

MEDIA
COUNCIL OF KENYA

ANNUAL REPORT **2023/2024**



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Media Council of Kenya

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

In the 2023/2024 Financial Year, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) implemented robust strategic measures aimed at mitigating emerging issues in the media industry. This enabled it to execute its mandate effectively and in serving the interests of its stakeholders.

Technological advances around the world have come with challenges and opportunities, shaping the media landscape in the country. Currently, the media faces several emerging issues that require urgent attention to survive the disruptions.

Considering this, issues around the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Protection and Intellectual Property are some of the major challenges the media must grapple with even as players adapt to technological changes. It is therefore crucial to ensure sufficient measures are put in place and implemented for the ethical and professional use of information.

In response to the rapid changes in technology, the Council established an AI taskforce to develop media guidelines on the use of AI, Data, and Social Media to ensure appropriate and ethical integration of the tool. The team comprised members from government agencies, media, technology, academia, and the legal field. Among their terms of reference, the team was expected to detail the benefits and threats posed by new technologies and make recommendations on how to integrate the use of data in journalism while offering ways of eliminating harmful content from the media.

The team worked for a period of three months and produced the following handbooks: *A Data Governance Guide for Media Practice in Kenya*, *Media Handbook for Reporting on Artificial Intelligence in Kenya*, *Media Guide on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Kenya* and *A Guide on the use of Social Media and the Internet for Media Practice in Kenya*



The Council has been in the forefront of advocating for journalists' rights in the country. Threats and violations against these rights go against the Kenyan Constitution and international instruments to which the country is a signatory. We must ensure press freedom is upheld at all costs and that journalists are granted a conducive environment to perform their duties without fear and favour putting in mind the public good.

Globally, press freedom is facing significant challenges, with many countries experiencing increased restrictions and repression of journalists. I am pleased that the Media Council of Kenya in its quest to enhance and fight for journalists' rights joined hands with media councils across the East African region to foster an independent, professional and accountable media landscape in East Africa through advocacy, collaboration, advisory services and research. The formation of the East Africa Press Councils (EAPC) is a major step towards strengthening and promoting independent media regulatory bodies in East Africa. Comprising membership from Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with plans to onboard other countries in the region including Burundi and the Republic of South Su-

dan, the Press Councils contribute to the East Africa Community spirit.

In June this year, the EAPC convened in Kigali Rwanda to develop a 3-year Strategic Plan. The Plan will be domiciled around five strategic pillars namely: Media Freedom and Advocacy, Media Sustainability, Journalism Excellence and Professionalism, Media Advisory and Media Research.

Media regulation is the bedrock of the Council's existence. The legislative review of the Media Council Act 2013 was conducted to empower the Council to effectively discharge its mandate of setting media standards, regulating and monitoring compliance with the standards.

On 8th September 2023, the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy unveiled a sector working committee to look at the policy and legislative review in the media and ICT sector.

Proposed amendments to the legislative framework have been submitted to the Ministry through a working committee appointed on 20th June 2024. The committee has since developed a zero draft of the Media Bill 2024.

In a bid to align with the government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda pillar on Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy, the Council has launched five Media Hubs/Digital Content Production Centres in Kisumu, Busia, Kisii, Mombasa and Eldoret.

The centres are meant to empower the upcoming journalists (youth), journalists, media practitioners, and independent content producers to leverage the opportunities presented by technology for financial gain, sustainability and media viability.

In addition to the hubs, the Council also supported in the formation of Press Clubs to enhance professionalism in the regions. The press clubs also act as associations where journalists can deliberate on issues concerning their professional welfare, training and press freedom matters.

Training is integral to the Council's mandate to enhance compliance and adherence to the set standards in the profession. Towards this end, I am pleased that the Council has remained steadfast in empowering journalists on harnessing the power of technology to produce captivating content that can earn them money. The trainings focused on the four pillars of development namely Reporting on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) economy, Housing and Settlement, Healthcare, Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy and Agriculture and Agribusiness.

The government, being the major source of news and information, interacts with the media regularly. To strengthen government-media relations, the Media Council of Kenya has organised engagements for Public Communications Officers working in national and county governments to champion Access to Information and proactive disclosure between the officers and journalists.

To streamline its internal and external services, the Council in April this year implemented the ERP system. This has contributed to a seamless transition in communication among the different directorates, enabling quick and efficient service delivery. External customers including suppliers and consultants have also undergone an onboarding training to ensure ease of doing business.

Finally, the Council penned collaborations with several government and private organisations aimed at promoting professionalism in the country. We believe that the partnerships will help steer the Council in fulfilling its objectives and mandate.

Edward Waswa Kisiang'ani (Ph. D)

Principal Secretary, State Department for Broadcasting and Telecommunication

Ministry of Information, Communications and The Digital Economy

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REMARKS



The 2023/2024 financial year was significant for the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), as we made momentous strides towards strengthening media professionalism and regulation in the country. This year, we experienced both challenges and opportunities, influenced by the rapid technological advancements shaping the global media landscape. Our work focused on ensuring the media industry in Kenya adapts to these changes while upholding ethical standards and maintaining freedom of expression.

The global surge in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), data-driven journalism and digital platforms necessitated the establishment of new guidelines and frameworks to ensure that technological innovations were integrated responsibly into media practice. MCK, in collaboration with various stakeholders, led the way in developing handbooks on *Data Governance Guide for Media Practice in Kenya*, *Media Handbook for Reporting on Artificial Intelligence in Kenya*, *Media Guide on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Kenya*, and a *Guide on the use of social me-*

dia and the Internet for Media Practice in Kenya. These efforts aimed to safeguard the public from harmful content while promoting the ethical use of technology in media practices.

Further, the Council's advocacy for press freedom continued to resonate both locally and regionally. We joined forces with our counterparts in East Africa to form the East Africa Press Councils (EAPC), a significant milestone in safeguarding media freedom across the region. By fostering collaboration with regional bodies, the EAPC aims to protect press freedom, uphold media standards, and promote the sustainability of the media industry across East Africa.

We also launched five media hubs/Digital Content Production Centres and supported the formation of Press Clubs in Kisumu, Busia, Kisii, Mombasa and Eldoret. The hubs have provided platforms for journalists to leverage technology in their reporting, enhancing their ability to produce high-quality digital content and engage with audiences in innovative ways.

To ensure professionalism in the sector, the Council undertook substantial training initiatives during the period under review. Recognising the crucial role of effective communication between media and government, the Council facilitated two Executive Training Workshops for 300 Public Communication Officers, concentrating on enhancing government communication strategies and media relations. These efforts were designed to foster a more collaborative environment between the media and government, ensuring more transparent and constructive interactions that contribute to informed public discourse.

Regulatory Affairs

The MCK took significant steps in enhancing media regulation through a series of legislative reviews, policy reforms and compliance moni-

toring efforts. We collaborated with the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy to host sensitisation forums on the Media Policy guidelines, culminating in the revision of the 2022 draft by a policy expert. These revised guidelines were submitted to the Council for further action.

In line with the performance contract objectives, MCK undertook a comprehensive review of the Media Council Act of 2013. The review process, conducted in collaboration with a sector working committee, resulted in the submission of proposed amendments aimed at strengthening the legislative framework. The Council's submissions contributed to the development of the zero draft of the Media Bill 2024.

The Council also conducted several awareness forums focused on the legislative framework, ensuring that stakeholders were well-informed of the proposed amendments. MCK further participated in the task force reviewing the Kenya Information and Communications Act, pushing for key changes such as removing the Communications Authority's regulatory oversight over journalists.

The Council further monitored compliance with the Media Council Act of 2013, issuing notices to show cause letters to media outlets that breached the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya. The Council resolved several cases during the year, reinforcing its commitment to upholding ethical standards in the media industry.

Accreditation

The Council made notable advancements in streamlining the accreditation process for journalists and media practitioners during the 2023/2024 financial year. We surpassed our target of accrediting 8,900 journalists by accrediting a total of 9,413 journalists, which highlights our dedication to upholding professionalism and accountability in the media sector.

Significant innovations were introduced this year to improve the accreditation process. Remote printing was implemented across four regional offices to ensure journalists in remote areas could access their press cards faster. Additionally, the accreditation system was integrated into the E-Citizen platform and transitioned into the new ERP system, enabling more efficient processing.

The Council also took steps to address challenges faced by foreign journalists, including the development of a digital information factsheet. This was aimed at streamlining the accreditation process for foreign journalists covering major events in the country.

Academy

The Council continued to set standards for the training of journalists and built the capacity of media professionals through its Africa Media Academy. As part of efforts to align with the Kenya Kwanza Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), the Council trained 500 media practitioners on local content creation to bolster the Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy pillar.

The Academy developed specialised curricula focused on key developmental areas, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Housing and Settlement, Healthcare, Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy, and Agriculture and Agribusiness. These thematic courses helped journalists report on national development more effectively. Additionally, the Academy introduced a Media Viability module, aimed at guiding media managers on sustainable practices in media operations.

Throughout the year, a total of 2,300 journalists received training on subjects such as agriculture and food security, healthcare, financial literacy, the blue economy, artificial intelligence, and governance. The Council also conducted two (2) Executive Training Workshops for 300 Public Communication Officers, focusing on government

communication and media relation.

To further support media development, 110 technicians were trained on fact-checking and digital journalism, and 50 media managers from community and county-based radio stations received mentorship on media management and business models. The Academy's flagship event, the Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA), recognised exceptional journalism, with 1,083 entries across 18 categories, further promoting ethical standards and excellence in the media industry.

Advocacy

MCK's advocacy efforts in the period under review focused on protecting press freedom, enhancing journalist safety, and promoting media rights. We documented 124 incidents of press freedom violations and responded through dialogues with government and security agencies, creating a safer environment for journalists. Over 200 journalists benefited from safety trainings, and we supported 33 media houses in developing safety and gender mainstreaming policies. Additionally, our rapid response interventions led to the release of five (5) journalists from unlawful detention and secured formal apologies from violators.

On the international stage, MCK submitted a detailed report on press freedom violations to the Attorney General. This report formed part of the special rapporteur's submission to the United Nations Human Rights Council, contributing to global efforts to combat impunity against journalists.

Locally, MCK held Media Information and Digital Literacy forums in Kajiado and Kitui counties, raising awareness on journalists' rights and obligations among key actors, including civil society, county governments, and security agencies. These forums helped to reduce tensions between the media and local authorities, fostering a more supportive environment for journalism.

MCK also participated in the Inter-agency Technical Committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contributing to Kenya's position paper for the UN High-Level Political Forum on SDGs. Our input further supported the review of the Voluntary National Review criteria, emphasising the role of the media in achieving sustainable development goals.

Analysis

During the 2023/2024 financial year, the Media Council of Kenya's Research, Planning, and Strategy department played a pivotal role in enhancing media regulation through comprehensive monitoring and analysis. The department produced over 245 daily newspaper briefs and 68 weekly broadcast briefs, providing critical insights on key media trends and challenges. These briefs informed the Council's regulatory decisions, ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya.

In addition to daily monitoring, the department published 41 issues of the Media Observer, which featured media reviews, editorials, and insights on digital trends. These efforts promoted media literacy and ethical journalism across the sector. Moreover, 134 incidents of misinformation and disinformation were debunked using the iVerify platform, a crucial step in the fight against fake news.

The department also facilitated several key reports, including the State of Media 2023 report, launched during World Press Freedom Day, and other thematic reports such as media coverage on critical issues like femicide and climate change.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit department has continued to spearhead the institutionalisation and operationalisation of a robust Enterprise Risk Management

(ERM) framework at the Council. During the year, MCK identified risks inherent within its functions and processes and developed comprehensive Corporate, Departmental, and regional risk registers. These registers serve as key tools in monitoring identified risks and ensuring the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

To enhance risk management, a risk monitoring and evaluation communication tool was developed. This tool allows for timely responses to emerging risks, ensuring that MCK remains proactive in addressing potential challenges and safeguarding its operations.

Partnerships

The Council penned working collaborations with several entities for mutual advantages. Notable partners include the Kenya Yearbook Editorial Board, the Open Institute and KEMRI-Welcome Trust. These partnerships underscore our commitment to fostering a collaborative environment that drives excellence and integrity within the media sector.

Way Forward

Looking ahead, the Media Council of Kenya will continue its mission to enhance media regulation, professional capacity building, and press freedom. We will invest in new digital innovations, strengthen regulatory frameworks, and expand our partnerships with stakeholders at all levels. Our unwavering commitment to the values of freedom, responsibility and inclusivity will guide us in the coming year as we strive to create an environment where the media industry in Kenya can thrive.

David Omwoyo Omwoyo, MBS

Chief Executive Officer & Secretary to the Council



Directorate of Corporate Services

The Directorate of Corporate Services is charged with the responsibility of providing facilitative and logistical support to the other directorates for enhanced internal efficiency.

It comprises 5 Departments namely:

- HR and Administration/Logistics
- Finance and Accounts
- Supply Chain Management
- ICT
- Corporate Communications & Public Affairs

In the reporting period 2023/2024, the Directorate of Corporate Services recorded below achievements as per the respective Departments:

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

➤ Within the year, the Performance Contract for 2022/2023 was evaluated and the delivery score was rated as 3.0408 which is ranked as 'good' as per the 19th Cycle guidelines. The Council further signed a Performance Contract for the Financial Year 2023/2024 being the 20th Cycle of whose key deliverables were intended to address the entire mandate of the council and also focus on business process re-engineering and productivity improvement. The execution ranking will be published after evaluation.

➤ During the year, the Council had a total of one hundred and fifteen (115) staff spread across all the functions necessary to enable the Council to achieve its objectives, with a boosting of capacity mainly being in the media monitoring function. However, one member of staff left the organisation within the period on her own accord.

➤ Staff performance appraisals were undertaken in the year which culminated in the development of departmental and individual workplans and target setting which were drawn from the Performance Contract and Strategic Plan. For their exemplary performance, staff were rewarded through annual increments and bonus pay.

➤ In order to improve staff performance and teamwork, the Council undertook a team-building training for all staff in Panari Hotel Nyahururu within the month of January 2024. During the training, staff were also sensitised on various personal development matters with the approach to the exercise being different from the previous year leading to the event being referred as the best ever.

➤ The Council undertook various trainings which focused on either individual staff training needs or cohort cadres. These included training of drivers on defensive driving, Office

Assistants on reception and client management, supervisory Skills, and media monitoring and report writing. All staff were also able to attend workshops and conferences in their respective professions which had inclination on CPD points necessary for practicing licenses and professional standing.

➤ The Council offered eight (8) internship and attachment opportunities to students and graduates who had made requests. This was despite challenges faced on sitting space and workstations within all five MCK offices.

➤ The Council also took to improve the office work area by remodeling and redesigning the office space in the Head office wing B. This called for change of the workstations, demolition of existing partitioning, change of the carpet and change of doors among others. Eventually the same space was able to accommodate an additional sixteen staff. In the same spirit, the Council also renovated the Kisumu Office to rectify various faults and install air conditioning.

➤ The key challenges faced by the Council and specifically in Human resource and management circled around reviewed financial position which compromises various HR programmes.



MCK team building exercise at Panari Hotel Nyahururu provided a valuable opportunity for our staff to connect, collaborate and learn from one another.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTS

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) relies heavily on Government funding through the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Digital Economy. The allocation of the funds is majorly premised on the Council's workplan and programmes which are aligned to the budget cycle.

The operations and financial performance for the year was based on the 2018/2023 Corporate Strategic Plan, Budget for the financial year 2023/2024 and the set targets as per 2023/2024 Contract Performance.

During the year, The Council continued to enjoy a strong financial base arising from the government funding and partnership with various institutions in implementing various programmes, project and activities.

Financial Performance

During the financial year 2023/2024, the Council realised a total revenue of Ksh 1,550 million against a budget of Ksh. 1,550 million for the FY 2023/2024. This represented 100% collection against the budgeted amount and an increase of 63% compared to Ksh. 963 million for the previous year 2022/2023.

The additional funding received during the year was towards enhancing broadcast media monitoring across the country, setting up and operationalisation of digital content production centres, review of strategic plan and the Media Council Act of 2013 and capacity building for local content production.

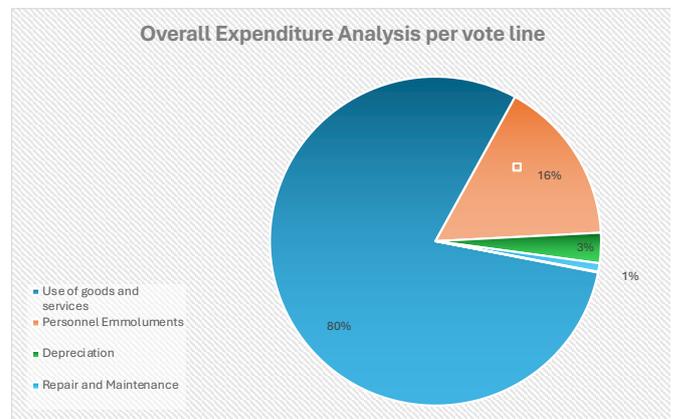


Figure 1 below shows a summary of funding / revenues received for the last three years.

Overall Expenditure Analysis

During the year the Council incurred total expenditure of Kshs 1,550 million representing an absorption rate of 100% as per the set target in the performance contract. Use of goods and services consumed the largest part of the budget followed by personnel emoluments, depreciation, repairs and maintenance and Council expenses respectively.

Below is an analysis of overall expenditure during the year.



Council's Assets

At the end of the financial year, the Council closed with a total asset base of Ksh. 405 million compared to Ksh. 412 million in the previous FY 2022/2023. The reduction in the assets base is attributed to the current year's depreciation and amortisation.

Despite the reduction in the total assets base, the council did not have any pending bills. The current asset base of Ksh. 154 million compared favourably with the total liabilities of Ksh 181 million, an indication that the Council is able to honour its liabilities as and when they fall due.

To ensure effective asset management, the Council carried out a comprehensive asset identification, verification, valuation, and tagging of all its fixed assets and commissioned the asset man-

agement system (AMS).

To enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, the Council continued with the process of revamping the institution's ERP system. The development of various system modules and testing was carried out and implemented. The EPR system is designed to enhance business reporting and control.

Projects implemented in partnership with other institution

During the year, the Council carried out various projects and activities in partnership with other institutions on a cost sharing basis. Among the institutions include Sacco Society Regulatory Authority (SASSRA), OSEA, NHIF and UNESCO.

Compliance with statutory requirements

The Council complies with all statutory obligations including but not limited to remittances of Pay as You Earn (PAYE), National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) and Withholding tax within the stipulated deadlines.

Challenges

Although all planned activities and projects were implemented as planned, delays in exchequer disbursement caused a bit of a challenge. Some of the planned activities and projects were consequently delayed.

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT



The Supply Chain Management department is committed to delivering efficient and cost-effective procurement solutions.

The Supply Chain Management department serves to support the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) goals and objectives through delivery of excellence in procurement by establishing strategic thinking in procurement processes, responsible sourcing, financial stewardship, customer-focused services, and inclusivity from a diverse supplier base.

The department successfully supported the Council's operational requirements through sourcing of goods, works and services, contract management and supplier relationship management while maintaining value for money. The total number of procurements conducted in the Financial Year (FY) 2023-2024 was greater compared to FY 2022-2023. 353 procurements were conducted in FY 2023-2024 as compared to 270 conducted in FY 2022-2023. This was an extremely busy year for Supply Chain Management at the Council.

In compliance with the Presidential Directive on Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), we are committed to making public procurement open and accessible to businesses, especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the AGPO categories. Most of our tender opportunities greater than KShs 3,000,000

are advertised on the Public Procurement Information Portal (PPIP). We also publish our contract register on PPIP.

The Department successfully carried out Supplier Sensitisation forums for the AGPO groups at the headquarters and regional offices.

The Council has continuously promoted the adoption of prompt payment practices throughout its supply chain by having fair and reasonable payment terms with suppliers and ensuring suppliers' invoices are approved and paid within agreed terms. This is in line with the prompt payment Bill 2021 (Senate Bill No.16 of 2021).

Promotion of Fair and Ethical Trading: Our standard procurement procedures involve assessing a bidder's suitability to be awarded the contract. This process includes considering whether the bidder has met the statutory requirements.

Guided by the Council's performance contract and in conformity to the existing legal requirements, the Council undertook the disposal of unserviceable, obsolete, obsolescent, or surplus stores and equipment for the FY 2023-2024 which were donated to the ICT authority for refurbishment and re-use.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Automation of Back office and citizen centric services

In line with the Government of Kenya's commitment to automate systems and reduce paperwork, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) automated most of its back-office services as well as citizen centric services with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its services.

Internal processes including generation of memo requests for approval, imprest application and surrender among other services have been automated through the employee self-service portal. Additionally, the Council has greatly increased its e-presence through creation of service portals that will enhance service provision to members of the public. The portals include the following:

- Application for media grants
- Public complaints filing portal
- Media complaints filing portal
- Industrial attachment program application
- E- recruitment portal
- E-procurement portal
- Accreditation of journalists and media house subscriptions portal
- Access to information portal
- Application for training of Journalists

Systems and User support and ICT Equipment maintenance

The ICT Department consistently delivers system and user support to ensure that both internal and external stakeholders can effectively utilise the services offered by the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) through various ICT platforms. These platforms include internal ICT systems, websites, telecommunications systems, E-board systems, video conferencing platforms, and more. ICT support plays a vital role during the Council's signature events, such as the Annual Journalism Excel-

lence Awards (AJEA), World Press Freedom Day, and World Radio Day, all of which depend on ICT platforms.

Furthermore, the provision of ICT support to staff and the Complaints Commission has been instrumental in the successful execution of essential institutional activities, including Complaints Commission proceedings, journalist training sessions, and stakeholder engagements, both in-person and virtually.

In addition, the department undertakes quarterly preventive maintenance of ICT equipment to ensure optimal performance with minimal downtime, thereby extending the lifespan of these assets. This approach enables staff to effectively utilise ICT equipment in their daily operations, thereby enhancing productivity.

Cybersecurity

The ICT department has taken a proactive approach to safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of both MCK's internal data and that of its stakeholders. This approach includes not only the deployment of physical and technical controls but also a strong emphasis on staff education. To raise awareness about cybersecurity threats and to teach strategies for mitigating these risks, the department has conducted comprehensive training sessions for all employees.

To enhance its cybersecurity framework, the Council has implemented a range of protective measures, including unified threat management firewalls with advanced intrusion detection and prevention capabilities, state-of-the-art antivirus software, email security protocols, and offsite data backup solutions. Additionally, the Council recognises that security is not solely reliant on technology; the role of well-informed staff is vital. Therefore, educating users remains a fundamental aspect of the organisation's overall security strategy, ensuring a vigilant and responsive workforce capable of safeguarding the digital assets of MCK.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The department undertook several activities in line with the strategic objective to strengthen the Council's institutional capacity and image.

The Council is in the process of reviewing its Communications and Stakeholder Engagements Strategy in adherence to the Mwongozo Code of Conduct for Governance for State Corporations under its Ethical Leadership and Corporate Citizenship provisions.

To attain these, the Department undertook branding of its signature events namely World Radio Day, Annual Media Summit, Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA), International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI), the International Day to End Impunity Against Journalism (IDEI) and the launch of Media Hubs/ Digital Content Production Centres and Press Clubs.

In line with the Performance Contract guidelines, the Council reviewed its Corporate Service Charter to incorporate information of the Commission on Administrative Justice.

Regular website audits and updates were undertaken during this period. The Council also held some of its signature events in a hybrid format for enhanced coverage and social media presence.

Every year, government organisations are required to plant trees in implementation of the presidential directive. So far, the Council has planted 9197 trees in different locations in the country. This was made possible through collaborations with the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, Kenya Forest Service and Journalists among other stakeholders.

With regards to application of technology in communication, the Council recorded sustained media appearances on print, electronic and digital media platforms, thought leadership through producing regular in-depth pieces on media matters through regular commentaries/ opinion editorials.

We continued to record enhanced online presence with our statistics for the top current social media platforms standing at:

	X	127,522 followers
	Facebook	49,702 followers
	LinkedIn	6,263 followers
	Instagram	2,332 followers
	TikTok	566 followers
	YouTube	964 followers



By collaborating with the Ministry of Information, Communications, and the Digital Economy, Kenya Forest Service, and journalists, we are making a significant contribution to Kenya's greening efforts. We have planted over 9,000 trees in various locations across the country.

INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal Audit Department provides independent and objective assurance and consulting for the Council's processes and operations. This function is executed through the evaluation of the effectiveness of risk management, the robustness of internal controls, and confirming compliance and adherence to good corporate governance practices.

The Internal Audit Department reviews the systems established and maintained by the management for effectiveness, efficiency and economy in service delivery to the public, confirms accuracy in financial reporting and checks for compliance with applicable laws, policies, regulations, circulars and guidelines issued by the government from time to time.

This report is a highlight of activities undertaken by the Internal Audit function during the financial year 2023/2024, providing an overview of the activities undertaken by the department and the outcomes realised, summarising the challenges faced by the function in the execution of its mandate and the proposed recommendations for action.

Key Milestones/ Achievements

Risk Management

- The Internal Audit department has continued to spearhead the process of institutionalisation and operationalisation of a robust Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework at the Council.
- Media Council of Kenya has identified risks inherent within its functions and processes and developed Corporate, Departmental and Regional risk registers.

The registers will enable the Council to monitor the risks that have been identified and ensure the effectiveness of the proposed mitiga-

tion measures.

- A risk monitoring and evaluation (communication) tool has been developed, to enable timeliness in response to any emergent risks.

Internal Controls

- The review and reporting on the robustness of internal controls is an integral part of the internal audit department's Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

The department has fully met this objective through recommendations made to the management on the strengthening of internal controls and in the internal audit reports tabled before the audit committee.

- Some of the recommendations made include the development of policy and procedure documents and review of existing ones to align with applicable laws, policies, regulations, circulars and guidelines issued by the government from time to time.

Corporate Governance

- The Internal Audit department has made contributions towards the realisation and strengthening of good corporate governance practices at the Council, through its contribution within the Corruption Prevention Committee (CPC). As the Integrity Officer, the Internal Auditor has ensured that the Council adheres to the provisions of the constitution in upholding integrity and ethical values and the tenets of corporate governance.
- The department has also issued various advisories to the management on compliance with various government circulars issued within the financial period for compliance.



Directorate of Media Training and Development

MEDIA TRAINING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Media Council of Kenya is dedicated to setting and upholding high standards for journalism training in middle-level colleges while also building the capacity of practicing journalists and media professionals. In 2023, the Council played a crucial role in improving the capabilities of media practitioners through specialised training programs designed to align journalistic practices with Kenya's development agenda.

These initiatives not only aimed to enhance local content creation and fact-checking but also equipped media professionals with the necessary tools to report effectively on significant national issues such as economic development, healthcare, and the digital economy.

Through efforts like curriculum development, executive workshops, and mentoring programs, the Council actively supports the professional advancement of journalists, ensuring that Kenya's media landscape remains vibrant and sustainable.

During the year, the Council embarked on activities to promote the Kenya Kwanza BETA development agenda through conducting training sessions for 500 media practitioners on local content creation, to enhance the pillar on Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy. Further the Council trained 110 technicians from various media houses across the country on factchecking and digital journalism.

The Academy developed curricula on thematic areas aligned to the four pillars of development, namely Reporting on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Economy, Housing and Settlement, Healthcare, Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy, and Agriculture and Agribusiness. These curricula will help journalists report on development issues in a more in-depth way and capture the government's progress. In addition, a module on Media Viability was developed to guide media managers in the running of media establishments and ensure sustainability.

A total of 2300 journalists were trained on reporting on various focus subjects including agriculture and food security, Health and healthcare, financial literacy, the Blue Economy, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the National Values and Principles of Governance.

The Council conducted two Executive Training Workshops for 300 Public Communication Officers in Mombasa and Naivasha. The focus of the

workshops was effective government communication, messaging and media relations. Further 50 media managers from community and county-based commercial radio stations received mentorship on media management and business models.

To maintain standards of professional practice the Media Council of Kenya held its Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA) 2024 which received 1,083 entries from journalists, media practitioners and independent content creators. Winners were drawn for 18 different categories and it was notable that county-based radio stations presented outstanding pieces compared to metropolitan broadcasters. The awards showcase exceptional journalism which encourages ethical practice and quality news presentation by the media.

Launch of Media Hubs

In support of media development, the Council launched five media hubs/Digital Content Production Centres and supported the formation of Press Clubs in Kisumu, Busia, Kisii, Mombasa and Eldoret. The hubs continue to provide platforms for journalists to leverage technology in their reporting, enhancing their ability to produce high-quality digital content and engage with audiences in innovative ways.



The Media Council of Kenya is committed to supporting the growth and development of the media industry. By launching media hubs and supporting the formation of press clubs, we are providing journalists with the tools and resources they need to thrive in the digital age.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND STRATEGY



The Council's Research Planning and Strategy department plays a crucial role in monitoring media compliance, supporting professional journalism, and informing strategic decision-making. In the 2023/2024 financial year, the department continued its efforts to elevate media standards through thorough monitoring, fact-checking initiatives, and strategic partnerships. By generating detailed reports, compiling media briefs, and engaging in various collaborative activities, the department has made significant contributions to the Council's regulatory functions. These efforts aim to cultivate a vibrant and ethical media environment in Kenya, ensuring that journalism remains a respected and effective pillar of society.

During the year, the department continued to support the Council in delivering in its mandate, ensuring monitoring across media houses to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya. As a result, the department shared (245) daily briefs. The briefs are a compilation of the daily newspapers that captures the headlines and a summary of

newsworthy content.

The brief's highlight The Standard, The Star, Daily Nation, People Daily, Taifa Leo, Business Daily, The Eisleigh Voice and My Gov publications. The summary is shared with management to enhance their ability to stay informed, make strategic decisions, and respond effectively to the dynamic media environment. Two hundred and twenty-four (224) of the briefs were converted into PDF and shared via social media with our various stakeholders.

Further, the department produced sixty-eight (68) weekly broadcast briefs that highlights key themes that were covered in the broadcast media during the week. The weekly brief comprises of content monitored from 13 television stations and 19 radio stations. The report is shared with management to enhance the regulatory framework and seek interventions to enhance professionalism in the media.

The Broadcast briefs are shared on social media platforms under the hashtag #Broadcast Brief.

Additionally, the department generated thirty-six (36) weekly intelligence reports that were key in providing insights to enhance decision-making, reputation management, crisis response, and overall strategic planning for the Council. In fulfilling its regulatory function of enhancing professionalism in the media industry the department flagged eighty-one (81) incidents that mostly touched on the breach of the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya. The most sections of the code that was mostly breached by media houses include accuracy, invasion of privacy, balance, the right of reply and the editor's responsibility among others.

During the period the department further published forty-one (41) issues of the Media Observer. The weekly publication featured various sections, including media reviews, editorials, and digital trends, providing insights into current media practices and challenges. The publication ensured that it remained relevant and timely as such enhancing media literacy, promoted ethical journalism, and contribute to the broader conversation about media responsibility in Kenya.

134 incidences of mis/disinformation were debunked using the iVerify platform and shared on the social media platforms under the hashtags #iVerifyKE #MediaObserver and #FactsMatterKE.

Government and Donor Relations

The department, actively sought collaborations with organisations that share similar values, primarily within the government, National Housing Co-operation (NHC), Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (REREC), National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), National Irrigation Authority (NIA), Kenya National Highways Authority (KENHA), Kenya Yearbook and Editorial Board (KYEB), Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), The National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND), African Development Bank, All Africa Summit, and Kenyatta National Hospital. Additional partnerships with the Iran Embassy, Bomet County, Garissa County, Communications

Authority of Kenya (on sponsorship for MIL), and National Counterterrorism Centre were pursued during the period.



The Media Council of Kenya is committed to fostering strong partnerships with key stakeholders to advance the media industry. By collaborating with the Kenya Yearbook Editorial Board, the Open Institute, and KEMRI-Welcome Trust, we are leveraging our collective expertise to drive positive change.

Media Information Literacy Forums

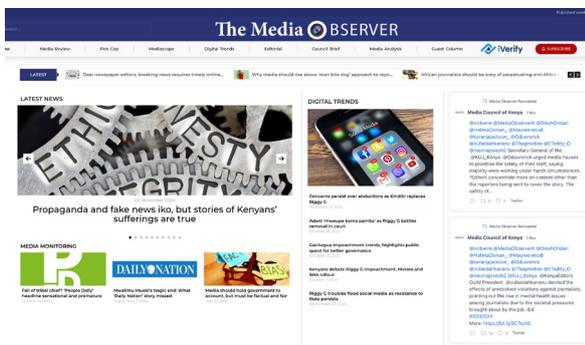
Media Information Literacy (MIL) workshops have been a mainstay of citizen involvement, imparting knowledge to the public about media operations, news production and content development along with advice on appropriate media engagement. The department delivered twelve (12) forums in conjunction with the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK), Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society (ACEPIS), National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), County Government, other Civil Society Organisations, Security Agencies and the Media.



The Media Information Literacy (MIL) forums are a crucial component of the Media Council of Kenya's efforts to promote media literacy and digital citizenship.

The Observer Magazine

Additionally, the department successfully revamped the Media Observer website (<https://mediaobserver.co.ke/>) to an interactive site that will enhance user experience, improve search engine optimisation, and ultimately drive better reach to our stakeholders. Currently, the process of renewing the iVerify platform subscription is ongoing and is meant to enhance fact-checking, maintain its relevance in the changing digital space, enhance accuracy of information, and impact the fight against misinformation and hate speech.



Media Monitoring Reports

The department played a critical role in research and has disseminated several reports namely, Media Coverage of Father Kariuki, Media Coverage of Elnino, Baby Sagini Coverage, State of Media Survey 2023, Accreditation needs survey, and Media Coverage of Femicide.



Launch of the State of Media 2023 Report

The State of Media 2023 report was launched during the World Press Freedom Day on May 2, 2024, in front of more than 500 stakeholders receiving wide coverage and critique by both mainstream and online practitioners. For the first time, the data sets were accessible to data crunchers and other users in the spirit of open data and access to information. Radio Africa Group and Re-analytics accessed the data sets, following the request. The detailed report is available online.



Launch of State of the Media Report 2023 during the World Press Freedom Day Celebrations

PRESS FREEDOM, SAFETY AND ADVOCACY

Safety and Protection of Journalists

The safety and protection of journalists is a core priority for the Media Council of Kenya, as the ability to report freely and without fear is vital for maintaining the integrity of journalism and press freedom.

In the 2023/2024 financial year, the Council continued to implement a robust safety and protection program that emphasises prevention, protection, and the promotion of journalists' rights.

This initiative was essential in tackling challenges related to press freedom and ensuring that journalists could work in safe and supportive environments.

Throughout the year, the Council recorded 124 incidents of press freedom violations. In response to these violations, it undertook a series of interventions designed to protect journalists' rights and address complaints raised by media practitioners.

These interventions were both proactive and reactive, providing comprehensive support for those affected.

Key initiatives included:

- Eight dialogues with various actors including security agencies, county and national government. The dialogues were aimed at creating a conducive working environment for journalists and fostering a professional working relationship with the various stakeholders.
- Eight trainings on physical, digital and mental safety for journalists in the country. A total of 200 journalists including those affected by widespread protests and media practitioners benefitted for both training and psychosocial debriefing
- Provided support for development of

safety and gender mainstreaming policies for 33 media houses across the country

- 14 Rapid Response Initiatives
- Two letters to the Inspector General of Police and the Independent Police Oversight Authority pushing for investigations and seeking updates on progress of cases reported by journalists
- Ten press statements in response to various violations
- Five journalists released from police custody after illegal arrests
- Three apologies from perpetrators to journalists after intervention by the Council

Press Freedom

The Media Council of Kenya hosted a successful Media Summit bringing together media stakeholders nationally and regionally on 2 May 2024 to commemorate the World Press Freedom Day 2024. The theme of the summit was, "A press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis". This is the date set aside to celebrate the World Press Freedom Day and also serves as a reminder to governments on the need to respect their commitments to press freedom. On this day, journalists reflect on issues affecting





press freedom and professional ethics. The meeting brought together 150 participants including regional regulators, human rights defenders, foreign and local journalists, representatives of media associations, partners and government representatives.

In response to emerging issues and industry concerns, MCK organised four peer review meetings with industry stakeholders in Nairobi, Mombasa and Naivasha on contemporary issues on media freedom; these included media sustainability, safety and welfare of field-based correspondents and media development. The actors represented various industry sectors such as media owners, media associations and partners. The meetings served as platforms for reflection and resulted in the development of action plans for key players in thematic areas of intervention.

The Media Council of Kenya, in partnership with Katiba Institute, hosted the 2023 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists in Kisumu County on 2nd November 2023 under the theme “Protecting Press Freedom in the Face of Rising Attacks against Journalists in Kenya”. The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists is a UN-recognised international day observed annually on 2nd No-

vember to pay attention to the level of impunity for crimes against journalists, which remains high globally. The meeting comprised a total of 100 participants comprising of journalists, civil society organisations, academia, government and members of the public. Duty bearers including investigating agencies, prosecutors and lawmaker were put to task to the issue of impunity and their role in prevention and protection.

Advocacy

In response to a request by UNESCO, the Council also submitted a report on the status of various violations against journalists in the country. The Council submitted a report to the Attorney General on measures taken to implement general assembly resolution 76/173 on safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The report forms part of the special rapporteur’s report to the United Nations Council on Human Rights on efforts by countries to combat impunity against journalists and portion of their rights.

The Council held Media Information and Digital Literacy forums in Kajiado and Kitui counties to create awareness on the rights and privileges of journalists and the various rights and obligations of various actors including members of the public, journalist, civil society organisation, county government and security agencies. The meetings comprising of 30 participants each were meant to address tensions between actors and the county in a bid to create a conducive working environment for the media.

The Council also participated in the Inter-agency Technical Committee on Sustainable Development Goals which led to the preparation of the country position paper on implementation of SDG for the UN High level political forum on SDGs. MCK also made its contribution to the review of the Voluntary National review criteria.



Access to Information

The Council hosted national celebrations to mark the International Day on Universal Access to information in Kirinyaga county on 28th September 2023 in Kirinyaga county. The global theme of the event was “The Importance of the Online Space for Access to Information”. In recognition of the pivotal role of technology in the protection of journalists’ right to information, MCK marked the day under the theme: Kenya’s Digital Superhighway as an enabler of Universal Access to Information”. The meeting brought together 100 participants drawn from various sectors in the country including county governments, security agencies, human rights defenders and journalists to discuss the role of access to information in advancing Kenya’s interest digitisation dream, with journalist at the centre of it. The action plan drawn from the meeting informed subsequent intervention in creating awareness and building the capacity of journalists and public information officers in their roles as requesters and suppliers of information.

In recognition of the role public information officers play in the provision of information held by government, to the public, the Council held three trainings for public information officers from county and national government. The trainings were held in Naivasha on 20-22 July 2023 28th August -1st September 2023 in Mombasa and in Nairobi on 27th and 28th March 2024. A total of 150 public communication officer were equipped with skills on how to engage the media and ensure provision of information to the public in the promotion of public interest.

In response to concerns by the high number of complaints on denial of access and denial of information to journalist based in the Western and Nyanza counties, the Council held an Access to Information summit on June 13th 2024 to create a platform for reflection on the challenges affecting information exchange between the affected county government and areas of support for journalists in the region.



Directorate Of Regulatory Affairs

ACCREDITATION AND COMPLIANCE

The Accreditation and Compliance department is essential in maintaining professional journalism standards throughout Kenya. In the 2023/2024 financial year, the department implemented various initiatives aligned with its Performance Contract goals, such as accrediting journalists, monitoring compliance, and raising awareness of the Council's policies. This report details the department's significant achievements, the challenges faced, and the measures taken to enhance the accreditation and compliance processes.

Accreditation of Journalists and Media Practitioners

In accordance with the Media Council Act of 2013, the Council is responsible for accrediting and maintaining a register of both local and foreign journalists, media enterprises, and other relevant registries. During the 2023/2024 financial year, the Council set a goal to accredit 8,900 journalists and media practitioners. By the end of the financial year, it had accredited 9,413 journalists, exceeding its target by 513.

The introduction of remote printing services in four regional offices greatly improved access to press cards, particularly for journalists in remote locations. Furthermore, the accreditation system was successfully integrated into the E-Citizen platform and transitioned to a new ERP system, which streamlined the process and enhanced service delivery.

The department also played a crucial role in accrediting foreign journalists for significant events, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) Annual Meeting held in Kenya, demonstrating the Council's continued support for international media professionals.

Development of Digital Information Fact Sheet for Foreign Journalists

In response to the increasing inquiries from foreign journalists regarding Kenya's accreditation processes, the department created a Digital Information Fact Sheet that offers detailed guidance on the legal requirements for foreign journalists operating in Kenya. A consultative meeting was held with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, foreign journalists' associations, and media houses, to validate the fact sheet.

Following the meeting, the fact sheet was distributed to embassies and relevant media entities, providing clear instructions to foreign journalists

about the accreditation process. This initiative also underscored the need for streamlined procedures for accrediting foreign journalists in preparation for significant events, such as the 2027 AF-CON, which Kenya will co-host.

Sensitisation of Journalists and Media Practitioners

In line with its mandate, the Council also focused on educating journalists and media practitioners about accreditation guidelines. The initial target was to reach 2,300 individuals; however, by the end of the year, 3,772 journalists and media practitioners had been sensitised. This was accomplished through visits to media houses, institutions offering journalism and media-related courses, and interactions with county governments.

These sensitisation initiatives raised awareness of accreditation requirements and facilitated a smoother transition for journalists to the E-Citizen platform, thereby further streamlining the accreditation process.

The Council continuously updates and maintains three registers of accredited journalists, media enterprises and media associations. Notably, many of the new media houses in the MCK register are run by Independent Content Producers. At least three new media associations were included in the Media Associations register.

Sensitisation of Media Enterprises on Subscription Requirement

The Council also worked to ensure that media houses were aware of and adhered to the subscription requirements. Although the target was to sensitise 160 media enterprises by the end of the financial year, 186 enterprises were ultimately sensitised. By June 30, 2024, 81 of these enterprises had fulfilled their subscription payments.

This outreach reflects the growing compliance with the Council's regulations and contributes to the overall professionalism and governance within the media industry.

Engagement with Media Trainers, Public Communication Officers and Independent Content Producers

Throughout the financial year, the Council engaged key stakeholders by organising seven (7) sensitisation forums for media trainers, Public Communication Officers (PCOs), and Independent Content Producers (ICPs). These forums addressed several emerging issues, including the importance of accrediting content creators, particularly those working in the digital space.

The discussions held underscored the need for stricter measures to tackle individuals falsely posing as accredited journalists, an issue of growing concern in the media landscape.

Survey on Accreditation and Media standards

A comprehensive survey was conducted to assess the impact of digital disruption on accreditation and media standards in Kenya. The findings were compiled into a 57-page report, revealing key insights into the motivations for seeking accreditation. The survey found that 66 per cent of respondents sought accreditation for professional recognition, while 18 per cent sought it to access training opportunities.



Among the recommendations stemming from the survey were the inclusion of bloggers and independent content creators in the accreditation process and the development of digital press cards. The survey also suggested introducing a USSD code for easier access to accreditation services and streamlining renewal processes for accredited individuals.

The council engaged a consultant to conduct a survey on the impact of digital disruption on accreditation and media standards. The theme of the comprehensive survey was based on the digital disruption that has adversely impacted the media landscape in Kenya. The culmination of the exercise was the publication and dissemination of a 57-page report. Key finds of the survey include:

- The major reasons for the respondents seeking media accreditation is professional recognition (66 per cent), 18 per cent seek accreditation in order to access training and development opportunities, 9.6 per cent seek accreditation to access information, 3 per cent to have networking opportunities, 0.2 per cent is for complaints resolutions.



➤ The survey established that a majority 67 per cent believed that media accreditation is extremely important, 28 per cent believed that media accreditation is very important, 3 per cent moderately important and 1 per cent slightly important.

Some of the recommendations include:

- Consider bloggers and independent content creators in the accreditation process
- Development of MCK app for accreditation
- Omission of recommendation letters for renewal applications
- Incorporate USSD code for accreditation process
- Introduce digital cards
- Incorporate provisions for persons with disability
- Establish payment of renewal fee by instalments
- Proper vetting of individuals to eliminate quacks

COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Complaints Received and Processed

CASE NO	COMPLAINANT	COMPLAINT AGAINST	DATE FILED	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	STATUS
MCC/07/2023	Millicent Aoko Ogot	The Elephant & Two Others	13 th April 2023	Misleading, Inaccurate, Inflammatory, Malicious and Biased	Listed for Mediation on 4 th August 2023 Vice Chair, Esther Aduma Closed
MCC/08/2023	Margaret Wamuyu Muthee	The Star Newspaper & Another	21 st March 2023	- Misleading, Inaccurate, Inflammatory, Biased and Sexist	Listed for Mediation on 8 th August 2023 Comm. Lempaa Suyianka Closed
MCC/09/2023	Angaaf Radio Isiolo	Hon. Mumina Bonaya	16 th May 2023	- Defamation and Threat. 'Counter claim'.	Listed for S. O. G (Stood over Generally)
MCC/10/2023	Anjarwalla & Khanna LLP	The Standard Group Plc & Two Others	5 th June 2023	- Accuracy and Fairness, Integrity, Opportunity to Reply and Covering Ethnic, Religious and Sectarian Conflict	Listed for Mediation on 10 th August 2023 Comm. Prof. Nancy Booker & Chairman, William Oketch Closed
MCC/11/2023	Johnson Otieno Odera	Nation Media Group & Two Others	5 th September 2023	Misleading, Inaccurate and No Opportunity to Reply	Closed
MCC/12/2023	David Maina Mwangi	MediaMax T/a K24 Digital Media & Another	5 th September 2023	Misleading, Inaccurate, Accuracy and Fairness and Opportunity to Reply, Privacy and Intrusion into Grief and Shock	Closed
MCC/13/2023	Linet Nyasuguta Ongeni	Setio Fm & Another	5 th September 2023	Misleading, Accountability and Integrity	Closed
MCC/14/2023	Raha Solution	Nation Media Group & Another	5 th September 2023	Integrity and Editors Responsibility	Closed

The Commission attained several milestones in its jurisdiction with the term having lapsed within the first quarter of the Financial Year 2023/2024 leading to fewer cases.

Turnaround Time

The Commission's new approach of handling matters through written affidavits, rather than oral testimony, has not only improved efficiency by streamlining the adjudication process but has also shortened its turnaround time to an average of three months, as outlined in its charter.

Virtual Sittings of the Complaints Commission

The Media Complaints Commission (MCC) continues to embrace virtual sittings to ensure faster and more accessible complaint resolution. This allows all parties to participate without location barriers, while maintaining the same standards as in-person hearings. Key tools for communication, document submission, and security are in place to protect confidentiality. This move ensures that the MCC continues to provide fair and timely decisions in a rapidly changing media environment.

Uptake of Mediation

During the year under review, the Media Com-

plaints Commission (MCC) equally embraced mediation as a core component of its dispute resolution process. By offering mediation, the MCC provides a collaborative and less adversarial approach, enabling parties to reach mutually agreeable solutions without the need for formal hearings as well as aid in dispute resolution within the turnaround time of three (3) months.

Publicity/ Outreach

During the Financial year 2023/2024 the Commission engaged in outreach activities through platforms such as The Devolution Conference and the Annual Law Society of Kenya (LSK) Conference to promote awareness of its mandate. These conferences provided vital opportunities for the MCC to connect with diverse stakeholders, including government officials, legal practitioners, and members of the public

Draft of The Complaints Commission Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedures drafted by the previous Commission are due for finalisation and adoption by the current Commission and parties to the procedures of the Complaints Commission.

The members of the Complaints Commission officially ended their term on 16th October 2023.



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