

**GAVEL.**

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT





# OUR GOAL

Gavel's goal is to accelerate the pace of justice delivery through access to justice, digital technology and citizens' engagement.

In view of our goal, we review our strategic plans against what we have been able to achieve.

# INTRODUCTION



The past year has been an eventful and challenging time for us. We faced several unexpected challenges, including the global pandemic and its after-effect impact on our operations and workforce. However, we could adapt and progress towards our goals despite these obstacles.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the previous year's activities, challenges, and achievements. It will cover the significant initiatives and projects undertaken and the challenges encountered. Throughout the report, we will examine the successes and shortcomings of the previous year to identify areas for improvement and build on the progress made. We will also consider the lessons learned and the strategies that effectively overcame the challenges faced.

This report will provide a comprehensive account of the previous year's activities, challenges, and achievements to inform future decision-making and help our organisation grow and succeed in the years ahead.





# STAFF RETREAT

## ***Time for Deeper Reflection***

For us at Gavel, an annual staff retreat is a valuable opportunity for every employee to unite for team-building, goal-setting, and skill-building activities. Typically, it's an off-site arrangement that allows us to escape the office and immerse ourselves in an environment conducive to creativity, learning, and collaboration. It's one of our powerful tools for building a stronger, more connected team; by setting clear goals and choosing activities that promote cooperation and skill-building.

The year 2022 staff retreat held in Abeokuta allowed us to discuss how the organisation performed in the previous year and the year before it and the expectations and targets we hope to set in the new year. It was also an avenue where the staff and the management team evaluated and reviewed policies and procedures, evaluated systems and processes, and rethought resource allocation. This was also one of the times we worked on the identified challenges affecting staff performance. The focus is continually increasing work quality, staff bonding, skill-building, welfare and performance, etc.



# THE OUTCOME: 2022 Strategic Road Map

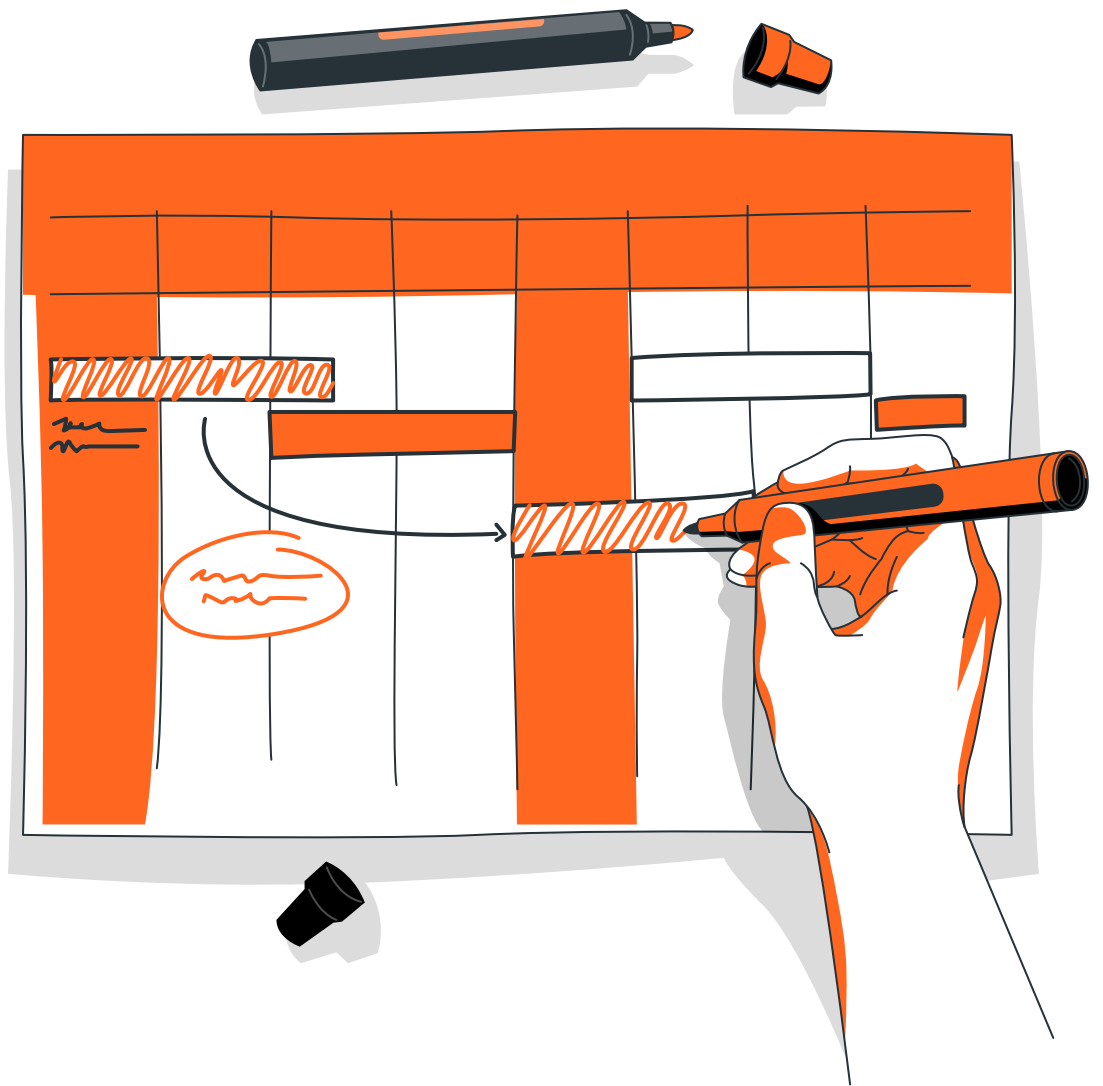
The year 2022 began with extensive deliberation on the successes recorded, the challenges faced in the previous year, what works, and what areas needed more effort. It gave an insight and direction into what the new year holds and, most importantly, how we were going to address the inherent challenges of the year. The outcome of the deliberation allowed the management staff to set the road map for the year 2022.

The road map we christened is **“the 2022 Strategic Road Map”**. This document is expected to guide the organisation's operations and programs, what was set out to achieve, strategies needed to be deployed to achieve these programs and projects, who was expected to lead and report on the progress recorded etc.



# 2022 PLAN

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## At the beginning of 2022, we planned for the following activities/projects:



1. The Deployment of a National Case Management System (NCMS) to 6 States (Ekiti, Adamawa, Osun, Kogi and two other states (TBD)

- Capacity Building for Gavel's team to provide adequate technical support to the states during deployment
- Continuous/periodic technical support for the ICT department of the High Court and other staff



2. Access to Justice

- Legal support for 150 persons (Court cases)
- Tracking of 200 cases for legal advice
- Legal Intervention in 50 SGBV Cases
- Legal intervention in 200 other legal-related cases



3. Justice Clock; Lagos & Ogun States

- Upgrade of Ogun State Justice Clock
- Presentation of the new JC



4. PODUS: Uber for Justice

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Deployment of Podus



5. Online and Offline Engagements

- Content for 300 infographics
- Designing 300 infographics
- Review of 300 infographics
- 500 social media posts
- 15 Newsletters



6. Measuring the Pace of Justice Delivery; Court Ranking

- Data gathering from NJC measuring courts' performance
- Data analysis of NJC data
- Virtual launching of High court ranking research document/report (Issuing a Press release etc.)



7. Sustainability Initiatives

- SOJIARE
- Other Tech Initiatives/Activities



8. Facilitation and promotion of non-custodial sentencing in Oyo State

# 2022 SCORECARD

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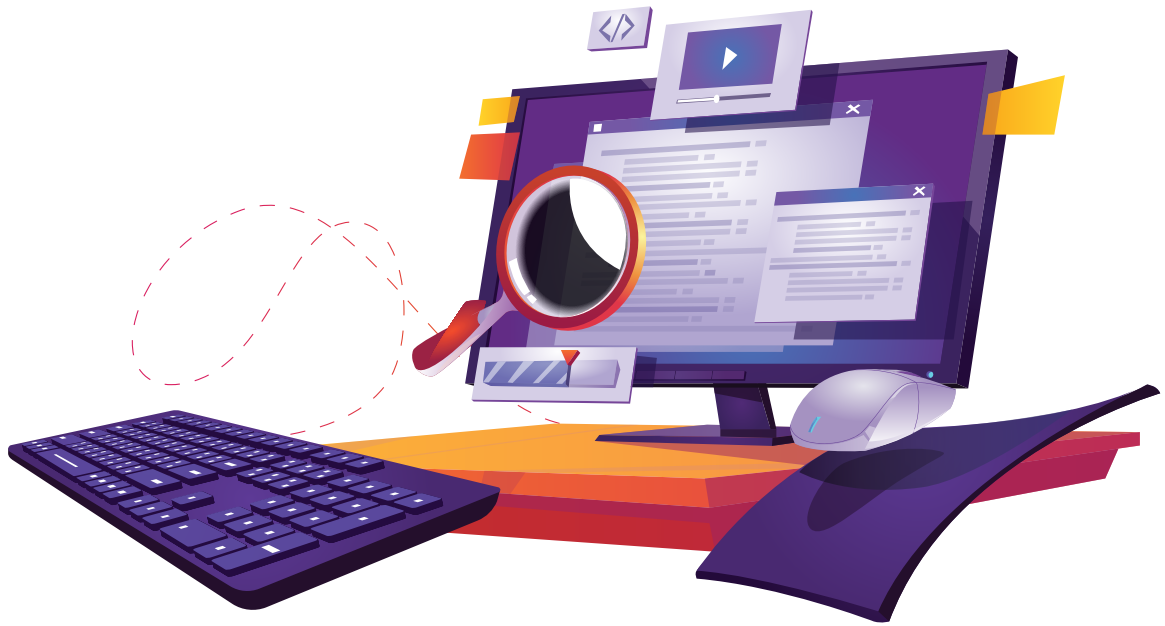
S/N	Activities	Timeline	M&E	Status
<b>NATIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NCMS)</b>				
1.	Deployment of NCMS to 6 states (Ekiti, Adamawa, Osun, Kogi and 2 other states (TBD))	Year Long	Consistent/frequent use of the software/platforms	<b>Not done</b>
2.	Capacity Building for Gavel's team to provide effective technical support to the states during deployment	January – February 2022	Capacity building (ToT) for effective technical Support	<b>Completed</b>
3.	Continuous/periodic technical support for the ICT department of the High Court and other staff	February – December 2022	Providing technical support for the staff of ICT Department of the High Court	<b>Completed</b>
<b>LEGAL (CASES) RELATED ACTIVITIES</b>				
4.	Virtual launching of <b>High court ranking research document/report</b> (Issuing a Press release etc)	3rd February 2022	Press release/statement	<b>Completed</b>
5.	Legal support for 150 persons (Court cases)	Year-long		183 Cases were handled in the year under review

S/N	Activities	Timeline	M&E	Status
6.	Tracking of 200 cases	100 cases in 1st quarter.  The other 100 cases -year long		183 Cases were handled in the year under review
7.	Legal Intervention in 50 SGBV Cases	January – December 2022		In the year under review, 11 legal interventions were provided for SGBV-related cases
8.	Legal intervention in 200 other legal-related cases	January – December 2022		In the year under review, 212 legal interventions were provided in other legal-related cases.
<b>INFOGRAPHICS</b>				
9.	Content for 300 infographics	75 contents per quarter		<b>Done</b>  Content for over 450 infographics
10.	Designing 300 infographics	75 infographics per quarter		<b>Done</b>  Over 450 infographics were designed and published

S/N	Activities	Timeline	M&E	Status
11.	Review of 300 infographics	75 infographics per quarter		<b>Done</b>
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>				
12.	500 social media posts	At least 2 tweets/post per day		
13.	15 Newsletters	At least 1 week		12 Newsletters were published in the year under review
<b>MEASURING THE PACE OF COURT PERFORMANCE 2022</b>				
14.	Data gathering from NJC measuring courts performance	February, 2022		<b>Done</b>
15.	Data analysis of NJC data	March, 2022		<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>JUSTICE CLOCK &amp; PODUS</b>				
16.	Deployment of Podus	15th February 2022	Functional Platform	<b>Done</b>
17.	Upgrade of Ogun State Justice Clock'  Presentation of the new JC	February – March 2022	Deployment of the “new” Justice clock for Ogun State	<b>Done</b>  The upgraded version has been done, but it is yet to be deployed

S/N	Activities	Timeline	M&E	Status
18.	Presentation of the new JC Lagos State to the stakeholders	4th February 2022		<b>Done</b>
19.	Debriefing on MoJL web application	April 2022 (Proposed Date)		<b>Done</b>
20.	Training on web application	April 2022 (Proposed Date)		<b>Done</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ADVOCACY</b>				
21.	Collaboration with the NURTW (Lagos – Mushin/Ikorodu and Ibadan – Oyo etc)	February 2022		<b>Completed</b>
22.	Sensitization and Feedback from the community engagement	2nd Week, May 2022		This activity was done at the Windinrin community in Oyo State
23.	Facilitation and promotion of non- custodial sentencing in Oyo State	1st Quarter, 2022. Start from 1st week, March, 2022		<b>Ongoing</b>

S/N	Activities	Timeline	M&E	Status
<b>REPORTS</b>				
24.	Completion and ratification of the ENDSARS Report	15th February 2022		<b>Completed</b>
25.	Quarterly KPI Evaluation	Quarterly		<b>Completed</b>
26.	Inhouse: Capacity Building for staff Q3	2nd week April 2022		<b>Completed</b>
27.	Inhouse: Capacity Building for staff Q4	2nd week, June 2022		<b>Completed</b>
28.	Content update on Justice Clock	Year long		<b>Completed</b>
29.	Content update on Gavel's website	Bi-monthly		<b>Completed</b>
30.	3 other strategic litigation on justice related issues	Each quarter of 2022		2 Petitions to the Police Complaint Response Unit and 2 Petitions to NAPTIP



# NATIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NCMS)

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The National Case Management System (NCMS) is a digital platform designed to streamline and improve the management of court cases across the country. In partnership with the National Judicial Council committee on information technology, we piloted the NCMS in Oyo State. The system was developed in response to the growing need for a more efficient and practical approach to case management, particularly in light of the increasing number of cases filed in courts nationwide.

The NCMS is a web-based system allowing judges, lawyers, and other court personnel to access case information from anywhere, anytime. This makes managing cases easier, tracking progress, and meeting deadlines. The system also includes features such as electronic filing, eliminating the need for paper documents and reducing the risk of lost or misplaced files.

One of the key benefits of the NCMS is its ability to facilitate communication and collaboration between all parties involved in a case. Lawyers can easily file documents and communicate with other parties, while judges can review case. Lawyers can easily file documents and communicate with other parties, while judges can review case information and make decisions more efficiently, including assigning cases to judges. This helps to reduce delays and ensure that cases are resolved in a timely manner. Another benefit of the NCMS is its ability to provide real

-time data and analytics on case management. This data can identify trends and improvement areas, allowing courts to make more informed decisions about allocating resources and improving processes. This can help reduce costs and improve the overall efficiency of the court system.

Overall, the National Case Management System represents a significant step forward in managing court cases in Nigeria. By providing a centralised, web-based platform for case management, the system helps to improve communication and collaboration, reduce delays, and provide real-time data and analytics on case management. While there have been implementation challenges, the system's benefits are clear, and it is likely to play an increasingly important role in the court system in the coming years.

Despite its many benefits, the NCMS has faced some challenges in implementation. One of the biggest challenges has been integrating the system with existing court technology, such as case management software and document management systems. Additionally, there has been a learning curve for users as they adapt to the new system and workflows.

The NCMS platform was piloted at the Oyo State High Court, and the initial success recorded during the deployment state of the platform motivated the team to propose the scale-up to six more states in Nigeria (Ekiti, Adamawa, Osun, Kogi and two more states). However, scaling up to the identified six states was postponed due to the challenges of stakeholders' readiness and integrating the existing structures into the platform.

**Capacity Building for Gavel's team to provide adequate technical support to the states during deployment:**

At the initial stage of the deployment of the NCMS in Oyo State, we had extensive training on the platform and how it works to increase the pace of justice delivery in Nigeria for the technical personnel of the organisation. A 7-day training was held at the National Judicial Council conference room in Abuja. The intention was to build the capacity of the technical team to provide adequate technical support for the deployment and adoption of the NCMS in Oyo State and other proposed states.

**Continuous/periodic technical support for the ICT department of the High Court and other staff:**

Gavel's technical team periodically provided technical support for the ICT department of the Oyo State High Court, the only state in the platform that has been deployed.

# ACCESS TO JUSTICE»»»



Access to justice is a fundamental human right that ensures everyone has equal access to the justice system regardless of social status. In Nigeria, access to justice has been a significant issue, particularly for impoverished or rural areas. However, through our network of volunteer lawyers across the length and breadth of the country, we have provided free legal support, advice and representation to those who need it. In the year under review, we have provided **183** legal representations for people who are indigent or incarcerated. We also have **327** cases for legal advice at the States Ministry of Justices. Additionally, we provided over **212** legal interventions in other legal-related issues. Our drive to fight for survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) gave us victories for **11** Survivors.

# ACCESS TO JUSTICE INITIATIVES

For us at Gavel, efforts have been made to modernise the justice system in Nigeria, including the use of technology to improve access to justice. In collaborating with the National Judicial Council (NJC), we have deployed the e-filing system, which allows for the electronic filing of court documents, reducing the need for paper documents and making the process more efficient. Additionally, we have also deployed and managed other tech-for-justice initiatives;



Podus is a web application that has been developed to provide human rights support to Nigerians, with a particular focus on helping those who are indigent and may not have the means to access legal support. One of the main goals of Podus is to make it easier for Nigerians to access legal assistance and support when they need it most. Whether it is to seek redress for human rights violations, protect their civil liberties, or understand their legal rights and obligations, Podus is designed to be a one-stop shop for all of these needs.

Through technology, Podus provides an easy-to-use platform that allows users to access relevant legal information and resources, connect with legal experts and support networks, and find the help they need to defend their rights. In addition to providing a wealth of legal information and resources, Podus allows users to report human rights abuses and other legal violations they have experienced or witnessed.

This critical feature helps highlight these issues and hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

Podus is a tech platform that enables victims of pre-trial detention to connect to a Police Duty Solicitor Scheme (PDSS) lawyer nearest their location. It is the “uber for justice” for pre-trial detainees because the tool allows remote access to lawyers.

Conclusively, Podus is an incredibly valuable resource for Nigerians seeking to defend their rights and promote justice in their communities. With the help of this powerful web application, individuals and communities can access the legal support and resources they need to protect their rights and seek justice for themselves and others. The platform has been deployed.



The Justice Clock is a symbolic representation of how long it takes for a case to be resolved in the Nigerian justice system. The clock serves as a reminder of the importance of timely justice and the need for swift resolution of legal disputes. The Justice Clock is typically designed to show the elapsed time from the start of a case to its resolution. Justice Clock draws attention to the problem of delays in the justice system.

Legal disputes can often take months or even years to be resolved, leading to frustration and uncertainty for those involved. The Justice Clock serves as a visual reminder of the need for timely justice and encourages parties to work towards a swift resolution of their case. In addition to its symbolic importance, the Justice Clock can be useful for legal professionals. By tracking the elapsed time of a case, lawyers and judges can identify areas where delays are occurring and take steps to expedite the process. It helps to reduce the backlog of cases in the justice system and ensure that justice is served promptly and efficiently. This initiative has been deployed and used at the Ministry of Justices in Lagos and Ogun States. However, new features were added to the Justice Clock, and the platform was upgraded to accommodate the newly added features, making it more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

# ONLINE & OFFLINE ENGAGEMENTS

Online and offline legal-focused engagement refers to how we interact with clients and stakeholders. Both online and offline engagement channels play a crucial role in helping us build relationships, share information, and provide legal services.

Our online engagement approach involves using digital channels such as websites, blogs, social media, and email to communicate with our clients and stakeholders. Our social media platforms have helped us reach out to our clients, bringing our existence closer to them. We published over **800** updates across our social media platforms, **206** on the Sojiare platform, **15** Newsletters and over **450** infographics in the year under review.

On the other hand, our offline engagement provides us with the rare opportunity to interact face-to-face with our clients and respond to engaging issues or questions. Such offline engagement includes; meetings, conferences, community engagement forums etc. For instance, in collaboration with the Nations Union of Road Transport Workers, Gavel's team stormed the NURTW park at Iwo-road to sensitise the public on legal issues considered pro bono. Also, in partnership with Tracka-BudgIT, we conducted a sensitisation engagement at the Windirin community, Ibadan, where we discussed the rights within the law, especially regarding SGBV. The positive response and receptivity led to cases being rereferred from that community. This was replicated in Ilupeju and Iwo-road in June and September, respectively.

# MEASURING THE PACE OF JUSTICE DELIVERY

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# COURT RANKING

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Measuring the pace of justice delivery in Nigeria is an essential aspect of our at Gavel. We do this by focusing on the data from the court's system. While not all disputes come to court, we focus on this aspect of justice delivery because it is one of the accurate methods to collate concrete data. Also, the court system is the mainstream institution for dispute resolution. The court system's efficiency is a critical factor in ensuring that disputes are resolved promptly and that justice is served fairly.







For us at Gavel, one of the ways we measure the pace of justice delivery in Nigeria is to look at the average time it takes for cases to be resolved in the courts. This was achieved by analysing court records and tracking the progress of cases from filing a lawsuit to the final judgment. By doing so, it is possible to identify areas of the legal system where delays are occurring and take steps to improve the efficiency of the process.

The 2021 edition of the report on the court ranking research provides insights into the pace of justice delivery in the 36 states of the federation. The data (court records etc.) was accessed at the National Judicial Council and analysed. The delay in accessing the data from the NJC stalled the early production of the 2022 edition of the court ranking report. However, the data was recently released, and the team is currently analysing it for onward publication. As it is, the results will be published during the year's second quarter.

# SUSTAINABILITY EFFORT: JUSTICE LAB

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JusticeLab combines strategic thinking and emerging technologies to provide solutions that consistently break new ground, resulting in the development of various tech solutions in the justice ecosystem. Several projects were completed, while some are ongoing;

- Stand to End Rape (STER); The development of a learning platform |  Completed
- Land Authentication Project |  Ongoing
- Sojiare |  Completed
- Malaria Consortium |  Ongoing
- Redress |  Unsuccessful
- Missing voice |  Unsuccessful

## FACILITATION AND PROMOTION OF NON-CUSTODIAL SENTENCING IN OYO STATE

Non-custodial sentencing is an alternative to traditional custodial sentences and involves punishments that do not involve imprisonment, such as community service, fines, or probation. The use of non-custodial sentencing can be beneficial in reducing prison overcrowding and promoting rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders back into society.

We are at the forefront of ensuring this bill is passed into law in Oyo State. Currently, this is still pending before the State House of Assembly. It has passed the second reading at the State House Assembly.

# CHALLENGES



## **Political Will:**

The political will to implement reforms that are beneficial to the justice sector is, unfortunately, low. However, through sustained advocacies and engagements, we have broken barriers and pushed through our goals.



## **Technological Infrastructure:**

Using technology in the justice system can help improve the pace of justice delivery, but not all courts have access to modern technical infrastructure, making it challenging to measure and improve performance. However, we support relevant agencies/institutions to meet the necessary requirements.



## **Human Resources:**

Hiring skilled hands have become a little more challenging in Nigeria because we need to be competitive in our payment structure to retain their services either remotely or physically. Hence, inadequate funding opportunities have impeded this. However, we review staff salaries and allowances to reflect realities and what the organisation can sustain.



## **Funding and Sustainability:**

The funding landscape in Nigeria continues to reduce and change, therefore, posing a challenge to the continuity of our impactful works. However, we are actively seeking new donors and engaging with existing donors to ensure sustainability.

**GAVEL.**

[www.gavel.ng](http://www.gavel.ng)

