



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

---

#### **MDDA EXTENDS FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY AND SCM MEDIA SECTOR**

**Johannesburg, South Africa, 30 March 2020.** The Board of the Media Development & Diversity Agency (MDDA) has significantly extended the MDDA's financial support to the community and small commercial media (SCM) sector, to cover both COVID-19 emergency response funding, as well as some 32 applications for grant funding. The decision was made at the MDDA Board meeting of 28 March 2020 (held via video conferencing) in recognition of the critical and essential service played by the community and SCM sector in information, news and content dissemination, particularly during the 21 day lockdown and coronavirus pandemic.

The Board approved a total of up to R10 million in emergency response funding to be dispensed to qualifying applicants by 31 March 2020. This funding is designed to assist community and SCM media projects in acquiring or renting additional safety measures to minimise the safety risks to staff during this period, and to assist with quality and community specific content. The Board and MDDA Executive will monitor the developments with regard to COVID-19 and make necessary decisions in relation to further support to the sector, should the need arise.

Grant funding for 22 community broadcast projects and 10 community and SCM print projects was also approved, totalling some R49,9 million. The projects for which funding was approved applied in the call for applications implemented by the MDDA in the second half of 2019. Funding is approved for a one-year period and covers a range of items from broadcast equipment and transmission fees (for broadcast projects) to printing costs (for print projects), stipends and content development. The next call for applications for funding will take place in the second quarter of 2020.

Projects receiving funding have been drawn from all nine provinces of South Africa and are in line with the mandate of the MDDA to promote media development and diversity through supporting media projects that redress the historical exclusion of disadvantaged communities and persons from access to the media and media industry. As a result, the projects supported have an emphasis on those publishing or broadcasting in indigenous languages, and which bring disadvantaged communities and sectors – particularly women, people with disabilities, and the rural-based, working class and poor - into the information and communications loop. The new project approvals bring the total number of media projects

that have been supported by the MDDA, since it was established in 2002 by an Act of Parliament, to well over 250.

“In amplifying financial support to the community and SCM media sector, the MDDA Board has reinforced the message of the Government and the Agency that no South African must lack the necessary information, both to be active citizens and to protect themselves and their communities,” commented MDDA CEO, Zukiswa Potye. “The MDDA is grateful for the vital contribution the community and SCM sector make to communities across South Africa, particularly in worrying times such as these. We also recognise the risks that they are facing in continuing to provide their services to their audiences and readers during the national lockdown.”

### **About the MDDA**

The MDDA is a statutory development agency, deriving its mandate, from Section 16 and 32 of the Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996, thereby providing for freedom of expression and access to information. As a partnership between the South African Government and major print and broadcasting companies, it promotes and assists in the development of community media and small commercial media in South Africa and the transformation of the media, by providing support (financial, capacity building, etc.) in terms of the MDDA Act No 14 of 2002. It also aims to raise public awareness with regard to media development and diversity issues, and to encourage media literacy and a culture of reading. For further information: [www.mdda.org.za](http://www.mdda.org.za)

---

*Issued by the MDDA*

*Enquiries: Cheryl Langbridge 011 643 1100/082 493 6184  
cheryl@mdda.org.za*