AKINYI ODONGO art centre

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
BILL NO. 48 OF 2026



POLICY & LEGISLATIVE SUBMISSION | MEMORANDUM ON THE

Creative Economy Bill, 2026

Strengthening the Legislative Framework for Fashion as a Core Creative Economy Sector

ADDRESSED TO	Departmental Committee on Sports and Culture, National Assembly
SUBMITTED BY	Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC)
DATE	September 2026

CORE MESSAGE

Fashion is not only a creative expression.

It is a connected economic value chain spanning agriculture, fibre and material development, design, manufacturing, enterprise, culture, technology, retail, tourism and exports. Kenya's creative-economy law should make that value chain *visible, measurable and investable.*

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SECTION 01

Executive summary

Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC) welcomes the introduction of the Creative Economy Bill, 2026 and the effort to establish a coherent legal and institutional framework for Kenya's creative economy. The Bill is an important opportunity to move creative work from the margins of cultural policy into the mainstream of economic development, enterprise, employment, trade and investment.

AOAC's principal submission is that the Bill should be strengthened so that fashion is treated not merely as a category within the definition of creative industries, but as **a complete economic value chain** with dedicated mechanisms for skills development, enterprise growth, research and innovation, access to finance, manufacturing, raw-material development, intellectual property, market access, export promotion, public procurement, sustainability and county-level development.

The current institutional architecture is substantially centred on audio-visual and cinema functions. The National Assembly's own description of the Bill highlights the proposed Kenya Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission, the Kenya Audio-Visual Regulatory Authority and the Kenya School of Film and Creative Arts. At the same time, the Bill proposes broader measures such as a National Creative Economy Development Plan, creative hubs, incentives, capital-market integration, education and a Creative Industry Development Fund. AOAC submits that these cross-cutting provisions should become the principal vehicle through which non-audio-visual creative sectors, including fashion, receive measurable and equitable support.

AOAC therefore recommends a **sector-balanced framework** in which fashion has explicit representation in governance, planning, funding, training, research, infrastructure, trade and monitoring. The objective is not to create preferential treatment for fashion over other creative sectors, but to ensure that a sector already connected to agriculture, manufacturing, retail, culture, tourism, technology and exports is not institutionally invisible within a law whose stated purpose is to build a national creative economy.

SECTION 02

Status and context of the Bill

No. 48
National Assembly Bill of 2026

25 Aug
First Reading in the National Assembly

25 Sep
Eldoret public participation forum

The Creative Economy Bill, 2026 is National Assembly Bill No. 48 of 2026. The National Assembly recorded its First Reading on 25 August 2026 and referred it to the relevant committee. Parliament subsequently described the Bill as seeking to establish a legal and institutional framework for the growth, development and sustainability of Kenya's creative economy.

The Bill proposes, among other measures, a Kenya Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission, a Kenya Audio-Visual Regulatory Authority, a national creative-economy development plan, skills development, creative clusters and hubs, integration of creative-economy products with capital markets, integration of creative industries into education, incentives and a Creative Industry Development Fund.

The full stakeholder-sensitization draft reviewed for this memorandum expressly places fashion under "design and creative services," alongside graphic, interior and architectural design. However, the same draft excludes

intellectual-property matters from the Bill's scope and devotes its principal institutional machinery to audio-visual and cinema functions. This creates a distinction between **nominal inclusion and practical institutional support.**

Public participation is already surfacing sector-specific concerns. At an Eldoret forum on 25 September 2026, a fashion designer and trainer called for recognised professional certification, training and employment opportunities for people entering the fashion industry. This is precisely the kind of practical gap that the legislation can address through explicit implementation provisions.

SECTION 03

AOAC's position

AOAC supports the creation of a comprehensive creative-economy framework. AOAC does not propose weakening the development or regulatory framework for film, television, digital media, music or other creative disciplines. Rather, it proposes that the Bill should reflect the full economic architecture of the creative sector and establish a framework capable of supporting different creative value chains according to their distinct realities.

Fashion should therefore be recognised as a *creative, cultural and productive industry.* It is simultaneously a design sector, a manufacturing ecosystem, a cultural-expression platform, an enterprise sector, an employment generator, a market for agricultural and industrial inputs, and an exportable Kenyan product.

AOAC's proposed approach is informed by more than 26 years of experience in fashion, education, enterprise development, sustainability, innovation and industry leadership, including Akinyi Odongo's role as the Founder and first Chairperson of the Kenya Fashion Council, the establishment of MEFA Institute of Design, and practical work linking agriculture, fibres, design, manufacturing and markets.

SECTION 04

The central legislative gap: inclusion without institutional architecture

The Bill's broad definition of creative industries is capable of covering fashion. The problem is that a definition alone does not create an ecosystem. The institutional provisions create dedicated bodies whose names, functions and regulatory powers are overwhelmingly audio-visual. The result is a risk that funding, technical capacity, data, infrastructure, professional development and government attention will follow the institutional mandates rather than the breadth of the definition.

AOAC therefore proposes a principle of **"institutional equivalence"**: every major creative subsector identified in the Act should have a defined pathway into national planning, representation, skills development, financing, market development, research and monitoring. This does not necessarily require a separate statutory commission for every discipline. It does require legally visible mechanisms that prevent non-audio-visual sectors from becoming residual beneficiaries.

For fashion, this means that the Act should expressly recognise the full fashion value chain, from fibre and raw materials through design, product development, manufacturing, branding, retail, digital commerce, fashion media, events, modelling and international trade.

SECTION 05

Why fashion requires a value-chain approach

Fashion is often reduced in policy discussions to designers, runway events or apparel. In economic terms, that is incomplete. A functioning fashion economy connects farmers and fibre producers; ginneries and processors; textile and material innovators; artisans; pattern makers; designers; manufacturers; educators; photographers and stylists; models; retailers; digital platforms; logistics providers; financial institutions; intellectual-property professionals; tourism and cultural institutions; and export markets.



Raw cotton: the first link in Kenya's fashion value chain.

Kenya can therefore use fashion policy to connect creative-economy policy with manufacturing, agriculture, youth employment, women's enterprise, county development, circular economy, cultural heritage and export development.

AOAC's own fibre-to-fashion work demonstrates this convergence. Its programme interests include western Kenya cotton, water hyacinth and other indigenous materials; farmer cooperatives; research and innovation; local talent development; sustainable fashion; women and youth enterprise; and value addition. This is the type of cross-sector economic model the Bill should make possible at national scale.

SECTION 06

Key gaps identified by AOAC

A **Institutional representation**

There is no clearly defined fashion or broader non-audio-visual creative-industry promotional home comparable in statutory visibility to the proposed audio-visual institutions.

B **Governance representation**

Representative creative practitioners should be drawn from multiple subsectors, with the appointment framework requiring demonstrable sectoral diversity, including fashion/design, music, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, digital creativity and other recognised fields.

C **Skills and certification**

The Bill should recognise formal, technical, vocational, apprenticeship, mentorship and recognition-of-prior-learning pathways for fashion and craft occupations, with alignment to TVET and relevant examining/certification bodies.

D **Finance**

Creative funding should not be concentrated around project-based audiovisual production. Fashion enterprises require working capital, equipment finance, product development finance, prototype funding, raw-material development, market-access support and export-readiness finance.

E **Manufacturing and productive capacity**

Fashion policy should connect the creative economy to local manufacturing, textile development, machinery, production standards, common-user facilities and industrial clusters.

F **Agriculture-to-fashion linkages**

The Bill should recognise creative value chains that begin in agriculture, including cotton, natural fibres, plant-based materials and other regenerative materials.

G **Intellectual property**

The Bill's exclusion of intellectual-property matters should not result in creative sectors such as fashion being left without an integrated IP implementation pathway. The Act should require coordination with the Kenya Copyright Board and other relevant IP institutions, while preserving their statutory mandates.

H **Market access and exports**

Fashion needs structured domestic procurement, trade missions, buyer programmes, digital-commerce support, export readiness, standards, branding and international market development.

I **County-level development**

Creative clusters should include fashion production, craft, textile and design hubs in counties, not only media-production infrastructure.

J **Data**

Government should collect subsector-level data on creative enterprises, employment, exports, value addition, training outcomes, financing and regional distribution so that policy can be measured.

SECTION 07

AOAC's proposed legislative amendments

01

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the purpose and guiding principles.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Insert an explicit principle that the creative economy shall be developed as a diversified ecosystem comprising multiple creative subsectors and value chains, with equitable access to public support, infrastructure, finance, skills development, markets and innovation opportunities.

02

Recommendation 2: Make fashion an expressly recognised creative-economy subsector.

PROPOSED APPROACH

In the interpretation/scope provisions, retain fashion within design and creative services but add a fuller description covering fashion design, apparel and accessory design, textile and material innovation, garment manufacturing, artisan production, fashion technology, fashion media, modelling, styling, fashion events, retail, digital fashion commerce and related services.

03

Recommendation 3: Require a subsector-balanced National Creative Economy Development Plan.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Require the Plan to contain distinct targets, interventions, budgets, responsible institutions and performance indicators for each major creative subsector. Fashion should have measurable indicators covering training, enterprise growth, manufacturing, raw-material development, jobs, exports, women/youth participation and county distribution.

04

Recommendation 4: Establish a Creative Economy Advisory Council or equivalent multi-subsector mechanism.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Create a statutory advisory structure representing recognised creative subsectors. Its membership should include demonstrable expertise in fashion/design and other non-audio-visual disciplines. The body should advise on the Development Plan, funding priorities, regulations, standards, research and market development.

05

Recommendation 5: Ring-fence or earmark a fair share of Creative Industry Development Fund interventions for non-audio-visual sectors.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Funding rules should require transparent subsector windows or allocation criteria. Fashion funding should include enterprise development, equipment, prototyping, materials, training, market access, export development, research and innovation, not only showcases and events.

06

Recommendation 6: Establish national creative hubs as productive economic infrastructure.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Define creative hubs to include fashion studios, maker spaces, sewing and production facilities, textile/material laboratories, digital design facilities, incubation, business advisory services, exhibition/showroom space and shared equipment where appropriate.

07

Recommendation 7: Build a recognised fashion skills and certification pathway.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Require collaboration among the creative-economy authorities, TVET institutions, relevant examining/certification bodies and industry associations to establish occupational standards, competency pathways, recognition of prior learning, apprenticeships and continuing professional development for fashion and garment-making occupations.

08

Recommendation 8: Connect the creative economy to agriculture and manufacturing.

PROPOSED APPROACH

The Development Plan should include creative-manufacturing value chains, including cotton, natural fibres, indigenous materials, recycled materials, textile processing, garment production and other relevant inputs. Incentives should favour value addition in Kenya rather than export of raw materials without downstream development.

09

Recommendation 9: Create a Creative Procurement and Market Access Framework.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Government and public institutions should, within applicable procurement law, develop mechanisms that enable eligible Kenyan creative enterprises to access public markets, exhibitions, uniforms, cultural products, gifts, décor, design services and other appropriate procurement opportunities.

10

Recommendation 10: Strengthen export and internationalisation provisions.

PROPOSED APPROACH

The State should support creative trade missions, buyer-seller forums, international exhibitions, digital export channels, standards compliance, branding, packaging, logistics and market intelligence. Fashion should be treated as a Kenyan export product and cultural-diplomacy asset.

11

Recommendation 11: Protect creative IP through coordination rather than exclusion.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Replace a blanket exclusion of IP matters with a coordination/savings provision requiring the institutions created or recognised under the Act to work with the Kenya Copyright Board and other competent bodies on education, enforcement, licensing, commercialisation and awareness across creative subsectors.

12

Recommendation 12: Add sustainability, circularity and responsible production.

PROPOSED APPROACH

The Development Plan should support sustainable materials, repair, reuse, upcycling, waste reduction, responsible production, traceability, regenerative fibre systems and circular business models. Fashion is particularly well placed to operationalise these principles.

13

Recommendation 13: Address AI and emerging technology across all creative sectors.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Develop a cross-sector framework for AI-generated creative content, digital replicas, image/likeness protection, provenance, training-data use, attribution and commercial rights. The framework should include fashion, where AI is increasingly relevant to design, product development, imaging, marketing and virtual commerce.

14

Recommendation 14: Establish subsector data and reporting requirements.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Annual reporting should disaggregate support and outcomes by subsector, including number of enterprises supported, financing, training, jobs, exports, market access, innovation outputs and regional distribution.

SECTION 08

Proposed fashion economy framework

AOAC recommends that the Act and the first National Creative Economy Development Plan adopt the following fashion value-chain architecture:

01 Fibre & raw materials

Cotton, natural fibres, indigenous materials, recycled and innovative materials; farmer linkages; traceability; research; cooperatives.

02 Material processing

Ginning, spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing, finishing, material innovation and quality standards.

03 Design & product development

Fashion design, pattern development, prototyping, digital design, product engineering, cultural design and innovation.

04 Manufacturing

Tailoring, garment manufacturing, artisan production, accessories, footwear and small-to-medium production enterprises.

05 Creative services

Styling, modelling, photography, fashion film, publishing, events, branding, digital content and fashion technology.

06 Market & commerce

Retail, wholesale, e-commerce, marketplaces, buyer programmes, tourism, hospitality, institutional markets and public procurement.

07 Export & global positioning

Trade missions, international showcases, standards, certification, market intelligence, export finance and Kenyan creative branding.

08 Circular & regenerative economy

Repair, reuse, recycling, upcycling, waste reduction, sustainable materials, traceability and regenerative agriculture-to-fashion models.

SECTION 09

AOAC's practical evidence and industry experience

AOAC's submission is grounded in practical sector experience rather than a theoretical claim for recognition.

PRESIDENT, FOUNDER & CHAIRPERSON, AKINYI ODONGO ART CENTRE

Akinyi Odongo, O.G.W.

President, Founder & Chairperson / Creative Director, Akinyi Odongo Kenya™
Founder, MEFA Institute of Design
Industry Leader, Fashion, Creative Economy & Enterprise Development

26+
years of industry experience

Founder
& first Chairperson, Kenya Fashion Council

O.G.W.
Order of the Grand Warrior

1,000s
young and emerging creatives mentored



Akinyi Odongo, O.G.W., brings more than 26 years of experience across fashion, innovation, education, sustainability and enterprise development. She has been a pioneering industry leader, including as the Founder and first Chairperson of the Kenya Fashion Council, with experience in policy engagement, professional development and sector advocacy.

Through **MEFA Institute of Design**, AOAC's wider ecosystem has direct experience in fashion education and the need to connect training to employability and enterprise. This aligns with the concern raised during the September 2026 public participation process regarding recognition and certification for fashion trainees.

Through Fashion Agenda Africa and its evolution into AOAC, the work has included mentorship and development of thousands of young and emerging fashion creatives, as well as community-level enterprise development.

AOAC also advances the convergence of fashion and agriculture, including interest in western Kenya cotton, farmer cooperatives, indigenous materials, water hyacinth, value addition and fibre-to-fashion development. This provides a practical model for linking creative policy to agriculture, manufacturing and regional economic development.

Akinyi Odongo's national recognition with the **Order of the Grand Warrior (O.G.W.)**, conferred by the fourth President of Kenya, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, included recognition of her contribution to the fashion sector during COVID-19, when she helped create opportunities for local tailors and designers to produce cloth masks for the public. This experience demonstrates how fashion enterprises can rapidly respond to national economic and social needs when enabling structures exist.

AOAC therefore proposes that Parliament view fashion not as an event-based cultural activity, but as **an economic ecosystem capable of creating livelihoods** from the farm and artisan level to design, manufacturing, retail and export.

SECTION 10

Implementation scorecard proposed by AOAC

12 **Within 12 months of commencement**

Establish the multi-subsector creative advisory mechanism; map creative subsectors and enterprises; publish the first baseline creative-economy data; and include fashion representatives in planning and regulatory consultations.

24 **Within 24 months**

Launch subsector funding windows; establish or designate pilot creative hubs with fashion-production capability; publish fashion occupational/competency pathways; and begin structured buyer and market-access programmes.

36 **Within 36 months**

Establish measurable county fashion and creative clusters; implement agriculture-to-fashion pilot value chains; expand export-readiness programmes; and publish annual subsector performance reports.

60 **Within 60 months**

Measure jobs, enterprise survival, domestic value addition, exports, training outcomes, women/youth participation, county distribution and private investment attracted through the creative-economy framework.

SECTION 11

Conclusion

AOAC respectfully submits that the Creative Economy Bill, 2026 presents Kenya with an opportunity to build a genuinely diversified creative economy. The question is not whether film and audio-visual industries deserve support; they do.

The legislative question is whether a Bill titled for the entire creative economy should create an institutional and economic architecture that gives all major creative subsectors a realistic pathway to work, earn, grow, innovate and trade.

Fashion should be visible in that architecture: not simply in the definition of creative industries, but in national planning, representation, funding, education, infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture linkages, intellectual property, market access, exports, sustainability and data.

AOAC therefore urges the National Assembly to strengthen the Bill through explicit multi-subsector provisions and to ensure that the first National Creative Economy Development Plan contains **a dedicated, measurable Fashion Creative Economy Programme.** Such an approach would not fragment the creative sector; it would make the sector more economically coherent, inclusive and investable.

Kenya has the talent, heritage, entrepreneurial energy and productive capacity to build a globally competitive fashion economy. The legislative framework should give that ecosystem the visibility and institutional pathways required to convert creativity into *sustainable livelihoods, enterprises, jobs, local value addition and international trade.*

SECTION 12

Request to the Departmental Committee

AOAC respectfully requests that the Departmental Committee on Sports and Culture:

01 Receive this memorandum as a formal sector submission on the Creative Economy Bill, 2026.

02 Invite AOAC and relevant fashion-sector stakeholders to make oral submissions during the Committee's public participation and technical review process.

03 Consider amendments that give fashion and other non-audio-visual creative subsectors explicit representation in governance, planning, funding, training, infrastructure, market access and reporting.

04 Require the National Creative Economy Development Plan to contain subsector-specific targets and budgets, including a Fashion Creative Economy Programme.

05 Ensure the Creative Industry Development Fund is administered transparently and equitably across the recognised creative economy, with funding windows appropriate to the distinct economics of each subsector.

ANNEX A

Suggested policy wording

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLE

“The development of the creative economy shall recognise and support the diversity of creative subsectors and their distinct value chains, and shall promote equitable access to skills, finance, infrastructure, research, innovation, markets and investment.”

SUGGESTED PLANNING REQUIREMENT

“The National Creative Economy Development Plan shall identify the major creative subsectors and prescribe measurable objectives, strategies, responsible institutions, financing mechanisms and performance indicators for each subsector.”

SUGGESTED FASHION PROVISION

“The national creative economy framework shall support the development of fashion and design value chains, including fibre and material development, design, production, manufacturing, creative services, skills development, intellectual property, market access, digital commerce, exports, sustainability and circular-economy practices.”

SUGGESTED REPRESENTATION PROVISION

“In establishing advisory, consultative or representative mechanisms under this Act, the Cabinet Secretary shall ensure balanced representation of recognised creative subsectors, including fashion and design, music, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, digital creativity and audio-visual industries.”

SUGGESTED FUNDING PROVISION

“Funding mechanisms established under this Act shall provide transparent and equitable access for eligible creative subsectors and shall take account of the distinct financing needs of project-based, enterprise-based, manufacturing-based and value-chain-based creative activities.”

ANNEX B

AOAC organisational profile for the submission

Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC), formerly Fashion Agenda Africa, is a creative and cultural development organisation focused on transforming the fashion and arts ecosystem through sustainable fashion, local talent development, economic empowerment, innovation, research, partnerships and value-chain development.

AOAC's work places particular emphasis on the convergence of fashion and agriculture, including fibre-to-fashion approaches, cotton value chains, indigenous materials, farmer cooperatives, women and youth enterprise, skills development and market access.

AOAC is led by a network of practitioners and advisers with expertise spanning fashion, creative education, intellectual property, innovation, cotton and farmer cooperatives, communications, programmes, partnerships, policy and resource mobilisation. The organisation is therefore positioned to contribute practical technical knowledge to the development and implementation of Kenya's creative-economy framework.

SOURCES

Sources and documents reviewed

01 Parliament of Kenya, "Bill Seeking to Boost Creative Economy Introduced in the National Assembly," 28 August 2026.

02 National Assembly Hansard, 25 August 2026: First Reading of the Creative Economy Bill, National Assembly Bill No. 48 of 2026.

03 The Creative Economy Bill, 2026: stakeholder-sensitization draft dated 17 March 2026, reviewed for detailed structural and clause-level analysis.

04 Kenya News Agency, "Eldoret youth push for royalties, certification and anti-piracy protections," 25 September 2026.

Note: The National Assembly Bill No. 48 of 2026 is still at the legislative/public-participation stage. Where the publicly accessible full stakeholder-sensitization draft and later parliamentary descriptions differ in numbering or institutional detail, this memorandum intentionally uses functional descriptions rather than assuming that earlier clause numbering is identical to the current printed Bill.

SUBMISSION

Submitted respectfully on behalf of Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC)



Akinyi Odongo, O.G.W.

President, Founder & Chairperson, Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC)

Founder / Creative Director, Akinyi Odongo Kenya™
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DATE	29 September 2026
ON BEHALF OF	Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC)

AKINYI ODONGO
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