The Feasibility of Regional Television (RTV) in South Africa.

A study of the official process towards the issuing of licenses for RTV and subsequent developments.

F.J. Robinson

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Philosophy (Journalism) at the University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor: Professor Lizette Rabe
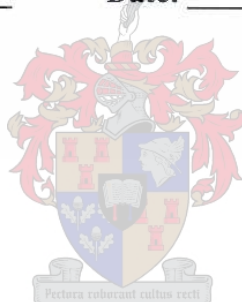
Date: March 2007

Declaration

I the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this theses is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree

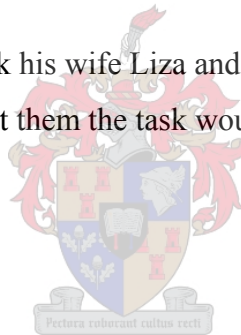Signature: _____   Date: ___30 October 2006.___

F.J. Robinson

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This is a qualitative study on the question whether regional television can be feasible in South Africa with particular reference to the official process to introduce regional television (RTV), the various reports and opinions on the subject, new technological developments and the exploration of alternatives. It is an effort to make a contribution towards the debate about how the public broadcaster can deliver better dedicated services to the diverse language groups of the country wherever they live, while also keeping pace with the challenges of an ever changing global digital world.

The study indicated that various public broadcasters internationally struggled to find a financially viable model for regional television to serve diverse communities. The general option was the use of "windows" – specific limited time allocated on national networks for regional break-aways. Yet, increasingly technology provided answers but still at a relative expensive fee for the average citizen. In South Africa the windows model was implemented for a limited period between 1996 and 2003. It was discontinued because of lack of financial support from the state.

The researcher indicates how the process to implement regional television already started with transformation envisaged in the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act of 1993 through to the Broadcast Amendment Act of 2003 instructing the SABC to apply within nine months to the Independent Broadcasting Authority of South Africa (ICASA) for regional licenses that "should reflect the diversity of all sections of the population and represent the plurality of views and opinions of the audience" (ICASA, 2003a:11).

ICASA published its Discussion Paper on Regional Television in September 2003 inviting comments while emphasizing the importance of serving the various language groups and providing local content. It recognised the problems concerning funding. Its Position Paper was released in November 2003. ICASA clearly took the view that the introduction of regional services in the various (especially marginalised) languages were imperative and that it had to be offered to the exclusion of English. The state had to fund the services while advertising would not be permitted.

The study was approached within the framework of normative mass media theories, and in particular the developmental theory. Through content analysis the ICASA documents and the SABC's application for RTV in December 2003 was assessed and the stark points of difference indicated, such as the use of English, local content (especially drama) and advertising income. By using the methodology of in-depth interviews and a social survey based on a structured questionnaire more information and perspective was gained.

In its application for regional television the SABC suggested two channels for 10 indigenous languages in the nine provinces delivered through the outdated but cheaper analogue technology. Throughout 2004 ICASA and the SABC communicated in letters and at hearings to resolve differences without much success.

The SABC's main concerns remained funding and the lack of capacity and skills to offer the services required. ICASA decided in June 2005 to grant the SABC two regional licenses without issuing it until the funding issue could be resolved with the state. It relented to allow some advertising but remained opposed to the use of English.

Towards the end of the study the researcher gives an overview of the fast developing international trends in digital broadcasting. Various options to serve regional communities are offered. News reports on international trends and the opinions of experts are then related to the situation in South Africa. One conclusion is that the state and the country would have to weigh up the cost of subsidising regional television to other pressing social needs of citizens. It appeared that the cost would be too high in the short term. Preparations for the staging of the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa might lay the foundation for more sophisticated and affordable services later.

Abstrak

Hierdie is 'n kwalitatiewe studie van die proses om streekstelevisie in Suid-Afrika in te stel, 'n bespreking van die verskillende verslae en menings oor die onderwerp, nuwe tegnologiese ontwikkelings en die oorweging van alternatiewe. Dit is 'n poging om 'n bydrae te maak tot die debat oor hoe die openbare uitsaaier beter en meer toegewyde dienste kan lewer aan die verskillende taalgroepe in die land, waar hulle woon. Terselfdertyd moet ook tred gehou word met die uitdagings van 'n steeds veranderende internasionale digitale wêreld.

Die studie dui aan dat openbare uitsaaiers wêreldwyd sukkel om 'n lewensvatbare finansiële model vir die lewering van streekstelevisie aan verskillende gemeenskappe te vind. Die algemene keuse was die gebruik van "vensters" – dit is die toekenning van beperkte spesifieke tydsgleuwe op nasionale netwerke vir streekuitsendings. Tog begin tegnologie al hoe meer antwoorde verskaf, maar nog steeds teen redelike duur tariewe vir die deursnee-burger. Die venster-model van streekstelevisie is vir 'n beperkte tyd van 1996 tot 2003 in Suid-Afrika toegepas. Dit is gestaak weens gebrek aan geldelike ondersteuning van die staat.

Die navorser dui aan hoe die proses om streekstelevisie in te stel reeds begin het met die transformasie wat in die vooruitsig gestel is in die Wet op die Onafhanklike Uitsaai-Owerheid van 1993. Dit het later gelei tot die Uitsaai-Wysigingswetsonwerp van 2003. Daarin is die SAUK beveel om binne nege maande by die Onafhanklike Kommunikasie-Owerheid van Suid-Afrika (algemeen bekend as ICASA) om lisensies aansoek te doen vir streekstelevisie wat "die diversitieit van alle seksies van die samelewing sal reflekteer en die verskillende sienings en menings van die gehoor verteenwoordig" (ICASA, 2003a:11).

ICASA het sy Besprekingsdokument oor Streekstelevisie in September 2003 gepubliseer. Daarin is klem gelê op die belangrikheid van dienslewering aan die verskillende taalgroepe en die lewering van plaaslike inhoud. Die kommentaar van belanghebbendes is gevra. In die dokument het ICASA erkenning gegee aan die struikelblokke rakende befondsing.

ICASA se Standpuntdokument is in November 2003 vrygestel. ICASA het onomwonde verklaar dat die lewering van dienste aan die verskillende (maar veral aan die gemarginaliseerde) taalgemeenskappe voorkeur moes geniet en dat Engels uitgesluit moes word. Die staat sou die dienste moes finansier terwyl advertensies nie toegelaat sou word nie.

Die ondersoek is benader binne die raamwerk van die normatiewe teorieë van massa-media kommunikasie en veral die ontwikkelingsteorie. Deur inhouds-analise het die navorser 'n omvattende ontleding gedoen van die ICASA dokumente en van die SAUK se aansoek vir streekstelevisie. Die aansoek is in Desember 2003 by ICASA ingedien. Die skerp verskille met ICASA is uitgewys, naamlik die gebruik van Engels in die dienste, die lewering van plaaslike inhoud (veral drama) en oor advertensie-inkomste. Die navorser het die metode van diepte-onderhoude en 'n openbare menings-ondersoek, gegrond op 'n gestruktureerde vraelys, gebruik om meer inligting en perspektiewe te bekom.

Die SAUK het twee kanale vir streekstelevisie voorgestel vir die tien inheemse tale in die nege provinsies. Dit sou gelewer word met die goedkoper, maar uitgediende analoog-tegnologie. In 2004 het ICASA en die SAUK deurlopend gekommunikeer in briewe en by openbare verhore in 'n poging om verskille te oorbrug, maar sonder veel sukses. Deurgaans was die SAUK bekommerd oor die kwessie van befondsing en die beskikbaarheid van bronne en vaardighede om sulke dienste aan te bied. ICASA het in Junie 2005 besluit om twee lisensies vir streekstelevisie aan die SAUK toe te ken, maar dit is nie uitgereik nie, hangende duidelikheid oor finansiering van die staat. Die owerheid het skiet gegee oor die geskil rondom advertensies, maar voet by stuk gehou dat Engelse uitsendings nie toegelaat sou word nie.

Aan die einde van die studie gee die navorser 'n oorsig van die vinnig ontwikkelende internasionale digitale tegnologiese tendense in die uitsaaiwese en die moontlikhede wat dit vir streeksgemeenskappe bied. Nuusberigte oor internasionale ontwikkelings en die menings van deskundiges word in verband gebring met streekstelevisie in Suid-Afrika. Een gevolgtrekking is dat die land die koste van subsidies vir streekstelevisiedienste sal moet opweeg teen die dringende maatskaplike behoeftes van burgers. Die het geblyk dat sulke subsidies te duur sou wees in die korter termyn. Voorbereidings vir die aanbied van die Wêreldbeker Sokkertoernooi in 2010 kan die basis skep om later wel meer gesofistikeerde en bekostigbare streeksdienste te lewer.

Table of Contents   Page

VIII

1 Introduction

How feasible is it to introduce regional television (RTV) in South Africa?

This question will be assessed against the background of the process followed for the introduction of such services and the practical requirements in terms of staff, technical and financial resources. Various international examples will be cited and the applicability to the South African environment investigated. The study will be supplemented by exploring possible workable alternative models.

The purpose is to examine whether the process followed and the proposals made were practical and feasible, also whether other options could be considered. By suggesting alternatives, the author wishes to make some input in the public debate about the service expected from the Public Broadcaster in an ever changing global technological environment. This is intended as a positive and constructive endeavour to promote the introduction of attainable, sustainable and valuable public services to regional or language specific television audiences.

This study will be done within the framework of the normative development theory of mass media using qualitative research methods such as analysing documents, in-depth interviews and snap surveys in order to gain a better understanding of the topic.

In terms of section 22A of the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 2003, the SABC was instructed to apply for public regional television broadcasting services. In this process the SABC had to give due regard to language usage within such regions and to ensure that ten official indigenous languages (excluding English) would be treated on an equitable basis (South Africa, 2003).

Up until then, the normal procedure (as laid down by the Broadcasting Act) was that a company or institution had to apply to the regulator, ICASA (previously the Independent Broadcasting Authority), for a license if it wanted to introduce and operate a service. In the application process such an entity would then submit detailed proposals on the financial viability of the intended service and what it planned to offer in terms of content, and to whom. ICASA would after due consideration of various submissions decide who would get the license.

In this case, the SABC had no choice whether it wanted to apply to deliver such services or not. Nor did it have the freedom to decide how it would provide for various languages. It was told to apply and to provide for the various prescribed languages on an **equitable** basis (South

Africa, 2003). The term "equitable" was not specified. Logically it implied that equal services (in terms of time, content variety and expenditure) should be delivered to the various language groups irrespective of the size of the population, regional distribution or inherent skills capacity to write, produce and broadcast a wide range of programming. No practical consideration was given to the financial viability of such services before the law was enacted. It could be argued that the regulator, ICASA, was in effect also obliged to issue licences for such services to the SABC irrespective of whether it would be viable.

Already in the Triple Inquiry Report of the Independent Broadcasting Authority of 1995 it was suggested that an envisaged new free to air service could consist of regional network stations. It was suggested this would widen ownership and establish regional centres of production and infrastructure. In this way regional culture, character and identity could also be advanced. The authority investigated RTV in 1996 and discovered it would not be financially feasible. However, provincial diversity was a license condition for granting a licence to e.tv (ICASA Discussion Paper, 2003a:06).

The SABC did offer regional services in windows of one hour per week day in the Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal and a combined service in Mpumalanga and the Limpopo provinces from 1996 to 2003. This was abandoned in part due to lack of financial resources, according to the head of SABC News Research (Minnaar, 2006). Yet, it was reasonably successful in terms of technical feasibility, practical implementation and public support (Minnaar, 2006).

As will become clear later, the windows model was certainly cheaper and more practical than the obligatory channels suggested in law. The windows model could be considered again. Yet, the regional windows offered to the respective language groups were limited since the break-away times were only one hour. The international tendency was two hours. This will be discussed in greater detail in following chapters.

One could say that the SABC, as the public it was servicing, was also in a state of transition. It had to define and refine its role on several levels - not only in terms of how to service society in its diversity, but also how it could align its role with funding models and challenges of a fast developing technological era of which it was fundamentally part. All of these issues were of relevance in the process to deliver regional television. The process itself helped to stimulate debate on these very issues.

Irrespective of one's view about the feasibility of regional television, the technological developments in the past ten years, combined with the extent of advances expected in the coming four to five years, raised serious questions about the desirability to continue with a process and proposals as initiated a decade or more ago. Towards the end of the thesis a broader picture will be given of the technological advances and the possible implications of such developments for regional television in South Africa.

In the research for this thesis it became apparent that technological developments in the broadcasting and telecommunications fields were taking place at such a breathtaking pace that regulatory and policy decisions had to be taken and implemented fast – and that was not always the case in South Africa.

The researcher invites the reader on an exciting journey with him to explore developments in the television broadcasting industry in the recent past and into the future.

2 Theoretical Framework

The value of scientific theory according to Fourie is to "describe, interpret, understand, evaluate and predict a phenomenon" (Fourie, 2001:230).

Given the particular juncture of development in South Africa, the many needs, ideologies and solutions offered in public debate to solve these problems and the cleavages in terms of income, education levels and connectedness to the new information age, several theories of mass communication have some relevance to the issue of regional television and how it should be analysed. In particular three theories have been considered with a preference for the *development* theory within the normative theories of *functionalism*. The others are the *democratic-participant* theory and the *social responsibility* theory.

2.1 The Meaning of Mass Communication

At the outset it might be useful to understand the meaning of mass communication and mass media in the South African context with particular reference to the SABC and regional television. DeFleur and Dennis identified the major mass media as print, film and broadcasting (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:29). They explained the linear process of mass communication in six stages:

- Professional communicators deciding on the nature and goals of a message. These messages can be delivered in the form of news reports, entertainment, dramas, advertising messages and others. This is perhaps an important point in relation to the SABC. There is a tendency in other mass media (newspapers and opposition television and radio stations) in their reporting and commentary on the role of the SABC as mass communicator to only concentrate on the news department. But the SABC offers a wide range of programming and the legislator and ICASA clearly had the intention that the SABC should deliver a diversified service of products on the regional channels – as will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

- Encoding the intended messages in some format for distribution;

- Transmitting the media message. The authors specifically mentioned the characteristics of such mass media transmissions as *rapid dissemination* and the *continuous* nature thereof;

- How such mass communication messages are perceived differently by a large and diverse audience. In this regard they referred to the great social, economic and

4

cultural diversity in societies determining differing tastes and interests in media content;

- The decoding and interpreting of media messages – the assigning of meaning to messages might be different depending on the diversity of the audience as described above. These two points about the perception and interpretation of messages might be useful in the context of regional television as one could argue that the encoding of intended messages could be easier should the audience be less diverse – such as a specific group defined by geographical distribution and language as intended by regional television.

- Influencing media audiences – the outcome of the previous stages with the result that the receivers of the message are changed in some way. The authors make the point that the mass media play a part in swaying public opinion (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:22-27).

In summary of the six stages outlined above, the authors defined mass communication as:

"…a process in which professional communicators design and use media to disseminate messages widely, rapidly and continuously in order to arouse intended meanings in large, diverse and selectively attending audiences in attempts to influence them in a variety of ways" (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:28).

The controversial part of the definition is the reference to the intention to arouse meanings. According to the definition the party having this intention is the communicator (SABC in this instance). But some critics will argue that the SABC is merely the "mouth piece" through which the government (or governing ANC party) intended to communicate to regional audiences in order to influence them. Apart from an unsubstantiated remark by the leader of the Freedom Front +, Dr. Pieter Mulder (Mulder, 2006), the author could find no evidence that the government had such an intention. It is easier to argue that the government had the intention the SABC should play a role to fulfil a function such as to inform and educate rural communities more effectively by doing so in their own languages through regional television.

Regional television could also be described as being part of mass communication although the audience would obviously be smaller than the mass audience of a national channel

(especially if such a service broadcast on an analogue system where only communities living in the particular transmission area could gain access). The audience of regional television will also be less diverse (that is the intention) and certainly more selective.

2.2. Effect Theories

It might be useful at this point to briefly refer to the effect theories. In media research it is a debateable point whether the *magic bullet* (or hypodermic needle) theory can still be seen as valid today. The theory held that the mass media had very powerful effects on people (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:537). The notion that a government could use a mass media institution such as the SABC and regional television to powerful effect to influence people one way or the other is therefore questionable. DeFleur and Dennis pointed out that many research studies led to the *selective and limited influences* theory overtaking the magic bullet theory (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:555). Around the middle of the previous century the *uses and gratification* theory gained momentum giving more substance to the selective and limited influences theory. The uses and gratification theory held that the audience was "active in freely choosing and selectively using message content" (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:556). In the modern television era where viewers can in a split second select different viewing material with a click of a button on the remote control of their television sets, this theory makes more sense. It needs to be pointed out that viewers who might in future gain access to regional television will receive it as an additional service to the national service or services they already have – they will therefore always have the choice not to watch regional television if it did not satisfy their needs at a particular viewing time or in general (Mansfield, 2006).

The *social expectation* theory can also be important for the study of the topic of regional television. Fourie writes: "By watching television, going to the movies, reading newspapers or listening to the radio, we can, over a period of time, learn the societal norms and roles expected from and adhered to by certain groups, people and organisations in society" (Fourie, 2001:301). He continues that the theory could be useful in multicultural societies such as South Africa where the different groups could learn more about each other through the media and about their respective norms and values (Fourie, 2001:302). This theory clearly has relevance to regional television where the emphasis is on language and culture of the various groups.

Lastly the *agenda-setting* theory can also be of value. Fourie defines it as "concerned with *how* the media's legitimisation of issues and events *affects* our perceptions or reality" (Fourie, 2001:304). Du Plooy writes: "According to this theory, the topics (viewpoints, symbols or

questions) that the mass media select, and the way in which the topics are presented, create the agenda about which audiences think and talk" (Du Plooy, 2002:26). In the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 2003, it was stated quite blatantly that the regional services had to contribute "to a shared South African consciousness and identity" (South Africa, 2003). The SABC is therefore prescribed to that it must set a certain agenda in the broadcasts of the regional services. As explained above concerning the effect theories, it does not necessarily follow that if the SABC would set such an agenda it would lead to such a consciousness and identity.

2.3 Functionalism

In reading the Broadcasting Amendment Act (South Africa, 2003) it became clear the government intended to enforce the introduction of regional television because it discerned a deficiency in the services provided to various indigenous language groups. By implication, this constituted criticism of the SABC as having failed to live up to its public broadcasting mandate to adequately provide for such services on existing channels. In other words: The SABC failed in part of its prescribed function. It therefore seems prudent to investigate the introduction of RTV within the framework of functionalism.

Author Pieter J. Fourie defined functionalism as follows:

"As powerful socialisation instruments, they (the media) should function towards integration, harmony and cohesion, whether it is through the information, entertainment and/or education they provide" (Fourie, 2001: 265).

Newbold, Boyd-Barrett and Van den Bulck's definition of functionalism is:

"This sociological tradition posits the analysis of social behaviour on the idea that there are meaningful entities called 'societies', whose component parts are usefully analysed in terms of their functional significance for social cohesion and survival" (Newbold, Boyd-Barret & Van den Bulck, 2002:421).

The government made it very clear in the Broadcasting Amendment Act that the SABC in its proposals for the delivery of RTV had to provide "significant amounts of educational

programming" from a wide range of issues in order to contribute "to a shared South African consciousness and identity" (South Africa, 2003). It appears the government certainly had a strong inclination towards the sentiment that the SABC should function as a powerful instrument in providing educational and educative programming for the purpose of attaining greater cohesion and harmony in the country.

One could deduct from the above that the government wanted regional television services to provide two functions or needs:

- Satisfy the need for programming in the various indigenous languages;

- To serve as platforms to educate and inform.

In this study these functions will be investigated within the framework of the process to introduce such services, the technological advances and the practical and financial viability of such services.

2.4 Diversity and Culture

As a young democracy South Africa is still a country in transition to a unified society in all its diversity, all participating fully in public life and the economy. In this transition the SABC as the public broadcaster can play a role, but what and how? And would regional television in a multi-cultural society be a vital ingredient of public broadcasting to deliver a service to citizens?

As pointed out by Kristen Skare Orgeret in her work *Moments of Nationhood*, the original public service broadcasting model of the BBC in the early part of the previous century was designed for a relative homogenous society on the assumption that there was *a* nation and *a* public to address (Orgeret, 2006:19). This traditional "Western concept" of public broadcasting was not suitable for the heterogeneous post apartheid society of South Africa (Orgeret, 2006:36). In addition the public broadcaster (SABC) in South Africa was also subject to the dichotomy of citizen versus consumer where commercial broadcasters delivered products to consumers while public broadcasters (funded by the public) had to deliver services to citizens (Orgeret, 2006:22).

The chief operating officer of the SABC, Solly Mokoetle, referred to the anomaly that the public service components of the SABC's television services (SABC1 and SABC2) were in fact delivering more commercial revenue than the commercial channel, SABC3 (Mokoetle, 2006a). In addition the public broadcaster received virtually no funding from the state, only some 20% from the public trough license fees and all the rest from commercial sources (Mokoetle, 2006b). The SABC was therefore a hybrid broadcaster that had to address the audience at times as

citizens and at other as consumers. This had to be done in an environment of two economies, as so often referred to by President Thabo Mbeki where the poor were mostly black – and therefore predominantly from the indigenous language or cultural groups living in the various provinces that had to be targeted by regional television. These were exactly the citizens that were in most need of services of all kinds (including broadcasting). They were not necessarily in a position to pay for it or to be a lucrative market as consumers to advertisers.

Orgeret argued it was commonly assumed that "public service broadcasting [had] an important role to play and even a responsibility in periods of transition and in the construction of democracy" (Orgeret, 2006:18). In this regard she also referred to scholars such as McQuail. She continued:

" [the] link between the nation and the different cultures within it is crucial. Multi-cultural nations may necessitate national broadcasting, which promotes multicultural and minority concerns because they too are in the national interest and which not only follows the laws of the commercial market, or is mostly concerned about interesting market segments" (Orgeret, 2006:31).

Orgeret did not offer a specific definition or explanation of "culture" in the South African context, but her passing reference to the various official languages in the introduction suggested that languages were at least part of the defining elements of the various cultures. She also referred to the dichotomy that South Africa (and the SABC) faced to deepen democracy by recognising and respecting the multitude of identities while also pursuing nation building by creating a national culture (Orgeret, 2006:9). In the Broadcasting Amendment Act the various languages were very specifically and prominently mentioned but there was also a reference to programming on various topics including culture (South Africa, 2003). The South African Concise Oxford Dictionary describes "culture" as: "...the customs, institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or group" (South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2002:282). While there is no reference to language, one can logically accept that the reference to "a particular nation, people or group" could also refer to the various ethnic groups as defined by language.

While discussing the philosophy of authority and order, Merrill wrote that the "idea of bringing people of a community into the communication process, is growing in various venues.

The idea of a right to communicate , defining press freedom as collective rights of states and social and ethnic groups, thought dead at the ed of the cold war, is still very much alive". His belief was that these ideas might not be authoritarian but more liberating and democratic than the so-called Western libertarianism (Merrill, 2003:12). One might therefore ask whether the South African government had an inclination towards the old authoritarian approach in legislating for regional television or was it a liberating, democratic urge to give expression to the various language/cultural groups?

"Culture" can also be interpreted in various other ways. Apart form the specific interpretation mentioned above within the context of an ethnic group with a particular language, there can also be the national culture as referred to by Orgeret. But is there a national cohesive culture in South Africa or must it be built? And can regional television be a vehicle for it? Campbell, Martin and Fabos referred to *media culture* and a feature of the development of mass communication as the "process of designing and delivering cultural messages and stories to large and diverse audiences through media channels as old as the book and as new as the Internet". They continued: "…mass communication accompanied the gradual shift of rural populations to urban settings and the rise of consumer culture" (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2007:11). This definition adds "consumer culture" to the mix and by implication also rural and urban cultures. By implication rural populations are less consumer orientated and more needs driven for various basic services that might include regional television. Campbell, Martin and Fabos also made the distinction between *high culture* (ballet, the symphony) and *low culture* (soap operas, rock and rap music etc.) (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2007:18). Television products mainly fall within the category of low culture. So what kind of culture would be featured on regional television and would it be conducive to development?

Parsons defined *development* as "increasing the quantity and improving the quality of the available means of communication". "Development also includes improved individual access to the channels of communication." (Parsons, 2003:59). Regional television could therefore be tested against this definition of development. But ironically Parsons also refers to culture as a barrier to media development. Such barriers are various taboos, illiteracy, multilingualism (because of the complicated logistics to serve the needs of different groups), interpersonal communication in traditional communities and religious beliefs (Parsons, 2003:60-62). Other obstacles mentioned were *media barriers* (such as the lack of trained professionals), *economic barriers* (the lack of funding for the development of media) and *technological barriers* (Parsons,

2003:62-71). All of these barriers are relevant in the analysis of the proposals for regional television in South Africa.

If one accepted the argument that the SABC had such an important role to play as a public broadcaster in the transitional and multicultural society, it might also be prudent to examine how it should play the role and what was expected from it by the state and the public with particular reference to regional television. This leads one to the normative theories of mass media. Three theories can be applicable: the Developmental Media theory, the Social Responsibility theory and the Democratic-Participant Media theory.

On the basis of the definitions of these theories (Dictionary of Media and Communications Studies, 2003:203) one could certainly argue that the SABC as public broadcaster had an obligation to society but it was less certain whether this also included playing the role of *watchdog*. In fact, one of the Board members of the SABC, Thami Mazwai, publicly rejected that the SABC should only play the role of watchdog. He believed as a public broadcaster it could also be a *guide dog* given the particular development needs of the country (Mazwai, 2006).

2.5 Developmental Media Theory
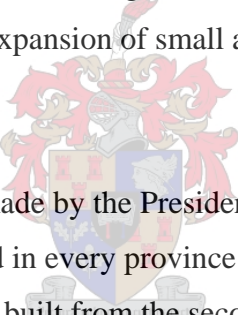
Of the 190 countries of the world, 75% are developing nations, according to George Djolov, the chief industrial economist of the Association of Southern African Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) classified South Africa as a dual economy but the World Bank listed it as a developing nation (Djolov, 2007). From these figures it must be clear that the developmental media theory might be useful in the majority of countries including South Africa. While this country was better off than many others, it still had considerable developmental challenges and experienced sharp income disparities. President Thabo Mbeki refers to a country of two nations as pointed out before. This is what the president said during his State of the Nation address in parliament on 6 February 2004:

> "We have already identified the challenges posed by the Second Economy, which economy constitutes the structural manifestation of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalisation in our country. We must therefore move vigorously to implement all the programmes on which we have agreed to ensure that we extricate all our people from the social conditions that spell loss of human dignity.

These include the urban renewal and rural development programmes, the expanded public works programme, the expansion of micro-credit and small enterprises, the provision of adult basic education and modern skills, and the development of the *social* and economic infrastructure.

This will also help us enormously to achieve the goals of non-racism, non-sexism, balanced urban-rural development and social cohesion.

At the same time, we must continue to focus on the growth, development and modernisation of the First Economy, to generate the resources without which it will not be possible to confront the challenges of the Second Economy. This is going to require further and significant infrastructure investments, skills development, scientific and technological research, development and expansion of the knowledge economy, growth and modernisation of the manufacturing and service sectors, deeper penetration of the global markets by our products, increasing our savings levels, black economic empowerment and the further expansion of small and medium enterprises" (Mbeki, 2004).

Referring to these statements made by the President, the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, said these two worlds existed in every province and every city (Manuel, 2004:1). He referred to "staircases" that should be built from the second to the first world in South Africa. President Mbeki mentioned several steps or strategies of how this staircase between the first and second economy can be built. In many of these the SABC can play a role by expanding services to the regions and through these services also contribute to goals such as skills development and the expansion of the knowledge economy.

Mass media can be seen within the framework of development theory as part of the instruments to overcome such inequalities and to stimulate economic growth to the benefit of the larger population. As will be pointed out later in more detail, President Mbeki in fact did place the extension of the information and communication sectors in the larger picture of the nodal development plan for the country (Mbeki, 2001). It is not clear whether the government legislated for regional television from the perspective of the development theory of mass communication. It is unlikely, but the theory can nevertheless be useful as a framework to analyse the thesis question. In the SABC there certainly was an inclination to use the development theory as a guide, as will be explained shortly.

Elements of the development theory as defined by Fourie are:

- "The media should make a positive contribution to the national development process"

- "The media should give preference to information about national, cultural and language issues" (Fourie, 2001:274).

This last point is of particular reference as the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 2003 specifically legislated for the introduction of regional television to broadcast:

"(a) Regionally;
 (b) in such official languages as are appropriate, having regard to language usage within respective regions served by the proposed services;
 (c) so as to ensure that between these public regional television services, broadcasting in the languages of Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu is provided on an equitable basis" (South Africa. 2003).

According to Van Gompel, Van den Bulck and Biltereyst developmental media theory acknowledged "that the media in many post-colonial states [were] not only working in totally different conditions, but [were] often also enclosed in broader projects of education, social and economic development" (Van Gompel, Van den Bulck & Biltereyst, 2002:175).

Being part of the developing nations, and faced with the many challenges of the globalised world, South Africa faced multiple challenges. One could argue that within the framework of the developmental theory the SABC as a public broadcaster had a responsibility to help. Quite logically some of the most pressing needs were better education and skills development (also in broadcasting). The Broadcasting Amendment Act of 2003 very specifically prescribed that the SABC had to include significant amounts of educational programming on a wide range of topics in its scheduling on regional television (South Africa, 2003).

The SABC's initiative (driven by the News Department) to offer regional television in limited "windows" from 1996 to 2003, was principally done to comply with its language mandate. This will be discussed in detail in chapter five. It was not done in the framework of any media theory. But recently the News Department of the SABC took the initiative to define its objective within the parameters of the developmental media theory. At a strategic workshop on

21 October 2006 in Boksburg on the East Rand, Professor Fackson Banda of the University of Rhodes, was invited to address senior managers and journalists on the issue of developmental theory. His lecture was taken so seriously that it was posted permanently on the internal newsnet.

Professor Banda gave an historical perspective on the stages of the theory and how it was demonized by Western notions of press freedom. He identified the latest stage of the theory as the "multiplicity" or "another development" paradigm. In this model the importance of cultural identity and local communities was stressed as well as participation and empowerment (Banda, 2006:4). It might be purely incidental but the new vision of the SABC as pronounced by the new Group Chief Executive, Adv. Dali Mpofu, is: "Broadcasting for Total Citizen Empowerment" (SABC, 2006). Banda said in terms of this theory, communication became more concerned with process and context (Banda, 2006:4) He then related development journalism to public service broadcasting (PSB) and came to the conclusion that PSB offered the best medium for development journalism. He presented the following table (Fig. 1) of similarities:

2. PSB & Development Journalism: A Conceptual Synergy

PSB	Development Journalism
❖ Universal accessibility	❖ Focus on rural (remotest) areas
❖ Universal appeal	❖ Views 'development' holistically
❖ Attention to minorities	❖ Inclusive of hitherto unheard voices
❖ National identity & community	❖ Cultural identity and community
❖ Distance from vested interests	❖ Journalistic 'agency' or 'free will'
❖ Direct funding & universality of payment	❖ Distant from the influence of the market and of the state
❖ Good programming	❖ Values 'quality' content
❖ Independent programme-making (in Raboy 1996)	❖ Values independent & democratic participation

Fig.1   Source: Banda, 2006.

Banda suggested five strategies for the implementation of development journalism in public service broadcasting:

- Framing audiences as citizens;

- Listening to citizens;

- Promoting serious dialogue;

- Citizen-based framing of development – understanding that only citizens can name their problems effectively;

- Active engagement of journalist with citizens in the process of developmental problem-solving.

At the very same strategic workshop, the Managing Director of News, Dr. Snuki Zikalala, identified the editorial line as: "The SABC News [was] an independent news organisation that [provided] balanced, critical, accurate, relevant and interesting news, located within a *developmental narrative*..."(Zikalala, 2006:20). Referring to one of the SABC's corporate values of "Restoring Human Dignity" he said SABC News "contextualised coverage within a *developmental narrative"* (Zikalala, 2006:13). It seemed therefore clear that developmental theory was identified as the guiding framework of news reporting in the SABC. In this thesis it will thus also be useful to apply the theory in the analysis of the thesis question. Although this clear stand in favour of development theory took place long after the initial process to license regional television, the implementation (if it does happen) might very well be guided by the theory.

But the development theory also has some other elements that could be regarded as in conflict with Western notions of press freedom, as described by Banda above. Some such elements could be the following:
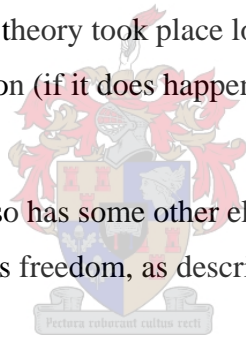
- "Certain liberties of the media should be made subordinate to the achievements.."

- "...Common objectives are given priority over individual freedom."

- "The State should be able to restrict the media if economic interests and the development needs of the society are at stake."

- "To protect development objectives, the state has the right to intervene by restricting and censoring the media. State subsidies and direct control are therefore justifiable" (Fourie, 2001:274).

These elements will also be considered in the analysis of the research question.

2.6 Social Responsibility Theory.

According to Fourie this theory attempted to reconcile the ideas of freedom and independence with responsibility towards society. Some aspects the theory as identified by McQuail are:

- "The media have an important function to fulfil in society, especially with regard to supporting democratic political principles;

- The independence of the media should be emphasised in relation to their responsibility to society;

- The media collectively should represent all social groups and reflect the diversity of society by giving people access to a variety of viewpoints and the right to react to these viewpoints;

- Society is entitled to expect high professional standards and intervention is justifiable if the media fail to meet these standards" (Fourie, 2001: 272-273).

The very aim of regional television as defined in the Broadcasting Amendment Act was the responsibility to provide services to various groups and in doing so reflect the diversity.

2.7 Democratic-Participant Theory.

This is another theory with some relevance to regional television. Fourie made the point that this theory was "primarily a reaction to the trends towards commercialisation and monopoly-formation in privately controlled mass media, and towards centralisation and bureaucratisation in public broadcasting" He said the theory was primarily encountered in developed societies (Fourie, 2001:274).
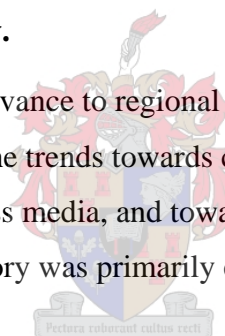
Van Gompel, Van den Bulck and Biltereyst argued that the theory stressed egalitarianism, political emancipation and democratic participation as key values. In practice it applied to grass roots media forms such as local community or minority television (Van Gompel, Van den Bulck & Biltereyst, 2002:176). Again quoting McQuail, Fourie listed several basic principles such as:

- "Individuals and minority groups should be able to claim the right of access to the media and the right to have their needs served by the media;

- The organisation of the media and the content of messages should not be influenced by political or bureaucratic control (this is in direct contrast to the two previous theories);

- Groups, organisations and communities should have their own media; and

- Small scale interactive and participatory forms of media are regarded as more beneficial than large scale, unidirectional media which are used only by professional media workers" (Fourie, 2001:275).

There can be little argument about the fact that South Africa was still a young democracy. Naturally, the public broadcaster had a role to strengthen democracy by giving access to citizens and minority groups and to attend to the needs of such citizens or groups – elements specifically mentioned in the definition of the theory on Democratic-Participant Media (Dictionary of Media and Communications Studies, 2003:203). But this theory did not fit the study of regional television well. As a public broadcaster the SABC had only one shareholder (the state) and could not be totally free of government, nor of big business as it was largely dependent on business as stakeholders to deliver the larger part of revenue. This theory was more applicable to the study of community television – the next phase of media development in South Africa as indicated by ICASA (Tsotsetsi, 2006).

Reference will be made to all three these theories when the information on the process towards regional television have been analysed. Yet, the developmental media theory will be the most dominant.
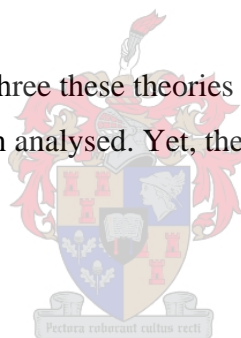
3 Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study will give a broad overview of events in the television broadcasting environment in the past decade pertaining to regional television and other relevant developments in the industry. It will include a review and analysis of appropriate documentation such as research papers, submissions, discussion papers, position papers and proposals broadly and specifically pertaining to regional television. Content analysis as defined by Mouton, referred to studies that analysed the content of texts or documents (Mouton, 2005:165). Through the input of various role players and experts the processes to introduce regional television services will be assessed.

The *qualitative* approach to media research is described by O'Sullivan, Dutton and Rayner as aiming "less at measuring and more at understanding, often from the inside" (O'Sullivan, Dutton & Rayner, 1998:322). By careful content analysis of several sources the author wishes to promote greater understanding on the subject of regional television and to give some answers to the question concerning the feasibility of such services. As described in the definition above on qualitative research, this author is indeed also from the "inside". The researcher has not done previous research on regional television, but he has more than 30 years experience in broadcast television in various disciplines and departments -- in particular the practical side of broadcasting in the studio situation and production in the field. While this can be considered as a compromising situation for scientific study as it might not be possible to maintain absolute objectivity, it can nevertheless also be seen as an advantage since extensive personal experience in the industry can also help to give better understanding of the issues at stake and the practical requirements.

According to Hilde van den Bulck in *The Media Book*, the main tool of qualitative survey research "is the in-depth, semi-structured or open interview" (Van den Bulck, 2002:69). The author predominantly used this methodology in doing individual in-depth one-on-one interviews. Unlike the structured interviews in quantative research, the interviews or conversations were done face-to-face with committed purpose to gain as much insight as possible from the interviewees. Van den Bulck appropriately described the individual in-depth interview as a "very complex and exhausting task, which requires a lot of planning, effort and considerable expertise. The interviewer not only has to prepare the structure and flow of the interview [but] he/she also needs a particular set of social and intellectual skills" (Van den Bulck, 2002:70). The author mainly used the interview technique of *funnelling* – starting with the most general and broad questions and then narrowed it down to the area of enquiry (Van den Bulck, 2002:70). All

interviewees were selected on the basis of their very specific knowledge of the subject or direct involvement with the process towards regional television or aspects of it.

The interviewees were:

1. Blaauw, Christoff: Senior Researcher, SABC Market Intelligence.

2. De Bod, Manie: Regional Television Working Group, finance.

3. De Souza, Lydia: Senior Manager Licensing, Monitoring & Complaints, Broadcasting Services of ICASA.

4. Doyle, Aynon: Senior Manager, Policy Development and Research Department, ICASA.

5. Dreyer, Aldred: Manager SABC Technology. He worked on the revised models for RTV transmission and reach.

6. Fuchs, Oren: Regional Television Working Group, strategy.

7. Jooste, Ida: Senior current affairs producer. She was previously the regional news editor in Durban and manager of the regional "window" broadcasts in KwaZulu Natal.

8. Kantor, Lara: SABC General Manager, Policy and Regulatory Affairs. She and her department were much involved with the preparation of the SABC applications for Regional Television and the subsequent ICASA public hearings.

9. Kelly, Pat: SABC Content Enterprises. He has vast experience in the commissioning of dramas. He was previously the Commissioning Editor: Drama for SABC 3.

10. Koster, Johann: Executive Director of the South African National Association of Broadcasters.

11. Lindeque, Frans: Acting Chief Operating Officer, Sentech.

12. Mansfield, Lynn: SABC Manager Regulatory Affairs. He was directly involved in drawing up the signal distribution charts for the SABC's RTV application and subsequent adjustments.

13. Minnaar, Izak: SABC Manager, News Research. He was previously tasked to write an assessment report on the SABC's "windows" experiment with regional television.

14. Mjawara, Joe: Formerly Director, Broadcasting in the Department of Communications.

15. Moilwa, Philly: SABC Manager, Regulatory Affairs. He previously worked for ICASA and was given the task to be the corporation's liaison link with ICASA.

16. Botlenyana Mokhele: Manager, Policy Development, ICASA

17. Molaudzi, Simon: SABC Regional Manager, North West. He was formerly from the Limpopo Province and represented the SABC in discussions on RTV with the North West Province.

18. Molefe, Phil: SABC General Manager, International Affairs. He was previously the head of SABC Africa News.

19. Mthembu, Zweli: General Manager, Strategy in the office of the Chief Operating Officer of the SABC.

20. Mulder, Pieter Dr.: Leader of the Freedom Front + .

21. Naidoo, Kamscilla: Head of Commissioning, SABC Content Enterprises.

22. Nicholson, Robin: Chief Financial Officer of the SABC and member of the executive and Board.

23. Oliphant, Godfrey: Acting Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications.

24. Olivier, Tian: A financial manager in the TV License Department of the SABC and previously a financial officer in the news department.

25. Schmulian, Sherylle: Former Company Secretary of the SABC. She was intimately involved in the process to submit the SABC's applications to ICASA and was also a member of the delegations at the ICASA public hearings.

26. Stevenson, Rob: SABC Senior General Manager, resources.

27. Tleane, Console: Researcher at the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI).

28. Tsotsetsi, Sipho: Acting General Manager, Broadcast Licensing, ICASA.

In addition, field interviews were conducted by the author with assistance from colleagues in selected urban and rural areas to give a broader perspective of what potential viewers of regional television would like to see and what their views were on the proposals submitted by the SABC. A structured questionnaire was used for this survey. This can not be described as

quantitative research although it might have elements of it. Lemon refers to "social surveys" as being part of qualitative research (Lemon, 1997:33). This seems to be a more appropriate description of the method used by the author and colleagues in doing the field research.

Van Vuuren, Maree and De Beer also list personal interviews as part of the methods of data collection involving questionnaires (Van Vuuren, Maree & De Beer, 1998:406). They believed one of the advantages was that it did not depend on the literacy and educational level of the interviewee (Van Vuuren, Maree & De Beer, 1998:406). This was certainly important in the survey as one could easily have encountered people in the deep rural areas who could not read and write but could have strong views about the issue of regional television. One could also argue that one of the primary objectives of regional television was education (as described in the Broadcast Amendment Act of 2003) precisely for those illiterate people in the rural areas who could benefit from the visual medium where sight and hearing where the basic ingredients of message transfer. Van Vuuren, Maree and De Beer mentioned the high cost as one of the disadvantages of this personal interview questionnaire method (Van Vuuren, Maree & De Beer, 1998:406). Van den Bulck also referred to the considerable expense/investment required in face-to-face interviews in terms of time, organization and money (Van den Bulck, 2002:64). This unfortunately was one of the primary reasons why the extent of the survey was not as comprehensive and wide as the author would have liked it to be. Yet DeFleur and Dennis still believed that face-to-face personal interviews with respondents delivered the best surveys despite other shortcomings and difficulties (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:525)

The author solicited the support of colleagues in Johannesburg and the regions to assist in doing the face-to-face interviews on the basis of the questionnaire. Although all promised co-operation, none really embarked on the exercise with enthusiasm. The author anticipated co-operation from each person to deliver at last ten completed questionnaires but no one managed to do that – most only delivered four or five. The intention was to have at least ten respondents in each of the nine provinces. Apart from several other considerations, the main constraint was probably the time it required from each colleague to do the interviews. In the experience of the author, it took at least 30 minutes to complete one questionnaire with one person. It transpired that very few people knew anything about regional television while many had never heard of the possibility that such services might be introduced. This entailed that the interviews had to be accompanied by considerable explanations and the transfer of information.

The author also persisted throughout the period of writing the theses in trying to persuade the SABC to commission a formal survey into regional television to determine the opinions and

21

needs of the broader population concerning regional television. Even if only a few questions could be added to other surveys, it would also have been of value. Unfortunately, budget constraints precluded the research department of the SABC from commissioning such research. The author believed such a survey would have been very valuable especially since no survey had ever been done about the issue or about the SABC's proposals as submitted to ICASA.

Nevertheless, Van Vuuren, Maree and De Beer argued that qualitative survey research involved a small number of people who were not sampled on a probability basis but rather on the basis of representation of different categories of people from a given target market or section of the community (Van Vuuren, Maree & De Beer, 1998:409). The field survey done for this thesis could fit this definition. The method used to identify people to take part in the survey could be described as *convenient sampling* – the random selection of people in the street (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:518). It can also be called a *snap survey* or *dipstick sample* (Du Plooy, 2002:114). The survey also had some elements of quota sampling on the basis of a broad sampling frame. The frame given to colleagues in the other provinces and used by the author when he did personal field interviews was to obtain a reasonably balanced sample of:

- Young and old;

- Urban and rural

- Male and female;

- Low and higher income

- Various language groups in the target area

- Family detail

The demographical detail listed in the questionnaire were:

Name (optional):

Sex:

Age:

Married?

Children?

Do you live in a rural or urban area?

Income per month (if you do not want to give your income, indicate on a scale of ten where you will place yourself: 1 = very poor, 10 = well-off).

What is your preferred present TV channel?

Home language:

Contact number (optional)**:**

This demographic information was then used to categorise the respondents and to analyse them within category context. According to DeFleur and Dennis the use of formal questionnaires in such face-to-face interviews helped to standardise the questions and provided for efficient and uniform recording of the observations. In this way later data processing and analysis could be simplified (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:525). In designing the questions a number of factors were taken into consideration such as the sequence/order of the questions, the phrasing and length of the questions and the type of questions (Van den Bulck, 2002:65). The intention was to ask questions in very simple, clearly understandable language and to keep it short.

The questionnaire started by testing the knowledge of the respondent about RTV, then to give some information about it and to ask for reaction; the next phase was to ask about the needs and preferences such as language and kind of programming, points of dissatisfaction and then lastly about the financial implications. By structuring the questions in this manner a clear pattern could be discerned: respondents would start of by answering questions in a fairly neutral manner. As soon as cultural and language issues were discussed, most would warm to the topic indicating broad support for regional television. However, when the last questions about the financial implications were asked, one could sense that respondents had second thoughts when they realised the vast cost of such services. This will be discussed in greater detail later (Point 8.6). Most questions were closed questions demanding direct, clear responses. At the end respondents were given the opportunity to express opinions.

Through these field interviews and questionnaire the extent of differences on the process and proposals on RTV became clearer and it helped to explore alternatives. The study will also refer to practical examples in the country and abroad.

The author therefore made use of triangulation to broaden the scope of information gathering. Du Plooy refers to triangulation as: "The combination of two or more data collection methods and reference to multiple sources of information to obtain data..." (Du Plooy, 2002:39)

As a qualitative study the approach will be to critically assess present literature or documentation on the subject. This will include various acts of parliament, government policy documents, IBA and ICASA documents and research studies and submissions by various role players.

To the knowledge of the researcher, no other comprehensive academic studies were conducted in South Africa on the specific topic of regional television. An extensive search, with the aid of a subject librarian, did not reveal the existence of any such studies.

In the next chapter international developments will be discussed to provide the necessary context for this study.
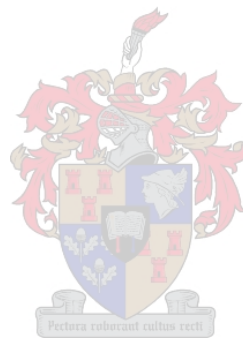
List of abbreviations used and explanations:

3G: Third generation technology. It is used in the context of mobile phone standards. The services associated with 3G provide the ability to transfer simultaneously both voice data (a telephone call) and non-voice data (such as downloading information, exchanging e-mail, and instant messaging). In marketing 3G services, video-telephony has often been used as the moist attractive application.

AR: Audience Rating. This is the minute by minute measurement of the number of people per selected households watching a particular television programme as registered on electronic devices. This is done by the South African Advertising Foundation in its Television Audience Measurement Survey (SAARF TAMS®). The results are reported weekly to the media as a tool for broadcasting research and selling point for advertising**.**

CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

DOC: Department of Communications.

DTH: Direct To Home. The distribution of digital television programme signals from the broadcaster or content distributor via satellite to the homes of viewers.

DTTV: Digital Terrestrial Television.

DVB-H: Digital Video Broadcasting: Handhelds. It is a terrestrial digital TV standard. It allows the receiving device to move freely while receiving the transmission, thus making it ideal for mobile phones and handheld computers to receive digital TV broadcasting over the digiTV network (without using mobile phone networks at all).

DVR: Digital Video recorder.

HDTV: High Definition Television.

ICASA: The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa.

ICT: Information communication technology.

IPTV: Internet Protocol Television.

ITU: International Telecommunications Union.

NAB: National Association of Broadcasters.

NEMISA: National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa

OB: Outside Broadcast Unit.

PBS: Public Broadcasting Service.

PC: Personal Computer

PPP: Public Private Partnership.

RTV: Regional Television.

SAARF: South African Advertising Research Foundation.

TAMS: Television Audience Measurement Survey.

TiVO: TiVo is a company offering a branded subscription-based interactive television service that enables viewers to programme and control which television shows they watch, and when.

VCR: Video Cassette Recorder.

WASP: VA wireless application service provider (WASP) is part of a growing industry sector resulting from the convergence of two trends: wireless communications and the outsourcing of services. A WASP performs the same service for wireless clients as a regular application service provider (ASP) does for wired clients: it provides Web-based access to applications and services that would otherwise have to be stored locally. The main difference with WASP is that it enables customers to access the service from a variety of wireless devices, such as a smartphone or personal digital assistant (PDA).

WiMax: World Interoperability for Microwave Access. WiMax technology is expected to enable multimedia applications with wireless connections. WiMax also has a range of up to 30 miles, presenting provider networks with a viable wireless last mile solution.

4 The International Experience

4.1 Introduction

In the discussion of international experiences in regional public television, it stands to reason that South Africa could learn most from developing countries faced with the same kind of developmental and/or language challenges. Yet, some examples in developed countries also offered valuable lessons. Africa has had little experience in regional television. According to the General Manager International Affairs of the SABC only Nigeria delivered television services on a regional basis that could be of some relevance to South Africa. Yet, these channels were largely the result of the political history and structure of the country as a federal state (Molefe, 2006a). More detail will be given later in this chapter.

4.2 Developing and developed countries

4.2.1 India

According to the CIA World Factbook India has a population of one billion and 95 million people on a total land area of 2.9 million sq. kilometer (more than double the size of South Africa – 1.2 million sq. km.). There are 28 states and 7 union territories. Apart from English and the most spoken Hindi language, there are 14 other official languages. It has a strong performing economy with a growth rate of 7% and more. Yet, there are still wide income disparities and 25% of the population are classified as poor (CIA, 2006).

From these figures it must be clear to the observer that India faces a serious challenge to provide public broadcasting services to all the various groups in their languages across the country. The national broadcaster is Doordashan. Apart form the national channel, it broadcasts 11 regional services in the languages of the respective states. These services can be accessed terrestrially in the states in windows on the national channel but also on a satellite around the clock in any part of India (Doordashan, 2006). These regional services broadcast a wide variety of programmes covering news, current affairs, documentaries, social programmes and films (Government of India, 2006: 47). It has 56 programme production centres around the country. The services are state funded.

The advantage of the Indian model is that all people can have access. Those with access to satellite services can watch programming in their languages wherever they might be living or travelling in India. Those who only have access to terrestrial services can watch their channel in

the dedicated area or state where the majority of the particular language speakers lived. Naturally there is also a dual cost to the broadcaster.

4.2.2 Russia

The Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (RTR) is the largest in the country. It is controlled and funded by the central state. It has 86 regional TV and radio companies all over Russia reaching almost all the people. The regional stations deliver for the national state TV channel (Rossia) and receive material from the national station and other regional stations (Richeri, Richter & Bundgard, 2004:97).

According to a study by the University of Lugano into regional television in selected European countries, the Russian language dominated in most broadcasts. When the regional windows were scaled down in 2003, states such as Tatar, Ingush and Yakut established their own broadcasters. In several states there are also independent commercial stations. The regional state broadcasters derive their income from selling advertising slots in their national regional windows, sponsorship and transfers from the central RTR. The regional stations have regular national news windows from 06:00 in the morning until 21:00 at night. On Saturday afternoons they have an hour slot for general programming of a regional nature and on Sunday mornings a 40 minute slot (Richeri *et al*, 2004:99).

4.2.3 Denmark

In Denmark there are public and commercial regional stations (Richeri *et al*, 2004:35-40). The eight public regional television channels were part of the national TV2 channel. Since 2003 they have independent managements but retained ties with, and windows on, the national channel. The regional windows on the national channel are limited, yet regular and very popular. Regional stations are limited to news, current affairs and information programming. Yet, they can also provide telecom and data services to the public.

An interesting license condition is that 10 percent of the programming must be produced by independent producers. This was clearly a step to stimulate the private industry. The regional TV2 stations receive income through allocations of license fees, subsidies, dividends and share of profits. They can also sell programmes to the national channel (Richeri *et al*, 2004:35-40).

4.2.4 Finland

Finland also has eight regional television stations under the national channel, YLE (Richeri *et al*, 2004:47-48). In addition, there are two Swedish language channels distributed in windows on the

national channel. YLE and the regional stations are state owned and not allowed to accept advertising or sponsorship. It is financed through license fees.

The regional channels have windows of ten minutes on the national channel every week day from 17:50 to 18:00. Yet, the regional news is also broadcast on the 24 hour digital news channel YLE24. This is available throughout Finland. They therefore have double exposure: digital and analogue. Being such an advanced and technology orientated country, the Finnish government spearheaded a drive towards digital services and most people can afford it.

The specific license conditions for the regional services are that they should support and develop Finnish culture, promote education and treat language groups equally. The regional services have only been established in 2000. An estimated third of the total potential national viewership watch the regional windows and the popularity is growing

4.2.5 Australia

Australia has a well developed television industry in a first world economy with some 20 million people. According to the Australian Communications and Media Authority 48 commercial stations are in operation, 84 community television stations and two national public broadcasting stations, ABC and the Special Broadcasting Services or SBS (ACMA, 2006).

The SBS station is of interest to South Africa. Although it is a public broadcasting channel, it also receives commercial income. It is watched by some 50% or 7.8 million of the viewing public and delivers programming in more than 60 languages with English subtitles. It also provides news from all over the world sourced from abroad (Norris, Pauling, Zanker & Lealand, 2003:69). The station tries to maintain a 50/50 balance between English and other languages and to feature all languages in a specific target area (Lloyd, 2002:25)

Another interesting example is Imparja Television. It is a commercial station but receives considerable support from the state because it specifically targets the aboriginal population. It promotes indigenous culture and values. The station is wholly owned by aboriginal shareholders and broadcasts via satellite direct into the homes of viewers – the majority of whom are in rural areas (Norris *et al*, 2003:69).

ABC is directly funded by the state for more than 80% of its revenue. It broadcasts nationally but also regionally throughout Australia. The corporation has been in a battle for funding with the Conservative government for years. It believes its declining audience share of some 20% is directly related to the lack of sufficient government funding (Norris *et al*, 2003:71).

According to an independent survey by Regional TV Marketing, regional television reaches 36% of the population of Australia. Most commercial stations are very successful. The survey indicated that return on regional television marketing was double the national average. Consumer response to such advertising was also above the average (Regional Television Marketing, 2006). This was an indication that regional television markets could generate substantial income. Yet, there are no plans to introduce commercial regional television in South Africa at the moment and one should remember that Australia had a well developed television industry broadcasting to a first world market.

4.2.6 Canada

The public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), has two national networks delivering programming in English and French. But it also has services for Canada's North in English, French and 8 aboriginal languages (Norris *et al*, 2003:83).

The CBC faced serious challenges in overcoming the overwhelming competition from American programming and more internal free to air commercial broadcasters. It also has to deal with the fragmentation of audiences, erratic and declining government funding (on average some 60%), technological developments and delivering services to a dispersed population over a very wide land mass (Norris *et al*, 2003:91). In terms of the Languages Act the CBC was required to actively promote the two main languages and other indigenous languages. The CBC tried to meet the challenges by promoting the idea that it was a committed patriotic broadcaster delivering almost exclusive indigenous material to the citizens. It entered into joint ventures and partnerships with private producers and other companies in order to limit the financial burdens (Lloyd, 2002:21).

A novel practice in Canada was the initiative to stimulate the private production sector. The Canadian Television Fund receives income from the state and private television companies. It is managed as a non profit concern supporting productions in children's, drama, documentary and variety programming. In this way the supporting industry to television is stimulated directly (Norris *et al*, 2003:97).

4.3 ICASA references to international examples

In its Discussion Paper, ICASA referred to six countries, but ironically five were from Europe and only one from Africa (Nigeria) or the developing world. The five countries in Europe mentioned were the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, France and Poland. The European services mainly delivered public broadcasting regional programming as windows on national

grids. Funding was a mixed model of state allocations and (limited) advertising revenue (ICASA, 2003a:27).

As a federal state, Germany had regional services for each of its "Länder". This was quite understandable and stemmed from the strong regional identities the country had developed over centuries. Public corporations in the respective states had worked together to establish a national service ARD under which auspices the regional services were delivered. Other interesting features were:

> ➢ a network of independent producers jointly provided programming material;

> ➢ newspapers had alliances with broadcasters to provide news;

> ➢ there were public access channels were individuals could flight their productions (ICASA, 2003a:25).

The advantage Germany had was that a strong independent producing sector had been established. This ensured a steady stream of original material in the regions. The absence of such a strong sector in South Africa was a distinct disadvantage.

Nigeria experienced similar problems to South Africa. Its private industry lacked the resources to produce. As was the case in Germany, Nigeria also had a strong developed federal dispensation and each state had its own broadcasting services. Some 25 of the 30 states had their own television stations but only four were viable while the others depended on state financial assistance to survive (ICASA, 2003a:21).

ICASA concluded that the regional services in the countries referred to were aimed at reflecting regional and national identities and to give more opportunities to regional or minority languages (ICASA, 2003a:27). A study in Britain clearly indicated a real need for regional television – in particular for local or regional news (ICASA, 2003a:19).

In the SABC's application reference was made to international examples only in the context of multi-lingual broadcasting. It cited the experience of SBS in Australia where English subtitling was used to ensure wider accessibility. In reference to Doordashan in India, the SABC remarked that a mix of Hindi and English proved to be very popular (SABC, 2003a:31). The motivation for mentioning these international examples was clearly to make the point that English should not be omitted from regional services – especially in South Africa where the understanding of English as a second language among indigenous peoples was quite high.

4.4 Conclusion

Many other examples could be cited, but the above references gave an indication that many public broadcasting services were struggling with the same challenges and had many things in common.

The following points can be made:

- Most PBS stations accommodated regional services in limited windows on the national networks.

- Invariably regional services also related to language obligations.

- There was a particular need for regional news and current affairs.

- Most PBS stations received substantial funding from the state.

- Most PBS stations struggled to survive due to problems with state funding, competition from private operators and fast developing new technologies. As a result regional services were limited in delivering optimal services to targeted communities.

- Regional services usually came at a higher cost as target audiences lived in less developed or less urbanized areas. The cost to people ratio was therefore considerably higher.

- Regional services were nevertheless popular.

- Most were faced with a difficult transition period to also provide digital services where cost to the end user was problematic.

- Regional television needed strong, developed, diversified and area based production capacity.
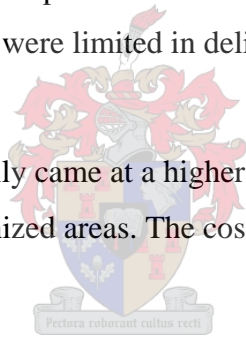
5 The SABC Experience.

5.1 Introduction

The SABC launched in 1996 limited regional television services with three "window" break-aways of 30 minutes each from 18:00 to 18:30 each week day. The three services were:

- *Cape @ Six* in the Western Cape offered in Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English;

- *KZN-2-Nite* in isiZulu, English and Afrikaans;

- *Mopani* in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces in Xitsonga, Tshivenda, SiSwati, isiNdebele, Sepedi, English and Afrikaans. Figure 2 shows the foci on programming, language mix etc.

	Regional TV:Previous SABC Offerings		
	Cape @ Six	**KZN Tonight**	**Mopane**
Programming	• Regional News, weather • Current Affairs • News magazine programs-local events and entertainment updates		
Language Mix	• Mon & Wed: isiXhosa • Tues & Thurs: Afrikaans • Fri: English	• Mon & Thurs: isiZulu • Tues & Fri: English • Wed: Afrikaans	• Monday & Wed: SiSwati & isiNdebele • Tues: Sepedi & Tshivenda • Thurs: English & Afrikaans • Fri: iXiTsonga & Sepedi
ARs	• Between 3 & 7		
Discontinued:	• 2001	• 2001	• 2003

Fig 2 (SABC, 2003b:19)

These services were broadcast to the viewers by way of break-away transmissions from the normal schedules. The responsibility was mainly shouldered by the news department. It delivered targeted regional news and current affairs/magazine type inserts. There were never specific people appointed as part of a separate unit to produce the material. According to one of the editors, Ida Jooste from KwaZulu-Natal, some journalists were initially allocated to deliver

for the regional service but resentment developed as they perceived their nominations as indicative that they were not good enough to deliver for national bulletins (Jooste, 2006).

It often happened that stories produced for the local window would also be included in national bulletins and thus the dividing line increasingly started to blur. It meant that regional news staff had to work harder and longer hours to deliver for the local and national bulletins. This created particular problems with technical staff such as camera persons who had to be given overtime off. In this way general production was negatively affected (Jooste, 2006).

Despite the problems the services were popular. As can be seen from the table above (Fig 2) the services attracted between three and seven AR's (Audience Ratings). Jooste contends the popularity of the local service was at times higher than that of the national bulletins. A broadcast researcher at the SABC confirmed this, but warned against a simplistic interpretation of the figures (Blaauw, 2006). He said the regional break-aways might well have scored more on face value but audiences were measured against the potential for the specific service. *KZN-2-Nite* for example was popular especially amongst isiZulu viewers but at the same time the break-away divided the potential audience for the national service. In sheer numbers of viewers watching the respective services, the national service still attracted considerably more viewers. The ratings did however indicate that regional services had potential loyal followings.

Blaauw argued that the wrong model was used for the regional break-aways. He referred to the model in Germany where one national channel would have regional break-aways for all states in a specific window. In that timeframe no national service would remain. All viewers who would tune in to the national grid at that time would only receive their regional service. In contrast, the SABC continued to broadcast the national service in the rest of the country outside of the regional break-away regions. This meant for example that Afrikaans speaking people in the Western Cape who wanted to watch the Afrikaans soapie on SABC2 at 18:00 could not do so. Their only choice was the regional service – and that they could only receive in Afrikaans on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This led to many complaints (Blaauw, 2006).

5.2 Financial aspects

Initially a specific budget was allocated for the break-away services in the three regions. Although the government allocated money for the services over a period of three years, it only covered part of the cost (Stevenson, 2005). When the services started in February 1996, money had not been transferred by the fiscus yet. This only happened in the financial year 1997/1998 when the SABC received R87.4 million (SABC, 1998:29). In the following year it was R57.5

million (SABC Annual Report, 1999:28) and the last payment of R61 million was received in 1999 (SABC Annual Report, 2000:26).

According to a SABC financial analyst at the time the problem was not so much the day to day operational cost of the regional windows but the initial capital expenditure to get all the regions up to standard as proper live broadcasting facilities. The Western Cape was best equipped, but the news department had to budget more than R80 million to upgrade the other two regions (Olivier, 2006). According to him this had a major crippling effect on the total financial position of the SABC. While this might have been true, the author could testify from a personal perspective that the upgrading had to be done at some point as the improved facilities were of great benefit to many other users such as current affairs programmes that wanted to link directly and live on air to the various regions. In that sense the expenditure on regional services was of benefit to the SABC as a whole and thus also to the viewers.

Yet, it was a time of financial difficulty for the SABC. An outside consulting company, McKinsey, contracted to advise on how to overcome the problems, suggested that RTV was too costly and should be terminated (Stevenson, 2005). Some financial arguments against the stations were also that the switching on of transmitters for the break-away services had to be done physically and then switched back again for the national broadcasts. This was an expensive exercise as the sender costs doubled. The SABC2 also complained that they incurred double programming costs as they had to run four schedules on one channel at the same time (Stevenson, 2005).

In the Annual Report of 1997/1998, the corporation reported that the regional services had been well supported and that the popularity had increased. Yet, it warned that it might not be able to meet expectations and continue to offer the services as the government was unwilling to fund it. The SABC launched a feasibility study to determine whether such services could be sustained in an affordable way and even expanded to meet language and local content obligations. The task team also had to report on advertising and sponsorship opportunities to national and regional business (SABC Annual Report, 1998:17).

5.3 Feasibility study

The team did an initial investigation and reported to management in October 1998 (SABC Regional TV Task Team, 1998). The conclusion was that viable services could be delivered but only in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng with the involvement of partners in the private sector. The team was given the go-ahead to explore such possibilities with private

television industry stakeholders in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Yet Gauteng was excluded from the study as the argument was that the province already had some regional service through BOP-TV (Minnaar, 2006). Ironically Bop-TV was later closed down after a cabinet decision in March 2003.

The task team started exploratory talks with interested parties on certain conditions such as:

- In any partnership the SABC would maintain total editorial control;

- The SABC reserved the right to be the sole provider of news;

- Broadcasts would be outside of prime time (18:30 to 22:00).

By January 1999 the team reported to the Group Executive Management of the SABC that

"there was enough potential in terms of business, operational, programming, production and financial capacity to add sustainable regional services to the SABC's portfolio in a new market for TV while shifting the financial risks from the SABC and government to commercial players" (Minnaar, 2000:1).

The recommendations were approved and a panel appointed to call for submissions from interested parties or consortiums and to go through a selection process. The first selection was done in April 1999.

On the basis of the submissions made, Minnaar suggested to the convenor of the panel, Vasu Moodley, that the strongest bidder should be selected as the national network operator co-ordinating all regional services and managing other regional operators on behalf of the SABC. It should also start to develop services in other provinces. In addition to the regional services, it should select the best material from the regions, including commissioned work from other provinces, and produce a national programme to be broadcast on the SABC's national public broadcasting platform while the regional breakaways were transmitted to the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (Minnaar, 1999).

The final round of the assessment of the bidders took place in July 1999. The bidders were promised answers within weeks but the panel only had a final sitting in September (Minnaar, 2000a:2). During the meeting the commercial unit of the SABC responsible for selling

advertising space, Action Stations, expressed concern that the proposals might erode prime time revenue (this was the argument about audience fragmentation that later became quite a prominent feature of considerations about regional television). The suggestion was that regional services should rather be delivered through more inserts in the morning programme *AM-2-Day* (Minnaar, 2000b:2). *AM-2-Day* was a product delivered to the SABC by a contracted private company.

Minnaar remarked wryly in an interview with this researcher that *AM-2-Day* was taken off air a month later and substituted with an internally produced programme, *Morning Live*, without any regional breakaways (Minnaar, 2006). He believed the SABC wasted a golden opportunity to enter into the first large commercial joint venture and to explore an untapped television advertising market. The commercial bidders spent thousands of Rands, submitted good proposals and were prepared to work together in consortiums. They repeatedly requested feedback, but received none (Minnaar, 2000a:2). The joint venture proposal had died a quiet death. After the termination of government funding in 1999/2000 the regional breakaway services in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal were ended and the Mopani service in 2003 (see Fig 1). By the end of 2003 there was no television regional service on air. That remains the situation today (although *Morning Live* has made a concerted effort to showcase regions).

A review report was given to the Board of the SABC in September 2000 and afterwards a discussion document was drafted by Minnaar. Some of his observations about the SABC's regional services were:

- RTV could contribute to the language mandate;

- Targeted local content did build audience loyalty and advertising opportunities;

- The daily slot duration threshold was two hours (Minnaar, 2000b).

Minnaar believed that the SABC could still have revived the process of the previous year. It could start by rolling out a service in the Western Cape and gradually expand it to KwaZulu-Natal while developing capacities in other regions. In an example given he estimated that the SABC would loose R200 million by providing the 16:00 to 17:00 slot on SABC2 to a regional operator. Yet, the revenue potential was R300 million. The operator could therefore refund the SABC for its loss and use the balance for operational expenditure and profit (Minnaar, 2000b). If the proposals could be ratified by the Board he believed the service could have been on air by July 2001.

5.4 Conclusion

One is tempted to agree with the observations made by Minnaar. Had the SABC proceeded with the process in 1999 to select a national regional operator and other regional operators (working together), it could have been an opportunity to test the viability and feasibility of such ventures. At the same time, even if it had failed financially, it could have kick-started a development process in the regions to give more people in different regions the opportunity to receive training, gain experience and deliver television products.

According to Stevenson the real cost of the SABC's regional window broadcasts was never properly quantified (Stevenson, 2005). Whatever the real cost could have been, it would still have been far cheaper than the cost of two fully separate channels as later legislated for by government. He argued that the SABC's mandate requirement to give universal access of services to all the people in the country was far more important than the requirement to provide regional television services in the various languages. The SABC should therefore rather have prioritised the extension of its radio and television broadcast networks. RTV did not give wider reach but only broadened coverage of languages in the existing broadcast areas (Stevenson, 2005).

In wider perspective the following observations could be made:

- By 2001 it would have been clear to government that the regional broadcast experience had failed because the SABC could not sustain it without government funding or private sector involvement.

- The highest amount transferred by government to the SABC for regional television was R87 million in the first year. One must assume (and deducted from the observations by Olivier) that the initial capital expenditure to get the services started was the highest. Once the studios and other infrastructure had been established, the operational costs were less. The painful part had been suffered through, it seemed. Even if the government had doubled the allocation to the SABC to R170 million, it would still have been cheaper than the costs for starting up two separate channels as later prescribed in law. If the government could not afford to continue spending some R50 to R80 million on RTV, why did it decide to opt for the more expensive separate channels costing some R500 million per annum and then specifically determined in law that it had to be paid for by the state?

- What happened in 2001 and 2002 to motivate government to legislate for regional channels? In many conversations with a wide spectrum of people the author could not find an answer to this question. The government initiative to legislate for the introduction of regional television channels must have started in 2001. The amendments to the Broadcasting Act was published and submitted in 2002 and signed into law in 2003.

- The SABC's brief experiment with regional television certainly had lessons for future endeavours to establish regional television. The option of regional windows was in line with international experience and had proofed to be possible – although not financially viable in the way implemented by the SABC.

6. ICASA Discussion and Position Papers

6.1 Introduction

The Broadcasting Amendment Act, Act 64 of 2002, became law on 7 March 2003. With this act, the official process was set in motion to prepare for the introduction of regional television (RTV) in South Africa. In terms of section 22A(1) of the act, the SABC had to apply within nine months to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) for additional licenses to provide regional services (ICASA, 2003a:14).

The SABC therefore had to submit its application by 8 December 2003. The Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 153 of 1993, already envisaged the diversification of broadcasting services to include regional television (ICASA, 2003a:5). The idea was further developed in the Triple Inquiry Report of 1995(ICASA, 2003a:6). However, up to 2003 there was no proper study to determine the detail of regional services.

The IBA and later ICASA no doubt realised on the basis of the act and report mentioned above that such services would be introduced at some stage and that they had to give guidelines. Yet, the short time frame prescribed in the Broadcasting Amendment Act for the SABC to apply for licenses, speeded up the process. According to the senior manager: Policy Development & Research, ICASA had never before drafted a Discussion Paper and a Position Paper in such short time (Doyle, 2005).

6.2 The Discussion Paper

6.2.1 Introduction

ICASA published its Discussion Paper on Regional Television on 22 Augustus 2003. The aims were to "solicit public participation and input" and to "generate discussion" on the regulatory framework for RTV (ICASA, 2003a:3). However, there was very little time for such participation, input and discussion. Written representations had to be submitted by 29 September 2003. Just two months hence, on 26 November 2003, ICASA published its Position Paper. That left the SABC just two weeks to prepare and submit its applications.

The Discussion Paper did not only deal with Public Regional Television Broadcasting Services, but also with Commercial Regional Television Services and Community Regional Television Services. The researcher will not deal with the last two topics in this thesis. It will be mentioned only concerning the possible effect of such services on audiences and advertising income for public regional television should they be licensed later.

Regarding public RTV, the Discussion Paper concentrated mainly on two issues: The kind of services that should be offered and the funding (including advertising).

Throughout the paper a number of questions (33 in all) were posed, indicating a desire by ICASA to receive input on particular issues. Those ranged from frequency allotments to broadcasting conditions or restrictions.

At the beginning of the paper, ICASA carefully explained the legal framework obligating it to license a range of services, including regional television, in the interest of all language and cultural groups (Section 2 of the Independent Broadcastings Authority Act, Act 53 of 1993; section 5(2) of the Broadcasting Act, Act 4 of 1999; and the Broadcasting Amendment Act, Act 64 of 2002) (ICASA, 2003a:5-7).

6.2.2 Funding

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the legislative framework already laid down a series of indicators and parameters for the introduction of RTV. None was probably more prescriptive than the Broadcasting Amendment Act, Act 64 of 2002. It stated categorically in section 22A (2) that the regional services provided by the SABC "must be funded by money appropriated by Parliament and [could] draw revenues from grants, donations and sponsorship" (South Africa, 2003). It was followed by article 3 stating that ICASA had to "determine the extent to which these services [could] draw revenues from advertising" (South Africa, 2003).

In several interviews conducted by the author it became apparent that funding was a fundamental problem. The only exceptions were the representative of the Department of Communications who believed that funding would not present a major stumbling block – the state would somehow allocate the necessary funds to the SABC to enable the introduction of RTV (Mjawara, 2005), and the other exception was the acting chairperson of the parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications, Mr. Godfrey Oliphant, who believed the resources could be found to allocate to regional television – also from regional businesses (Oliphant, 2006). However the senior manager Licensing, Monitoring & Complaints Broadcasting Services of ICASA, said funding was a major concern. Due to the uncertainty about funding, the authority was in a catch 22 situation: It could grant licenses to the SABC to provide regional services, but it would make no sense to issue such licenses if there was no clarity on whether it would receive the funds to make it viable and sustainable (De Souza, 2005).

The Act prescribed that government should fund the SABC's regional operations. Yet, no indication was given where the funding would come from. The discerning observer could for example ask the following questions:

- Should funding for RTV be appropriated as part of the Budget Vote of the Department of Communications, approved by Parliament and then channelled through the department to the SABC?

- Would it be a special allocation by the Treasury, approved by Parliament and then paid over directly to the SABC?

- Was there any indication when the Treasury would start making provision for such services and in what medium term expenditure framework cycle it would be factored in?

- Was there any broad estimate by the state about cost *before* the prescriptive funding article was drafted into law?

- Was there any indication that the state would be able to afford it?

- Or would it be made possible by savings elsewhere, and if so, from where?

None of these questions had conclusive answers.

The only clear indication ICASA had of its role concerning the funding issue, was that it could determine to what extent advertising might be allowed and the scheduling thereof (ICASA, 2003a:9). Later ICASA observed that public regional broadcasting services internationally were funded through a mix of license fees and a limited advertising (ICASA, 2003a:16). Although this was the case in the majority of international case studies quoted, states did also help to fund such services -- in France and Nigeria for instance (ICASA, 2003a:20-23).

There was no mention in the Broadcasting Amendment Act of the possibility that the SABC could increase its license fee income in order to fund regional television. The only other real viable source therefore was advertising and ICASA had to rule on that. The Authority stated clearly at the beginning of the paper that its decision to introduce RTV would "depend on factors such as economic sustainability, audience fragmentation and impact upon other market incumbents..." (ICASA, 2003a:6).

Although it could be argued that the introduction of RTV would increase competition for audiences (and advertising revenue if allowed) and might therefore also have a negative impact on the many radio stations licensed by ICASA, another consideration would be the possible

effect of RTV on the economic viability of e.tv, the only other national terrestrial television station licensed by the authority.

The Authority pointed out that the Triple Inquiry Report of 1995 had already recommended that the new envisaged free to air channel (e.tv) could consist of regional network stations (thereby advancing the principle of promoting regional diversity and development). Yet, a consultative process by the Authority led to the decision that such a scenario would not have been economically feasible (ICASA, 2003a:6). ICASA later commissioned a private company to report on the feasibility of commercial RTV. It also concluded that the business case for commercial RTV was very marginal at best and that it would have to be subsidised by the state or another agency to survive. This lead to the suggestion that public RTV should rather be licensed with such state support (Z-Coms, 2003:152).

6.2.3 Funding and audiences

In the discussion on *commercial* RTV, ICASA made the point that the television broadcasting industry did not seem to follow other market trends where an increase in the suppliers of a product or service, and the concurrent increase in supply, led to increased demand and consumption (ICASA, 2003a:30).

The opposite seemed to happen: An increase in channels and television hours tended to fragment the audience. By implication, the introduction of RTV would reduce the viewers of existing channels – including that of the other SABC channels. A financial analyst at the SABC who helped to draft the financial model for the corporation's submission to ICASA, said it was difficult to estimate to what extent viewers would migrate from the existing SABC channels to the regional channels. Any such movement however, would "cannibalise" the established channels and reduce advertising income. It would therefore affect the overall financial position of the SABC (De Bod, 2005).

Concerning *commercial* RTV, ICASA said the introduction of new services would

"fragment the audiences further and intensify competition for market share and advertising cake. The introduction of new entrants could therefore increase the speed at which SABC and M-Net [could lose] their current share of advertising revenue and could also negatively impact on e.tv's growth" (ICASA, 2003a:33).

The observations made by De Bod above indicate that these statements might well be true even if the new public regional services would not be allowed to generate income from advertising.

According to ICASA, international models indicated that public RTV was funded through a mix of license fees and a limited amount of advertising (ICASA, 2003a:16). The Broadcasting Amendment Act did not allow the option of license fees for RTV in South Africa and left the decision on the extent of advertising income to ICASA.

The Authority pointed out that only 54% of all South Africans had access to television by 2002. Among Africans 44% had access, 74% of the Coloured community, 91% of the Indian South Africans and 93% of the whites. Growth in the latter three markets was stagnant over the past decade while access to television by African households increased from 41.9% to 59.3% (Fig 3). This was clearly the growth market for RTV if programme material in indigenous languages could be provided and electrification accelerated (ICASA, 2003a:32).

TV Household by Population Group ('000)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002A
TOTAL	4,607	4,877	5,224	5,232	5,310	5,416	6,286	6,459	6,661
Whites	95.7	96.2	96.5	94.5	95.2	95.7	96.2	95.8	96.3
Coloureds	81.3	83.6	84	81.3	81.5	81.7	83.7	84.4	83.3
Indians	95.8	95.5	96	97.1	96.1	95.4	95.7	95.4	95.5
Africans	41.9	43.8	48.3	49.2	50.3	57.1	56.4	57.9	59.3

Fig 3   (ICASA, 2003a:32)

The SABC had 60% television market share across its channels and covered 73% of the country (ICASA, 2003a:30). One could argue that the SABC would be able to increase its share of viewers if the footprint of RTV could be extended to other parts of the country. However, the cost would be astronomical and such extension would depend on the availability of frequencies. (These points will be discussed later in detail).

The picture that emerged from all these arguments was that the funding of RTV would be challenging with little scope for growth in the market. It could also have possible negative effects for existing services. ICASA gave no opinions of its own on the funding issue in the Discussion Paper. Other factors that could affect the cost would be *how* these services would be broadcast (the model) and *what* would be offered (the content).

After analysing various international models for public and commercial RTV, ICASA summarised that regional windows or regional centres were the models followed by public RTV while commercial RTV mainly followed the network model (ICASA, 2003a:38) . This referred to *how* services were offered to the public.

ICASA correctly mentioned that the SABC pioneered regional television in 1996 when it launched windows between 18:00 and 18:30 on SABC2 on weekdays (ICASA, 2003a:26). Viewers in the Western Cape could watch "Cape at Six", those in Mpumalanga and Limpopo "Mopani" and viewers in KwaZulu-Natal "KZN-2-Nite".

These break-away services were broadcast at the same time while viewers in other provinces watched the normal nationally scheduled programmes on SABC2. Although English and Afrikaans were also used, the aim was to offer more extensive services in isiXhosa, isiZulu, TshiVenda, siSwati, Sepedi and Xitsonga. It was abandoned due to lack of funds in 2001, but the Mopani service continued until 2003 specifically because it offered services in the more marginalised languages not accommodated on SABC1 and SABC2, namely Tshivenda and Xitsonga (Stevenson, 2005).

The international case studies of public RTV discussed by ICASA clearly indicated that regional windows were the more popular way of providing such services to viewers (ICASA, 2003a:26). The reason was obvious: it was cheaper. Existing platforms could be used to broadcast it. Little start-up funding was required and the distribution costs were minimal since it was merely a case of switching frequencies. However, production of programming required substantial costs. Even this cheaper windows model of regional broadcasting was in the end too expensive for the SABC (Stevenson, 2005).

The Broadcasting Amendment Act, Act 64 of 2002, did not leave this option open to the SABC. It stated in Section 22A (1) that the SABC had to provide *additional* services in all the official languages, except English (South Africa, 2003). Separate channels had therefore to be offered. The state thus prescribed in law the most expensive model.

Due to the legal restrictions on different models, ICASA could not pronounce on them. The windows model ironically did not require any legislation or the approval of ICASA. This model had several disadvantages such as the limited air time available and the limited range of programming that could be offered. Separate channels, though more expensive, created far more possibilities to provide the specific services envisaged in the Broadcasting Amendment Act.

This leads to another important issue dealt with in the Discussion Paper: the kind of services that should be delivered. The intention with the Broadcasting Amendment Act was clearly to ensure that proper services could be delivered in 10 official languages on an equitable basis. ICASA concluded at the end of the section on international case studies that the main rationale for the existence of public RTV was to encourage national and regional diversity and to provide coverage opportunities for minority languages (ICASA, 2003a:27). It reasoned that the same would apply in South Africa.

Under the specific point, "Encouraging Diversity" the Authority referred to various laws requiring it to ensure that regional/provincial identity, culture and character were addressed in regional services. It added:

"…when viewed collectively [the services] should reflect the diversity of all sections of the population and represent the plurality of views and opinions of the audience" (ICASA, 2003a:11).

These statements were ambiguous. One could justifiably ask: What was the regional/provincial identity of a province such as Limpopo? According to the 2001 Census 52.1% of the population of the province spoke Sepedi. But the province was also home to the majority of Xitsonga and Tshivenda speakers, although they only constituted 22.4% and 15.9% respectively of the total population of the province (ICASA, 2003a:18). In KwaZulu-Natal the overwhelming majority were isiZulu speakers (80.9%), but they were also the majority in Gauteng (21.5%) and the second largest group in Mpumalanga (26.4%). In Gauteng most of the ethnic groups were well represented.

It seems therefore rather difficult to define the regional/provincial identity or character of provinces. In a province such as Limpopo it would be easier to reflect the language and with it the *culture* of a particular group than to try to define the provincial regional/identity where several different groups live in the potential broadcast area. It might even be difficult to define culture and how it should be accommodated in programming. The former apartheid homeland nation states such as Venda disappeared. The defined regional bases were removed and the people purposefully integrated into the larger society. Since the Group Areas Act did not exist anymore, people were free to move anywhere and become part of the natural urbanisation process. The "culture" of people in deep rural communities can simply not be the same as those

of the educated urban members of the same language group – and the urbanites will in all probability be the producers of the cultural programming for the group as a whole.

A representative of the Freedom of Expression Institute told the researcher the SABC would find it difficult to satisfy the needs of all people in one language group. There would be tension between urban and rural demands (Tleane, 2005). He made a study of Motsweding, FM, the Setswana community station. His conclusion was that it catered more for urban/metropolitan audiences than the rural people. It was in competition with stations such as Metro FM and SAFM. Tleane argued that Motsweding tried to be more upmarket. Reports on the stock exchange, traffic and English premier soccer league had no relevance to the rural poor, he said. RTV should not follow this radio example and alienate the target audience. A spectrum of programme genres should be delivered, he argued.

The requirement that services in ten official languages (excluding English) should be delivered on an equitable basis was also problematic. In the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary the meaning of "equitable" is given as "fair and impartial" (South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2002:390).

What would "fair" in this situation mean? Would a quantifiable number of minutes given to each language based on the demographic representation of the particular language group in the province/region be fair? If this was strictly adhered to in a province such as KwaZulu-Natal, no other language would get any meaningful coverage. In the Western Cape, nearly one in every five persons spoke English. Yet, in terms of the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 2002, English was left out of the equation altogether. Would it be fair not to give any airtime to a language group that numbered the third largest in the province? No clarity was given in the Broadcasting Act or by ICASA on these questions and the practical meaning of "equitable".

The rationale that public RTV should encourage national and regional diversity and provide coverage opportunities for minority languages seemed more realistic – especially if this was to be achieved collectively by all the services. This approach merely set a goal without specifying quantity. The additional requirement that the plurality of views and opinions of the audience should be represented also appeared somewhat unrealistic. Would it mean the plurality of views on every subject reflected? How wide should "plurality" be interpreted?

Later, in Section B of the report, ICASA stated that public RTV offered the opportunity to reflect the lives of people in different regions and to promote a sense of community in the regions (ICASA, 2003a:13). The SABC had to provide services appropriate to the language

usage in the regions served. These two statements could be contradictory. It was unclear whether a sense of community had to be cultivated within a specific language group in a region or among people of various language groups living in the same region. ICASA quoted a statement by the Independent Television Commission in the United Kingdom about how broadcasters had to recognise their special relationship to the nation's sense of community and national identity. This, ICASA argued, highlighted the "critical need" in South Africa to provide programming reflective of regional interests capturing the diverse views in different cultural centres (ICASA, 2003a:13). However, the situation in the UK was very different, as English was the dominant language – especially in the regions. It follows logically that it was easier to build a sense of community in a region if most people spoke the same language.

ICASA correctly observed that public RTV was not defined in any of the legislative measures. But section 22A of the Broadcasting Amendment Act did state that regional services had to broadcast in languages appropriate to the regions. ICASA deducted that regions could include more than one province with the determining factor being language (ICASA, 2003a:16). It was stated as a challenge to the SABC to determine how many services in what regions had to be provided to meet the language requirements of the Broadcasting Act (ICASA, 2003a:17).

Already in 1995, ICASA believed that regional television could play a role in the economic stimulation of regions. In the Triple Inquiry Report, the Authority recommended a regional dimension to the envisaged commercial free to air channel (later awarded to e.tv). It suggested that regional stations, as part of a national network, could diversify ownership and stimulate the development of regional production centres and infrastructure. In this way an important contribution could be made to the promotion and development of regional identity, culture and character (ICASA, 2003a:6). Under the heading, "Encouraging Diversity", ICASA made the specific point that RTV had to spread economic opportunities for television production across the country. Programming should be "sourced (produced, commissioned or acquired) from different provinces within the region" covered by the regional station (ICASA, 2003a:11).

The Authority referred to a system in Australia whereby regional broadcasters accrued points for locally produced programmes. In this manner, a broadcaster could reach required total points to comply with license conditions. In this way the Australian Broadcasting Authority believed local production capacity could be increased (ICASA, 2003a:11-12). As shall be seen, this system no doubt made some impression on ICASA.

ICASA contended that the inclusion of local content was both a social necessity and economic opportunity. It believed the "potential economic benefits from the production of South African content for the television industry [was] considerable" (ICASA, 2003a:12). Yet, no facts were given to substantiate the statement. While the statement sounded logical, several negative factors should also be kept in mind: The level of training and experience available to take up opportunities; the low remuneration in the industry in South Africa and the low profit margins due to the high cost of productions. All these factors will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

Another factor mentioned by ICASA in its Position Paper on South African Content on Television and Radio was that the same, larger production houses tended to get all the contracts while smaller and newer companies struggled to enter the commissioning process (ICASA, 2002:38). If the intention was therefore to give opportunities to more companies and grow the industry, there would have to be a deliberate policy to ensure that more companies were contracted. From personal experience, the researcher knows that established companies tended to be favoured since they had the experience and skills to deliver effectively and fast. Given the high costs of local television production, the risk was too high to give a substantial contract to a company without a good record of accomplishment. One could argue that such companies had to be given opportunities in order to establish credibility in the market place. However, it would come at a price of additional cost and time.

ICASA pointed out that the local content requirement for public television broadcasting was 55%. Since the explicit aim of RTV was to promote languages and regional culture, one could assume that this figure would be upheld or even increased for regional television. According to ICASA the local content requirement in Nigeria was 40%, but the limited number of independent production houses made it difficult to achieve the goal. Such companies were reliant on multinationals, foreign aid or the government for funding (ICASA, 2003a:21).

Normally, independent production companies in South Africa did not rely on any outside funding, but survived on the negotiated contract fee with the broadcaster. The fact that such companies in Nigeria needed additional funding, could only imply that the broadcasters themselves were under funded and not in a position to pay production houses a living fee. One could therefore argue that the noble goal to stimulate the private sector (and the economy) could easily be derailed if the state did not provide adequate funding to public television stations.

In Denmark the free to air channel TV2 (with regional windows and funded by license fees and advertising) outsourced production to private companies and regional affiliates. Figures quoted indicated that regional television viewing was popular and that it had increased over the years (ICASA, 2003a:23). The channel broadcast in five languages. This case study demonstrated that the Danes succeeded in providing quality content to attract viewers. The logical deduction is that the best plans and intentions could go wrong if viewers did not switch on. If a station relies to any degree on public popularity and viewership for commercial funding (such as license fees and advertising), it had to provide the kind of programming that would attract viewers in the open market.

In the discussion on commercial regional television ICASA pointed out that at least 90% of ITV1's regional programmes in the UK were produced in the regions where commissioned. By law the BBC and ITV had to buy 25% of programming from independent producers. As a result ITV made a crucial contribution to create regional income in Wales and Scotland. In Wales 670 full time jobs were supported, contributing £12 million to disposable income in the Welsh economy (ICASA, 2003a:34). One must remember of course that Britain has a much stronger television industry with a considerable longer history and that the television stations operate in a first world economy. In South Africa it is simply a historical fact that apartheid limited opportunities, training, skills and experience to specifically those groups who would have to make a huge creative contribution to regional television in indigenous languages.

6.2.4 Frequencies

A few last points need to be made about the Discussion Paper. ICASA referred to the important topic of frequency assignment (ICASA, 2003a:8) but did not provide any answers. It just observed that the roll-out of digital terrestrial television and the potential introduction of local television broadcasting could influence spare capacity. Frequency assignment is of vital importance and will be dealt with more comprehensively later. This topic ties in with the debate on when the country should start the migration from analogue to digital television.

The advantages of digital television are beyond argument and it can be delivered free to air as prescribed in the Broadcasting Act. The problem will be the cost of the receiving device. The migration will have to take place in the next decade or two in line with regulations of the International Telecommunications Union. Yet, the present state of underdevelopment and poverty in the country will not allow large numbers of the population to access digital public television services. Diversification of access was a primary consideration for government as

stated in various acts such as the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, Act number 153 of 1993.

6.3 Industry Submissions to ICASA

As reflected in the Position Paper, ICASA received 12 submissions (ICASA, 2003b:3). All the major players, such as the SABC, Midi Television (owners of e.tv) and M-Net submitted papers. The others were Mikhail Peppas, Malcolm Ramsay, the Media Monitoring Project, the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Community Radio Forum, Orbicom, Sentech and Seriti Broadcasting Company.

Judging by the frequency of references made to them, the submissions of the major players (understandably) weighed more than those of individuals and institutions who also made submissions.

In this brief discussion of the submissions, the researcher will concentrate on the major issues in the Discussion Paper as reacted to by the broadcasters and others. This will later be tested against the decisions taken by ICASA in its Position Paper. In this way one can determine to what extent the submissions might have influenced the stance of ICASA. The headings below broadly follow the framework set out by ICASA in its Position Paper in the chapter on the submissions received

6.3.1 Approach to Public Regional Television Services

ICASA made the points in the Discussion Paper that the regional services had to reflect the diversity of the regions and that the provincial identities, cultures and characters should receive exposure in the regions to be covered (ICASA, 2003a:11). It was left to the SABC and others to suggest how the regions should be determined and how the various provinces would fit into them.

The SABC submitted that the final determination of regions should take account of where existing coverage had been lowest (ICASA, 2003b:11). Its information was that coverage and access were lowest in Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. The languages affected were Sepedi, Tshivenda, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele.

On the basis of this information the SABC then proposed two channels for Regions A and B. Region A would cover Limpopo, North West, Gauteng, Free State and Northern Cape, broadcasting in Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Afrikaans. Region B would consist of the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo (eastern

border) and Gauteng. It would broadcast in isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, siSwati and Afrikaans (ICASA, 2003b:11). The SABC more or less stuck to these proposals throughout further interaction with ICASA.

What the Authority did not specifically refer to was that the SABC in its submission introduced the arguments for the two channels by saying "…if the regional services [were] to further the objectives of *universal access*" (own italics) the issues of lowest access and coverage had to be decisive (SABC, 2003:21). This was an important distinction because it presupposed that the goal to give almost every citizen access demanded that remote rural areas had to be given preference in deciding on the regions and the initial roll-out. As shall be seen later, the SABC had to adjust this approach when the enormous financial implications became apparent.

The only other submission quoted by ICASA on this subject, was the point made by Primedia that the language profile of provinces had to be taken as the basis to determine regions if the intention was to cater for marginalised languages (ICASA, 2003b:12). As an example it suggested that the Western Cape and the Northern Cape had to be grouped together since both provinces had high numbers of Afrikaans speakers. This suggestion conflicted with the SABC's proposal. It was not logical either since Afrikaans could certainly not be classified as a marginalised language in relation to some of the other indigenous languages.

M-Net and e.tv did not specifically offer opinions on the spread of provincial languages in regions.
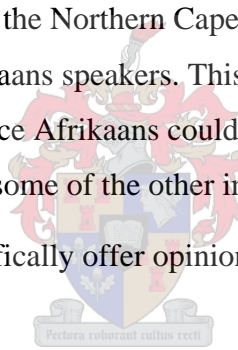
6.3.2 Finance, viability and advertising

Naturally, these issues were of most concern to the SABC's rivals, M-Net and e.tv. ICASA quoted e.tv's accusation that the Authority had failed to consider the effect of the introduction of regional television on the viability of existing services (ICASA, 2003b:13). This point was also made by Primedia (ICASA, 2003b:14). In addition, e.tv pleaded for stricter license conditions on the existing SABC channels before RTV could be introduced (ICASA, 2003b:13).

The SABC made it clear that the majority of funding had to come from government in a model of mixed funding – including advertising. While not mentioning the effect of such a funding model on other television stations, it warned against the implications of fragmented audiences on its existing channels (ICASA, 2003b:14).

6.3.3 Language

E.tv suggested 90% of the SABC's broadcast time on regional channels should be devoted to indigenous African languages leaving a maximum of 10% for Afrikaans broadcasts. It wanted no English allowed (ICASA, 2003b:19).

The SABC argued that regional and marginalised languages had to be represented in a manner that was reflective of the regions. This would assist the SABC in delivering the language equitability required (SABC, 2003a:18). The SABC maintained the Broadcasting Act prescribed the *collective* achievement of these goals across all public service channels and not by each individually (ICASA, 2003b:15). Here one must bear in mind of course that the existing SABC public channels (SABC1 and SABC2) already had prescribed local content and language quotas. Moreover, the SABC proposed that the imperative to broadcast the majority of programming in indigenous languages (other than English) had to be achieved *over time* (ICASA, 2003b:16). The impression one could gain from these statements was that the SABC wanted to leave a few back doors open in order to ease into an onerous obligation.

The SABC also proposed that the *majority* of programming should be delivered in languages other than English *over time* (SABC, 2003:19). Logically this argument suggested that English could be a prominent broadcasting language in the early stages of RTV. A second deduction was that although English would be scaled down over time, it would not disappear.

6.3.4 Programming and South African content

The last ruling by ICASA on local content was that public television had to comply with a 55% quota while the figure for commercial free to air television (e.tv in other words) was 35%. Midi Television very strongly insisted that RTV should only be allowed to offer local content programming sourced entirely from independent production companies in the relevant regions (ICASA, 2003a:16). In effect, it wanted the most onerous obligations imposed on the SABC, leaving it no room to buy and offer foreign programming (and thereby competing with e.tv). At the same time it would be the most expensive option forcing the SABC to channel vast resources to RTV (again leaving less room to compete on its national channels).

The SABC in turn raised the practical point that production capacity at local regional level was limited. The goal of local sourcing therefore had to be set over the longer term (SABC, 2003a:19).

In terms of content, the SABC accepted that RTV would be driven by regional programming – in particular news, information and sport (SABC, 2003a:19). In addition,

children's and educational programming had to be provided as well as local drama. The SABC suggested that it had to be given the discretion to provide a mix of entertainment and other programming. As shall be seen later, the production of local drama became somewhat contentious. Given its reservations about local production capacity, the SABC was hesitant to commit to local drama from the start-up of RTV. The chairperson of ICASA believed local drama had to be provided from the outset (De Souza, 2005).

The Media Monitoring Project suggested programming and local content had to be quota-based. These quotas had to be negotiated at reasonable, equitable levels. It did not specify what "reasonable" was but conceded that the quotas had to be high concerning language, local content and the catering for previously disadvantaged regions (ICASA, 2003b:17).

6.3.5 Frequency assignment and availability

ICASA already conceded in the Discussion Paper the conflicting demands on spare frequency capacity that would necessitate prioritisation and reorganisation to provide for regional television (ICASA, 2003a:8). These conflicting demands were mainly the need to migrate from analogue to digital radio and television services and the possible introduction of *local* television (as opposed to regional television).

Midi Television, M-Net and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) warned that proper investigation into spare capacity and the availability of frequencies for the migration to digital television had to be conducted *before* any decision could be taken on RTV (ICASA, 2003b:8). Sentech expressed the fear that the country could jeopardise the smooth transition to digital transmission if the last available frequencies in urban areas were assigned to regional television. It argued that this migration process had to be foremost in the mind of ICASA (ICASA, 2003b:9). Orbicom went further and suggested that the Authority should not perpetuate technical obsolescence by licensing new regional stations on analogue frequencies (ICASA, 2003b:10).

Sentech was also concerned about the availability of interference free frequencies and the effect of such interference on existing services (Sentech, 2003:2). It did not want ICASA to proceed with the consideration of RTV before these issues had been resolved.

The SABC was of the opinion that transmission of the two new regional stations on analogue would not leave any room for the licensing of more *commercial* stations on this frequency band (SABC, 2003a:10). It foresaw that it could deliver the required service throughout the country on the available analogue frequencies except in Gauteng.

6.3.6 Licensing

This issue pertains to the administrative fees ICASA could charge for the process of issuing licenses. It was not treated as a serious problem by any of the parties.

The SABC argued that no such fees should be charged since it had not been taxed with any such costs for its existing public broadcasting licenses (SABC, 2003a:12). M-Net supported reduced fees in proportion to the region covered and to the kind of service delivered such as public, commercial or community broadcasting. The fees should not affect the viability of the service (M-Net, 2003:2). NAB wanted the fees to be "most consistent and fair" and determined on the basis of the real administrative costs incurred by the Authority (NAB, 2003:10). While this argument seemed logical, the SABC could argue that it should not pay for the process to issue licences for regional services since it had been obliged by law to deliver regional television channels. The SABC had never requested to be awarded such licenses.

6.4. ICASA Position paper on Regional Television Broadcasting Services

6.4.1. Introduction

The most telling observation in the opening aim statement of the Position Paper was probably a few lines towards the end of the section. ICASA said one of the main objectives was to ensure that public broadcasting services duly took account of the needs of language, cultural and religious groups in the constituent regions. In addition, stability should be promoted within the broadcasting industry as well as fair competition between broadcasting licensees (ICASA, 2003b:6). These two statements set the tone of proposals to follow.

The three very clear positions ICASA took about public regional television were:

- Advertising would not be allowed (ICASA, 2003b:28);

- The use of English would be prohibited (ICASA, 2003b:29).

- Local content should comprise 55% from start-up (ICASA, 2003b:33).

All these decisions had very serious implications for the SABC in its plans for RTV (as will be discussed in the next chapter). It is safe to presume that some of the submissions to ICASA in the interim period after the publication of its Discussion Paper must have had some influence on the decisions reflected in the Position Paper. E.tv (as the main direct competitor to the SABC) submitted some of the most serious concerns – in particular about funding, the use of English as a broadcasting language on RTV, the fragmentation of the market and local content.

A fourth very definite position taken by ICASA was that no *commercial* regional channels would be licensed in the short to medium term (although the door was not closed). The senior manager: Policy Development and Research Department at ICASA told the author that such commercial channels would be considered again after the migration to digital terrestrial television in South Africa (Doyle, 2005).

The decision not to license regional commercial stations had been taken mainly because several parties, and the feasibility study commissioned by the authority, had argued that such channels could not be viable (ICASA 2003b:24). In addition, it would harm existing licensees and destabilise the industry. E.tv had argued that the introduction of commercial regional television would enhance the SABC's dominant revenue share (according to ICASA it had 60% market share) and further fragment the limited revenue sources (ICASA, 2003b:13). The decision was therefore in line with the aim statements mentioned above.

6.4.2 Language

In legislative measures (in other words the stance taken by government) and in ICASA's approach, it was quite clear that the language issue had been central. The Authority also specifically referred to section 6(2) of Chapter 1 of the Constitution that the state had to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and use of historically disadvantaged languages. In subsection (2) the Constitution stated "…all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably" (ICASA, 2003b:25).

ICASA continued by quoting from the Triple Inquiry Report, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO Declaration on Racial Prejudice to underline the importance of language and cultures. It also said "language [was] basic to the articulation and enjoyment of all other rights" (ICASA, 2003b:26).

In the immediate next section of the paper, "Funding of Public Regional Television Services", the Authority wrote: "… in order to promote the constitutional right to language, government proposed the introduction of public regional television services" (ICASA, 2003b:27). The conclusion was therefore very clearly that regional television had to be introduced to enable the SABC to fulfil its language mandate and in particular marginalised languages. Reference was made to section 22A(1), subsection (c) of the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 2002 where English was explicitly not mentioned (but not explicitly excluded either). The interpretation of the Authority was that the aim of the Act was to address languages other than English (ICASA, 2003b:29). Moreover, the regional channels had to give

more airtime to those languages that were most marginalised: Tshivenda, Siswati, isiNdebele and Xitsonga (ICASA, 2003b:30).

This raised several questions:

- Should RTV start roll-out in the regions where these languages were most prevalent? (These are the more remote areas of the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces less covered by the footprints of the SABC channels).

- Should these languages receive more airtime from the beginning?

- Should these minority languages receive preferential treatment over majority languages such as isiZulu and Sepedi on the regional services?

- Should fair and equitable treatment be measured on the basis of all the services of the SABC with the minority languages getting more airtime on the regional channels? Later the statement was made that RTV channels should meet the needs of all the people in coverage areas (ICASA, 2003b:30).

- Should the needs be met equally? It seems the Authority gave some vague answer to this question by saying that services for a few could also be interesting and worthwhile for the majority (ICASA, 2003b:30). This statement was not substantiated by any facts.

ICASA saw delivery of the language mandate as the primary purpose of RTV. The senior manager: Licensing, Monitoring & Complaints Broadcasting Services of ICASA said in an interview: "The whole issue of marginal languages was the driving force for the initiative to start the process towards RTV" (De Souza, 2005).

6.4.3 Funding

In arguments about the funding of the regional channels, ICASA first referred to the stipulations of Sections 22A(2) that the regional services had to be funded by money appropriated by parliament and from grants, donations and sponsorship. In terms of subsection (3) the Authority could determine the extent of funding from advertising. It then made two telling observations: "In the Authority's view, state or government funding [was] vital to ensure the sustainability of the proposed regional television services." It continued: "It [was] important therefore that the SABC and government properly planned for the funding of these services" (ICASA, 2003b:28).

In these plans allowances also had to be made for the potential loss of audiences by SABC1 and SABC2 (and therefore income) when the regional channels were launched (ICASA, 2003b:29). Even before the SABC submitted its application, ICASA had therefore already foreseen that regional services would have a potential negative impact on the existing channels of the SABC. The Authority in effect conceded (in line with its stated aims) that it had a duty to protect the existing channels of the SABC – even against itself (ICASA, 2003b:29).

From the above it is clear that the Authority considered the success of the channels conditional on the ability of government to fund it properly. Yet, no clear indication was ever given by government that such funding would be forthcoming nor could any person in the SABC or ICASA testify to having received any such information. ICASA also made the point that successful regional television elsewhere had government funding and operated under special regulatory measures (ICASA, 2003b:28).

Other possible sources of funding were grants, sponsorships and donations. These sources were not considered to be meaningful by anybody consulted by the author. The only alternative was advertising, but the Authority explicitly ruled it out (ICASA, 2003b:28). The reasons were mainly:

- Regional advertising would in any event not be substantial.

- It would still leave the SABC dependent on state funding.

- In addition, it argued, the SABC might be tempted to deviate from the mandate of the regional services. This was not explained (ICASA, 2003b:28).

In line with the aims ICASA stated at the beginning of the Position Paper, it also believed advertising revenue on public regional television channels would not promote stability in the industry, would not ensure fair competition among licensees (in particular e.tv) and that it might endanger the advertising income of already licensed regional radio stations (ICASA, 2003b:29).

The Position Paper did not give a clear indication of how the services had to distinguish between the needs of regions, provinces and languages. As indicated above, it was an absolute requirement that proper language services should be provided. But as ICASA pointed out, the IBA Act also stipulated that all the *provinces* needed to have their news and cultures represented (ICASA, 2003b:30). Many isiXhosa speakers lived in the Western Cape and Gauteng with the vast majority residing in the Eastern Cape. How would a regional channel then provide a service to the Xhosa group if they were located in three vastly different provinces? Was language a

stronger determinant than province or region?   In Figures 4 below and on the next page the language distribution of isiXhosa can be seen as presented in a report by the company Z-Coms to ICASA:

Western Cape Languages

Gauteng Languages
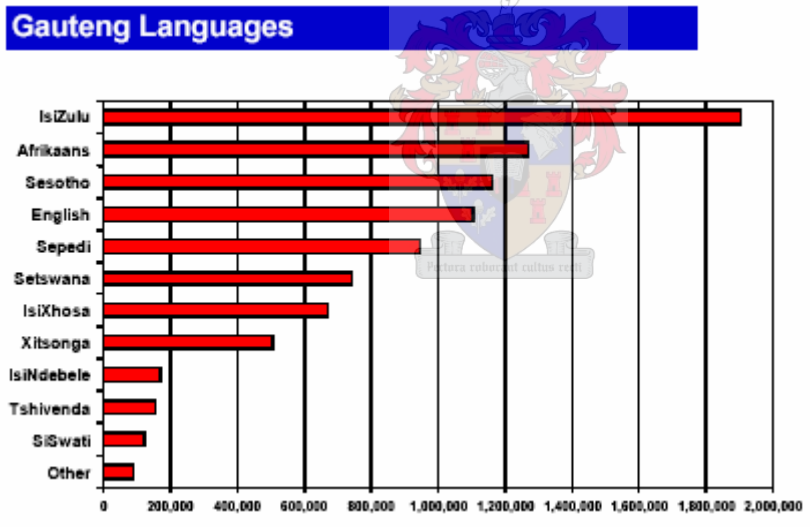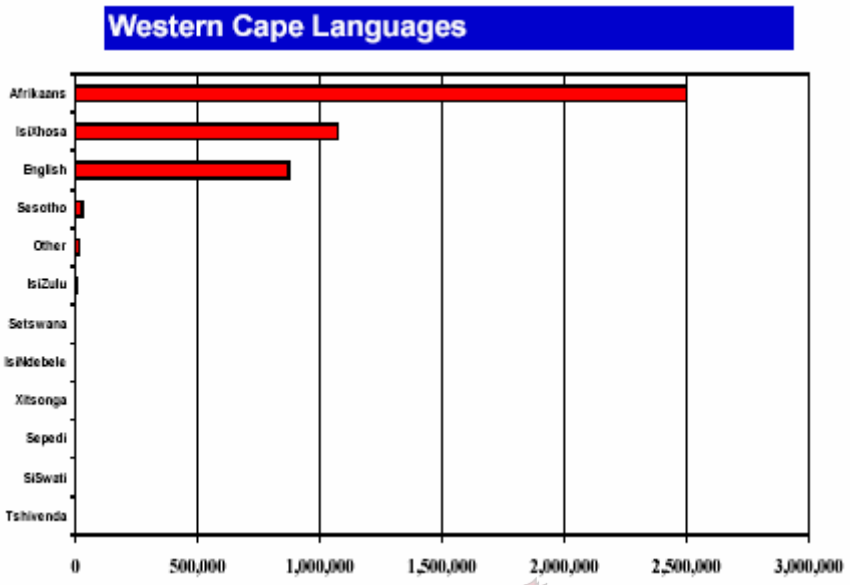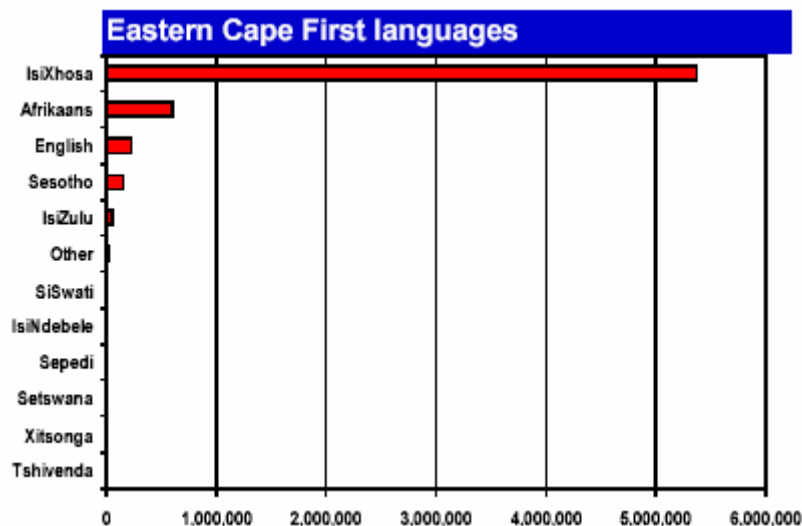
Fig 4   (Z-Coms, 2003: 21,23,29).

6.4.4 Programming

The programme categories to be covered on RTV were stipulated by ICASA. They were: news, actuality programming, children's programming and educational programming. Very little detail was given on what was expected in the various categories or how much time proportionally should be given to the different categories (it indicated that the number of hours per day would be stipulated in the license conditions). Drama or other forms of entertainment such as soaps, comedies, game shows, music programming or sport were not specifically mentioned. Later the Authority did refer to dramas when it discussed local content requirements. It then became clear that the broadcasting of dramas were in fact viewed as a very serious requirement for RTV since it created "a sense of pride and it also create[d] a competitive edge that relate[d] to the unique cultural heritage and identity of South Africa" (ICASA, 2003b:32).

A few specific points made by ICASA about the different categories can be highlighted. Concerning news, it remarked that international, regional television broadcasting services were guided by a sense of "qualitative priorities as well as by their cultivation of a reputation for accessibility to regional concerns and responsiveness to regional needs" (ICASA, 2003b:30). The priority for such services clearly had to be regional news although national and international news should also be delivered. No reference was made to provincial news, but presumably, it was also important.

In terms of actuality television, it was stipulated that a range of programming had to be provided. Four categories were named: documentary programming, documentary drama,

informal knowledge building programmes and regular current affairs programmes (ICASA, 2003b:30). The informal knowledge building programmes presumably referred to talk shows.

As a person with many years experience in current affairs, this researcher can testify that all these categories (except talk shows) are extremely expensive. It requires producers and technical teams of experience and flair. If it was accepted that such programming had to be delivered in all the languages, finance would indeed be a challenge as well as the necessary staff to deliver it. This was an argument later used by the SABC.

The discussion of children's programming received more space than the other categories. Unlike other (or adult) programming it was specifically mentioned that children's programming had to entertain in addition to inform and educate.

The audience ratings of all television channels in South Africa clearly indicated that entertaining programming – soaps in particular – was the most popular among adults. One could argue therefore that a channel could be so overloaded with serious, informative and educational programming, that few people would have the stomach to watch it. ICASA made a particular point that children's programming also had to address the language needs of the audience. It was prescribed that constructive programming should be screened that contributed to the healthy development of children. Young viewers also had to be protected from harmful material – in terms of content and the screening hours of such programming (ICASA, 2003b:31).

Although educational programming was only dealt with in one paragraph, it was nevertheless stated that RTV would have "an important role to play as a powerful source of general public education and empowerment" (ICASA, 2003b:31). RTV was seen as a tool to enhance formal and informal education. In addition, it had to be produced in the regions concerned. It was argued that this in turn would further stimulate regional production capacity, economic development and employment.

ICASA ruled that the local content for RTV should be 55% from start-up. The independent television production quota was set at 40% (ICASA, 2003b:33). In principle, these were lofty ideals, but in practice it was the more costly approach. One would presume it meant that more than half of all the programming should, from the first day of broadcast, be original, new material produced locally by the SABC and independent contractors. Apart from the obvious implications that the necessary staff with experience and talent should be sourced to produce the material, it also implied that quite substantial stock should be produced in advance to kick-start the stations for the first two to three months.

Apart from news (and current affairs to a degree), most other programming would need at least six weeks lead-in time to produce one episode or visual report of 30 minutes. This could take longer when producing dramas. This was the category specifically mentioned by ICASA to create "a sense of pride and competitive edge that relate[d] to the unique cultural heritage and identity of South Africa". It further argued that the potential economic benefits of local productions would be considerable (ICASA, 2003b:32). This was not substantiated.

The television and film industries do have a substantial multiplier effect in creating jobs along an extended production stream – from the very creative graphic design, script writing and directing disciplines through to on-camera talent, the more technical sectors of camera and editing work, the administrative sections, financial services, artisans and set builders to even very basic unskilled labour. On the other hand, this is a high cost, low-income industry. Although the industry requires substantial capital investment, it does not mean that wealth will necessarily be distributed on a wide scale – rather just some income.

6.4.5 Incentives

In order to stimulate local productions, the Authority decided to allocate points to certain categories of programming and to certain provinces. An adapted version of the Australian model was therefore accepted. The rationale was that a channel could attain the required local content quota quicker by directing production towards those categories that would accumulate more points. If a production was commissioned in any one of six specific provinces, a channel could accrue three points. Gauteng and the Western Cape were excluded (probably because they already had well established television and film industries). Productions sourced in KwaZulu-Natal would accrue two points while it would be three points in the six other provinces. Documentaries, children's and art programming produced in any of the official languages other than English and Afrikaans would accrue three points each (ICASA, 2003b:33).

Since the Authority had already expressed itself against the use of English on the regional channels, the exclusion of English from the point system made sense, but not the exclusion of Afrikaans. While Afrikaans did have a good head start on all the other indigenous languages during the Apartheid years, the language was clearly identified in the Broadcasting Amendment Act as one of the preferred languages with other indigenous languages. One would have expected the Authority to allocate at least one point to productions in this indigenous language – especially if one took into account the fact that the majority of Afrikaans speakers were non-white. This is clearly indicated in the census table below (Fig 5):

Home language	Black African	Coloured	Indian or Asian	White	Total
Afrikaans	253 282	3 173 972	19 266	2 536 906	5 983 426

Fig 5 (Statistics South Africa, 2001a:18).

6.4.6 License fee

ICASA determined that the license application fee would be R50 000 (ICASA, 2003b:35). Considering the larger picture of how costly it would be to start and operate one channel, this was quite modest. Yet, as pointed out by the Executive Director of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) no logical explanation was given for this. He argued that the license fee had to be related to the time and effort the Authority had to put in to prepare for the issuing of the license. The fee as determined in the Position Paper was too low. The Authority lacked resources. Due to its wide and heavy workload, it could only deal with one process at a time. This impacted negatively on the industry as a whole. By asking more market related fees, the Authority could recoup its costs and perhaps afford to strengthen its staff complement (Koster, 2005). As pointed out before, the SABC did not want to pay such fees at all.

6.4.7 Frequency assignment

The submissions to ICASA and its own assessment led it to recognise the importance of prioritising the migration of analogue to digital television. It also made the point that such a process had to be part of a holistic national plan initiated by government in conjunction with the International Telecommunications Union. While spare capacity should be reserved for future migration to digital television, provision also had to be made for the two regional public stations, where possible, and for additional commercial and community services as well as e.tv analogue expansion. ICASA acknowledged that there might be gaps in coverage in some larger metropolitan areas (ICASA, 2003b:23).

The above arguments are sensible and logic but somewhat vague. The process to examine each transmission site to determine the frequency availability, reach and possible interference, turned out to be a mammoth task. The argument in several submissions that a proper study of frequency availability should have been done and a strategy devised for the migration to digital television *before* the consideration of regional television licenses, had merit (ICASA,2003a:8).

In such a highly technical industry as television, lofty ideals have little value unless it is practically feasible.

6.5 Conclusion

The publication of ICASA's Position Paper on RTV set the scene for the SABC to submit its applications some two weeks later on 8 December 2003.

The very limited time between the publication of ICASA's Position Paper and the legally required application date for the SABC to submit its proposals to ICASA, naturally caused major problems. It meant the SABC had to submit detailed, comprehensive proposals without really knowing what ICASA would determine. To start the process of preparing a submission only after the publication of the Position Paper, was obviously out of the question. According to the manager of Regulatory Affairs at the SABC an open line was kept with ICASA in order to have some idea of what the Authority had in mind during the drafting of the Position paper (Kantor, 2005a).

Yet, the SABC could not and would not respond in all cases to the rules laid down by ICASA. The two major points of difference were concerning the use of English and advertising on RTV. This will be dealt with in depth in the following chapters.

ICASA itself was bound by very strict time frames and could naturally not have given the necessary attention to its reports or the responses of the various institutions in the manner it might have preferred to.

In retrospect it is quite baffling why the government had determined such tight time frames. It is now three years after the publication of ICASA's Position Paper and the SABC's application, yet, nothing much has happened in these three years. Had the time frames been set differently, much more effort and consideration could have gone into the preparation of the reports and consultation between the various parties to come to a more considered position in the interest of the country and the viewing public at large.

It is clear that ICASA did a commendable job in producing the two reports in the limited time available. However, as a seasoned television journalist with 30 years experience in the practical side of production, it struck the researcher that the compilers of the ICASA report were not people with wide practical television experience. (Ironically this was also the case in the SABC with its submission).

Some of the decisions, such as the onerous percentages set for local content and languages, indicated a more ideological, desired disposition than a reflection of real achievable goals. On the other hand, such goals could inspire the SABC and others to greater efforts in achieving it.

A detailed discussion of the SABC's submission will follow in the next chapter.
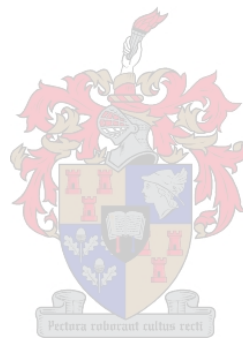
7 The SABC's Application

7.1 Introduction

The SABC application was duly submitted on 8 December 2003 – nine months after the Broadcasting Amendment Act, Act 64 of 2002, became law on 7 March 2003 (SABC, 2003b). It was a comprehensive document of almost 150 pages. The SABC supplemented it by submitting additional information as requested by ICASA. This was an indication that the SABC had taken the legal requirement to apply seriously, according to a member of the task team who prepared the submission. He said the members really applied their minds and worked hard to submit a decent document. He believed ICASA was quite impressed since many thought the SABC would not have shown much enthusiasm, as it had no choice in the matter (Fuchs, 2004).

In another respect, the work to submit was a challenge too. Naturally, the SABC could not wait to start the preparation for its applications only *after* the official publication of ICASA's Position Paper on Regional Television. It had to work and plan while ICASA was still busy formulating the rules according to which it actually had to submit the applications. The only way to prevent submitting applications that were way off the mark was to maintain constant contact with ICASA.

This was done unobtrusively behind the scenes – mainly by Lara Kantor, the General Manager: Policy and Regulatory Affairs at the SABC and three people at ICASA: Aynon Doyle, Senior Manager Policy Development and Research; Lydia de Souza, Senior Manager Licensing, Monitoring and Complaints Broadcasting Services; and Botlenyana Mokhele, Manager Policy Development. This was confirmed in interviews with the four people (Kantor, 2005; Doyle, 2005; De Souza, 2005; Mokhele, 2005).

According to Kantor the SABC had a good idea what ICASA'S thinking was. It prepared its submission accordingly together with own proposals based on practical experience (Kantor, 2005a). Yet, not everything could be anticipated and the SABC could not really change the substance of its applications in the two weeks it had after the publication of ICASA's Position Paper. In the executive summary of the SABC application, the corporation openly admitted that it had already done a significant amount of work to develop its approach to RTV by the time ICASA's Position paper was published. As a result its application was not "in alignment" with several positions taken by ICASA (SABC, 2003b:9). In two respects, the use of English and commercial advertising, the SABC did not adhere to the rules laid down by ICASA at all (Kantor, 2005).

7.2 Motivation for application

In the preamble of the SABC's submission, it was emphasized that it had been constrained in delivering its public broadcasting obligations, such as reflecting the country's rich diversity in indigenous languages, by a lack of funds and limited platforms. The SABC believed RTV would present it with the opportunity to deliver on its mandate in a "fuller, more relevant and meaningful way" (SABC, 2003b:5) and that its application represented a "significant advancement in the delivery of public broadcasting" in the country (SABC, 2003a:2). The precondition was that the state had to provide a "secure public funding base" – as stipulated in section 22A of the Broadcasting Amendment Act (SABC, 2003b:3).

The SABC stated that its charter was fundamental in guiding its application for RTV. Five key aspects were highlighted (SABC, 2003b:10):

- Delivering in all indigenous languages (excluding English)

- Reflecting regional and cultural diversity

- Increasing access to and availability of services

- Nurturing South African talent

- Providing for the disabled community

The objectives highlighted by the SABC in terms of the charter were:

"…to encourage the development of South African expression by providing, in the official languages, a wide range of programming that:

- Reflected South African attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity;

- Displayed South African talent in educational and entertaining programmes;

- Offered a plurality of views and a variety of news, information and analysis from a South African point of view; and

- Advanced the national and public interest" (SABC, 2003b:3).

All these objectives were seen against a wider backdrop of the Constitution on which the SABC's editorial policies were based. In this regard four points were referred to (SABC, 2003b:4):

- "To heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

- To lay the foundations for a democratic open society in which the government is based on the will of the people …

- To improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;

- To build a united, democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations."

In this context the SABC as public broadcaster had to (SABC, 2003b:4):

- Play a part in healing the divisions of the past;

- Promote respect for democratic values and human rights;

- Supply information that allowed citizens to exercise their rights; and

- Reflect the rich diversity of a united South Africa.

All of these values were seen as the foundation of the approach to deliver on the mandate. One could say that these objectives and obligations were quite extensive and onerous. While one could understand that RTV might contribute towards achieving these objectives, any person would be rather optimistic to believe that RTV would be the answer to effectively attain them. These were national objectives on a political level following the country's painful history, coupled with economic goals to advance skills and diminish poverty while also trying to deliver a practical language and cultural service on a local level.

The SABC stated that its application was informed by extensive research and an investigation into the experiences of other broadcasters. It believed the result was a "prudent and implementable" application (SABC, 2003b:12). Later in the introductory chapter on the *Broadcasting Landscape* it added that its understanding of the business of television and the market (audiences, revenue and capacity) helped to determine its approach (SABC, 2003b:18).

The market had two distinct features: at the one end, an abundance of choice and at the other end scarcity. This was determined mainly by the economic status of individuals or households. RTV would therefore give even wider choice to those with means while it would not necessarily stimulate more television purchases at the lower end of the market. Viewing time might increase only among some of the marginalised African language speakers (SABC,

2003b:18). Because of its mandate as a public broadcaster the SABC could not hand pick the top end of the market. It had to deliver to the viewers in the lower Living Standards Measure (LSM) categories as well. This is an index compiled by the South African Advertising Research Foundation's (SAARF) and was widely used as a marketing research tool by all media in South Africa.

The SABC's share of this market (5 LSM and below) was 75%, while its overall share of all viewers was some 60% (SABC, 2003b:19). The conclusion was therefore that an increase in viewers through RTV would not lead to an increase in revenue since such viewers at the lower end of the market would not have purchasing power. RTV could in fact have the opposite effect, as audience migration away from other SABC services could affect ratings and advertising income. This was a serious concern for the SABC – as already indicated by a financial analyst in the previous chapter (De Bod, 2005).

7.3. The SABC's Proposals

7.3.1. Approach

Given the legal requirements and the obligations in terms of the charter and the editorial policies of the SABC (as explained above), the corporation simply had to find ways to comply – such as the clear and challenging directives to provide comprehensive public television services to the official language groups (excluding English). To do so, the SABC embarked on a study based on its own understanding of the broadcasting business, an analysis of the television market (audiences, revenue and capacity), the competitive environment (including television viewership and preferences), demographics, macro socio-economic factors, content and advertising trends (SABC, 2003b:18).

Essentially the SABC had to decide to whom it would broadcast, in what region on what channel. Once it had clarity on these issues, it had to decide on content and consider the financial and technical implications. In determining the geographical areas of the channels, the SABC assessed the mix of languages spoken in various regions; the absolute numbers of specific language speakers per province and the migration patterns (SABC, 2003b:22). This research was done on the basis of the 2001 Census.

In addition, the corporation examined where television access and penetration was lowest (SABC, 2003b:22). This was an important statement as it influenced later proposals on priority penetration areas for roll-out. The approach was to deliver services in the various languages spoken in specific regions, but with weighting towards marginalised languages not as well

represented on television, specifically IsiNdebele, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga (SABC, 2003b:13). Significantly, the SABC stated that it did not intend to increase *coverage* into those areas. The implication was that by broadening the services in indigenous languages more people of such groups would hopefully have access to their own programming, but that signal distribution (regional geographical coverage) could not be increased. An increase in signal distribution would have meant quite a capital investment. Such a venture could not be undertaken without the necessary funding in place from government (SABC, 2003b:22).

According to a manager in the office: Policy and Regulatory Affairs of the SABC some four and a half million people in the country still had no television access. A study by the SABC revealed that if the Corporation wanted to extend the signal footprint of SABC1 from the present 89% to match SABC2's 91%, the capital cost for additional transmitters and other equipment would be at least R20 million. It also had to be remembered that such transmitters could only be erected with the permission of ICASA and the co-operation of Sentech. It also involved environmental impact studies and a long public process (Mansfield, 2005).

The guiding principle was therefore to devise proposals that would give people more extended services in their languages rather than to ensure that every person in every corner of the country would have access. In effect this meant indigenous language services in regions and not regional television to every indigenous person. One doubted whether this had been the initial intention of the government but cost factors clearly forced a more practical approach on the SABC.

Mansfield said the SABC was also guided by the specific announcements made by President Thabo Mbeki during his State of the Nation Address to the Houses of Parliament on 9 February 2001 (Mansfield, 2005). In that speech he outlined a government programme of action to stimulate economic growth – especially in some nodal rural development areas. It was therefore no mere co-incidence that the Broadcasting Amendment Bill instructing the establishment of regional television was introduced in 2002.

Below are a few appropriate and relevant quotes from the president's speech (Mbeki, 2001):

"In further pursuit of the objective of a better life for all and building on what has already been achieved, the government has decided on a programme of action for the year 2001."

"However the reality remains that our rate of growth is still too low as are the aggregate savings and investment rates. Similarly, the levels of poverty, unemployment and under-development in some parts of our country are too high."

"We have identified other sectors of our economy that require special attention because of their potential to contribute, especially to the objectives of higher growth rates and job creation."

"These include agriculture, tourism, certain export sectors, cultural industries and the information and communication sector."

"It [the government social sector] will implement co-ordinated programmes in the nodal rural and urban areas we have identified which, among other things, will address such issues as housing, water, sanitation, health, including HIV/AIDS, pension pay-outs, household food, security and nutrition, poverty alleviation including the provision of certain amounts of free services, Home Affairs services, education and training, sport and culture."

The areas as identified by the President in his speech was, according to Mansfield, used as a guideline for the SABC in determining access regions and people (Mansfield, 2005). Regional television was seen as part of an economic strategy of development, education, intellectual stimulation, providing information and stimulating culture. The relevant quote from the President's speech was (Mbeki, 2001):

> "The work that will help us to move to a higher phase with regard to rural development has now been concluded. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the urban renewal programme except in the instance of two areas. In both instances, the nodal points for the implementation of these programmes have been identified. With regard to rural development, these are:
>
> - The O.R. Tambo, North East, Ukhahlamba and EG Kei District Municipalities in the Eastern Cape;
> - The Umzinyathi, Umkhanyakude, Ugu and Zululand District Municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal;

- The Kgalagadi Cross Boundary District Municipality in the Northern Cape and North West;

- The Central Karoo District Municipality in the Western Cape.

- The Sekhukhune Cross Boundary District Municipality in Mpumalanga and the Northern Province;

- The Eastern District Municipality in the Northern Province; and,

- The Qwaqwa District Municipality in the Free State.

With regard to the urban renewal programme, the areas identified include:

- Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain in the Western Cape;

- KwaMashu and Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal;

- Mdantsane and Motherwell in the Eastern Cape;

- Alexandra Township in Gauteng; and,

- Galeshewe in the Northern Cape."

It was quite a comprehensive list announced by the President. Even though this might have served as guide for the SABC in formulating its proposals on the coverage areas and access, it was not possible to ensure that each person in such areas would have potential access (Mansfield, 2005).

7.4 The Proposed Channels

The SABC had a legal obligation to apply for licenses to provide regional television in terms of Section 22A of the Broadcasting Amendment Act, 64 of 2002. The act only mentioned regional television *services* without giving the number or limiting it to two (South Africa, 2002). Yet, the SABC decided to apply for only two licences or two channels. According to Mansfield this was done because there were two obvious majority language groups, the Sesotho languages and the Nguni languages, and because of the limited frequency space that would not have allowed for the application for more licences (Mansfield, 2005).

The channel for the Sesotho languages would be called SABC4 (Region A, as illustrated in Figure 6) and provide services to the north-western part of the country. The provinces to be incorporated were:

- Limpopo

- North West

- Gauteng

- Free State

- Northern Cape.

This channel would broadcast in Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi,Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans and English.
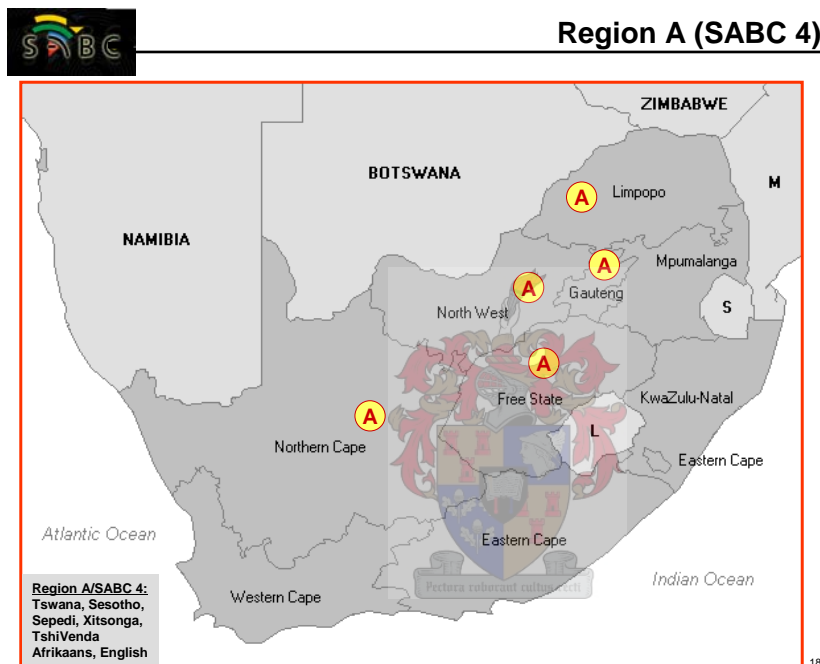
Fig 6   (SABC, 2003b:109)

The proposal for SABC5 (Region B, as shown in Fig 6) for the Nguni languages was that it covered the south eastern part of the country including the provinces:

- Mpumalanga

- Limpopo (Eastern Border)

- Gauteng

- KwaZulu-Natal

- Eastern Cape

73

- Western Cape

This regional channel would broadcast in isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, SiSwati, Afrikaans and English.

Region B (SABC 5)
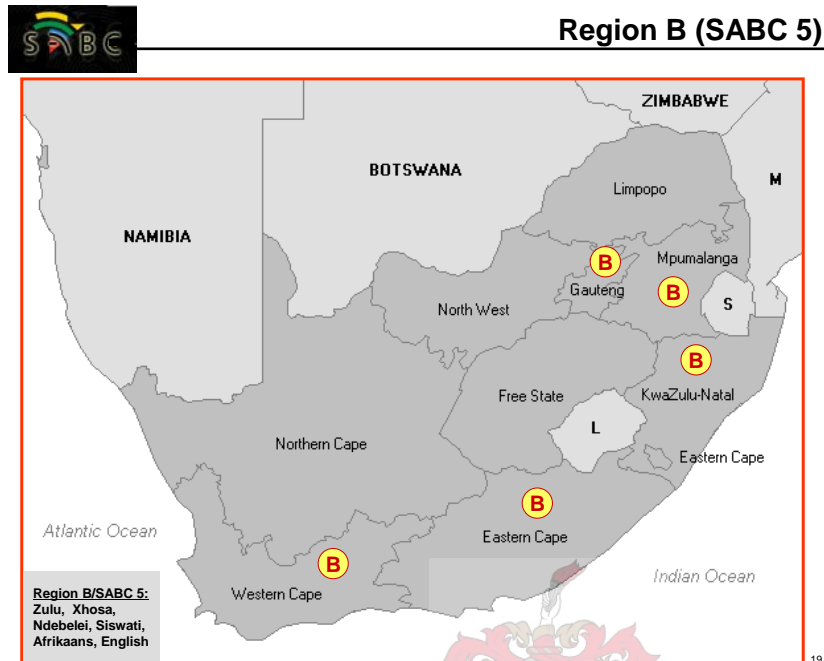
Fig 7   (SABC, 2003b?:110)

The first obvious observation was that both channels would broadcast in Afrikaans and English and that both channels would also be received in Gauteng. SABC4 would broadcast in seven languages and SABC5 in six. Although region A covered the larger part of the country, region B potentially had a larger audience.

Statistics South Africa gave the land areas of the provinces and populations as follows (Fig 8 and 9):

Province	Land Area (square kilometres)		Population (millions)	
Free State	129 480	10.6%	2 706 775	6.0%
Gauteng	17 010	1.4%	8 837 178	19.7%
Limpopo	123 910	10.2%	5 273 642	11.8%
Northern Cape	361 830	29.7%	822 727	1.8%
North West	116 320	9.5%	3 669 349	8.2%
Total SABC 4	**748 550**	**61.4%**	**21 309 671**	**47.5%**

Fig 8   (Statistics South Africa, 2001:1-7)

Province	Land Area (square kilometres)		Population (millions)	
Eastern Cape:	169 580	13.9%	6 436 763	14.4%
Gauteng	17 010	1.4%	8 837 178	19.7%
KwaZulu Natal	92 100	7.6%	9 426 017	21.0%
Mpumalanga	79 490	6.5%	3 122 990	7.1%
Western Cape	129 370	10.6%	4 524 335	10.1%
Total SABC 5	**487 550**	**40%**	**32 347 283**	**72.3%**

Fig 9   (Statistics South Africa, 2001:1-7)

Although the above tables gave interesting relative information about the land areas and populations of the various target provinces of the two channels, one had to bear in mind that the total percentages were not a true reflection of reality since Gauteng had been counted twice. In addition not all the people of Gauteng would watch both channels. Potentially all the Afrikaans and English speaking people of Gauteng might watch both channels from time to time, but it was less likely that there would be a large cross-over from the one channel to the other by the respective Sesotho and Nguni groups. In point 7.5 below a more detailed and accurate reflection will be given of the potential viewers according to language spread. The tables above did give a true reflection of the land areas to be covered by the proposed channels.

The land area of SABC 4 would be considerably larger mainly because of the size of the Northern Cape as the largest province. But this province also had the smallest population. KwaZulu Natal only ranked at number seven in terms of land area but it had the largest

population. From this information it had to be clear to the observer that the unit broadcast cost per person in Region A would be higher because there were less people over a wider area and more languages had to be served.

In terms of SABC calculations the two channels would together cover 76.3% of the country and reach 90% by the end of the license period (eight years). In effect therefore the channels combined would initially cover less land mass than the smallest footprint of existing channels (SABC 3 at 77.08%). After eight years it would almost reach the cover area of the largest channel, namely SABC 2 at 90.52% (SABC, 2003b:43). Communities presently not covered by any of the channels were mostly living in the more remote rural parts of the country. The areas where penetration, access and viewership were lowest, included sections of the Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape as can be seen in Fig 10 below.

Television penetration and viewership by province.

Province	Share of total population	Share of TV audience(adults)	% TV sets in households	% TV viewership
Gauteng	19.7%	25.5%	74%	84%
Western Cape	10.1%	12.3%	74%	85%
KwaZulu Natal	21%	17%	47.3%	56%
Eastern Cape	14.4%	7.3%	38.6%	57%
North West	8.2%	8.1%	53.9%	71%
Mpumalanga	7%	7%	50%	68%
Free State	6%	7%	53%	74%
Northern Cape	1.8%	1.9%	53.8%	62%
Limpopo	11.8%	7%	39.8%	50%

Fig 10   (SABC, 2003b:81)

The SABC pledged to *attempt* to further the aims of universal access *over time* and deliver *some* coverage in geographical areas not serviced by existing channels (SABC, 2003b:43). This was clearly a very guarded statement. As pointed out before, the SABC did not undertake to

provide service in geographical areas where it did not exist – only increased access to expanded *language* services. The extension of the broadcast network was an expensive exercise and dependent on the necessary funds allocated by government.

7.5 Language

The language distribution patterns in a particular province and existing coverage of the various languages were important factors in the decision where to place a province in the proposed channels and what importance to attach to the language. The fact that so many people of all the official language groups resided in Gauteng, strengthened the argument that both channels had to be available in the province (SABC, 2003b:13). As can be seen in the table (Fig 11) below, a fair proportion of the total countrywide population of each language group could be found in Gauteng.

Home Language	Gauteng	South Africa
Afrikaans	1 269 176	5 983 426
English	1 105 192	3 673 203
IsiNdebele	171 018	711 821
IsiXhosa	871 045	7 907 153
IsiZulu	1 902 025	10 677 305
Sepedi	945 656	4 208 980
Sesotho	1 159 589	3 555 186
Setswana	741 219	3 677 016
SiSwati	122 560	1 194 430
TshiVenda	154 183	1 021 757
Xitsonga	505 380	1 992 207
Other	90 134	217 293
Total	8 837 178	44 819 778

Fig 11   (Statistics South Africa, 2001)

There was also an even spread of Afrikaans speakers throughout the country in each province – more so than any other language. It did make sense therefore to accommodate Afrikaans on both channels. The same could not be said for English. But the difference was that English was the preferred second language choice of most viewers.

Levels of understanding other than own home language:

Afrikaans speakers:	English	50%
	African Language	11%
English speakers:	Afrikaans	54%
	African Language	14%
Sesotho speakers:	Afrikaans	24%
	English	28%
	Other African	30%
Setswana speakers:	Afrikaans	24%
	English	14%
	Other African	20%
Sepedi speakers:	Afrikaans	7%
	English	19%
	Other African	13%
SiSwati speakers:	Afrikaans	6%
	English	27%
	Other African	42%
IsiNdebele speakers:	Afrikaans	10%
	English	3%
	Other African	19%
IsiXhosa speakers:	Afrikaans	7%
	English	24%
	Other African	13%
IsiZulu speakers:	Afrikaans	4%
	English	32%
	Other African	16%
Tshivenda speakers:	Afrikaans	4%
	English	0%
	Other African	13%
Xitsonga speakers:	Afrikaans	2%
	English	24%
	Other African	21%

Fig 12   (SABC, 2003b:115)

As can be seen in the above table (Fig 12), English was by far the most preferred second language among the most populous language groups of isiZulu and isiXhosa. It was only among Tshivenda and isiNdebele speakers that the understanding of English was really low. The SABC believed on the basis of its research that more and more non-English people were prepared to accept English as the language of broadcast across most genres. The reason was probably that English dominated on existing channels. The corporation argued that acceptance of other

languages would grow as investment increased and such languages were given more airtime on the new channels (SABC, 2003b:26).

The SABC made the pledge in its submission that indigenous languages, other than English, would receive a minimum of 70% of the programming. It was not clear how this figure was derived at. However, the argument that some programming had to be in English was plausible. The SABC noted that most present programming originated in English. It would therefore take time and money to produce original material in other languages (SABC, 2003b:13). In addition, there was a lack of skilled people (especially in the more marginalised languages) to produce material (SABC, 2003b:51). This problem will be further explored later.

In the table below (Fig 13) a comprehensive view is given of the spread of the various languages in the provinces as given by Statistics South Africa.

Table: Home Language Distribution By Province (numbers):

Language	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
Afrikaans	600 057	323 082	1 269 176	140 833	122 531	192 129	559 189	275 681	2 500 748	5 983 426
English	232 952	31 246	1 105 192	1 285 011	28 939	51 833	20 662	42 709	874 660	3 673 203
IsiNdebele	4 134	10 000	171 018	18 570	78 617	377 688	581	48 997	2 216	711 821
IsiXhosa	5 369 672	246 192	871 045	219 826	14 225	46 553	51 228	214 461	1 073 951	7 907 153
IsiZulu	51 434	138 091	1 902 025	7 624 284	34 358	822 934	2 724	92 288	9 166	10 677 305
Sepedi	2 966	7 007	945 656	10 844	2 750 175	336 451	762	153 220	1 898	4 208 980
Sesotho	152 340	1 742 939	1 159 589	66 925	69 370	114 169	9 101	209 315	31 438	3 555 186
Setswana	1 944	185 389	741 219	5 195	83 130	84 911	171 340	2 398 366	5 522	3 677 016
SiSwati	5 201	7 451	122 560	12 792	57 703	963 188	591	23 206	1 738	1 194 430
Tshivenda	766	1 433	154 183	1 215	839 704	5 935	358	16 880	1 284	1 021 757
Xitsonga	14 482	8 960	505 380	3 289	1 180 611	117 921	397	172 768	2 065	1992 207
Other	6 436 763	4 985	90 134	37 232	14 278	9 277	5 794	21 460	19 650	217 293
Total		2 706 755	8 837 178	9 426 017	5 273 642	3 122 990	822 727	3 669 349	4 524 335	44 819 778

Fig 13   (Statistics South Africa, 2001)

The following observations could be made:

- **isiNdebele:** Traditionally the isiNdebele people used to live in the area east and northeast of Pretoria (the old KwaNdebele apartheid homeland). As could be seen from the figures above the majority of these people resided in Mpumalanga (53.1%) but also a significant percentage (24%) in Gauteng and in the Limpopo Province (11%). The isiNdebele speakers were part of the Nguni language group and would therefore be able to tune into SABC5. It meant that special distribution arrangements would have to be made to cater for those people living in Limpopo – a province that was actually part of SABC 4. In its submission the SABC specifically mentioned that the eastern border of Limpopo would also fall within the coverage area of SABC5 (SABC, 2003b:12). It seemed the sizeable number of some 49 000 isiNdebele in the North West Province would fall through the cracks. As the smallest group of all the languages the Ndebele's would need special attention.

- **isiXhoxa:** Numbering almost eight million, the isiXhosa was the second largest in South Africa after the IsiZulu group (10.6 million). The vast majority of Xhosas lived in the Eastern Cape (67.9%). Significant numbers could also be found in the Western Cape (14%) and in Gauteng (10%). This group would be well covered on SABC 5. However, some 450 000 isiXhosa speakers resided in the Free State and the North West provinces and would miss out on coverage.

- **isiZulu:** More than two thirds of isiZulu speakers (70%) lived in KwaZulu Natal but they were also the largest group in Gauteng and the second largest in Mpumalanga. This group would be well provided for on SABC 5. The only real problem area was the Free State where some 140 000 Zulus resided.

- **SiSwati:** By far the majority of this group lived in Mpumalanga (81%) while 10% could be found in Gauteng. They would be well served by SABC 5 but a sizeable number of almost 58 000 (4.8%) resided in the Limpopo province where they would not get access.

- **Sepedi:** The Sepedi's were concentrated in the Limpopo Province (65.3%) and 22.5% were in Gauteng. Almost 88% of this group would be able to have access to their own service on SABC4. Since the Sepedi's were one of the larger language groups, the remaining 12% might seem low in a percentage figure, but it was still quite substantial in terms of numbers. Close to 340 000 resided in Mpumalanga (8%) and 153 000 in North West. Almost half a million people of this group could therefore not receive a service.

- **Sesotho:** The Free State was the home base of the Sesotho's (49%) with Gauteng a good second at 32.6%. More than 80% of this group would be able to tune into SABC4. As in the case of the Sepedi's quite a number would fall outside the service area of the channel with the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the North West housing more than a hundred thousand of this group each (more than 13%).

- **Setswana:** The figures for the Tswana's were very similar to those of the Sepedi's. Some 2.4 million of this group lived in the traditional base of the North West Province (65.2%) and another fifth in Gauteng. Large numbers also lived in the Northern Cape, Free State and Limpopo. All of these provinces were part of the footprint of SABC4. Very few Tswana's would be excluded from their service.

- **Tshivenda:** The Venda people were the second smallest group and probably the most marginalised because of the remoteness of their traditional home base in the far northern Limpopo Province. In addition their language was not really part of any of the other language families. Few other people could speak or even understand Tshivenda. They were conveniently grouped together with the Sesotho languages. This was done more on the basis of geographical considerations. Eighty two percent of the one million Venda's lived in the Limpopo Province and 15% in Gauteng. They would be well covered by SABC 4.

- **Xitsonga:** Although the number of Tsonga's was almost double that of the Venda's, they were also one of the smaller and more marginalised groups. Some 60% or just over a million lived in the Limpopo Province and almost another quarter in Gauteng. One hundred and seventy three thousand could be found in the North West Province and would also be served by SABC 4. The problem might be to reach the 118 000 residing in Mpumalanga. As with the Venda's they were also not really related to any of the other languages and qualified more on the basis of geographical location (the far north east of Limpopo) for inclusion on SABC 4. The challenge in relation to both these groups would be to develop the production capacity and material to serve them and to provide the network capacity for people to have access in the remote areas where they lived.

The SABC made the specific point that it would "weight" broadcasting towards the marginalised languages of Xitsonga and Tshivenda on SABC 4 and isiNdebele and SiSwati on SABC 5 (SABC, 2003a:25). It was an indication that the SABC would endeavour to make special efforts to accommodate these languages. In effect it meant greater time allocation to these languages in the broadcasting schedule – as will be seen in the discussion on programming. The news "offerings" to marginalised languages could be longer and more appropriately scheduled on the new channels than had been possible on other SABC channels (SABC, 2003b:26). Below it can be seen that the marginalised languages had strong demand for programming in their languages (Fig 14).
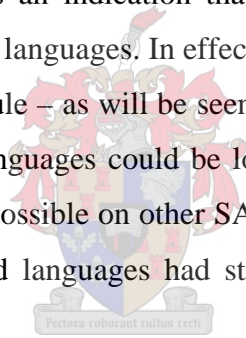
⇑ **= above average demand for programming in home language on television**

Afrikaans	isiNdebele	Pedi	Sesotho	SiSwati	Xitsonga	Setswana	Thsivenda	isiXhosa	isiZulu
⇑	⇑			⇑	⇑		⇑		
61%	60%	48%	41%	60%	64%	44%	69%	46%	39%

Fig 14 (SABC, 2003b:117)

In the demarcation of the geographical areas of the channels the SABC had also taken into account where the access and penetration was lowest. It undertook to increase coverage in those areas, funding permitting (SABC, 2003b:22). In addition it would make use of multi-lingual broadcasts, dubbing and subtitling to enhance delivery in languages other than English, where "appropriate and acceptable" (SABC, 2003b:26). Language comprehension and usage across the regions would be guiding indicators. SABC research indicated that many non-English viewers enjoyed multi-lingual local productions (SABC, 2003b:26). This statement was not further

substantiated. As far as the author could establish, no research was conducted to determine what viewers would consider as "appropriate and acceptable" in the use of dubbing and subtitling.

The problem with subtitling was that it had no value for people who were illiterate. Unfortunately the two provinces where the four most marginalised languages could be found also had the highest levels of people above 20 with no formal education. Limpopo at 33.4% was the highest followed by Mpumalanga with 27.5%. In both provinces it was higher than the national average (18%). Countrywide black Africans had the least formal education: 22.3% (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Consequently one could argue that many people from the four marginalised languages would not benefit from subtitling.

The SABC noted that the distribution of languages (and therefore people) was subject to "shift" (SABC, 2003b:22). According to Statistics South Africa the highest population growth rates (Fig 15) from the census in 1996 up to 2001 were in Gauteng (20.3%) and the Western Cape (14.3%). This was in part due to migration from the more rural provinces to urban areas (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The Eastern Cape had the lowest population growth rate. A logical conclusion was that many Xhosa people migrated towards the Western Cape. Although this might have changed the internal population sizes within the provinces in relation to each other, this migration would not influence the geographical spread of SABC5 as the two provinces were both part of the same channel anyway. Apart from any other consideration, this could even be helpful to the SABC as it was much easier to provide services in more developed urban areas with established infrastructure. Likewise, no migrations to Gauteng by whatever language speakers would affect the effectiveness of either channel to reach targeted languages as all services to all languages would be available in the province.

Province	1996	2001	% growth
Eastern Cape	6 302 525	6 436 763	2.1
Free State	2 633 504	2706 775	2.8
Gauteng	7348 423	8837 178	20.3
KwaZulu-Natal	8 417 021	9 426 017	12.0
Limpopo	4 929 368	5 273 642	7.0
Mpumalanga	2 800 711	3 122 990	11.5
Northern Cape	840 321	822 727	-2.1
North West	3 354 825	3 669 349	9.4
Western Cape	3 956 875	4 524355	14.3
South Africa	40 583 573	44 819 778	10.4

Fig 15   (Statistics South Africa, 2001)

Throughout the application submission, it was clear that the SABC had been under no illusion about the seriousness of the mandate for the public broadcaster to deliver on language obligations to all the official groups in South Africa. But as will be seen under the technical, human resources and finance points, there were serious constraints. Although the principle of universal access was accepted, practical circumstances complicated implementation despite the best intentions.

7.6 Programming and Scheduling

It was quite a difficult task determining *where* (geographically) to broadcast to and to *whom.* It might have been even more challenging to determine *what* should be broadcast and *when.* The SABC stated that programming was "one of the fundamental pillars" on which the regional services had to be built (SABC, 2003ba:13). As public broadcasters all over the world could testify, it was always difficult to balance programming between what was popular and what should be broadcast for the public good. It was an even greater challenge if the broadcaster also had to rely on commercial income, such as advertising. That was the position at the SABC. The corporation proposed that the funding of regional television should be supplemented with advertising. Another factor was the cost of the particular kind of programming required. Even if

the SABC had the best intentions to deliver a full scope of programming right from the start, the high cost of certain genres, such as local dramas, was limiting.

Given the above difficulties, the SABC proposed a phased approach to programming and scheduling. Some of the more expensive genres would only be offered later in the eight year license period. The broadcast hours in the schedule would also increase from an initial four hours to eight hours towards the end of the license period with the potential to increase to 24 hours in a second license period (SABC, 2003b:14). Full spectrum programming would therefore be achieved over time. This approach was identified as a key principle (SABC 2003b:25).

According to the SABC, the programming proposals submitted were the result of extensive own research, its experience of operating in the South African context and the experiences of other international broadcasters providing regional services (SABC 2003b:25)

7.6.1 Programming

The SABC suggested the two regional stations should initially offer news, information, children's and education programming. Later other genres such as music, sport and local dramas could be added. In a specific section on programming content, sport, current affairs and actuality were included in the proposed start-up line-up (SABC 2003b:25). These apparent differences could have been an oversight in the writing of the application. Yet, the inclusion of sport was realistic – depending on what kind of sport was reflected and how. The easiest and cheapest form of "sport offerings" was talk shows. If a minor sport anxious for exposure (such as amateur wrestling) was reflected, the cost would be low. The sport would probably not charge coverage fees and one or two manually operated field cameras could film it as the sport was confined to a small space. If the more popular sports, such as soccer, had to be covered, the cost would escalate enormously as television rights would have to be paid and the filming had to be done by several cameras attached to an outside broadcast unit. Current affairs and actuality programming could also be cheap if only interview and debate shows were offered.

In a more detailed submission to the board of the SABC on 2 December 2003, just a week before the applications were delivered to ICASA, it was stated that the regional channels would primarily provide news and information programming in the first two years. It would be language-based regional relevant programming. From year three onwards the genres of cultural, religion, children's and relevant entertainment programmes would be added to further develop and promote regional languages. This would also include development sport and local drama pilot programming. In years five to eight the approach would be the same, yet, four more hours

would be added to the six hours of the previous two year cycle. In a second licence period the broadcast hours might be extended beyond twelve hours. It might be made available on a satellite digital platform in order to reflect the regions to themselves and to the nation as a whole (SABC 2003b:27). This would of course only be of value to those with digital receiver equipment.

During the license period and beyond the approach would be to "weight" programming towards marginalised languages but all major languages in regions would be reflected. In all cases sub-titling would be used to enhance the widest accessibility (SABC 2003b:28) It was not stated in what language the sub-titling would be offered. For example: Would Sesotho programming be sub-titled in Tshivenda or in Xitsonga or both throughout the week? Or would the Sesotho group of languages be sub-titled with another language in the same group and Tshivenda and Xitsonga to each other? Although the intention was obviously good, implementation posed several challenges.

The corporation expressed willingness to have a more "aggressive" approach in its programme offering should the necessary funding be forthcoming (SABC 2003b:14). This would in essence mean that more time and a greater variety of genres could be accommodated. It was quite a logical argument but one could imagine that a point could be reached beyond which money would not be able to solve the problems. If the original material (such as dramas) and production capacity did not exist, it would simply not be possible to deliver sooner. To illustrate this, one only needed to ask: how many dramas suitable for television had been written in Tshivenda? And even if there were, were there enough to sustain programming material for a license period of eight years?

A language study done for the SABC in 2001 revealed a viewer preference for news, local drama, local sport and religion in local languages. The language preferences guided the corporation in determining the language approach and distribution within schedules (SABC 2003b:26).

The table below (Fig 16) rates the importance of international, South African, local and provincial news.

	Afrikaans	Ndebele	Pedi	Sesotho	SiSwati	Tsonga	Tswana	Venda	Xhosa	Zulu
International	38%	49%	60%	46%	53%	56%	61%	38%	43%	51%
South African	67%	96%	82%	74%	85%	88%	83%	100%	76%	79%
Local	65%	90%	78%	68%	88%	78%	77%	69%	78%	79%
Provincial	57%	82%	81%	69%	80%	75%	74%	58%	75%	76%

Fig 16   (SABC, 2003b:119)

This table clearly indicate a strong need for local news but also strong support for national or South African news. In most cases the need for provincial news was lower than the need for local news. Based on this information, one would conclude that viewers would watch regional television but would also continue to tune in to an existing channel to catch up with national stories.

It was stated as another key principle that "*many* of the ….genres would include *elements*... reflecting the regional nature of the services" (SABC 2003b:25). By using the words "many" (and not "all") and "elements" the SABC clearly demonstrated caution and kept the option open to broadcast material of a more national nature should the material or production capacities not be available to deliver comprehensive regional programming.

7.6.2 Scheduling

The corporation did not submit a detailed schedule as part of the public documentation. This was delivered separately to ICASA and in confidence.

As indicated before, the SABC proposed a phased approach to scheduling. It wanted to start with limited genres and broadcast time. This would increase over the license period of eight years and beyond. Part of the reasoning for this approach was that the first two years could be used as a period of capacity building in the regions to ensure that the necessary talent and skills could be developed. In this way relevant content could then be produced and sustained in the regions (SABC, 2003b:28). The corporation argued that language equitability would be secured by scheduling language blocks per day per channel, as can be seen in the two tables on the next two pages (Fig 17 and Fig 18).

SABC4 Draft Schedule. 4 hours. Years 1 and 2.

Key: Genre; Language; Additional information. CA = Current Affairs.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
18:00	News Sesotho/ Sepedi/ Setswana Subtitles Signing	News Sesotho/ Sepedi/ Setswana Subtitles Signing	News Sesotho/ Sepedi/ Setswana Subtitles Signing	News Sesotho/ Sepedi/ Setswana Subtitles Signing	News Afrikaans Subtitles Signing	News Sesotho/ Sepedi/ Setswana Subtitles Signing	News Afrikaans Subtitles Signing
18:30	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	Regional Spotlight Multi-lingual	Regional Spotlight Multi-lingual
19:00	News Tshivenda Subtitles	News Xitsonga Subtitles	News Tshivenda Subtitles	News Xitsonga Subtitles	News Tshivenda Subtitles	News Tshivenda/ Xitsonga Subtitles	News Xitsonga Subtitles
19:30	Religion Tshivenda	Religion Xitsonga	Religion Tshivenda	Religion Xitsonga	Religion Tshivenda	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	How to Multi-lingual
20:00	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Religion/ culture Multilingual
20:30	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Religion/ culture Multilingual
21:00	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual
21:30	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual

Fig 17   (SABC, 2003e)

SABC5 Draft Schedule. 4 hours. Years 1 and 2.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
18:00	News isiZulu/ isiXhosa Subtitles Signing	News isiZulu/ isiXhosa Subtitles Signing	News isiZulu/ isiXhosa Subtitles Signing	News isiZulu/ isiXhosa Subtitles Signing	News Afrikaans Subtitles Signing	News isiZulu/ isiXhosa Subtitles Signing	News summary Afrikaans Subtitles Signing
18:30	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	CA Multi-lingual	Regional Spotlight Multi-lingual	Regional Spotlight Multi-lingual
19:00	News siSwati Subtitles	News isiNdebele Subtitles	News siSwati Subtitles	News isiNdebele Subtitles	News siSwati Subtitles	News siSwati/ isiNdebele Subtitles	News Afrikaans Subtitles
19:30	Religion siSwati Subtitles	Religion isiNdebele Subtitles	Religion siSwati Subtitles	Religion isiNdebele Subtitles	Religion siSwati Subtitles	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	How to Multi-lingual
20:00	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Religion/ culture Multilingual
20:30	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Parliament/ Government Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Religion/ culture Multilingual
21:00	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Local culture/ music Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual
21:30	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual	Sport Multi-lingual

Fig 18   (SABC, 2003e)

The following observations can be made:

- The Sotho group of languages (Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana) were scheduled together in one news slot at 18:00 and so were isiXhosa and isiZulu. The underlying logic might have been that there would be a reasonable level of understanding among the viewer groups of the various languages on one channel. A Tswana person would for instance be able to understand Sepedi if the two languages together with Sesotho were presented in one news bulletin. It was not clear whether the Sesotho languages (or isiZulu and isiXhosa) would in fact be treated as a group in one time slot accommodating all in the same bulletin, or whether the languages would alternate from day to day – in which case it would be very difficult to be fair to all giving each major language equal time – especially on SABC4 where more languages would have to be accommodated.

  Yet, the same level of cross-understanding could not be presumed for the other

languages. Tshivenda and Xitsonga were distinctly different languages and each of them differed from the Sesotho languages, according to the regional manager of the SABC in Mafikeng who was born a Venda person (Molaudzi, 2006). Although isiNdebele was broadly speaking part of the Nguni group of languages, isiNdebele speakers could not follow the other languages that well and vice versa.

According to a study by the Pan South African Language Laboratory, as quoted by the SABC (see Fig 11), people speaking Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati and Xitsonga had a reasonable understanding of other African languages (above 20%). Tshivenda, Sepedi and isiXhosa speakers had little understanding of other African languages (only 13%). One could have doubts whether this was really true for isiXhosa speakers as they certainly did understand isiZulu (in most cases better than isiZulu speakers could understand isiXhosa). The figures nevertheless illustrated the point that Tshivenda speakers in particular would find it difficult to share broadcasts with others.

- It was indicated that all the news bulletins in all languages would be subtitled. While this might have been a good idea in principle to make the news more accessible, it is impractical – unless the news was pre-recorded well in advance to allow time for sub-titling. It was simply not possible to sub-title live broadcasts in real time. Sub-titling was a more practical option in religious programming provided for in the half hour block at 19:30. Yet, it was unclear why such programming on SABC5 would have sub-titling in the Nguni languages (where there was a fair level of cross-understanding) and not on SABC4 where Tshivenda and Xitsonga were less accessible languages to each other and to the Sesotho languages on the same channel.

- Afrikaans was only accommodated twice on SABC4 offering two 30 minute news bulletins – one on a Friday and one on a Sunday at 18:00. On SABC5 the same was provided for and an additional news bulletin on Sunday evenings at 19:00. This language was given such little scope that it could hardly be worthwhile. It also seemed rather strange that two Afrikaans news bulletins should follow each other on SABC5 in the Sunday schedule with only 30 minutes separating them. The scheduling of the 18:00 bulletin on Sundays on both channels could be a problem if the current broadcast of the Afrikaans news on SABC2 would be maintained in the same slot. It obviously limited the offering for Afrikaans viewers and the doubling

up did not make sense. All the Afrikaans bulletins would have sub-titling and/or signing but it was not stipulated in what languages this would happen.

- The SABC specifically pledged to weight programming towards the most marginalised languages: Xitsonga, Tshivenda, SiSwati and isiNdebele (SABC, 2003b:25). This was done by providing hour blocks in peak time from 19:00 to 20:00 on alternate days for the four languages on the respective channels. Because of the additional Afrikaans bulletin on SABC5, SiSwati and isiNdebele had less exposure than the other two marginalised languages. It was not clear why this had been done. It could have been to give Afrikaans more exposure on SABC5 given the larger concentration of Afrikaans speakers in the target area of the channel. On SABC5 SiSwati was given more exposure than isiNdebele. SiSwati received three news bulletins in the week and isiNdebele only two. They were accommodated together on a Saturday in a bilingual news bulletin. Again the reason for this was not clear. IsiNdebele as the smaller group was more marginalised and should arguably have been given more time. The same argument applied to the scheduling of religious programming on SABC5 at 19:30 to 20:00.

- On both channels provision was made for a current affairs multi-lingual programme from 18:30 to 19:00. Since six indigenous languages had to be accommodated on SABC4 and five on SABC5, the challenge was to give fair treatment to all. Even if it were possible to do so in theory, it would pose major staff requirements. It was not indicated what format the programmes would have. If the programmes had to consist of visual inserts on topical regional issues for the respective language groups, greater control could be exercised to give reasonable coverage to all languages. Yet, this was the more expensive option demanding more time and more producers and staff members. If the idea was to deliver discussion programmes, the issue of fairness to languages would be more difficult to address as such discussion demanded more time and thus less variety and options for other languages. Another problem would be to find polished presenters in all languages to lead such discussions.

- The scheduling of a multi-lingual hour each week evening in the peak time of 20:00 to 21:00 on both channels on parliamentary and government business seemed on the one hand rather excessive and on the other somewhat limited. First one had to take into account that parliaments nationally and provincially only sat for a limited

number of months in the year. In most cases nothing much happened from November to February. During this period many government departments also slowed down with a limited number of decision makers available to speak to the media. It would therefore be a challenge to fill the one hour slot in these "dead times".

This one hour slot had to provide for all the languages on both channels. It would be quite difficult in busy times to do justice to all languages. A practical example would illustrate the point: How would the provincial budget in the Limpopo Province be accommodated? Such a budget would affect millions of people of three prominent languages: Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. How would the time be divided to be fair to all? Will all be given the same news but just in their language? What service would be provided to other languages covered by the same channel but living in other provinces?

The SABC would also be faced with some delicate management and credibility issues – especially in the "government" slots. Since it had been legislated that the channels would be funded by government, it was just logical to suspect that government would also seek to exercise some control over content.

- Since the original intention to introduce regional television was, among other things, to "truly reflect the country's rich diversity" with programming that people found "interesting, relevant and enjoyable in the languages they chose" (SABC, 2003b:2), it appeared limited to have only one dedicated cultural programme on week nights on the schedules (21:00 to 21:30). In addition this programme was scheduled as multi-lingual. In one half hour it was hardly possible to give equitable service to all languages and to do justice to the marginalised languages.

- In the SABC's application it was stated that the initial schedule would focus on news, information, children's and education programming (SABC, 2003b:13). But in the schedules submitted very little provision was made for children's and educational programming. Educational programming could be interpreted very widely. Yet, the lack of provision for children in the *initial* schedules was quite obvious. This could be better provided for in programming earlier in the day. It was only scheduled in extended hours in later years.

- The last half hour of every week night was set aside for a multi-lingual sport programme. Over weekends this was an hour. Again the challenge would be to do justice to all the languages on the respective channels.

- There was no clear indication of how much English would feature on the channels. It would be logical to assume that most news bulletins and Current Affairs shows, as well as the Parliamentary/Government slots and Sport would include some English.

In the submission to the SABC Board an outline was given of the possible development of the schedule over the full license period of eight years and beyond, as indicated in Fig 18 below and Fig 19 on the next page.

Cornerstones Of Schedule

	Years 1 - 2	Years 3-4	Years 5-8	Years 8+
Hours of Broadcast	4 hours	6 hours	8 hours	12+ hours
Positioning	Broadcast provider of news and information programming, with a focus on regional content, in languages not fully serviced by SABC to date Differentials – language based and regional relevant programming	Broadcast provider of news, information, cultural programming and relevant local entertainment that will further develop and promote these languages and regions Differentials – language based and regional relevant programming	Broadcast provider of news, information, cultural programming and relevant local entertainment that will further develop and promote these languages and regions Differentials – language and regional programming	Broadcast provider of news, information, cultural programming and relevant local entertainment that will further develop and promote these languages and regions, **and reflect the regions to themselves and the nation** Differentials – language and regional Programming
Scope	Regional footprint	Regional footprint National ? (satellite)	Regional footprint National ? (satellite)	National footprint ? **Possible migration to DDT**
Editorial Line	Reflecting South Africa's linguistic and regional diversity	Reflecting South Africa's linguistic and regional diversity	Reflecting South Africa's linguistic and regional diversity	Reflecting South Africa's linguistic and regional diversity
Programming Approach	Programming that informs, reflects and develops the target audience	Programming that informs, reflects and develops the target audience	Programming that informs, entertains, reflects and develops the target audience	Programming that informs, entertains, reflects and develops the target audience and showcases this to the regions and beyond

27

Fig 19   (SABC, 2003b:27)

	Years 1 - 2	Years 3-4	Years 5-8	Years 8+
Hours of Broadcast	4 hours	6 hours	8 hours	12+ hours
Genres	Primarily news and current affairs Regional news focus	Inclusion of entertainment, regional/development sport, local drama pilot Regional news focus	Inclusion of entertainment, regional/development sport, local drama Regional news focus	**Broad spectrum** (in line with public service broadcasting)
Approach to Language	Weighted towards marginalised languages, but with major regional languages Subtitling for widest accessibility	Weighted towards marginalised languages, but with major regional languages Subtitling for widest accessibility	Weighted towards marginalised languages, but with major regional languages Subtitling for widest accessibility	Weighted towards marginalised languages, but with major regional languages Subtitling for widest accessibility **Technological developments could assist in language delivery**
Mandate	News, information Language delivery Regional content	News, information Language delivery Regional content Drama development Religion Children	News, information delivery language Regional content Local drama Religion Children	News, information delivery language Regional content Local drama Religion Children

28

Fig 20   (SABC, 2003b:28)

In the last row in Fig 20 under the heading "Mandate" one could see how the development of the schedule would take place in years three to four and then from years five to eight. In the second phase pilot dramas and children's programmes would be added while local language dramas would be established as integrally part of the schedule in the third phase from year five onwards.

Following are the draft schedules of the two channels (all from the same source: SABC, 2003e) from years five to eight (Fig 21, 22,23and 24):

SABC 4 DRAFT SCHEDULE 8 HOURS.
YEARS 5 - 8

	GENRE	LANGUAGE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	DATE & TIME
		LOC - Locally Originated Content	RS - Region Specific	
	® - Repeat			

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
14H00 - 14H30	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Tsongo	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Venda	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Afrikaans
14H30 - 15H00	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Venda	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Tsongo	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Afrikaans	Venda	Tsongo
15H00 - 15H30	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Tsongo	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Venda	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
15H30 - 16H00	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
16H00 - 16H30	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
16H30 - 17H00	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
17H00 - 17H30	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Afrikaans
17H30 - 18H00	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Tsongo	Sotho / Pedi / Tswana	Venda	Afrikaans	Venda	Tsongo
	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS

Fig 21

SABC 4 DRAFT SCHEDULE 8 HOURS. YEARS 5 - 8

GENRE	LANGUAGE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	DATE & TIME
® - Repeat	LOC - Locally Originated Content	RS - Region Specific	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
18H00 - 18H30	NEWS	NEWS	NEWS	NEWS	NEWS	NEWS	NEWS
	Venda	Tsonga	Venda	Tsonga	Venda	15 min -Venda; 15 min Tsonga	Tsonga
	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS
18H30 - 19H00	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - SOCIAL	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT – SOCIAL	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS
	Multi Language - Tswana anchor	Multi Language - Tsonga anchor	Multi Language - Shoto / Pedi anchor	Multi Language - Afrikaans anchor	Multi Language - Venda anchor	Multi Language	Multi Language
	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS
19H00 - 19H30	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA	PILOT SLOT - MUSIC	PILOT SLOT – MUSIC	RELIGION / CULTURE
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	
19H30 - 20H00	RELIGION	RELIGION	RELIGION	RELIGION	RELIGION / CULTURE	RELIGION / CULTURE	RELIGION / CULTURE
	Sotho /Pedi /Tswana	Tsonga	Sotho /Pedi /Tswana	Afrikaans	Venda	Multi Language	Multi Language
20H00 - 20H30	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	DOCUMENTARY
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Alternative: Venda / Tsonga
020H30 - 21H00	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT	DOCUMENTARY
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Alternative: Venda / Tsonga
21H00 - 21H30	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	DOCUMENTARY
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Sotho / Venda / Pedi
21H30 - 22H00	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	DOCUMENTARY
							Afrikaans

Fig 22

SABC 5 DRAFT SCHEDULE 8 HOURS. YEARS 5 - 8

GENRE	LANGUAGE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	DATE & TIME
® - Repeat	LOC - Locally Originated Content	RS - Region Specific	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
14H00 - 14H30	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Zulu / Xhosa	Siswati	Zulu / Xhosa	Ndebele	Zulu / Xhosa	Zulu / Xhosa	Afrikaans
14H30 - 15H00	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN ®	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	CHILDREN WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Ndebele	Zulu / Xhosa	Siswati	Zulu / Xhosa	Afrikaans	Siswati	Ndebela
15H00 - 15H30	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT -YOUTH	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Zulu /Xhosa	Siswati	Zulu / Xhosa	Zulu / Xhosa	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
15H30 - 16H00	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT - REGIONAL DEVELPOEMENT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
16H00 - 16H30	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT - REGIONAL DEVELPOEMENT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
16H30 - 17H00	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	SCHOOL EDUCATION	PARLIMENTARY / GOVERNMENT	SPORT - REGIONAL DEVELPOEMENT	PILOT DRAMA ® BLOCK
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language
17H00 - 17H30	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	YOUNG ADULT ENTERTAINMENT	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Multi Language	Zulu / Xhosa	Afrikaans
17H30 - 18H00	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	LOCAL TALK / HOW TO	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS	TALK WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
	Zulu / Xhosa	Siswati	Zulu / Xhosa	Ndebela	Afrikaans	Siswati	Ndebela
	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS	LOC / RS

Fig 23

SABC 5 DRAFT SCHEDULE 8 HOURS. YEARS 5 – 8

GENRE	LANGUAGE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	DATE & TIME
® - Repeat	LOC - Locally Originated Content	RS - Region Specific	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
18H00 - 18H30	NEWS / Ndebela / LOC / RS	NEWS / Siswati / LOC / RS	NEWS / Ndebela / LOC / RS	NEWS / Siswati / LOC / RS	NEWS / Ndebela / LOC / RS	NEWS / 15 min Ndebela; 15 min Siswati / LOC / RS	NEWS / Siswati / LOC / RS
18H30 - 19H00	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS / Multi Language - Xhosa anchor / LOC / RS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS / Multi Language - Zulu anchor / LOC / RS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS / Multi Language - Ndebela anchor / LOC / RS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS / Multi Language - Afrikaans anchor / LOC / RS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - SOCIAL / Multi Language - Venda anchor / LOC / RS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - SOCIAL / Multi Language / LOC / RS	REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT - CURRENT AFFAIRS / Multi Language / LOC / RS
19H00 - 19H30	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA / Multi Language / LOC / RS	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA / Multi Language / LOC / RS	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA / Multi Language / LOC / RS	PILOT SLOT - LOCAL DRAMA / Multi Language / LOC / RS	PILOT SLOT - MUSIC / Multi Language / LOC / RS	PILOT SLOT - MUSIC / Multi Language / LOC / RS	RELIGION / CULTURE / Multi Language
19H30 - 20H00	RELIGION / Xhosa	RELIGION / Zulu	RELIGION / Ndebela	RELIGION / Siswati	RELIGION / CULTURE / Afrikaans	RELIGION / CULTURE / Multi Language	RELIGION / CULTURE / Multi Language
20H00 - 20H30	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	DOCUMENTARY / Ndebela
020H30 - 21H00	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	PARLIAMENTRY - GOVERNMENT SPOTLIGHT / Multi Language	DOCUMENTARY / Siswati
21H00 - 21H30	REGIONAL SPORT / Multi Language	REGIONAL SPORT / Multi Language	REGIONAL SPORT / Multi Language	REGIONAL SPORT / Multi Language	REGIONAL SPORT / Multi Language	REGIONAL SPORT / Multi Language	DOCUMENTARY / Zulu / Xhosa
21H30 - 22H00	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	REGIONAL SPORT	DOCUMENTARY / Afrikaans

Fig 24 (SABC, 2003e)

The following observations could be made:

- Children and youth programming were well provided for in the afternoon schedules on weekdays (except Fridays).

- It seems illogical that the language patterns established in the first two years were not sustained. Had it been sustained, predictability would have been maintained as well as viewing patterns. This in turn would limit confusion. In the first schedule of SABC4 special provision had been made for the marginalised language Tshivenda on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In the extended schedule Tshivenda received only two half hour slots on a Monday – a repeat children's programme from 14:30 to 15:00 and the news at six. On Wednesday Tshivenda was only allocated the slot at six for the news while Xitsonga received an additional children's slot to the six language specific slots allocated to it on Tuesdays. On Thursdays Tshivenda had another showing with three afternoon slots. It meant that Venda children and adults had to establish different viewing patterns. It is unclear why Xitsonga had to be favoured above Tshivenda in this manner as the latter was the more marginalised of the two – in numbers and in the ability to understand other languages as indicated before.

- On SABC5 the scheduling patterns of the marginalised languages SiSwati and isiNdebele were switched with isiNdebele getting the lions share – especially on Mondays and Wednesdays. In a positive sense one could observe that isiNdebele was the more marginalised of the two. The language could therefore be favoured somewhat more but it would have made more sense to have done it at the expense of the stronger languages.

- On both channels the weekday evening slots for government/parliamentary business in prime time between 20:00 and 21:00 were retained. Rather surprisingly additional slots were added between 15:00 and 17:00 on Friday afternoons and from 20:00 to 21:00. on Saturday evenings. One could hardly imagine that younger viewers would have an appetite for such material on Friday afternoons and adults on Saturday evenings.

- Given the SABC's promise to broadcast local drama in the later phases of RTV the provision of only one slot per evening from Monday to Thursday seemed limited. In addition these slots would be multi-lingual without specific provision for especially the marginalised languages.

- In the schedules of the first phase, eight slots of 30 minutes each were provided for local culture/music. This was reduced to two in the extended service of eight hours.

- As in the schedule of phase one, Afrikaans received only a few slots. In the first schedule Afrikaans received two half hour slots on SABC4 and three on SABC5 – all on Fridays and Sundays. In the phase three schedules, Afrikaans was allocated seven thirty minute slots on both channels. On SABC4 six of the slots were on Fridays and Sundays but the seventh on a Thursday. Yet, this programme was identified as a multi-lingual programme with an Afrikaans anchor. The same programme on the SABC5 schedule was allocated a Friday spot. On this channel all the Afrikaans programmes were therefore on either the Friday or Sunday. No original Afrikaans children's programmes were scheduled. One (on Fridays at 14:30) was identified as a repeat while the Sunday programme at 14:00 was specified as a highlights programme of the week (but no programmes had been scheduled to extract the highlights from). No news slot was allocated to Afrikaans.

- It was never explained what mechanism would be in place to ensure that the many scheduled multi-lingual programmes would provide equitable treatment to the various languages. Neither was it indicated how much content would be in English.

- It was not explained what would happen with the "dead time" after broadcast at 22:00 and before broadcast started again at 14:00.

It was no doubt a mammoth and most difficult task to plan the scheduling in such a way that all languages received a reasonable deal while also providing for a progressive spread and development of genres through the license period of eight years. One also understands that the scheduling was merely a preliminary exercise to give some indication of how good intentions might be realised in practice. Yet, as indicated in the observations above, many troubling questions could be asked. Should the financing of RTV be resolved, more serious planning of schedules would have to follow.

7.7 Human Capital

Broadcasting is a people's business. It is done by people, mainly about people and for people. This is common sense but it made an impression on the author several years ago. During a visit to a regional television station in the United States, the manager of the station made this point. He proceeded to say that the success of a television station depended on good people and good equipment. This approach was implemented in practice at the station. It was situated in an old warehouse on the outskirts of town but the equipment was modern, cutting edge and the staff

multi-skilled and professional. This story illustrates why human capital is so important for the success of RTV in South Africa.

One of the first points made by the SABC in its application was that the growth of the ICT sector in the country had outstripped the supply of skills. This impediment was even more serious in the regions where it would take some time to develop the necessary skills. The anticipated cost of training would be so high that the SABC did not want to carry the responsibility on its own (SABC, 2003b:14). It argued that the development of such skills should be part of an official industrial strategy (SABC, 2003b:24). The corporation estimated that it would take at least six months to recruit the necessary additional staff for the stations (SABC, 2003b:18). Training would then have to follow.

The original assumption was that RTV could be on air in the current (2006/2007) financial year (SABC, 2003b:43). Should everything fall into place in the near future, the earliest switch on can only be expected by 2008/2009 (this will be explained in greater detail in the technology section below). In a recent study by a global information and technology company IDC, it was found that demand for people with ICT skills in South Africa would exceed supply by 24% or 113 900 jobs in 2009 (Mokopanele, 2006). It was suggested that the government should help to establish a new academy to train such professionals. Although there was no specific reference to the broadcasting industry, one could safely assume that the shortfall would be in the same order or even worse. As the SABC rightly argued, television staff had to have creative, production and other skills in addition to technical skills (SABC, 2003b:45).

Apart from the news department, the SABC had no internal production capacity. It contributed some one billion rand per annum to the local industry, but mainly in Gauteng and the Western Cape (SABC, 2003b:24). Those were also the main centres for the other television stations M-Net and etv. The only other centre where some development did take place was in Mafikeng where the old Bop TV had been. After the closure of the station three years ago, most of the skilled staff left and the previously modern equipment fell in disuse. It was obvious that a major training programme had to be initiated to develop skills in most regions, but especially in Limpopo and Mpumalanga where the minority languages Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele and siSwati were spoken. These languages were not even well presented on existing SABC channels and the skills shortage was thus even more severe.

In an interview with the author, a manager in the SABC's Content Enterprises department (where productions from outside producers were commissioned), Kamscilla Naidoo, said it was

very difficult to source programming that *originated* in the various indigenous languages of South Africa. In terms of the language requirements of the SABC, it was simply not good enough to translate existing material from English to another language such as Xitsonga. Such material would not reflect the communities it reached. In addition it was a struggle to find indigenous writers who had the skills to adapt original indigenous literary works to television dialogue scripts. She said the SABC had not done the necessary training in the past to develop producers in indigenous communities. Before 1999 some 70% of the schedules of the SABC television channels were provided by only 12 outside companies. The figure had since been increased to more than a hundred (Naidoo, 2006).

Naidoo said the SABC was about to appoint a development officer to accelerate the producing skills in indigenous languages. Some training initiatives had already been undertaken with funding from local and international institutions. Recently the staff of an outside company that had been awarded a contract for a local drama received training over eight months to prepare them for production. Naidoo said it would take at least three years before the SABC would be in a position to acquire local dramas and soapies in indigenous languages to be included in the schedules of regional television channels (Naidoo, 2006).

Since the regional channels had to reflect the indigenous cultures in their languages, it followed that virtually all the material had to be originally produced. In its applications for RTV, the SABC committed itself to broadcast a maximum of 30% of the programming in English (SABC, 2003b:26). Very little of the material could therefore be imported from abroad or simply lifted from other SABC channels. This meant that a full complement of skills was needed to produce such original material. From personal experience the author knows, as logic would tell one, that it was very difficult for a urban based Afrikaans/English (or even other language speakers) person to produce a programme about deep rural indigenous communities. One could simply not do justice to them and their cultures. Although the corporation also envisaged making use of subtitling and dubbing (to promote multi-lingualism and to provide for the deaf) such production processes also required specialised skills (SABC, 2003b:26).

One of the aims stated by the SABC in its application for regional television was that it had the potential to "create economic, training and development opportunities outside of the traditional hubs of television content development and delivery" (SABC, 2003b:5). The "traditional" hubs were Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The SABC did not specify any specific centres that would become additional hubs, but since the regional services had to reflect cultural diversity (SABC, 2003b:10), it was just logical that other provinces had to develop

stronger television industries over time. This development would not only happen because of the direct employment of SABC staff to manage the channels but also as a result of contracts given to private companies in the regions to deliver programming content. A strong set of independent regional production teams had to be developed (SABC, 2003b:46).

The SABC suggested two main manufacturing bases – one each for the respective channels. Without specifically specifying these centres as a fait accompli, Cape Town and Mafikeng were mentioned as possible locations. All other regional existing SABC offices in the provinces would be contribution centres (SABC, 2003b:48).While Cape Town was already well developed as a production centre, the Mafikeng base (the old BOP TV facilities) had to be upgraded substantially and many new fulltime staff appointed. In the other centres some of the supporting functions (human resource management, finance etc.) could be shared, but additional staff also had to be recruited (SABC, 2003b:46). In the regions strong creative and commissioning elements had to be established while managerial functions could be centralised. As the schedule expanded from year five, the structure could be more decentralised (SABC, 2003b:52). It was estimated that at least 100 full time employees had to be recruited for the two channels (SABC, 2003b:51).

The organogram (Fig 25) below indicates the managerial and staffing requirements:
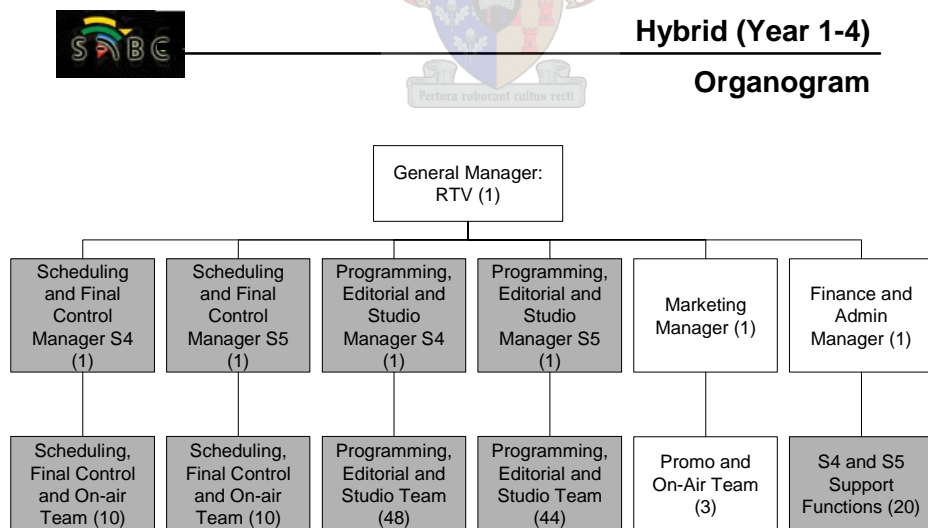
.

Fig 25   (SABC, 2003b:53)

In the submission to the Board of the SABC (SABC, 2003d:40) more details were given (Fig 26 below):

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SABC 4								
Total Headcount		71.1	72.1	72.1	83.1	83.1	83.1	83.1
Channel Manager		0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Marketing Manager		0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Promo and On-Air Personnel		1.5	1.5	1.5	2	2	2	2
Finance and Administration Manager		0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Support Personnel		10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Programming, Editorial and Studio Manager		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Programming, Editorial and Studio Personnel		46	47	47	48	48	48	48
Scheduling and FC Manager		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Scheduling Personnel		10.1	10.1	10.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1
SABC 5								
Total Headcount		67.1	68.1	68.1	79.1	79.1	79.1	79.1
Channel Manager		0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Marketing Manager		0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Promo and On-Air Personnel		1.5	1.5	1.5	2	2	2	2
Finance and Administration Manager		0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1
Support Personnel		10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Programming, Editorial and Studio Manager		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Programming, Editorial and Studio Personnel		42	43	43	44	44	44	44
Scheduling and FC Manager		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Scheduling Personnel		10.1	10.1	10.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1

The SABC noted that while *some* existing staff in *some* regions could be "leveraged" to run the services, most would have to be newly recruited (SABC, 2003b:51). This was done in the news department at the time when the regional window broadcasts had been on air. Judging on several discussions the researcher had at the time and afterwards with journalists in the regions, it was clear that work done by a person for the regional window could not simply be duplicated for national, as the focus was different. The journalists had to work extra hard and long hours to satisfy the needs of two different news bulletins: nationally and regionally. It was also difficult to always find a reporter for each and every language group that could understand the cultural needs and sensitivities of each. Technical equipment such as editing facilities and camera kits were always overbooked. In the end the journalists could not do justice to either the regional or national services.

Based on this experience it seemed that the staff allocations in Fig 25 were quite conservative. If one would only concentrate on the needs of the news bulletins of SABC4, this could be illustrated. News had to be delivered by full time employees and could not be outsourced to independent people.

In the proposal SABC4 had to service six languages – Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana and Afrikaans. Given the wide area serviced by the station and the fact that all languages had significant percentages of the population living in urban areas, it would make sense to have at least two reporters for each language based in different locations. Although technical equipment and services could be shared, it was fair to assume that at least six camerapersons and six video editors had to be appointed. This would already total 24 persons in the direct news gathering effort without any provision for desk writers and other technical staff in the studio etc. In addition current affairs would need a similar staff complement.

In its submission the SABC alluded to managerial difficulties in running such a diverse station delivering over such a wide area. It proposed an initial centralised management structure that would be decentralised over time (SABC, 2003b:52).

The SABC proposed a two phased training campaign. The first would be an intensive process before the launch of the channels and the second an on-going, sustained project thereafter to further develop and enhance skills. Phase one would be conducted by a dedicated team while the other would be done by rotating staff from existing channels (SABC, 2003b:54). Considering the skills shortages mentioned earlier, the training process would be of vital importance and might take more effort and staff than anticipated. It was doubtful whether the

SABC would have the necessary existing skilled staff in each language to embark on such an extensive training programme. Yet, it was clear that training would be a major challenge, time consuming, intensive and costly.

7.8. Technology

Broadcasters all over the world today faced serious challenges to stay abreast with technological developments. Apart from the consideration of the equipment that must be used to produce material, it was imperative to find the right kind of distribution system in order to broadcast the material to as many people as possible in the designated target area. Worldwide the trend was towards digital systems in the increasing convergent telecommunications sector. This was also a process prescribed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) of which South Africa was a member.

Planning for the switch-over from analogue to digital broadcasting systems had been in progress for a number of years. At an ITU conference in Geneva, Switzerland on 16 June 2006, members eventually agreed to a target date of 2015 for this to happen. It was hailed by the ITU as a "landmark towards establishing a more equitable, just and people-centred information society" (ITU, 2006). Countries agreed there should be some flexibility to allow less developed countries to make the transition. That was the position South Africa also faced.

The choice made by the SABC in 2003 was to deliver regional television by way of the analogue terrestrial system to viewers. This technology had been in place for the past 45 years but was still considered to be the cheapest and most established platform to deliver services to the end user (SABC,2003b:33). Although the signal would reach viewers via analogue, the SABC would invest internally, at high cost, in digital technology for existing and the proposed regional services (SABC, 2003b:31).

It was envisaged that existing Sentech transmitter high sites would be used where frequencies could be allocated to carry the signals. The roll-out period was estimated at 18 months to deliver signals to 77% of the surface area, starting with the outer regions. (This approach was later re-considered and will be discussed in the next chapter). The roll-out would be extended over the eight year license period to reach the 90% (now 92%) of SABC2's footprint. The corporation undertook to extend services to those areas where penetration, access and viewership were lower and even to areas not covered by existing services. These areas included parts of the Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. Yet it warned that such extensions would be "highly expensive" involving a lengthy

process. Experience has taught the SABC that sight identification, town planning and the process of getting an environmental impact study done and approved for the erection of a new transmitter could take up to three years (SABC, 2003b:50). The corporation was therefore careful to link the extension of the network to the availability of funds (SABC, 2003b:43). Nevertheless, using the existing analogue terrestrial transmission network would save the SABC money and the roll out would be fairly rapid. The SABC estimated the roll-out costs at some R50 million per annum (SABC, 2003b:41).

The (abridged) table below (Fig 27) gave perspective on the relative cost of signal distribution to outer and urban areas. Not only did the physical costs of erecting transmitters in deep rural areas cost more (because of lack of infrastructure etc.) but the unit cost per capita of population was also considerably higher – especially in sparsely populated areas.

Name	Province	Transmitter p.a. cost	Population	Cost per viewer
Pretoria	Gauteng	791 268	5 432 673	0.15
Nylstroom	Limpopo	137 856	18 003	7.66
Cape Town	Western Cape	351 084	2 067 141	0.17
Aurora	Western Cape	42 552	6 913	6.16
Bloemfontein	Free State	791 268	621 936	1.27
Upington	Northern Cape	791 268	77 047	10.27
Durban	KwaZulu-Natal	178 644	803 550	0.22

Fig 27   (SABC, 2003b:127)

The table indicated that the per unit cost per person in Cape Town was 17 cents for more than two million people. It was considerably lower than the R6.16 per person for the 6 913 people living in the Aurora area or the R10.27 for the 77 047 people living in the Upington region.

 The two alternative distributions systems considered by the SABC came with additional costs for the viewer. For both Digital Terrestrial Television (DTTV) and digital satellite delivery (DTH – Direct To Home) the viewer would have to pay an estimated R750 for the decoder, plus the cost of aerials/dishes and installation of some R1 150 (R1 900 in total). It was clear that few citizens in the predominantly poorer rural areas (where the majority of the under-serviced

language groups lived) would be able to afford a receiver box and the other additional costs. If the SABC had to subsidise the receivers, the cost would be an estimated R4.2 billion. The costs are reflected in the table below (Fig 28):

LSM	Population Total	Average Income pm	Total TV Sets	Rand Cost
10	1445000	R 15 931	585 832	R216,750,000.00
9	1759000	R 10 731	674 436	R263,850,000.00
8	1729000	R 8 053	630 761	R259,350,000.00
7	1865000	R 5 859	642 996	R279,750,000.00
6	3709000	R 3 897	1 210 062	R556,350,000.00
5	3660000	R 2 421	1 095 174	R549,000,000.00
4	4135000	R 1 724	1 031 742	R620,250,000.00
3	4160000	R 1 318	704 346	R624,000,000.00
2	4114000	R 1 075	368 352	R617,100,000.00
1	3006000	R 832	30 492	R450,900,000.00
	28137000	Total	6 974 193	R 4,220,550,000.00

Exchange rate assumed at R7.50 / $, based on AMPS 2002B

Fig 28   (SABC, 2003b:39)

The above table indicated that few of the 19 million viewers in the LSM categories five and below would be able to afford such costs of receivers, dishes and installation. The corporation discussed the digital options quite extensively, but the main argument against it was affordable access for the end user. The great advantage of the satellite option was that every single person in the country would immediately be able to have access to the station and

language of choice irrespective of where s/he lived. For instance a Venda person in Cape Town would have access to the service even if s/he was the only Venda person in the city. Although the implementation costs for the SABC would be very low, the cost to end users would be prohibitively high (SABC, 2003b:40). Satellite distribution costs would be R3.6 million per channel whereas the fee paid to Sentech for terrestrial analogue distribution for SABC2 was R76 million (SABC, 2003b:36). Implications of this point will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

As the SABC pointed out, the average viewer was neutral to the technology platform (SABC, 2003b:40) and cared more about the content. For such an average viewer the more sophisticated multi-functional digital platforms had little relevance. A digital service would therefore add very little value. And if it came at a heavy price, it would not be accepted. Even if the platform could be delivered without additional cost to the end user, considerable sums would have to be spent on marketing and education to familiarize the viewer to the system.

Considering all the arguments, the SABC followed the logical option to suggest an analogue service. Yet, the lapse of time and subsequent developments such as the advancement of technology, the decision by the International Telecommunications Union that analogue services should be phased out, and South Africa's obligations as host of the 2010 Soccer World Cup (to deliver digital broadcast services) might have changed the picture somewhat. More about that later.
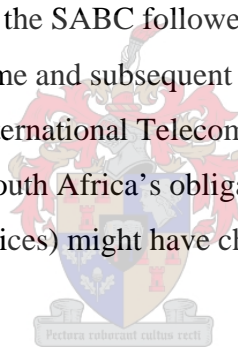
7.9 Financial Implications

7.9.1 Introduction

There can be no doubt that the funding of regional television will be the single most challenging factor. Already on the first page of the Preamble of its application, the SABC started to allude to this fact (SABC, 2003b:2).

It then went on to say:

"With a secure public funding base, the public regional television services [would] be key to the SABC's continued and enhanced delivery of its public service mandate" (SABC, 2003b:3).

It also reminded ICASA from the outset of the "significant" fact that section 22A of the Broadcasting Act stipulated that such services had to be financed by money appropriated by Parliament, in addition to revenue from grants, sponsorships, donations and possible advertising income as determined by ICASA (SABC, 2003ba:3).

Again in the second paragraph of the Executive Summary of its application, the SABC remarked how limited funding had constrained the corporation's ability to deliver on the existing mandate (SABC, 2003b:9). It also referred to the statement in the Triple Inquiry Report that the financial viability of the SABC had to be protected to ensure sustainable mandate delivery (SABC, 2003b:11).

After the introduction of these cautionary notes, the SABC then developed its proposals for RTV while regularly referring to the financial realities that could compromise it.

7.9.2 Language

The first issue was the reference to the use of language. The SABC envisaged that it could deliver 70% of programming in indigenous languages from the launch of RTV. But since most programming originated in English, it warned that it would take time and investment to develop original material in other languages (SABC, 2003b:13). Because of this development process and financial constraints, the SABC suggested a phased approach to scheduling, starting with four hours and gradually increasing to eight hours over the license period of eight years. It made the point that a more "aggressive" approach could be followed if the funding would be forthcoming (SABC, 2003b:14).

7.9.3 Fragmentation

Apart from the concern about the funding source for regional television, the SABC was also worried about the possible effect of such channels on the existing services of the corporation. Since the regional channels would broadcast in prime time, it was just logical to assume that every viewer gained by regional television might well be a loss to one of the other services of the SABC. The corporation's market analysis indicated audiences would be fragmented with the introduction of RTV with a possible consequential revenue loss to existing channels (SABC, 2003a:14). The SABC was already worried about the gradual loss of audience share from commercial competitors – as could be seen in the table on the next page (Fig 29):
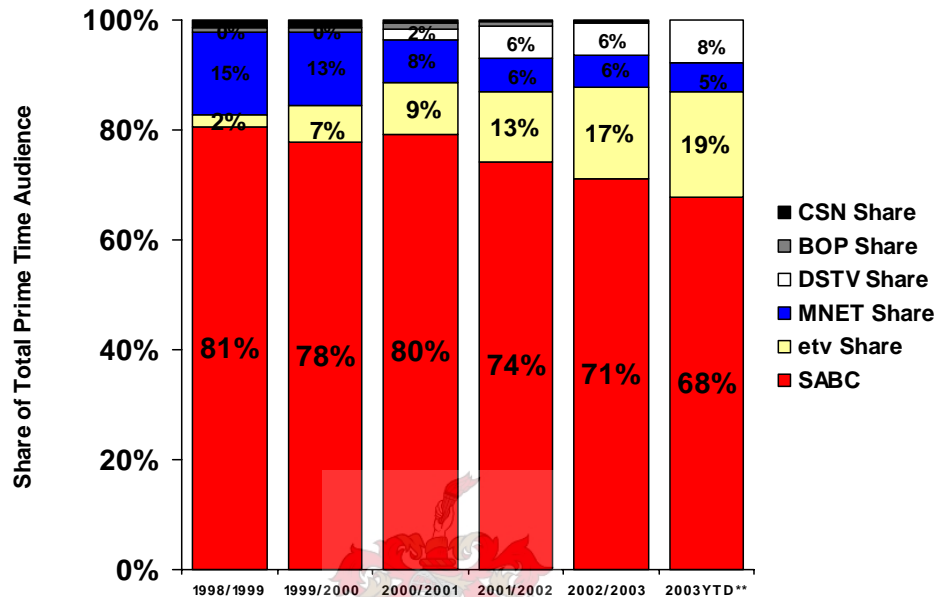
Note; * Prime time: 18:00-22:00 ave Mon-Fri, **Year to 5 Oct 2003, Time Period is SABC Financial Year
Source: TAMS

Fig 29   (SABC, 2003b:105)

In submissions to the Board of the SABC on 12 November 2003 and again on 2 December 2003 the concern about possible fragmentation of the viewers were put even stronger. It was stated emphatically that the core channels of the corporation had to remain paramount.

Scheduling for the new channels had to be designed in such a way that, while legislative conditions would be complied with, a primary aim would also be the safeguarding of audiences and revenue of the core channels. The regional channels had to be complementary services (SABC, 2003c:6; SABC, 2003d:11).

7.9.4 Staff and skills

The SABC pointed out that the growth of the information and telecommunications sectors of the South African economy had outstripped the supply of industry relevant skills. As a result the

new proposed channels would demand "significant" investment in skills development – especially in the provinces (SABC, 2003b:14). Obviously this would take time.

The SABC also made it clear that it could not shoulder the development of skills on its own. The clear suggestion was that since the services would be introduced to deliver better services to the citizens of the country, it should be a shared responsibility to advance skills development in the broadcasting sector (SABC, 2003b:14).

7.9.5 Technology

The SABC opted for the analogue signal distribution platform since it would be more cost effective and accessible to the end user (SABC, 2003b:15). The digital distribution platform would be more expensive for the viewer. The SABC estimated the cost of the receiver decoders to all television households at R4.2 billion – excluding the aerial and installation costs estimated at a further R1 200 per household (SABC, 2003b:38).

The analogue option implied several costs for the SABC in terms of the roll out of the network. The corporation indicated that it would first target the peri-urban and rural areas – in other words those regions where less transmission services existed. This approach was of course the more expensive option.

Apart from the analogue roll-out transmission costs, each broadcast centre would have to be technically prepared as fully fledged broadcast centres. This would entail additional spending. The costs as reflected in the table (Fig 30) on the next page were at 2003 prices and would certainly have increased by quite a margin since then.

Facilities / Support Functions	Western Cape	Mafikeng	Contributing Regions	TOTAL
Studio/Edit facilities (start-up cost) full digital facilities	R 6,993,000	R 6,993,000	-	R 13,986,000
Switching Centre (start-up cost)	R -	R 1,000,000	-	R 1,000,000
FCC (start-up cost)	R 8,000,000	R 8,000,000	-	R 16,000,000
ATM circuits (Annual costs)	R 2,849,040	R 1,734,876	-	R 4,583,916
Regional Digital Camcorders	-	-	R 630,000	R 630,000
TOTAL ONCE OFF COST	R 14,993,000	R 15,993,000	R 630,000	R 30,986,000
TOTAL ANNUAL OPS COST	R 2,849,040	R 1,734,876		R 4,583,916

Fig 30   (SABC, 2003b:49)

7.9.6 Advertising

ICASA took the clear stand in its Position Paper that Advertising would not be allowed on the regional television stations (ICASA, 2003b:28). The SABC implicitly indicated in the introduction of its application submission that due to the timing of the publication of the Position Paper, it had already developed views out of alignment with decisions taken by ICASA. One of these was the accommodation of advertising. This later became an issue of serious difference, yet ironically the SABC admitted that commercial revenue would "at best" offset 5% of the costs (SABC, 2003b:16). This would translate into R10.5 million in the first year against estimated costs of R221 million per channel and advertising revenue of R29.5 million in year eight while the cost would be R577.8 million. The SABC also had little hope that other sources such as sponsorships, grants and donations would make any significant impact to cover costs (SABC, 2003b:16). The challenge therefore remained to obtain almost all the required funding from the state.

7.9.7 Financial models

The SABC submitted that the two channels would cost almost R443 million to establish and operate in the first year. Detailed financial models were included and the corporation specifically

113

requested that it should not be made public. However, the author gained exclusive access. Below is a table illustrating the points made (Fig 31):

Confidential budget submitted to ICASA for one regional channel:

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Operating Cost		R205,856,034	R 216,606,681	R 311,020,013	R 328,084,755
Broadcast cost	3%	R 5,975,000	R 6,243,500	R 6,845,180	R 7,204,554
OPEX	9%	R 18,464,234	R 18,845,125	R 15,854,091	R 16,795,025
Signal distribution	6%	R 12,500,000	R 15,000,000	R 18,000,000	R 21,600,000
Programme cost	82%	R 168,916,800	R 176,518,056	R 270,320,742	R 282,485,176
Operating cash flow		(205,856,034)	(216,606,681)	(311,020,013)	(328,084,755)
Capex		(15,500,000)	-	-	-
Funding requirements		(221,356,034)	(216,606,681)	(311,020,013)	(328,084,755)

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Operating Cost	R 486,757,229	R 514,549,190	R 544,294,080	R 577,814,890
Broadcast cost	R 10,120,319	R 10,635,224	R 11,179,082	R 11,751,769
OPEX	R 19,007,949	R 20,156,702	R 20,669,907	R 21,909,564
Signal distribution	R 27,000,000	R 33,750,000	R 42,187,500	R 52,734,375
Programme cost	R 430,628,961	R 450,007,264	R 470,257,591	R 491,419,183
Operating cash flow	(486,757,229)	(514,549,190)	(544,294,080)	(577,814,890)
Capex	-	-	-	-
Funding requirements	(486,757,229)	(514,549,190)	(544,294,080)	(577,814,890)

Fig 31   (SABC, 2003e)

The following observations could be made:

- The highest expenditure item was programming (82%).

- The signal and broadcast costs seemed low. It later turned out to be too conservative.

- Funding requirements in the second year were lower due to the initial start up capital expenditure in the first year. The capital expenditure also seemed somewhat low.

- Costs of each channel escalated to almost R578 million in year eight – more than a billion rand for the two together in the last year of the license period.

- No distinction was made in cost projections for the two channels individually. Given the fact that SABC4 would cover a larger region and more languages, it could hardly be imagined that the costs would be the same.

- The combined costs of both channels over the entire eight year span came to more than R3.2 billion rand.

Programming costs were based on per minute rates that were relevant at the time (Fig 32):

Programme Category	Y1 Cost p/m	Y3 Cost p/m
News Regional	R 2,925	R 3,194
Current affairs	R 3,000	R 3,276
Religion	R 1,200	R 1,310
Parliament	R 1,500	R 1,638
Local Culture & Music	R 2,500	R 2,730
Regional sport	R 2,800	R 3,058
How to/IKB	R 3,200	R 3,494
Regional spotlight - light material	R 3,800	R 4,150
Children	R 1,500	R 1,638
School education	R 2,200	R 2,402
Young adult edutainment	R 4,000	R 4,368
Local talk	R 2,500	R 2,730
Drama local	R 5,500	R 6,006
Documentary	R 3,800	R 4,150
Regional spotlight - current affairs	R 3,500	R 3,822
Regional spotlight – Social	R 4,000	R 4,368
Music – Local	R 4,000	R 4,368
Sport foreign	R 3,500	R 3,822

Fig 32   (SABC, 2003e)

From Fig 31 it was clear that local drama was by far the most expensive item. This explains in part why the SABC was so reluctant to offer local drama from the start. The expectation at the time was that the channels could start broadcasting in 2005/2006 or 2006/2007 (SABC, 2003b:17). This obviously did not materialise. According to the Manager: Regulatory Affairs of the SABC, one could safely assume that costs would have escalated by at least 6% per annum since 2004. In addition the broadcast and signal distribution costs had to be adjusted upwards quite drastically (Mansfield, 2006). But even the estimated cost at the time of local dramas was too conservative and would certainly be more than double today. According to a high ranking official in the SABC's Content Enterprises department, the cost of locals dramas in 2006 was some R12 000 per minute (Kelly, 2006).

7.9.8 Demographic and other factors

As the public broadcaster the SABC had the duty to deliver services to all the citizens of the country – unlike the commercial television stations that could cherry pick the more affluent viewers in the market. While the SABC at the time had 59.8% of the total market share, it also reached 75% of the people in the LSM 1-5 categories – the people at the lower end of the income scale. Almost 70 percent of the television audience were African home language speakers. (SABC, 2003b:19).

The country had six million households with television sets reaching some 79% adult viewers (SABC, 2003b:19). The SABC believed the number would grow as more people progressed to the LSM 5-7-categories. Relatively speaking more middle and upper income Afrikaans and English were viewers but they were the groups mostly excluded from the services of RTV (SABC, 2003b:20). It meant that the SABC had to deliver services to the people who would be less able to pay television licenses and who were poorer consumers and thus less attractive to advertisers. This again illustrated the point that public service programming could not rely on the market for funding.

The next table gives an indication of the viewership in relation to income and television sets in the households (Fig 33):

LSM	Population Total	Average Income pm	Total TV Sets
10	1 445 000	R 15 931	585 832
9	1 759 000	R 10 731	674 436
8	1 729 000	R 8 053	630 761
7	1 865 000	R 5 859	642 996
6	3 709 000	R 3 897	1 210 062
5	3 660 000	R 2 421	1 095 174
4	4 135 000	R 1 724	1 031 742
3	4 160 000	R 1 318	704 346
2	4 114 000	R 1 075	368 352
1	3 006 000	R 832	30 492
	28 137 000	Total	6 974 193

Fig 33   (SABC, 2003b:39)
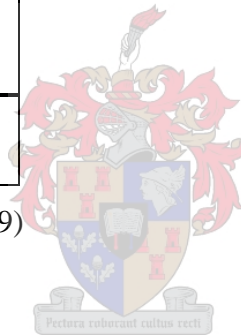
Television reach in the poorer provinces was more limited than in the others. While the television market was not yet saturated, television penetration and viewership tended to coincide with economic status (SABC, 2003b:20).

The next table (Fig 34) shows that the daily reach in the Limpopo province was the lowest at 50%. This was also the provincial home to two of the marginalised languages, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. While isiZulu and isiXhosa were majority languages, the reach in KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape were also limited. Both provinces were also relatively poor. While one could argue in a positive spirit that these areas had the potential to grow audiences, it would be a gradual process for people to afford to buy television sets and pay license fees. It would also cost the SABC considerable capital expenditure to extend the signal distribution in such areas.

	All adults	% TV reach (yesterday)	% TV reach (past week)
Total	29 773 000	67	79
Gauteng	6 115 000	84	93
W. Cape	2 890 000	85	95
KwaZulu Natal	6 094 000	56	68
E. Cape	4 379 000	56	68
N.Cape	598 000	62	75
N.West	2 413 000	71	83
Mpumulanga	2 003 000	68	80
Limpopo	3 288 000	50	67
Free State	1 994 000	74	84

Source: AMPS, 2003A

Fig 34   (SABC, 2003b:80)

Since the SABC had an obligation to deliver more services in indigenous languages, it was important to increase access. Yet, research indicated that the introduction of regional television would more likely lead to people with access spending more time watching television than enticing more people to watch (SABC, 2003b:19). Should that be the case in practice, it would mean the SABC would have to spend vast amounts of money to provide an extended service with the aim to reach more speakers of indigenous languages. Yet the additional viewers would in all likelihood not translate into an improved revenue stream.

An analysis of the Television Audience Measurement Survey (TAMS) data (Fig 35) showed that the hours spent watching television tended to be lower among television viewers who were African home language speakers than among Afrikaans and English home language speakers (SABC, 2003b:20). African home language speakers were exactly those who had to be reached.

Television Viewership by language group

Figures in Thousands

	Total	Eng	Afr	Zulu	Xhosa	S. Sotho	Pedi	SiSwati	Tswana	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga
Adult population	29773	3337	4485	6916	4707	2478	2572	691	2518	291	548	1090
% TV viewership yesterday	67%	89%	85%	57%	57%	72%	51%	59%	73%	61%	63%	62%
% TV viewership Past week	79%	96%	93%	68%	78%	83%	68%	70%	86%	79%	75%	76%

Source: AMPS, 2003A,

Fig 35   (SABC, 2003b:81)

The next table (Fig 36) summarises television penetration and viewership by province. Again Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal were worst off with less than 50% of households having television sets. In these three provinces the share of the population was also much higher than the share of the television audience.

Province	Share of total population	Share of TV audience (adults)	% TV sets in households	% TV viewership
Gauteng	19.7%	25.5%	74%	84%
Western Cape	10.1%	12.3%	74%	85%
KwaZulu Natal	21%	17%	47.3%	56%
Eastern Cape	14.4%	7.3%	38.6%	57%
North West	8.2%	8.1%	53.9%	71%
Mpumalanga	7%	7%	50%	68%
Free State	6%	7%	53%	74%
Northern Cape	1.8%	1.9%	53.8%	62%
Limpopo	11.8%	7%	39.8%	50%

Fig 36   (SABC, 2003b:81)

According to the SABC the growth of 4.4% in television viewers from 1996 to 2003 (Fig 37) was mainly the result of Eskom's electrification roll-out programme and not because of the efforts of the SABC to market itself better or to extend the signal distribution network. The extension of the network would become increasingly less cost effective as distribution towers had to be erected in more sparsely populated areas where people would be less likely to afford the services.

ELECTRIFICATION & TV TRENDS
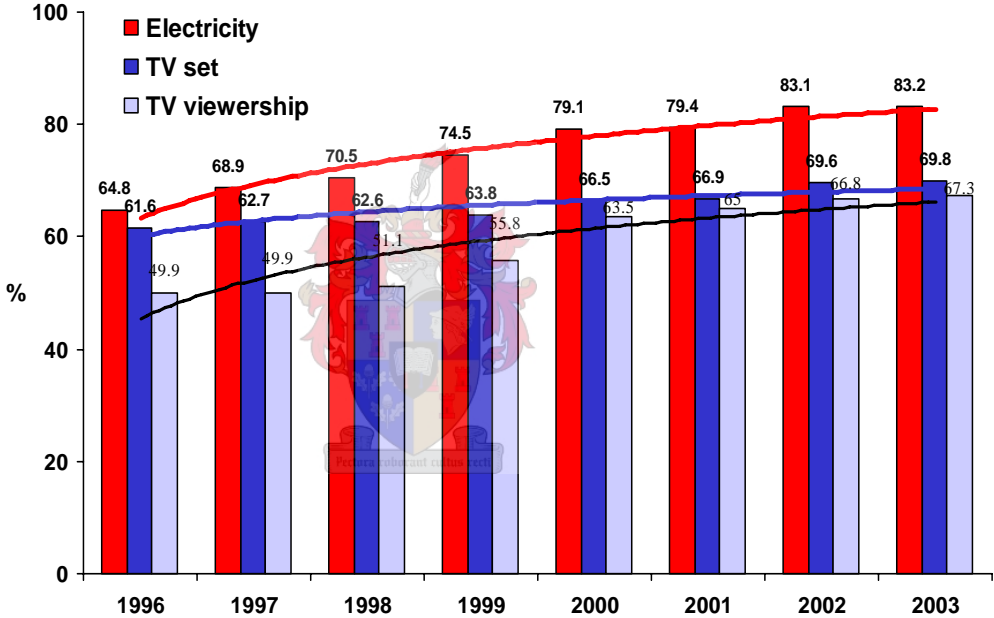
Source: AMPS 1996-2003A

Fig 37   (SABC 2003a:82)

The financial challenges were no doubt quite daunting. The SABC nevertheless declared its intention to submit requests to the government by March 2004 to provide funding for the services in its medium term expenditure framework. The corporation expected the process of granting and transferring the money would take at least 18 months (SABC, 2003b:17). It would then be another 18 months before the services could be on air. Everything hinged on the availability of funding.

7.10 Conclusion

It was clear that the SABC made a special effort to submit a comprehensive application as indicated by one of the drafters of the report (Fuchs, 2004b). The former company secretary assured the researcher the SABC had been committed to deliver the services if given the licenses (Schmulian, 2005). She denied any negative attitude and pointed out that the corporation had been involved in the thinking on the subject by giving input over several years and assisting in the drafting of the Broadcasting Act. She did not regard it as prescriptive that the Act instructed the SABC to apply. The corporation was the PBS provider of the country and had to deliver the services.

Similar sentiments were expressed in the SABC's concluding remarks of the applications. It said the services would be an essential element of future public service delivery. The proposed channels would directly address the needs of viewers to receive more programming in their languages reflecting cultural and rural diversity. It said it was "excited" about the many possibilities of RTV and looked forward with "keen anticipation" to the licensing of it (SABC, 2003b:58).Yet, it warned that success would depend on sustained funding, technology roll-out and training of skilled people to deliver the services (SABC, 2003b:57).

Any reader perusing the report would certainly have gained the impression that it was the product of hard work in a short time covering a wide area backed by many facts and considered argument. As the author pointed out at several points in this chapter, there were some deficiencies. With respect to the committed and hard working drafters of the report, one had to question the fact that so few operational people with real practical experience of the day to day realities of broadcasting were involved.

After the submission of the applications, a long process still had to follow before ICASA delivered a verdict.

8 The Process after applications

8.1 Written interaction between ICASA and the SABC

After the SABC's submission of its applications for regional television channels on 8 December 2003, as required by law, a period of robust interaction followed between the corporation and ICASA. It will be remembered that ICASA published its Position Paper on Regional Television on 26 November 2003 while the SABC had to submit 12 days later. As discussed before, the SABC had very little time to adjust its own proposals in line with decisions taken by ICASA in its Position Paper.

With the assistance of the company secretary, the author had access to the written communication between the SABC and ICASA after submission of the applications.

When the SABC submitted its applications it also delivered a letter to the Chairperson of ICASA, Mandla Langa, from the Group Chief Executive Officer of the corporation, Peter Matlare. He raised concerns and sought clarification from ICASA on three issues:

- The ruling against the use of English on the regional channels;

- The enforcement of a minimum quota of 55% local content and

- The prohibition of advertising (Matlare, 2003).

Langa responded on 5 February 2004. He pointed out that the regional services had to address the needs of other languages. However, ICASA did not advocate a complete ban as English could still be used in interviews and inserts in the news and current affairs programming. Yet, no programming could be commissioned in English. The IBA had a duty in terms of section 2 of the IBA Act to:

"…promote the provision of a diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional and local level which, *when viewed collectively*, catered for all language and cultural groups…"

In his view, the free to air services and SABC3 already catered more than adequately for English while the same could not be said of the marginalised languages (Langa, 2004a).

Regarding a SABC objection to the rule of a minimum quota of 55% local content measured weekly over a year, Langa expressed surprise. He referred to the submission by Sentech that the network roll-out would take 18 months. In addition the SABC had submitted that broadcast duration in the first year would only be four hours on the respective two channels. Given the long lead time to roll out the services and the limited duration of the broadcasts in the first few years, Langa believed the SABC could use the time productively in producing enough local content material to comply with the quota. He dealt fairly abruptly with the concern on the prohibition of advertising. He simply said the authority had exercised its power in terms of the Broadcasting Act to decide to what extent advertising would be allowed (Langa, 2004a).

In the meantime a sideshow was being played out. ICASA gave notice in the *Government Gazette* no 25856 of 18 December 2003 that the SABC had submitted applications for regional television channels as required in law. It published the details of the SABC's applications and asked for public comment. However, the published details contained some mistakes. Mr. Philly Moilwa, the Manager: Policy and Regulation of the SABC, wrote a letter to ICASA on 24 December 2003 complaining about it (Moilwa, 2003). ICASA republished the notice in *Government Gazette* no 25902 of 9 January 2004 (Langa, 2004a) rectifying mistakes such as the omitting of the Sesotho language from the proposed SABC4 channel schedule and isiXhosa from SABC5.

8.2 Industry comments

Following the call for comment on the SABC's applications, e.tv and Sentech submitted their responses on 9 February 2004. Some of the main points made by e.tv were:

- E.tv argued that by giving the SABC licenses for regional television services, its dominant position would be further entrenched to the detriment of other players such as e.tv.

- Public regional television should be permitted only to broadcast in South African languages other than English, and at least 90% of such languages should be African languages, excluding Afrikaans.

- Programming should be exclusively South African content.

- Programming should be sourced entirely from independent production companies resident in the relevant regions. The channels should therefore be subject to a 100% independent production quota.

- The channels should have no commercial revenue, including sponsorships from commercial sources.

- The SABC's regional television channels should be funded entirely by the state and through license fees and non-commercial donations.

- No cross promotion of the regional channels and other SABC services should be allowed (e.tv, 2004:10).

In its submission Sentech mainly commented on the roll-out proposals and the footprint of the signals for RTV. It expressed reservations about the SABC's proposal that the roll-out of the network had to start in the outer regions (Sentech, 2004).

On 9 March 2004 the General Manager: Policy and Regulatory Affairs of the SABC wrote a letter to Mr. Thabo Ndhlovu, Manager: Licensing Unit of the Broadcasting Division of ICASA to respond to some of the points raised by e.tv and Sentech. The SABC rejected e.tv's argument that the licensing of regional channels would entrench the SABC's dominant position in the market further. She pointed out that the SABC had been mandated by parliament to apply for the licenses. The SABC believed in fact that the regional channels would further fragment the market mostly to the detriment of the SABC (Kantor, 2004a:2).

Kantor further argued that the SABC had been unable to fully cater for all official languages on television due to the lack of platforms. It saw regional television as a crucial and much needed vehicle to promote languages other than English. Due to the lack of capacity to produce material in other languages, there had to be an initial use of English on the regional services. The situation would improve over time with more investment in the production capacity of other languages. Subtitling, dubbing and multi-lingualism would be part of the strategy (Kantor, 2004a:4-6).

Concerning e.tv's objection to cross promotion on existing SABC channels for the regional services, the SABC countered that there were no legal restrictions on such promotions, nor did ICASA pronounce on it in the Position Paper. The SABC believed such restrictions could constitute undue interference in its commercial activities (Kantor, 2004a:7).

In relation to Sentech's reservations about starting the roll-out of the services in the outer regions, the SABC repeated its arguments that the need was greatest in those regions. It would also be in line with the objectives of the Broadcasting Act to give particular attention to marginalised languages. It would further strengthen the undertaking in the SABC's charter to

increase access and availability of its services (Kantor, 2004a:1-2). Although one could understand the reasoning of the SABC, it later turned out that the corporation had to re-think the strategy as the huge financial implications became apparent. The SABC did admit though that it would reconsider if its proposal proved to be technically unfeasible requiring substantially longer roll-out times (Kantor, 2004a:2).

8.3 Funding initiatives

On 21 June 2004 the Minister of Communications, Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, announced that her department, in conjunction with the Treasury, would finalise a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for the funding of regional television later the same year (Matsepe-Casaburri, 2004).

This did not happen. The announcement was significant though because it clearly indicated that the government was not prepared to carry the burden alone for funding RTV. Yet, it was stipulated in the Broadcasting Act that parliament would allocate the funds. One could probably argue that it was never explicitly stated in the Act that *only* Parliament (or government for that matter) would fund *all* the costs of RTV.

The Department duly released the terms of reference for the appointment of a transaction advisor to conduct a feasibility study for the rolling out of regional television services. It was a comprehensive document of 25 pages. The overarching objective of the project was stated as:

> "...to determine the self-sustainability of regional language broadcasting services as well as developing appropriate strategies in order to ensure the sustenance of regional language television services".

In this process the contractor had to do a comprehensive study concerning:

- The feasibility of such services;
- The management thereof;
- The best models (including PPP);
- Investigate international experience;
- Establish the market potential for such services in South Africa (Department of Communications, 2004).

The contract was later awarded to the Johannesburg consulting firm Utho.

8.4 Sentech briefing and technical roll-out plan

On 27 July 2004 Sentech gave a briefing to the executive management of the SABC. The following points were made:

- There was a need to extend broadcasting access. Only 60 to 70% of total households had access to TV – numbering some six to seven million households. Yet, according to the AMPS figures of 2002 only 54% of adults had access (Commerford, 2004a:3).

- He estimated the roll-out of phase one would take 9 months and phase two 18 months (Commerford, 2004a:8).

- Commerford alerted the SABC at the meeting that it had underestimated the transmission costs in its submission to ICASA (Commerford, 2004a:9).

- He also wanted to know what plans the SABC had to broadcast in the down time on the transmitters when it was not offering RTV (Commerford, 2004a:10).

- He suggested the SABC and Sentech should have a combined task team to deal with common issues when presenting oral applications to ICASA (Commerford, 2004a: 11).

Sentech later decided not to give oral evidence.

In internal SABC e-mail communication between Mansfield and Kim Heller of the strategy office, the total transmission cost per annum was calculated at just more than R53 million. This was an adjusted figure from the amount submitted to ICASA in the SABC's application (Mansfield, 2004). In the application the SABC estimated total technical broadcast costs at some R37 million (SABC, 2003b).

From an internal document titled "Technology Issues Related to the Regional Services Application" it appears that in re-considering the footprint with Sentech, 6 more transmitters were added to the network. This increased costs by R5.2 million. This was also done to improve accessibility to language groups. The document was compiled by a technical team consisting of Lynn Mansfield, Oren Fuchs and Aldred Dreyer. The original application document was compiled by the strategy office with little input from the technical experts (Dreyer, 2005). In the course of internal discussion it became clear that the language requirements were not sufficiently

met in the previously proposed network roll-out plan. Sentech was then asked to recompose the network to ensure 80% minimum language coverage (Fuchs, 2004b).

The Manager: Technical Liaison said they planned with Sentech how certain transmitters could be adjusted to target specific language groups to receive SABC 4 or 5. The challenge was how to adjust frequencies in such a way that audiences could receive the analogue signals while spare capacity was reserved for the future migration to digital broadcasting (Dreyer, 2005).

The plan was to roll-out the services in two phases over 18 months. In the re-worked plan, access in Phase 1 for the Sotho group on SABC4 increased from 36.5% to 54% and then to 67.9% in Phase 2.

The most significant increases achieved in Phase 1 were for the Tshivenda language (from 9.5% to 52.1%) and the Xitsonga language (from 14.4% to 64.3%). These were of course some of the most marginalised languages.

The improvement of the signal distribution for the Nguni group on SABC5 was from 32.6% to 39.1% in Phase 1 and another increase to 56.1% or ten million people in Phase 2.

The most significant improvement was for the marginalised language of SiSwati. Access was almost doubled. In the end it was assured that all languages had equal treatment as far as it was technically possible to allocate frequencies and direct transmitter signals (Dreyer, 2005).

During the discussion with Sentech, it was suggested that the regional networks should first be rolled out in the metropolitan areas. It was agreed that this would be the best strategy to ensure maximum impact. This argument was based on density and numbers of total population coverage in a particular transmitter area. The inevitable result of this strategy would be that more people would receive the signals of the regional channels, but less potential viewers of the marginalised languages would initially receive a service as many lived in remote rural areas.

According to Dreyer the emphasis all along was on the delivery of services in different languages and not to reach all the people with language services. To start in the denser urban areas would ensure faster delivery to more people and it would give more people wider choice. By starting in the more sparsely populated rural areas less people would be reached and the cost would much higher (Dreyer, 2005). The next graph (Fig 38) is a visual demonstration of this concept – the values are arbitrary.

COST TO PEOPLE OVER TIME

Fig 38   (Dreyer, 2005)

Dreyer said the roll-out strategy was perhaps contrary to what the Department of Communications originally had in mind. If the intention had been to deliver services to all people in their languages wherever they lived, a different approach should have been followed.

Given the cost implications, it would pose a major challenge to deliver services to people who had no reception. The plan to deliver analogue services in various languages to people who already had some reception, was the most attainable, cost effective and quickest option. The digital option was simply too expensive for the end user and it would take at least two years for the planning, roll-out and the education of the people on how to use the technology. The estimated cost at the time was that a set-up box for the end user would cost at least $30 (Dreyer, 2005). The price in Rand could of course fluctuate quite substantially depending on the exchange rate.

The Senior Manager: Divisional Resources informed the researcher the SABC and the state should have prioritised the achievement of universal access to all viewers before they embarked on the road towards regional television (Stevenson, 2005).

Universal access was a fundamental requirement in the SABC's mandate. Canada, a country with a huge expanse of land, sparsely populated in most internal and northern regions, achieved 100% access – but the CBC had government funding. In the end it was a political decision in South Africa to opt for a wider service in languages rather than a service over a wider area to all people. The option to provide access to all was expensive. The estimated figure was

that it would cost more than a billion Rand to extend the transmission coverage to the 9% of surface area and some five million people not yet covered by SABC2 – the channel with the largest footprint (Stevenson, 2005).

Stevenson believed the SABC would never be able to meet the mandate of universal access on television with the funding model it had. Given the re-directed energy towards language services and the time lapsed since the process started to introduce regional television, the country could do better to strive for the more attainable goal of universal access on radio in the various languages (Stevenson, 2005).

The tweaking and the extension of the transmission network to reach people of specific language groups in the RTV regions would naturally cost money. After the implications had been assessed on the basis of the new plan, Sentech requested the SABC to include the capital costs of the extended network in its submission for government funding. The SABC refused. Its argument was that capital costs were already factored into the SABC's lease agreements with it. Sentech therefore had to find its own funding for capital expenditure and recoup it over time from services to the SABC and others. The SABC could not approach government twice for network funding. The two parties could not agree on this point (Fuchs, 2005).

8.5 Audience Research

During June/July 2004 the Market Intelligence Department of the SABC conducted research to determine the possible effect of the proposed regional services on existing SABC television services. The research was conducted on the basis of TAMS figures in a six week period in the broadcasting time similar to the proposed broadcast times for the regional channels (18:00 to 22:00). Previous findings and figures were also taken into consideration.

It was estimated that the potential audiences for the respective channels would be 5.1 million for SABC 4 and 9.6 million for SABC5 (Maree, 2004a:2). The projection was that the loss of viewers away from SABC 1 would be greatest. The potential loss when Sesotho or Nguni news bulletins were offered on the regional channels would be 79 000 viewers to SABC 4 and 104 000 viewers to SABC 5. This represented 1.55% and 1.1% of the potential adult viewing populations of the respective regions. The estimated losses to SABC 2 and SABC 3 were estimated at 10 000 and a maximum of 7 000 from e.tv (Maree, 2004a:4). It was estimated that these losses would increase once the regional channels started offering sport.

The following observations could be made about these figures:

- The figures could at best be regarded as relatively informed guestimates. It was simply not possible to make accurate projections about viewing patterns for a new concept. Viewership was determined by many factors including the relevancy of the content, the quality of the product and the popularity of the presenters/reporters.

- The combined loss away from SABC 1 to SABC 4 and 5 would be less than 200 000 viewers. Although this could naturally be of concern to the management of SABC 1 and to the marketing department selling advertising space on the basis of viewership, the figure was low in comparison with the large and loyal viewership of SABC 1.

- The combined migration of all viewers to the two regional channels would be less than 300 000. One could not simply assume that the regional channels would only attract that number of viewers. The figure did give some indication that the channels could struggle to find viewers. If that would be the case, it would obviously be of no use to offer services at huge cost when there was little interest.

- The 18:00 to 22:00 slots across all three channels were delivering the most income and profit to the SABC. The relative income on SABC 1 during that time was highest – although the channel's contribution to the profit of the SABC was not the highest during the time (Fuchs, 2004b). SABC1 had the second largest footprint (89%) behind SABC 2 (91%) (Commerford, 2004:2).

- The estimated figures seemed to indicate that the concerns raised by e.tv (and the SABC) to ICASA about the possible fragmentation of the market were unfounded. TAMS figures of viewership in prime time from 1998 to 2003 indicated that e.tv's audience share increased from 2% to 19% while the SABC's share dropped from 81% to 68% (SABC, 2003b:83). The SABC's reasoning was that since RTV would target primarily African viewers and since SABC 1 and 2 drew most of their viewers from the same group, existing SABC channels rather than e.tv were bound to suffer losses.

- The percentage loss of viewers away from SABC 1 to SABC 4 was greater. Some 35% of the viewers of SABC 1 were from the Sesotho group and many of them could rather tune in to SABC 4 in the earlier part of the evening and then switch to SABC 2 when the indigenous service started after the Afrikaans and English programming (Maree, 2004a:2).

- The Nguni speakers might also switch away from SABC 1 to SABC 5 at 18:00 to watch the local news in isiZulu or isiXhosa, but then switch back again to SABC 1 to watch the national news at 19:30 in their own languages. This particular news slot on SABC 1 was by far the most popular of all.

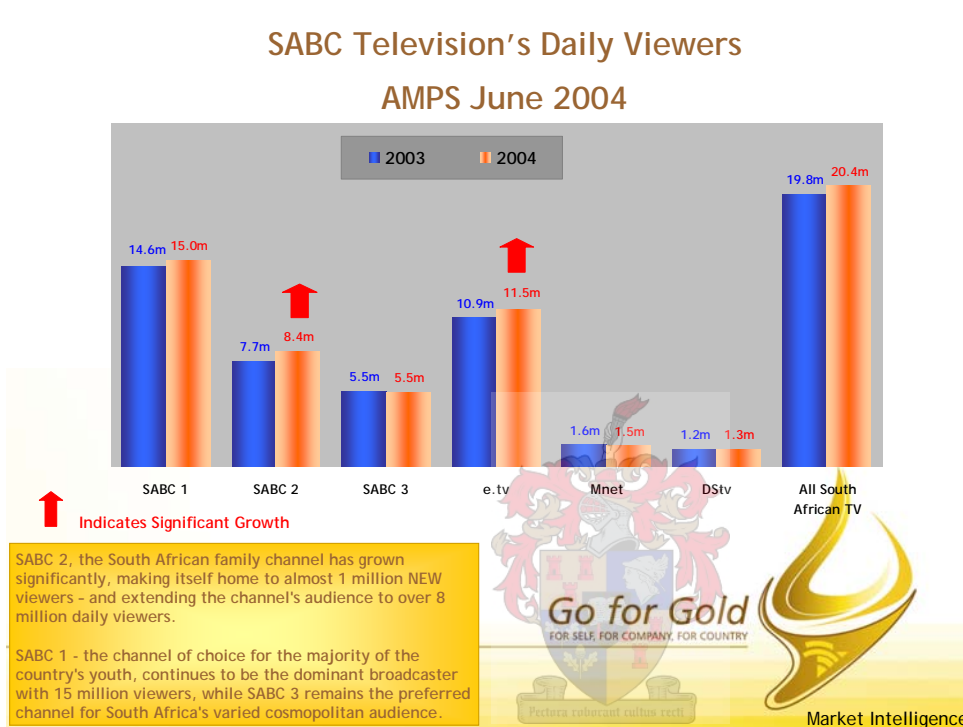The next graph (Fig 39) gives an indication of viewership.

SABC Television's Daily Viewers
AMPS June 2004

2003 | 2004

SABC 1: 14.6m / 15.0m
SABC 2: 7.7m / 8.4m
SABC 3: 5.5m / 5.5m
e.tv: 10.9m / 11.5m
Mnet: 1.6m / 1.5m
DStv: 1.2m / 1.3m
All South African TV: 19.8m / 20.4m

Indicates Significant Growth

SABC 2, the South African family channel has grown significantly, making itself home to almost 1 million NEW viewers - and extending the channel's audience to over 8 million daily viewers.

SABC 1 - the channel of choice for the majority of the country's youth, continues to be the dominant broadcaster with 15 million viewers, while SABC 3 remains the preferred channel for South Africa's varied cosmopolitan audience.

Go for Gold
FOR SELF, FOR COMPANY, FOR COUNTRY

Market Intelligence

Fig 39   (SABC, 2004)

8.6 The SABC and RTV Research

No official research was done about the specific proposals of the SABC for regional television as submitted to ICASA. The researcher tried to persuade the SABC to do so without success. The regions were also asked by the researcher to assist in interviewing people to establish some data base on this, but again the response was poor.

Yet, the researcher managed to personally do a number of field interviews n North West, Limpopo (both part of the SABC 4 region) and the Eastern Cape (part of the SABC 5 region) while colleagues helped in these and other provinces. For the SABC 4 region 11 people were interviewed, and for the SABC5 region 25. This took the form of a structured interview, as questions according to a set questionnaire were put to them. This was by no means a quantative study but more a qualitative approach in doing interviews for a social survey (Lemon, 1997:33)

or snap survey (Du Plooy, 2002:114). The method of convenient sampling (De Fleur & Dennis, 1994:518) was used on the basis of a frame of structured questions.

The questions were formulated according to relevant issues. (A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Addendum A). This effort was regarded as a survey to gauge perception. Most answers were quite predictable and logical.

Below is an overview of the respondents (Fig 40):

Province	Gender	Rural/Urban
Eastern Cape 9 respondents	7 female 6 male	6 rural , 1 urban 5 rural, 1 urban
Mpumalanga 5 respondents	3 female 2 male	urban urban
KwaZulu/Natal 11 respondents	5 Female 6 Male	3 rural, 1 urban 1 rural, 6 urban
North West 3 respondents	3 female	urban
Limpopo 3 respondents	3 male	2 urban 1 rural
Western Cape 1 respondent	1 female	rural

Fig 40

In general most people supported regional television and had a definite need for more local programming and news in their own languages. Yet, after these positive responses they would start getting second thoughts when confronted with the question whether the state should spend some R500 million per annum on regional television rather than on social services such as housing, clinics, water and electricity.

Of the 36 respondents 19 felt strongly that the state should rather accelerate social spending than to fund RTV. One person qualified his statement by stressing that more should be done by the other channels of the SABC to provide better services in the various languages.

Six respondents agreed that some money could be spent on regional television while another eight supported spending on RTV. Three were undecided. Those who supported spending on regional television stressed the developmental role of regional television in giving more informational access to marginalised people and that such channels would create jobs. Most were not personally prepared to pay an additional fee to help fund regional television.

An interesting issue was to discover whether viewers would identify with a particular channel. Would every channel be able to build a brand and attract loyal audiences?

The dilemma with the channels was that they were artificial creations based on perceived and relative linkages among certain language groupings. In the case of SABC 4 this was even more tenuous as languages such as Tshivenda and Xitsonga had little in common with each other (although the speakers were living close or even among each other) and with other languages of the proposed shared channel such as Setswana, Sepedi and Sesotho. One could argue that it would have been difficult for respondents to imagine the service they would get in the context of the multi-lingual and multi-province dispensation proposed by the SABC. A total of 30 of the 36 said they would be able to identify with either or both of the channels.

The Chief Financial Officer of the SABC told the researcher that people in the LSM categories one to three, most of whom could not afford television sets, would logically have a need for receiving public broadcasting programming. Yet, if they had a choice between receiving regional television or a good meal every day, it was quite obvious that RTV would not feature. In his view the introduction and funding of regional services was essentially a political decision that had to be taken by government on the basis of the perceived socio-economical value of providing information to the homes of the majority of he population (Nicholson, 2006).

8.7 Public Hearings

8.7.1 Polokwane: SABC4

The first hearing was held in Polokwane in the Limpopo Province on 5 October 2004. This was significant as the Limpopo Province was home to four languages accommodated on SABC 4 of which two where the marginalised languages of Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

Apart from explanations in general about the initial written submission, discussion mainly centred around three points (ICASA, 2004a):

- A rather cool interaction between lawyers and others on the powers ICASA had to determine and enforce strict license conditions;

- A debate about the desirability of the inclusion of English in the schedule;

- Interaction on the funding of the channel and the inclusion of advertising as a source of revenue.

After the opening remarks by Chairperson Mandla Langa of ICASA, the Group Chief Executive Officer of the SABC, Peter Matlare, led the corporation's input by making quite a positive statement about the commitment of the SABC to regional television. He said while the corporation recognised the legal imperative to apply for regional licences, it also accepted it did not deliver a key part of the service demanded by the constitution. As the national public broadcaster it believed it could deliver better services through regional television to citizens in their languages, reflecting their cultures (Matlare, 2004a:7). The intention was to initially cover 77% of the population and progressively increase it to 90% in the eight year of the license term.

8.7.1.1 The use of English and language strategies

During the hearing the head of the SABC's Market Intelligence unit said more than half the population in the Limpopo province were Sepedi speakers, 22% Xitsonga, 16% Tshivenda and only 5% were English home language speakers (Maree, 2004b:32). Matlare hastened to add that this low figure did not imply that other home language speakers did not speak and understand English (Matlare, 2004a:33).

The Chief Operating Officer referred to a previous language study of the SABC indicating that most people preferred to have news, local drama, local sport and religion in their own languages (Mokoetle, 2004a:35). The General Manager: Policy and Regulatory Affairs added that the regional challenges would deliver increased unilingual programming. Yet the successful multilingual approach, as demonstrated in some dramas or soapies on the existing channels, would also continue on the regional channels as it promoted national unity and multi-culturalism (Kantor, 2004b:39).

Kantor explained that the SABC interpreted equitable treatment of languages as meaning, fair, just and reasonable but not equal time. Some more widely understood languages might get more time. But the aim was to give relatively more time to marginalised languages. Equitability

would also be achieved through a mix of unilingual and multilingual programming (Kantor, 2004b:40). Apart from the number of home language speakers and the spread of the speakers, the ability to understand other languages would also be taken into consideration. She stressed that regional television would not lead to a reduction of indigenous language programming on existing channels (Kantor, 2004b:42).

Following Kantor's explanation, Mokoetle then argued the case for the use of English. He said the SABC was committed to the delivery of languages "other than English" as stated in the amended Broadcasting Act. Due to the lack of skills and original material in other languages some English programming would still be used as most programming originated in English. Yet, the SABC proposed that a minimum of 70% of the four hours in prime time should be in other languages and original material.

To this the Chief Financial Officer, Robin Nicholson, added that the use of English was an important proviso as programming took up 82% of costs due to the local origination and orientation requirement (Nicholson, 2004:60). Logically therefore cost would escalate the more programming was produced in indigenous languages.

Mokoetle explained that here was high consumption and understanding of English in South Africa and it served as a bridging and educational language. The SABC therefore believed it was justified to use English initially. Section 22A of the Act did not specifically exclude English in regional services. The corporation would follow a phased approach for the increase of indigenous languages and the scaling down of English as it succeeds in building production capacity and skills in the other languages (Mokoetle, 2004a:47). By year eight of the license there should be 8 hours of original programming on RTV. He said in India it took up to 16 years to deliver original programming in a 24 hour schedule (Mokoetle, 2004a:48). The SABC would follow the internationally tried formula of phasing in more original programming as capacity increased. The development of drama would take five years. The bulk of drama programming before then would come from archives and dubbed into various languages (Mokoetle, 2004a:50).

During the question and answer session the two parties entered into a legal debate about the use of English. In his introductory remarks, the chairperson, Mandla Langa, gave the background to developments leading up to the public hearings. He specifically quoted from section 22A of the Amended Broadcasting Act determining that the regional services had to broadcast in "any such languages as are appropriate, having regard to language usage within respective regions…" (Langa, 2004b:2).

Advocate Sibeko for the SABC argued that the clause did not specifically prohibit the use of English and the term "appropriate" might well include English since it might be the language understood by many in a particular region and used as next best medium of communication other than the respective home languages (Sibeko, 2004:80).

Councillor L. Mtinde for ICASA would have none of the argument and said the clear intention of the law was to correct the imbalances of the past including the marginalisation of "other" languages (Mtinde, 2004:82). Councillor M. Markovitz pointed out that while English was not specifically prohibited in the act, it was "spectacularly" absent from the list of languages mentioned in the Act (Markovitz, 2004:79).

The SABC conceded that there should be a clear bias towards indigenous languages and committed itself to do so (Sibeko, 2004:82). Matlare said many newsmakers could not speak one or more of the indigenous languages and therefore they had to be reflected in English in news bulletins. Markovitz accepted this and said ICASA never said the use of English in such circumstances would be prohibited. Matlare further argued that English would only be used in other genres because of the lack of original material in indigenous languages and because of the time it would take to develop it (Matlare, 2004a:90-91). Yet the legal argument about the interpretation of "appropriate" and the exclusion or inclusion of English was not resolved.

Matlare offered some information that was not clarified in the written applications of the SABC. He said while the SABC intended to have a phased approach by starting with a four hour schedule in year one and gradually extend it, the rest of the 24 hours still had to be paid for and could well be used for all kinds of programming in English (Matlare, 2004a:92).

8.7.1.2. Advertising

In his introductory remarks Matlare started making the case with ICASA to allow some advertising on the regional channels. He said the government might decide not to provide all the funding for RTV. If that would happen, it might mean that the opportunity to provide a wider service to the public would have to be abandoned. He referred to the statement by the Minister that a model for private public partnership would be finalised in the year. He proposed that the SABC, ICASA and the Department engage in detailed discussions to get certainty about funding (Matlare, 2004a:11).

Nicholson pointed out that the rural and lower LSM audiences were under serviced and could benefit from a commercial revenue model for regional television. However, traditionally this audience attracted less advertising than the more affluent groups. Commercial advertisers

might in future find regional television a useful platform to engage the developing rural market (Nicholson, 2004:61). A new source of revenue might be the state itself. It might wish to inform people in the LSM 1-3 categories of social developments and therefore buy time on the regional channels (Nicholson, 2004:122). The main challenge for the SABC would be to get the scheduling right. He argued that RTV would fragment audiences and create more space for advertising but then the channels had to attract viewers in sizable numbers (Nicholson, 2004:121). However he warned that advertising was not expected to be substantial enough to cover costs to a significant degree (Nicholson, 2004:126).

ICASA asked the SABC to present other models to it at the hearing in Cape Town to indicate the costs should English be removed altogether from prime time on RTV (Mtinde, 2004:123). The SABC promised to do so. It also requested the opportunity to reveal sensitive financial information in camera. It was granted and the public hearing adjourned.

8.7.1.3. Legal arguments

The legal arguments about the powers of ICASA to lay down rules, regulations, conditions or obligations and the body's capacity to monitor it, were rather long and tediously wrapped in legalese. The impression one got was that the SABC wanted to intimidate ICASA somewhat to relax or at least not enforce conditions so stringently – such as those on advertising and the use of English. ICASA took offence and argued on the basis of several legal measures that it had the right to set conditions and monitor implementation. Through the conciliatory approach of Matlare a stand-off was reached with the parties agreeing to engage each other on disputes concerning conditions (Matlare, 2004a:69).

The hearing was valuable in the sense that it gave the public the opportunity to observe and hear arguments about the proposed channel, although no one from the public asked questions or participated (ICASA, 2004a). The author's observation was that the hearing brought more clarity on the issue of language use and scheduling.

8.7.2 Cape Town: SABC 5

The hearing on the SABC 5 application took place in Cape Town on 18 October 2004. At this hearing e.tv and Sentech also gave evidence. As was the case at the hearing in Polokwane on SABC 4, the problematic issues were the use of English and whether advertising should be allowed on the regional channels (ICASA, 2004b).

8.7.2.1 Language

In addition to the arguments put to ICASA at the Polokwane hearing, the Group Chief Executive of the SABC, Mr. Peter Matlare, gave the assurance that no one who had access to African language programming on the existing channels of the SABC would lose that access (Matlare, 2004b:11). The regional services would complement existing services. Jointly, all the SABC channels would deliver better and more programming in the various languages. He compromised somewhat on the stance taken during the earlier hearing saying the SABC agreed that the regional services were intended to promote languages "other than English" but at the same time it recognised that there were developmental obstacles in producing such content (Matlare, 2004b:12). He nevertheless gave the assurance that the SABC would endeavour to commission original programming predominantly in other languages (Matlare, 2004b:13).

In elaboration Lara Kantor referred to international experience and raised the following points:

- Language mandates were usually delivered on a mix of regional and national channels;

- The number of languages to be accommodated affected delivery. Canada only had to deliver in English and French while India had to provide services in many languages and as a result had to revert to satellite technology in order to deliver;

- Complementary platforms could be used – such as terrestrial and satellite to deliver to various groups;

- Certain genres were considered to be more important in delivering on language mandates – such as news, current affairs and events of national importance;

- Costs were always a constraint on language delivery;

- International broadcasters seldom had a "big bang" approach to languages delivery – they introduced limited services and then expanded over many years.

Kantor said all these lessons were incorporated in the formulation of the SABC's proposals for regional television (Kantor, 2004c:18).

Dr. Anina Maree expanded on the basis of the research her department had done. This confirmed a big need for more home language programming especially in IsiNdebele, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. Viewers wanted such programming:

- At more convenient times;

- And the focus should be more on regional and local news and information.

- Viewers had a high preference for local drama in indigenous languages.

Yet, African language viewers also appreciated multilingual programming and had a need for exposure to English in order to improve their language skills. In planning how to reach these viewers, the SABC had taken into consideration where access had been lowest in line with the policy to strive for universal access (Maree, 2004c:20).

The Chief Operating Officer, Solly Mokoetle, gave the first indication that the SABC might well decide to use the rest of the broadcast time (outside of the core peak time on the schedule as submitted for the first eight years) to transmit programming. But the focus in the peak times would be on original indigenous language programming, he said. The off peak broadcast might start earlier and within the first eight years. However, the experience in India was that it took six to 16 years to introduce a 24 hour schedule (Mokoetle, 2004b:26).

8.7.2.2 Finance and advertising

As further background, Matlare explained to the commissioners of ICASA that government funding for the SABC had steadily declined over the years. It was a strategy of the SABC to reverse the trend in order to deliver on the public service mandate. In particular the SABC would be heavily dependent on government in the short and medium term to fund regional television (Matlare, 2004b:15).

8.7.2.3 Technology

The Managing Director of Technology, Sharoda Rapeti, explained that in the absence of a national plan for digital migration, the SABC thought it wisest to select analogue transmission as the best option for regional television. Two of the main considerations were the lower cost (especially to the end-user) and the quicker roll-out time. By selecting the analogue option the SABC did not abandon the intention to migrate to digital broadcasting. In the planning for RTV specific provision was made to keep frequencies free for digital migration (Rapeti, 2004:32). There was the danger that the analogue system would become obsolete but all new transmitters employed would be compatible for digital upgrade (Rapeti, 2004:37). In rolling out SABC 5 the SABC would prioritize isiNdebele and SiSwati and then extend the isiXhosa and isiZulu services in phase two (Rapeti, 2004:35).

Rapeti very pertinently referred to the challenges of high costs to re-develop infrastructure in the regions after the closure of the regional window broadcasts and to train the necessary skilled staff to produce and broadcast in the regions (Rapeti, 2004:36).

8.7.2.4 e.tv oral representation

E.tv was represented at the hearing by Bronwyn Keene-Young. Her main argument was that the regional channels would pose unfair competition should it not be regulated to concentrate strictly on public service programming. In addition ICASA should enforce its ruling that no advertising and English programming would be allowed on the channels. Even sponsorships should be prohibited. The regional channels should also be subjected to a 100% local content quota (Keene-Young, 2004:47-51).

8.7.2.5 The use of English and other issues

In the question session the ICASA councillors started pressing the SABC about the proposed use of English in the first few years of the regional television schedules. In particular ICASA wanted to know what kind of programming would be broadcast in English and at what time during the prime time schedule. Apart from references to news, current affairs and sport the SABC could not provide a clear answer (ICASA, 2004b:53-54).

The next issue was the use of archive material for delivering drama in indigenous languages in the first four years of the schedule. ICASA enquired whether this would lead to the repeated transmission of programmes. Mokoetle answered that the use of archive material was a worldwide practice to save costs. Programmes could also be cross-dubbed from one indigenous language to the other – meaning that not all material had to originate in English. In this way the local dubbing industry could be developed and given a new lease of life (Mokoetle, 2004b:55-56).

Calvo Mawela of ICASA wanted to know whether some new transmitters would have to be erected to increase access to the regional services (Mawela, 2004:64). Brian Commerford of Sentech replied that some new transmitters would be needed (Commerford, 2004b:66). Rapeti pointed out that the erection of new transmitters could take several years as an environmental impact assessment had to be done first (Rapeti, 2004:65).

On the whole the hearing in Cape Town seemed to have taken place in better spirit.

8.8. ICASA's follow-up interaction

After the public hearing, on 26 October 2004, ICASA requested more information from the SABC – particularly about the use of English, the schedules and financial information.

Lara Kantor, General Manager: Policy and Regulatory Affairs responded on 26 November 2004 to Lydia Jordaan, Senior Manager: Licensing and Monitoring, Broadcasting Division, ICASA. Kantor gave the assurance that no programming would be commissioned in English but would primarily be included in news, sport and parliamentary programmes. In such cases it would be "tailored" to the language needs of the audience and subtitled or dubbed. This practice would continue even after the development of production capacity in the regions (Kantor, 2004d).

Concerning the use of archive material she wrote it would serve as source for educational, religious and cultural programming. No mention was made of drama. Kantor noted that more work had been done on the technical specifications of the SABC submissions and that additional transmission costs had been identified (Kantor, 2004d).

The financial statement submitted to ICASA during the hearing in Cape Town, contrary to the request, did include provision for English. The schedules submitted never specifically indicated English as a broadcasting language of a particular programme, but one could assume that many of the programmes indicated as multilingual could include or might even be predominantly English. In the subsequent letter by Kantor a schedule and costing without provision for English was submitted. The researcher could not gain access to this, but one could assume on the basis of previous arguments that it would have been more costly.

The SABC's legal representative, Adv. L.T. Sibeko, submitted supplementary legal arguments to ICASA on 16 November 2004. He specifically responded to issues raised by e.tv during the hearing. This concerned the fact that the SABC's applications for regional television channels did not comply with the explicit conditions stated by ICASA concerning the prohibition of advertising and the use of English on the channels. The SABC argued that the decisions in ICASA's Position Paper did not have the force of law but could merely be regarded as guiding principles (Sibeko, 2004b:11-12). Moreover, the SABC contended that ICASA had to determine in terms of Section22A (3) of the Broadcasting Act the "extent" to which services could draw revenues from advertising and therefore did not have the power to decide that no advertising at all could be allowed (Sibeko, 2004b:16).

The SABC also rejected e.tv's request that ICASA had to bar the corporation from accessing sponsorships for the regional services as devoid of any legal basis (Sibeko, 2004:18). In further submissions regarding the use of English Adv. Sibeko argued that the exclusion of English from the list of languages to be accommodated on regional television as stipulated in Section 22A 10 (1)(c) of the Broadcasting Act as amended, did not imply that no English at all could be used (Sibeko, 2004b). He referred to article (b) just preceding (c) that regional services had to broadcast in "official languages as appropriate". As English was an official language and spoken in the various regions, English could also be considered an appropriate language and accommodated. He contended that the prohibition of English, especially in the early stages, could result in the services not being viable.

In the end the SABC and ICASA never reached a compromise on the issues of advertising and the use of English. These matters were only resolved in part when ICASA finally decided to award regional television licences to the SABC.

8.9 The ICASA decision

ICASA published its ruling on regional television on 15 June 2005. The chairperson, Mandla Langa, first gave an historic background of the process leading to the final ruling of the Authority on RTV. He noted that the SABC's legal submission subsequent to the hearings in effect disputed the legal force of the Position Paper. He pointed out that the Paper as such was not binding on the SABC but the ruling he was about to make in terms of the Position Paper was (ICASA, 2005:10).

ICASA rejected the SABC's arguments concerning the use of English in the schedules of the two proposed channels. ICASA insisted the intention of Section 22A of the Broadcasting Act was to address imbalances of the past. Langa ruled that English would not be allowed as a language of broadcast. It could only be used in news and current affairs when newsmakers spoke in English. The marginalised languages of Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele and SiSwati had to receive more broadcast time (ICASA, 2005:12).

ICASA agreed to the SABC's proposal of a phased approach to scheduling but determined that local drama had to be scheduled from the third year (and not the fifth). Educational and children's programming also had to be increased from the third year (ICASA, 2005:13). It stuck to its previous position on the 55% level of local content (ICASA, 2005:14).

The surprise was the Authority's ruling to allow advertising on the regional public channels. This was done to protect the "integrity and viability" of the SABC and as a result of

"changed circumstances" since the publication of the Position Paper (ICASA, 2005:18). These changed circumstances were not explained. ICASA was however quite emphatic that it had the right to rule on whether advertising could be allowed despite the SABC's arguments to the contrary.

Because of the uncertainty of funding from the state, ICASA ruled that it would grant the SABC licenses for the two regional channels, but would not issue the licenses until such time when clarity on funding could be obtained (ICASA, 2005:18).

Lydia de Souza, the Senior Manager Licensing, Monitoring & Complaints, Broadcasting Services of ICASA, told the researcher funding had been a substantial problem and a "catch 22 situation" for the Authority. It could simply issue licenses but without clarity on funding it would not make sense. Despite the lack of clarity on funding, ICASA was under pressure to take a decision by June 2005 when the contract of the chairperson of the council, Mandla Langa, expired. He had been the chairperson of the hearings into regional television. Under administrative law, the whole process would have had to start from the beginning if he had left without taking a decision. At that stage ICASA was still in the dark about possible state funding. It had the perception that government had not been too willing to fund all the costs of RTV (De Souza, 2005).

Philly Moilwa and Lynn Mansfield of the SABC's Regulatory and Compliance department said ICASA's decision to allow advertising on RTV was unexpected. Yet, they were less pleased by the ruling on the use of language and English. Mansfield said if the Private Public Partnership model would be implemented, the private sector companies might want to see more advertising time allowed or more English so that more viewers and income could be attracted. He also said some of the license conditions would have to be amended anyway as some of the frequencies allocated by ICASA to the SABC for RTV might well not be available by the time RTV eventually got the necessary funding from government or other sources (Moilwa & Mansfield, 2006).

Moilwa also expressed some concern at ICASA's other rulings on the amendments to conditions of existing services. He pointed out that the process to decide on such conditions took place at the same time when the Authority was considering the proposals for the SABC's regional channels. The amended conditions were also announced in June 2005 to come into effect on 23 March 2006. Despite the fact that ICASA was acutely aware that the purpose of regional television was to supplement and extend services in various indigenous languages, it

still burdened the SABC with more language obligations in existing services (Moilwa & Mansfield, 2006).

The initial ruling was that SABC 1 and SABC 2 had to broadcast 80% of their schedules in indigenous languages other than English within 18 months. The SABC objected as it would incur massive costs to do so. The language obligations were adjusted with increased specified hours to be introduced up to 2012. Moilwa wondered whether ICASA had such little trust that RTV would ever happen that they actually started to transfer the intended language requirements of regional television onto the existing services of the SABC in order to achieve the same objective (Moilwa, 2006).

Thus the whole process to rule on regional television came to and end. Yet, by the time the researcher completed this thesis, there had still not been any decision on the funding of regional television. The author had heard from the Department of Communications (Wesso, 2006) that a report on Public Private Partnerships had been submitted to it by the private consulting company. It had still to be considered. That consideration would no doubt be influenced by several other developments that had emerged subsequent to the process to introduce regional television. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

9 Technological Developments and the Future

9.1 The International Picture

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) took a far reaching decision on 16 June 2006 in Geneva: A treaty was signed by 104 countries to digitise broadcasting globally by 2015 (ITU, 2006).

According to the statement by the ITU, the decision heralded a major landmark towards "establishing a more equitable, just and people-centred Information Society". It went on to say that the digital switchover would "leapfrog existing technologies to connect the unconnected in under-served and remote communities and close the digital divide" (ITU, 2006:1).

In effect it meant that the old analogue technology of the past 45 years would cease to be recognised as a protected international standard, rendering broadcasts on the system vulnerable to interference and therefore obsolete. Yet, some countries that might face difficulties in switching over were given a five year grace period. The two systems would co-exist for some time. The switchover date of 2015 was specifically chosen to coincide with the date set for attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

The digital "dividend" or advantages listed by the ITU were:

- Create new distribution networks;

- Higher quality video and audio;

- Faster rates of data transmission;

- Consistency of data flows over long distances;

- Expand the potential for wireless innovation and services;

- More efficient spectrum usage;

- More channels over fewer airwaves. Digital compression multiplies by 10 the number of signals a slice of bandwidth can carry (Rose, 2003);

- Greater convergence of services;

- More flexibility in use of spectrum such as mobile television and video, internet, multimedia data making applications, services and information accessible and usable anywhere, anytime;

- Opens the way to new innovations such as Handheld TV Broadcast (DVB-H) and High Definition Television (HDTV);

- More bandwidth to existing mobile, fixed and radio navigation services;

- Future extension to wireless microphones and talk back links (ITU, 2006).

Digital broadcasts have been introduced since the late nineties of the previous century. It has steadily increased as technology improved and costs declined. In the United States, according to the National Association of Broadcasters, 1566 Stations in 211 Markets were delivering digital television (NAB, 2006).

The European Union has set 2012 as the date of switchover, but countries such as the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden have already started and will step down from analogue by 2008 (Ofcom, 2006:12).

In South Africa the Department of Communications has mandated a Digital Migration Working Group to produce a report by October 2006, mapping the process in the country. The group will report on the economic impact of digital migration on the country, consumers and broadcasting services. The intention is to start the process by 2008/2009 in time for the staging of the Soccer World Cup in 2010 when the SABC will also be the host broadcaster to international companies and audiences (Department of Communications, 2006).

The digital age has gained momentum worldwide and South Africa has also boarded the process. It is a daunting phase of many technological and financial challenges for governments and companies, with profound implications for individuals and broadcasters.

Writing in *Newsweek*, a recognised American expert, Steven Levy, said the single sweeping mantra of "New TV" was: "Anything you want to see, any time, on any device" (Levy, 2005).

In practice it entails the convergence of pictures, video, sound, text, the internet and data bases on various devices such as television screens, computer screens, hand devices such as cell phones or iPods, watches (and several more) relayed to the end-user through satellite, digital terrestrial signals, cable, fibre or telephone lines.

Levy said the world was moving to a "cosmic video jukebox" where the consumer will have the initiative to tune in to tens of thousands of channels (and not hundreds as at present), having access to anything that was ever broadcast, was being broadcast or in production or happening in real time while also having the ability to deselect advertising, select programme

favourites, interact with programmes and do business – all in one viewing session on one device of choice wherever he or she was. Two fundamental new qualities that the old era television did not have were personalisation and empowerment for the individual (Levy, 2005).

While RTV is still a dream in South Africa, and discussions centre on the availability of terrestrial dissemination platforms, a new digital age is developing internationally. Some of the features of these new technologies are:

- Larger screens with clear high definition picture quality. In a humorous article for *Newsweek* in 2005 about new trends in television, comedy presenter Conan O'Brien said: "...television will eventually grow so large that families will be forced to watch TV from outside their homes, peering in through the window. Random wolf attacks will make viewing more dangerous" (O'Brien, 2005).

- TV stations or networks used to "own" audiences by broadcasting content at specific times on planned schedules. This will completely change to a situation where individuals will make their own choices on what they want to see, where and when (Levy, 2005). Traditional broadcasters had the ability to control the viewer – to deliver millions of eyeballs to the advertisers (Rose, 2003). In the past ten years this has already changed. Nielsen research indicates that network audiences in the US have dropped an average 2% per annum in the past decade despite a population increase of 30 million (Garfield, 2005:2).

  Now the control is shifting from the networks to the viewer.

  The schedule/channel model will be replaced by the site model. "Channels are limited, sites not", says Andrew Kantor in *USA Today*. The end of channels will also bring to an end the networks or television stations in the way they operated. In stead of being day to day broadcasters with specific scheduled programming they will be timeless video libraries providing content by choice (Kantor, 2006b). Television stations will not be gatekeepers of content anymore but mere pipeline providers.

- Time shifting will be refined. Since 1975 the video cassette recorder (VCR) gave people the option to record a favourite programme and watch it later – shifting the viewing to a more convenient time for the individual. With digital video recorders (DVR) and the TiVo technology, pre-recorded or real time broadcasts can be rewinded, fast forwarded, viewed in slow motion or advertisements can be

skipped. Nielsen research found that 70% of DVR users bypassed advertising spots (Garfield, 2005:2). With DVR technology viewers can download a personalised line-up of shows on to the home entertainment server, also storing digital music, photo and home video collections. The server can be connected to multiple television monitors and personal computers in the home (Sloan, 2004). A basic TiVo package can hold more than 80 hours of DVD-quality television.

TiVo might have been a victim of its own success. It has fallen prey to copycats and competition. The advantages of contracts signed with cable companies are also slow to deliver on the bottom line. Yet, TiVo already had 4.4 million subscribers in the United States, increasing by more than 74 000 per quarter (Swann, 2006). Almost 10% of US households have TiVo or similar DVR devices. This will increase to 30% or more by 2010 (Trombino, 2006).

- Due to the falling prices of ever better video cameras and laptop-based, user-friendly editing software, more and more people will be able to produce better quality material that can be posted on the web or even in the libraries of networks. Humble individuals will start competing with former mighty networks to provide content for choosy consumers (Kantor, 2006b). It is not even necessary to use a video camera. Cell phones can record video and the quality improves all the time. In effect every person with a cell phone will become a potential picture journalist, storyteller or moviemaker (MindBullets, 2006).

  Television stations and content providers can produce much faster and at a cheaper rate today because of the advances in technology. They are basically forced to do so because of the ever more pressing challenge to provide more material for more platforms and because of the fragmented audiences resulting in the wider spread of the advertising pie. Production companies must work smarter, faster, harder, differently and more cost effective. There is no more time for the big blockbusters that took several months to film and even more to edit (Rose, 2003:6). As was the case with so many other large multinational companies, television and film companies outsource to where the best facilities at the best rates are: such as shooting in South Africa, India or Brazil.

- Time shifting to space shifting – from the when to the where. There will be an almost seamless opportunity to connect to programming or data, or to watch pre-

recorded or stored data anywhere given the higher mobility of viewing devices. Devices are becoming progressively smaller and more powerful – such as laptops and more functional ipods and cell phones (Levy, 2005). In the United Kingdom Virgin Mobile has concluded a contract with British Telecom in 2006 to offer five digital television channels and 350 radio channels to users (Reuters, 2006). More and more cars, trains, airports and aeroplanes are equipped with connectivity ports or user stations to enable clients to continue watching or doing what they want even while on the move (Levy, 2005). Due to security concerns at public transport places and on planes, laptop computers and other handheld devices might become less popular as companies and airlines are forced to provide on board equipment and connectivity.

- Webcasting will become common place. It is a move from broadcast TV to broadband TV or Internet Protocol Television (IPTV). Bill Gates of Microsoft has concluded a deal with a telecoms company to provide television viewing on the internet (Levy, 2005:2). The global demand for IPTV among broadband users was already 20% (Mochiko, 2006:1). It will enable the viewer to watch several broadcasts at the same time on the same television screen – split into several sections. "Ticker" information on stocks can be customised to fit the need of the individual customer. The person will only see what s/he is interested in and will not have to put up with a never ending stream of largely unwanted information. Gates believed the internet would revolutionise television within five years giving people the choice not to be the slaves of schedulers at television stations but to make own choices about what to watch and when (The Star, 2007:9).

  In the decade from 1994 to 2004 the television to internet use ratio in the United States has halved from 8:1 to 4:1. Household broadband penetration has increased from 8% in 2000 to 56% in 2005 (Garfield, 2005:2).

- Internet television can bypass the distributor such as a cable provider or satellite service. Most flat panel television sets will have in-built internet connections. This obviously has implications for such distributors, but also for the end user. Just as bloggers and hackers have managed to invade the screen privacy of individuals and companies, they will be able to do so on IPTV (Levy, 2005:3). Or individuals can choose to tune into such blogger sites or create their own at minimum cost and post it on the web for access on computer monitor or the television set.

- The Skype founders (internet telephony) announced their "Joost" project at the beginning of 2007 offering studios, cable stations and other product producers their platform to distribute high quality video over the internet. They claimed their advantage was that they could offer a fast, cheap and efficient distribution method. Also that their software replicated the TV viewing experience better than other who tried to wed TV to the PC. Users would be able to browse a menu and then switch channels by clicking on a link. They would have control over content by skipping forward or backwards and to connect at anytime to whatever content they wanted to see (ZDNet, 2007).

- To make it easy for consumers to choose from the glut of material, Yahoo suggested that a personalised home video page could be created to select favourite channels and programming as per choice of the user. The flipping through hundreds or even thousands of channels could be done automatically (Levy, 2005:3). Yet viewing patterns might not change drastically and traditional television shows with good stories would still attract a sizable audience. According to Nielsen households that had access to 60 channels, only watched 15, and those with access to 96 channels, also only watched 15. It was the paradox of choice (Levy, 2005:3).

- Broadband wireless internet connections also carrying voice, such as WiMax and 3G, are gaining in popularity but the technology still has some way to go in overcoming technical glitches and limitations in range mobility (The Economist, *Surfing the Airwaves*, 2006).

- Greater variety and targeted material will be available from content providers and broadcasters to fit the various devices. While the cell phone might not be the most effective tool to watch a *Lawrence of Arabia* movie, it can be very effective for sport and news updates. The research group Informa says 125 million consumers in the US will watch television on their cell phones by 2010 and more than 85 million handsets will be sold. Mobile television will be broadcast to all at the same time but consumers could also select to receive streaming video on demand (Reuters, 2005).

The Digital Video Recorder has profound implications for television stations and advertisers.

- Television stations will increasingly open up and stock up their visual libraries. Video on demand will enable viewers to access any archive of choice and select whatever stock material for viewing at their leisure when they please. The challenge for TV stations will not be about what you have available to broadcast or what you plan to produce for a schedule. It will be about the accessibility and variety you can offer irrespective of the schedule (Levy, 2005:2).

- Advertisers will have to find more innovative ways of reaching target audiences as the conventional 30 second spot can easily be skipped by the consumer. The more dedicated and predictable internet market will become more popular among advertisers. In South Korea, where broadband penetration is more than 80%, the internet share of ad spending is twice that of the US (Garfield, 2005:5).

Networks charge more and more for the fewer traditional shows that do still attract high audience ratings (Rose, 2003:3). Advertisers are also opting for subtle displays within programming, their products being actively used by actors or presenters in programming such as in soapies or movies, characters talking about their products or programming named after products or a range of products. Such exposures come at much higher prices on a differential scale. If a Coke container appears for 15 seconds on the kitchen counter of a soapie scene, it can cost Coke a basic fee (it can even be digitally inserted after recording of the show). Should the character lift the can and take a sip, the rate increases exponentially. If characters *talk* about Coke the advertiser will have to pay a really steep price, and so on.

- Yet, the revenue streams of traditional television stations are under pressure. The media research company Nielsen has started tracking the viewing habits of viewers to determine what and when they watch programming directly from the schedule of broadcasters; and when and what viewers watch as time-shifted TiVo programming. News and big sport events are mostly watched in real time. These are major target areas for traditional television advertisers (Trombino, 2006).

TiVo has come up with an innovation to personalise advertising if the viewer was prepared to "opt in" or release his/her contact details. By carefully tracking the viewing habits of households, it can inform advertisers and programmers what a specific household is watched, where they came from, to what channel they went next and what received the "TiVo-treatment" (skipping of ads or programmes).

151

This much more targeted and detailed information is sold on by TiVo and it makes the money – not the networks (Rose, 2003:4).

TiVo has recently contracted an additional large advertising company to research and experiment with new interactive advertising models. The Omnicom Media Group bought TiVo's second-by-second audience measurement research and bought into a second study that uses TiVo's DVR behavioural data. This is part of a strategy to counter initial fears that TiVo would kill the advertising industry. The company has been deploying more "opt-in" advertising. A viewer can respond to a specific ad requesting more information. This interactiveness is tagged by TiVo and relayed to advertisers who then respond (Klaassen, 2006).

- Audiences will become more fragmented as they migrate by own choice to various programming on different platforms or devices. Consumers have already started moving from scheduled mainstream programming to niche transmissions or recordings thereof. Due to the many more digital channels available at cheaper rates of distribution, more dedicated programming in niche markets can be offered. The fragmentation disturbed viewing patterns and habits. The family does not sit together in the lounge glued to the TV set anymore. The younger generation marches off to their rooms and tune into whatever they want to see on the net – such as specific channels for them… and the advertisers follow and pay a premium (Rose, 2003). It might be a smaller market, but a dedicated one making advertising more productive by aiming with a target gun and not a shotgun. It is especially the 18-34 market that has fled television to go online. The economics of scale will shrink. In stead of broadcasting to captured audiences of millions, choosy individuals will deliver only thousands to advertisers – if they watch the ads at all (Garfield, 2005:3-4). Marketers and advertisers will have to learn to interact with clusters of consumers who know exactly what they want.

It will be the great leveller of the big networks with the podcasters and video bloggers. Garfield pointed out that there could be many video bloggers flighting material from their homes on the internet that might be viewed by only a few thousand. The new technological advances were contributing towards the total democratisation of the media where the individual could place voice, video or script on the internet platform owned by nobody but reaching so many more than

the platforms owned by the networks (Garfield, 2005:5). People were not merely demographics to networks and advertisers anymore. The individual would gain more power by the freedom to choose.

- The next wave is individualised viewing. The television industry faces "unparalleled complexity, dynamic change and pressure to innovate", say the authors of an IBM study (Berman, Shipnuck & Duffy, 2006). The study says the key market drivers will be:

  - openness of access channels;

  - levels of consumer involvement with media.

One consumer segment will remain traditional passive television viewers in the living room – "massive passives" – while the other will embrace technology in search for anytime, anywhere content through multiple channels or platforms. They are called the "Kool Kids" and "Gadgetiers". It will be a huge challenge to provide for both segments simultaneously while preparing for the migration of the "massive passives". IBM offered six strategies:

  - ❖ Segment and provide for the different consumer types;

  - ❖ Innovate and accept consumer choice;

  - ❖ Experiment to track consumer preferences;

  - ❖ Provide seamless content mobility for users that require on-the-go experiences;

  - ❖ Drive open content delivery platforms to optimize content and revenue exploitation;

  - ❖ Re-organize business assets against future requirements.

The economic dynamics of the industry will be from TV to online; mass media to micro media; mass marketing to permission marketing. But it will take some time and be accompanied by pain. Nothing is certain (Garfield, 2005:5). The big problem in all these mega trend models is that it will come at a cost. To be digitally connected and interactive costs some $100 per month in the United States. In the process millions of people are picture and choice disenfranchised. This will be a particular problem in third world countries such as South Africa.

9.2 The South African situation and SABC plans

The television scenario in South Africa has changed drastically since the process to introduce regional television started.

When the Broadcasting Amendment Bill was being steered through parliament in 2002, the international digitization process was already well under way, as outlined above. But when the opportunity to host the Soccer World Cup of 2010 was given to South Africa in 2004, the picture suddenly changed irrevocably. It was no more a case that the country could decide at its leisure when to migrate to the digital age. With the SABC having been awarded host broadcast status, the international imperative was that it had to develop the capacity to broadcast digitally – and in High Definition Television (HDTV) (Screen Africa, 2005:1).

The SABC immediately started the process to prepare for HDTV capacity and broadcasts. The first process was to upgrade internal equipment to the digital technology. The cost of the entire technology upgrade plan was estimated at R1.3 billion (Mpofu, 2006:12). The SABC could not fund this entirely from its own funds and approached government for assistance. The government promised R700 million over a number of years, committed to R400 million and paid R100 million in the 2005/2006 financial year The rest of the capital requirements will be funded from own SABC sources (Nicholson, 2006).

The corporation ordered a fully HDTV enabled Outside Broadcast unit (OB). The SABC received the unit in time for a test broadcast this year during the Soccer World Cup in Germany. The High Definition Television Transmission System was tested at a special public screening at Montecasino theatre in Johannesburg. This year's World Cup was the first to be broadcast on high definition. The SABC relayed the signal from its own dish at the World Cup in Germany to Montecasino. A second OB unit will be delivered in December 2006 (Motsoene, 2006).

The picture was changed even more drastically when two additional processes started taking shape. The first was the decision by ICASA to ask for applications for more satellite and cable subscription broadcast services. The second was the announcement by Sentech (supplemented by SABC plans) to create capacity for Digital Terrestrial Television (DTTV) broadcast together with the upgrading process of equipment in preparation for 2010 (*Beeld*, 2006:B1/24).

9.2.1 Call for Satellite and Cable Television applications

ICASA launched the invitation to apply for commercial satellite and cable subscription broadcasting services on 31 January 2006 (ICASA, 2006). On 19 July 2006 the Chief Operating Officer of the SABC, Solly Mokoetle, had a briefing for independent producers on the intention of the SABC to apply for a satellite television license. As indicated by him at the meeting, the SABC duly did apply by the deadline date of 31 August 2006 together with partners Sentech and Telkom (Derby, 2006a:21). The application date was preceded by the commencement of the Electronic Communications Act, Act 36 of 2005 on 19 July 2006, regulating the environment for new convergence applications such as pay-tv with internet, audio, voice and so forth.

In the preamble of the Act it was stated that it was intended:

"To promote convergence in the broadcasting, broadcasting signal distribution and telecommunications sectors and to provide the legal framework for convergence of these sectors; to make new provision for the regulation of electronic communications services, electronic communications network services and broadcasting services; to provide for the granting of new licenses and new social obligations…" (South Africa, 2006).

Mokoetle said the introduction of more satellite television channels would represent the largest explosion in the industry in South Africa since the launch of DSTV and it would end the monopoly of DSTV in the local market. It would also broaden the market substantially, reaching more people and opening the opportunity for the introduction of new channels, programming and services (Mokoetle, 2006). The partnerships with Sentech and Telkom would ensure distribution efficiency and the employment of other applications such as voice and mobile convergence. He believed the SABC had a strategic advantage as it had extensive archives to use as source for broadcast material. International partners had also been approached to provide additional content.

Yet, the approach of the SABC would be to target a different market as DSTV, said Mokoetle. Whereas the existing satellite pay-service targeted the upper LSM 8-10 market, the SABC and partners would aim for the LSM 5-8 market bringing wider services and more local content to more people at more affordable rates.

DSTV penetrated some 10% of the market, or just over a million households, while the SABC believed that anything between 35 to 50% or 5 million households could be reached (Mokoetle, 2006).

The strategy and technology would be different as well. The set-up box and sophistication of software would determine the extent of access and also the cost to the end user. The DSTV model was prohibitive – an all or nothing approach. In contrast the SABC would like to follow a tier approach. Viewers would be able to buy various packages or even pay-as-you-go (Mokoetle, 2006). Ironically Sabido, the sole shareholder of e.tv, also applied for a pay-TV license with the same kind of market in mind, according to CEO Marcel Golding (Derby, 2006b:4).

The SABC believed the introduction of more pay-tv stations and especially the offering by the SABC and partners would open many more opportunities for local independent producers in South Africa. Mokoetle said there had to be a massive expansion in the size and scope of the television production sector in South Africa. The SABC intended to offer some 40 to 50 channels. Some would be dedicated channels, such as for documentaries, soapies, sport, children and many more.

Yet, the business model had to change completely. The SABC already paid some 10 to 15 times more for some local productions, such as dramas, compared to those bought overseas. Independent producers would have to become business partners. Pay-television was a commercial venture and had to be profitable. Independent producers would have to form alliances to create economies of scale in order to bring costs down (Mokoetle, 2006).

The cost of a satellite channel had to be less than an estimated R120 million per year to be profitable in contrast to the cost of some R700 million per existing analogue channel (Mthembu, 2006).

ICASA expected that the competition in the new open satellite market would be fierce. There was no limit set on the number of licenses that could be granted, but ICASA anticipated that it could be five (Tsotsetsi, 2006). If each of these five licensees would offer 40 channels, South Africa would suddenly have 200 more channels to choose from apart from the choice already offered by DSTV.

Yet, this explosion of choice will be for those who have the means to pay for it. Even if some innovative packages could be offered, it might still be too expensive for viewers in remote regional areas.

9.2.2 Digital Terrestrial Television (DTTV)

Significantly, Mokoetle said the introduction of pay-tv by the SABC would be a step towards digital terrestrial television in two to three years. Such channels could be used to offer an extension of the public broadcasting services of the SABC. Commercial income from pay-tv, enhanced by the fact that more and cheaper foreign material would be screened, could be used to cross-subsidise public broadcasting and more local content on DTTV. However, it was difficult to predict what the revenue drivers would be. At present the PBS channel SABC 1 was actually the driver of revenue for the SABC – more so than the commercial channel SABC 3 (Mokoetle, 2006).

With DTTV, the SABC could also offer interactivity and have an e-government channel, e-health and various other such offerings to widen the information reach and help bridge the digital divide.

During his address to the independent producers Mokoetle gave the first public indication that the SABC was re-considering its regional television proposals. He suggested that regional services could be accommodated on DTTV. During normal SABC television broadcasts on national channels of local content material, the SABC could simultaneously stream the dialogue in various indigenous languages on digital audio channels.

Only two weeks later the GCEO of the SABC, Dali Mpofu, publicly said in an extensive article in *Finweek* that SABC 4 and SABC 5, as licensed by ICASA, would not be rolled out (Mwanza & Kelly, 2006:13). He said he did not believe that channels based on specific language preferences were the right option to follow. Mpofu envisaged that the SABC would be able to offer nine additional channels on DTTV over five to seven years, launching by 2008. Multiple audio channels tied to a video channel could enable the SABC to deliver more effective services and specific types of content to the various language communities while also fostering the spirit of nation building as a national broadcaster.

The statements made by Mpofu did not cause any consternation or follow-ups in the media. The researcher could find no such reports, and in a discussion with representatives of the Freedom of Expression Institute where they voiced their concern over the delay in introducing regional television, they were not even aware of the *Finweek* report.

Yet, fact remained that the licences for regional television were granted on the basis of a specific process and history and the directive to establish RTV was determined in law.

Although the Broadcasting Act had been overshadowed by the Electronics Communications Act, its legal determinants were still in force. The General Manager: Policy and Regulatory Affairs of the SABC, Lara Kantor, said the SABC had adhered to the legal instruction to apply for regional television channels and ICASA had also complied with its obligation by considering the SABC's submission and by granting the licenses with conditions. If the government would adhere to the legal stipulation of providing the funding, the SABC would have to roll out the services in terms of the licences granted. Any adjustment to the concept of regional television would have to be revised by parliament and the act amended (Kantor, 2006).

More information about future SABC plans concerning digital terrestrial television (DTTV) was provided by the General Manager: Strategy, Zweli Mthembu. He believed there would be inefficient frequency space to provide for digital migration if the SABC had to launch regional television channels on analogue. The space used by one analogue channel could accommodate six digital channels. The SABC could therefore offer two regional channels and additional dedicated channels for news, sport, education and parliament on digital platforms as compressed signals on one frequency. Nevertheless, Mthembu believed regional television was the wrong option and would never be realised. In a developing country such as South Africa, issues such as education and HIV/Aids were far more important than the funding of regional television. It was most unlikely that the government would ever follow the Indian example to fund such services completely (Mtembu, 2006). He thought technological developments and the awarding of the 2010 Soccer World Cup to South Africa had pushed regional television into the background.

The need concerning broadcasting was for services in the various languages and not regional television. Analogue regional television would in any event not deliver universal access as the signal would not be available all over the country or even in certain areas of a dedicated region. Mthembu explained that if a channel such as SABC 2 would broadcast on a digital platform, four audio channels in various languages could also be streamed on the same platform. DTTV would stimulate the local industry and it would be a tremendous boost to the auxiliary dubbing sector (Mthembu, 2006).

Mthembu stressed that a decision had to be taken soon to start the digital migration process in South Africa. Being the host broadcaster of the Soccer World Cup, the SABC would have to provide digital services to international broadcasters but it also had to broadcast to the people of the country. Especially in the earlier stages of the tournament two matches would be played at

the same time. If the SABC wanted to broadcasts both games on the analogue services, it would have to clear all the programming on SABC 1 and SABC 2 to accommodate soccer while completely disregarding the needs of many viewers who would like to see normal public broadcasting programming. The answer was clearly to launch dedicated digital sport channels. The longer it took to migrate to digital television the more expensive it would be as the SABC would have to pay for "double illumination" – the distribution and transmission costs of digital and analogue signals (Mthembu, 2006).

In Mthembu's view the first major challenge was the funding of the infrastructure for digital migration and then the subsidisation of the setup boxes for the end user. He estimated the cost of the migration process at R7 billion. In order to speed up the process, funding from government was essential, as the industry alone would only be able to do so over a period of two or more decades. There were various serious cost implications for the SABC in delivering digital terrestrial and satellite services. Should he SABC and its partners receive a license for a satellite service, an entirely new play-out centre would have to be established for the 40 planned satellite channels and it would take at least two years to build.

The Chief Financial Officer of the SABC, Robin Nicholson, believed the cost of the set-up boxes for digital television and the adjustment to television sets would cost some R6 billion. He was satisfied with the financial performance of the SABC in the past year, posting a profit of R383 million (almost double the previous year), revenue growth of 17% and exceptional success in boosting income from television licenses by 30% to R739 (Nicholson, 2006). Although there was scope for more revenue growth in increasing advertising rates, the license fee and other innovative ways of saving on expenses and taxes, the SABC would not be in a position to subsidise the lower and middle market to obtain set-up boxes. The government essentially had to take a political decision whether it would fund the set-up box. This would be determined by the perceived social value of delivering digital television (and thus information) to the poorer masses (Nicholson, 2006).

Nicholson believed the SABC had an obligation to deliver the kind of services envisaged in its regional television plans, but that it had to be realised in the digital terrestrial environment over time – probably only by 2012 and later. He thought the advertising industry could be developed to become interested in the more fragmented and broader lower-end market. As in India each transmitter could become a revenue point where businesses in a specific area could advertise to a very specific local community at different rates than those advertisers targeting a national audience. Such new initiatives could not be implemented on analogue. As indicated in

the tables below (Fig 41), there was a steady mobility in the South African population upwards from the lower LSM levels, raising expectations of an evolving market for advertisers.

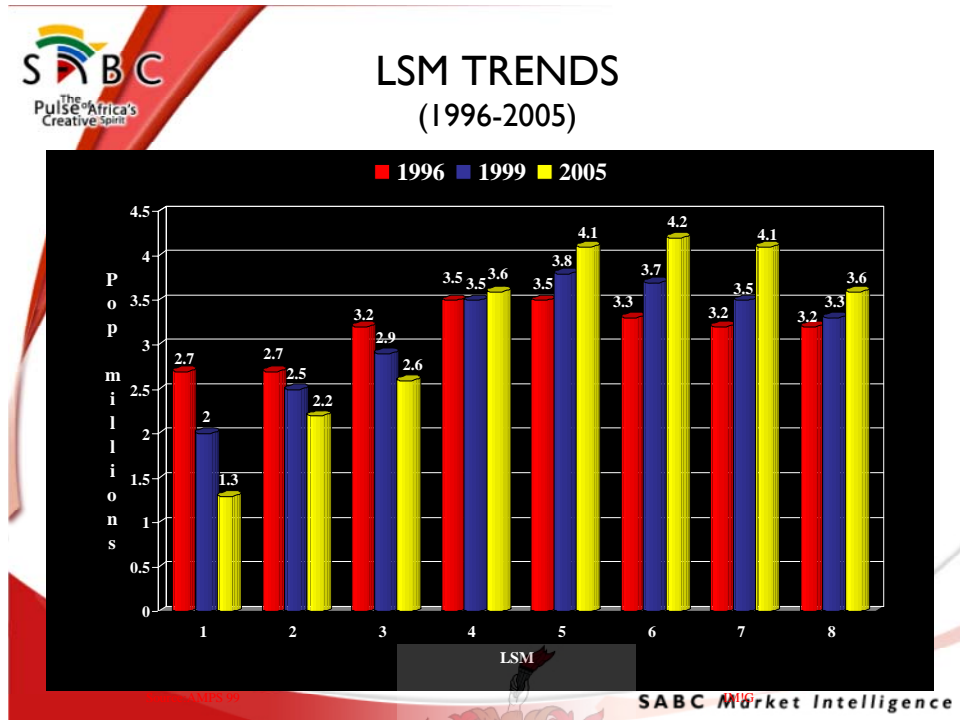Fig 41   (Nicholson, 2006)

The more lucrative ad spend was still at the higher end of the market and amongst white, Coloured and Indian citizens. The vast majority of the people at the lower end remained rural black people. But as could be seen in the next table (Fig 42), the SABC audience continued to gain advertising value. However, at the top end of the market fragmentation would increase as new competitors entered the digital era (Nicholson, 2006). His concern was whether the SABC would be able to emerge from "death valley", as he described it. With any new large capital project there was a downward spiral as the company spent money to prepare for production, started production and struggled to become profitable over time. He estimated it might take the SABC some 6 years before digital television would become profitable.
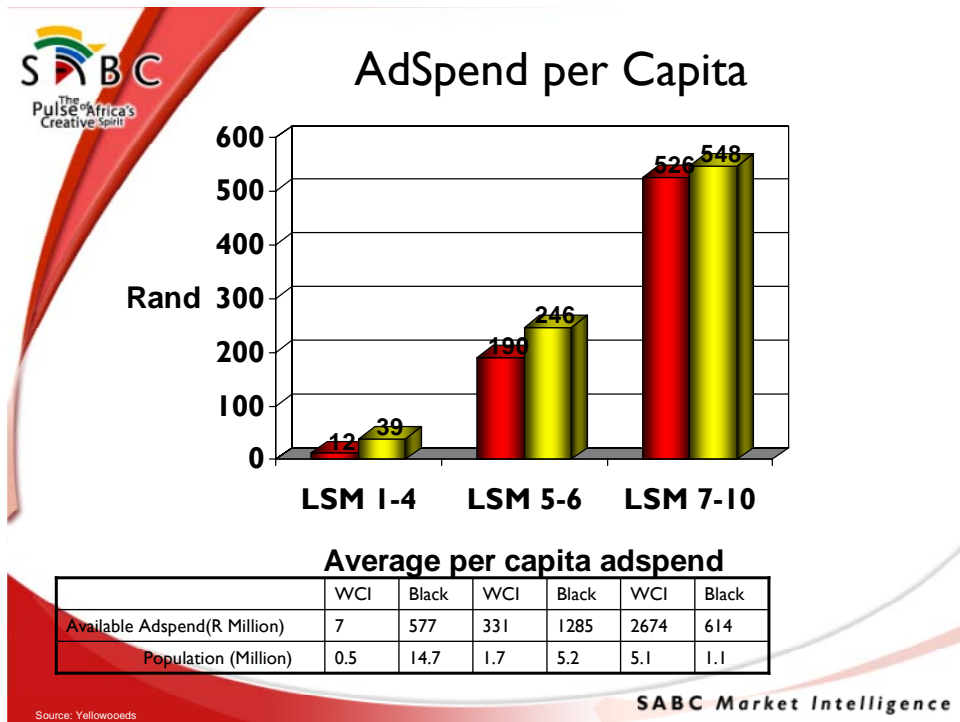
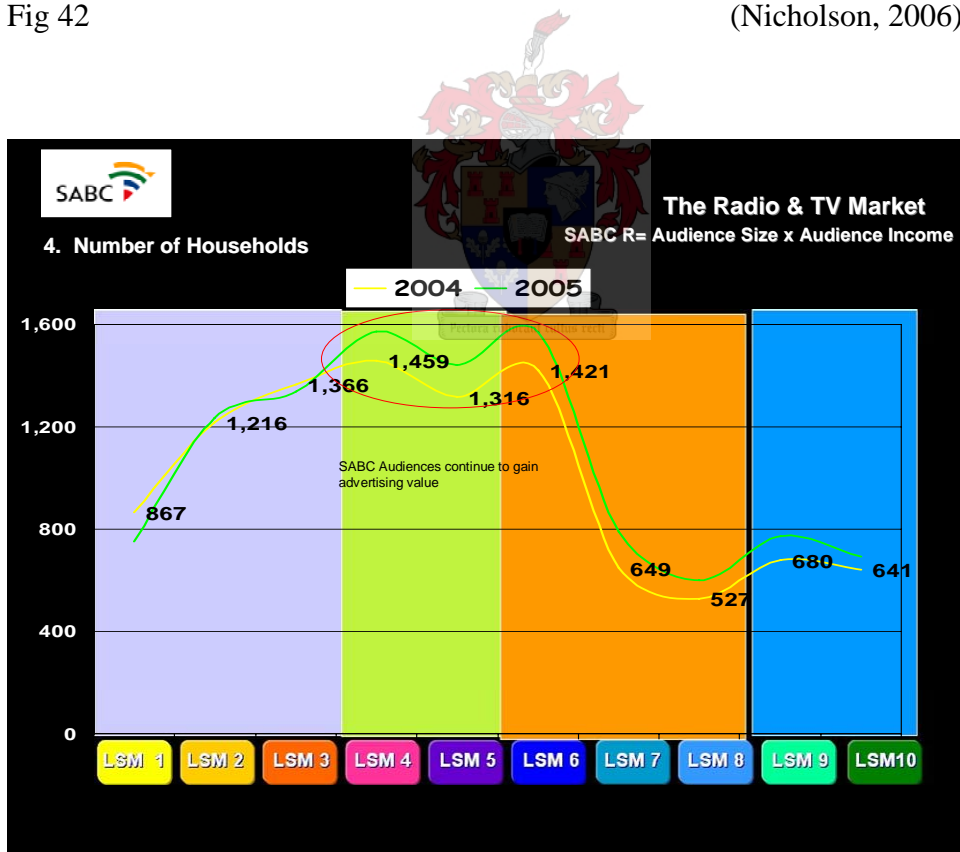Fig 42   (Nicholson, 2006)

Fig 43   (Nicholson, 2006)

9.2.3 The Position of Sentech

According to the acting operational manager of Sentech, Frans Lindeque, the company would have to upgrade each transmitter in the country to provide for DTTV. Some new transmitters would also have to be erected (Lindeque, 2006). The estimated cost was at least R1 billion. This had to be funded by government. Despite initial differences with government, the money was beginning to flow as all concerned realised the urgency to prepare for 2010. Sentech wanted to complete the process by 2008 in order to make sure that testing and then broadcast could be smooth by the time the Soccer World Cup commenced. Sentech would be able to provide High Definition Television transmission and distribution facilities to international broadcasters, but such services could only be offered much later locally to South Africans when some analogue services were switched off and migrated to digital channels.

Although Sentech could still provide the analogue frequencies should SABC 4 and SABC5 be launched, such analogue services would severely curtail the possibilities of digital options, said Lindeque. In place of one such analogue service, frequency space could open up to even 9 DTTV channels and 30 audio or digital radio stations. The roll out of two such analogue services would take 18 months and impact on the digital preparations for 2010. In addition the quality of broadcast pictures was far better on DTTV. He also argued that the need for regional television services could be accommodated by streaming the dubbed voice tracks in tandem. Unfortunately DTTV would not resolve the problem of those people in the 8% of land surface not covered by terrestrial transmitters. He believed a way would have to be found in future to bring television to people in such areas via satellite services.

The challenge remained how ordinary viewers in areas covered by existing transmitters would gain access to DTTV. There were three models concerning the access with set-up boxes:

- The very basic box giving free access with limited channels and no control by the broadcaster;

- Access to basic services with control by the broadcaster to switch off if the viewer did not pay a required fee such as a license fee;

- Full subscription access to many channels and services such as interactivity that would be fully controlled by the broadcaster on the basis of payment.

Lindeque said prices of the set-up boxes were coming down. He believed the cost of a basic box (under controlled conditions such as stable exchange rates) might cost R200 in two to

three years. Yet, it might still cost some R4 billion to fully subsidise the set-up boxes to all end-users. Part of the cost could be recovered by selling off spare frequency space to mobile phone companies to provide mobile TV or to others for data streaming or internet broadcasting. He could foresee that some 60 mobile channels might be available by 2010, delivering different services to that of the SABC and also earning income via advertising. Alcatel South Africa was already planning internet television in the country. The problem was the bandwidth available, the high price and the slow demand for broadband. The number of broadband users was expected to be still under a million by 2010 (Mochiko, 2005:1). Yet, with the new second telecommunications network operator, Neotel, entering the market, it is logical to assume that increased competition might lead to lower prices and increased demand..

9.2.4 The SABC and New Media

The SABC had already launched a new initiative, SABC Mobile, in 2005 to become part of the "unstoppable global force of convergence" (Van Tonder, 2006). It was the SABC's intention to be an active and capacitated participant and not merely a content provider. The corporation was already developing more interactive applications, mobile games, SMS competitions and business services to optimise mobile revenues. SMS applications were extremely popular with viewers as a means to interact with favourite programmes. Advertising clients were also starting to use it.

The manager of SABC Mobile said the corporation had recently procured a Wireless Application Service Provider (WASP) platform to connect directly into the Cell C, MTN and Vodacom networks to access and interact with SABC viewers and listeners via their mobile phones. The "killer application" was mobile television. The SABC was in a good position to provide content for such services. Mobile network operators and broadcasters had to find a way to work together. With the SABC's partnership with Telkom (and thus also Vodacom) for satellite television, it could build such a relationship.

9.3 RTV as a victim of new technology?

All the dazzle of digital television and the various applications would mean very little to the average South African viewer if it did not add understandable and practical user value, said Regulatory Manger, Lynne Mansfield. The ordinary person was neutral to the technology platform and cared more about the content. For such a person the sophisticated, multi-functional digital platforms had little relevance. And if it came at a heavy price, it would not be accepted (Mansfield, 2006). Even if the platform could be delivered without additional cost to the end

user, considerable sums would have to be spent on marketing and education to familiarise viewers to the system.

During a meeting at the SABC in August 2006, the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Communications (DOC), Dr. Harold Wesso, said he was perplexed by the fact that he had received two separate reports on his table dealing with seemingly irreconcilable developments.

The consulting company Utho that had investigated the possibility of different Public Private Partnerships for the introduction and operation of RTV, delivered its report. It contained four different scenarios. At the same time he started getting information about how South Africa would comply with the decision of the ITU to migrate to digital platforms by 2015. The DOC's working group on digital migration had been given a deadline of October 2006 to report to the Minister. As a newcomer to the DOC in April 2006, he was amazed that he still had to consider proposals for services on analogue while there were several challenges concerning digital migration and the many opportunities it offered. He believed the RTV proposals had to be reviewed (Wesso, 2006).

Wesso though it might be a good option to decide on a speedy digitisation process to move beyond analogue broadcast. (The author has subsequently reliably learnt that the Working Group on Digital Migration suggested to the minister in its report at the end of October 2006 that regional television should be considered on digital platforms). Wesso said the approach of having dual illumination (digital and analogue broadcasting at the same time), would be fairly expensive for the SABC as it would have to pay Sentech more. Sentech estimated this additional cost at 30% (Lindeque, 2006). He believed information communication technologies could be used as a means to empower people in a nation building process. The SABC's Managing Director of Technology, Sharoda Rapeti, warned however, that a major campaign would still be necessary in future to familiarise the average person with the new technologies and how to use it (Rapeti, 2006). Technology should not become an inhibiting factor to limit access to the less skilled and illiterate in society. Wesso was also worried whether the SABC would have the skills capacity to deliver content, given the new demands that more digital terrestrial and satellite channels would bring to the industry.

According to Rapeti the SABC had already dismantled many of the equipment in regions as part of a cost cutting exercise to deploy it to Johannesburg. Since the SABC had progressed about one third towards digitising its internal operations, it would be difficult to redeploy

equipment to the regions again for analogue broadcasting. The head of Audience services, Anton Heunis, added that it was a real concern for the SABC that it had to prepare for digital broadcasting to the whole world in 2010 while it could still not reach all the citizens of South Africa in the country. This could be achieved through digital satellite transmission (Heunis, 2006).

It was stated that the SABC would have to think completely out of the box about how to fund its operations in the future (Rapeti, 2006). One option was to disconnect the license fee from a device – in other words the television set. In the new digital technological era, content could be distributed on various platforms such as television, computer, iPod or cell phone. The device would increasingly become irrelevant. The service selected to receive was more important. Therefore the SABC could broadcast a range of programming on one basis level. This would be the normal service that the average person would be able to access through a television set. This service could be subsidised by government in allocating set-up boxes for digital signal receiving and by lowering the license fee. More extensive services such as dedicated sport and news channels could be accessed by people with the means to pay for it. In this way no one would loose out as the poorer sections of society would still receive a valuable service. The richer people would pay for greater variety while also having access to normal programming (Rapeti, 2006).

It is clear: the digital era has arrived in South Africa with many implications – not least of all for regional television.
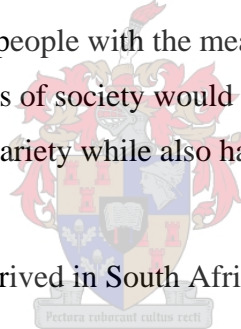
10. Conclusion

The qualitative research approach to this study was certainly most useful in gaining greater understanding of the thesis topic and the larger international picture concerning regional television and technological advances. Much insight and perspective was given by the 28 expert individuals who gave in-depth interviews. This was supplemented by the views expressed by 36 people in the field. They participated in the convenient sampling of the snap survey giving personal interviews to the author or colleagues. Another layer of information and understanding was added by the careful content analysis of several documents, official papers and acts, reference books and news reports.

As indicated in chapter 2, the study was placed within the framework of the developmental theory of mass media communication. Naturally the study could not investigate real broadcasts to test the relevance of the practice to the theory as the broadcasts have not started. The approach was rather to determine to what extent the *intentions* of what various parties wanted to see in regional television were aligned with the basic elements of the developmental theory. There certainly were elements in alignment. But an intention might not be realised in practice – keeping in mind that the *magic bullet effect theory* has largely been discredited (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994:537). It is more likely that the *uses and gratification* theory will come into play in the sense that those people, who would have a choice, would determine their watching patterns on the quality and content of the regional channels and switch away if they do not get what they want. This was stated quite bluntly by one of the respondents in the field survey.

As indicated in Chapter 2.3 *functionalism* did have some relevance as the government clearly wanted to see services on regional television that would contribute to a "shared South African consciousness and identity" (South Africa, 2003). This would be in line with the aspect of functionalism that the media should contribute to integration, harmony and cohesion. However, from his interview with Finweek, one gained the impression that the SABC Group Chief Executive, Dali Mpofu, did not believe that "creating channels dedicated to a single language or language group [would] promote the spirit of nation building that we're committed to as a national broadcaster" (Mwanza & Kelly, 2006:13). In his view regional television could have the opposite effect. This could be true, but the author was somewhat surprised during the field interviews to find people who, while they obviously wanted to see more programming in their own languages, also expressed a willingness to watch programmes of other language groups in order to learn more about other fellow South Africans. In the end it would all depend

on how programming content would be designed. If it was designed to give a service to the particular group but at the same time also to inform them about developments in other communities and in the country at large, then it could fulfil the kind of role envisaged in the functional theory.

It appeared to the author that ICASA in its various reports and the SABC in its applications for regional television and in the evidence at the ICASA oral hearings, had the clear intent that regional television should give "preference to information about national, cultural and language issues" – the elements of developmental theory as defined by Fourie (Fourie, 2001:274). Not only was the intention to contribute towards such goals in the *broadcasts* of regional television but also that the introduction of such channels would expand the industry, create jobs, accelerate training and expand skills (ICASA, 2003a:6;11). In the Executive Summary of the SABC's application it was stated: "The SABC as the national public broadcaster has a unique responsibility to broadcast programmes that promote the development of national and regional identities while supporting the development of South African language and cultures" (SABC, 2003b:9).

Moreover, as pointed out in Chapter 7.3.1, the SABC regarded the introduction of regional television as integrally part of the nodal development plans announced by President Thabo Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address in 2001. Placing the SABC in such a role would also be in line with the definition of *multiplicity developmental theory* as suggested by Professor Fackson Banda of Rhodes University where the emphasis was more on process and context. He also believed the public service broadcaster, in this case SABC, was the best medium for developmental journalism.

There would be no conflict between this view and the goals set by the SABC in the Group Chief Executive's mission statement of "Broadcasting for total citizen empowerment". The conflict might arise in the question whether regional television as proposed (and legislated for) was necessarily the best vehicle to achieve such goals. Furthermore, the central question about the feasibility of regional television might also be problematic. There is no use in having intent according to wonderful theories, if the means are not there to implement it. This author certainly discovered it was highly unlikely that the proposals as submitted and licensed by ICASA would be implemented. Yet, many of the ideals of the developmental theory could still remain valid if other models were considered.

It might be prudent to also sound a cautionary note about the developmental theory. Although Professor Banda seemed to believe that his sanitised definition of the theory would take care of the demonization of the concept within Western notions of press freedom, the SABC as public service broadcaster was periodically plagued by a public perception of being under government control. At the strategic SABC News workshop in October 2006, the Managing Director of News did state the editorial line that SABC News was independent. Yet, he was also in favour of the developmental theory – a theory according to Fourie that accepted state subsidies and control in order to protect development objectives (2001:274). The serious questions were: Who would decide on the basis of what, when it would be necessary to intervene?

Several barriers to media development, and the introduction of regional television as proposed by the SABC, could be identified. The first is ironically *media barriers* – the lack of skilled professionals in the industry that would be able to set-up and sustain such services. This would be true in the SABC and in the private sector. While it was one of the goals to stimulate the industry through the development of regional television, it would take time to do so. In a sense this also tied in with *cultural* barriers – the level of underdevelopment of the people the channels must serve (explaining the skills shortage) but also the fact that services had to be delivered in ten languages, meaning the same talent had to be duplicated over and over again in every community. Naturally this would be highly expensive and cost prohibiting – leading onto the *economic* barriers.

In terms of the Broadcasting Amendment Act, the state had to fund the regional services. ICASA granted the regional licenses to the SABC in June 2005. The original plan was to have the regional services on air by 2006. Yet, no funding plans have transpired. The last barrier would be the *technology* barriers. While digital technology offered many possibilities the cost of implementation for general viewing and access was prohibitive and so was the level of information technology literacy in the country. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, even in a highly developed country such as Britain, an intensive education process had to be launched to prepare citizens for the digital television era.

The author has indicated in Chapter 2 that the *social responsibility* and the *democratic-participant* theories could also be relevant but the preferred model was the developmental theory. The democratic participant theory will certainly become more relevant when ICASA considers and eventually grants licenses for community television. As indicated by Mr. Tsotsetsi of ICASA, this might well happen within the next few years. Right now, before the introduction of regional television, the social responsibility theory is probably the most appropriate for the

services of the SABC. The new Group Chief Executive of the SABC has emphatically placed social responsibility at the core of the SABC's duties – to broadcast for citizen empowerment. The citizens he refers to are citizens of the country and employees of the SABC. His value statement also reflects this: to build a common future and to restore human dignity (SABC, 2006).

In conclusion:

There can be no doubt that the world and in particular a third world country such as South Africa, was entering a most fascinating and exciting television and communications era. There is an explosion of technology, platforms, devices and choice as never before. These are developments that will thrill but also daunt the average person. And while all of this is happening, the country is also struggling to provide basic services to millions of people – including basic radio and television reception. The SABC's Lynn Mansfield believed 3.6 million people in the country still did not receive television and 5.2 million did not have access to FM radio, as illustrated in the tables below (Fig 44 & 45) (Mansfield, 2006).
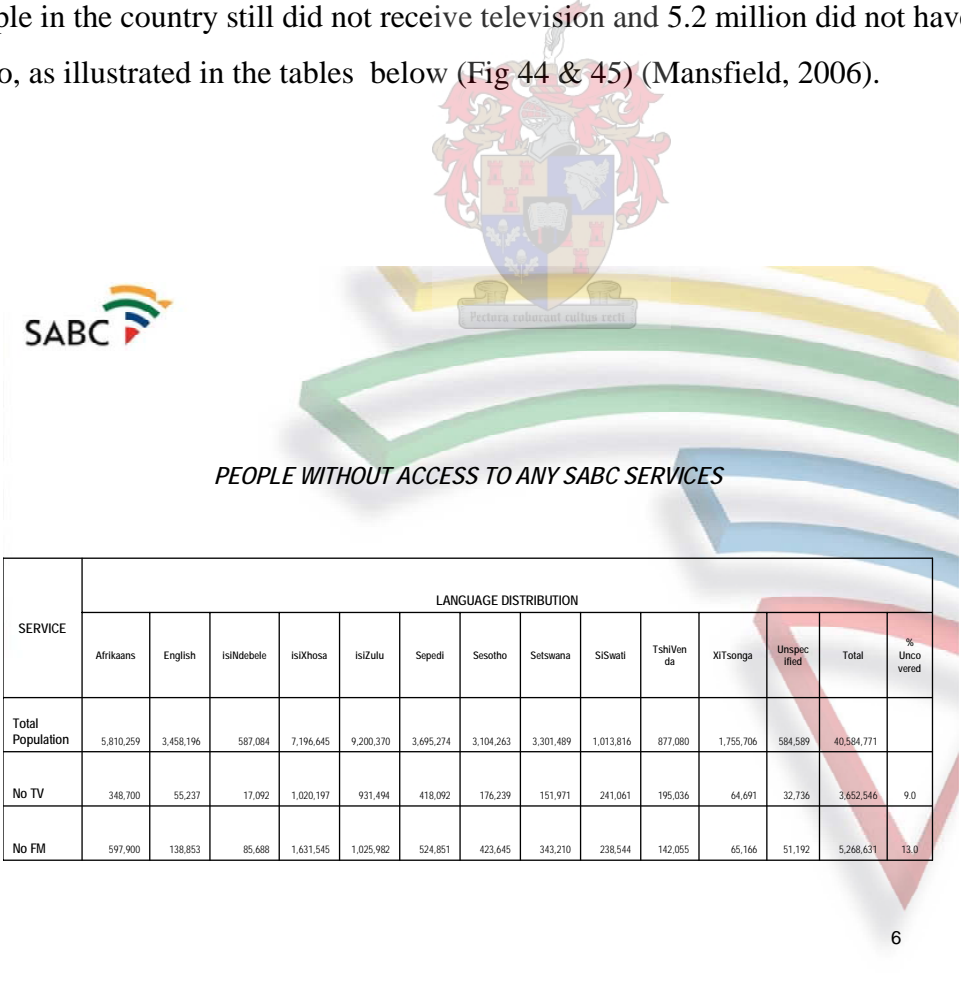
PEOPLE WITHOUT ACCESS TO ANY SABC SERVICES

SERVICE	LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION													
	Afrikaans	English	isiNdebele	isiXhosa	isiZulu	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	SiSwati	TshiVenda	XiTsonga	Unspecified	Total	% Uncovered
Total Population	5,810,259	3,458,196	587,084	7,196,645	9,200,370	3,695,274	3,104,263	3,301,489	1,013,816	877,080	1,755,706	584,589	40,584,771	
No TV	348,700	55,237	17,092	1,020,197	931,494	418,092	176,239	151,971	241,061	195,036	64,691	32,736	3,652,546	9.0
No FM	597,900	138,853	85,688	1,631,545	1,025,982	524,851	423,645	343,210	238,544	142,055	65,166	51,192	5,268,631	13.0

6

Fig 44   (Mansfield, 2006).

AREAS WITHOUT ACCESS TO A SABC FM SERVICE
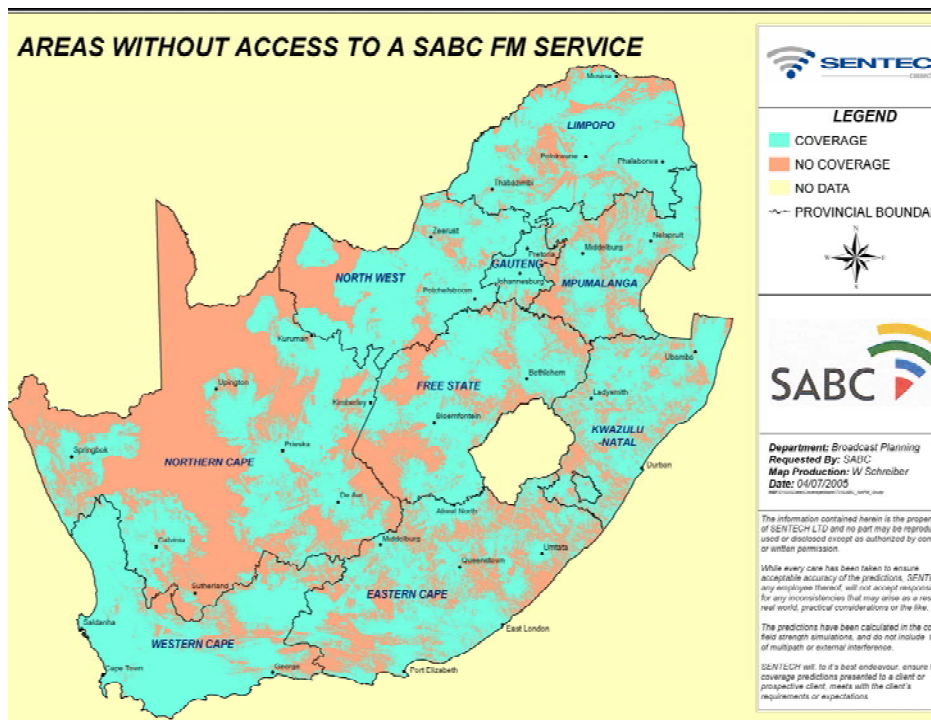
Fig 45   (Mansfield, 2006).

Considering all the arguments, one has to conclude that the SABC followed the logical option at the time (2003) to suggest analogue regional television services. Yet, the lapse of time and subsequent developments such as the advancement of technology, the decision by the International Telecommunications Union that analogue services should be phased out, and South Africa's obligations as host of the 2010 Soccer World Cup (and to deliver digital broadcast services) changed the picture fundamentally.

There can be little doubt that the decision to introduce legislation instructing the SABC to apply for regional television services was taken with some haste and without thorough investigation to determine the cost and practicality. Several people told this researcher that the decision was a political one driven by a desire to reach more people (or voters). The author could not establish this independently, but an opposition politician, Dr. Pieter Mulder of the Freedom Front+, bluntly stated that the ANC wanted the services up and running before the local elections in 2006 (2006). If there had been such a notion, it obviously failed.

The concept of regional television should be revisited and deliberated against the backdrop of the totally changed circumstances.

Irrespective of political considerations, the principle of introducing more services to more people in their indigenous languages, was a good one and in line with the constitution and the mandate of the SABC as public broadcaster. There were mainly three problems:

- funding,

- the timing of the introduction of such services, and

- how comprehensive the services would be.

The following points can be made:

- The introduction of two regional television stations at a cost of at least R500 million or more per annum when the country was still in a developing stage with so many people not having access to basic services or the means to pay for it, could hardly be justified. Interviews with members of the viewing public in various provinces confirmed that poor people wanted their basic needs addressed first. If the state could use the money that might be allocated to RTV to accelerate delivery of basic services and to create jobs, development could be accelerated giving more people the means and the desire to pay for regional services in their own languages on a digital platform.

- It was regrettable that the SABC did not persevere in exploring and delivering regional services in windows in partnership with private companies in 1999 when it was first investigated. It was a missed opportunity to at least deliver some limited services in various marginalised languages and to develop talent in the regions. There can be no doubt that South Africa would now have been in a far better position to deliver content to satisfy the massive need that will arise with the introduction of more satellite and DTTV channels.

The Chief Operating Officer of the SABC, Solly Mokoetle, was proud of the fact that the SABC had increased local content by almost 20% in the past financial year (2005/2006). He also declared that the SABC had contracted 114 private companies – 88 were from Gauteng, 18 from the Western Cape, 6 from KwaZulu-Natal, one from the North West Province, one from the Eastern Cape and none from the other provinces (Mokoetle, 2006). In broader perspective this was really an indictment of the SABC, other broadcasters and the government that more had not been done to develop capacity and talent – especially in the marginalised provinces and communities.

- Globally television and broadcasting services are in a state of flux. Due to new technologies, more and better services on various platforms will be delivered to more people than ever before. In this time of fundamental transition, it might be best for South Africa to concentrate on the things that must be done first – such as the preparations for

171

2010. By using the opportunity to get the infrastructure in place for digital television, more possibilities will open for the benefit of the poorer sections of the population and in the languages of the various groups – in particular the marginalised language communities.

- In a few years the development of technology might bring down the cost of delivering digital satellite television and the cost of the set-up boxes as indicated by Lindeque of Sentech (2006). With digital satellite television it will be possible to deliver a better service over a wider area to people of any language group. A Venda person will not have to live in the northern part of the country in order to receive the service. Digital television (satellite or DTTV) will also offer several other advantages such as using the television set to tune in to many radio stations; or to supplement normal SABC television channels with various dubbed audio digital channels in several languages; or to provide e-government and education channels to accelerate the level of skills in the country.

- ICASA is considering the introduction of community television stations in the more developed urban areas. The acting General Manager: Broadcasting of the regulator, believes up to five such licenses could be issued in the next year or two (Tsotsetsi, 2006). Such stations would no doubt also broadcast in some indigenous languages. This will of course increase competition for the SABC but it will also play a positive role in developing talent and infrastructure. Later alliances or partnerships can be forged to use such programming, infrastructure and talent for the SABC.

  Apart from normal programming, the stations might sell airtime to private companies, institutions and NGO's and even government departments in the morning/afternoon slots or later in the evening. Normal programming can also be longer than the initial four hours suggested in the SABC's model for regional television. Programme formats such as talk shows are cheap and at the same time it can contribute further to satisfy the demand for programming in indigenous languages.

- If the government really still believed strongly that regional television should be introduced, the regional window break-away services such as those offered by the SABC before (*Cape @ Six, KZN-2-Nite* and *Mopani*) could be considered. This is actually what should have happened in 1999/2000 and it is a practice well established in other countries as pointed out in the chapter on international experiences. The former SABC services were popular and successful. The problem was the limited service: only one hour. This can be extended to two hours – from 17:00 to 19:00.The SABC discontinued the services because

it was deemed too expensive and it made inroads in the normal programming and thus affected advertising revenue. Yet, if the SABC should re-introduce such services, the government could be requested to fund it from the start. It will no doubt be far cheaper to fund such services than two separate wide range regional channels.

A problem during the broadcast of the regional windows was the complaints by some people who did not want to see the regional service but wanted to stay tuned to the national channel (especially Afrikaans speakers who wanted to see soapies such as *7e Laan* on SABC2). This problem can be resolved by marketing the regional channels better and to reschedule the popular programmes at times when all viewers can watch it. Digital technology will provide better opportunities for such services in the next two to three years. While analogue is still in operation, the analogue versions of SABC 1 and SABC 2 can have break-away windows while the "normal" channel can continue on satellite or DTTV to the people who can afford digital technology.

- In the meantime the SABC must do its utmost, with assistance from the state, to broaden the signal distribution network for terrestrial television and radio. It is simply unacceptable that so many millions of citizens still do not have access to radio and television at all. It makes sense that the SABC should first try to reach as many people as possible with existing services. In the process it can also improve the language services on television as requested by ICASA. The roll out of more transmitters will be expensive – especially if measured in terms of cost effectiveness. The less people in a particular area, the more costly it becomes. But people living in such areas are also citizens with a right to have access to services. Again digital television and subsidisation of set-up boxes might be the answer for those really isolated communities. Innovative strategies can be developed to relay satellite signals to community centres where isolated communities could at least have some access.

- The best option will be to provide digital satellite services to all the people in the country – the option India implemented. If the SABC should be successful, with its partners Sentech and Telkom, to receive a licence for pay-TV, it will provide the opportunity to establish the infrastructure, sort out the technology, develop talent, get out of "Death Valley", make money and then start subsidising a PBS service more geared for the poorer communities in marginalised languages. According to Mansfield the SABC now pays some R250 million per annum to Sentech for the distribution of terrestrial signals. The cost of providing a countrywide service on satellite would be an estimated R15 million per year.

- The most likely option was probably to start limited DTTV services by 2008. Initially SABC 1 and SABC 2 can be delivered on a digital platform with some of the programming dubbed into the four marginalised languages of Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele and SiSwati streamed on digital audio channels. But it entails that the SABC should start as soon as possible to develop a thriving dubbing industry. At the very least it can help to develop it with the support of the government and other institutions. The corporation must also start identifying the programmes that could be dubbed and build up an archive for later use.

It is clear that much time, energy and money have been wasted over the past four years in trying to develop a model for regional television and to determine how to fund it. Time and technology have surpassed the proposed model. Funding has still not been resolved.

The SABC clearly cannot implement an old model based on old technology in an era of breathtaking new technology and increasing competition. In this new world where broadcasters worldwide are trying to redefine their position in order to continue generating revenue and survive, South Africa's model for regional television as licensed by ICASA does not make sense. The SABC was already seriously engaged in a process to determine a new funding model for public broadcasting in South Africa. Given the fact that commercial television stations the world over are struggling to survive, public broadcasters will face even greater challenges.

It is this researcher's humble suggestion that it is time for government and role players to engage in a serious summit on the future of television in our country and on our continent. This was already a discussion point during the summits of the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) and Public Broadcasting International (PBI) in Maputo, Mozambique in late September 2006 (Molefe, 2006a).

South Africa cannot afford to make unnecessary mistakes now when technological challenges are so serious and funding so precarious. At the same time there are tremendous opportunities in the development of the broadcasting industry for all stakeholders. It is possible to deliver more advanced, better quality services and greater variety. In the process the industry will blossom and become one of the most dynamic, creating employment opportunities and advancing skills development.

After this extensive research, one had to come to the inevitable conclusion that technology has bypassed the proposed model for RTV for our country's diverse peoples. The new

technological developments and the sudden opening up of the market can be of great value to South Africa and her citizens. Much is going to happen in the next three years as the country get geared for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. It is possible that the country might then have some 250 satellite channels, an additional 9 terrestrial national digital channels, four to five community channels and 60 or more mobile television channels. Some of these channels might well be language channels designed to serve the audiences intended in the proposals for regional television.

One thing is certain: There will be an abundance of television choice for the South African citizen in the next few years. But will it be appropriate for the under serviced, marginalised communities in deep rural areas of Limpopo and Mpumalanga? This is the question that needs an answer in terms of regional TV and its role in a young democracy.
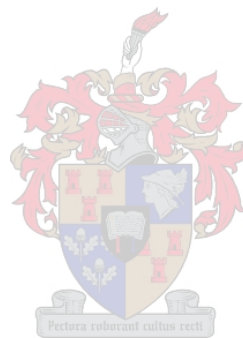
References

ACMA. 2006. Australian Communications and Media Authority. Television licenses. Retrieved on 9 August 2006 from the World Wide Web:
http://www.acma.gov.au/ACMAINTER.131218:STANDARD::pc=PC_91868;
http://www.acma.gov.au/ACMAINTER.131180:LANDING:796309675:pc=RADIOTV,tlp=RADIOTV.

Banda, Fackson. 2006. An appraisal of the Applicability of Development Journalism in the Context of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB). Unpublished paper read to the Strategic SABC News Workshop, Boksburg, South Africa, 2006-10-21 October 2006. Retrieved on 5 February from the SABC intranet: http://newsnet/upload_research/inhouse/workshopoct06/banda.pdf

Beeld, 2006. DTTV tref SA kykers in 2008. (DTTV to hit SA viewers in 2008). *Beeld.* 5 July 2006.

Berman, Saul J., Shipnuck, Louisa A. & Duffy, Niall. 2006. The end of TV as we know it: A future industry perspective. *IBM Institute for Business Value study*, 27 March 2006. Retrieved on 29 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www-1.ibm.com/services/us/index.wss/ibvstudy/imc/a1023172?cntxt=a100006

Blaauw, Christoff. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 26 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Campbell, Richard., Martin, Christopher R. & Fabos, Bettina. 2007. *Media & Culture. An Introduction to Mass Communication.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

CIA, 2006. The World Factbook. Retrieved 8 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/in.html

Commerford, Brian. 2004a. Briefing to SABC Management, 27 July 2004, Johannesburg. Accessed in confidential documentation of the SABC.

Commerford, Brian. 2004b. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town. Western Cape Province.

DeFleur, Melvin L. & Dennis, Everette E. 1994. *Understanding Mass Communication*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Department of Communications. 2006. Media Statement: Digital Broadcast Migration on Tack for 2010 Roll-Out. 7 August 2006. Retrieved on 28 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.doc.gov.za/Media_Statement_20060807_Digital_Broadcasting_Migration

Department of Communications. 2004. Public Statement: Terms of reference for Regional Television Public Private Partnership. October 2004. Pretoria, South Africa.

Derby, Ron. 2006a. Telkom and SABC apply for pay-TV license. *Business Day*. 1 September 2006.

Derby, Ron. 2006b. E.tv owner Sabido seeks pay-television license. *Business Day*. 4 September 2006.

Djolov, George. 2007. [georged@ascci.org.za]. Accessed: 2007- 02-07. Personal e-mail to author.

Doordarshan, 2006. Regional Language Satellite Service. Retrieved on 8 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.ddindia.gov.in/About+DD/CPC.

e.tv. 2004. Submission to ICASA on SABC's Application for Public Regional services. 9 February 2004. Johannesburg.

De Bod, Manie. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 14 April 2005 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

De Souza, Lydia. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 20 April 2005 at te ICASA offices, Sandton, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Du Plooy, G.M. 2002. *Communication Research. Techniques, Methods and Applications*. Lansdowne: Juta.

Doyle, A. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 20 April 2005 at the ICASA offices, Sandton, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Dreyer, Aldred. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 9 June 2005 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Fourie, Pieter J. 2001. *Media Studies. Volume One. Institutions,Theories and Issues*. Lansdowne: Juta Education.

Fuchs, Oren. 2004a. E-mail sent to Kim Heller on 1 September 2004. Johannesburg.

Fuchs, Oren. 2004b. Personal interview conducted on 13 December 2004 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Garfield, Bob. 2005. Bob Garfield's Chaos Scenario. A look at the Marketing Industry's Coming Disaster. *Advertising Age*.com. 13 April 2005. Retrieved on 3 May 2005 from the World Wide Web: http://www.adage.com/news.cms?newsID=44782

Government of India, 2006. Annual Report 2005/2006, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi. Retrieved on 8 August from the World Wide Web: http://mib.nic.in/informationb/POLICY/ar/arE05_06.html

Heunis, Anton. 2006. Discussion notes. 15 August 2006. SABC Head Office, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

ICASA, 2002. South African Content on Television and Radio Position Paper and Regulations. 15 February 2002.

ICASA, 2003a. Discussion Paper. Inquiry into Regional Television. 22 August 2003. Johannesburg.

ICASA, 2003b. Regional Television Broadcasting Services. Position Paper. 26 November 2003

ICASA. 2004a. Oral hearing on the SABC's application for SABC4. 5 October 2004. Polokwane, Limpopo Province.

ICASA. 2004b. Oral hearing on the SABC' application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town. Western Cape Province.

ICASA. 2004c. Letter to SABC on 26 October 2004.

ICASA. 2005. Application for two regional public television licenses by the South African Broadcasting Corporation in terms of section 22A of the Broadcasting Act, Act 4 of 1999. June 2005. Johannesburg.

ICASA. 2006. Media/Stakeholder Notice. 27 January 2006. Johannesburg.

ITU, 2006. International Telecommunication Union. Press release. Digital broadcasting set to transform communication landscape by 2015. 16 June 2006. Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved on 10 July 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2006/11.html

Jooste, Ida. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 25 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Kantor, Andrew. 2006b.The future of television lies on television, not on the Net. *USA Today*, Cyber Speak. Retrieved on 29 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.usatoday.com/tech/columnist/andrewakntor/2005-07-28-kantor-future-tv_x.htm

Kantor, Lara. 2004a. Letter to ICASA. Response to e.tv and Sentech comments. 9 March 2004.

Kantor, Lara. 2004b. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC4. 5 October 2004. Polokwane. Limpopo Province.

Kantor, Lara. 2004c. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town. Western Cape Province.

Kantor, Lara. 2004d. Letter of response to ICASA. 26 November 2004. Johannesburg

Kantor, Lara. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 4 May 2005 at the SABC Head Office, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Kantor, Lara. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 8 September 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Keene-Young, Bronwyn. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's License Amendments. 18 October 2004. Cape Town.

Kelly, Pat. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 18 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Klaassen, Abbey. 2006. TiVo: an Advertiser's Best Friend? Signs Ad Pact With Omnicom for Audience Data. 30 August 2006. *Advertising Age.com*. Retrieved on 1 September 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://adage.com/mediaworks/article?article_id=111572

Koster, Johann. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 11 April 2005 at the NAB offices, Hyde Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Langa, Mandla. 2004a. Letter to the GCEO of the SABC, 5 February 2004. Johannesburg.

Langa, Mandla. 2004b. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's License Amendments. 5 October 2004. Polokwane.

Lemon, Jennifer. 1997. The Research Process. In: Du Plooy, G.M. Ed. 1997. *Introduction to Communication. Course Book 2. Communication Research.* Cape Town: Juta.

Levy, Steven. 2006. Television Reloaded. MSNBC.com Newsweek. 23 May 2005. Retrieved on 29 August 2006 from the World Wide Web:

http://www.msnbc,msn.com/id/7935915/site/newsweek/print/1/displaymode/1098

Lindeque, Frans. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 3 August 2006 at Sentech Head Office, Four Ways, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Lloyd, Libby. 2002. All our Voices. A Review of the SABC's Language Policy.

Mansfield, Lynn. 2004. E-mail sent to Kim Heller. Re: Technical cost, Regional Television on 22 September 2004. Johannesburg.

Mansfield, Lynn. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 11 April 2005 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Mansfield, Lynn. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 2 June 2006 at the SABC Headquarters, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Manual, Trevor. 2004. Address to the Youth Ministers' Project, Western Cape Launch. 10 June 2004. Retrieved on 1 February 2007 from the World Wide Web:

http://www.treasury.gov.za/speech/2004061501.pdf

Maree, Anina. 2004a. SABC Market Intelligence Report. Regional Channels: Potential impact model. August 2004.

Maree, Anina. 2004b. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC4. 5 October 2004. Polokwane.

Maree, Anina. 2004c. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town.

Markovitz, M. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's License Amendments. 5 October 2004. Polokwane.

Matlare, Peter. 2003. Letter to the Chairperson of ICASA, 8 December 2003. Johannesburg.

Matlare, Peter. 2004a. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC4. 5 October 2004. Polokwane. Limpopo Province.

Matlare, Peter. 2004b. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town. Western Cape Province.

Matsepe-Casaburri, Ivy. 2004. Address by the Minister to the National Assembly on the occasion of the Budget Vote of the Department of Communications. Cape Town, 21 June 2004. Retrieved on 29 December 2005 from the World Wide Web: http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2004/04062316151001.htm

Mawela, Calvo. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's License Amendments. 18 October 2004. Cape Town.

Mazwai, Thami. 2006. Address to the second Annual Media and Society Conference. 19 October 2006. Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Mbeki, Thabo. 2001. The State of the Nation Address. National Assembly Chamber, Parliament on 9 February 2001, Cape Town. Retrieved on 11 April 2005 from the Government Information Home Page: http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2001/0102131223p1001.htm

Mbeki, Thabo. 2004. The State of the Nation Address. National Assembly Chamber, Parliament on 6 February 2004, Cape Town. Retrieved on 2 February 2007 from the Government Information Home Page: http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2004/04020610561002.htm

Merril, John,C. 2003. Global Press Philosophies. In: De Beer, Arnold,S. & Merrill, John,C. Eds.2003. *Global Journalism. Topical Issues and Media Systems*. Working Copy. Stellenbosch: US Printers.

MindBullets. 2006. Move over CNN, we're all connected now. *MindBullets: News from the future*. Retrieved on 28 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.mindbullets.net/

Minnaar, Izak. 1999. *Regional TV Brief*. E-mail message sent to moodleyv@sabc.co.za. 4 May 1999.

Minnaar, Izak. 2000a. *Report on the SABC's 1998/99 initiative to establish Regional TV as joint venture breakaway services*. SABC, Johannesburg, South Africa. September 2000.

Minnaar, Izak. 2000b. *SABC Regional Television Services (RTV) – a joint venture approach*. SABC, Johannesburg. October 2000.

Minnaar, Izak. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 26 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Mjawara, Joe. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 11 May 2005 at the Department of Communications offices, Hatfield, Pretoria. Copy of notes available from the author.

M-Net. 2003. M-Net's Response to the Discussion Papers on the Licensing of Regional and Local Television. 29 September 2003.

Mochiko, Thabiso. 2006. Big Plans for Small Screen, *Business Report,* 20 October 2005.

Moilwa, Philly & Mansfield, Lynn. 2006. Personal interviews conducted on 10 May 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Moilwa, Philly. 2003. Letter to ICASA. 24 December 2003. Johannesburg.

Mokoetle, Solly. 2004a. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC4. 5 October 2004. Polokwane. Limpopo Province.

Mokoetle, Solly. 2004b. ICASA on SABC's application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town. Western cape Province.

Mokoetle, Solly. 2006a. Briefing to independent producers on 19 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Mokoetle, Solly. 2006b. SABC Annual Results Presentation. 30 August 2006. Johannesburg.

Mokopanele, Thabang. IT skills shortage likely to balloon – report. *The Star Business Report*, 7 July 2006:1.

Molaudzi, Simon. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 25 January 2006 at the SABC Regional Office Mafikeng, South Africa. Copy of notes available from author.

Molefe, Phil. 2006a. Report back on SABA and PBI summits. Internal SABC documentation.

Molefe, Phil. 2006b. Personal interview conducted on 10 October 2006 at the SABC Head Office Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from author.

Motsoene, Errol. 2006. SABC launches Hi Definition Television Transmission System. *Intercom*. June 2006. Johannesburg.

Mouton, Johann. 2005. *How to Succeed in your Master's & Doctoral Studies. A South African Guide and resource Book.* Pretoria: Van Schaik

Mpofu, Dali. 2006. Your guide to our 2005/2006 Annual Report and 2006 Corporate Strategy: Technology. Johannesburg.

Mthembu, Zweli. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 31 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Mtinde, L. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's License Amendments. 5 October 2004. Polokwane.

Mulder, Pieter. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 8 June 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Mwanza, Chimwemwe & Kelly, Ben. 2006. Dali's dilemma. Caught between a lack of skills and technology challenges. *Finweek.* 3 August 2006.

NAB. 2003. National Association of Broadcaster's Submission to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa on the Inquiry into Regional Television and the Inquiry into Local Television. 29 September 2003.

NAB. 2006. DTV Stations in Operation. Retrieved on 29 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.nab.org/Newsroom/issues/digitaltv/DTVStations.asp

Naidoo, Kamscilla. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 18 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Newbold, Chris, Boyd-Barrett, Oliver & Van den Bulck, Hilde. Eds. 2002. *The Media Book.* London: Arnold Publishers.

Nicholson, Robin. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's License Amendments. 5 October 2004. Polokwane.

Nicholson, Robin. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 16 August 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Norris, Paul; Pauling, Brian; Zanker, Ruth & Lealand, Geoff. 2003. The Future of Public Broadcasting: The Experience in 6 Countries. November 2003. Retrieved on 9 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://research.cpit.ac.nz/researchpapersoutput.asp?uid=163

O'Brien, Conan. 2005. The Future of Television. MSNBC.com Newsweek. 30 May 2005. Retrieved on 29 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7935916/site/newsweek/print/1/displaymode/1098

O'Sullivan, Tim, Dutton, Brian & Raner, Philip. 1998. Studying the MediaLondon: Arnold Publishers

Ofcom. 2006. Digital switchover: an audit of viewer's priorities. Office of Communications. 12 July 2006. London, United Kingdom.

Oliphant, Godfrey. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 9 June 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Olivier, Tian. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 27 July 2006 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Orgeret, Kristin Skare. 2006. *Moments of Nationhood. The SABC News in English – The first decade of Democracy.* Doctoral dissertation. Oslo: Faculty of Humanities,University of Oslo.

Parsons, Paul. 2003. Barriers to Media Development. In: De Beer, Arnold,S. & Merrill, John,C. Eds.2003. *Global Journalism. Topical Issues and Media Systems*. Working Copy. Stellenbosch: US Printers.

Rapeti, Sharoda. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC5. 18 October 2004. Cape Town. Western cape Province.

Rapeti, Sharoda. 2006. Discussion notes. 15 August 2006. SABC Head Office, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Regional Television Marketing, 2006. Report on Regional TV Effectiveness in Australia. Retrieved on 9 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.regionaltvmarketing.com.au/ Portals/www.regionaltvmarketing.com.au/documents/casestudies/RTV_Effectiveness_Report.

Reuters. 2006. Cellphone TV set to reach masses. *Reuters News Service*, 29 April 2005. Retrieved on 10 May 2005 from the World Wide Web: http://wwww.itweb.co.za/sections/telecoms/2005/0504290816.asp?A=TEL&S=Telecoms&

Reuters. 2006. Virgin eerste met mobiele TV. *Beeld*, 15 February 2006:31.

Richeri, Giuseppe; Richter, Andrei & Bundgard, Lars Holst. 2004. Report on Regional Public Television in Europe: Istituto Media e Giornalismo, Facoltà di Scienze della Comunicazione Università della Svizzera Italiana Lugano. 25 April 2004. Retrieved on 17 October 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.circom-regional.org/2004/Report-regpubTV-summary.pdf

Rose, Frank. 2003. The Fast-Forward, On-Demand, Network-Smashing Future of Television. *Wired News*. October 2003. Retrieved on 29 August 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.10/tv_pr.html

SABC Annual Report and Financial Statements. 1997/1998. *Notes to the Financial Statement.*

SABC Annual Report and Financial Statements. 1998. Johannesburg, South Africa.

SABC Annual Report and Financial Statements. 1998/1999. *Notes to the Financial Statement.*

SABC Annual Report and Financial Statements. 1999. Johannesburg, South Africa.

SABC Annual Report and Financial Statements. 1999/2000. *Notes to the Financial Statement.*

SABC Annual Report and Financial Statements. 2000. Johannesburg, South Africa.

SABC Regional TV Task Team, 1998. *General Terms of Reference for Consultations on Regional Options.* SABC TV Division report to Executive Management. 26 October 1998.

SABC, 2003a. SABC response to ICASA Discussion Papers on Regional and Local TV. 29 September 2003.

SABC, 2003b. SABC Public Regional Television Services Application. 8 December 2003. Johannesburg.

SABC, 2003c. SABC Regional Television Prepared for the SABC Board. 12 November 2003.

SABC, 2003d. SABC Regional Television Updated for the SABC Board. 2 December 2003.

SABC, 2003e. Confidential documents submitted to ICASA.

SABC. 2003f. Financial Report presented to the Board on 12 November 2003. Johannesburg.

SABC.2004. Market Intelligence report.

SABC. 2006. 2006 Annual Report. Johannesburg South Africa.

Schmulian, Sherylle. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 14 April 2005 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Screen Africa. 2005. SA Digital Roll Out. April 2005.

Sentech. 2003. Response by Sentech Limited to the Discussion Paper on the Inquiry into Regional Television and the Discussion Paper on the Inquiry into Local Television. 29 September 2003.

Sentech. 2004. Submission to ICASA. Comments on the SABC's Applications for Regional Television. 9 February 2004. Johannesburg.

Sibeko, L.T. 2004. ICASA oral hearing on SABC's application for SABC4. 5 October 2004. Polokwane. Limpopo Province.

Sibeko, L.T. 2004b. Supplementary Legal Submissions by the SABC (Ltd.) to ICASA. 16 November 2004. Johannesburg.

Sloan, Robin. 2004. TV 2015: A Reminder. *Poynter Online.* 24 May 2004. Retrieved on 29 April 2005 from the World Wide Web: http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=56&aid=66182.

South Africa. 1999. *Broadcasting Act, Act 4, 1999.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. 2003. *Broadcasting Amendment Act, Act 64*, 2002. Pretoria: Government Printer

South Africa. Electronic Communications Act, Act 36 of 2005. 19 July 2006. Pretoria.

South African Concise Oxford Dictionary. 2002. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa..

Statistics South Africa. 2001. Census, 2001. Pretoria. Government Printer.3 February 2003

Stevenson, Rob. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 9 June 2005 at the SABC Head Office, Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Swann, Phillip. 2006. TiVo's Losses Widen; Might Get Worse. *TVPredictions.com*.Retrieved on 31 August from the World Wide Web: http://www.TVPredictions.com/tivoreport083006.htm

The Economist. 2006. Surfing the airwaves. 13 July 2006. Retrieved on 1 September 2006 from the Word Wide Web:
http://www.economist.com/business/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=7161556

The Star, 2007. Why we'll soon be watching TV via the Internet, by Bill Gates. *The Star*. 30 January 2007.

Tleane, Console. 2005. Personal interview conducted on 15 April 2005 at the FXI office, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

Trombino, Stacy. 2006. Watching the TiVo effect. *BusinessWeek online,* 2 March 2006. Retrieved on 5 March 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.businesweek.com/prin/investor/content/mar2006/pi20060302_999595.htm

Tsotsetsi, Sipho. 2006. Personal interview conducted on 1 August 2006 at the ICASA Head Office, Sandton, Johannesburg. Copy of notes available from the author.

Van den Bulck, Hilde. 2002. Tools for Studying the Media. In: Newbold, Chris, Boyd-Barrett, Oliver, & Van den Bulck, Hilde. Eds. 2002. *The Media Book*. London: Arnold Publishers.

Van Gompel, Roland., Van den Bulck, Hilde.& Biltereyst, Daniël. 2002. The Power of the Media Industries: Theoretical Positions. In: Newbold, Chris, Boyd-Barrett, Oliver, & Van den Bulck, Hilde. Eds. 2002. *The Media Book*. London: Arnold Publishers.

Van Tonder, Philip. SABC Mobile. Briefing paper. July 2006. Johannesburg.

Van Vuuren, Daan., Maree, Anina & De Beer, Arrie. 1998. Mass Media Research. The quest for certain knowledge. In: De Beer, A.S., Ed. 1998. *Mass Media - Towards the Millennium. The South African Handbook of Mass Communication*. (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Watson, James & Hill, Anne. 2003. *Dictionary of Media and Communications Studies*. London: Arnold Publishers.

Wesso, Harold. 2006. Discussion notes. 15 August 2006. SABC Head Office, Johannesburg, South Africa. Copy of notes available from the author.

Z-Coms. 2003. Market Analysis for Commercial Regional and Local Television. Final Report. October 2003. Johannesburg. Produced for ICASA by Z-Coms. Unpublished.

ZDNet, 2007. Skype founders name new video start-up Joost. 15 January 2007. Retrieved on 2 February 2007 from the World Wide Web: http://www.zdnet.com/2102-9588_22-6150225.html

Zikalala, Snuki. 2006. Mission and Vision of the SABC News sub cluster. 20 October 2006. Retrieved on 5 February 2006 from the SABC intranet: http://newsnet/upload_research/inhouse/workshopoct06/snuki.ppt

Addendum A

<u>**RTV Questionnaire:**</u>

Name (optional):

Sex:

Age:

Married?

Children?

Do you live in a rural or urban area?

Income per month (if you do not want to give your income, indicate on a scale of ten where you will place yourself: 1 = very poor, 10 = well-off):

What is your preferred present TV channel?

Home language:

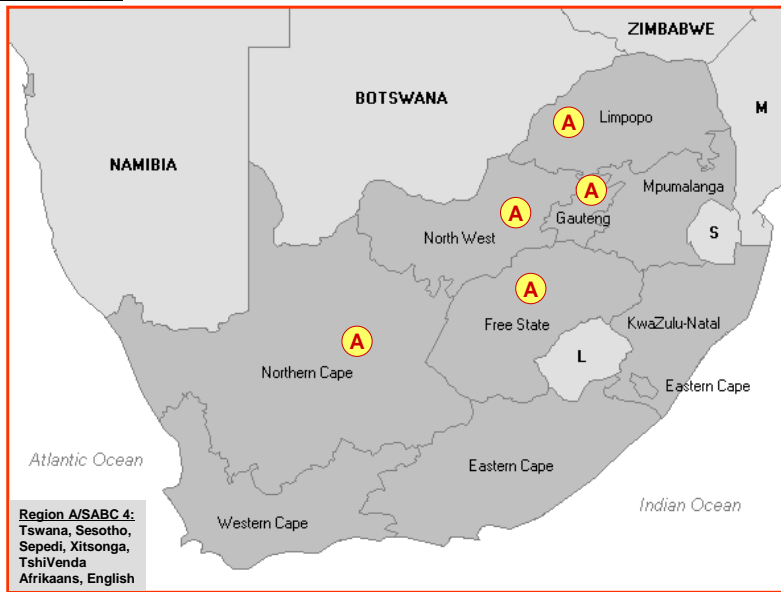Contact number (optional):

Questions:

1. Have you heard, or do you know anything about the SABC's licenses to broadcast regional television?

2. The SABC will introduce two regional stations: one for all the Sesotho languages, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Afrikaans/English in Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Northern Cape and Free State (SABC4); One for all the Nguni languages and Afrikaans/English from the Western Cape to KZN and Mpumalanga (SABC5) – see attached maps. Do you agree with this?

3. Do you have a need for a regional television service?

4. Are you dissatisfied with any of the present national television services of the SABC? If so, what, why?

5. What kind of programming would you like to see on a regional service?

6. Do you believe your language should get more air time – such as on a regional service?

7. Would you still like to see English programming on the regional channel?

8. Would you mind if local dramas and/or soaps are only introduced 5 years or more after the introduction of regional television?

9. Would you like to see stories about other communities in the broadcast area of the regional station (for example, if you live in Cape Town would you identify with the stories of people in northern KZN?)

10. Can you identify with any of the two channels proposed by the SABC? Will you feel at home watching it?

11. Will you watch a regional channel regularly?

12. The SABC had previous regional television services in one hour windows on SABC2. Would you prefer such a regional service again or rather a separate channel?

13. Would you still watch national television channels if regional television is introduced in your area?

14. Would you like to see more educational programming on the regional channels?

15. Would you like to see more children's and youth programming on the regional channels?

16. Are you interested in regional news and would you like to see it on regional television?

17. Would you like to see more parliamentary/political news?

18. Regional television will be very costly. Would you mind if the government spends some R500 million per year on funding such television stations or would you prefer the money to be spent on social services such as housing, electricity, water, job creation etc.?

19. Will you be prepared to pay extra for receiving regional television?

20. Would you mind seeing advertising on a regional station to help pay for the costs?
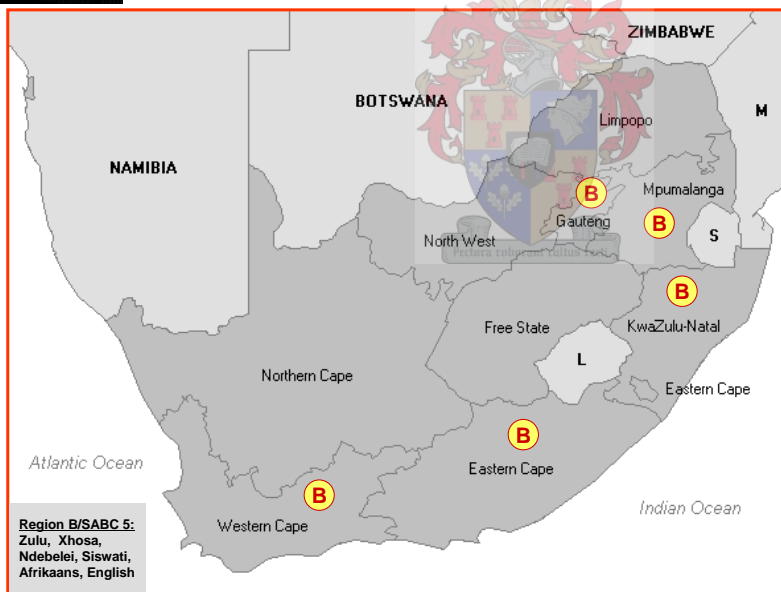
21. Any other comments?

Region A (SABC 4)

Region A/SABC 4:
Tswana, Sesotho,
Sepedi, Xitsonga,
TshiVenda
Afrikaans, English

Region B (SABC 5)

Region B/SABC 5:
Zulu, Xhosa,
Ndebelei, Siswati,
Afrikaans, English