



REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE NORTH WEST FILM COMMISSION; FILM PRODUCTION COMPANIES & FILM MAKERS

Introduction

Members of the North West Film Commission undertook visits to all the four districts of the North West Province to have consultations with film production companies and film makers to discuss strategies of turning the film sector into a thriving industry whereat all the role players could reap the benefits of their creativity.

The secondary aim of the consultations was to assess the state of film training and capacity needs of the film makers.

Meetings were called in each of the district were called on short notice yet the attendance was at the least very satisfactory Mafikeng **(40)** ; Huhudi **(30)**; Bojanala **(9)** & Klerksdorp **(25)** whilst the database of role-players is growing in leaps and bounds.

General Overview

There is a whole lot of filming activity taking place in the North West Province which is not documented or co-ordinated and thus making quantifying the economic impact of the sector very difficult.

The absence of a central structure also robs the emerging film makers the opportunity to hone their skills and build their film production profiles.

The television sector is opening up and role-players in the province need to position themselves to meet the demands for local content from the SABC, Multi-Choice, OVHD, StarTimes and many more other channels. A co-ordinated approach to liaise with commissioning managers is needed in order that producers from the North West Province could also start making inroads and sidestepping current barriers.

Access to financial and material resources is a big huge barrier to most of the film makers in and those from the North West Province. Developmental Financial Institutions such as SEDA, SEFA, IDC, DTI & NFVF need to be sensitised to the plight of the filmmakers of the North West whilst at the same time endeavours are also made to assist provincial role-players to be compliant with all investments pre-requisites.

Officials at Department of Culture, Arts & Traditional Affairs (CATA), Department of Tourism and municipalities need to act in sync for the development of the sector that cuts across economy, arts and tourism.

North West Province is a green-field in the field of film and television which carries a lot of potential for the role-players in the sector in that the audience of 3,5million which is spread across 19 Local Municipalities and 4 District Municipalities still remains untapped in terms of local content.

Currently the North West has Community Radio Station in all districts, a National Radio Station and a Commercial Radio Station with one Commercial TV Station (Siyaya) & two



Community TV Stations (Platinum TV & SpiritWord TV) which would be sufficient to transact with film makers and writers of the North West Province.

Bojanala District Municipality 11th May 2016, Olympia Stadium, Rustenburg.

The issue of contention raised at this meeting was the process that CATA was involved in also establishing a government enacted film commission also to be referred to as the “North West Film Commission”.

A film forum should be mooted as a platform to advocate, lobby and engage CATA and all film making role-players views and inputs to taken on board.

The other view was that the NPC should proceed in its current form with the goal of movie-making should not be lost to all the role-players. Participation in the establishment of a government enacted film commission which may take 4 or more years has to be pursued whilst at the same time the well being of film makers is not relegated to the back benches and left at the discretion of government officials who have not moved an inch on the sector.

In terms of structure the meeting agreed that a lot of thought be made on this matter so that a point of conversion be reached without compromising or prejudicing the film makers who struggling at the moment.

The following points were to be looked into going forward:

1. Role-players should establish the status/stage of how far is CATA in establishing the government enacted film commission.
2. Establishment of a vehicle that will be inclusive and accommodative of all role-players with film makers at the centre of such a vehicle in the North West Province.
3. Further consultations by North West Film Commission with film makers in other districts of the North West Province.
4. A provincial consultative meeting where all stakeholders and role-players could meet under one roof and chart the wayforward of turning this sector into an industry.
5. Strategic partnerships with other film commissions should be pursued especially the KZN Film Commission who have indicated their willingness for collaboration at the Bojanala Film Festival of March 2016.

Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality on 17th May 2016 at Mmabana Head Quarters

Role-players in the sector had a concern that most were trained by MovieTech from Durban in 2014 and there has been no support from that time. Most of these trainees were requested to start establishing new ventures on their own yet there has been no economic activity as equipments and financing their projects has also not been forth-coming.



A point of thorough research of people currently involved in the film and television industry and how they could help fast-track the industry in the North West Province. A case in point was that a sitcom called Ga Re Dumele had more inputs from the North West against the view that NWFC held; as many more role-players in the province were doing in other productions.

A major concern raised was the lack of interest from CATA to assist role-players in pursuing their careers in the sector as well as the lack of capacity from the department to lead other departments in the economic cluster like FEED & Tourism to transform the sector into a viable and profitable industry contributing as much into the GDP of the North West Province.

Role-players emphasized that the NWFC should establish close ties with CATA, FEED & Tourism whereby monitoring and evaluation of budgets and programmes for the sector are closely scrutinized and followed up. The departmental officials need to be reigned in and reminded that their role is to facilitate and create a conducive environment for the sector to be transformed.

Many role-players in the district are deeply concerned that the Deputy Minister of Arts & Culture; Mrs. Rejoice Mabudafhasi has opened a film studio at the cost of R850 000 which was so sub-standard and qualifies to be called an Editing Studio; local film makers cannot utilise the facility; nor could they utilise resources at SABC.

Mafikeng Municipality has facilities but these were also out of reach of many production companies and this situation needs to be attended as a matter of great urgency.

The following points were to be looked into going forward:

1. The film and television strategic plan should be informed by the research on the state of the sector in the North West Province.
2. Transition from NWFC (NPC) to a government enacted NWFC as this process might take too long and jeopardise or prejudices the livelihoods of many film makers and producers in the meantime.
3. NWFC to assist companies that want to pursue training in the sector to have their accreditation fast-tracked with MICTSeta.
4. Audience development, distribution and marketing should not be ignored
5. The NWFC should also create links with Art Forums, Tourism Associations throughout the North West Province.
6. Strategic partnerships with other institutions and companies have to be pursued.

Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality on 24th May 2016 at Huhudi Community Hall

Meeting raised their unhappiness about how officials from CATA discriminated and had their biases with role-players giving preferences to handpicked individuals who have little



inclinations to the industry. NWFC was requested to have officials available at the next meeting so that these concerns could be addressed directly to them.

Film makers have a lot of material that is busy gathering dust whilst the creators are struggling with making ends meet.

Government officials with vested interests and stakes in companies in the industry are the ones that are stalling the growth and development of the Film and Television sector. Measures to redress this situation needs to be taken up with political offices in the province and nationally, if possible.

The following points were to be looked into going forward:

1. Consultative meetings should not be simple talk shops but action-orientated.
2. Transparency on allocation of learnerships and internships within the North West Province without prejudicing small municipalities like in the Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District.
3. Bureaucracy and government red-tape for access to finance by film makers to be addressed.
4. Officials from CATA who are interfering and also having vested interests need to be stopped from damaging the sector and livelihoods of role-players.
5. Access to finance and state of the art studios & equipment for post production is needed at district level.
6. Vertical and Horizontal Communication between stakeholders and role-players need to be developed and strengthened in the North West Province.
7. Linkages with government and municipalities including participating at IDP Forums has to be the responsibility of all film and television role-players.
8. All filmmakers and production companies to be ready to participate at the Mafikeng International Film Festival in August organised by Mr. Dan Selebano of Africa Today Productions (0764839593)

Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality on 27th May 2016 at Klerksdorp Ballroom Hall

Role-players expressed disappointment on the manner in which the North West Province was discriminating against the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda who until up to now has no institution like Mmabana where artists can hone their skills.

Film makers also face serious problems when it comes to accessing finance and resources for their projects.

Many writers have already developed scripts and the problem was having a link to take the process forward to production; post production, distribution and marketing as there is lack of knowledge and information from both officials of the municipality and CATA on the filming processes.



Book writers and other writers also need skills on the art of script writing techniques so as to participate meaningfully within the sector.

The following points were to be looked into going forward:

1. NWFC has to work with CATA to advance the interests of film makers and producers in the North West Province; especially ensuring that role-players can access finance and shoot in the province.
2. NWFC to lobby and advocate for access of finance on behalf of film makers and producers in the North West Province with the following bodies: SEDA, SEFA, IDC, DTI & NFVF
3. Fast-track links and communication between local film production companies and film makers
4. Film makers to be mentored and guided by NWFC on aspects such as deal structuring, production accounting and auditing as this is grey area for many role-players
5. Many workshops and sessions to be organised to empower film makers
6. NWFC to come up with projects that will transfer skills to local film makers and contribute their profiles.
7. Film makers should register companies that will make it easy for them to transact with investors and other companies in the film value-chain.

NWFC leadership undertook to look at all issues raised by film makers and production companies and prioritise issues such:

1. NWFC should come up with Operation Fast-Track that will ensure that filmmakers and producers from North West cover some lost ground.
2. Meeting with Culture, Arts and Traditional Affairs leadership to assess the departments' status of establishing a government enacted Film Commission and the role of stakeholders, film makers and film production companies in the process.
3. Interim arrangements have to also be put in place to assist as many projects between June and December 2016.
4. Creating a mechanism that will allow for vertical and horizontal communications and bring back all North West producers, directors, technicians who are plying their trades elsewhere to come back and shoot films here as part of “**Areyeng Bokone-Bophirima Campaign**”.
5. Meetings with DFI & Private Investors in the industry locally and internationally have to be expedited so that production is not stalled beyond December 2016.
6. Rollout a training programme with an MICTSeta Accredited Service Provider throughout all districts in an equitable manner.
7. Kickstart a process of ensuring that each district has a company that MICTSeta will assist with the accreditation in the short-term.



8. Fast-track filming projects with strategic partner/s that will elevate the profile of North West Filmmakers and locations.
9. Provide support to both the Mafikeng International Film Festival (August 2016) Mr. Dan Selebano of Africa Today Production has more details **(0764839593)**; and the Bojanala Film Week (March 2017) Mr. Kea Malao of KM Films SA has more details **(072665500)**.
10. Ensure that members are aware and attend as many film festival events nationally and internationally.

Photo Gallery

