

Centre for Cultural and Media Studies
University of Natal, Durban

BROADCASTING POLICY RESEARCH

Since 2 February 1990, the South African political, economic and social orders have been undergoing change. These dynamics of change have also placed broadcasting on the agenda of the ongoing political negotiations. Through the Jabulani! conference (August 1991) and the COM conference (January 1992) among others, the democratic movement has been able to put forward positions on future broadcasting legislation and regulation.

However, there still remains a need to develop realizable broadcasting policy to give substance to the legislative shell. Organisations within civil society have and continue to stress the importance of developing a substantive, principled and pragmatic vision of the future public broadcaster and the opening up of the frequency spectrum to new broadcasters. If the public broadcaster is to take its mandate from the "public" then it is crucial that the organisations within civil society prepare themselves to assert that mandate. Such a mandate will have to be based both on a vision of what is desirable and a sense of what is possible.

Civil society needs to be equipped, especially in the interim period, to assert its rights and needs in relation to the public broadcaster in general. The tasks of the proposed policy research project would be to facilitate and inform debate and discussion on the future of the public broadcaster and the democratisation of broadcasting in general and to assimilate those discussions into working policy guidelines.

GOALS OF THE PROJECT/MODUS OPERANDI

What will the transformation of the SABC from an Apartheid broadcaster to a genuine public service broadcaster involve?

In order to most effectively equip people to develop a vision of what they want from the public broadcaster in a new nonracial democracy, and to lobby for the implementation of that vision, the policy research project will consist of the following four phases:

PHASE 1

Producing and Distributing Information/Discussion Papers:

Researchers will be commissioned to produce information and discussion papers relating to public broadcasting. The discussion papers will address the issues of radio and television and will include the following subject areas:

- a) The changing role of the SABC - perspectives on public broadcasting in South Africa and internationally.
- b) Civic access to broadcasting and possibilities for regional civic stations/channels, community broadcasting etc.
- c) Educational broadcasting and religious broadcasting - what are the responsibilities and capacities of the public, commercial and community broadcast sectors?
- d) The financing of the public broadcaster.
- e) Local content - what are the responsibilities and capacities of the public, commercial and community broadcast sectors in relation to
 - * language and cultural diversity in broadcasting
 - * news and current affairs programming
 - * music and culture
 - * drama
 - * documentary
 - * religious broadcasting

quotas for independent producers - what are the responsibilities of the public, commercial and community broadcast sector?
- f) Human resource needs and development for the public broadcasters with a special emphasis on affirmative action along race and gender lines.

The information/discussion papers will be commissioned to researchers on a contract basis. The papers will be based on a combination of research, expert advice and consultation with relevant organisations and groupings. The information/discussion papers will be distributed to all the participants in the National Workshop for their consideration prior to the workshop.

PHASE II

National Workshop:

Access to the Airwaves and the Role of the Public Broadcaster

The research papers prepared in the first phase will be presented at a national workshop. The broadest possible range of stakeholders in the future of the SABC, including SABC personnel, will be invited to participate in the workshop. This workshop will provide a fantastic opportunity to debate policy issues, well informed by the preliminary research and inputs on the specific areas. The discussion will be further enriched by a range of international broadcasters, producers and producers' associations who will give inputs of their experiences. These will include guests from Britain,

Australia, America, Nigeria and India. Decisions and resolutions from this workshop will form the basis of the formal policy guidelines which will be drawn up in Phase III.

PHASE III

Final Reports and Policy Guidelines

Researchers would be contracted to finalise reports and working policy guidelines on the basis of the discussions and decisions reached at the workshop. These reports/policy guidelines will be published and widely distributed. Further research and development priorities would be thoroughly assessed at that point.

PHASE IV

Popular information Campaign and Lobbying for the Policy Guidelines:

This will involve:

- a) an extensive popular information campaign including the publication of a booklet, summarising the policy guidelines in an accessible English, to be circulated through organisations,
- b) lobbying and briefing (in the form of presentations), key political organisations (e.g. NP, ANC, IFP, PAC, CP, DP); key organisations of civil society (e.g. COSATU, NACTU, SACC, NECC, Civics, Metropolitan Chamber, Environmental and development organisations etc.) as well as the broadcasting community (e.g. SABC, M-net, 702, Capital, Bop Broadcasting etc.)

Addendum

FAWO is already in a process of establishing an alternative "audience research project" in conjunction with CASE (Community Agency for Social Enquiry). This project will provide information on the reception and the impact of the electronic media and will greatly strengthen and deepen each of the aspects of the policy research proposed here.

Professor KG Tomaselli
Director

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Research Coordinator

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FAWO has so far managed to secure R117 000 from donor agencies. However more funds are still needed if the research project is to be completed.

FUNDS STILL REQUIRED

Research

Phone/Fax: Co-ordinator	3,500
Phone/Fax: Researchers	3,500
Research materials	12,000
Travel	26,400
Accommodation	12,800
Transport	4,800
Printing/distributing discussion papers	3,000
CCMS overheads	10,000

SUB-TOTAL 76,000

National Workshop

Conference Organiser	12,000
Venue	5,000
Accommodation/catering: 100 delegates	30,000
Travel: 50 delegates	50,000
Conference administration	6,000

SUB-TOTAL 103,000

Popular Information Booklet

Printing	20,000
Distribution	5,000

SUB-TOTAL 25,000

FAWO administrative overheads 7,000

TOTAL 211,000

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