

SABC commits to settling Samro debt by April 2020

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (Samro) have reached an agreement regarding the unpaid royalty fees of Samro's members.



Image credit: Hello ImNk on Unsplash.

The SABC has committed to having all of its outstanding debt settled in full and current financial year invoices up to date by April 2020. The SABC had fallen behind in its payments amid its own financial challenges and, by 30 September 2019, it owed Samro a total of more than R160.4m.



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The SABC has paid 35% towards reducing this long outstanding debt to Samro – which is responsible for collecting royalty fees and distributing them to its more than 19,000 members.

Despite the SABC's commitment to settling the debt, some musicians are expressing scepticism. Taking to Twitter, electronic musician David Scott – AKA The Kiffness – said that the SABC is “pulling a massive Hlaudi”.

“ While it's great that all South African's get to watch [#RWCFinal](#), please keep in mind that [@SABCPortal](#) have just been granted R2,1bill bailout from government. This is money meant to pay back debt (to musicians), maintain infrastructure & make the SABC commercially viable again.— David Scott ([@TheKiffness](#)) [October 28, 2019](#) ”

“ But here we are! There's not a fat f***king chance that the SABC are in a position to screen the world cup, and after speaking to SABC spokesperson Vuyo Mthembu, (as suspected), she couldn't disclose howmuch it's costing them to get the broadcasting rights from [@MultiChoice](#).— David Scott ([@TheKiffness](#)) [October 28, 2019](#) ”

“ Until they can actually provide evidence as to how this agreement is commercially viable, it's safe to assume that this is a massive PR stunt to make SABC look like heroes. But if my suspicions are correct. They're just pulling a massive Hlaudi on us.— David Scott (@TheKiffness) [October 28, 2019](#) ”

Samro's interim CEO Ditebogo Modiba, meanwhile, expressed her thanks to the SABC for prioritising these payments in recognition of the impact that it has on the industry's sustainability since it is a key source of income for many South African artists.

“Honouring their commitment to us reflects their understanding of the importance of paying for their license, which ultimately benefits our members. This is still a challenge when dealing with some other licensees, and the SABC, despite its financial challenges, has proven to be a positive example in complying with this,” Modiba said.

“All of the money received from the SABC will be used to secure the payment of royalties to our members, which is our primary and core function.”

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