

Press Release

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New Sustainability Model to Strengthen Community and Small Commercial Media in South Africa

On 29 October 2024, the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), released a groundbreaking Sustainability Model aimed at revitalizing the Community and Small Commercial Media (CSCM) sector in South Africa. This model is a strategic initiative to address the long-standing challenges faced by community radio, television, and print media organizations across the country.

The research highlights that despite [over 20 years of development efforts by the MDDA](#), only 7% of research respondents considered their organizations to be sustainable; whilst 74% indicated that their organisations were partially sustainable. Community radio had a higher sustainability score (55/100) when compared to community television, community and small commercial print. [Key challenges were funding constraints, lack of skilled personnel, limited access to advertising, and inadequate infrastructure](#)

What was interesting to find when looking at overall sustainability by province is that no survey respondents in KwaZulu Natal & Gauteng considered their organisation to be sustainable. This is interesting because these are the two provinces where the MDDA has the largest footprint/presence which forces us to introspect on the impact we are making generally and the impact we are making in these provinces. Similarly, no survey respondents in the Free State, Northern Cape and Mpumalanga considered their organisation to be sustainable.



On the other hand, 33% of survey respondents from the Northern Cape indicated that their organisation is not sustainable, followed by 29% who indicated the same in Gauteng. Similarly, 25% of respondents from the Free State indicated that their organisation was not sustainable, while 20% of respondents from Mpumalanga indicated the same. These results indicate that the community and small-commercial media (CSCM) organisations most in need of targeted, focused support from the MDDA are located in the Northern Cape, Gauteng and Free State provinces. The provincial analysis indicated above is the lowest level of geographical analysis possible with the available data.

A Multi-Faceted Sustainability Model

The new Sustainability Model incorporates the UNESCO Media Viability Indicators and the MDDA's own Six Sustainability Pillars, providing a comprehensive framework to measure and enhance the sector's sustainability across economic, political, content, technology, and community dimensions. The model promotes shared service centers to reduce operating costs, introduces targeted training programs through accredited providers, and encourages stronger government and private sector support.

Pathway to Transformation

The MDDA's Sustainability Model focuses on developing a robust CSCM ecosystem by:

1. Mandating 30% of government advertising budgets toward CSCM organizations.
2. Facilitating access to critical skills and technologies through shared service centers.
3. Supporting regulatory compliance and governance reforms to enhance credibility.

A Call to Action for Stakeholders

The MDDA urges both public and private stakeholders to support the CSCM sector's transition towards long-term sustainability. "Our aim is to create a thriving community media sector that serves as a reliable platform for local voices and promotes diversity in media ownership," stated Shoeshoe Qhu, MDDA's Chief Executive Officer

For more information about the Sustainability Model and how it will reshape the future of community media, please contact:

The MDDA Communications unit, e-mail: margaret@mdda.org.za
/082 785 6071.

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Issued by the Media Development and Diversity Agency.

About the MDDA The MDDA is a statutory body established to promote ownership, control, and access to media by historically disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Funded by government grants and levies from commercial broadcasters, the MDDA has supported over 500 community and small commercial media outlets nationwide.