BASA
creative youth policy lab
PROGRAMME

LANGUAGE POLICY PRIORITY

Language Is Infrastructure:

Officialising Nama as South Africa's 13th Official Language



In partnership with the British Council South Africa &
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Prepared by the CYP Lab - “Creative Policy Pioneers” Cohort 2026

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Executive Summary

This document presents the priority policy proposals developed by the 2026 cohort of the **Creative Youth Policy Lab (CYP Lab)** through a participatory process focused on strengthening the role of young creatives in policymaking and public decision-making.

The CYP Lab was established as a space for young creatives to move beyond being recipients or subjects of policy and to develop the knowledge, confidence, collective voice and practical tools required to **understand, participate in and influence policy processes** affecting the creative and cultural industries (CCI) and wider society.

The proposals presented in this document are therefore not intended simply as expressions of concern. They represent the cohort’s collective attempt to move from **lived experience and identified challenges to evidence, dialogue, policy recommendations, advocacy and pathways for implementation**.

The CYP Lab Mandate

The mandate of the CYP Lab is to support young creatives to:

- understand how policy, legislation, public institutions and decision-making processes shape their lives, careers and industries;
- identify and investigate policy challenges through lived experience, evidence and research;
- understand and map the stakeholders, institutions and power relationships connected to these challenges;
- deliberate collectively and develop policy responses that are practical, relevant and grounded in the experiences of young people;
- test and refine policy ideas through creative methods, dialogue, feedback and scenario-based thinking;
- develop the confidence and skills to communicate policy recommendations to decision-makers, industry and the public; and
- build pathways for continued youth participation in policymaking, including advocacy, monitoring, feedback and follow-up after proposals are submitted.

This approach was developed through a co-created policy process that moved through **problem identification, evidence gathering, stakeholder mapping, drafting recommendations, advocacy and coalition building, submission pathways, and monitoring and feedback**.

From Creative Practice to Policy Participation

The CYP Lab recognises creativity not only as an industry or form of cultural production, but also as a way of thinking, questioning, imagining and solving problems.

The Lab therefore used creative and participatory methods to help participants move from individual experiences towards collective policy thinking. Across the programme, participants were encouraged to examine the systems surrounding creative work, engage with different perspectives, investigate evidence, imagine alternative futures, develop policy interventions and practise communicating those interventions to stakeholders and decision-makers. The programme included activities such as power mapping, active listening, stakeholder role-play, mock policy hearings, future scenarios and collaborative policy drafting.

The resulting journey can be understood as:

Lived experience → Evidence → Dialogue → Policy ideas → Testing → Collective action → Influence

The Lab's ambition extends beyond the submission of individual policy proposals. Its underlying system-change goal is to contribute towards a model in which young people are permanently heard in policymaking, rather than being consulted only once or after decisions have already been made.

What This Document Presents

This document consolidates the priority policy proposals developed by the 2026 cohort and presents them for consideration by policymakers, public institutions, creative-sector organisations, practitioners, civil society, funders and other stakeholders.

The proposals currently prioritise two areas:

Priority 1: Language Is Infrastructure - Officialising Nama as South Africa's 13th Official Language

This proposal identifies the gap between the constitutional recognition and development of indigenous languages and the current official status of Nama, and calls for a formal, consultative and accountable pathway towards its officialisation, building on existing language development work.

Priority 2: Professionalisation of the Creative and Cultural Industries - Creative workers Are Workers Too

This proposal responds to structural challenges affecting the sustainability and protection of creative work, including insecure working conditions, irregular or late payment, weak contractual arrangements and limited access to social protection, and proposes measures to strengthen professionalisation and protection across the creative and cultural industries.

Beyond the Document

The cohort sees this document as a starting point for continued engagement rather than an endpoint.

The intention is for the proposals to be presented to relevant stakeholders, opened to wider sector dialogue, strengthened through further evidence and consultation where necessary, and followed through beyond the initial submission. This includes building support, engaging decision-makers, monitoring responses and implementation, and reviewing or adapting the proposals as new evidence and feedback emerge.

The objective is not simply to put young creatives in the room. It is to strengthen their ability to understand the room, contribute meaningfully to the conversation, influence decisions and remain engaged in what happens afterwards.

PRIORITY #1

Language Is Infrastructure

Officialising Nama as South Africa's 13th Official Language

1. The Problem

South Africa's Constitution recognises the historically diminished status of indigenous languages and requires the state to take practical and positive measures to advance their use. Nama is expressly included among the languages whose development and use PanSALB must promote. Yet Nama remains outside the list of official languages in section 6(1) of the Constitution.

This creates a gap between the constitutional and institutional recognition of Nama as a language requiring development and protection, and its formal status within South Africa's constitutional framework of official languages.

2. Who Is Affected?

The groups listed below are not affected in the same way. Nama-speaking communities are directly affected by the current status of the language, while young people, women, creatives, educators and cultural practitioners are also affected by the limited opportunities to use, develop, teach, produce and communicate through Nama in public and cultural life.

- Nama-speaking communities and people seeking to reclaim, preserve and develop their language.
- Khoi and San communities whose languages have experienced historical marginalisation.
- Young people and emerging creatives and cultural practitioners working with indigenous language, heritage and identity.
- Communities whose participation in public life is limited by the languages used in government and public institutions.
- Women, including Nama-speaking women and women language practitioners, creative workers, educators, writers and cultural workers, should have meaningful opportunities to contribute expertise, help shape language development, and need access to paid work.

Our Evidence:

- **Geographic Concentration:** Nama-speaking communities are highly concentrated in the remote, arid regions of the Northern Cape (primarily Richtersveld, Kuboes, Riemvasmaak, and Namaqualand). This geographic isolation compounds their exclusion from mainstream public life.
- **Public Service Barriers:** Vital public data, municipal updates, and national healthcare campaigns are entirely unavailable in Nama. This directly compromises basic human rights, limiting civic participation, access to justice,

and healthcare comprehension.

- **Intergenerational Language Transmission:** Decades of colonial and apartheid assimilation forced younger generations to shift to Afrikaans or English for education and work. This has placed Nama on UNESCO's endangered languages list.

- **Active Community Mobilisation:** The push for recognition is backed by active grassroots movements. On 24 September 2025, the National Khoi-San Unity Congress was held in Aeroton, Johannesburg, where community leaders openly demanded the official ideation and legal protection of their languages to halt cultural erasure.

- **Why Existing Mechanisms Fail:** While PanSALB has a promotional mandate, it lacks the legal jurisdiction to enforce language use within government operations without Section 6(1) status. Consequently, initiatives remain limited to under-funded, localized preservation rather than systemic integration.

3. What Has Already Been Done?

- **PanSALB recommendations and mandate:** The proposal builds on documented PanSALB work relating to Nama language development and the existing institutional mandate for the development and promotion of indigenous languages. Any specific recommendation relating to Nama's officialisation should be supported by the relevant PanSALB documentation.
- **Northern Cape pilot programme:** The existing pilot at schools like Riemvasmaak Primary School and Kuboes should be recognised as an implementation effort already underway, rather than a proposed future activity. It has successfully introduced Nama in early primary phases, proving classroom viability.

- **Standardised orthography:** South African Nama Spelling and Orthography Rules have been developed and published, providing a foundation for written language development, textbooks, and official text.
- **Institutional language structures:** PanSALB's language development structures, including National Language Bodies and National Lexicography Units, already support language planning, spelling and orthography, terminology, and dictionary development.

- **The March 2026 Home Affairs Milestone:** On 3 March 2026, the Department of Home Affairs updated its administrative systems to formally accommodate Khoi and San indigenous names. This technically proves that the state can

successfully adapt its infrastructure to process Nama's unique click characters and orthography.

- **The Verified Constitutional/Legal Pathway:** To elevate Nama as the 13th official language, South Africa must follow the exact legislative precedent set by South African Sign Language (SASL), which became the 12th official language via the Constitution Eighteenth Amendment Act of 2023.
- **Amending Section 6(1) of the Constitution:** requires a Constitutional Amendment Bill passed under Section 74(3), which demands: A two-thirds majority vote (at least 267 votes) in the National Assembly.
- **Supporting votes**: from at least six of the nine provinces in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

4. What Is the Policy Gap?

The Constitution provides for the development of Nama but does not currently list it among the official languages. Officialisation would therefore require a constitutional change, not simply a new translation standard or an additional public information programme. The policy gap is the absence of a defined, publicly accountable pathway that connects existing Nama language development to formal constitutional recognition and practical access to public life.

The distinction is important because language development and official language status are not the same policy intervention. Development can strengthen language resources, terminology, literacy and cultural use, while officialisation establishes a different level of recognition within the constitutional language framework. The policy question is therefore not whether Nama should continue to be developed, but how existing development work can be connected to a transparent process for considering and implementing constitutional recognition.

5. Our Proposed Change

South Africa should establish a formal, consultative and accountable process to recognise Nama as the 13th official language of the Republic, building on existing PanSALB recommendations, the Northern Cape pilot programme, established South African Nama spelling and orthography rules, and the language development structures already in place.

Implementation should include the creative sector as an active partner in language development and public access. Creative practitioners should be supported to

develop Nama language educational materials, public information, cultural resources, films, publications, exhibitions, children's media, digital content, storytelling, music, theatre/performance, games/interactive media, cultural tourism, and archives/digital preservation.

Women, including Nama-speaking women and women working in language and cultural fields, must be meaningfully represented in the consultation, planning and implementation of the policy, with access to paid opportunities, training, resources and decision-making roles.

The goal is to ensure that Nama officialisation is not only a constitutional recognition of language, but also a practical process that supports cultural continuity, creative expression, economic participation and access to public life. Our proposed approach can also create opportunities for creative and cultural workers to contribute to language development through translation, writing, publishing, performance, film, music, design, digital content, education and cultural programming. In this way, language policy can support both cultural continuity and economic participation within the creative and cultural industries.

6. Who Needs to Act?

a. Lead / decision-making institutions

- Parliament;
- Department of Sport, Arts and Culture;
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

b. Language and technical institutions

- PanSALB;
- relevant National Language Bodies;
- relevant National Lexicography Units.

c. Implementation institutions

- Department of Basic Education;
- provincial education departments;
- national/provincial government departments;
- municipalities.

d. Rights-holders and community representatives

- Nama-speaking communities;

- relevant Khoe and San community structures;
- language practitioners.

e. Creative and cultural partners

- creative workers;
- writers;
- filmmakers;
- designers;
- educators;
- cultural institutions;
- creative-sector organisations.

f. Participation and inclusion

- women's organisations;
- women language and cultural practitioners.

7. What Should They Do?

- **Review and consolidate existing work:** compile PanSALB recommendations, the Northern Cape pilot findings, existing orthographies and other relevant language development outputs into one public record.
- **Establish a Nama officialisation working group:** bring together relevant language bodies, government departments and Nama-speaking communities to define the steps required for official recognition. Theworking groupshouldhave clearterms of reference,representation fromNama-speakingcommunitiesand relevanttechnical institutions, defined deliverablesand reporting responsibilities, and a public mechanism for communicating progress and outstanding actions.
- **Develop a constitutional and legislative pathway**: identify the required legal amendments, responsible institutions, consultation requirements and decision-making process.
- **Expand practical language access:** use existing orthography and language infrastructure to develop priority public documents, educational resources, terminology, translation and interpretation capacity in Nama.
- **Monitor implementation:** publish progress reports and measure the availability and use of Nama in public services, education and other priority areas.
- **Establish a creative sector language programme:** support creative workers,

filmmakers, writers, designers, educators and cultural practitioners to create Nama language public information, educational materials and cultural resources.

- **Ensure women's participation**: include women, particularly Nama-speaking women and women language practitioners, in consultation, governance and implementation, with paid opportunities in translation, language teaching, creative production, research and cultural programming. Women should have representation in:

- consultation;
- working-group membership;
- technical work;
- implementation;
- monitoring;
- paid opportunities.

8. How Could It Be Implemented?

- Implementation should occur progressively, beginning with a review and consolidation of existing work, followed by formal consultations and the development of the officialisation pathway.
- The creative sector should be included from the beginning, working with government and relevant language institutions to develop Nama language materials and public information using existing orthographies and language development infrastructure.

- Women should be included in the planning and delivery of these initiatives through meaningful representation, paid opportunities and access to training and resources, with priority given to Nama-speaking women and women with relevant language, cultural or creative expertise.
- Existing language development infrastructure should be used wherever possible rather than creating parallel systems. Recognition alone is not the end goal; it is the foundation for practical linguistic access, cultural continuity and creative participation.

We propose a four-phase structure:

Phase 1: Consolidate evidence and existing work

- Review PanSALB material, pilot findings, orthography and existing resources.

Phase 2: Consultation and pathway development

- Consult Nama-speaking communities, language institutions, government,

Parliament and relevant stakeholders.

Phase 3: Formal legal/constitutional process

- Follow the applicable constitutional and parliamentary process.

Phase 4: Progressive implementation

- Develop public-service, education, media, cultural and creative resources and monitor access/use.

Implementation also needs some consideration of:

- funding/resource requirements;
- responsible institution;
- technical capacity;
- translation/interpreting capacity;
- education resources;
- digital infrastructure;
- monitoring.

9. How Will We Measure Success?

- A publicly available consolidated record of existing Nama language development work.

- Establishment of a formal officialisation working group.
- Establishing a Monitoring Framework that includes the; Indicator, Baseline, Target, Timeframe, Data Source, and Responsible Actor.
- Completion of a constitutional and legislative pathway.
- There should also be a measure for the legal/policy pathway itself, which includes; completion of defined procedural milestones, public reporting on progress, consultation completed, and parliamentary/legal milestones reached.

- Progress toward formal recognition of Nama as the 13th official language.
- Number and percentage of priority public documents available in Nama.
- Increased participation in public programmes and services by Nama-speaking communities.
- User feedback on whether information is understandable and usable.
- Number of creative practitioners and cultural organisations participating in Nama language development and implementation.
- Number of Nama language creative and educational resources produced

using existing orthographies.

- Number of women participating in consultation, governance and implementation.
- Number of paid creative and language development opportunities created for women.
- Increased participation of Nama-speaking women and cultural practitioners in publicly funded programmes.

10. Call to Action

We call on the South African government, PanSALB and relevant language institutions to build on the work already undertaken to develop the Nama language and establish a formal, accountable pathway for Nama to become South Africa's 13th official language.

We further call for the creative sector to be recognised as an active partner in the implementation of Nama officialisation, with creative workers, writers, filmmakers, educators and cultural practitioners supported to develop Nama language resources and public information.

Women, particularly Nama-speaking women and women working in language and cultural fields, must be meaningfully included in decision making and implementation, with access to paid opportunities, training and resources. As an immediate next step, we call for the relevant institutions to:

1. consolidate and make publicly accessible the existing evidence, recommendations, pilot findings and language-development resources relating to Nama;
2. establish a representative Nama officialisation working group with clear terms of reference and reporting responsibilities; and
3. initiate the appropriate consultation and constitutional/legal process for considering the officialisation of Nama.

These actions would provide a transparent starting point from which progress can be monitored, publicly communicated and reviewed. Language is infrastructure: it is essential to dignity, cultural continuity, creative expression and meaningful participation in public life.

PRIORITY #2

Professionalisation of the CCI's

"Creative workers are workers too: Building a Formalised and Professionalised Framework for creative workers with relevant Social Protection"

1. **The Problem:**

Creative workers and cultural producers in South Africa are often expected to operate professionally while working in an industry that remains highly informal, unpredictable and poorly protected. Not enough money reaches the sector, which points to a funding problem. Even where money exists, the practitioner doing the work may not receive adequate contractual, social or economic protection. This points to a worker-protection problem.

Furthermore, the problem includes:

- Irregular and late payments.
- Unpaid or underpaid preparation and administration work happening behind the scenes.

- Lack of medical aid.
- Lack of retirement or pension provision.
- Lack of standardised contracts.
- Heavy dependence on grants and short-term project funding.
- Limited access to professional business and legal support, against cancelled projects, unsafe working conditions and bargaining power.

1. **Who Is Affected?**

The proposed framework should particularly recognize: Creative workers with irregular incomes; and independent cultural organizations and individuals creating employment for other creatives.

- Emerging creative workers. Independent creative workers. Freelance cultural

producers
- Curators and independent curators. Cultural project managers.
- Independent cultural organisations.
- Creative workers working outside major cultural centres. Creative workers from rural, township and peri-urban communities.
- Young creatives entering the industry.
- Older independent practitioners who may have spent decades working without formal employment benefits.

1. **What does this evidence tell us?**

- The South African Cultural Observatory estimated that the Cultural and Creative Industries contributed approximately R161 billion to South Africa's GDP in 2020, representing just under 3% of total economic production. The sector also accounts for approximately 6% of employment, or about 1 million jobs. Creative workers are economic participants, real workers that generate significant tax revenue.

- The 1996 White Paper already identified the rights and status of the artist as an important policy issue, including employment, access, equality, social security and sustainable working conditions.
- The 2022 Cultural and Creative Industries Masterplan identifies: professional skills; professionalism; an integrated creative value chain; economic reward; supportive regulation; and equitable access to infrastructure as important to the future of the sector.

- In 2025, DSAC introduced 17 Cultural and Creative Industry Clusters specifically to improve coordination, professionalization, advocacy, funding and market access. Therefore, the problem is not that South Africa has no policy. The problem is that existing policy has not yet created a sufficiently practical system that follows the individual artist through their working life.

The problem is not a lack of talent. It is the structure surrounding creative work, hence the South African Cultural observatory found out through earlier mapping that 43% of jobs in the sector were informal, again strengthening the need for formalization of freelance work

1. **Where Is the Policy Gap?**

The major policy gap is the distance between recognizing creative work as economically valuable; and protecting the people who perform that work.

- South Africa has the: **National Arts Council Act 56 of 1997**, **the Cultural and**

Creative Industries Masterplan, Mzansi Golden Economy, National Youth Development Agency, labour legislation, cultural institutions, collecting societies, and the new Cultural and Creative Industry Clusters. The current systems are not sufficiently accessible, portable and cross-sector social-protection designed around the realities of freelance creative work.

- The National Arts Council Act 56 of 1997 established the NAC as a statutory body responsible for arts development and funding, but funding alone does not solve the employment and social protection problem.

Professionalisation must therefore mean more than: registering for a company, attending a business workshop, writing a funding application, having a website, or receiving a grant. Professionalisation should mean that an artist can:

- receive a proper contract,
- know when they will be paid,
- negotiate a fair professional fee,
- understand their tax obligations,
- contribute towards retirement,
- access affordable healthcare,
- receive protection for workplace injury,
- access unemployment protection where applicable,
- protect their intellectual property,
- build a professional record,
- access to various markets, and
- continue receiving benefits when they move between projects.

A creative sector cannot be called professional if the person doing the creative work remains economically unprotected. The policy gap is not simply the absence of social-protection systems in South Africa. The gap is that existing systems and professional standards do not always adequately reflect the freelance, project-based, irregular and multi-employer nature of creative work. Creative workers may move between commissions, organisations and sectors without a continuous employer relationship through which benefits and protections can follow them. The proposed framework should therefore complement and connect with existing systems wherever possible, while addressing gaps specific to creative work.

1. **What Must Change?**

We propose a national framework that formally recognises creative workers, cultural producers and independent creative workers as workers who contribute to the South African economy. The purpose is to formalise and professionalise the creative sector so that creative workers can earn, save, access healthcare, plan for retirement, receive fair payment and build sustainable careers.

The current frameworks must recognize that many creative workers work as

freelancers, meaning:

a. They move between projects, working for different institutions and clients.
b. Their income can change significantly from month to month, and therefore,
c. Social Protection must be "portable" and follow the artist, rather than being attached to one permanent employer.

Create a **National Creative Worker Social Protection and Professionalisation Framework**.

The framework should provide:

• **Portable social protection** A national system where an artist can contribute towards: • retirement/pension, • medical cover, • unemployment protection, • occupational injury protection, and • other appropriate benefits. These benefits should follow the artist between: • Galleries, • Festivals, • Museums, • Companies, • government projects, • independent productions, and • other employers/commissions	**Example:** →Worker receives account → commissioner makes contribution → contribution follows worker → worker changes project/employer → account remains active.
• **Minimum professional standards** • Standard principles for contracts. • Clear payment periods. • Cancellation clauses. • Minimum professional fee guidelines. • Clear intellectual-property provisions. • Clear crediting requirements. • Protection against unreasonable unpaid work.	**Examples:** • minimum remuneration/fee standards; • annual updating of fee guidelines; • rehearsal/preparation rates; • dispute-resolution mechanisms; • legal support;

• Basic health and safety requirements.	• a labour desk/ombudsman-type mechanism; • a Code of Conduct & Consequence Management.
• **A Creative Worker Register** Develop a voluntary national database of: ○ Creative workers, ○ Cultural producers, ○ Creative organisations (SAMRO, DALRO, SAPRA - e.g; registration with one must mean being recognised on all), ○ Galleries, ○ Studios, ○ Production companies, ○ Festivals, and ○ other creative-sector employers. This should map-out: • who is working, • where they are working, • what they do, • what infrastructure they have, • what benefits they currently access, and • what support they need. Mapping is important, but mapping must not be the end of the policy. The existing 17 CCI Clusters are already a useful starting point because they create sector-specific structures for coordination and representation. However, the clusters should be developed further so that they also help practitioners: ○ Register professionally, ○ Access standard contracts,	**Example:**

○ Understand tax, ○ Access social-protection schemes, ○ Find employment opportunities, ○ Access markets, ○ Receive professional development, and ○ Collectively negotiate better industry conditions.	

1. **Who needs to Act?**

b. **The creative and cultural practitioners:**

- Co-designers & included in the decision-making process.

c. **Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC):**

- Coordinate the CCI Masterplan and CCI Clusters.
- Set national professionalisation standards.

d. **Department of Employment and Labour:**

- Adapt labour protections to freelance and project-based cultural work.
- Explore how creative workers can access existing labour protections.

e. **Department of Social Development:**

- Assist with social-protection mechanisms for workers whose income is irregular.

f. **National Treasury:**

- Design sustainable funding and tax mechanisms.
- Determine how contributions can be collected and allocated transparently through the institutions that are implementing partners of the government departments and other government agencies.

g. **Provincial And Municipal Cultural Institutions:**

- Implement the framework locally.

h. **CCI Clusters:**

- Represent sector-specific needs.
- Help map the industry at community level, i.e. freelance practitioners, CBO's, Place-bases-assets etc
- Identify gaps.
- Assist with professional development.
- Monitor implementation.

i. **Galleries, museums, festivals, corporations, advertising agencies, production** companies and other organisations that commission creative work:

- Participate in the social-protection system. (Dedicate a percent or a particular amount for any creative work to the social protection bank/fund)
- Meet minimum contract and remuneration standards. (Be compelled to use and follow standardised contracts) Creative workers and cultural producers
- Participate directly in designing and monitoring the framework.

7. **What Should They Do?**

Government should**:**

- Create a national creative-worker social-protection system.
- Establish a Creative Workers Benefit Fund or equivalent mechanism.
- Allow creative workers to make portable contributions regardless of who commissions their work.
- Use the tax system to help finance the CCI's operational systems.
- Explore establishing a feasible **Creative Worker Social Protection Levy/Contribution** connected to income generated through creative work. This should not simply mean taking more money from poor or emerging creative workers. Instead, the contribution could be placed primarily on the organisations and businesses that commission and benefit from creative labour

- Learn from the existing Skills Development Levy. South Africa already has a compulsory contribution designed to support skills development. The Skills Development Levy is generally charged at 1% of remuneration paid by employers.

- Create minimum standards for publicly funded creative work: Any organisation receiving public money from: NAC, DSAC, NFVF, and provincial departments municipalities.

- Adopt a national Financing Model.

Benefits could include:

- pension/retirement savings,
- medical-aid contributions,
- ringfenced Artist Support Grant (specifically for out-of-work CCI's practitioners),

- occupational injury protection,
- emergency assistance, and
- professional development.

- **How could it work?**

Example #1:

Artist's professional fee: A museum or gallery commissions a curator or artist – A feasible percentage could be added to the transaction as a creative-worker social-protection contribution.

- Commissioning organisation pays: **R20,000.00** artist fee - a small social-protection contribution to the national scheme.

The contribution should preferably not be deducted from the artist's agreed fee.

It should be treated as part of the cost of commissioning professional creative labour.

Example #2:

All registered CCI's orginisations, institutions, and government agencies must sign a MoU, agreeing to support:

- annual contributions towards a grant attached to qualifying creative-sector transactions,
- contributions from large corporations commissioning creative work,
- contributions from publicly funded cultural projects, and
- potentially contributions from larger galleries, commercial cultural institutions and production companies.

The important principle is that those who financially benefit from creative labour should contribute to protecting the people who produce that labour. Government should therefore stop measuring a funded project only by whether the project was delivered. It should also ask whether the people who delivered the project were treated as professionals and workers or not.

Public Cultural Programmes should:

- meet minimum standards.

These should include:

a. written contracts,
b. fair remuneration,
c. payment within a defined period,
d. protection against abrupt contract cancellations,
e. intellectual-property provisions,
f. safe working conditions, and
g. appropriate worker contributions.

If public money is being used to commission creative labour, minimum worker-protection standards can be attached to the funding/commissioning conditions.

The 17 CCI Clusters should**:**

- help establish:

a. a sector map,
b. a register of practitioners,
c. professional standards,
d. standard contracts,
e. fee guidelines,
f. training,
g. employment opportunities,
h. market opportunities,
i. social-protection information, and
j. data on working conditions.

Example #3: Visual Arts Cluster map:

- Creative workers, curators, galleries, art fairs, museums, independent art spaces, art handlers, conservators, producers, writers, and other workers.

The purpose should not simply be to know how many creative workers exist. The purpose should be to know:

a. Where they work?
b. How they earn?
c. Who employs them?
d. Who commissions them?
e. How much they are paid?
f. Whether they have contracts?
g. Whether they have retirement savings?
h. Whether they have medical cover?
i. What infrastructure do they lack, and
j. What barriers prevent them from building sustainable careers.

- Prioritise rural, township and peri-urban practitioners

Mapping should specifically identify areas where creative workers have historically had less access to:

- Galleries,
- Museums,
- Studios,
- Funding,
- Training,
- Markets,
- Internet Access,

- Transport, and
- Professional Networks.

This responds directly to the apartheid legacy of unequal infrastructure and economic geography. CCI practitioners should not be expected or forced to move to established cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town or Durban before they can become professionally viable. The policy proposes more support for:

- regional creative hubs,
- shared studios,
- mobile cultural programmes,
- local exhibitions,
- regional production spaces,
- digital access, and
- local market development.

- Make professionalisation practical

Every registered or participating artist should be able to access basic professional tools, including:

- standard contracts,
- invoices,
- tax guidance,
- copyright guidance,
- funding information,
- professional fee guidelines,
- pension information,
- medical-aid options, and
- legal assistance.

Professionalisation should mean making it easier for an artist to operate professionally, rather than placing additional administrative burdens on them. CCI Clusters or another designated structure could provide a single access point/referral system.

- Direct and increased access for women, youth, and disabled people.

Marginalised groups should not be treated as an afterthought. Instead, they should be consultant and included in the decision-making processes – particularly regarding:

- accessibility of venues and programmes;

- accessible application processes;
- transport;
- caregiving responsibilities;
- safety;
- discrimination;
- access to professional networks;
- accessible digital systems;
- reasonable accommodation;
- paid participation;
- representation in governance;
- access to professional development and markets.

1. **How Could It Be Implemented?**

Step 1: Map the sector:

- Use the CCI Clusters, NAC, SACO, provincial departments and municipalities to create a national picture of creative workers, cultural producers, organisations, employers, funders, infrastructure, and existing benefit schemes.
- Mapping must include rural, township and peri-urban areas.

Step 2: Establish a Creative Worker Task Team

- Supported by DSAC, the Creative Worker Task Team would be made up of creative and cultural practitioners, representatives from Labour, National Treasury, SARS, Social Development, NAC, NFVF, CCI Clusters, cultural producers, unions, galleries, and creative organisations.
- Creative workers and cultural producers must be part of the decision-making process rather than simply being consulted after the policy has already been designed.

Step 3: Prototyping & Testing

- Test a small contribution on qualifying creative transactions.
- The pilot should test; collection, administration, compliance, benefit allocation, and the effect on creative workers and commissioning organisations.

Step 4: Pilot roll-out Creative Worker Contribution

- Start with selected sectors and provinces. Possible pilot sectors: visual arts, music, performing arts, film, and design.
- Begin with publicly funded projects because government can immediately control the conditions attached to its own funding.

Step 5: Create the portable & ringfenced Benefit Account

- Every participating artist receives a portable account.
- Contributions follow the artist from project to project.
- An artist does not lose their benefits simply because one project ends.

Step 6: Evaluate Pilot Quarterly & Annually

Measure income, payment times, number of contracts, number of creative workers with retirement savings, access to healthcare, unemployment protection, geographic participation, and number of creative workers moving from informal to more formal professional practice.

Step 7: Expand nationally

After the pilot has been evaluated, expand the system across the creative economy.

1. **How Will We Measure Success?**

Success should be measured by whether creative workers are becoming more economically secure.

Key indicators:

a. Increase in:

- the number of creative workers and cultural producers with written contracts,
- retirement savings,
- access to medical cover,
- unemployment protection,
- occupational protection,
- average income,
- professional fees,
- paid creative opportunities,
- employment created by cultural organisations and market opportunities,
- the number of marginalized creative workers, including women, people with disabilities, rural, township and peri-urban creative workers participating in the formal creative economy.
- publicly funded projects meeting minimum professional standards.
- the number of creative organisations operating as sustainable professional organisations.

- Tracking how much money is collected through the proposed social-protection mechanism and how much is returned directly to creative workers through:
- pension contributions; medical support; unemployment protection; training;

- and other benefits.

b. **Reduction in:**

- late payments,
- unpaid creative work,
- cancelled projects without compensation, and
- informal working arrangements.

Impact Measurement:

Outputs ● number registered; ● number of contracts; ● number of public projects meeting standards; ● amount collected.
Outcomes ● reduced late payment; ● increased income security; ● increased retirement/healthcare access; ● reduced unpaid work.
Longer-term impact ● improved sustainability of creative careers; ● increased formalisation/professionalisation; ● improved economic resilience of the sector.

1. **Call To Action**

We call on the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, together with the Department of Employment and Labour and the creative sector, to formally recognise creative workers and cultural producers as workers and build a practical system of professionalisation and social protection around creative work. We are not asking the government simply to give creative workers more funding. We are asking the government to recognise that the creative economy is already an economic sector that generates employment, income, tax revenue and cultural value.

As an immediate next step, we call for the relevant institutions to:

- establish the Creative Worker Task Team;
- conduct/consolidate the national mapping;
- develop and test minimum professional standards on publicly funded creative work;
- design/pilot the contribution and portable-benefit mechanism.

To formalise and professionalise the sector for the benefit of the artist. Professionalisation must mean more than asking creative workers to become businesses. It must mean creating an industry where:

- creative workers are paid fairly,
- contracts are standardised,
- work is recognised,
- income can contribute towards retirement,
- healthcare can be accessed,
- unemployment does not automatically mean complete economic collapse of the creative,
- creative workers can work across multiple employers without losing their benefits, and
- Cultural producers can build sustainable careers without having to leave the creative sector to achieve economic security.

Creative workers are workers too. Cultural production is work. Professionalisation must protect the person behind the work. A stronger creative economy must first mean a more sustainable life for the people who create it.

Ends