

# Away From Here Trading investigated after allegedly failing to deliver on contract

An investigation into Away From Here Trading, owned by former SABC sports presenter Owen Ndlovu, has been launched by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture.



Source: © Anna Fou [Pexels](#) An investigation into Away From Here Trading, owned by former SABC sports presenter Owen Ndlovu, has been launched by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture

In 2021 the department's entrepreneurial initiative, the Mzansi Golden Economy paid R2m to Away Here Trading to monitor musicians' royalties based on radio airplay.

However, the company has, allegedly failed to deliver as well as adequately report how it spent the funds.

According to *News24* source, Ndlovu had failed to submit a report to the department breaking down how the money was spent.

*News24* also states, "The cash injection itself is questionable and problematic because the department ought to have known that there are independent institutions tasked with the issue of royalties across the country."

It quotes a source, "But the department chose to award the contract to an entity owned by an individual."

News24 says the source asked not to be named for fear of reprisal.



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## An allegation of possible maladministration

Another source told *News24* that Ndlovu's company could not deliver on this mandate.

"Some aspects of the investigation revealed that the reports he had submitted to the department were conducted by another company which received the money."

Last year, EFF MP Eugene Mthethwa in Parliament asked Sport, Arts and Culture Minister Zizi Kodwa for an update on the multimillion-rand contract and if Away From Here trading had delivered, and if not, what the department was doing about that.

In November last year, the minister said after the funding was granted, the department had received an allegation of possible maladministration regarding the project and that an investigation had been launched.

The department says the contract was a pilot project after Ndlovu's company partnered with an Australian-based company for data harnessing.



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## No investigation

According to *News24* Ndlovu was adamant that there was no investigation against him, but claimed that the department was following its internal process.

"There was no investigation letter served on me. What I know is that the department responded to a question posed by Parliament. I was made aware of the question in Parliament and also responded."

The article also states that he says the "funding was once off and also denied that his reports to the department were not originally his".

"We are the only company that monitors royalties for artists. Right now, we have a contract with the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (Samro) and all the reports we give are original," he said. He also said he gave the department a breakdown of the expenditure, which included salaries and marketing, totalling R1.8m.

*News24* says that Litha Mpondwana, the department's spokesperson, has confirmed the investigation was ongoing.

"The matter was referred to the department's investigation unit, which then commissioned an investigation. The investigation into the matter is still being finalised."

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