

NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY  
**SITUATIONROOM**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

---

2025 - 2027







**STRATEGIC  
PLAN  
2025 - 2027**

---

2026 Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room

All Rights Reserved

**Situation Room Secretariat:**

c/o Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)  
Plot 451 Gambo Jimeta Crescent,  
Guzape District,  
Abuja, Nigeria

**Telephone:** 09095050505, 09032999919

**Website:** <https://situationroomng.org>

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/situationroomnigeria](https://facebook.com/situationroomnigeria)

**Twitter:** @situationroomng

# Table of Contents

1.	Introduction by the Convener .....	<b>1</b>
2.	Executive Summary .....	<b>2</b>
3.	Background .....	<b>6</b>
4.	Purpose of the Situation Room Strategic Plan (2025-2027) .....	<b>8</b>
5.	Vision, Mission, and Values Statements .....	<b>9</b>
6.	Context of the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan .....	<b>10</b>
7.	Core Strategy and Theory of Change .....	<b>17</b>
8.	Programme Portfolio and Plans .....	<b>19</b>
9.	Strategic Objectives / Key Actions .....	<b>22</b>
10.	Business Model and Financial Plans .....	<b>24</b>
11.	Organizational Capacity and Leadership Development Plans .....	<b>26</b>



# Introduction by the Convener

I am delighted to present to you the Strategic Plan of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room for the period 2025 to 2027. As the Convener of the Situation Room, I am deeply honoured to lead this unique and respected organization in charting a course for our future direction and impact.

The Situation Room was established in 2010 to enhance the role of civil society in promoting electoral reforms and democratic governance in Nigeria by coordinating the activities of civil society groups to ensure proactive and constructive engagement with stakeholders. The Situation Room's efforts were initially targeted at one of Nigeria's core development priorities, which is reform of the electoral process to enhance the country's democratic development. Over the year, the Platform has expanded its focus to democratic governance in general. Our work in knowledge production and sharing, connecting and mobilizing, capacity-building, partnership, and influencing has contributed significantly to shaping the electoral and governance landscape of Nigeria.

As we look ahead to the next phase of our work, we recognize the evolving challenges and opportunities in our society and the need for innovative responses. We are equally mindful of the institutional transformations that we

experience as an organizational platform and the changes taking place in the wider civil society sector. This Strategic Plan reflects our commitment to adaptability, resilience, and sustainability as we strive to achieve our vision of a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Nigeria.

Through this plan, we aim to strengthen our core programmes while exploring new opportunities for growth and impact. We will focus on enhancing our capacity to promote the civil society's demand for electoral and governance reforms, expanding our research and advocacy efforts, deepening our engagement with stakeholders, enhancing our support to state institutions, and leveraging technology and other resources for greater effectiveness, efficiency, and reach.

I am assured that with the dedication of our members, the Steering Committee, the Secretariat, partners, donors, and supporters, we will be able to realize the ambitious goals set out in this Plan. Together, we will continue to enhance democratic governance in Nigeria and beyond.

**Dr. Y.Z. Ya'u**

*Convener, Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room*

# Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan builds on insights and recommendations from a 2020 evaluation of the design and implementation of the Situation Room's interventions. Furthermore, it responds to the trends and emerging realities of democratic governance in Nigeria, especially regarding the perennial failure of elections, declining performance and effectiveness of the government, deteriorating socio-economic conditions of citizens, changing relationship with state institutions, and shrinking development funding. The Plan emerged from extensive deliberations among Situation Room members and discussions with internal and external stakeholders, who provided their valuable inputs mainly through bilateral consultations. It outlined the Situation Room's vision, which is to see "A Nigeria where elections are credible, citizens' voices are heard, and the government is effective," and the Platform's mission, which is to enhance democratic governance in Nigeria through civil society coordination and constructive engagement in electoral and governance processes.

The key element that will drive the interventions aimed at achieving the Situation Room's vision and mission is the Platform's theory of change. The Situation Room's theory of change is based on the assumption that if the credibility

of elections is improved, citizens' voices are amplified, and the government's performance is improved, then democratic governance in Nigeria will be enhanced, leading to more responsive, rule-compliant, and accountable state institutions; increased citizens' trust in government, and greater involvement of citizens in governance. All these, in turn, would lead to a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous society where citizens can live more fulfilling lives.

To realize its theory of change, the Situation Room will frame its interventions around specific strategic priorities and objectives derived from its core strategy. The following are the core strategic priorities the Situation Room will pursue to achieve its overall goal for the 2025-2027 period:

1. Strengthen its capacity, and that of its members, to demand electoral and governance reforms in Nigeria.
2. Enhance the quality, focus, and delivery of programmes to ensure citizens' oversight of electoral and governance institutions.
3. Enhance its capacity and leverage partnerships and resources to undertake research and other activities to support electoral reform and improve government performance and effectiveness.

4. Strengthen its capacity, and that of its members, to leverage the use of technology, particularly with regard to garnering, producing, and sharing knowledge, as well as mobilizing, connecting, and influencing.
5. Increase its engagement with national and international actors in the field of development financing and international development cooperation to improve access to funding for democratic development programmes.
6. Work with state institutions to improve the operating environment of civil society groups, while deepening engagement with the private sector and local philanthropists to leverage funding and programmatic opportunities to enhance democratic governance.

The Situation Room will pursue three major strategic objectives to achieve its overall goal for the 2025-2027 period. They include:

1. Improve the credibility of elections through: i) demanding and supporting electoral reforms at the federal, state, and local levels through, among other things, knowledge-based advocacy; ii) conducting, and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct, oversight of institutions responsible for elections; iii) influencing the responsible authorities to conduct audits and scrutiny of elections and electoral processes, and follow up with the implementation of the outcome of such audits and scrutiny; iv) conducting, and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct, election observation using state-of-the-art methods and

tools, and based on international best practices; v) conducting, and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct, civic and voter education programmes using various media, especially digital media; and vi) strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of civil society groups to collate, document, and disseminate feedback and learning from all elections conducted in Nigeria.

2. Amplify citizens' voice in governance through:
  - i. Supporting citizens and citizens' groups to expand their voices in governance through their involvement in targeted outreach campaigns and engagement, especially on issues affecting the Youth, Women, People with Disability, and other marginalized groups;
  - ii. Strengthening the capacity of citizens and citizens' groups to leverage technology and other critical resources in expanding and creating inclusive platforms for dialogue;
  - iii. Strengthening the organizational and technical capacity of citizens and citizens' groups to be involved in local governance;
  - iv. Conducting, and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct, community outreach and education programmes that aim at mobilizing the people to demand improved governance;

- v. Deepening, extending, and creating new opportunities for citizens' involvement in governance;
- vi. Deepening and extending networking, collaboration, and partnerships with and among local organizations and citizens' groups; and
- vii. Strengthening the knowledge capacity of Situation Room members and other citizens' groups to support policy analysis and advocacy.

3. Improve the performance of the government through:

- i. Generating and disseminating evidence to support and substantiate the government's performance and effectiveness;
- ii. Supporting and initiating programmes to promote citizen-led policy analysis, policy response, and policy advocacy;
- iii. Demanding and supporting governance reforms at the federal, state, and local levels through, among other things, knowledge-based advocacy;
- iv. Strengthening and creating new partnerships with the private sector to engage in programmes that address issues relating to, among other things, the promotion of local socio-economic and inclusive development, local content, and ease of doing business; and
- v. Strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of civil society

groups to monitor and track rule compliance by state institutions, and audit and document the rule compliance profile of relevant institutions.

Funding the Situation Room's programme plans and supporting its administration and infrastructure will require a huge outlay of resources, which the Platform plans to mobilize from diverse sources. The Situation Room will continue to rely on the generous support of its development partners and donors. However, it will explore new funding and programming opportunities with the private sector, state institutions, and philanthropic organizations. Importantly, the Situation Room will encourage its members to be more active in resource mobilization to support the mission and vision of the Platform. To this end, the Situation Room will provide its members with capacity building and other forms of support to enable them to engage in meaningful fundraising. The Situation Room will also prioritize and improve its financial management and control systems and mechanisms to ensure efficient resource allocation and utilization, effective budget monitoring and control, and value for money.

The implementation of the Situation Room's programme portfolio rests on upholding and deepening the core values of the Platform, defined as integrity, non-partisanship, inclusivity, collaboration, and professionalism. Similarly, the Situation Room will expand its local, national, and regional partnerships, which cover an impressive list of civil society, government, and private sector organizations. The Steering Committee, Conveners, and the Secretariat

will oversee and monitor the implementation of this Strategic Plan. These three main bodies will be responsible for managing the Situation Room and implementing its interventions. The Situation Room will work towards addressing the gaps and weaknesses identified in its organizational and leadership structure to ensure full and effective implementation of the Strategic Plan.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING



# Background

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, founded in 2010, is a forum of civil society organizations collaborating to deliver effective engagement and response to the challenges of elections and governance in Nigeria. The Situation Room provides a broad platform for connecting and mobilizing, knowledge production and sharing, information sharing and real-time analyses of field reports by election observers, objective insights into the challenges of election management and governance, rapid response to crises and emergencies, knowledge-based advocacy, and constructive engagement on elections and governance issues by civil society groups. The Situation Room has a track record of enhancing democratic governance in Nigeria by facilitating citizens' oversight of state institutions and policy processes, amplifying citizens' voice in governance, and advocating for improved performance of government.

The Situation Room was envisioned as a marketplace of ideas, where different civil society groups can bring their observations and ideas to share with others, so that each group will understand what is happening and can discuss with the others how best to deal with the emerging electoral and governance challenges. This way, it was possible to converge programmes that were hitherto

running unilaterally and get them to work within a shared platform, with none losing its independence or traction as a consequence. Each of the participating organizations in the Situation Room brought their specific skills, insights, and networks into use, helping develop a critical mass that has become hard to ignore by all who wanted to gauge the progress of Nigeria's democratic process.

Before the establishment of the Situation Room, civil society organizations in Nigeria could not adequately coordinate and apply their resources to achieve effective intervention in the country's electoral processes. Civil society groups would be individually involved in traditional election observation, but this did not have much impact. Although the groups would observe and document irregularities in the country's electoral process, their reports always came in retrospect, when all harm had already been done and the offenders had had their way. In the build-up to the 2011 general election, there was a decision by key actors in the Nigerian civil society to adopt a new and more effective approach to address the challenge of election failure in Nigeria. This decision gave rise to the establishment of the Nigeria Civil Society Election Situation Room.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first meeting of the civil society groups that eventually evolved as the Nigeria Civil Society Election Situation Room was called by PLAC on 30 September 2010. The meeting was attended by representatives of 21 civil society organisations. The groups represented at the

With the support of the then UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), a broad platform of civil society groups in Nigeria collaborated to provide a more effective response to electoral fraud and violence.

The Nigeria Civil Society Election Situation Room later evolved and became the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (the Situation Room). The word “Election” was dropped from its name to reflect a wider focus extending to other governance issues and concerns. Over the years, the Situation Room has extended its mandate by addressing, among other things, some specific needs of political parties for institutional capacity building, creation of an inter-party platform, gender mainstreaming in the electoral process, advocacy for an inclusive electoral process, campaign for the prevention of electoral violence, and engagement of stakeholders on peaceful elections. The relevance of the Situation Room project has been enhanced by the platform’s engagement with the National Assembly. The engagement started with a focus on electoral reforms, but has been extended to accommodate other issues such as effective representation, legislative oversight, and specific policy issues.

---

meeting include Action Aid Nigeria, Alliance for Credible Election (ACE), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training, African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development (Centre LSD), CLEEN Foundation, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Community Emergency Response Initiative (CERI), Community Life Project (CLP), and Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI). Others include Enough is Enough, Forward Africa, Human Development and Care Centre, Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, JDP/Caritas Nigeria, Next Generation Youth Initiative, Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Women Environment Programme, and Women’s Right to Education Program (WREP).

The greatest strength of the Situation Room lies in the diversity, spread, and resourcefulness of its members. In the Room are civic groups with wide grassroots coverage spanning several local communities in the country, as well as organizations with a long track record of engagement with specific groups and institutions such as the police and other security agencies, youths, women, and people living with disabilities. In addition, the Situation Room hosts organizations with the capacity in specific fields such as human rights, the environment, and the application of technological solutions. The diversity of the Situation Room’s membership confers on it a rich network and strong convening power. For instance, the Situation Room could leverage the relationship of its members with specific institutions in government and the private sector to provide quick access to senior officials as quickly as possible, when their attention is needed to address an emerging situation. It is also possible for the Situation Room members to request a meeting with the leadership of key national institutions, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission and the National Assembly, and get a prompt appointment. The relevance of the Situation Room, therefore, lies in the fact that civic groups are able to move from their erstwhile passive role to a more active one, where they can observe a problem, analyze it, and get something done about it, as quickly as possible.

# Purpose of the Situation Room Strategic Plan (2025-2027)

**T**he Situation Room Strategic Plan (2025-2027) builds on a ten-year evaluation of the Situation Room conducted in 2020.

Although the evaluation concluded that the Situation Room's programmes were generally relevant, effective, efficient, and sustainable, it identified serious gaps and weaknesses that must be resolved to attain greater levels of success. These gaps and weaknesses touch on issues such as programme scope and design, programme planning and strategy, programme management, communication, partnership management, and technical support and capacity-building.

In addressing these gaps and weaknesses, the Situation Room seeks to reassess its vision and mission, explore ways of increasing the impact of its interventions, and respond to emerging issues in its operating environment. Overall, three core issues form the basis for adopting this Strategic Plan. They include: a) Reassessing the vision and mission of the Situation Room, b) Identifying ways of increasing the impact of the Situation Room's interventions, and c) Responding to emerging issues in the Situation Room's operating environment, particularly regarding the perennial failure of elections, declining performance and effectiveness of the government, deteriorating socio-economic

conditions of the citizens, changing relationship with state institutions, and shrinking development funding.

In general, the purpose of this Strategic Plan is to provide the Situation Room with a clear direction and a programme of action for achieving the overall objective of the Platform, taking into consideration local, national, and international contexts. The plan will propose a set of strategic priorities and objectives that the Situation Room must accomplish in the next phase of its operation and provide a framework for performance monitoring and evaluation. The Plan will serve as a guide to assist leaders and members of the Situation Room in being intentional about their priorities and proactive in achieving them.

# Vision, Mission, and Values Statements

## Vision Statement

The vision of the Situation Room is: “A Nigeria where elections are credible, citizens’ voices are heard, and the government is effective.”

## Mission Statement

The Situation Room’s mission is to enhance democratic governance in Nigeria through civil society coordination and constructive engagement in electoral and governance processes.

## Values Statement

The core values of the Situation Room are as follows:

- Integrity requiring members, leaders, and staff to uphold and display honesty, transparency, and accountability in their engagements
- Non-partisanship requiring members, leaders, and staff to be free from party affiliation or political bias and impartial in a political dispute or election
- Inclusivity requiring members, leaders, and staff to be welcoming, value and respect people from all backgrounds and identities, and

to create an environment where everyone has equal access to resources and opportunities and feels a genuine sense of belonging

- Collaboration requiring members, leaders, and staff to work with and cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve shared goals
- Professionalism requiring members, leaders, and staff to display competence, knowledge, ethical behaviour, and respect in the discharge of their responsibilities

The overall goal of the Situation Room is to enhance democratic governance in Nigeria, enabling Nigerians to be more involved in governance and state institutions to be more responsive, rule-compliant, and accountable. Towards this end, the Situation Room partners with state institutions, private sector organizations, community groups, as well as national and international bodies to facilitate the realization of its vision and mission.

## Context of the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan builds on insights and recommendations from an evaluation of the design and implementation of the Situation Room's interventions for the period 2010-2020. Furthermore, it responds to trends and emerging realities of democratic governance in Nigeria, especially regarding the perennial failure of elections, declining performance and effectiveness of the government, deteriorating socio-economic conditions of citizens, changing relationship with state institutions, and shrinking development funding.

Since 2015, Nigeria has been experiencing a serious backsliding of democratic governance, marked by a weakening quality of elections, erosion of public trust in the credibility of the electoral process, declining performance and effectiveness of the government, widespread corruption and impunity by state officials and institutions, deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the citizens, deepening and spread of violent extremism and criminality, and a disturbing increase in the displacement of populations. The civil society space and citizens' voice in policy review and dialogue seem to be shrinking, despite available instruments and mechanisms to harness engagement with state institutions and other actors in governance and development in the

country. These trends are happening despite efforts being made by civil society organizations and development partners to enhance democratic governance through support to state institutions and capacity-building of civil society groups to influence political, social, and economic governance mechanisms. To make matters worse, the meltdown of democratic governance in Nigeria is occurring at a time when development funding is generally declining, and the relationship between civil society groups and state institutions is shifting steadily from collaboration towards confrontation.

The above-mentioned challenges informed the formulation of the Situation Room Strategic Plan (2025-2027) to focus on strengthening civil society's capacity to demand electoral and governance reforms and to deliver essential support to state institutions to improve their performance and effectiveness. The persistence of the meltdown of democratic governance in Nigeria calls for a well-thought-out plan and an innovative response. The thrust of this Strategic Plan is, therefore, to identify and map the distinctive changes or outcomes that the Situation Room seeks to achieve in the area of elections and governance, and how (and in which specific areas) the Platform can be strengthened to drive the change.

## **Findings and Recommendations from the 2020 Evaluation of the Situation Room**

In 2020, the Situation Room commissioned an evaluation of its interventions to, among other things, measure the level of success, impact, and the challenges faced, as well as the lessons learnt in the implementation of the interventions since 2010. Below are the highlights of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation that are relevant to the 2025-2027 Strategy.

### **a. Relevance**

The evaluation found that the relevance of the Situation Room is defined by three factors, namely: i) the reputation and credibility of the members and leadership of the Platform, ii) the convening power of the Platform, and iii) the dynamism and adaptability of the Situation Room's programmes and activities. Conversely, three critical elements affect the relevance of the Platform. The first is the fragile nature of the Situation Room's interventions, considering that the strength of the Platform lies in its capacity to convene high-level meetings where members can share information, conduct analysis, form positions, engage stakeholders, and release statements on critical governance issues. Although the Situation Room can connect, convene, and influence, the Platform's interventions depend tremendously on a collaborative relationship with stakeholders - this makes the Situation Room's strategy largely fragile. In the event of a strained relationship with stakeholders, as is increasingly being experienced in recent times, the Situation Room may be stripped of its critical intervention capacity. The second threat

to the Situation Room's relevance arises from the fact that the continued deterioration of the quality of elections and governance in Nigeria may raise unrealistic public expectations from the Situation Room to intervene and push for immediate reforms. The inability of the Platform to meet the unrealistic expectations can be perceived as a failure, and might lead to loss of public confidence and a collapse of the entire project. Meanwhile, the current situation throws the Situation Room into a programmatic dilemma. A shift from the strategy of collaboration to confrontation by the Platform will negate its overall programme design. Yet, continued collaboration with discredited state institutions could undermine the reputation and credibility of the Situation Room. Lastly, the relevance of the Situation Room is challenged by the proliferation of Situation Rooms, undermining the main reason for setting up the Situation Room in the first place, which is to provide a coordination platform for civil society engagement on electoral and governance issues.

### **b. Programme management**

The evaluation noted that the Situation Room has an appropriate management structure, which enables effective decision-making as well as programme monitoring and supervision. However, it identified major gaps, one of which is the need to strengthen the relationship between the different components of the Platform (members, Steering Committee, Conveners, Secretariat) through improved communication and coordination. In particular, the evaluation stressed the need to further define and improve internal communication, workflow, reporting system, control

mechanisms, succession planning, transition management, and leadership development. It recommended that the full governance structure of the Situation Room should be clearly defined and documented. This involves a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of management (Members, Steering Committee, Conveners, Secretariat) and institutionalization of the Platform's intervention principles, practices, and procedures.

### **c. Effectiveness and efficiency**

The evaluation found that the Situation Room was effective in delivering the main outcome of its intervention – “to strengthen civil society demand for electoral and governance reforms in Nigeria.” It particularly noted that the flexibility of the Situation Room's interventions, which enabled the Platform to respond to emerging electoral and governance issues, contributed to the success. However, the evaluation observed a tension between responding to emerging issues and sticking to a good work plan. While flexibility is desirable, it should be complementary to detailed plans that specify the degree to which adjustments can be made during implementation of interventions. The evaluation called for accurate assessment of needs and strict implementation of intervention plans, but with the understanding that these can be adjusted to changing circumstances. Annual or quarterly work plans should be well defined, leaving only marginal room for amendment of activities. When work plan changes are required, such changes must be approved by the Steering Committee even if this calls for extraordinary meetings. To mitigate the effects of environmental changes and fluctuations

in cost, mechanisms should be put in place to periodically monitor and assess the socio-political and economic environments in which the intervention is taking place.

### **d. Sustainability**

The evaluation concluded that the Situation Room is generally sustainable. The Platform's sustainability is based on the fact that its members were involved in the incubation of the idea of a Situation Room and continue to be involved in redefining the mission and implementing the interventions of the Platform. A critical indicator of ownership, as noted by the evaluation, is that many Situation Room members see the platform not just as a development programme but as a movement. The Situation Room's sustainability is further enhanced by the institutional structure of the Platform, particularly the democratic and inclusive method of selecting the leadership, that is, conveners and Steering Committee members. Although the Situation Room appears sustainable, the evaluation maintained that empowering local partners and promoting their interest in and ownership of the Platform is necessary to enhance sustainability. In addition, it insists that the Situation Room must commit to preserving its duality (that is, converging the viewpoints of civil society groups while allowing them to maintain their identity) in order to remain competitive and sustainable.

On the whole, the 2020 evaluation of the Situation Room concluded that a substantive revision of the interventions of the Platform is necessary based on a reflection of the activities

implemented and the outcomes achieved. It suggested that the revision should pay attention to programme scope and design, programme planning and strategy, managing partnerships, especially creating opportunities for technical support and capacity building of members, and improving communication.

## Organizational Assessment

To support the strategic planning process, the Situation Room conducted a systematic organizational assessment. Below are key highlights derived from an internal and external analysis of the organization based on the SWOT tool.

### SWOT: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats



## Emerging Trends and Challenges

Since Nigeria transitioned to civil rule in 1999, the country has made considerable progress in its pursuit of democratic governance. The progress is marked by regular elections, a willingness to engage in electoral and governance reforms, and marginal improvements in the

growth of both the public and private sectors, which have provided new opportunities. The progress, notwithstanding, several challenges persist. The challenges are summarized below.

- Declining credibility of elections arising from lack of internal party democracy, gaps in election preparation, flawed

- organization, non-compliance with electoral laws, regulations, and procedures, poor management of election technology, allegations of fraud, disputes over results, breach of election security, and judicial intervention in elections.
- Declining performance and effectiveness of the government, reflecting in widespread corruption, mismanagement of public funds, misplaced priorities, a lack of policy continuity and effective implementation, failure to provide basic services, weak revenue generation, ineffective bureaucracy, inability to recognize systemic risks, and weak transparency and accountability.
- Deterioration of socio-economic conditions occasioned by economic mismanagement, high inflation, rising cost of living, increasing poverty, and widening socio-economic inequality.
- Increasing state fragility and escalation of insecurity, especially in the areas of terrorism, banditry, crime and criminality, kidnapping, humanitarian crises and displacement, communal conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, and sexual and gender-based violence.
- Inadequate inclusion of women, youth, people with disability, and other marginalized groups in leadership and social-economic development initiatives, resulting in limited access to essential resources, poverty, marginalization in decision-making processes, and increased vulnerability to crime and social vices.
- Inadequate penetration and uptake of technology, and its utilization to advance innovations in governance, communication, and citizens' mobilization.

## EMERGING TRENDS & CHALLENGES

In the past few years, some West Africa Member States have made commendable progress in the pursuit of democratic governance, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and human security, such as successful elections in Ghana, The Gambia, and Liberia, as well as some marginal economic growth in public and private sector, leading up to new opportunities.



## Insights from Programme Context Analysis

The findings and recommendations from the evaluation of the Situation Room's interventions 2010-2020, and the analysis of current and emerging trends and challenges to democratic governance in Nigeria, have informed the identification of several competencies and needs. The following are key insights from the programme context analysis.

- The Situation Room's vision and mission remain relevant in the context of current and emerging realities.
- The Situation Room's intervention is focused on strengthening the capacity of civil society to demand electoral and governance reform and deliver the essential support required by state institutions to improve performance.
- The Situation Room's scope of influence needs to go beyond electoral governance to include supporting citizens' groups and state institutions to focus on issues relating to social and economic governance, including poverty, public service delivery, conflicts, humanitarian crises, and natural resource governance.
- The Situation Room's capacity-building programme should continue to focus on empowering member organizations and other strategically identified citizens' groups, coalitions, or networks, and will be extended to support state institutions, to enhance democratic governance in Nigeria.
- The Situation Room needs to continue to be driven by the quest to garner, produce, and share knowledge, and to function as

a thought leader and a knowledge hub on elections and governance in Nigeria.

- The Situation Room needs to improve its ability, and that of other citizens' groups, to mobilize resources and partnerships to enhance democratic governance in Nigeria and strengthen the sustainability of the Platform.
- The Situation Room needs to enhance its capacity, and that of other citizens' groups, to embrace technological innovations and adopt technological solutions to improve access to information and communication, citizens' participation in governance and socio-economic development processes, and advocacy and influencing.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF INSIGHTS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL AND INTERNAL SCAN

The findings and recommendations from the evaluation of WACSI's 2018-2022 strategic plan, and the analyses of current and emerging realities in the West African civil society space have informed the identification of capacity needs of civil society

WACSI's vision and mission remain relevant in the context of current and emerging realities

WACSI's domain of engagement is focused on strengthening the capacity of civil society as a sector or ecosystem, encompassing all actors in the civil society space – organised and/or organic.

WACSI's scope of influence needs to go beyond political/social governance, to include supporting civil society groups that focus on economic and natural resource governance, including climate change and resilience

WACSI needs to enhance its internal digitalisation capacity and also support civil society to strengthen their access to, and the use of technology to influence policy and enhance citizen participation in governance and socio-economic development processes in the region.

WACSI needs to credibly demonstrate its impact in terms of SDG Progress Indicators that require civic participation, including and especially Goals 16 and 17

Impact of climate change in West Africa is getting worse with more frequent flooding in the coastal areas, and longer spells of drought in the Sahel regions

WACSI needs to revamp, integrate, and digitize its M&E, Learning, Knowledge Management and Communications architecture/systems

WACSI's capacity building approach will continue to focus on stakeholder-groups and organisations, capacitating a set of strategically identified CSOs, civil society coalitions or networks in the West Africa

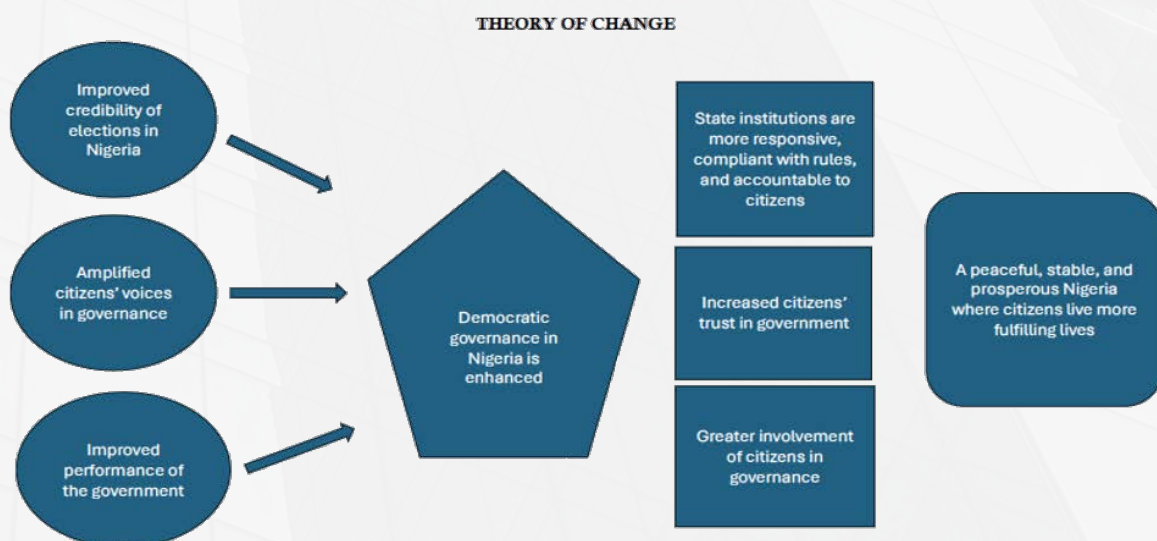
WACSI will continue to be driven by a search for alternative, African, indigenous knowledge, philosophy, and approaches, and function as a thought leader and a knowledge hub on African and context-relevant approaches to civil society

WACSI's effectiveness will surely continue to be measured in terms of the enhanced ability of civil society in West Africa to raise resources and mobilise partnerships for their sustainability.

# CORE STRATEGY AND THEORY OF CHANGE

One key element that drives Situation Room’s interventions is the Platform’s theory of change. The thrust of the theory of change is the belief that democratic governance is feasible and can be sustainable in Nigeria if activities are designed to mobilize stakeholders in civil society, government, and the private sector to respond to the three core pillars of democratic governance, namely elections, voice, and governance, through a strategy of demand and supply. While the demand side empowers citizens and citizens’ groups to advocate for reforms and improvements in democratic governance, the supply side addresses capacity deficits that limit the delivery of democratic governance. To enhance democratic governance, the Situation Room’s interventions will focus on improving

the quality of elections to make them more credible, expanding participatory governance by amplifying citizens’ voices in governance, and making government more effective by improving the performance of state institutions. The Situation Room’s theory of change is therefore based on the assumption that if the credibility of elections is improved, citizens’ voices are amplified, and the government’s performance is improved, then democratic governance in Nigeria will be enhanced, leading to more responsive, rule-compliant, and accountable state institutions; increased citizens’ trust in government, and greater involvement of citizens in governance. All these, in turn, would lead to a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous society where citizens can live more fulfilling lives.



## CORE PROGRAMME FOCUS



# PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO AND PLANS

To realize its theory of change, the Situation Room will frame its interventions around specific strategic priorities and objectives derived from its core strategy.

## Strategic Priorities

Based on the theory of change, the Situation Room will pursue the following strategic priorities to achieve its overall goal for the 2025-2027 period:

1. Strengthen its capacity, and that of its members, to demand electoral and governance reforms in Nigeria.
2. Enhance the quality, focus, and delivery of programmes to ensure citizens' oversight of electoral and governance institutions.
3. Enhance its capacity and leverage partnerships and resources to undertake research and other activities to support electoral reform and improve government performance and effectiveness.
4. Strengthen its capacity, and that of its members, to leverage the use of technology, particularly with regard to garnering, producing, and sharing knowledge, as well as mobilizing, connecting, and influencing.
5. Increase its engagement with national and international actors in the field of development financing and international development cooperation to improve access to funding for democratic development programmes.
6. Work with state institutions to improve the operating environment of civil society groups, while deepening engagement with the private sector and local philanthropists to leverage funding and programmatic opportunities to enhance democratic governance.

## Strategic Objectives

Based on the theory of change, the Situation Room will pursue the following strategic objectives to achieve its overall goal for the 2025-2027 period:

### Strategic Objective 1: Improve the credibility of elections

#### Key actions

- Demanding and supporting electoral reforms at the federal, state, and local levels through, among other things, knowledge-based advocacy.
- Conducting and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct oversight of institutions responsible for elections.

- Influencing the responsible authorities to conduct audits and scrutiny of elections and electoral processes, and follow up with the implementation of the outcome of such audits and scrutiny.
- Conducting and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct election observation using state-of-the-art methods and tools, and based on international best practices.
- Conducting and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct civic and voter education programmes using various media, especially digital media.
- Strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of civil society groups to collate, document, and disseminate feedback and learning from all elections conducted in Nigeria.
- Conducting, and mobilizing citizens' groups to conduct, community outreach and education programmes that aim at mobilizing the people to demand improved governance.
- Deepening, extending, and creating new opportunities for citizens' involvement in governance.
- Deepening and extending networking, collaboration, and partnerships with and among local organizations and citizens' groups.
- Strengthening the knowledge capacity of Situation Room members and other citizens' groups to support policy analysis and advocacy.

### **Strategic Objective 2: Amplify citizens' voice in governance**

#### **Key actions**

- Supporting citizens and citizens' groups to expand their voices in governance through their involvement in targeted outreach campaigns and engagement, especially on issues affecting the Youth, Women, People with Disability, and other marginalized groups.
- Strengthening the capacity of citizens and citizens' groups to leverage technology and other critical resources in expanding and creating inclusive platforms for dialogue.
- Strengthening the organizational and technical capacity of citizens and citizens' groups to be involved in local governance.

### **Strategic Objective 3: Improve the government's performance**

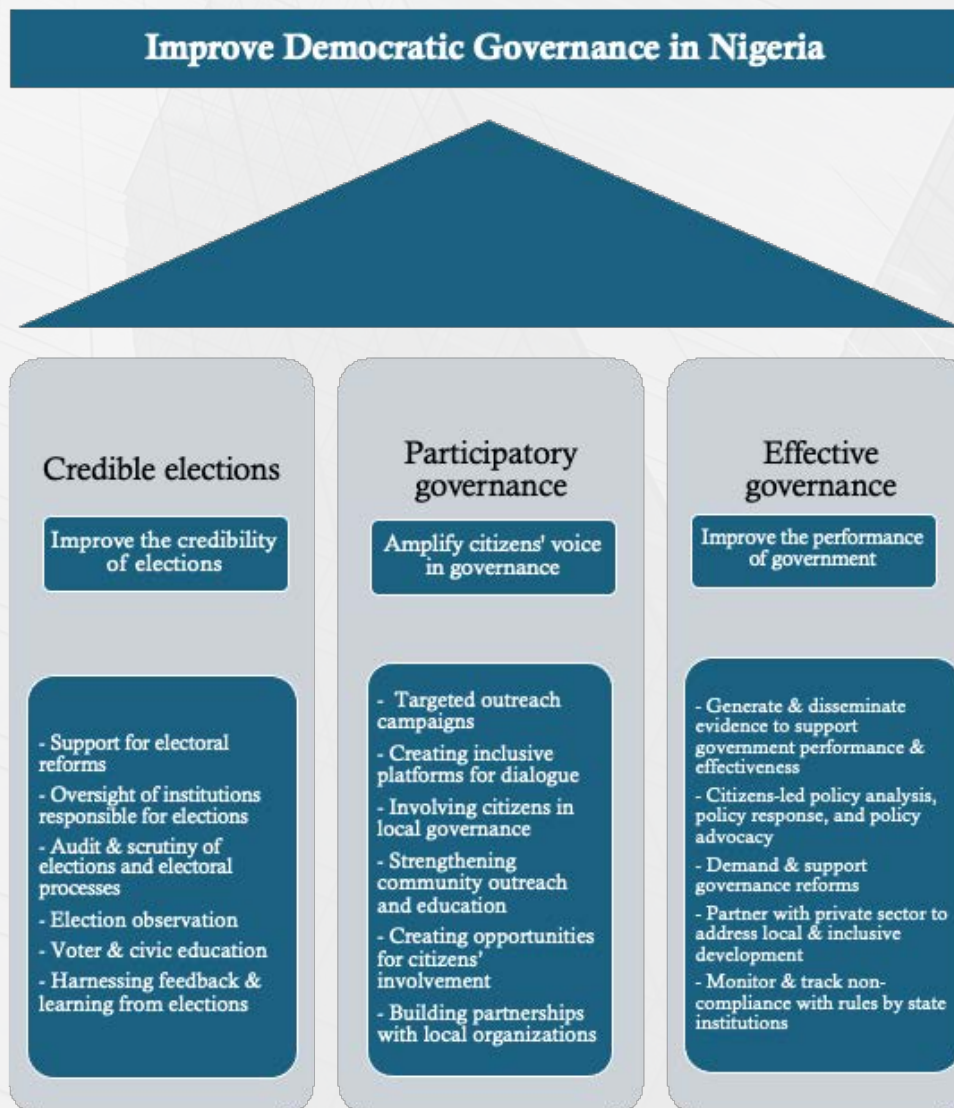
#### **Key actions**

- Generating and disseminating evidence to support and substantiate the government's performance and effectiveness.
- Supporting and initiating programmes to promote citizens-led policy analysis, policy response, and policy advocacy.
- Demanding and supporting governance reforms at the federal, state, and local levels through, among other things, knowledge-based advocacy.
- Strengthening and creating new partnerships with the private sector to engage in programmes that address issues relating to, among other things, the promotion of local socio-economic and inclusive development, local content, and ease of doing business.

- Strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of civil society groups to monitor and track rule compliance by state institutions, and audit and document the rule compliance profile of relevant institutions.

The implementation approach of the Situation Room’s interventions will combine

a conventional, “planned for” and a “flexible process” approach. In other words, the interventions will be designed to combine firm commitments to specific activity streams through the intervention cycle with the flexibility to respond strategically to issues emerging from the environment and/or highlighted by key stakeholders.



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES /KEY ACTIONS

INPUTS	PROCESSES	RESULTS		
Resources and Assumptions	Strategy/Key actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expanding and diverse membership with a national spread</li> <li>▪ Expertise and resourcefulness of members</li> <li>▪ Astute and committed leadership</li> <li>▪ Skilled and dedicated staff</li> <li>▪ Requisite funding</li> <li>▪ Scalable physical and technological infrastructure</li> </ul> <p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is value in people power - CSOs mobilization is a source of power</li> <li>▪ Knowledge is a source of power</li> <li>▪ Situation Room has a convening power</li> </ul>	<p><b>Credible elections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for electoral reforms</li> <li>▪ Oversight of institutions responsible for elections</li> <li>▪ Audit &amp; scrutiny of elections and electoral processes</li> <li>▪ Election observation</li> <li>▪ Voter &amp; civic education</li> <li>▪ Harnessing feedback &amp; learning from elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # of advocacy activities for electoral reforms completed</li> <li>▪ # of activities to support electoral reforms completed</li> <li>▪ # of oversight engagements with institutions responsible for elections</li> <li>▪ # of advocacy activities for election audits &amp; scrutiny completed</li> <li>▪ # of election assessment &amp; observation statements &amp; reports</li> <li>▪ # of civic &amp; voter education engagements</li> <li>▪ # of feedback &amp; learning activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nigerian elections are more credible</li> <li>▪ Positive changes in voter behaviour</li> <li>▪ Increase in voter turnout</li> <li>▪ Increased citizens' trust in elections and electoral processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More responsive, rule-compliant, and accountable state institutions</li> <li>▪ Increased citizens' trust in government</li> <li>▪ Greater involvement of citizens in governance</li> </ul> <p>As a result, the society is stable, there is economic growth, and Nigerians are able to live more fulfilling lives.</p>

	<p><b>Participatory governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targeted outreach campaigns</li> <li>▪ Creating inclusive platforms for dialogue</li> <li>▪ Expanding capacity for citizens' involvement in local governance</li> <li>▪ Strengthening community outreach and education</li> <li>▪ Creating opportunities for citizens' involvement in governance</li> <li>▪ Building networks, collaborations partnerships with local organizations</li> <li>▪ Strengthening capacity for policy analysis and advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # of targeted outreach programmes completed</li> <li>▪ # of inclusive platforms for dialogue created</li> <li>▪ # of capacity building programmes for citizens' involvement in governance completed</li> <li>▪ # of community outreach and education programmes completed</li> <li>▪ # of programmes for citizens' involvement in governance completed</li> <li>▪ # of networks, collaborations, and partnerships with local organizations created</li> <li>▪ # of programmes to build policy analysis &amp; advocacy capacity completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greater involvement by citizens and citizens' groups in governance</li> <li>▪ Increase in citizens awareness &amp; knowledge of governance issues</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Effective governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generate &amp; disseminate evidence to support government performance &amp; effectiveness</li> <li>▪ Citizens-led policy analysis, policy response, and policy advocacy</li> <li>▪ Demand &amp; support governance reforms</li> <li>▪ Partner with private sector to address local &amp; inclusive development</li> <li>▪ Monitor &amp; track non-compliance with rules by state institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # of programmes to generate &amp; disseminate evidence on government performance &amp; effectiveness</li> <li>▪ # of performance reviews completed</li> <li>▪ # of project assessment completed</li> <li>▪ # of activities promoting citizens-led policy analysis, response, &amp; advocacy</li> <li>▪ # of input to policy &amp; institutional reforms</li> <li>▪ # of engagement with private sector to address local &amp; inclusive development</li> <li>▪ # of activities/reports on non-compliance with rules by state institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government institutions are more effective</li> <li>▪ Increased institutional and policy performance</li> <li>▪ Government institutions more compliant to rules</li> <li>▪ Government institutions are more responsive and accountable to citizens</li> </ul>	

# BUSINESS MODEL AND FINANCIAL PLANS

**F**inancing the Situation Room's programme plans and supporting its administration and infrastructure will require a huge outlay of resources. The Situation Room is aware of its financial needs and, therefore, will explore diverse approaches in resource mobilization within the plan period. The Platform will continue to rely on the generous support of its development partners and donors. However, it will explore new funding and programming opportunities with the private sector, state institutions, and philanthropic organizations. Importantly, the Situation Room will encourage its members to be more active in resource mobilization to support the vision and mission of the Platform. To this end, the Situation Room will provide its members with capacity building and other forms of support to enable them to engage in meaningful fundraising.

The Situation Room will actively engage the development partners and donors with the goal of maintaining existing relationships and building new strategic relationships. The Platform will hold formal and informal meetings and engagements to discuss and assess programme priorities/agenda and consider funding possibilities. The Situation Room will encourage joint development of project proposals among its members and other partners, as well as by a group of members, in response to an emerging

issue or in response to requests for proposals by donors and development partners.

The Situation Room's resource mobilization strategy will emphasize diversification of its funding base and prioritization of multi-year funding for the realization of its vision and mission. In this plan period, the Situation Room will adopt a complementary fundraising strategy that targets the organised private sector, government institutions, and philanthropic organizations that share in the vision and mission of the Platform. In this regard, impact-driven concept notes and proposals that build on the gains made through Situation Room's interventions and respond to emerging trends and challenges will be developed and shared with the target organizations. The Situation Room will particularly encourage its member organizations to take advantage of consultancy opportunities to raise funds.

The Situation Room will prioritize and improve its financial management and control systems and mechanisms to ensure efficient resource allocation and utilization, as well as effective budget monitoring and control. The 2020 evaluation of the Situation Room's interventions acknowledged that deployment of resources in tranches and on time ensured efficient project implementation, and that earmarking of funds

for specific activities ensured efficiency in resource utilization. The Situation Room will maintain these best practices and improve on all aspects of its financial management. Audit and control functions will be strengthened through the work of internal and external auditors. The Situation Room will continue to rely on the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), which hosts its secretariat, for support in financial management. The 2020 evaluation noted that the resources deployed between 2010 and 2020 were properly managed by PLAC based on its capacity and experience in managing project funds. The hosting of the Situation Room Secretariat by PLAC allowed for efficient utilization of human and material resources because the personnel and infrastructural resources of PLAC were sometimes deployed for the administration of the Platform.

The Situation Room will strive to maintain adequate and accurate financial records and information of its operations. As a matter of priority, quarterly narrative and financial reports of programme activities will be properly kept. Appropriate quarterly reports of the Situation Room programmes showing progress, results, challenges, and lessons learned will be produced and properly documented. Project reports will be properly presented in qualitative and quantitative forms using the Logical Framework to show comparison across similar periods. Periodic reports will be received from sub-grantees to monitor and evaluate progress, results, challenges, and lessons learned of projects of the sub-grantees. The secretariat will ensure that financial information matches project structure (objectives, outputs,

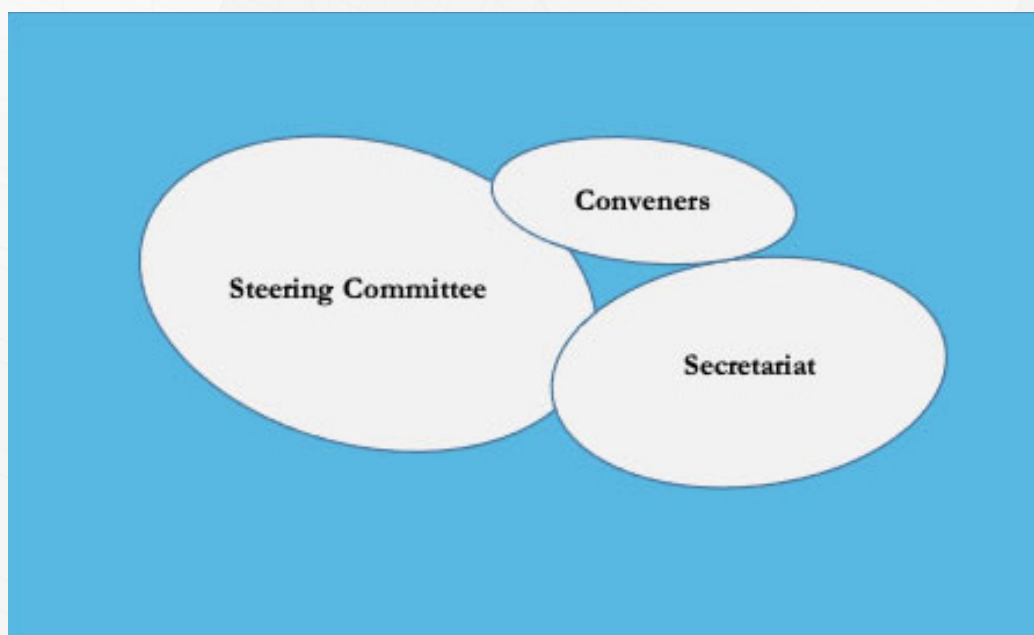
activities), and that the information is kept together with the matching and comparison of financial data across various periods.

Through the efficient management and leadership style of the Conveners, Steering Committee, and the Secretariat, the Situation Room will ensure value for money in all its interventions. To reduce cost, arrangements for Situation Room programmes will be made well ahead of time. Collaboration with and among member organizations in the implementation of interventions will facilitate economies of scale. The adoption of a sub-granting strategy will facilitate the implementation of Situation Room interventions at the local levels at low cost. Sub-granting will also enable capacity building and sustainability, and facilitate learning by the Situation Room members at low risk, given that the risks of project implementation will be mitigated by PLAC.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Three main bodies are responsible for managing the Situation Room and implementing its interventions. These are the Steering Committee, the Conveners, and the Secretariat. While trying to entrench this structure, the Situation Room allows for flexibility in the roles and responsibilities of these bodies to accommodate innovations, foster synergy among its members, and ensure the realization of the programme objectives in a constantly changing electoral and governance environment. The diagram below represents the management structure of the Situation Room.

## Management Structure of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room



### The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the apex decision-making body of the Situation Room. It is composed of fifteen organizations selected from the Situation Room members. The Steering Committee members represent Situation Room members on a thematic and geopolitical basis. Nine Steering Committee

members are selected based on their thematic area of work, while six members are selected on the basis of one from each of Nigeria's geopolitical zones. All former conveners and selected foundation members serve in the Steering Committee as ex officio members to provide institutional memory and guidance.

In 2014, the Situation Room decided that appointments to the Steering Committee would be by election to allow for greater transparency and make the process more democratic. Members of the Steering Committee serve a two-year term. The adoption of the elective principle in the composition of the Steering Committee is aimed at enhancing the sustainability of the Platform by ensuring that leadership succession follows a known and established process, and that the Situation Room would outlive its present members.

Despite the progress made regarding the structuring of the Steering Committee, several gaps remain. In the first place, the mandate and the roles of the Steering Committee are still being tinkered with several years after the establishment of the Platform. The constant evolution of the mandate and role of the Situation Room limits structured engagement among Steering Committee members and between the Steering Committee and the other management structures of the Situation Room. Additionally, the documentation and routinization of the internal operations and activities of the Steering Committee need improvement. In this Plan period, the Situation Room will focus on systematizing and improving the operations of the Steering Committee.

### **The Conveners**

The Situation Room is led by a convener, supported by two co-conveners. This leadership structure is a product of evolution and innovation. In the first four years of its existence, the Situation Room was led by only one convener, Clement Nwankwo, the Executive Director of PLAC, who served as

the Convener of the Situation Room from the inception of the platform in 2010. In 2014, he was joined by Esther Uzoma as co-convener. Clement Nwankwo stepped down as the convener of the Situation Room in 2020, making way for the election of Esther Uzoma as the convener. The emergence of Esther Uzoma was followed by further restructuring of the Situation Room's leadership structure with the introduction of a second co-convener position. Between 2020 and 2023, the Situation Room elected two more conveners. Ene Obi was elected in March 2021 following the demise of Esther Uzoma earlier that year, while Y.Z. Ya'u was elected in June 2023 at the end of Ene Obi's tenure. This smooth transition of leadership has brought stability and progress to the Platform.

The Situation Room has ensured that its conveners are highly reputable and well-respected civil society activists with a wealth of experience in CSO coalition building and engagement. The conveners have demonstrated strong leadership capacity and unwavering integrity in the management of the Situation Room. Their experience, leadership capacity, resourcefulness, and integrity have contributed immensely to the success of the Situation Room. The convening power and traction of the Situation Room in the development community draw largely from the character and standing of its conveners.

However, like other management structures of the Situation Room, the roles and responsibilities of the conveners are constantly evolving and are still being formalized. It appears that the flexibility the Situation Room applies in

managing its organization and programming is a major burden on the conveners, who have to use their personal initiative and tact to manage the platform and maintain a balance in the way they function vis-à-vis the Steering Committee, the Secretariat, and other stakeholders.

The fact that the Situation Room conveners are usually longstanding civil society activists and, most times, leaders of their own organizations sometimes makes it difficult to discern voices or positions on issues. The Situation Room conveners struggle with the delicate task of defining when they speak as individuals, leaders of their own organizations, or conveners of the Situation Room. The reality is that the influence of the Situation Room is so strong that the position of Convener tends to overshadow all the other identities of the person who assumes the position.

This poses a major strategic challenge for the Situation Room. The success and survival of the Platform depend largely on how its leaders are perceived within and outside the Platform. The Situation Room has thrived under the leadership of successive conveners. However, considering that the tenure of the convener is relatively short (two years), the Platform will be constantly subjected to the pain of finding and selecting capable leaders every other year. This is an issue the Situation Room will have to deal with in this Plan period. The relevance, influence, and traction of the platform rest on the reputation, experience, leadership capacity, resourcefulness, and credibility of whoever leads the Situation Room.

## **The Secretariat**

The Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) hosts the Secretariat of the Situation Room. The secretariat performs the day-to-day functions of the Platform. It supports the conveners in managing the members, coordinates the activities of the Situation Room, and handles its communication and record-keeping. There is a consensus among internal and external stakeholders that the Secretariat has demonstrated strong capacity in dealing with the dynamics of coalition management and programme implementation, and that it has done so creditably since 2010. There is also a shared view that the Secretariat has been effective in mobilizing resources in a resource-scarce environment, managing donor relations with diligence, and administering the Platform with integrity and professionalism.

Over the years, the Secretariat has grappled with several challenges, some of which continue to persist. In the first place, the overall flexibility of the Situation Room's governance makes it hard to subject the Secretariat to a documented procedure and practice code. As a result, the Secretariat may inadvertently stretch its roles and responsibilities, leading to a risk of administrative conflict between the Secretariat and other management structures.

Furthermore, the Situation Room is working to define and manage the relationship between the Secretariat and PLAC, which hosts it. In the past, there have been concerns that PLAC is overly involved in the running of the Secretariat, as the Secretariat staff are also PLAC staff. This strips the Situation Room Secretariat of its independence and identity, and creates the risk of internal issues within the Situation

Room affecting PLAC, while institutional risks within PLAC could easily affect the operations of the Situation Room. Additionally, there is the possibility that PLAC's staff, who also run the Situation Room Secretariat, may be overburdened and may lose focus.

An additional challenge faced by the Secretariat is the handling of the Platform's internal communication. The Secretariat has been criticized for failing to keep up with communications in-between meetings,

depriving members of the Platform of essential feedback and follow-up with some of the issues discussed in the Situation Room meetings. Although the Secretariat reaches Situation Room members through phone calls, text, and WhatsApp messages, sometimes there are delays in communication, affecting the Platform's mobilization and action. In general, the Situation Room is aware of these challenges and will work assiduously to address them during this Plan period.









# ABOUT

PLAC hosts the secretariat of the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room and is a member of its steering committee. The Situation Room provides a co-ordinating platform for civil society engagement on governance issues. It is also a platform for information sharing among civil society groups working on elections and topical national issues. It intervenes in the electoral process by promoting collaboration, proactive advocacy and rapid response to crisis in the electoral process. The Situation Room provides a forum of advance planning, scenario building, evidence based analysis, constructive engagement with various stakeholders in the electoral process and observation of elections.

## **Situation Room Secretariat:**

c/o Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)  
Plot 451 Gambo Jimeta Crescent,  
Guzape District, Abuja, Nigeria

**Telephone:** 09095050505, 09032999919

**Web:** <https://situationroomng.org>

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/situationroomnigeria](https://facebook.com/situationroomnigeria)

**Twitter:** @situationroomng