

# Parliament invites comment on draft legislation for an independent media development agency

The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications is inviting the public to submit comment on the draft legislation for the establishment of an independent agency to help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity in South Africa.

The draft legislation for the establishment of a Media Development and Diversity agency (MDDA) was introduced last week in Parliament by the Minister in the Presidency. The bill provides for the establishment of an independent agency that will through support, facilitation and research, help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity in South Africa. Funding will be directed principally at community media. Some assistance through the facilitation of loans may be received by small commercial media.

The public is invited to submit comment on the draft legislation to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications by 27 February. The Portfolio Committee will be holding public hearings on the bill.

The draft legislation was approved by Cabinet in December last year, one year after the release for public discussion of a Draft Position Paper, itself the product of consultative policy development in which government interacted with stakeholders including the community media and the media industry.

Comment from a wide range of stakeholders was taken into account in drafting the legislation and finalising the position paper. Further consultation with the media industry resulted in a draft Memorandum of Understanding between GCIS and key print and broadcast media houses. Amongst other things it is based on a commitment by the media industry to contribute to the funding of the MDDA.

The bill stipulates that the MDDA will be an independent statutory body funded jointly from government and other sources. It will be governed by a nine-person Board appointed through an open process by Parliament and the President. Four seats will be reserved for nominees from community media, commercial broadcast media and commercial print media and GCIS.

The Bill, together with the final MDDA Position Paper, is available on the [GCIS](#) and [Government Online](#) web sites and in hard copy from the Government Printers.

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