



**END FGM**  
EUROPEAN NETWORK



End FGM EU



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027



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# METHODOLOGY

End FGM EU commissioned ODS (Organisation Development Support) to facilitate the strategic development process to be finalised before the end of 2022. Each phase of the process ensured the active participation of the Secretariat, Members, Board Members and Ambassadors both in consultations and in drafting the strategic plan document.

The methodology involved **four key phases** (inception, data collection, drafting the plan and developing the M&E framework) and a series of activities.

The consultations included: a survey to Members, Ambassadors and the Secretariat to scope the initial direction of the strategic plan, interviews with internal and external key stakeholders, in-person workshops and focus group discussions with Members as well as specific sessions with the Secretariat and Board Members to check the direction in which the strategy is going, and to integrate new insights and feedback. The M&E framework will be developed in 2023, based on findings from the consultation phase in 2022 and on additional input from a smaller number of internal stakeholders.



# INTERNAL NOTE

This document outlines the proposed updated priorities and strategic objectives for the upcoming 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Based on feedback from the Membership and Secretariat through the various consultations, it is clear that the priorities and objectives of the current strategic plan (ending in 2022) remain **relevant**. However, stakeholders also clarified that the priorities and objectives are vague and therefore the 2023-2027 strategy should refocus the current priorities and objectives.





# CONTEXT: END FGM EU'S ROLE

The End FGM European Network (End FGM EU) is an umbrella network of over 30 European organisations based in over 15 European countries working to sustain European action to end female genital mutilation.

As a network organisation, End FGM EU is dedicated to being **the driving force of the European movement** to end FGM. It does so through:

## 01. INFLUENCING

European and international policy-makers to work towards the elimination of FGM; uniting the European movement to speak with one voice on ending FGM and channelling community voices and experiences to European discussions, consultations and legislative processes.



## 02. SUPPORTING & COORDINATING

its Members and Ambassadors by: enhancing their capacities to better advocate for change at their respective levels; creating useful connections at European level to consolidate their position as experts on FGM in relevant contexts; facilitating their participation in different fora; and designing and implementing projects to **advance transnational change**.

## 03. FACILITATING

the exchange of ideas, insights, experiences and skills across the Network and **encouraging joint collaboration** and efforts.

## 04. CONNECTING

all relevant actors in the field of FGM both in Europe and globally: building bridges and cooperation between communities, civil society organisations (CSOs), **professionals and EU and European stakeholders**, as well as connecting issues through partnering with network organisations addressing other GBV and gender equality or intersectional issues; and providing opportunities for joint initiatives, knowledge and experience sharing across networks and Members.



# WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

## I. POLICY AND DECISION-MAKERS

End FGM EU will actively engage with policy-makers to advance the end FGM agenda.

At **European level**, it will continue to advance human rights-, child- and community-focused policy making and legislation, implementation, evaluation and reform, including with the European Parliament, the European Commission, Permanent Representations of EU Member States as well as the Council of Europe.

At **international level**, the Network will contribute to international debates and consolidate its position as the EU focal point on FGM-related issues, including with United Nations bodies. It will contribute to European and international debates, providing evidence-based information on FGM-related issues and disseminating practical solutions informed by communities' needs.



## II. PROFESSIONALS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

End FGM EU will enhance its cooperation with networks of professionals and service providers at European level — including health professionals, social workers, lawyers, police, and child protection officers — to facilitate **cross-country collaboration** and channel the voices of its Members and affected communities.

## III. CSOs AND NETWORKS

End FGM EU will sustain and further develop its partnerships and **strategic alliances** in the broader children's rights, women's rights and human rights communities within and beyond Europe. It will collaborate more strongly on advocacy, communications and programmes with organisations working on eliminating other Harmful Practices. It will foster cross-sector dialogue and knowledge exchange to build a collective force to end FGM, including with the **European Coalition** to end violence against women and girls, the Inter-regional Coalition to end FGM, the **Global Platform for Action** to end FGM/C, the Human Rights and Democracy Network and SDG Watch Europe.



## WHAT IS FGM?

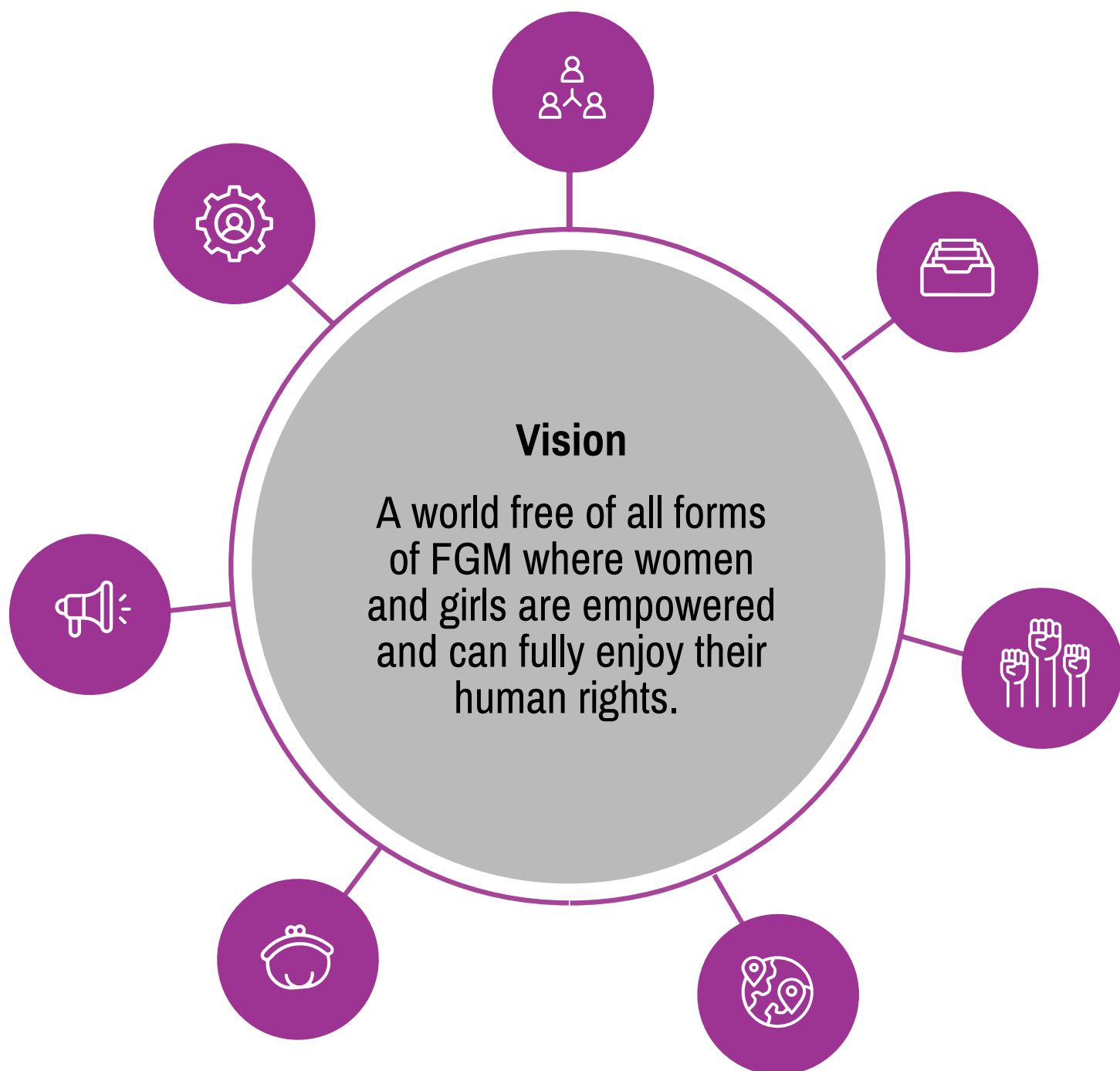
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving the removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Female genital mutilation is classified into four types: the partial or complete removal of the clitoris, of the labia minora and majora, the narrowing of the vaginal opening by joining the two sides of the wound, leaving only a small opening for urine and menstrual fluids, and any other procedures to the genitalia of women for non-medical purposes such as such as pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterisation.

FGM causes pain, infection, problems with sexual intercourse, problems with urination, problems with childbirth, and death. FGM is also defined by the **Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention**, which requires its **criminalisation**. Its Survivors have to be protected in accordance with the convention's support and protection measures in those Member States that have ratified the convention.

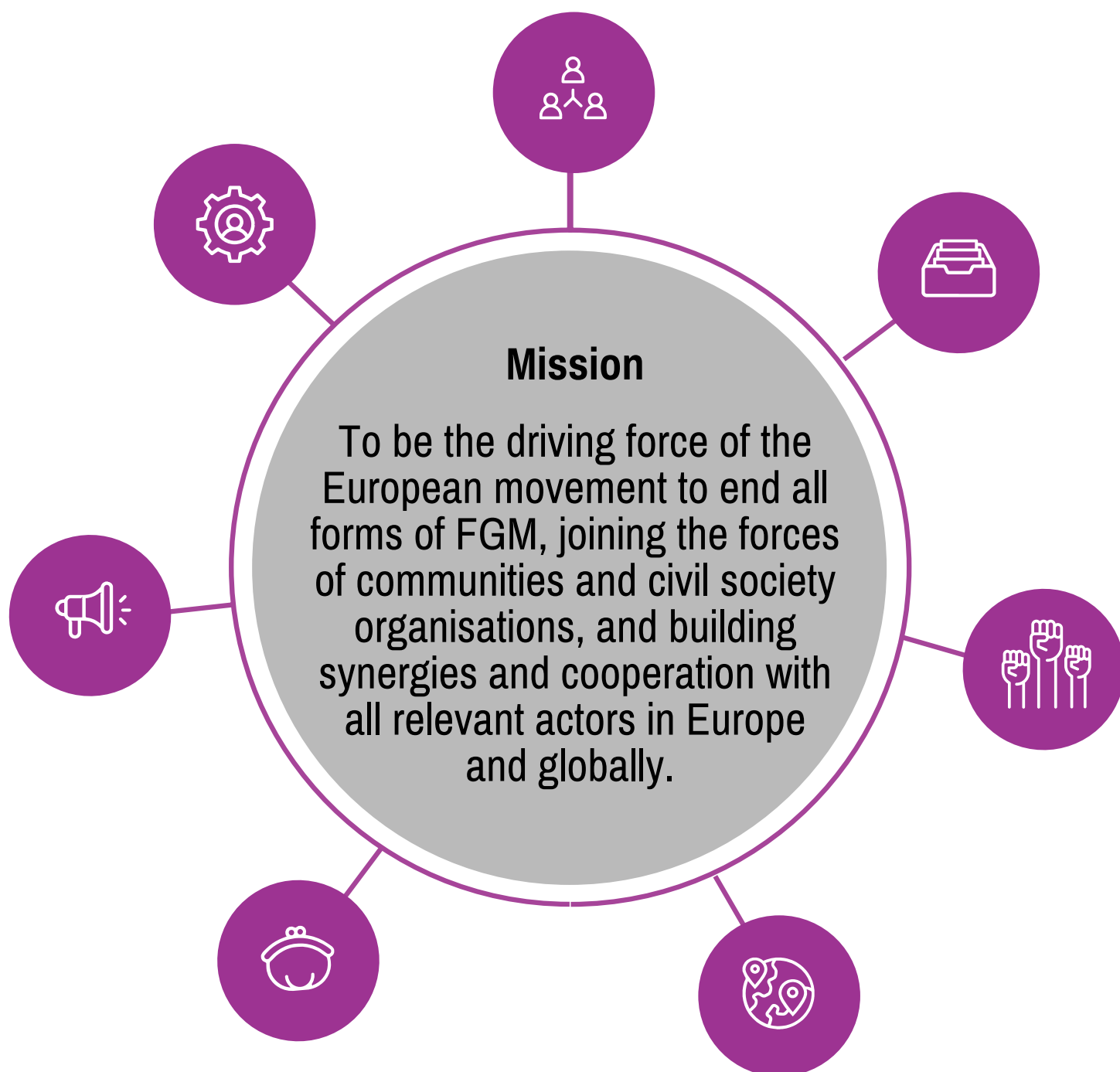


# VISION





# MISSION





# VALUES

**Use and promotion** of empowering, non-stigmatising language framed in human rights terminology

**Respect and promotion** of human rights & gender equality

**Ownership and participation** by Member organisations and affected communities

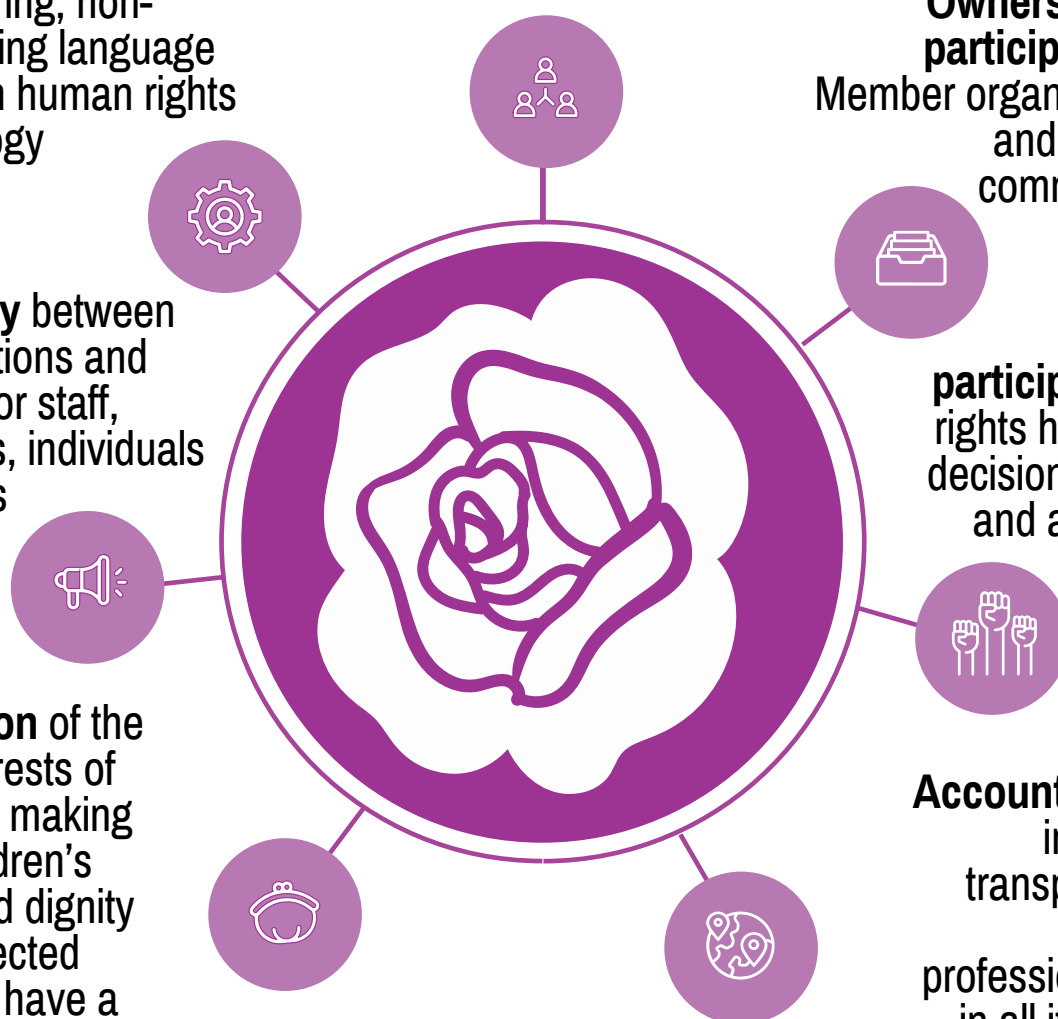
**Solidarity** between organisations and respect for staff, Members, individuals and allies

**Active participation** of rights holders in decision-making and activities

**Promotion** of the best interests of the child, making sure children's rights and dignity are respected and they have a say in all matters that affect them

**Accountability,** integrity, transparency and professionalism in all its work

**Commitment to an intersectional approach** which recognises the systemic and structural nature of discrimination and exclusion, driven by interrelated and intersecting power structures including racism, patriarchy and economic exploitation





# MAINTAINING THE FOCUS ON FGM WHILE CREATING BETTER CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER HARMFUL PRACTICES

Violence against women, including some harmful practices (e.g. child, early and forced marriage), is **rooted in gender inequalities** and subject to common international and regional norms and standards.

Placing the Network's work on FGM within broader efforts to end violence against women, including harmful practices, is essential in recognising the links and commonalities between these forms of violence.

Nevertheless, these forms of violence can take place in different contexts and also **require a tailored approach - through specific terminology and expert knowledge** - to avoid shortcuts that contribute to maintaining and spreading prejudices about these practices and to develop adapted solutions that are culturally and socially informed by local contexts.



In the new Strategy, End FGM EU will therefore continue to fulfil its mandate and its mission as the European network working to end FGM, while creating greater connections between FGM, violence against women and other harmful practices, both theoretically and through partnerships, in all areas of its work (**advocacy, communications and programmes**).

While End FGM EU is already connected to stakeholders that address other harmful practices and violence against women, over the next strategic period it will seek to strengthen this work through increasing exchanges and learning between the secretariats and membership of relevant European networks and **developing joint advocacy and projects**, without fundamentally changing its configuration and composition.

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# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## INTRODUCTION

After a six-year campaign to combat FGM in Europe, a network of 15 NGOs across 13 EU Member States joined together to form a membership organisation dedicated to keeping the movement going. They developed a network that would, as part of its mission, support a ***constellation of grassroots organisations*** working to end FGM and promote women's rights.

Created in 2014, End FGM EU has led campaigns in Europe to inform and **mobilise policymakers and media**, it has helped build the knowledge and skills of an array of stakeholders and offered a platform for Survivors and affected communities to engage directly with policymakers, the media, and the public.

From awareness raising on FGM as a European pressing concern, to policy victories and capacity building for institutions and individuals working on FGM, the Network has set a track record of advocacy and movement-building achievements over the last decade.



Among some of the major achievements, FGM was included in the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (commonly known as the “Istanbul Convention”).

In 2013, the European Commission adopted the first ever communication towards the elimination of FGM, recognising FGM as an issue within the EU.

From 2015 to present day, gender and human rights action plans, **gender equality strategies and resolutions** for which the Network has been consulted, were launched or adopted by the European Parliament, the European Commission and United Nations bodies, reflecting the vision of the End FGM European Network and incorporating key asks from the Network. These successes helped End FGM EU become **a trusted partner and a catalyst in its field**.

Today, the Network has grown into a stable umbrella organisation of over 30 European organisations based in over 15 European countries who share a vision of a world free of all forms of FGM, where women and girls are empowered and can fully enjoy their human rights.



It has contributed to strengthening a movement across Europe to end FGM, to building connections between Member NGOs and policymakers while developing programmes and advocating for a child-focused, rights-based approach to ending this harmful practice through awareness-raising, policies, legislation, and funding.

However, several factors have limited progress and impact over the past few years. Despite key policy achievements, promising discourses and commitments, **the rise of political extremism and the recurrence of crises** (political, financial, environmental and health) have represented serious obstacles to the prioritisation of the needs, work and challenges of organisations and communities combating FGM on the ground.

Refining its role, capacities and priorities in this new and demanding environment, the Network will seek to further unlock the potential of the grassroots level: by **strengthening the profile of Members and affected communities** and consolidating the work and visibility of End FGM EU.

It will ensure that FGM continues to be prioritised at European and national levels and that organisations and communities on the ground have the capacity to engage in collective advocacy and grassroots work, despite challenging circumstances.



With the aim of **accelerating transformative change**, it will support the efforts of diverse stakeholders working to end FGM through a systemic approach.

In the next 2023-2027 Strategy, End FGM EU will therefore contribute to sustained and growing impact in its field by **focusing on two main priorities** for which specific strategic objectives have been identified. These priorities will reinforce each other by combining external advocacy, communications and project partnerships, and internal network and capacity building.

- On the external front, End FGM EU will advance the end FGM agenda in Europe and beyond, ensuring a coordinated, human rights-based and child- and community-focused approach.
- At the same time, it will work internally to strengthen the movement to consolidate the network and strengthen its role as a sustainable, impactful collective force driving systemic change.



# PRIORITY 1 - ADVANCE THE END FGM AGENDA IN EUROPE, ENSURING A COORDINATED, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED, CHILD- AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED APPROACH

## Focus

In order to achieve lasting, systemic change, End FGM EU takes an integrated approach to advocate for European policies, legislation and funding to end the practice. **Acting as the European focal point of a global movement to end FGM**, the Network will also continue to contribute to global and cross-regional efforts to end the practice.

To help change to trickle down to EU and European countries, the Network will not only make policy recommendations and contribute to debates, but will also keep track of policy commitments and monitor the implementation of European legislation in national contexts through its Members, thereby holding States to account for their commitments.



The Network will partner with other organisations in fields related to ending FGM to implement projects that foster change and raise awareness across Europe.

By assembling and highlighting community experiences, good practices and lessons learned from the experience and expertise of its Members, Ambassadors and project partners, and promoting the voices of Survivors and affected communities at the European level, the Network will contribute to **evidence-based policy-making and legislation** and improve the understanding of the issue.

Efforts will be sustained to educate and mobilise policymakers, media, professionals and the public to take action to end FGM.

**Myths and misconceptions** can be detrimental both to the global movement against FGM, to women and girls in need of protection and support, and to affected communities that are already subject to discrimination and exclusion based on other factors such as race, ethnicity, residence status and economic status.

The Network will therefore continue to play an important role in developing, sharing, and disseminating language and terminology aimed at **avoiding stigmatisation and promoting the empowerment of Survivors** and affected communities.



## **Strategic Objectives**

**1.1 To influence policies and practices within and beyond Europe, End FGM EU will focus its efforts for the next five years on the following:**

1.1.1 Contribute to shaping European legislation, policy making, funding, national implementation (through Members and project partners) and monitoring on FGM and areas of relevance (e.g. gender equality, health, asylum, protection of victims, etc), holding duty-bearers accountable.

1.1.2 Step up collaboration with global and regional partners worldwide to end FGM by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**1.2 To improve understanding and support to end FGM, End FGM EU will focus on the following:**

1.2.1 Contribute to shifts in attitudes and perceptions of FGM-related issues through an empowering, non-stigmatising communication approach at EU level.

1.2.2 Raise awareness of FGM as a European issue and solidify the Network's position as the European reference on FGM.

1.2.3 Increase visibility of achievements and impact of the Network and its Members towards key stakeholders (decision-makers, media and professionals).



# PRIORITY 2 - CONSOLIDATE THE NETWORK AND STRENGTHEN ITS ROLE AS A SUSTAINABLE, IMPACTFUL COLLECTIVE FORCE DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

## Focus

Change cannot happen without CSO actors (Members) and the participation of the affected communities. Both can push for effective policies and help ensure that prevention and protection systems are adequate and effective.

In the new strategy, End FGM EU will work to strengthen the Network, **building on its existing capacities**, coordinating the development of new capacities and bringing Members closer together to act as one. It will work to sustain the Secretariat as the catalyst for the collective action of its Members and Ambassadors at the European level. It will seek to strengthen Members' technical and advocacy capacity to hold decision-makers to account and recognise emerging trends and needs, and to adapt their approaches and strategies accordingly.



The Network will foster a trusting and collaborative environment for Members to exchange ideas, insights, experiences and skills, **leveraging the potential for collective action** and impact.

Moreover, the Network will continue to ensure the effective participation of affected communities in the European movement to end FGM, including through its Ambassadors Programme. By bringing their voices to wider audiences, End FGM EU will ensure these activists drive change both at European and national levels.

In recognition of the **interconnectedness** of issues and actors mobilised to end any form of gender-based violence, the Network will also aim to build strategic partnerships and alliances and **play a central role as a connective platform** between organisations, regions and sectors. Through stronger connection and mutual exchange with other organisations, End FGM EU will contribute to the elimination of FGM and other Harmful Practices with common and related underlying causes, through an intersectional approach.

By encouraging strategic alliances between Members and key stakeholders, the Network will help increase the relevance and impact of the advocacy, communications and programmatic work of all.



## **Strategic Objectives**

**2.1 To increase the Network's capacity to contribute to growing and sustained impact, End FGM EU will focus on the following for the next five years:**

2.1.1 Ensure efficient management, governance and sustainable financing of the Network and nurture a meaningful, participative and collaborative experience for Members.

2.1.2 Provide essential space for knowledge sharing, effective collaboration and capacity-building to and between Members to support them in their work.

2.1.3 Empower and facilitate knowledge-sharing among Ambassadors and affected communities, to increase their advocacy impact and reach and bring their expertise to the Network's advocacy, communications and programmes efforts.

**2.2 For End FGM EU to develop coordinated and collective actions, it will:**

2.2.1 Support and increase engagement and exchange between Members and key stakeholders (incl. CBOs, CSOs, professionals, institutions, research centres) tackling FGM across Europe and worldwide, including in countries of origin.

2.2.2 Build alliances with strategic partners and institutions to foster mutual learning on interconnected issues and promote an intersectional approach to FGM and other relevant issues.

# ANNEXES - METHODOLOGY

PHASES	ACTIVITIES
<u>Inception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A short preliminary document review</li> <li>• An inception meeting</li> <li>• A briefing was held with the Secretariat, Board Members and a Member representative</li> </ul>
<u>Data Collection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A survey sent to Members, Associate Members and Ambassadors</li> <li>• 19 interviews with internal and external informants</li> <li>• An in-person workshop with Secretariat, Members, Assoc Members</li> <li>• A sensemaking session with the Secretariat and Board Members</li> <li>• Two focus group discussions (one on harmful practices and another one on organisational development) with Members and the Secretariat</li> <li>• One prioritisation session</li> </ul>
<u>Developing the new Strategy</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A draft plan integrating the feedback from the prioritisation session</li> <li>• A final note integrating the Secretariat's feedback</li> <li>• A validation workshop to present the final output</li> </ul>
<u>M&amp;E Framework</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be determined</li> </ul>

# ANNEXES - LOGFRAMES

## LOGFRAME PRIORITY 1

### **Objective 1.1**

**Influence policies and practices within and beyond Europe**

#### 1.1. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1.1.1 Contribute to shaping European legislation, policy making, funding, national implementation (through Members and project partners) and monitoring on FGM and areas of relevance (e.g. gender equality, health, asylum, protection of victims, etc), holding duty-bearers accountable

1.1.2 Step up collaboration with global and regional partners worldwide to end FGM by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

## 1.1 OUTCOMES

- Sustained attention to FGM at the European level, with legislation and policies specifically addressing the practice
- Inclusion of FGM in all relevant policies at EU level (gender equality, health, asylum, protection of victims, etc)
- Increased capacity of Members to follow and participate in effective implementation of European legislation and policies at national level
- Inclusion of voices and concerns of Members and Ambassadors, including community-based organisations, in EU spaces and consultations
- Increased funding and support for EU projects and programmes contributing to the elimination of FGM
- Continued collaborative programme work by the Network with European partners
- Reflection of expertise and experience of End FGM EU and its Members at international level, including in UN and inter-regional spaces

## **Objective 1.2**

### **Improve understanding and support to end FGM**

#### 1.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Contribute to shifts in attitudes and perceptions of FGM-related issues through an empowering, non-stigmatising communication approach at EU level

1.2.2 Raise awareness of FGM as a European issue and solidify the Network's position as the European reference on FGM

1.2.3 Increase visibility of achievements and impact of the Network and its Members towards key stakeholders (decision-makers, media and professionals)

## 1.2 OUTCOMES

- Continued recognition of FGM as a European issue
- Reflection of empowering, non-stigmatising terminology on FGM in European policies, legislation and debates
- Extended evidence-based expertise in the field of FGM for policy-making and improved programming, informed by the expertise of Members and by the affected communities on the ground
- Recognition of End FGM EU and Members' work, achievements (advocacy, communications and programmes) and impact by key stakeholders (decision-makers, media and professionals)

# LOGFRAME PRIORITY 2

## **Objective 2.1**

**Increase the Network's capacity to contribute to growing and sustained impact**

### 2.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**2.1.1** Ensure efficient management, governance and sustainable financing of the Network and nurture a meaningful, participative and collaborative experience for Members

**2.1.2** Provide essential space for knowledge sharing, effective collaboration and capacity-building to and between Members to support them in their work

**2.1.3** Empower and facilitate knowledge-sharing among Ambassadors and affected communities to increase their advocacy impact and reach and bring their expertise to the Network's advocacy, communications and programmes efforts

## 2.1 OUTCOMES

- Increased application of good management and governance practices in the running of the Network
- Sustainable and diverse funding of the Network
- Better informed and increasingly involved Membership in the Network's activities
- Increased participation and ownership of Members in the Network's capacity building and knowledge sharing activities
- Increased awareness of Members of key EU funding opportunities contributing to the elimination of FGM and development of joint projects to tackle FGM-related issues
- Increased direct dialogue for Ambassadors and affected communities with policymakers, the media, and the public

## **Objective 2.2**

### **Develop coordinated and collective actions**

#### 2.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 Support and increase engagement and exchange between Members and key stakeholders (incl. CBOs, CSOs, professionals, institutions, research centres) tackling FGM across Europe and worldwide, including in countries of origin

2.2.2 Build alliances with strategic partners and institutions to foster mutual learning on interconnected issues and promote an intersectional approach to FGM and other relevant issues

## 2.2 OUTCOMES

- Increased exchange between End FGM EU's Members and members of other relevant networks, as well as other key stakeholders within Europe and in countries of origin
- Increased collaboration (advocacy, communications and programmes) at Network and Member levels with strategic partners and institutions tackling topics at the intersection of FGM issues
- Better placement and conceptualisation of the Network's advocacy, communications and programmes on FGM within the broader framework of harmful practices, emphasising the common challenges and specificities



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