

# OUR SABC

*A review of South African broadcasting issues*

According to [Robert McChesney](#) public broadcasting is supposed to mean “that they're doing something in their broadcasting they would not do if they were simply out to maximize profit; if they were really public service institutions, not purely profit maximizing institutions”. This is the SABC we should strive for!

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## **ALLERGED CORRUPTION: Former Head of Legal Services at the SABC is accused!!!**

The [Mail & Guardian](#) reported this week that Mafika Sihlali (former Legal Head at the SABC) received a text message from the Hawks asking him to hand himself over. . According to the [Mail & Guardian](#) Sihlali has been accused of defrauding the public broadcaster. According to reports during his term of office at the SABC he outsourced legal services to a company which belonged to his friend in some cases his friend charged the SABC double the market related price.. Sihlali is also accused of invoicing the SABC for his own law firm, which had been deregistered by the Law Society”. [Politicsweb](#) also reports that the SAPS have also extended an invitation to Advocate Sihlali's friend to hand himself for similar charges. Should he fail to do so, he will be tracked down and arrested.

It is commendable that the Hawks have brought these issues under scrutiny; however, one cannot help but question how this happened at the SABC. There should be structures in place that specifically make sure that finances are used effectively and wisely. Our SABC should never be used as a cash cow.

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## **WHAT happened at the Icasa regulatory review conference?**

This was indeed a very important conference. If you are not sure of what we are talking about, read last week's newsletter. Canadian, Australian, Isle of Man and European speakers presented their experiences in digital migration and gave very helpful tips to our regulator on how to tackle the regulations side of migration. Interestingly enough the first speaker of the conference was the chairperson of Parliament's Portfolio Communications, MP Sikhumbuzo Kholwane

According to [ITWeb](#), Kholwane highlighted three challenges Icasa is facing and these need to be addressed within the context of Digital Migration. These challenges are inequality, poverty and unemployment. Kholwane also highlighted the importance of transformation when reviewing the regulatory framework. He said that it was the responsibility of Icasa to ensure that there was rapid transformation going forward in the ownership of communication.

SOS is now taking the issues forward at its own civil society debate on Monday 27 February – [Regulating Broadcasting in the Digital Age](#). Do come along and participate.

### **National Treasury invests more in Digital Migration**

In his 2012 [Budget Speech](#), Finance Minister Pravin Ghordan mentioned that signal provider Sentech would receive funding over the medium-term expenditure framework period (MTEF) for the dual illumination of analogue and digital television and for digital broadcasting infrastructure. *The New Age* reported that Sentech would spend 1,3 billion over the next three years to make the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. It also reported that Sentech had been allocated an additional R141 million in the 2013/14 year, which would be used to purchase 30 television and 30 radio transmitters, and a total of R643 million has been set aside for dual illumination.

The SABC would also receive funding to ensure that analogue programmes would also be available in digital format. In reports from [Money Web](#) there would be a play-out-center established and technology provided for a digital library for the SABC. The broadcaster will receive R138 million as part of a total allocation of R478,6 million. As SOS we feel that this is an important investment and will be useful especially in the production of local content. We reiterate that we would like to see excellent public service programming on our screens and a fair and transparent commissioning process to ensure this.

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