**BUSINESS PLAN REQUIRED FOR GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION: TEMPLATE**

A business plan is a formal written document containing the media project’s goals, the methods on how these goals can be attained, and the time frame within which these goals need to be achieved. It also describes the nature of the media project, background information on the project, the media project’s 3-year financial projections, and the strategies it intends to implement to achieve the stated targets. In its entirety, this document serves as a road map that provides direction to the media project for the next 3 – 5 years.

There are many different formats that can be used in developing a business plan. Below is a suggested structure, with information that is required by the MDDA from the business plan. Applicants are welcome to use their own format as long as they ensure that the information requested below is included.

**SUGGESTED STRUCTURE**

**1. Executive Summary**

Begin the document with a synopsis of the entire plan. Although it’s always the first element of a business plan, the executive summary is written last. The one-page executive summary should include your mission statement, basics about when and why your company/media project was founded and by whom, a description of your media product, highlights of your growth so far, and a summary of how you want the company/media project to grow.

**2. COMPANY/MEDIA PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This is where you elaborate on the media product, and who it serves. Think of this section as an extended pitch that will help readers understand the what and why of your media product. Describe what your media product does (eg the content it disseminates), how it satisfies a need in the marketplace, the specific types of listeners or readers you serve, and any competitive advantages that have made or will make you successful.

**Specifically, please cover the following:**

* Give us a short background about the project (Include information about when it started, how it started, and why)
* What are the objectives of your media project? (What are you trying to achieve with this project?)
* What community problems/ issues is your media product trying to address?
* What activities/procedures/systems are in place to ensure community involvement?
* Describe the target group that your project intends to reach and explain why you have chosen that group. (Include issues of gender, age group, disability, socio-economic status, literacy levels, HIV/AIDS etc.)
* Who are your other partners? What contribution / role do these partners play in assisting the project to realise its objectives?
* Is your organisation a member of any of the media networks / associations in the country? If so give details.
* How does your media product promote the use of the local African languages? Culture?
* To what extent does your media product encourage and promote the culture of reading within your community? Do you have any specific programmes to do this?
* **Importantly, describe how does your project contribute towards addressing the mandate of the MDDA (include specifically language diversity and cultural diversity)?**

**When describing your product**

If you are a print product, include the

* Format (eg newspaper/magazine, A4, tabloid)
* Number of pages
* Publishing schedule (weekly, monthly, etc)
* Languages of publishing and percentage usage
* How you/intend distributing your media product to the targeted people and areas?
* Outline your distribution plan/ also specify the areas and places you distribute to or are planning to distribute to?

If you are a digital publication, include the following information:

* Format and platform (e.g. website, mobile app, newsletter, podcast, or social media-based publication)
* Publishing frequency (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly content updates)
* Type of content and percentage breakdown (e.g. news, opinion, educational content, entertainment; local vs national/international focus)
* Languages used and percentage usage
* Target audience and geographic focus
* URL or access links to your digital platform(s)
* Distribution strategy – Describe how you reach your audience (e.g. SEO, social media promotion, email newsletters, push notifications, WhatsApp broadcasts)
* Analytics and engagement tools used (e.g. Google Analytics, social media insights – briefly mention how you track and understand your audience)

**3. MARKET ANALYSIS**

Now it’s time do a deep dive into your media product. This is where you identify and provide details about your target market (size, historical and forecasted growth rates, demographics, needs, etc.).

Include a description of the target community, eg LSM, demographics of community members, prevalence of HIV/aids, incidence of gender-based violence, service delivery challenges, unemployment figures, education levels, etc. This detail should only be provided if its relevant to the information/content that you will hope to provide through your media product in order to assist uplift your target community.

If your project is a start-up, has your organisation conducted any research/ feasibility study to establish the viability of your project? Summarise the main findings here and attach report, if applicable.

**4. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

In this section, address the following:

* Who are the community stakeholders of the project?
* What is the extent of their involvement in the project?
* How does your media product promote community participation?
* How is the community involved in the content production of your media product?

**5. COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS**

Here you’ll assess the competitive landscape you have in your target market. Are there other media products in the are you serve, and if so what are their strengths and weaknesses? What are the barriers you must overcome to compete both for increased listenership/readership and to attract revenue to your media product, and what opportunities can you take advantage of? Use this area to formulate a strategy to stand out from the crowd.

Specifically, please address the following:

* What other media products already exist in your targeted area? (radio, tv, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, digital news sites)
* How is your media product different from the ones already existing in your targeted area (and why you’re different (and better) than the others?)

**6. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS**

**a) Lay out how your company operates.**

* Include your organizational structure – please provide an organogram
* Ownership information
* Profiles of your management team, and number of employees.
* For management and key staff, please complete the template provide below for inclusion in your business plan

| **Name** | **Position** | **Skills & Experience** | **Qualifications** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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1. **If you are a community media project**

* Provide details of the Board, eg how many Board members, how often does it meet, when last it held an AGM?
* How are Board members elected?
* What procedures/ systems are in place for the project to report and account to the community?
* Provide information about members of your governing body on a table as below:

| **Full Name** | **Position held at the project** | **Experience & skills** | **Gender** | **Race** | **Age** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *e.g. Dineo Toka* | *Chairperson of the board* | *Journalism diploma, former Sunday Times editor.* | *Female* | *African* | *39* |
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1. **What resources do you have?**

Provide information on a table as below

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Details** |
| Office premises | Eg owned or rented, commercial or home premises |
| Office furniture |  |
| Equipment |  |
| Internet and email access |  |

**7. MARKETING AND SALES**

Explain how you’ll find and create revenue by defining your marketing and sales strategies.

For **marketing**, discuss your communications strategy as well as how and where you’ll share your messaging. The communications strategy should be aimed at both

* Potential advertisers and funders
* Your target readership/listenership and areas

For **advertising/airtime sales**, focus on who will handle sales (and how you’ll train any outside help) and what tactics you’ll use to identify, attract, and convert leads.

**8. FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

Finish your business plan with information about your company’s financial health and future. This is a good place to include income statements, cash flow reports, and balance sheets to outline your assets and liabilities.

1. **Monthly operational cost**

Include a, itemised breakdown of your monthly costs. Please use a similar template as below and ensure that your budget is at this level of detail.

**EXAMPLE**:

| **Line Item** | **Detail** | **Cost** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Monthly rental |  |  |
| Salaries or stipends | Number of staff |  |
| Equipment insurance |  |  |
| Website hosting & domain |  |  |
| Digital marketing |  |  |
| Travel costs |  |  |
| Newspaper printing costs | Number of copies printed per month |  |
| Monthly Sentech transmission costs |  |  |
| ***Total*** |  |  |

1. **Monthly revenue**

Include a detailed itemised breakdown of your monthly revenue. Please use a similar template as below and ensure that your budget is at this level of detail.

| **Source of revenue** | **Detail** | **Amount** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Advertising | Local Municipality |  |
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1. **Other sources of funding**

Provide a list of funders/donors you are receiving or have received funds from, other than the MDDA and the advertisers listed above. Include the year of funding and the amount.

1. **Future sustainability**

It is important to include the following

* A 3 year financial projections/ plan. You can include expected gross income/revenue or other financial predictions, but keep them grounded in reality.
* How you propose to generate additional resources after the MDDA grant?