



FUNDING FOR IMPACT: HOW THE NLC'S FUNDING MODEL STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

The National Lotteries Commission (NLC) continues to play an important role in South Africa's social and economic development by ensuring that public funds are used responsibly, transparently, and for maximum community benefit. Through a rigorous funding and compliance process, the NLC supports thousands of non-profit organisations across sectors such as education, sport, arts, heritage, and social welfare — transforming lives and fostering sustainable change. In a recent conversation with the Mail & Guardian, Acting Chief Operations Officer, **Mr. Mzwandile Ngubane**, explained how the NLC's funding framework promotes accountability and public trust while driving impact on the ground.

Fair and Transparent Funding Processes

At the heart of the NLC's funding model is a clear commitment to fairness and compliance with the **Lotteries Act (Act No. 57 of 1997, as amended)** — the legislation that guides every stage of the funding process. From the **Call for Applications** and eligibility screening to adjudication and approval, each step of the process goes through robust internal controls and independent oversight.

"Every funding decision must be aligned with the Lotteries Act," said Mr. Ngubane. "That means each application is evaluated on merit, guided by eligibility criteria and accountability requirements that ensure fairness and transparency," he emphasised.

To maintain integrity in decision-making, the NLC implement **due diligence procedures**, **financial verification** checks, and use **independent adjudication panels** to assess applications. This process minimises bias and ensures that funding benefits legitimate, well-run organisations that align with national development priorities.

Strengthening Oversight and Accountability

Accountability does not end when funds are disbursed. The NLC actively monitors all funded projects to ensure proper use of grants and adherence to the terms of approval. These include **regular progress reporting, site visits, and audits** to verify that funding is directed towards its intended purpose.

"We have strengthened our audit mechanisms and introduced enhanced risk assessments to prevent misuse of funds," Mr. Ngubane explained. "We've also improved collaboration with oversight bodies and introduced whistleblower mechanisms to encourage transparency."

These reforms reflect the NLC's proactive approach to preventing irregularities and reinforcing ethical conduct in the grant-making process.

Transforming Lives Across Communities

Behind every NLC grant, lies a story of transformation. From **early childhood development centres** that provide safe learning environments for children, to **women's cooperatives** creating economic opportunities in rural areas, and **youth empowerment** initiatives building future leaders — the NLC's impact extends far beyond financial support.

"Funding is not just about disbursing money; it's about building sustainable change," said Mr. Ngubane. "We want communities to grow, not just survive. That's why we're focusing on capacity building for non-profit organisations and promoting responsible, impactful use of limited resources."

As we continue to evolve, our guiding principle remains the same — to ensure that every lottery rand benefits South Africans and contributes to building a better, more equitable nation,"

Commitment to Public Trust

The NLC remains committed to upholding public trust through ethical leadership, transparent communication, and measurable outcomes.

"As we continue to evolve, our guiding principle remains the same — to ensure that every lottery rand benefits South Africans and contributes to building a better, more equitable nation," concluded Mr. Ngubane.

A Vision for Sustainable Funding

Looking ahead, the NLC is modernising its funding operations to improve efficiency and accountability. This includes adopting digital systems that streamline processes, enhance data management, and provide greater transparency for applicants and stakeholders.

"Our long-term vision is to create a more responsive, transparent, and digitally enabled funding model that continues to uphold fairness while amplifying social impact," Mr. Ngubane added.

