



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEPUTY MINISTER UNVEILS STATE-OF-THE-ART STUDIO AT UGU YOUTH RADIO 93.4 FM

Johannesburg, South Africa, 27 September 2019. The Media Development & Diversity Agency (MDDA) is proud to announce that the Honourable Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Ms Thambi Siyewa (MP), today (27 September 2019) unveiled the new state-of-the-art digital broadcast studio installed at Ugu Youth Radio 93.4 FM in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa by the MDDA.

Ugu Youth Radio was established by young people from the Ugu District Municipality with the intention of providing a platform for youth to use to raise their issues, views and aspirations. As a beneficiary of MDDA funding, Ugu Youth Radio contributes to the delivery of the MDDA's mandate of media diversity by providing a marginalised community with a 'voice', in the languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa and English) of the community's choice.

Ugu Youth Radio is one of more than 150 community radio stations that have been supported by the MDDA over the past 15 years since the Agency funded its project in 2004.

In other recent developments, there has been a positive response to the MDDA's new project funding policy and application process, both from the community radio sector and the MDDA funders. The new policy and process has been implemented to streamline the MDDA's application process, and therefore enhance efficiencies, and to enable it to more effectively deliver on its mandate of providing access to the media to those historically disadvantaged groups traditionally sidelined by the mainstream media.

"With some 15 years of the MDDA funding projects, we urgently needed to review the process of and criteria against which we fund projects as the current media landscape is very different to that of the early years of the Agency," commented MDDA Acting CEO, Zukiswa Potye. "Challenges we were encountering included the enormous backlog of projects we have accumulated as a result of having an open-ended period for submission of applications, with no prospect of being able to clear given our limited funds. Such a backlog and the principle of 'first come first serve' has meant that in some cases we were required to select projects for approval that applied in 2012, which may no longer be compliant or have relevance."

Community media were given the opportunity to interact with the MDDA Acting CEO and the Deputy Minister in the Presidency on the new funding policy and application process in a live broadcast simulcast to 65 community radio stations across South Africa. In addition, the policy and process were discussed with MDDA funders at a recent breakfast event held to acknowledge their invaluable support to the MDDA and to ensuring that South Africa has a vibrant community media sector.

Other developments shared with the funders at the event included the formal partnerships that are about to be signed by the MDDA with critical stakeholders to the community media sector, such as ICASA, SENTECH and SEDA, as well as the funding raising strategy the MDDA is currently implementing. This strategy is aimed at attracting support, both financial and non-financial, from other sectors such as the telecommunications industry, and thus provide the MDDA with a greater pool of resources for the development and sustainability of the community media sector.

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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