

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDDA LAUNCHES SECOND PHASE OF EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND TO COMMUNITY AND SCM MEDIA SECTOR

Johannesburg, South Africa, 25 May 2020. The Media Development & Diversity Agency (MDDA) has launched its second phase of COVID-19 Emergency Relief Funding open to all community and small commercial (SCM) media projects across South Africa, from 25 May 2020. This follows the end of the first phase of the Fund, which ran in March and April of 2020, with some R10 million being disbursed to 116 community broadcasters and 115 community and SCM publications in R45,000 relief packages, per station/publisher.

The Emergency Relief Fund was approved by the Board of the MDDA in recognition of the critical and essential service played by the community and SCM sector in information, news and content dissemination, particularly during the National Lockdown and coronavirus pandemic. The sector is facing severe pressures as a result of the economic impact of the National Lockdown and subsequent loss of advertising, while there is also an urgent need to minimise the safety risks to media projects personnel during this period.

The second phase of the Emergency Relief Fund is therefore aimed mainly at assisting community media and SCM projects with operational costs, with a lesser portion for acquiring safety and hygiene essentials. A total of R10 million will be allocated to media projects in relief packages according to need. Community and SCM projects are eligible for the second phase of the Emergency Relief Funding, irrespective of whether or not they received funding in the first phase as this was focused on safety essentials.

There is no set closing date for applications for the second phase, which will close when available funds have been exhausted. 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.

“Community and SCM media has continued, in the face of considerable economic and safety challenges, to play a responsible and highly active role in informing communities around the dangers of COVID-19 and the precautionary measures that urgently need to be taken,” commented MDDA CEO, Zukiswa Potye.

“We received an overwhelming response to our first call for Emergency Relief Funding and we are grateful to be able to make a contribution to alleviating some of the hardships faced by the sector as a means of thanking them for the vital role they play.”

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

Issued by the MDDA

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