



Indaba News & Meer

(KAROO Eastern Cape News Source)

– DNT Fund Application

COMMENT

Everton Sbu Williams is the **first Black publisher in Graaff-Reinet**, one of South Africa's oldest towns, to establish a print newspaper — an achievement he accomplished at a young age. As a committed **member of the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP)**, he brings strong experience in **sales and management**, which has been vital in sustaining community journalism in the Karoo. The Indaba News team is a blend of self-taught professionals and qualified journalists, united by their passion for telling authentic stories in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English, and for ensuring that under-served communities have access to credible, inclusive news.

Registered South African entity (NPC/Trust/NPO/Co-op/Pty) or fiscally hosted by one?

Yes. Williams 2050 (Pty) Ltd, Registration No. 2021/590183/07, trading as Indaba News.

Member of the Press Council of South Africa?

Yes.

Tax compliant (SARS TCS PIN)?

Yes.



Less than 1 million monthly unique website visitors (or ineligible for Google News Showcase due to language/other restrictions)?

Yes.

Commitment to monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements?

Yes.

Audience/readership profile: Describe communities served (location, gender, languages, age, interests).

Indaba News serves Graaff-Reinet and surrounding Karoo towns including Umasizakhe, Kroonvale and nearby farming communities. The audience is multilingual, with isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English as dominant languages. Readers and listeners range from youth to older farm workers, coloured communities, small-town residents, and local businesses. Content focus areas include farming, municipal accountability, social issues, township life, culture and heritage.

Rural/under-served focus? If yes, specify areas.

Yes. We focus on underserved townships such as Umasizakhe and Kroonvale, and remote farming communities across the Karoo.

Language(s) of publication.

IsiXhosa, Afrikaans and English.

Which of the following priority groups are included in your readership/audience?

Women, Youth, Rural communities, Coloured communities, Persons with disabilities.

Date the company/organisation was established.

2021.

Where do you distribute print copies (areas)?

Previously distributed in Graaff-Reinet and neighbouring towns with MDDA funding support. Due to rising printing costs, we have paused print and now focus on digital distribution.

Are you issuing print editions of your publication? If not, why not?

Not at present. Printing became financially unsustainable without external funding.

How often do you update your digital platforms (daily, weekly, monthly, other)?

Currently weekly. The new project will enable daily content and podcast updates.

Roughly how many content pieces do you upload per day to the above digital platforms?

Currently fewer than 2 per day. With this project, we aim for 5–6 daily updates across news, podcasts, and social platforms.

Provide links to digital properties if relevant.

Two Facebook pages: [Indaba News] -

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Graaff-Reinet-Indaba-News/100089197751561/>



and [Indaba & Meer]

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Indaba-Meer-61578292289199/>

Amount (Year 1): Amount requested for this year (total project value including co-funding, if applicable).

R750 000. - No Co-funding

Funding term: Are you applying for single- or multi-year funding (not more than three years)? Please indicate the number of years requested.

One year.

Tier (Year 1): Which Tier are you applying for in Year 1?

Grow (up to R950 000).

Justification for tier: Explain digital stage, as explained in the tiers in the application form, and why this tier fits.

Indaba News is transitioning from a successful MDDA-funded print operation to a digital-first platform. We have a strong content base but require digital infrastructure, podcast equipment, and professional training to scale. The Grow tier fits because it will enable us to stabilise our operations, launch Indaba & Meer podcasts, and expand digital reach in an underserved region of the Eastern Cape

Project start & end dates.

01/02/2026 – 31/01/2027.

Give a high-level overview of your project. Please cover Goal & fit.

The goal is to create a sustainable digital media platform that combines daily news updates with multilingual podcast storytelling. Indaba News will provide isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English content to fill the information gap left by closed local papers. The Meer division will focus on Karoo stories — farming news, township issues, coloured community perspectives and small-town life. The project directly advances DNTF priorities by diversifying revenue, increasing digital reach, and strengthening community engagement.

Who & where: Your primary audience/community and location.

Our audience includes rural, township and farming communities in the Karoo, centred in Graaff-Reinet and extending to nearby small towns. In two years, we plan to expand to Middelburg in the Northern Cape, which faces similar challenges.

Problem/opportunity: What needs fixing or improving.

Printing costs have made continued print editions impossible without external support. This leaves rural and township audiences without access to credible news in isiXhosa and Afrikaans.



The opportunity is to create a digital-first, podcast-driven newsroom that tells authentic stories, preserves languages, and serves as a hub for small-town journalism

What you will do (high level): 3–5 key activities over the grant period.

We will establish a new multilingual website using existing archived content. We will set up a professional podcast studio and employ two presenters, two production staff and three news writers. We will develop daily digital news and weekly podcasts covering farming, municipal issues, cultural life, and Karoo communities. We will build WhatsApp distribution groups and expand our two Facebook platforms to grow audience reach. We will also rent out podcast facilities to local businesses as a revenue stream.

Deliverables & success: 2–4 headline deliverables and 2–3 ways you will measure success.

Deliverables include a new multilingual website, weekly podcast episodes, and 5–6 daily digital news updates. Success will be measured by website analytics, podcast listenership (target 2,000 monthly), WhatsApp group reach (target 75 groups), and growth of Facebook audiences across our two active pages.

Timeline & team: Intended start–end months, project lead, and any core partner(s) if applicable.

The project will run from February 2026 to January 2027. The project lead is Everton Sbu Williams. The podcast team includes 2 presenters (R4,000 pm each), production staff (visual/audio R8,000 pm, head of production R9,500 pm), and 3 dedicated news writers. Partnerships will be developed with local municipalities and small businesses to support content and sustainability.

Risk & sustainability: One top risk and how you'll reduce it, plus what continues after the grant.

The top risk is limited resources to maintain operations after the grant. This will be reduced by introducing podcast rental services for businesses, local advertising, and solutions journalism partnerships. After the grant, Indaba & Meer will continue producing news and podcasts with diversified revenue streams and expanded regional presence.

Ethical AI/data safeguards (if applicable).

We will comply with POPIA, provide multilingual privacy notices, and only collect minimal community data. AI may be used for transcription but will be subject to human oversight to prevent bias.

Budget Summary (Year 1 – R950 000 request).



- Digital infrastructure & website development (multilingual, low-bandwidth optimised):
R200 000

- Equipment (5 laptops, podcast studio kit, 2 professional cameras, storage, software, hosting):

R230 000

- Team compensation for content production (2 presenters, production staff, 2 reporters, editor/ops manager):

R280 000

- Training & capacity development (digital journalism, podcasting, advertising, social media strategy, solutions journalism):

R140 000

- Marketing & audience growth (social media strategy, WhatsApp group expansion, 2 active Facebook pages, community launch events):

R70 000

- Podcast production & rentals (studio operation, editing services, rental for local businesses):

R30 000

Total requested (Year 1):

R950 000