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FPB TOR – to conduct a Comparative Analysis on Game Classification Systems and Processes internationally.

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1. Introduction

The FPB is a state-owned media content regulation authority in South Africa. The FPB is mandated by an act of parliament, the Films and Publications Act of 1996 (FP Act). The FPB is an entity of the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT).

Films and Publications Act (96 of 1996) guides the mandate of the FPB. Section 2 of the Act sets out its aim and objectives, that is, “to regulate the creation, production, possession and distribution of films, games and certain publications”. The FPB executes this mandate through advising adult consumers “...to make informed viewing, reading and gaming choices, both for themselves and for children in their care” (Section 2A). This provision is meant to protect children from premature exposure to and consumption of disturbing and harmful materials as well as adult experiences (Section 2B). Further, the Act sanctions punishment for the use of children in and exposure of children to pornography (Section 2C). This particular focus on children has been necessitated by the realisation that the public, and young children, are increasingly active in the online space, generating, storing and distributing their own content, which opens everyone up to online dangers.

The FPB intends to:

Conduct a comparative analysis study on gaming regulatory classification systems, frameworks as well as its procedures on an international basis.

The comparative analysis will be undertaken assessing available systems and processes of gaming classification (age ratings) which the service provider is requested to compare with similar or different classification rating systems (standards) globally.

The primary reason for conducting a comparative analysis is the exploratory interest for the Film and Publication Board in gaining a deeper understanding of all policy, systemic, procedural and causal processes involved in the available regulatory systems (industry regulated or government regulated).

The study seeks to compare and contrast (similarities and differences) between the available systems, policies and procedures.

The comparative analysis should provide the FPB with a framework for establishing good practices for gaming regulation on the African continent (audiences throughout SADC and the rest of the world). Furthermore, evidence from the study will enable FPB to strengthen its gaming classification regime - to bring it in line with international standards. Key technological changes in the gaming environment have given rise to the necessity for gaming classification changes which has spurred the FPB to assess key lessons internationally.

Key institutions to be assessed are PEGI and IARC (these are not exhaustive)

The Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) age rating system was established to help European parents make informed decisions on buying computer games. It was launched in the spring of 2003 and replaced a number of national age rating systems with a single system now used throughout most of Europe, in more than 35 countries (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldavia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). The system is supported by the major console manufacturers, including Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, as well as by publishers and developers of interactive games throughout Europe. The age rating system was developed by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE).

The day-to-day management, supervision and development of the PEGI system was handed to PEGI s.a., an independent, not-for-profit company with a social purpose established under Belgian law. Drawing on wide experience, PEGI is steered by way of a number of boards and committees as envisaged in article 12 of the PEGI Code of Conduct.

International Age Rating Coalition (IARC)

Administered by many of the world's game rating authorities, the International Age Rating Coalition (IARC) provides a globally streamlined age classification process for digital games and mobile apps, helping to ensure that today's digital consumers have consistent access to established and trusted age ratings across game devices. Established in 2013, IARC simplifies the process by which developers obtain age ratings from different regions around the world by reducing it to a single set of questions about their products' content and interactive elements. The questionnaire is programmed with unique algorithms that generate ratings reflecting each participating rating authority's distinct standards, along with a generic rating for the rest of the world. IARC rating assignments also include content descriptors and interactive elements identifying apps that collect and share location or personal information, enable user interaction, share user-generated content, and/or offer in-app digital purchases. The IARC system currently includes rating authorities which collectively represent regions serving approximately 1.5 billion people, with more expected to participate in the future.

Development

The IARC system was devised through close collaboration among participating rating authorities in consultation with game makers and digital storefronts. Together they established a streamlined and automated process for assigning ratings that incorporates each territory's distinct content criteria and standards.

Central to the IARC rating process is a questionnaire that was created based on the factors that each rating authority considers when assigning ratings. These factors were then weighed by each rating authority so that once a developer completes the questionnaire, the unique algorithms that have been programmed for each region instantly produce the appropriate age ratings. The result is a revolutionary solution that enables developers to simultaneously obtain ratings from various territories throughout the world while preserving their nuanced local standards. Each participating rating authority monitors to ensure that ratings for their region are accurate and the system enables each to promptly correct ratings when necessary.

2. Purpose and Aim

The primary reason for conducting a comparative analysis is the exploratory interest for the Film and Publication Board in gaining a deeper understanding of all policy, systemic, procedural and causal processes involved in the available regulatory systems (industry regulated or government regulated).

The study seeks to compare and contrast (similarities and differences) between the available systems, policies and procedures, to provide the FPB with a framework for establishing good practices for gaming regulation on the African continent (audiences throughout SADC and the rest of the world).

Furthermore, evidence from the study will enable FPB to strengthen its gaming classification regime - to bring it in line with international standards. Key technological changes in the gaming environment have given rise to the necessity for gaming classification changes which has spurred the FPB to assess key lessons internationally.

The following are a broad guideline of typical questions that could be answered (this is not exhaustive):

1. Is the current online gaming classification method or rating system effective and efficient compared to other countries internationally?
2. How are other regulators dealing with the dynamic technological changes as it relates to classification of games e.g. loot box, in-game purchases (microtransactions), immersiveness etc....
3. How do regulators internationally deal with issues of violence, sexual violence, prejudice, child pornography, cyberbullying?
4. What are the definitions or conceptions of gaming classification emanating from this study?

- a. Are these definitions consistent across diverse cultures?
5. Are FPB classifiers of games adequately equipped to do their work? Assess the educational qualification/s and or experience required for gaming classifiers internationally.
6. Assess the time allocated for gaming classification rating.
7. Compare and contrast available policies and or procedures.

3. Scope of Work

The scope of work will include the following:

- 3.1 Meet with the appointed service provider to detail the scope of the problem
- 3.2 Service provider to develop a detailed problem tree analysis in consultation with the research team.
- 3.3 Develop an inception report with detailed methods, literature review, research instruments, and possible list of respondents.
- 3.4 Develop a detailed workplan (Gantt chart) level of effort required, milestones as well as timelines and costing per deliverable.
- 3.5 Undertake secondary research to assess Online Content Rating Systems (OCRS).
- 3.6 Produce a first draft report based on the comparative analysis conducted and share in a workshop format the results with our Management Committee (MANCO), EXCO and the Research Reference Group. Garner inputs and or edits from these forums to develop the final draft.
- 3.7 Present the finalised narrative report (MS Word) to EXCO and in a PowerPoint format. Template to be provided by the FPB.
- 3.8 Submit the raw data and research tools/instruments to the FPB Research team.
- 3.9 In terms of the FPB copyright policy, this research remains the property of the Film and Publication Board.

4. Deliverables and time - frame

The final research report should be in an MS Word formatted document Calibri 11, with all appendices attached. This study is expected to be conducted over a 6-month period after signing an SLA with the FPB.

The Service Provider or Consultant/s is expected to make recommendations towards a proposed African harmonized Gaming Classification system as well as recommendation on how the FPB may strengthen and improve its gaming classification systems and processes.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) The Service Provider or Consultant/s will sign a performance-based Service Level Agreement with provisions for payments at completion of key deliverables.
- b) The Service Provider or Consultant/s will be provided with project management oversight.
- c) The Service Provider or Consultant/s will be required to use its own resources and tools to undertake the study.
- d) Payments to the Service Provider or Consultant/s will be made on satisfactory completion of each deliverable and final payment made on submission of an acceptable deliverable according to the Gantt Chart.
- e) The FPB will provide project management and oversight support to the project.

6. Functionality criteria

Functionality	Weight %	1 (Very Poor)	2 (Poor)	3 (Good)	4 (Very Good)	5 (Excellent)	Total Score
Experience, Skills and Ability of Service Provider to fulfil FPB's requirements, Past experience of doing of a similar nature.	10			3 years	4-5 years	Above 5 years	

The service provider (company) must have at least 3 years' experience in research fraternity.							
✓ At least three (3) years research experience in Film and Publication Sub-Sectors or other related fields.							
A qualification in research and evaluation systems.	15				Master's Degree	PhD and above	
Submit minimum of three (3) reference letters relevant to the project relevant to the work completed in the past 1 year – 5 years	10			3 letters	4 – 5 letters	More than 5 letters	
Submit a CV that demonstrates experience in similar research; sound research design and execution.	5			3 – 4 years	Above 4 – 5 years	Above 5 years	
Similar portfolio of evidence of previous projects worked on	10			3-5	5-6	Above 7	

7. Qualifications of service provider team:

Provide the CVs for key team members (Team Leader, Managerial and administrative staff). CVs should demonstrate qualifications in areas relevant to the Scope of Services. Please use the format below:

Name:			
Position for this Contract:			
Contact information:			
Countries of Work Experience:			
Language Skills:			
Educational and other Qualifications:			
Summary of Experience:			
Highlight experience in the region and on similar projects.			
Relevant Experience (start with most recent):			
Period: from xxx date to xxx date		Name of activity/ Project	
		Project value:	
		Job Title and key activities	
		Organisation	
Declaration:			
I confirm my commitment to carry out and complete the assignment in the stated position. I understand that any misrepresentation described above may lead to my disqualification, before or during my engagement.			
Signature of the Team Leader:		Date Signed:	
_____		_____	

Methodology and strategic approach	25			3	4-6	7	
- Proven knowledge of processes and research design: ✓ Research project methods and stakeholder engagement. ✓ Research and evaluation of systems and processes.							

The service provider should indicate in its proposal how it deliver on the project within the agreed period (six months). The proposal should outline clear roles and resources to be allocated for the execution of the project, from inception to the point of delivering the final report.