



Business Implementation Framework (BIF)

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Compiled by E. J. (Thea) Aboud
Executive Officer: WGSA
Sessions on 3 and 17 October 2020
Cell: 082-575-6901
Email: accounts@writersguildsa.org

PREFACE

On 10 January 2010, the Writers Guild of South Africa (WGSA) embarked on the development of its first Business Implementation Framework (BIF). The unpacking and implementation thereof, commenced immediately thereafter.

However, it was only in 2011 that the BIF influenced the organisation. With new, creative ideas, it became the organisation's true focal point. In December 2011, it was time to revise the original BIF, update successful projects, and add new projects created during 2011.

On January 19 to 20, 2013, the WGSA council, including representatives from Durban, Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth, convened in the WGSA Linden offices. A representative from SABC, one of the organisation's largest stakeholders, joined them. It was time to measure the effectiveness of the BIF as well as revise its focus and direction, and to set the pace for the next three years.

The WGSA has since experienced some challenges. It almost closed its doors at the beginning of 2018. The guild lost its office space and employees. The 2018 council received a vote of no confidence and had to resign. An interim council was appointed.

Since then, the WGSA had to activate a membership drive to obtain members and render services thereof, and working to raise much-needed funds into the WGSA bank account.

During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, amidst the national lockdown, it became an ideal opportunity to revise the 2013 version of the BIF. On 3 and 17 October 2020, the WGSA engaged with the full council and membership to unpack the BIF and to re-examine the current reality.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief Background

The Writers Guild of South Africa (WGSA) replaced SASWA, the South African Scriptwriters Association, formed in 1974.

The WGSA remains the only association in South Africa with the sole purpose of protecting, empowering, and developing performance writers in the local film, television, radio, stage, animation, and new media (internet – mobile and digital distribution, and gaming) industries.

The WGSA was one of the founding members of LAMP (Alliance of Language and Media Practitioners) and a key member of SASFED (The South African Screen Federation).

Full SASFED Member Organisations include Animation South Africa (ASA), Documentary Filmmakers Association (DFA), Independent Producers Organisation (IPO), Personal Managers' Association (PMA), South African Guild of Actors (SAGA), South African Guild of Editors (SAGE), Sisters Working in Film and Television (SWIFT), and Writers Guild of South Africa (WGSA).

The WGSA is a registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) that is solely dependent on fundraising. A constitution and a council govern its mandate. Volunteer council members and an Executive officer, a part-time contractor, execute all activities. *For a full history of the WGSA, please refer to the [original BIF document of 2010](#).*

1.2 Purpose of the Revised Plan

The need for revision flows from changes within the organisation, i.e., the successful implementation of certain programmes and projects and the need to develop new programmes and projects that will govern and guide the implementation process over a period. Also, part of the reason we revised this plan was COVID, and how we would need to be prepared better should something of that magnitude occur.

Through this strategic planning intervention, the current situation has been assessed, its future options evaluated, and a plan to improve its future sustainability developed. This document will serve as a compass to guide the WGSA as it builds its service delivery capacity in a systematic and cost-efficient way, in service of the organisational purpose.

1.3 Organisational Purpose and Highest Aspirations

High purpose and aspiration are the authentic driving force behind the world's greatest achievements. The purpose of an organisation and its primary focus determine its priorities, its allocation of resources and serves as the basis for measuring its performance. The purpose and highest aspiration are set for the next three to five years.

1.3.1 WGSA's Statement of Purpose:

"To protect, empower, and develop performance writers".

1.3.2 WGSA's Highest Aspiration:

"A self-sustainable and united guild representing the collective interests of ALL performance writers".

1.3.3 Definitions

1.3.3.1 What is a performance writer?

Someone who creates projects to be acted, sung, or spoken out loud, in other words, performed. This includes not only screenwriters who work for film and television, but also playwrights, radio writers, lyricists, computer games creators, animation writers, audio description writers, radio, and TV news writers and speechwriters.

1.3.3.2 In which industries do performance writers work?

The local film, television, radio, stage, animation, and new media - (internet – mobile and digital distribution, and gaming).

1.3.3.3 Protect

Protect includes writers rights, such as Intellectual Property and Copyright, residuals, credits, rates, contracts and terms and conditions of work.

1.3.3.4 Empower

Empowerment includes knowledge share and education around issues such as, but not limited to, contracts, rates, business aspects of being an independent writer, copyright, residuals, and exposure to the local industry and international industry.

1.3.3.5 Develop

Development includes all aspects of upskilling and training.

2 THE WGSA BUSINESS IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

2.1 Insight Questions

Statements of purpose are of no value to any institution unless specific implementation strategies, programmes, and projects are created to achieve them. The following insight questions need answers:

- Who are the WGSA role-players?
- What do role-players want from the WGSA?
- What is WGSA's core business?

2.1.1 Role Players

The role players are clients (the reason why the WGSA exists), stakeholders (those who benefit from the existence of the WGSA or from whom the WGSA benefits), and competitors.

Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance writers within WGSA's ambit
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiences • Vertical integration - Producers, Directors, Crew, Distributors, Actors • Broadcasters – Public, Commercial & Community • Other industry-related NGOs – SASFED, LAMP • Government departments and organisations within government, e.g. DSAC, National Heritage Council, Labour Department, Trade & Industry, Economic Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Social Services and Population Development, Communication and Statistics, Rural Upliftment, SETA, SITA, NFVF, Film offices and commissions, • Learning institutions, Trade unions like UASA, • Media and Advertisers • IAWG • Financial Institutions • Private sector – corporate companies
Competitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance writers within WGSA's jurisdiction not affiliated with WGSA • Vertical integration - Producers, Directors, Crew, Distributors, Actors • Broadcasters – Public, Commercial & Community • Other industry-related NGOs • Other non-related NGOs • Other Writers bodies/guilds and splinter groups • Agents collecting residuals • Training organisations • International performance writers and filmmakers • Affiliates within SASFED

2.1.2 Role Player Wants

Clients Want:	Stakeholders Want:	Competitors Want:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective and efficient services – protection, empowerment, and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality entertainment • Value for money • Return on their investment • Indirect positive advertising/promotion • Completion of their mandates on time • Nation-building • National mythology • Opening new avenues • Accurate bookkeeping and reporting on their investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-members undercut and compete for jobs • Available money from possible donors • High-quality products at low-cost rates within unreasonable timeframes

2.1.3 WGSA Core Business

- Protect members' interests
- Empower members
- Develop members

2.2 WGSA's BIF Strategies

WGSA's BIF consists of the following strategies:

- The Core Service Delivery Strategy is the primary strategy. This Strategy represents how WGSA will achieve its purpose and highest aspirations and is the reason why WGSA exists. However, it cannot be implemented successfully, without:
- The Capacity Building Strategy.

3 CORE SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Core Service Delivery Strategy addresses the primary reason why the WGSA exists, i.e. **“A self-sustainable and united guild representing the collective interests of ALL performance writers by end December 2023 or sooner”**.

The Core Service Delivery Strategy incorporates the legal protection of members’ interests, empowerment, and the development of members; therefore, four macro programmes make up this strategy:

- The Advocacy Programme
- The Membership Programme
- The Professional Development Programme
- The Communications Programme

It is important to mention that the above programmes cannot be implemented in isolation. All programmes are interdependent.

3.1 The Advocacy Programme

The Desired Outcome for this programme is, **“A bargaining council with a reasonable sectoral determination for the arts and culture sector approved by government by end December 2023 or sooner”**.

The purpose of this programme is to obtain legal minimum terms and conditions (rates and contracts) for performance writers and payment of residuals to performance writers secured by law, and legal protection for the intellectual property of creators of content.

This programme includes drafting of legislation and lobbying for:

3.1.1 IP and Copyright

- Copyright / Intellectual property issues
- Residuals on all work paid by all users

3.1.2 Bargaining Council

- Right to collective bargaining
- Standard contracts for performance writers to prevent exploitation of performance writers
 - Reasonable delivery timeframes and deadlines
 - Credits
 - Benefits for performance writers who are in permanent employ, i.e., in-house writers
- Minimum/standard rates for specific writing projects
- Taxation of independent contractors
- Performance writers are vulnerable. They are mainly contracted for short term periods, with no benefits that corporate employees enjoy, such as medical aid, UIF contributions and

benefits, training, pension plans, temporary disability insurance, paid sick leave, paid leave, etc., as well as no guarantee of future earnings

3.1.3 Collection Agency

- Establishment of a Collection Agency
- All of the above includes lobbying and strategic relations with role players.

3.1.4 Strategic Relations: Local

3.1.4.1 SASFED

WGSA is represented on both the SASFED Council and the SASFED Executive Committee. Issues and negotiations with other related screen organisations, government departments, and broadcasters are dealt with via SASFED. The current relationship needs to be re-evaluated.

3.1.4.2 Broadcasters

Most negotiations and communications with broadcasters occur under the auspices of SASFED. However, the WGSA has established relationships with broadcasters. It will enter specific negotiations on behalf of its members. This relationship needs constant attention.

3.1.4.3 Government and Parastatals

Most negotiations and communications with government occur under the auspices of SASFED. However, the WGSA has established relationships and entered into MOU with some film commissions and the NFVF. This needs to be extended to all other role players.

3.1.5 Strategic Relations: International

3.1.5.1 IAWG

The WGSA is a full member of the IAWG.

3.2 The Membership Programme

The Desired Outcome for this Programme is, **"A tangible, attractive, and empowering membership package to increase membership by 100% which will enhance WGSA members' quality of life while pursuing their careers, in place by April 2023 or sooner"**.

Performance writers must obtain their equipment and supplies to produce their products, provide their travel, and transport, and remain abreast of new developments in the industry. The only organisation attending to these needs is the WGSA.

3.2.1 Legal Advice and Representation

With the limited resources (funding, knowledge of entertainment law and labour disputes, and human resources) the WGSA has to deliver this crucial service to its members. Therefore, the WGSA will have to secure either additional funding, or request legal firms to supply a pro bono service or a discounted service to the WGSA. The alternative is to convince WGSA members to join UASA. The latter has not been received favourably in the past, but was very successfully implemented by one of our sister organisations.

3.2.2 Discounted Services, Products and Opportunities

The WGSA needs to negotiate discounts for its members with local and international suppliers of products and services that performance writers' need, such as computers, repair services to computers, software, data, phones, insurance, etc. Discounted training opportunities form part of this service.

3.2.3 Job Alerts / Work Opportunities / Online Platform

WGSA sends out regular job alerts to members. This project will be strengthened over the next three years as WGSA enters into negotiations with producers, broadcasters, and agents to form relationships that will ensure that WGSA becomes the formal advertiser of all job opportunities and calls for scripts.

Creating an online portal from the WGSA website where members may display and advertise their work and profile, and where international and local producers / broadcasters can find a writer for their specific needs will assist in creating work for WGSA members and add as an additional benefit.

3.2.4 Events

3.2.4.1 WGSA Muse Awards

In 2013, the WGSA introduced the WGSA Muse Awards, an annual award for writers by writers. The project is ongoing and needs to be strengthened by compiling a guideline / manual to assist and orientate new committee members.

3.2.4.2 FAS

In 2018, the WGSA declared its intention to host the inaugural Federation of African Screenwriters (FAS) Conference in 2019, which will be an annual event flowing from the initial Africa Initiative Project. The event will coincide with a bi-annual Writers Festival. Due to funding challenges, the event was moved to May 2020. Due to the international pandemic, the event is on hold until further notice. A guideline / manual to assist and orientate new committee members needs to be compiled.

3.2.5 Festivals and Markets

The WGSA was able to take its members to attend international film festivals via the DTI's Sector-Specific Assistance Scheme (SSAS). The DTI put this scheme on hold since 2018 owing to reasons, to date the WGSA is still investigating. As this is a major benefit for WGSA members, it is important to negotiate with the DTI. WGSA also needs to be actively involved in local film festivals and markets.

3.2.6 Membership Drive

In February 2017, the WGSA were 400 members strong. However, due to internal problems, the WGSA almost closed its doors and lost almost all its members at the beginning of 2018. After an interim council took over and repositioned the WGSA, membership is at 380 in April 2020. Membership drive is closely related to the Professional Development Programme and the various WGSA Membership Benefits.

A continues campaign needs to be lodged to target new members, which includes high profile writers not currently members, splinter groups / associations and new entrants into the field of writing. Lobbying broadcasters, relevant government departments, film commissions, film offices and online streaming platforms to assist and encourage writers to join the guild. This project needs to be done in collaboration with all other portfolios.

3.2.7 Learning Institutions

Relationships need to be renewed and managed. New MOU needs to be signed with the various institutions.

3.3 The Professional Development Programme

The Desired Outcome of this Programme is, **"A comprehensive, self-sustainable, developmental programme in place and implemented by the end of June 2021 or sooner, that will equip performance writers with the right tools to enhance their professional abilities and skills while remaining in line with the code of conduct"**.

"Professional Development", as used in this BIF, refers to the development of performance writers, both established and aspiring, on a series of subjects. These subjects will enhance their performance, knowledge of the Industry, self-worth, legal standing, and status within the Industry. The purpose is to deliver quality products continuously for the local and international markets, as well as enabling performance writers to take up new media.

During 2010, a Code of Conduct for performance writers was developed, which serves as the basis for all professional development. Since then, continuous surveys were conducted to establish additional needs among performance writers and a programme was developed to fulfil the needs. The priority focus for the next years will also be on radio, stage, theatre, new media, and gaming. Flowing from the above surveys, the following projects emerged:

3.3.1 Outreach Project

The Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture (DSAC) funds the outreach project. In 2019, the WGSA developed various manuals, translated into all SA official languages. The initial pilot rollout will be conducted as soon as the national lockdown has been lifted. This programme includes the skills lab for emerging writers.

3.3.2 Knowledge Share Sessions / Seminars / Workshops

Continuous empowerment of performance writers on all levels (emerging to advanced writers) is necessary. Performance writers need to be equipped with business tools – such as “how to read a contract” - practise their craft and extend it into different genres, etc. Seminars and Workshops will be designed to address this need on all levels and a variety of topics and must be delivered in all SA provinces.

3.3.3 International Workshops / Webinars

The WGSA envisage hosting two events per annum with international speakers: A two-day course with one international speaker on very specific topics, and a second three to five-day writing festival with numerous international speakers covering various topics.

3.3.4 Online Workshops

Considering the cost of travel, the current pandemic, and the availability of online platforms, the WGSA needs to adapt to deliver most of its professional development via online systems.

3.3.5 Non-writing Skills Development

It is important to not only focus on the writing skills, but also the mental well-being of writers and to develop business skills that all freelancers need to carry on a successful business. The implementation of the Contract Workshop will assist partly with this, however specific other business skills also needs to be developed.

Negotiations with SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group) to allow WGSA members access to their services can assist in this regard. There are also many other groups that assist on mental wellbeing that may be contacted for assistance.

3.4 The Communications Programme

The Desired Outcome for this Programme is, **“A streamlined, consistent approach – one design, one voice by end June 2021 or sooner”**.

3.4.1 Marketing and Branding

This programme cannot function in isolation, but is dependent on the input and needs of all other programmes. Those needs will prescribe the actions taken within this programme and the promotional materials that need to be produced.

All information going out should be synchronised to send a unified message and to promote the WGSA brand. Press releases, notices, social media, newsletter, website must carry the same brand and messages to all role players must be synchronised. The WGSA uses Everlyctic as its bulk mail application. This needs to be synchronised with social media and the website.

To ensure that the WGSA reaches its target audience, the database needs to be updated regularly. The database must include members, all other writers, media, government and parastatals, and international role players.

3.4.1.1 Members Online Networking Platform

In 2019, the WGSA initiated an online networking platform for its members – Telegram. More members need to be encouraged to use this platform.

3.4.1.2 Website

The website has been redesigned and needs to be kept updated. The website must become a resource for writers and should include a comprehensive database with relevant resources, access to job offerings and calls for scripts, competitions, producers, and collaborators. Seamless membership application and script registry process. The site should be linked to social media. Certain access should be only for members whilst more general information should be available to all writers. The website must also include a platform for members to display their work and profile and give access to be viewed by local and international producers looking for scripts and writers.

3.4.1.3 Social Media

The biggest challenge the WGSA is facing is the capacity to keep all the various social media platforms updated and relevant. In this case it is also to obtain the services of the right type of person to do this job. The use of certain apps might be relevant here.

3.4.1.4 Newsletters

Capacity to coordinate a newsletter even on a bi-monthly basis seems challenging. Currently the WGSA has volunteers to ensure that the newsletter goes out. This is not a sustainable model and more research and funding is necessary to ensure that the newsletter remain constant.

3.4.1.5 Promotional Materials

Currently, the WGSA is working on a brochure; however additional materials will be needed depending on the needs of the other programmes.

4 THE CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY

The desired outcome for this Strategy is, **“A high-performance WGSA in place by end December 2023 or sooner, empowered with the infrastructure, the human resources, the information, funding and finances to enable it to effectively and efficiently implement all the programmes and projects in this BIF.”**

The following programmes are required to build the capacity necessary to achieve the above-desired outcome:

- The Infrastructure Programme
- Human Resource Management Programme
- The Funding Programme

4.1 The Infrastructure Programme

The purpose of this programme is to develop an adequate infrastructure.

This programme deals with the overall management of the WGSA’s physical resources, such as equipment, premises, and consumables.

4.1.1 Office Premises and Equipment

After the 2017 debacle, the WGSA lost its offices. Several assets were also lost in the process. The WGSA needs to evaluate its needs. At this point, a small office space suffices, should the WGSA obtain another intake of interns. The real need, however, is for space to host workshops. The professional development team needs to negotiate with learning institutions to obtain free space in multiple cities and towns for a trade-off. During the Covid-19 lockdown communications had to take place online and proved to be as effective as physical meetings and workshops, less the cost of the latter. It is envisaged that should the WGSA not obtain interns the need for office space is obsolete and the current assets may be sold

4.2 Human Resource Management Programme

“Build me the finest factories, but take away my people, and soon the factories will be in ruins and grass will grow through the floors. Take away my factories but leave me my people, and soon we will build bigger and better factories”.

J. P. Morgan, Industrialist

As per the WGSA’s Constitution, a council of volunteers manages the WGSA. These professional performance writers earn their living by writing and have minimal free time available. The overall role and function of the council is to oversee the organisation, make creative and strategic inputs and decisions in the best interest of the organisation and the membership it serves. It is important that it is understood that portfolios on the council derives from the organisational structure which is informed by the organisational strategic plan. The

organisational structure will change to adapt to the needs of the organisation, the strength, knowledgebase, skillset, and time available of incumbents. Based on the definitions of a council versus a board (see below) it is recommended that the WGSA be governed by a board.

DEFINITIONS:

Board: a group of people who have all the powers to decide and control the working of a body. They are usually at the apex of the organization.

Council: an assembly or meeting for consultation, advice, or discussion

Ideally, a paid, full-time employed executive officer should deal with the execution and implementation of decisions and strategic inputs as well as the programmes and projects in this BIF and the day-to-day management of the organisation.

4.2.1 Organisational Structure and Portfolios

Over the years, the WGSA has tried various systems: – a larger pool of volunteer council members, a smaller pool of council members; each managing a volunteer pool of subcommittee members; a pool of interns and, of course, the use of a part-time paid executive officer. None was successful. The challenge for almost all NPOs is the use of volunteers and lack of finances for paid staff.

The recommendation is:

- 1. Obtain funding for capacity to create and fill executive positions**
- 2. Until such time that adequate funding can be raised for implementation of 1) above, the recommendation is to elect a smaller pool of volunteer council members – based on the specific portfolios, the appointment of a part-time executive officer, the appointment of part-time administrative and communications services and or the use of interns**

4.2.2 Training, Development, and Succession

Council members are elected from the membership, who are performance writers by trade and, in some cases, have very little training in the management of organisations and specialised skills such as proficiency in negotiation, knowledge of entertainment law, public speaking and the chairing of meetings. To prevent a vacuum in the overall management of the organisation, an opportunity exists to train and mentor members of the various sub-committees as a “shadow” council, who may then be nominated to stand for council in the future.

It has also come to light that an induction/orientation session is needed for all new council members taking up office, and to develop a Code of Conduct for council members. Currently, a Procedure Manual exists, and this document should be expanded to include a code of conduct.

The current volunteer structure needs to be re-investigated. Over the past 10 years it became obvious that it is not a sustainable or effective / efficient structure at all. Some form of

remuneration might be needed. A structure where there is a greater paid executive level might be more conducive and efficient.

4.3 The Funding Programme

The Desired Outcome for this Programme is, **“Adequate funding secured, by December 2023 or sooner, for the effective and efficient implementation of all programmes and projects in this BIF”.**

All programmes and projects in the BIF must be costed to prepare a budget.

This programme will investigate possible income-generating projects such as the collection agency, script registry, memberships, and professional development programme. However, additional funding will still be needed.

Possible resources are government departments, NFVF, Film Commissions, Lotto, provincial funds, municipal funds, and sponsorships from the corporate arena.

4.4 Constitution and Strategic Plan

Strategic plan influences the Constitution, specifically regarding structure and execution. It is necessary to draft the constitution in such a way that it is flexible to allow for changed operations and new organisational structures, but not to influence the underlying integrity of the organisation or basic principles that governs the moral path. It is also very important to define concepts so that everyone understands it and not leave it open for different interpretation.

5 CONCLUSION

“To protect, empower, and develop performance writers”.

By adopting the above statement of purpose, WGSA affirms its commitment to enhancing the existing Guild through this Business Implementation Framework, WGSA has developed the outcomes-based programmes, projects and activities that will empower them to do so.

The challenge that faces WGSA’s implementation plan is obtaining capacity in the form of funds to implement its core services delivery strategy and thereafter ensure a steady growth in members by enhancing the quality of its service delivery.

Throughout the implementation process, WGSA will be responsive to changing circumstances, yet remain focused on the desired outcomes of the programmes and projects. The projects in this BIF report are practical and achievable. They will ensure the growth of the organisation and an increase in membership.

“The quality of our future will be determined by the quality of our thinking”.

Dr Edward De Bono