that have not paid their GFMD membership dues for more than one year will no longer have access to GFMD services, the GFMD World Conference or GFMD regional forums for media development.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Membership: There are two categories of membership in GFMD, General and Associate.

4.2.1 General membership in GFMD will be open to independent, non-profit, nongovernmental organisations whose work focuses significantly on media development.

4.2.2 Independence implies independence from government, from any political party and from any singular vested political, economic or religious interest. Independence includes independence in governing structure, in funding and in other ways.

4.2.3 Although membership is restricted to non-governmental organisations, GFMD accepts, according to circumstances, organisations as NGOs based on their independence, their non-profit status and their mandates rather than on official registration.

4.2.4 General membership is restricted to groups whose work includes a significant focus on media development. Media development includes actions in support of:

- A system of media regulation and control conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity;
- Building media capacity to inform people on issues that shape their lives;
- Plurality and diversity of media, transparent and equal market conditions and full transparency of ownership;
- Media as a platform for democratic discourse within a prevailing climate of respect for journalism that represents professional independence and diversity of views and interests in society.
- Professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpin media freedom, independence, pluralism and diversity: media workers have access to professional training and development and the media sector as a whole is both monitored and supported by professional associations and civil society organisations.

- Infrastructural capacity that is sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media: the media sector is characterised by high or rising levels of public access and efficient use of technology to gather and distribute news and information.

4.3.1 Associate membership in GFMD will be open to individuals (academics, researchers, media consultants, experts) whose work focuses primarily on media development. Associate membership is also open to institutions and enterprises, whose main function is to make financial grants to media development organisations or who provide considerable assistance to media development.

4.3.2 Associate members can participate fully in all GFMD work, including attendance of the regional and global forum meetings. In order to enjoy these rights, Associate members have to pay the membership fee.

4.4 Membership Rights

4.4.1 All members have the right to attend the GFMD World Conference and any other general GFMD activities and join in discussions.

4.4.2 All members have the right to submit information for distribution to the GFMD platform.

4.4.3 General members have the right to be members of the GFMD Steering Committee, and to vote on matters brought before the general membership. Associate members do not enjoy these rights.

4.4.4 To enjoy the rights described above, a member must pay the membership fee.

4.5 Membership Application Process

4.5.1 All organisations that attended the GFMD World Conference and signed the GFMD founding document shall be deemed to have applied for membership of GFMD. That register of members was kept by the GFMD secretariat and confirmed by the Steering Committee at its first meeting after the 2008 World Conference.

4.5.2 Other organisations may apply for GFMD membership at any time by submitting a completed application form to the GFMD secretariat. The form shall include information about an organisation's aims and objectives, its finances, governing structure, non-profit status, media development work and category of membership being applied for.

4.5.3 An application for membership will be handled by the GFMD secretariat and confirmed by the Steering Committee at its annual meeting. There is no limit to the number of members per country. The secretariat shall reject an application outright where the organisation does not meet the membership criteria set out in Article 4.2. The Secretariat's decisions can be appealed to the Steering Committee at its biannual meetings.

4.5.4 An applicant shall be accepted into membership upon the decision of the Secretariat and the member enjoys rights of membership upon payment of the membership fee.

4.6 Membership Expulsion and Resignation

4.6.1 A decision to suspend or expel a General or Associate member under this Article shall be made when one or both of the following conditions are met:

- a) The General or Associate member no longer meets the conditions of membership as set out in Article 4.2; or
- b) The General or Associate member has not paid membership fees for more than one and after reminder fails to pay up in the 3 months after.

4.6.2 A decision to suspend a General or Associate member shall require a vote in favor of two-thirds of the voting members of the Steering Committee after consideration of whether or not the conditions for suspension, as set out in Article 4.6.1, have been met. A member who has been suspended shall no longer have rights associated with membership and shall have the right to appeal to the GFMD World Conference.

4.6.3 Any General or Associate member in good financial standing may resign from GFMD by giving notice in writing to the GFMD Steering Committee.

V. STEERING COMMITTEE

5.1 The Steering Committee shall manage and oversee the affairs of the GFMD, dealing with all strategic and policy matters facing GFMD and its membership between world conferences. The Steering Committee shall delegate the execution of activities and administration matters to the GFMD secretariat. The Steering Committee will oversee the work of the secretariat. The Steering Committee will appoint and register three legal representatives for the GFMD from its midst to the registry of the ASBL Monitor Belge.

5.2 The Steering Committee is comprised of two individuals nominated by their media development organizations from each of the GFMD regions (Sub Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eurasia, Middle East/North Africa, North America and Western Europe) preferably representing groups with an international focus and/or working on media development in more than one country.

5.3 The term of office of Steering Committee members is limited to two consecutive terms.

5.4 The Steering Committee members will be elected and confirmed for four years at the GFMD World Conference.

5.5 The Steering Committee remains in office until the next GFMD World Conference.

5.6 The election of Steering Committee members shall be by general members of GFMD. Candidates for Steering Committee members from the regions will be nominated by their organizations at least 10 days in advance of the World Conference. The Steering Committee is confirmed by electoral vote at the World Conference. The Steering Committee may appoint additional non-voting advisors to take part in meetings in order to provide specific expertise or to provide gender balance.

5.7 Members of the GFMD Steering Committee shall attend duly constituted Steering Committee meetings.

5.8 All members of the GFMD Steering Committee shall be entitled to one vote.

5.9 Proxy voting shall be permitted in the case of absence.

5.10 Organizations that have nominated members of the GFMD Steering Committee will ensure that they will be resourced to meet their own costs of participation in the work of the Steering Committee.

5.11 The GFMD Steering Committee shall elect with a vote of at least two-thirds majority one member from among its number to be the Chairperson until the next World Conference. If no member of the Steering Committee receives a two-thirds majority, the Chairperson is elected on a simple-majority basis in a run-off vote.

5.12 Unless otherwise decided by the Steering Committee, there shall be a general physical meeting of the GFMD Steering Committee once a year. In addition, there will be a telephone conference or VOIP meeting of the Steering Committee held at least once per year. Policy decisions can be taken at these meetings or

in between meetings via conference call or email, after consultation with all members. Any issues relating to GFMD and to the Steering Committee may be brought to the Steering Committee teleconference meetings by any member of GFMD. The GFMD secretariat will submit a summary report of GFMD activities to the teleconference Steering Committee meeting.

5.12.1 A quorum for decision-making shall be two-thirds of the Steering Committee, including proxy votes. Proxy votes shall be allowed in matters of membership, funding proposals and changes in governance. A failure by any Steering Committee member to attend a general meeting, or to send a proxy vote, shall be interpreted as an abstention.

5.12.2. Wherever possible, the GFMD Steering Committee will take decisions by consensus. Where votes are required, they shall be on the basis of a two-thirds vote unless otherwise specified.

5.12.3 The Steering Committee will develop its own working rules with the secretariat at its first meeting after the World Conference.

5.12.4 In the exceptional case of the Jakarta World Conference in 2016, after years of reconstruction, the Steering Committee requests the Membership to expand the Steering Committee membership with six incumbent members of the outgoing Steering Committee who have served two consecutive terms. These members (Joyce Barnathan, James Deane, Jesper Hojberg, Remzi Lani, Jeanette Minnie and Leon Willems) have been vital to support the growing resources and execution of activities of the GFMD Secretariat. The additional Steering Committee members will stay on board to safeguard the continuity of the activities and be available for advice to the newly elected Steering Committee until the new Steering Committee requests them to step down before the 2020 World Conference.

VI. VI. WORLD CONFERENCE – REGIONAL FORUMS

6.1 The GFMD World Conference will take place every four years. Regional forum meetings (Sub Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eurasia, Middle East/North Africa, North America, Western Europe) will take place at least once between World Conference meetings at the request of the GFMD Steering Committee members in consultation with the GFMD members of that region. Regional meetings will focus on topical issues related to the region and of interest to the media development community.

6.2 The World Conference is the sovereign body of the GFMD and brings together all general and associate members. The programme of the world conference will be prepared by the Steering Committee in consultation with the GFMD membership. The World Conference receives a report from the steering committee, deals with appeals on decisions of the Steering Committee, deals with matters related to the amendment of the constitution, decides on policy and confirms the election of the steering committee.

6.3 Regional forum meetings, focused on relevant and topical media development issues, can be organised by the GFMD Secretariat at the request of one or both of the Steering Committee members from the respective region in consultation with GFMD members from the region and those interested in supporting such meetings.

6.4 Any amendment to the constitution of the GFMD shall require a voting majority of at least two-thirds. Amendments shall be proposed and circulated not less than 45 days before the World Conference.

6.5 Each GFMD General member organization shall have one vote at the World Conference.

VII. VII. THE GFMD SECRETARIAT

7.1 The GFMD secretariat is established to carry out activities as agreed by the World Conference and the Steering Committee.

7.2 The GFMD secretariat shall promote the GFMD and seek to expand the influence of the GFMD and its membership by entering into partnerships with other relevant organisations under the guidance of the Steering Committee.

7.3 The GFMD secretariat is run under these Governance Articles.

7.4 The GFMD secretariat implements the working programme of the GFMD in line with Article 2. The GFMD World Conference sets the priorities for work of the secretariat. Between World Conferences, the Steering Committee oversees the work of the secretariat.

7.5 The GFMD secretariat is responsible for organising and fundraising for the GFMD secretariat, all GFMD activities and the World Conference in cooperation with the Steering Committee. Regional meetings can only be organized provided funding is available.

7.6 The Executive Director is the Chief Executive Officer of GFMD. The Executive Director is appointed by and reports to the Steering Committee. The Executive Director is a non-voting member of the Steering Committee. Other GFMD staff in the secretariat or in the regions report to the Executive Director. Additional staff at the secretariat or in the regions and other administrative support to the secretariat can be decided by the Steering Committee depending on the availability of funds.

7.7 The secretariat shall prepare an annual finance and activity report to the Steering Committee and an overall finance and activity report of the Steering Committee to the World Conference.

VIII. VIII. DISSOLUTION

The dissolution of the GFMD may take place at a World Conference or a special world conference called for that purpose upon the tabling of a motion to that effect and its adoption by at least two thirds of the voting membership present. In the event that the World Conference decides upon dissolution all liabilities of the Forum shall be discharged and remaining assets shall be divided among member organisations equivalent to the proportion of their contributions to the Forum during the current four year period.

IX. IX. Miscellaneous

9.1 Matters not provided for in this Constitution shall be decided by the Steering Committee and can be appealed at the World Conference.

9.2 This Constitution, which is framed and interpreted according to the conditions and circumstances set out in the Belgian law of October 25th 1919, shall at all times be interpreted and applied in a manner which avoids undue technicality and which best maintains and promotes the character and objectives of the GFMD.

9.3 Modifications to the Constitution shall be submitted for Royal Assent and published in annexes to the Moniteur Belge in accordance with Belgian law.