

## Uneven Governance of Visual Arts in Tanzania: Institutional Reform, Coordination, and Insights from the Film Administration, 2019-2024

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### Abstract

This article examines the absence of a clear governance strategy for the visual arts in Tanzania, resulting in uneven institutional support across art forms. It fills a gap in the understanding of African cultural policies and the creative economy by analysing how different governance structures affect the development of the visual arts. Drawing on data from policy documents, records, and other sources, the article compares these issues with the Tanzania Film Board's work from 2019 to 2024. It investigates how governance, institutional capacity, and policy priorities affect the entire visual arts sector. The article notes that the arts and entertainment industry is important to the global economy and can provide jobs for young people. It highlights lessons from governance practices in the film sector that could inform improvements in other visual arts, particularly in coordination, planning, and regulation. Overall, it offers insights for policymakers, arts and cultural leaders, and researchers interested in improving institutional effectiveness and fostering equitable arts and cultural development in Tanzania and across Africa.

### Keywords:

Uneven art governance, visual arts in Tanzania, institutional reform, institutional coordination, film administration, Tanzania film industry.

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### Introduction

Innovations to advance the visual arts in Tanzania are of utmost importance and urgently needed, given the global economic potential of the Creative Industry, which encompasses the Arts and Entertainment. The Creative Industry in Arts and Entertainment, which encompasses visual arts, is recognised by the United Nations as a crucial catalyst for both global and regional economic growth (United Nations



2024, p. 5), whereby arts and entertainment are increasingly positioned as drivers of inclusive development, particularly through their capacity to absorb youth labour in emerging economies. In Tanzania, the arts and entertainment sector has emerged as one of the fastest-growing tertiary economic activities, particularly notable for its capacity to absorb youths into the labour market. This is according to the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) Economic Survey Reports, which show that, generally, the Arts and Entertainment sector grew faster than all other sectors in the country by a rate of 17.7 per cent, 19 per cent, and 19.4 per cent in 2023, 2022, and 2021, respectively (URT 2024; 2023; 2022). Visual arts make up a core component of this sector and therefore have significant implications for economic diversification and cultural sustainability in Tanzania. Despite this overall growth, government support for different visual arts forms and genres in Tanzania remains uneven.

Although the film sector has received increased institutional attention in recent years, particularly from the Tanzania Film Board (TFB), other visual arts forms, such as painting, sculpture, photography, and mixed-media practices, have fared less well than in earlier periods. This issue highlights the need for a clear plan to manage the arts sector effectively. This article addresses a central issue: the absence of a unified strategy for extending the successful approaches of the film sector to other visual arts. In recent years, there has been a stronger focus on film in Tanzania, particularly between 2019 and 2024. This heightened attention to film calls for a similar focus on other visual art forms. During that period, the TFB implemented various innovations and growth strategies, including the coordination of regulations, the development of training programmes, and support for production and distribution. Rather than prioritising film over other visual arts, this article examines film-sector initiatives as a governance reference point and a model for strengthening the wider visual arts ecosystem.

Countries that recognise the potential of their creative industries and implement strategies like financial grants can reap benefits. A notable example is Nigeria, where government investment led to a 1.4 per cent increase in GDP in 2013, according to WIPO Magazine (2013). The Oxford Business Group (2022) notes that in 2016, the Nigerian Film Industry

contributed approximately 2.3 per cent to GDP and employed around 1 million people. This growth followed a substantial investment of 3 billion Nigerian Naira (about USD 2 million) to support film production, training, and distribution. Nigeria's experience demonstrates that sustained public investment in creative industries can yield measurable economic returns. This case provides a comparative reference point for Tanzania, particularly for understanding how targeted government support can strengthen the visual arts' contribution to national development. By adopting effective strategies learned from other nations, Tanzania can develop a dynamic and sustainable visual arts industry that can greatly benefit the country.

This article draws on policy documents, programme records, and administrative data relating to TFB initiatives implemented between 2019 and 2024. It employs a comparative analysis to examine the levels of institutional support and governance across visual art forms. Specifically, it examines the strategic innovations and growth initiatives undertaken by the TFB during this period. It compares the support provided to the film industry with that provided to other visual arts in Tanzania. The article also explores lessons from the film sector that could help improve the overall visual arts landscape. The author considers various factors that explain the different levels of support for artistic disciplines, including institutional goals, revenue needs, policy focus, and public awareness. The main argument is that the continued growth of Tanzanian visual arts depends on strategic government, and particularly institutional leadership and adequate support systems, which may involve adopting successful practices from other sectors, sub-sectors, or forms. While the importance of non-governmental contributions, including those from the private sector and international organisations, is acknowledged, the article focuses primarily on the role of the Tanzanian government, given its crucial responsibilities for coordination and regulation.

The article is structured around three key areas that can be viewed as research questions. The first area examines the governance structure,

detailing the foundation, organisational framework, operations, and transformative strategies of the Tanzania Film Board. The second area focuses on institutional capacity, assessing the extent to which the institution supports the visual arts. Lastly, the third area addresses policy and legislative prioritisation, offering practical suggestions to enhance the visual arts sector and policy recommendations to create a more equitable and sustainable framework for the visual arts in Tanzania.

### **What are the Visual Arts, and Why Visual Arts?**

Visual arts, according to the National Art Education Association (2012), include the Traditional Fine Arts such as Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, Photography, and Sculpture; Media Arts including Film, Graphic Communications, Animation, and Emerging Technologies; Architectural, Environmental, and Industrial Arts such as Urban, Interior, Product, and Landscape Design; Folk Arts; and works of Art such as Ceramics, Fibers, Jewelry, works in wood, paper, and other materials. The National Art Council of Tanzania, or *Baraza la Sanaa la Taifa* (BASATA), in Kiswahili, encompasses the visual arts within the Arts Sector, which includes all types of Fine and Media Arts (Drawings, Paintings, Sculptures, Graphic Designs/Communications, Animations, Printmaking, etc.), as well as Music, Films, and Stage Plays (BASATA, 2025). The primary focus of this article is on visual arts, including Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking, Photography, Graphic Design/Communications, Emerging Technologies, and Animation. Film is utilised as a model for the strategic innovations the author proposes, given the growth strategies employed within it and its similarities to other visual art forms. The author aims to propose strategic innovations and growth initiatives essential for capitalising on the burgeoning global creative economy in Tanzania's visual arts. The article specifically focuses on visual arts, using Film as a model to suggest strategic innovations, for two main reasons: one, the visual arts being a primary area of specialisation of the current author; and two, the attractive growth strategies innovated by the Tanzania Film Board from 2019 to 2024, as evidenced by this author.

## **Methodology**

This article adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design to examine governance disparities and institutional support mechanisms within Tanzania's visual arts sector, using the film industry as a comparative reference point. The research design prioritises documentary and institutional evidence, complemented by contextual insights derived from purposively selected key informants and the author's sectoral experience. Data were drawn from four main categories of sources. The first category was collecting and analysing policy and institutional documents, including Tanzania Film Board (TFB) strategic plans, annual reports, programme records, and national cultural and creative-industry policy documents issued between 2019 and 2024. These documents were selected based on their relevance to governance structures, regulatory coordination, funding mechanisms, and institutional support for the creative industries. The second category included a review of secondary academic literature, comprising peer-reviewed journal articles, edited volumes, and authoritative reports addressing creative-industry governance, cultural policy, and visual arts development in Tanzania and comparable contexts. These sources were selected based on their relevance and contribution to the article's conceptual framework. The third category involved obtaining contextual insights through purposive personal communication with a small, purposively selected group of key informants, drawn from their professional roles within the creative sector, including art and cultural administrators and visual artists (including film practitioners). These informants provided informed consent, and their communications were used to clarify institutional practices and interpret policy implementation dynamics rather than as standalone empirical evidence. The fourth category included the author's personal experience in Tanzania's creative sector to shape the article. The author treated the insights as background information rather than main data, and carefully checked all claims against documents and other sources to reduce bias. The data analysis involved identifying themes, drawing on both existing research and new findings. The author

identified key topics such as support systems, regulations, funding, and policy priorities, and compared them across the film industry and other visual arts. To ensure accuracy and transparency, the author cross-referenced policy documents, academic work, and expert insights.

### ***Background Information***

Since this article benchmarks selected governance and strategic innovations of the Tanzania Film Board (TFB) in formulating recommendations for strengthening the wider visual arts sector, this section provides a focused institutional overview of the TFB, with particular emphasis on reforms implemented between 2019 and 2024. Rather than offering a comprehensive institutional history, the discussion focuses on reforms that clarify how targeted public-sector interventions can reshape the performance of the creative industry.

Originating from colonial-era film control structures established in 1930, the institution assumed its current form under the Film and Stage Plays Act of 1976 (Mwakalinga, 2010, p. 18), providing a historical foundation that contextualises, but does not overshadow, the analytical focus on governance reforms implemented between 2019 and 2024. While earlier frameworks were primarily regulatory in orientation, recent reforms marked a significant institutional shift in the Board's mandate and operational philosophy. Amendments to the Film and Stage Plays Act in 2019 formally renamed the Central and Regional Censorship Boards as the Tanzania Film Board. They redefined their mandate, a shift that was subsequently operationalised through the 2020 Film Regulations. This is reflected in the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNPL), Tanzania Legal Institute (TANZLII), and Tanzania Film Board (TFB). These reforms introduced substantive changes that are central to this article's analytical focus. First, the reframing of regulatory language from "censorship" to "classification" and "certification" signalled a policy shift aimed at facilitating production and market access rather than restricting creative output (ICNPL 2025; TANZLII 2025; and TFB 2025). Second, the reduction and elimination of selected licensing and renewal fees lowered entry barriers for filmmakers, particularly independent and emerging producers, as articulated by the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) and the

Tanzania Film Board (TFB) (TFB 2020 and URT 2020). Third, the alignment of legal reforms with an updated five-year Strategic Plan (2021/22–2025/26) (TFB 2021c), institutional restructuring, and targeted staff recruitment strengthened the TFB’s operational capacity to coordinate training, regulation, and industry development.

These current developments contrast with the institutional experience of other visual arts forms governed under Tanzania’s framework, particularly those overseen by the National Arts Council of Tanzania (BASATA), which is responsible for visual arts, music, and performing arts. While BASATA continues to play an important regulatory and promotional role, it has not undergone a comparable sequence of legal, regulatory, and strategic reforms during the same period. As a result, other visual arts forms, including painting, sculpture, photography, and mixed-media practices, have recently operated within relatively unchanged governance arrangements, despite the overall growth of the creative economy. This has also been highlighted by civil society policy research, which has emphasised the need for policy harmonisation and review across creative sectors, signalling that existing governance structures, including those overseen by BASATA, have not kept pace with sectoral growth (Policy Forum Tanzania 2019), and the study of Development of Visual Arts in Tanzania from 1961 to 2015, which describes phases of visual arts development from independence through liberalisation, highlighting the continuity of institutional influence and policy inertia (Makukula 2019). This contrast, however, does not imply institutional failure on the part of BASATA, nor does it suggest that film is inherently more deserving of public support than other art forms. Rather, it highlights how differential government attention, revenue considerations, public visibility, and institutional mandates have produced uneven developments across the visual arts forms.

### **Institutional Structure and Operations to Enhance Growth and Innovation**

The Tanzania Film Board recruited additional essential staff, including management and operational personnel with diverse educational backgrounds, including those in film-related disciplines. This recruitment effort was launched to address staffing shortages that were limiting the Board’s ability to manage the film sub-sector effectively and to provide the necessary services. As a result of this hiring process, the TFB’s staff increased from 48 per cent to 98 per cent of the approved plan, greatly enhancing its operational capabilities. Having sufficient staff is crucial for agencies in the creative industries because it supports enforcement, coordination, and the development of strong relationships with stakeholders, all of which are important for sectoral growth. According to Semete-Makokotlela et al. (2021), many regulatory agencies face insufficient staffing, a lack of appropriate skills, and challenges with job roles. This hampers their ability to perform essential tasks, enforce regulations, and offer services. The increase in staffing made the TFB more active and visible. With the right personnel in place, the TFB could enhance its enforcement, coordination, and service delivery. This emphasises that having the right team is essential for effective governance, fostering trust in regulations, and establishing a stable environment conducive to growth.

Table 1: *Tanzania Film Board Establishment Plan*

Financial Year	Employment Status		Gender		%
	Establishment Plan	Number of employees	Females	Males	
2019/20	44	21	12	9	48
2020/21	44	27	17	10	61
2021/22	44	37	25	12	84
2022/23	44	38	23	15	86

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2023/24	44	43	27	16	98
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Source: Tanzania Film Board records.

The 2019-2024 period is also notable for TFB's establishment of several institutional committees to assist the Executive Secretary with operational tasks and to advise on decision-making regarding important and sensitive matters. Beyond their administrative role, these committees helped the Executive Secretary and TFB management as a whole to decentralise decision-making, enhance staff accountability, and improve policy compliance. During this period, the Tanzania Union of Government and Health Employees (TUGHE) branch, a workers' union, actively safeguarded the rights of TFB employees in the workplace. By officially establishing channels for workers to speak, TFB helped create a stable workplace. This indicates fewer workplace disputes and that TFB was following good practices, as other public agencies do, for involving employees and handling complaints. It shows that TFB was improving its ability to manage its own problems by ensuring that employees could voice their concerns in a structured manner, rather than addressing them casually. These changes helped keep the institution stable and running more smoothly, which is important for agencies that need to oversee their sector over the long term rather than just managing matters in the short term. The Committees established include the Budget Committee, Staff Training Committee, Integrity Committee, Leadership and Management Committee, ICT Steering Committee, and Community Diversity Committee. From a governance perspective, the creation of specialised committees indicated a shift toward shared decision-making and better risk management within TFB, aligning its operations with public-sector accountability standards. This committee structure suggests that regulatory bodies in creative industries are learning to use formal governance tools to manage complexity, enhance transparency, and ensure stable

organisational performance as the sector grows. The committees at TFB focused on various factors affecting the institution's operations, including overall performance, gaps in financial oversight, staff development, ethical issues, and digital systems (Interview with TFB Director of Corporate Services, 5 February 2026).

The Artists' Rights Committee and Filming Permit Committee were established before 2019 (the article's timeframe). However, their relevance is evident in the impact observed during the period covered by this article. Their continued relevance during the period in which this article was developed demonstrates that institutional continuity, when supported by stronger enforcement capacity, can translate into improved sector outcomes. The Artists' Rights Committee, for instance, received a total of 83 complaints, of which only 10 were received and resolved in 2018. The rest (71 complaints) were received and resolved between 2019 and 2024, recovering a total of TZS 317,000,000.00 (about USD 120,000), which was the financial losses incurred by film and art practitioners (Interview with TFB Director of Corporate Services, 5 February 2026). The high number of resolved cases shows that the regulatory authority is now more credible and effective. This change means a shift from reacting to problems to preventing them. Strong enforcement can help industries improve, reduce harmful practices, and rebuild trust between industry professionals and regulators. However, there are concerns about underreporting, particularly among informal workers, underscoring the need for improved outreach. The increase in resolved complaints indicates that consistent support and stronger enforcement can enhance regulatory bodies' credibility. This emphasises the importance of effective enforcement for resolving disputes, influencing industry practices, building trust, and encouraging growth in creative markets.

Institutional collaborations were another initiative undertaken by the Tanzania Film Board during this period to ensure steady institutional and Industry growth. During this period, institutional collaborations played an important role in addressing local capacity constraints and supporting institutional learning. TFB established, developed, and strengthened potential institutional collaborations within and outside the country.

Among the collaborators was the Busan Foundation for International Cooperation (BFIC) from Korea, which aimed to cultivate the capabilities of Tanzanian filmmakers to prepare them to establish a Green Smart City of Film in Tanzania. These partnerships reflected a governance approach in which the state facilitates access to knowledge, skills, and international networks rather than acting as the sole driver of industry development. Another collaborator was the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), which committed to fund a short-term training programme for a period of three years from 2023 to 2025 by facilitating training to staff and a few stakeholders each year in Tanzania or Korea on various areas of specialisation to increase the efficiency of the management and operation of the Film Industry in Tanzania (TFB, 2023). The three-year structure of this collaboration demonstrates a commitment to integrating skills transfer into routine institutional practices rather than relying on temporary or one-off training programmes. These partnerships demonstrate a governance model in which the state leverages international collaborations to address gaps in local capabilities and integrates skills transfer into everyday operations. This approach represents a transition from a focus on state control to a model of networked governance, in which learning, credibility, and sectoral improvement are achieved through strategic cooperation with external partners.

The TFB's collaboration with HAPAWARDS, the USA based initiative (Hapawards, n.d.), was a continuation of its intention of promoting the Tanzanian films on an international platform, which was also seen in 2019, when it began the process of getting Tanzania recognized by among the most famous and popular Awards in the global Film Industry (The Academy Awards, commonly known as "the Oscars"), whose headquarters are also in the USA (TFB 2022). Participation in internationally recognised award platforms increased Tanzania's cultural visibility and contributed to national branding, an increasingly important element of soft power within the discourse on the creative economy. Two years later, in 2021, Tanzania was invited to participate. In 2022, *Vuta N'Kuvute*, a film, was submitted

and accepted by the Oscars' selection committee, shifting the country from peripheral involvement to recognised participation in global film circuits (TFB 2022; The Citizen 2022). Since then, Tanzania has continued to receive invitations to participate in the Oscars, creating spillover effects for potential co-productions, investment, and domestic quality standards. Participation in global award platforms positioned TFB not only as a regulator but also as a facilitator of cultural diplomacy and national branding. This expanded institutional role demonstrates how regulatory agencies in creative industries can indirectly influence sector growth by enhancing international visibility, signalling quality standards, and attracting cross-border collaboration and investment.

In addition to international collaborations, TFB collaborated with film practitioners through the Tanzania Film Federation (TaFF), which comprises various film associations. This collaboration helped address long-standing fragmentation within the industry by strengthening collective action, which is essential for policy dialogue, self-regulation, and sustainable governance. Through this collaboration, TFB facilitated the Federation and its Associations' special and general assemblies, thereby helping film practitioners establish robust operational machinery (TFB, 2021a). By supporting practitioner-led organisational development, TFB adopted a shared approach in which both the government and industry share responsibility for the management of the creative sector. Working with TaFF demonstrates this partnership and highlights how both parties can collaborate effectively. This method emphasises the need for collaboration and the role of intermediary organisations in ensuring compliance with industry rules and encouraging innovation across the sector.

This experience from the Tanzanian Film Board suggests that institutional growth in creative industries depends more on the cumulative alignment of staffing capacity, internal governance mechanisms, enforcement credibility, and collaborative networks than on policy intent alone.

### **Institutional Strategies Implemented by the Tanzania Film Board**

Established in 1976, the Tanzania Film Board has periodically developed strategic programmes to elevate the Film Industry in Tanzania. Among them are the inauguration of the national film festival award (Tanzania Film Festival Awards) in the institution's history, the mapping of the prominent filming locations, the development of impactful capacity-building programmes both locally and internationally, and the facilitation of state-supported strategic film productions that promote collaborations on both local and international fronts.

The Tanzania Film Festival Awards (TAFFA), for instance, was established in 2021, when the Tanzania Film Board organised its first film festival awards ceremony. Notably, the festival garnered attention across Africa and beyond, attracting the interest of film practitioners nationwide. The decision was made to initially engage with East African countries, leading to the participation of 30 films from Kenya, Uganda, and the DRC in the 2023 festival. That same year, representatives from HAPAwards in California, USA, attended the event and expressed keen interest in collaborating on film projects with Tanzanian filmmakers (TFB, 2023). From an institutional governance perspective, the establishment of TAFFA signals a shift in the Tanzania Film Board's role from regulatory oversight toward market-shaping and reputational governance, where recognition platforms are used to stimulate quality competition, regional integration, and industry visibility. However, the extent to which such festivals translate into growth of the film industry, and in which aspects, remains a question rather than an automatic outcome.

Another transformative strategy was to identify and promote the country's prominent filming locations, to increase the institution's revenues and improve the circulation of funds within the Film Industry (TFB October 13, 2025). Although the programme's concept was established before 2019, most of its operations occurred during the article's timeframe (2019 - 2024), including the preparation of a 10-minute documentary video showcasing

various locations related to these themes. To increase the scope of understanding, the video was narrated in Swahili, English, French, and Spanish, the languages in which TFB could easily get translators. This video was distributed to 34 Tanzanian Embassies in various countries, which responded promptly to the TFB request to assist in disseminating the documentary to their respective countries. The documentary was also distributed to TFB friends and potential institutions globally. From an institutional governance perspective, this initiative illustrates how TFB leveraged informational infrastructure and diplomatic channels to reduce market-entry barriers, reposition the state as an investment facilitator, and integrate the Tanzanian film sector into global production networks.

The Capacity-Building programme is another strategy implemented by TFB and was first initiated in 2016 as seminar-style sessions conducted in a classroom setting. In 2019, the style was changed to a more participatory, practice-based approach, intentionally to provide training with direct, observable outcomes. It was organised into four divisions: the Film Screening, the Symposium, the Tailor-made, and the Coming Film Star. The Training and Symposium coordinators at TFB state that TFB introduced Film Screening as the first division launched under the Strategic Capacity-Building Programmes, which were initiated in 2019. This idea flourished in 2020 when TFB received financial support from a German cultural promotion institution (Goethe Institut - Dar es Salaam) to facilitate more screening sessions. The Tailor-made training programme, on the other hand, was introduced in 2020, when TFB coordinated it in the regions of Dar es Salaam and Geita in collaboration with the Bagamoyo Institute of Arts and Culture, the University of Dar es Salaam, and the University of Dodoma, which offered instructors. These instructors delivered a tailored session by working with trainees to produce a short film during the training, and the session concluded with a final screening of the film under the instructors' supervision.

Moreover, the Symposium Programme featured discussions among content creators, buyers, and government officials on various topics, including existing challenges in the film industry and proposed ways to overcome them. This session is more of a forum, imparting knowledge to participants,

as it invites experts from various areas of specialisation to serve as main speakers, discussants, or trainers (Interview with TFB Training Coordinator, October 15, 2024). The idea was to create a platform where film stakeholders would meet with relevant authorities to discuss the challenges they encountered when applying their skills in their day-to-day operations. The first symposium session, held in 2023 in collaboration with the Soshu na Mimi Organisation, examined how film producers could benefit from available digital distribution platforms (TFB Symposium Coordinator interview, October 13, 2024). Besides, the Coming Film Stars Programme was launched in 2022 by the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports, when the Film Industry was nurturing numerous young talents who were rising to stardom, mostly from popular TV series. The TFB wanted to ensure that these new stars cultivated a proper and socially responsible attitude, developed financial discipline, and honed their media communication skills (TFB 2021b). Analytically, the evolution of TFB's capacity-building programmes reflects a shift from ad hoc training toward an institutionalised skills-development model, in which learning outcomes are embedded in production processes and directly linked to sectoral professionalism and sustainability.

In 2021, the Board introduced a policy to facilitate the production of so-called "strategic films," reflecting a broader state approach that positions film as a vehicle for cultural representation and the formation of national identity. From an institutional governance perspective, this policy signals a shift from passive regulation toward a more interventionist model in which the state actively shapes cultural outputs to align with national priorities. The aim was to inspire patriotism and nationalism among the young generation by using film to showcase the rich history, culture, and attractions. However, framing film primarily as a nation-building tool also raises questions about how creative autonomy is negotiated within state-supported cultural production. The idea was borrowed from the United States during periods such as World War II and the Vietnam War, when film was used as a soft-power instrument to protect positive national

narratives. The Tanzanian case, therefore, reflected a selective adaptation of global soft power strategies rather than a direct replication, shaped by local political history and institutional capacity. Soft power is defined by scholars such as Hamm (2005) and Mwakalinga (2010) as the ability to influence attitudes and behaviour through attraction, values, and cultural appeal rather than coercion. Applied to this context, soft power provides an analytical lens for assessing not only the symbolic intent of strategic films but also their effectiveness in influencing audiences and industry practices. In exploring how the United States has utilised soft power, Hamm argues that American global influence has been achieved largely through non-military means, including film, popular culture, and media (Mwakalinga 2010, p. 6). This comparison shows that TFB's strategic films enhance cultural awareness and communicate policy messages. However, for these films to meaningfully support the sector's long-term growth, consideration should be given to audience reach, market sustainability, and institutional responsibility.

### **Examination of Government Support and Engagement in Visual Arts**

Major reforms within the Ministry responsible for the arts, which led to the establishment of the Department of Arts Development and ensured direct ministerial representation for the arts, emphasised the government's commitment to the arts and facilitated substantial transformations within the art sector. The Department of Arts Development was revived in 2016 within the Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts, and Sports, and operates under the oversight of a Director who, along with other functions, oversees activities carried out by the National Arts Council of Tanzania, the Tanzania Film Board, the Tanzania Culture and Arts Fund, the Copyright Office of Tanzania, and the Bagamoyo Institute of Arts and Culture. This institutional reform applied to multiple visual art forms, including all types and genres of fine arts, performing arts, music, and film, which is used as a deliberate contrast case in this article. However, implementation intensity varied across other forms of arts. Examining other countries' practices alongside Tanzania's reforms enables an assessment of how targeted policy instruments have shaped the outcomes observed today in creative economies. To analyse the effectiveness of these reforms, the film industry

is

used as a clear contrast because it has stronger incentives, clearer regulations, and more economic and institutional data than other forms of visual art.

Global legal reforms have yielded significant positive impacts across various countries, notably in the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Kenya. Examining Tanzania's reforms alongside those of other countries helps us understand how specific laws and financial policies affect the economy and institutions in creative industries across different stages of development. In the United Kingdom, the Film Tax Relief (FTR) programme, as reported by the British Film Institute (BFI), has generated substantial economic benefits, returning £13.48 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy. Each £1 invested in film tax relief is estimated to produce an impressive £8.30 in GVA. This initiative has also contributed to increased direct employment, as evidenced by growth in full-time equivalents (FTEs) from 2009 to 2019, with the period from 2017 to 2019 demonstrating the highest GVA returns associated with these tax relief measures (BFI, 2021). Similarly, South Africa's film industry has demonstrated substantial economic contributions as evidenced by the 2021 Economic Impact Assessment conducted by the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), which found that the sector generated R7.18 billion and supported approximately 31,444 jobs during the 2019/20 period, highlighting the importance of public incentives and institutional support in fostering growth (NFVF, 2021). Additionally, in Kenya, the Film Industry Satellite Account (FISA) serves as a key policy instrument for quantifying the economic contributions of the film sector and informing regulatory reforms aimed at increasing formal investment and employment (KFC, 2023). These cases are models to be replicated, but they demonstrate a common approach to governance in which laws that provide incentives, strong institutions, and specific tools work together to boost growth, create formal jobs, and sustain public funding for screen-based visual arts. Compared to international examples, Tanzania's reforms can be seen as a tailored adoption of these incentive-based approaches, adjusted to fit its local resources and budget

limitations. Compared with these cases, which demonstrate how targeted incentives can stimulate film-sector growth, they also highlight an imbalance in support for screen-based visual arts, leaving other forms of visual arts behind. This contrast is relevant for assessing Tanzania's prioritisation patterns, which, although its reforms reflect similar international incentive-oriented approaches, are narrowed down to address its sectoral needs. The 2019 amendment to the Film Act, coupled with the subsequent repeal of the Film Regulations in 2020, significantly transformed the regulatory framework governing the Tanzanian film industry. This legislative shift not only reduced financial barriers by decreasing fees and eliminating the Annual Film Renewal Fee, but also redefined film oversight from regulation towards development. Although these reforms strengthened the film industry, equivalent legislative instruments for other visual arts remained limited, revealing uneven institutional attention within the broader visual arts ecosystem. Alongside these legislative changes, several institutional interventions were introduced to strengthen the film industry. Notably, the five-year strategic plan was reoriented to prioritise film development rather than regulatory compliance.

Legislative reform establishes the official rules and policies, but it is the institutions' capacity that ultimately makes those rules work and leads to actual results across different areas. An institutional outcome of these reforms was the expansion of staff recruitment, encompassing qualified personnel across management and operational roles from diverse educational backgrounds, which is essential for effectively navigating institutional operations in the visual arts sector. This argument aligns with the article's theoretical framework on cultural governance and public value creation (Kershaw, Glow & Goodwin 2022). Moreover, Gstraunthaler (2012) links management practices to organisational performances, while Throsby (2010) provides a cultural economics rationale for investing in professional institutional capacity. The Tanzania Film Board's essential staff contributed to increased institutional operational capacity. This is illustrated by the recruitment of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) specialists, who enabled the establishment of the Artist Management Information System (AMIS), allowing practitioners to access services

remotely and improving regulatory compliance (Interview with TFB Head of ICT, September 30, 2024). Staffing and administrative systems serve as a bridge between policy design and implementation, shaping the extent to which reforms deliver public value to the visual arts sector. In addition to improving administrative capabilities, the reforms included plans for better physical and technological infrastructure, indicating a shift from quick fixes to more long-term planning for the sector's development. Nevertheless, during data collection, a proposal was developed for a Film Production Complex to integrate new technologies and attract foreign investment, supported by the hiring of the necessary staff. Research by Throsby (2004) and Schuetz (2014) shows that cultural infrastructure can boost the local economy. However, it is necessary to assess whether this complex is a better investment than other art facilities, such as galleries and craft centres, given Tanzania's financial situation. However, these projects also raise unresolved questions that require further attention.

The outcomes of various TFB programmes are clear today, but many still require further support to achieve lasting results. Although many outcomes can be measured in the film industry, similar data for other visual arts are lacking, making comparisons difficult. For instance, government institution efforts have concentrated on building partnerships, training practitioners, and fostering international cooperation to strengthen the sector and enhance professionalism. Creating strong collaborations between local visual arts agencies and international partners is crucial for expanding capacity in the field. A research report commissioned by the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) synthesises evidence showing that international cultural partnerships enhance institutional capacity, audience development, and skills exchange (DCMS 2025). The Tanzania Film Board's collaborations with the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) exposed Film Officers and Practitioners to international production management and infrastructure planning. This collaboration included a high-level bilateral engagement in 2023 that strengthened institutional ties. Participants reported initiating a

collaborative production project following the programme. These outcomes suggest skill transfer but require systematic evaluation to establish long-term sectoral impact. While these initiatives suggest positive skills transfer and network effects, the absence of longitudinal performance indicators limits the ability to attribute sustained sectoral growth directly to these interventions. On the other hand, the capacity-building programmes targeted practitioners and institutional staff responsible for advancing the visual arts. UNESCO (2019) documents comparable initiatives in Zimbabwe, demonstrating how targeted administrative training improves governance capacity. Empirical evidence from Tanzania includes commissioned television productions following training programmes, such as *Saluni ya Mama Kimbo*, which secured a broadcast contract with Azam TV in 2022 (Interview with Mama Kimbo Series's Writer and Producer, February 5, 2026), indicating market uptake rather than anecdotal success. Importantly, these outcomes indicate market uptake rather than symbolic success alone, providing a more concrete basis for evaluating the effectiveness of public investment in the creative industries.

The establishment of film-focused platforms stands in stark contrast to the lack of government support for other visual arts, highlighting a bias in public attention for the arts. The Tanzania Film Festival Awards (TAFFA) became a catalyst for competition among film practitioners. They contributed to the emergence of regional film awards in Morogoro, Iringa, Mbeya, and Kigamboni (Dar es Salaam). However, other National platforms for the visual arts, such as fine arts exhibitions or craft markets, receive limited support, underscoring the emphasis on film in state funding. Whereas some organisations, such as Nafasi Art Space and a few galleries, host visual arts exhibitions in Tanzania, these efforts are largely independent and not part of a regular government-supported system such as TAFFA. They often depend on donations, residencies, and private partnerships, indicating that civil society and private entities are stepping in to address gaps in support for the visual arts, rather than on a robust public infrastructure. (FundsforNGOs 2022; Nafasi Art Space 2023). These initiatives replace, rather than add to, public art and cultural support, indicating that non-governmental groups are assuming roles typically managed by the government.

In terms of outcome measurement, various programmes have not yet evaluated outcomes, limiting their contribution to evidence-based legislative formulation in the arts. The Mapping of Filming Locations Programme, designed to enhance government revenue and attract foreign investment, is supported by cultural tourism and creative economy literature (UNCTAD 2019; OECD 2020). Nevertheless, empirical data linking location mapping directly to employment growth or revenue increases in Tanzania remain scarce, indicating a need for further evaluation. Likewise, the Strategic Film Productions programme, initiated in 2021, supported the production of a film on *Chief Kingalu*. This film was in the final stages of production when this article was developed, pending its public release and distribution, thereby limiting assessment of audience reach and impact. Historical precedents, such as the *Fimbo ya Mnyonge* film, illustrate how film has been used as a policy instrument in Tanzania (Mwakalinga, 2010). This historical continuity in state engagement with film highlights both the durability of film as a policy instrument and the persistent tension between art and cultural development objectives and creative autonomy. This comparison highlights continuity in state-film relations but also raises questions about creative autonomy and evaluative criteria for state-supported productions.

### **Proposed Innovations for Enhancing the Visual Arts Landscape in Tanzania**

This article draws on the empirical findings and comparative insights discussed in preceding sections to examine how government support and institutional engagement shape the development of the visual arts in Tanzania, with specific reference to the article's research questions on governance structures, institutional capacity, and policy/legislative prioritisation. Rather than presenting recommendations as independent proposals, the discussion aligns these implications with the article's research questions on governance structures, institutional capacity, and

policy prioritisation within the visual arts ecosystem, demonstrating how each implication emerges from the empirical findings and interpretive framework developed earlier in the article. For analytical clarity, the discussion is organised around four interrelated domains that emerged from the findings: governance and policy/legislative prioritisation; institutional capacity and human capital; financing structures; and infrastructure development. Insights from global experiences, including policy and legislative instruments reflected in the Tanzanian Film Board's 2019-2024 strategies, are used analytically to interpret current trends in Tanzania. The emphasis on film-related strategies in this discussion reflects the actual dominance of film among other visual art forms, as documented in the article's findings on institutional attention, mandates, and legislative focus, rather than introduced normatively.

The findings indicate uneven support across visual arts forms, which may partly reflect policy and legislative factors. In response to this imbalance, international practices documented in the literature offer interpretive lenses rather than prescriptive models. For example, public art financing mechanisms, whereby a small percentage of public construction budgets is allocated to commissioning artworks, have been shown to enhance financial circulation within the visual arts sectors. In Tanzania, these mechanisms are analytically significant given the country's increased public infrastructure investment as a middle-income economy. Illustrative examples, such as allocating one per cent of a TZS 10 billion project, are provided solely to demonstrate potential scale and policy logic, rather than to dictate fiscal policy. This approach also addresses the concerns raised in this article regarding the lack of cross-sectoral support mechanisms.

The importance of recruiting qualified personnel within institutions governing the visual arts emerged as a recurrent theme in the findings. This discussion is grounded in the article's theoretical framework on cultural governance and institutional capacity, which emphasises professionalism, analytical competence, and adaptive leadership (UNESCO 2018; Kershaw, Glow & Goodwin 2022). Rather than functioning as a recommendation in isolation, this implication reinforces the argument that institutional performance in the visual arts is contingent upon human capital capable of

translating policy and legislative mandates into operational outcomes. The recruitment of qualified personnel for institutions governing the visual arts, particularly within governmental entities, emerged as a critical determinant of institutional performance as discussed throughout this article.

Nevertheless, evidence from the film industry illustrates how institutional collaborations can enhance governance capacity, notably through structured capacity-building initiatives highlighted in the staff training programme segments of this article. For instance, the Capacity-Building Programme, facilitated by KOICA in partnership with the Tanzania Film Board, contributed to the skill development of Film Officers, aligning institutional competencies with contemporary industry demands. The prominence of film-based examples here reflects data availability and policy emphasis, emphasising the relative absence of comparable collaborative mechanisms in other visual arts forms, a limitation identified in the article's findings. Capacity-building programmes for practitioners and institutional staff, on the other hand, are discussed here as mechanisms identified in the findings for strengthening institutional effectiveness. Given the evolving nature of artistic practices, continuous training is necessary to maintain relevance and artistic quality. This observation aligns with comparative evidence showing that artistic quality and market competitiveness are often associated with skills acquisition rather than formal education alone.

The analysis highlights that funding is a major challenge for visual arts institutions. Although there have been increased budgets and the revival of the Culture and Arts Trust Fund (TaCAF), as part of the government's efforts to create sustainable arts financing mechanisms, presented in the area of government support in this article, sectoral institutions seem to be sidelined from these benefits. For example, the National Arts Council and the Tanzania Film Board do not receive direct funding from TaCAF (*Daily News* 2024). Additionally, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), and international partners play a

significant role in funding visual arts projects. However, this reliance on external funding can create conflicts between donor priorities and local cultural needs. Ultimately, this indicates that dependence on external funding reflects weaknesses in local financial support for the arts.

Infrastructure development emerged as a critical theme in interviews and policy documents analysed in this study, particularly in relation to differential investment across visual art forms. The proposed Film Production Complex illustrates how infrastructure investment is foreseen to stimulate sectoral growth; however, comparable infrastructure for other visual arts, such as a National Art Gallery, remains largely aspirational. This contrast supports the article's finding that infrastructure planning currently privileges film, reinforcing asymmetries within the visual arts ecosystem.

The research highlights a critical need to protect arts and cultural institutions from direct political involvement. Studies show that when governance is politicised, it weakens institutional independence and erodes public trust (Schramme 2022; Reitov & Whyatt 2024). This article does not claim that political interference exists in Tanzania; rather, it frames the issue as a potential governance risk identified in the global literature, which is important for future institutional design and aligns with a comparative governance approach.

## **Conclusion**

This article has examined the implications of the absence of a unified governance strategy for Tanzania's visual arts sector, a gap identified as a significant structural challenge. Analysis of the empirical data demonstrates that the absence of a coherent, coordinated framework has contributed to uneven government attention across visual art forms, largely driven by disparities in institutional mandates, capacity, and levels of commitment among the bodies responsible for administering the arts. The findings indicate that the film industry, administered by the Tanzania Film Board, has at various points received comparatively greater policy attention and institutional support than other visual art forms. This differential focus has resulted in more developed governance structures, stronger institutional capacity, and clearer legislative prioritisation within the film

sector. Rather than advancing this outcome normatively, the study analytically highlights the film industry's governance arrangements as a reference point for other visual art forms to draw lessons, particularly with respect to institutional organisation, policy coherence, and strategic planning. Drawing on the empirical analysis and the broader discussion, the article concludes that there is a need for closer scrutiny of the governance structures overseeing the visual arts in Tanzania. This includes learning from comparable institutions with related mandates, ensuring greater consistency in institutional operations, strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks, and introducing strategic programmes to enhance the development of under-supported visual art forms. Equally important is the need to build institutional capacity among bodies tasked with governing the arts and to ensure regular review and updating of legislation to reflect the evolving nature of artistic practice and cultural production. Finally, while this article does not advance prescriptive policy solutions, its findings underscore the importance of addressing existing governance imbalances within the visual arts sector. It is hoped that this analysis will inform policymakers and cultural administrators as they reassess current governance arrangements, while also providing a foundation for future research to interrogate further cultural governance, institutional performance, and policy prioritisation in Tanzania's visual arts ecosystem.

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