



WFSJ

World Federation of Science Journalists

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2024 Annual Report

October 20th, 2025



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Word from the WFSJ President



Dear colleagues,

At the start of 2024 I would never have imagined that I would end up becoming President of our Federation. I was one of five new members elected to the Board in late 2023, full of enthusiasm about contributing to the WFSJ's mission of supporting science journalists worldwide – especially those in low- and middle-income countries.

However, as 2024 began, several of us on the new Board grew increasingly concerned about the lack of transparency from the Federation's then leadership. Most troubling was that the elected Treasurer was repeatedly denied access to the Federation's finances, despite multiple requests.

Fortunately, the Federation was built on a solid foundation of good governance. As the elected representatives of our membership, Board members are empowered by [our bylaws](#) to remove any Officer at any time (Article 43.1). In June 2024, the Board exercised this power, passing a resolution to remove the President and Vice-President, and install a new administration focussed on transparency and accountability to members.

The new team acted swiftly, presenting the situation openly to our members during an online meeting where everyone could ask questions. The membership was highly supportive, as reflected by the surge of associations renewing their dues.

The year culminated with our Annual General Meeting at the World Science Forum in Budapest – the first in-person AGM for many years. There, the new administration received a resounding mandate from members to continue strengthening accountability and transparency within the Federation.

As we entered into 2025, the Board focus turned to our upcoming conference in South Africa, which promises to be a landmark event – the first time that the World Conference of Science Journalists will be held on African soil.

I hope to see you there!

Ben Deighton

2024 Highlights

Reconnecting with members: the Budapest General Assembly

The Annual General Meeting (AGM), held on 20 November 2024 at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest and online, brought together representatives from over 35 associations. Member associations expressed strong support for the Board's actions and provided input for the Federation's future direction.



“This unanimous support is truly inspiring,” said WFSJ President Ben Deighton. “It gives the Board a clear mandate to focus on building a successful World Conference of Science Journalists next year.”

The AGM marked a turning point following a leadership transition earlier this year and the election of four new Board members: Agatha Ngotho (Kenya), Debbie Ponchner (Costa Rica), Subhra Priyadarshini (India), and Aleida Rueda (Mexico). These new members shared their vision for the federation during the meeting, which also featured updates on key initiatives such as a project to develop ethical guidelines for science journalism and an African-led proposal to expand science journalism training across the continent.

Delegates from countries including Argentina, Australia, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Ivory Coast, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States participated in the AGM.



2025 World Conferences of Science Journalists



13TH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SCIENCE JOURNALISTS
1 – 5 DECEMBER 2025, CSIR ICC, PRETORIA, TSHWANE, SOUTH AFRICA

Science journalists from around the world will meet in South Africa from 1st to 5th December 2025.

This sentence means a lot!

Thanks to unprecedented commitments from members and the unrelenting work of our partners in South Africa and our board, science journalists from all over the world will meet again two years after the previous World Conference held in Medellin, in March 2023. Resetting the two-year cycle of the World Conference of Science Journalists after the 2019 - 2023 hiatus is a major accomplishment.

Over 200 speakers from 60 countries will travel to Pretoria to cover a diverse range of topics, including climate change, mental health, quantum physics, energy matters, the lithium debate, ocean health, endangered species, and research being conducted in Africa.

Field trips include stops at the Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) Biomanufacturing Industry Development Centre, Biodegradability Testing Facility, Learning Factory and Mobile Robotics Laboratory, and its Centre for Nanostructures and Advanced Materials, as well as to the University of Pretoria's (UP) Nuclear Medicine Research Infrastructure, Department of Zoology and Entomology, Engineering 4.0 facility and Faculty of Veterinary Science Onderstepoort Campus.

WCSJ2025 is hosted by the South African Science Journalists' Association (SASJA) and the Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa, an initiative and entity of the National Department of Science and Innovation, in collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

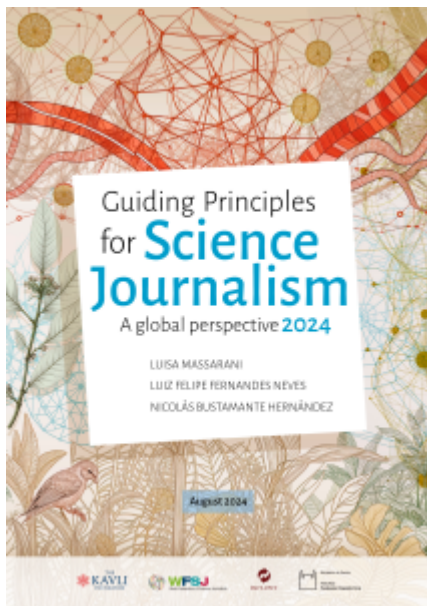
Probably an indication of the eagerness of science journalists to meet, the first World Conference of Science Journalists was held in Tokyo in 1992 while the World Federation of Science Journalists was incorporated, in Canada, only in April 2005.



Guiding Principles for Journalists Covering Science: Worth a visit!

In November 2024, at the Budapest General Assembly, the World Federation presented the results of some five years of surveys, consultations, and discussions on “Establishing the Boundaries of Ethics in Science Journalism”, a project funded by the Kavli Foundation in 2019.

In September, the Federation published the report synthesizing a worldwide survey directed by Luisa Massarani titled [“Guiding Principles for Science Journalism – A Global Perspective”](#). It joined a previous publication by Massarani: “Science Journalism in Latin America and the Caribbean: the perspective of science journalists”.



During the following two months, Vera Novais and her team of Moderators held a series of four online workshops in English, French, and Spanish, gathering comments, suggestions on Principles.

The final workshop was held in person, in English, on Nov. 19th, in Budapest.

A draft of Guiding Principles for Journalists Covering Science was presented and discussed at length during the Budapest General Assembly. The document will be again presented and discussed at the World Conference of Science Journalists, next December, in South Africa.

The [Ethics in Science Journalism](#) page of the WFSJ website is now an exceptional resource and treasure trove of documents and information.

It includes many documents and links to science journalism codes of ethics and legislation from some seventeen countries, see [Other guiding principles and codes of ethics from around the world](#).

The comprehensive webpage: [More resources to support journalists covering science](#) consists of four additional files. With its numerous tips, it represents a valuable handbook for science journalism:

- [Science journalism – guides and tipsheets](#)
- [Finding diverse sources](#)
- [Reporting on trauma and vulnerable communities](#)

- [Security and Safety for Journalists](#)

On the [WFSJ Resources](#) pages you will find a complete history of the project, including reports from initial workshops held in November 2019 at the World Science Forum in Budapest all the way to the update presentation during the WFSJ Budapest AGM in November 2024.

Fifth International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA)

Thanks to a grant from the International Network for Government Science Advice four science journalists: Jessica Ahedor, Ghana; Duncan Mboyah, Kenya; Tonny Abet, Uganda; and Irma (Tambuanan), Indonesia had the opportunity to meet with science advisers for all over the world in Kigali, in May 2024.

The World Federation of Science Journalists is thankful to Dr. Rémi Quirion, President of the INGSA, Chief Scientist of the Government of Québec, and a longtime supporter of the Federation.

Kavli Prize Week



A grant from the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters made it possible to award three travel scholarships to science journalists Vasiliki Michopoulou, from Greece, Anna Largos, from Mexico, and Rod McCullom from the United States to attend the Kavli Prize Week, in Oslo, in September 2024.

London (UK) to host the 2027 World Conference of Science Journalists

WFSJ member Association of British Science Writers (ABSW) will host the World Conference of Science Journalists in 2027.

Building Global Networks for a Stronger Profession is the WCSJ2027 theme chosen by our colleagues in the United Kingdom. The event will mark the 80th anniversary of the ABSW, most probably the second oldest science journalists association in the world³.

Can the UK beat the spectacular success of the 2009 World Conference of Science Journalists in London? They should. They will have had four years to prepare!



A Productive WFSJ Board

During 2024, the World Federation of Science Journalists needed to cut expenses to the bone. President Ben Deighton convinced his fellow board members to undertake a number of tasks. A trio of vice-presidents took responsibilities for key sectors of activities: Chhatra Karki with Projects, Joseph Mbeng Boum with Conferences and Lesley Evans Ogden took on Communications.



Ben Deighton



Lesley Evans Ogden



Chhatra Karki



Joseph Mbeng Boum

Aleida Rueda took on the Secretary role while Jean-Marc Fleury continued as Treasurer.

Agatha Ngotho worked with Joseph representing the Federation on the Local Organizing Committee of WCSJ2025 while Debbie Ponchner undertook fundraising for the Conference, and Subhra Priyadarshini reorganized the process for the delivery of the WFSJ International Press Card.

Board Summary Statements

Joseph Mbeng Boum, Vice President (Conferences)

Joseph MBENG BOUM, in his capacity as Vice-President in charge of Conferences, has been instrumental in the organization of the next World Conference and in the development of science journalism, particularly in Africa. He has worked tirelessly to ensure the conference is held, notably by making a trip to South Africa in 2024 with the President, Ben Deighton. The purpose of this trip was to meet with authorities and the local organizing committee and find a consensus for the event's organization.

He represents the Federation (WFSJ) along with Agatha on the Local Organizing Committee for the WCSJ 2025. During the crisis at the start of the mandate with the former leadership team, he played a crucial diplomatic role, clearly aligning himself with good governance. During the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Hungary in 2024, he developed and presented an ambitious training plan aimed at over 200 science journalists in Africa. He works in close liaison with African associations and actively contributes to the revitalization, or even the creation, of science journalism associations in Africa and globally. He also contributed to the founding of the African Confederation of Science Journalists.

His advocacy efforts resulted in the opening of a Master's program in science journalism specifically for African students. He is actively working for reforms and the revitalization of the Federation. He is involved in defining and clarifying the role of regional Federations within the WFSJ (World Federation of Science Journalists).

Chhatra Karki, Vice President (Projects)

Chhatra has been working to strengthen WFSJ's mission of supporting science journalists worldwide, especially in low and middle income countries. With support from the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Chhatra was involved in managing the travel grants for journalists to attend the 2024 Kavli Prize Week in Oslo. Chhatra also served as the focal person for the Louise Behan Grants under WFSJ, which supported three science journalists from low and middle income countries in 2024.

He also collaborated with Vera Novais to host an online workshop on ethical guidelines in science journalism. These principles were discussed at the 2024 WFSJ AGM in Budapest. At WCSJ2025 in Pretoria, he will coordinate a workshop on these guidelines – and is looking forward to seeing you there!

Lesley Evans Ogden, Vice President (Communications)

Heading communications for WFSJ, Lesley, with support from board members Subhra, Aleida, and Agatha, has coordinated a guest editor program on social media to provide an opportunity for member organizations to have an international voice via WFSJ's social media channels. Also guiding our platforms on LinkedIn, X, and BlueSky, Lesley has grown our social media following exponentially, for example with impressions on LinkedIn growing from a handful to over 80,000 people viewing October 2025 posts, aided by a global team of volunteer WFSJ supporters that

boost our posts in multiple languages across many continents. She has also been working closely with the WCSJ local organizing committee to share and boost their posts and edit newsletters promoting the WCSJ2025 conference. Lesley remains committed to transparency, inclusiveness and openness in communicating the business of WFSJ so that we can go forward in a positive, collaborative manner.

Aleida Rueda, Secretary

As secretary of the WFSJ, Aleida has been responsible for drafting the agendas and minutes of all board meetings (two per month, on average) and Annual General meetings, and has kept detailed records of actions taken and pending, which has contributed to the continuous and efficient progress of tasks. She also supported the WFSJ 2025 Social Media Guest Editor and contributed to the search for support and potential sponsors for the WCSJ. Aleida has been a spokesperson for the Federation's initiatives and actions in Latin America thanks to her participation in various Latin American projects and networks.

Subhra Priyadarshini, Director

Subhra restructured the application and delivery process for the WFSJ International Press Card, introducing a streamlined Google form to simplify data collection and improve efficiency. She engaged a professional designer to update the visual design of the card and collaborated with Jean-Marc Fleury to clear the backlog of pending applications. As a Board Director, Subhra represented the Federation at multiple conferences and meetings to promote registrations for WCSJ2025. She also contributes actively to WFSJ's fundraising, social media communications and public outreach efforts.

Agatha Ngotho, Director

She has represented the Federation on the Local Organizing Committee of WCSJ2025. Agatha has also supported the guest editor program across WFSJ's social media platforms (X, LinkedIn and BlueSky) that gives member organizations an opportunity to amplify their voices on an international platform.

Debbie Ponchner, Director

As the director responsible for fundraising, Debbie has been knocking on doors of non-governmental and governmental entities in search of funders for the WCSJ. Together with Ben Deighton and Jean- Marc Fleury, a consulting group with previous organizers of world conferences was established at the beginning of the year to guide these fundraising efforts. Debbie has also represented the WFSJ in various science journalism forums and contributed to the organization of pre-conference workshops.

Louise Behan Grants

Three grants were awarded to science journalists in 2024.

David Arome from Nigeria produced a story on “Plastic Waste and Climate Change: Nigeria's Dual Environmental Crisis.” David examined the effects of plastic pollution on local communities, its contribution to flooding and greenhouse gas emissions, the challenges of climate change adaptation, shortcomings in waste management, policy gaps, and potential solutions to enhance climate resilience.

Richard Leviano from Malawi wrote "Investigate Scientific Methods for Flood Mitigation." Richard's story explored the scientific methods currently adopted by the Malawi Government, private firms, non-governmental organizations, development partners, and Shire Valley residents in mitigating and reducing the effects of annual flooding. It will also analyze the potential strengths and weaknesses of the existing scientific approaches to flood management and their impact on reducing flood-related damage in the Shire Valley.

Tina S. Mehnepaine from Liberia wrote on “How Traditional Fish Smoking Method is Destroying Women's Health.” Tina detailed the adverse health effects of traditional fish smoking methods on women, focusing on respiratory, reproductive, and long-term health complications. She hoped to increase awareness among communities and policymakers about the health risks associated with prolonged exposure to smoke from traditional fish smoking, especially for women and children.

2024 Financial Statements

With Board directors assuming all tasks on a volunteer basis, the World Federation managed to close the year 2023 with a small surplus.

This financial recovery is mainly due to the magnanimity of the Kavli Foundation which permitted larger than planned management expenses.

Also very rewarding was a strong commitment and signal of trust from member associations to renew and pay membership fees, in some cases for two years.

Finally, a donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, made a significant gift which covered the unprecedented legal expenses.

[WFSJ Financial Report for 2024](#) (downloadable PDF document)