
UPDATE: 12/2006

AMFISA INTERNET BULLETIN – www.amfisa.org.za

07/12/2006

A GENERAL UPDATE

1. On the 27/10/2006 the AMFISA as part of the delegation that went on a poverty study tour of Chile and Tunisia reported and had discussions with leadership of the Presidency, Policy Coordination and Advisory Services. The delegation reported on the importance of having strong relationships between Government and Civil Society; the importance of targeting especially for the poorest of the poor; the different social funds for the poor; the need for a Women's Ministry as a means of mainstreaming gender equality. The Policy Coordination and Advisory Services outlined some of the processes they would be undertaking to address the issues raised by the delegation. The policy unit agreed to work with the delegation as it intended to brief more Government structures.
2. The AMFISA and the Department of Agriculture directorate which supervises MAFISA met on the 02/11/2006 to conceptualize and chart a way for future partnerships. The meeting agreed that a partnership should be established. It then was agreed that the directorate would sponsor AMFISA and its representative to attend the Global Microcredit Summit in Halifax Canada and that during the trip, the two representatives would develop a framework for a partnership. Due to unforeseen circumstances the trip was not undertaken. A follow up meeting was then organized for the 22/11/06. The Executive Director and Chairperson of AMFISA were in attendance. The meeting agreed to ensure cooperation and that once the 1 year pilot of MAFISA was over in December 2006. The criteria for funding intermediaries would be reviewed and if AMFISA members qualified, they would then be beneficiaries of the fund.
3. The National Treasury initiated a meeting with AMFISA on the 9/11/2006. The meeting was intended to brief AMFISA on the progress and discussions taking place in the treasury about Microfinance. The AMFISA also updated the National Treasury on the issues facing the sector. The meeting agreed that it was necessary that on going forward that a trilateral meeting between the National Treasury, South African Microfinance Fund and AMFISA be organize to develop synergies that have been absent in the past. The meeting also agreed that meetings of this nature would become a norm going forward to ensure that contradictions were minimized as has been the case in the past.

4. The AMFISA has handed over the draft terms of reference for the baseline study on the 17/11/2006 to the DBSA for editing. In due course matters relating to the transfer or donation of R60, 000 to AMFISA and the researchers for the study will be finalized. The Board has requested that the study should commence in early 2007.
5. A meeting which included the CEO and Board Member of Tembeka Social Investment Company with AMFISA took place on the 24/11/2006. The meeting discussed developing a framework that could benefit Tembeka as a private funder and AMFISA members taking into consideration the capacity problems facing our members. There was a concern that AMFISA needed to somehow participate in assisting and ensuring that its members had the capacity to administer and repay such loans. The AMFISA agreed, though stated that its members were autonomous institutions therefore could only advise and not interfere with the operations of its members. The AMFISA agreed to assist in ways acceptable to its main object of organization but encouraged the funder to individually assess institutions and make recommendations in which AMFISA could assist in the future.

Finally, the issue was raised that because Tembeka Social Investment Company was a social private company it encouraged development shareholders. It was therefore up to AMFISA members to decide and offer to be shareholders of the company. The AMFISA stated that it would raise the issue at the AGM in 2007.

6. The AMFISA initiated a meeting with the new CEO of SAMAF Mr. Sithembele. E. Mase on the 27th November 2006. The meeting committed to some of the following: -
 - Build broken fences
 - Ensure closer and better relationships with each other based on mutual respect
 - Ensure clarity of objectives in relation to poverty reduction, growth of micro-small enterprise and employment creation
 - Develop a framework for strengthening such relations based on sound principles, integrity and accountability
 - SAMAF will after its strategic planning session of January 2007 contact AMFISA to arrange a one-day consultative summit with industry players
 - Will review funding model and other things to ensure that some resources do target some of our member organizations
 - That SAMAF will not promise that all your members do get these resources because this depends on the level of engagement, trust and accountability that transpires at one to one level.

Further meetings will take place in 2007 based on mutual cooperation intended by both parties.

7. The AMFISA reported to Ford Foundation on its mid year report on the 28/11/2006. Both parties were happy and discussions were held on next year's activities.
8. The AMFISA Board of Directors meeting was held on the 29/11/2006. The Board took decisions on improving AMFISA's operations and announcements will be made continuously on the programmes of AMFISA.
9. On the 30th November 2006, again AMFISA as part of the delegation to Chile and Tunisia met and presented study tour findings to the Deputy President of South Africa; Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister of Public Works; Deputy Minister of Social Development; Deputy Minister of **theDTI**; Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture and Deputy Minister of Science and Technology. The meeting agreed to take the issues raised forward in their own structures. The delegation intends to engage the Forum for South Africa's Directors Generals in early 2007.
10. Since 2001 the Small Enterprise Foundation has been working with a team from Wits University and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine on an action research program to study the impact of combining microcredit along with HIV/AIDS and Gender training. It had been hoped that this study would be published in the major medical journal, the Lancet. The article has been promised to be published on the 1st December 2006.

As AMFISA we are proud of the leadership that SEF continues to provide on different fronts of microcredit. We would like to say keep it up and that we shall keep on learning from your successes.

11. The AMFISA was represented by its Executive Director and Mr. Jabulani Thusi at the Micronet workshop in Durban on the 4 – 6 December 2006. The AMFISA was invited by the Department of Agriculture to attend as part of the discussions of building partnerships and supporting ASGISA. The workshop reviewed legislation affecting Cooperatives in South Africa and evaluated existing microfinance programmes with a view to understanding how with different instruments the poor can access financial resources.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. The SEEP Network will conduct an assessment of AMFISA in 2007. You will be informed in due course on your role in the assessment. The Assessment is targeted at the secretariat and not members of AMFISA.
13. Members of AMFISA are requested to fundraise for the upcoming 2007 Southern New Hampshire University course in March 2007. Please visit www.amfisa.org.za for more information.

14. All members of AMFISA are requested to prepare themselves and be compliant for the upcoming National Credit Act/regulations deadline in June 2007. It is the responsibility of each institution to ensure that it is compliant.
15. You are all requested to organize a Nobel Peace Prize viewing event in your organizations on Sunday December 10th, 2006. Join the world in Honoring Prof. Muhammad Yunus on the day of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. Please log on the following to view event: www.nobelprize.org; www.muhammadyunus.org, more information can be obtained at www.muhammadyunus.org. Those with access to DSTV you might pick it up on one of the international news networks like CNN or BBC.
16. The offices of AMFISA will be closed from the 10th December to 15 January 2007.

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