

Digital technology proves to be the next money maker

By [Carole Kimutai](#): [@CaroleKimutai](#)

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Day 1 of the Broadcast Film and Music Africa ([BFMA](#)) conference opened with a house full. The two day conference, under the theme "Innovation, investment and partnerships for local content and service excellence" takes place at the Oshwal Centre, located in the Nairobi Central Business District, Kenya.

The potential of content

The opening session involved highlights of the mediascape in Africa and one thing was clear - there were lots of stories from Africa to be told. [Sean Moroney](#), chairman of AITEC Africa, organisers of the event, says it is unfortunate that local business had failed to recognise the potential of content despite the developed technology market in the region.

Introducing the National Film Policy

In his welcoming address to the delegates, Peter Mutie, CEO of the Kenya Film Commission (KFC) revealed that the commission would be unveiling the Film City which will be part of Konza City - Kenya's "Silicon Valley".

"We will be breaking ground in the next two months or so," he said, adding that KFC is aggressively promoting the production of local content in the country. He said the National Film Policy would be put in place to address challenges in the industry among which include financing and training.

"The draft policy is ready for validation and we will soon call stakeholders to give us their input."

Funding local productions

Mutie also highlighted plans in the Kenyan film sector that also include setting up a Lottery Fund that will be used to fund local productions. This also includes additional incentives aimed at encouraging the production of local content at a lower cost.

The lack of local content is a challenge for broadcasters to who are by law required to air 40% of local content in their programming. Kiss Tv committed to air one film per day for several months but it has been unable to get content.

In Kenya, content opportunities are in short feature films, television series, documentaries and animation. According to a research by KFC, in the government 2009/10 financial year, Kenya's film industry contributed 3.6% (KSh 71 billion) of the country's GDP, with more incentives this figure is expected to go up to 7%.

Opportunities in media

Africa boasts of a growing middle class which is fast embracing digital technology. Envir Fraser, head of Research, Regulatory & Policy - Convergence Partners South Africa said new technology will drive investment in media in Africa. The continent is rich in culture and the opportunity to diversify products was a major hint for content producers.

"You can diversify into audiovisual productions and know who you are targeting," said Ann Overbergh, an audiovisual consultant from Belgium. She said there was opportunity in kids' programmes and short stories.

To capitalize on the opportunities available, there is need for content producers to think of new business models for new media platforms. Advice from Overbergh, content producers should place their bet on making as many African stories accessible through the various media channels.

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