

## MDDA publishes funding regulations

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) has published regulations outlining its plans for support community and small media organisations most of whom are battling serious financial challenges.

Government passed the MDDA Act in June last year to ensure the establishment of the agency in order to help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity conducive to public discourse and which reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans.

The Act also aims to redress the exclusion and marginalisation of disadvantaged communities and persons from access to the media and media industry.

The MDDA seeks to promote media development and diversity by providing technical and financial support primarily to community and small commercial media projects.

The MDDA Board, chaired by Khanyi Mkhonza, last night launched the draft regulations on funding by the agency, setting out which media organisations qualified for financial assistance.

The draft regulations also spell out what assistance community and small commercial media organisations can expect from the MDDA and how to apply.

The public has until September 1 to comment on the draft regulations drawn up in consultation with Minister in the Office of the Presidency Essop Pahad as required by the MDDA Act.

According to the draft regulations, about 60 percent of grant money available would go to community media projects, 25 percent to small commercial media and five percent to research projects.

The MDDA also announced on Wednesday in Johannesburg that it had appointed Libby Lloyd as its first Chief Executive Officer.

Ms Lloyd has extensive electronic and print media experience and she is well known for being one of the founding and longest serving councillors of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, now Independent Communications Authority of South Africa.

Ms Mkhonza said further appointments to make up a fully-fledged structure were to be made soon.

'We are acutely aware of the challenges faced by both community and small media and are committed not just to providing grants but also to supporting organisations in their operations,' said Ms Mkhonza.

President Thabo Mbeki appointed the MDDA nine member Board towards the end of last year and it convened its first meeting in January this year.

The Board will oversee what many media fundis concur is a unique structure worldwide as the MDDA represents an unprecedented partnership between government and rival media owners.

Three of the Board's members were drawn from the donors (print and broadcast media as well as government) while the remaining six were nominated by Parliament.

The Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) has committed R3-million to the MDDA for the years 2002/3 and another R7-million for 2003/4.

Various Media owners have pledged about R10-million funding for the agency over a five-year period.

Speaking at the launch last night, GCIS Chief Executive Officer Joel Netshitenzhe said the MDDA was a unique outcome of an interaction between media practitioners and role players seeking to find a workable solution.

He said the MDDA's intention to help small media should not be perceived as a threat to established media houses as the agency's main objective was to promote media development and diversity in South Africa, consistent with the right to freedom of expression as entrenched in section 16 (1) of the constitution.

Mr Netshitenzhe said this was crucial in particular with regard to freedom of the press and other media had the freedom to receive and impart ideas or information and it was for that purpose that the MDDA would encourage ownership and control and access to media by disadvantaged communities as well as historically diminished indigenous languages and groups.

People wishing to comment on the draft regulations, available on [www.mdda.org.za](http://www.mdda.org.za), can do so in writing to Ms Khanyi Mkhonza C/o Thembi Khuzwayo, KPMG Offices, P Bag 9, Parkview 2122 or email: .

*Article by Thokozani Mtshali, courtesy of BuaNews, [www.gcis.gov.za/buanews](http://www.gcis.gov.za/buanews).*

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