

## 4 The Media Development and Diversity Agency

The MDDA will, through its various roles, functions, programmes and activities, help promote and implement media development and diversity for the benefit of all South Africans. It will, by becoming a resource for the whole nation, act as a catalyst for further media transformation such that all citizens are better informed and better able to exercise their democratic rights.

### 4.1 The MDDA's vision and mission

#### **Vision**

The MDDA's ultimate vision is for:

A thriving South African media reflective of the population it serves through:

- ▶ Participation by all groups and interests as owners, managers, producers and consumers of media.
- ▶ A diverse media infrastructure that provides relevant content to South Africa, Africa and the world, and is conducive to a public discourse that reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans.

#### **Mission**

The MDDA's mission will be to:

- ▶ Promote development by creating an enabling environment for sustainable media diversity in South Africa and thereby deepen democracy.
- ▶ Increase access to media for all citizens, as consumers and producers, and, in particular, ensure that the voices, aspirations and images of marginalised sectors such as women, the youth, people who are illiterate, rural people and people with disabilities, are heard and seen.

### 4.2 The MDDA's role

The MDDA's role will be to:

- ▶ Help develop a more diverse media industry through support for community and small commercial media.
- ▶ Promote media research and an informed public discourse around issues of media development and diversity.
- ▶ Seek to remove obstacles to media development and diversity by, amongst other things, making recommendations to government and the media industry.

### 4.3 Aims and objectives

To accomplish its mission, fulfil its role, and achieve its objectives, the MDDA will promote media development and diversity by:

- ▶ Identifying, through research, under-served areas and facilitating project development in these areas.
- ▶ Providing support - including funding, training and capacity building - to, in the first instance, community media, as well as small commercial media.
- ▶ Stimulating debate and creating awareness about the importance of media development and diversity.

- ▶ Addressing obstacles to media development and diversity issues with relevant bodies.
- ▶ Ensuring public participation through having transparent procedures and giving clear reasons for any of its decisions.
- ▶ Supporting media research on issues of relevance to media development and diversity.
- ▶ Playing a part in efforts to promote media development and diversity in the SADC region, Africa and other parts of the developing world, through networking and information-sharing.
- ▶ Forging relations with media initiatives seeking similar aims in all parts of the world.

Through these activities, the MDDA will promote conditions conducive to media development and diversity, and thereby to media freedom and democracy.

## 4.4 The MDDA's powers and mandate

The MDDA's main mandate will be to promote media development and diversity through the support of community as well as small commercial media enterprises, and through research.

The MDDA will be an independent statutory body, and will not interfere in the content of any newspaper, television or radio station.

The Agency will work together with other bodies dealing with, amongst others telecommunications, film and video, in order to achieve effective coordination and avoid duplication. These include other statutory bodies such as the Universal Service Agency and the Independent Communications Authority of SA (Icasa). Broader issues, such as that of concentration in the media industry, will be left to bodies such as the Competitions Commission.

While the MDDA may make recommendations, after public consultations, to government and the media industry on issues concerning media development and diversity, these will not be binding, as the Agency will not have regulatory powers.

It will also:

- ▶ Consult with all state and statutory institutions dealing with issues within its mandate.
- ▶ Consult with relevant self-regulatory bodies, industry associations and organisations of civil society on issues of common interest.
- ▶ Develop internal policies that are informed by ongoing research and evaluation.

## 4.5 Independence and accountability

The MDDA will be an independent, statutory body at arms-length from government, private sector interests, donors as well as beneficiaries. To ensure its independence and accountability the Agency will:

- ▶ Act through a broadly representative board, which will account to Parliament.
- ▶ Be independent and subject to the Constitution and the Public Finance Management Act No.1 of 1999, as amended by Act 29 of 1999.
- ▶ Function without any political or commercial interference.
- ▶ Arrange an annual meeting with stakeholders in the media industry to give a report on the Agency's activities.