



PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (PASA)

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE (DAC) WHITE PAPER 2016

SUBSECTOR: LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, BOOKS AND PUBLISHING

PASA Contribution to DAC White Paper 2016

---

We have pleasure in responding to the invitation by the DAC Working Group to submit proposals for a draft White paper.

In this letter, we list proposals that are of direct interest to our members.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA – see <http://www.publishsa.co.za/>) is the largest publishing industry body in South Africa. It represents book and journal publishers in South Africa in the field of non-fiction, fiction, education, academic and trade publishing. PASA's membership comprises the vast majority of South African publishing houses, for profit and non-profit, university presses, small and medium-sized companies and multinational publishing enterprises. PASA is committed to creativity, development of literacy and the exchange of ideas and encourages a culture of reading. PASA promotes the contribution of literature in all its forms to social and economic development, both of communities and individuals through the contribution of intellectual property. PASA is a full member of the International Publishers Association (IPA), as are 60 other publishers' organisations from approximately 50 countries.

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Culture and the arts convey the heritage and history of a society. More than that, culture and the arts provide a foundation for a society's future as free, open and democratic, so that the hopes and aspirations of its people may be met through:

- a. Human and social development;
- b. Education and equal opportunity; and
- c. Economic growth, creativity and innovation.

Within this context, South Africa aims to be a highly literate country which prizes and develops the literacy of its population – a reading nation is a successful and educated nation. PASA and its members, therefore:

- a. Recognise the need in South Africa to promote literacy, education, original thought, creativity, science, arts and culture.
- b. Believe that language, literature, books, publishing and learning underpin South African culture and the arts.

## **B. THE VALUE OF BOOKS, LEARNING MATERIALS, WRITERS AND PUBLISHING**

PASA and its members emphasise the central role of books and learning materials, whether in print or electronic formats, to underpin knowledge creation and learning. We highlight the following:

- a. Books articulate and communicate the language and culture of the nation.
- b. Books encapsulate knowledge and entertainment in an accessible and affordable way.
- c. Reading books hones the skills that allow citizens – including print-impaired persons – to access knowledge from a wide range of sources. Reading books also improves communication abilities to allow the sharing of knowledge.
- d. If introduced from a young age, books develop and support the skill and habit of reading.
- e. Books enhance education through access to wide-ranging texts created by educational and subject experts to support the role of educators at all levels of education.
- f. Books preserve ideas, expressions of culture and language in a format that can be exported, archived and accessed by future generations.
- g. Books develop and preserve all our South African languages.

- h. Books enhance community- and nation-building.
- i. Writers, as creators of content that expresses ideas able to be shared by a wide audience of readers, are key role-players in culture and the arts.
- j. Publishers, as other key role-players, curate these expressions of culture, entertainment and education to ensure quality, accessibility, appropriate production levels and affordability.
- k. Publishing allows for the clear establishment and protection of authors' copyright to ensure appropriate remuneration for authors, as without adequate copyright measures authors will hardly be incentivised to spend their time writing and developing our written heritage.

## **C. CHALLENGES TO THE SUB-SECTOR**

### **1. General**

- a. For writing and publishing to flourish, the country needs a strong respect for intellectual property and specifically for the establishment and protection of copyright that allows authors to receive appropriate remuneration from their creative works.
- b. The publishing sub-sector requires high levels of skilled staff in an industry that is not always well-remunerated and commercially successful.
- c. For publishing to exist only in areas where commercial success can be achieved excludes the publication of some important, but marginal forms of cultural expression, e.g. literature in languages spoken by a small number of people outside of urban areas.
- d. The sub-sector needs the South African Book Development Council's position as a champion of the book value chain to be recognised and funded to enable it to continue its work as a platform for co-operation and development within the sub-sector.

### ***Audience development and nation-building***

We need a unified nation-building project that will allow people to express their emotions and experiences in a positive way. Publishers, private and public organisations need to create an interesting and 'sexy' project that will grab the imagination and achieve social cohesion through expression.

There could be a nation-wide five-year focus on, for example, poetry. This national campaign would involve primary and high schools, higher education institutions and the public. The backbone would be poetry-writing competitions in various categories. The winning poems would then be performed in all the major centres and published in an anthology. This would give existing initiatives like the *Spier Poetry Festival*, the *The Naked Word Festival* and the electronic platform *Versindaba* a boost.

At the *Spier Poetry Festival*, for example, the poems read by the poets were translated beforehand and the translations were screened in various languages for the audience to read – the French poet's poems could be read in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, for example.

In the same vein as there are Enviro Champs – passionate community members educating their communities about conservation – so we can establish 'Word Ninjas'; people of all ages who can express themselves through poetry in their own languages.

### ***The high cost of books***

VAT is an additional cost to the already high price of books. Reducing VAT on books will make books more affordable. Also, books could be made a tax-deductible item for all tax-payers.

### ***Availability of libraries in rural schools without Internet and far from towns***

Shipping containers could be set up as "libraries" that contain materials learners will need to do their school projects. The libraries could be set up for specific grades, e.g. Grade 8–10, which means a school may receive more than one "container library". Logistics companies could donate shipping containers; private companies in a specific area could sponsor the library material; education departments could identify the schools most in need.

## **2. Higher education and scholarly books**

PASA highlights challenges pertaining to the writing, publishing and distribution of higher education and scholarly books on account of the sub-sector's particular and severe circumstances.

### ***Funding the development of subject terminology***

The multilingualism policies of higher education institutions create a demand for higher education books in various languages other than English, or, at the very least, the development of multilingual glossaries to support learning.

Funding is required for such activities.

## ***Journals***

Academics are encouraged – if not required – to publish in A-rated journals, rather than writing books. Most of these journals are international rather than local. There is a need for start-up funding to establish new South African journals in various fields, such as heritage, performing arts and visual arts, and various languages, that can be internationally accredited, to give a voice to emerging and established academics. A journal could, for example, be created for the output of the Association for African Systems of Indigenous Knowledge.

New journals require funding for the first three years of their life until they become accredited and subsidies kick in.

## ***Higher education lecturers prescribing journal articles instead of books***

In some higher education departments, lecturers are prescribing “Readers” consisting of journal articles instead of textbooks. In many instances these collections are not pedagogically structured, and are not suitable for undergraduates. It is therefore important to actively promote the benefits of using textbooks at higher education institutions.

There is a need for an awareness campaign to stress the value of textbooks in an education context and thus keep the market for higher education publishers alive.

## ***Making books available in African languages, and African languages books available in English***

Publishers are faced with the problem of producing books in African languages for which there is ostensibly no market. If African academics present their scholarly research in their mother tongue, publishers will need financial assistance (a) to publish a book which emanates from the research in the original language, and (b) to have it translated to reach a wider readership.

There is a need for subsidies to encourage the publication of raw research in African languages, and to fund the translation of that research into English. Similarly, there is a need for subsidies to translate English research and books (initially in selected fields) into African languages.

## ***Reaching a wider audience***

Open access is a means to disseminate scholarly material as widely as possible in order to encourage learning and research. However, the preparation of text for open access still involves production costs – the texts need to be edited, proofread and typeset, and there are costs associated with hosting files on a digital platform. The five major scholarly book publishers in South Africa have

established a collaborative forum, and are willing to work together to set up the digital platform for research as well as for scholarly books.

Funding is needed for the development of the platform and for carrying production costs, so that the research material can be disseminated not only locally but also internationally, to raise South Africa's research profile.

### ***Skills development in the industry***

There is a lack of skills in the industry across the board. Publishers are open to mentoring interns, but there is a cost involved to pay interns a decent salary. At present, the SETA contributes R2 000 per month per intern and the publishers top up this amount at their own expense.

There is an urgent need to increase the allowance from the SETA, and to increase the number of internships per annum so that more participants can be trained more rapidly.

### ***Publishing South African books abroad***

In order to publish works produced in South Africa overseas, it is important for publishers to meet international publishers and distributors face to face at international trade fairs to discuss their books and the licensing of their distribution. Most of the scholarly publishers are unable to travel to these trade fairs because of a lack of resources.

There is a need for subsidies that would allow South African scholarly book publishers to send delegates to international book fairs to establish and maintain a network and negotiate book deals. This is an interdepartmental issue and could involve not only DAC, but also DHET, the dti, DST and DIRCO.

### ***Inadequate education outside urban areas***

It is crucial to expand the low-cost delivery of books and research material to students in even the most remote areas of the country, and improve long-distance learning. This can be done via mobile-phone technology, among other things, using a connectivity infrastructure that could be developed by private and public sector partnerships.

There is a need to explore private–public sector partnerships to enable the effective electronic dissemination of knowledge products.

## ***Audience development***

It is important to create an excitement about books, literature and knowledge in the public domain. This can be done through public–private sponsorships of the following at Higher Education institutions, among other things:

- a. Teaching excellence awards;
- b. Prizes, e.g. for literary essays, creative writing, poetry, emerging researchers; and
- c. Bursaries.

## **C. KEY PRIORITIES**

PASA identifies the following **key priorities** that should inform a successful DAC White Paper:

### **1. DAC own activities**

<b>Growing a reading culture and growing a culture of valuing authors, creators and the written word</b>
--

- a. Promote the value of books in all languages.
- b. Provide seed funding for translations.
- c. Enable authors', publishers' and booksellers' self-sustaining business models.
- d. Support/encourage policies that promote reading: identify ways in which reading is encouraged, including by working with reading ambassadors and role-models in society, sports, arts, politics and business.
- e. Work with library partnerships to build and stock libraries and make use of libraries in schools.
- f. Support book fairs and festivals locally, and support attendance of authors and publishers at key overseas fairs and festivals.
- g. Support innovation including publishing electronically, fully accessible materials and multi-media productions.

- h. Facilitate acquisition of new skills, re-skilling, training and education of authors, publishers and creative talent in the book value chain.
- i. Maintain a culture of free expression and publication of and access to a diversity of views.

## **2. DAC co-ordination with other Departments and internationally**

### **Encouraging creativity, protecting intellectual property, removing barriers**

- a. Treasury: Abolish VAT (zero-rating of VAT) on print and electronic books and journals.
- b. DBE: Encourage education departments to maintain adequate resources for the purchase of local school books and textbooks.
- c. dti: Collaborate with the dti to set the right copyright framework and rights management infrastructure for authors and publishers, especially an environment fit for the digital age and fit to enforce rights against piracy and other abuses. In addition, to support enterprise development of SMEs as well as black (as defined by legislation) and women-led publishing companies for transformation purposes.
- d. Department of Social Development and others: Work with all departments that set standards for equal access by persons with a disability, e.g. work with departments to offer access to books to print-impaired persons with the goal, “same book same price, same day”.
- e. Support copyright and intellectual property (IP) awareness campaigns, including as part of school, college and tertiary curricula.
- f. Support international cultural exchange by enabling authors and publishers to build international networks; facilitating attendance at fairs and festivals internationally; showcasing South Africa’s culture internationally; and subsidising international attendance at local fairs and festivals.
- g. Contribute to the formulation and implementation of goals in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly on creativity and education.

### **3. DAC relationships with key private and public sector stakeholders**

**Engage with private sector, state agencies, civil society to agree public-private sector activities, facilitate round-tables to build greater stakeholder consensus and joint vision**

- a. Work with the National Book Development Council and trade associations such as PASA.
- b. Include books and writing as priorities in programmes administered by the DAC, e.g. the National Arts Council.

### **D. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

PASA identifies the following key **critical success factors** for the publishing cluster:

#### **1. Transition to electronic publishing**

- a. Publishers' transition on their own is not enough. Apart from promoting publishing and electronic reading platforms, the Department of Arts and Culture needs to foster collaboration between libraries, booksellers, publishers, government departments, and existing Internet platforms, whether they facilitate discovery, distribution, or sales.
- b. For educational books the transition also involves re-skilling and up-skilling teachers and learning facilitators, educating and working with parents, and funding digital assets, including digital books.

#### **2. Transformation**

Role-players in the sub-sector should all work towards these goals:

- a. A robust publishing sector representative of all segments of our society – both staff of publishers and their publishing outputs should be representative.
- b. Publishing in all languages and multiple genres for information, education and entertainment.

- c. Publishing original and translated works in South African indigenous languages.
- d. Acknowledging and engaging with the large number of SME businesses to support the publishing process. These include service companies like editorial businesses, proofreaders, typesetters, design businesses, couriers, writers, translation agencies, illustration and photography businesses as well as small publishing houses.
- e. Rolling out early childhood literacy programmes to all areas of South Africa to introduce children to the skills and habits of reading at the earliest age to ensure that we build new generations of literate citizens who can access knowledge and entertainment through reading.

**3. Maintaining a diverse and private publishing sector, and maintaining a good regulatory environment and copyright protection**

- a. Publishers are the only role-players who invest in a country's national literature. For publishers to continue to do this, they must be assured that the government's vision is one of a privately owned and diverse publishing sector with assured and enforceable property rights (copyright). PASA notes the concomitant rights of authors to protect their intellectual property and income, and of publishers to protect the products in which they have invested skill, time and money.
- b. PASA supports the view, also expressed in the South African Book Development Council submission, that DAC should formulate and adopt the National Book Policy.
- c. The South African Book Development Council should be a statutory body and the primary driver of campaigns to increase the awareness of the value of books and to promote access to books.
- d. Given the high level of copyright infringements, which is a threat to the publishing industry, the Publishers' Association of South Africa strives to:
  - Inform/educate the public and institutions as to the value of intellectual property and the laws that protect it;

- Assist in the enforcement of these laws and in the creation of a culture of compliance with these laws;
- Co-operate with all institutions to overcome the problems of illegal and unlicensed photocopying of written materials, or copying of electronically stored information; and
- Explore the potential for new media to offer appropriate solutions to information dissemination in an African context and seek the most effective ways of protecting the rights of authors and publishers in the digital environment.

#### **4. Sustainable funding of arts and culture and of education**

- a. Obtaining a good education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. Getting education right is a challenge for publishers, teachers, the government, civil society, but also for the Department of Arts and Culture.
- b. Continued funding of arts and culture is partly driven by state funding and incentive schemes. In the specific South African context, it is not possible to promote arts and culture without simultaneously promoting education, be that education of primary, secondary or tertiary level or life-long learning efforts.
- c. Book publishing and all its role-players rely on government support for publishing via the education departments' purchase of appropriate, well-priced textbooks.
- d. Strong library purchasing support for locally published materials in a wide range of genres will ensure the sustainability of local publishers and writers and ensure appropriate local content for libraries.
- e. Publishing in the smaller South African languages is often not commercially viable and requires direct support by government.

- f. Funding of the South African Book Development Council will provide an ongoing platform from which to develop reading and policies around books into the future.

**E. CONCOMITANT FACTORS RELATED TO ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE DAC WHITE PAPER WORKING GROUP**

**1. Social cohesion and nation building**

Books play a vital role in social cohesion and in nation building in a number of ways. Books:

- a. Allow the sharing of stories and texts that illustrate the views and experiences of the diversity of the South African population to promote an understanding of all South Africans.
- b. Convey the rich heritage, knowledge and educational developments of South Africans, to both South African and global audiences.
- c. Support the teaching and learning of the diversity of South African languages.
- d. Allow writers to share best-practice in a range of areas with all South Africans who can access books (via bookshops, educational institutions or libraries).
- e. Enable reading programmes in local languages supported by community libraries to help prepare young children for reading and learning when they enter school.

**2. Urban and rural community development**

- a. Books allow all communities, urban and rural, access to the best-quality local and global information.
- b. Well-equipped libraries extend this to all communities regardless of income levels and access to the Internet.

- c. Well-stocked libraries bridge the distance between rural communities and centres of knowledge and educational institutions.

### **3. Education, training and research**

- a. Books form the backbone of the packaging of knowledge suitable for all levels of education.
- b. Publishing requires an adequate supply of highly qualified professionals proficient in all South African languages to ensure appropriate quality products. These include editors, publishers, translators, proofreaders, designers, illustrators, photographers, content developers, typesetters, printers, project managers, print specialists, ebook developers, booksellers, bookshop managers, librarians and website developers.
- c. Ongoing training of publishing professionals in all South African languages is essential.
- d. Adequate funding of the South African Book Development Council will support the development of essential research projects in the book sector.

### **4. Infrastructure and services and audience development**

- a. The role of libraries in the accessibility of South African books and literary texts is essential.
- b. Community-based libraries can ensure that all South Africans can have access to all the knowledge produced in South Africa and globally no matter where they live and what their income level.
- c. Libraries can help develop reading ability and affinity in communities that have traditionally been starved of reading opportunities and thus build future audiences for reading – either as entertainment or access to knowledge and education.
- d. Set a goal to have a copy of every locally published non-educational/non-academic book in every municipal and provincial library in the country.