

The National Development Plan unpacked

The National Development Plan (NDP) offers a long-term perspective. It defines a desired destination and identifies the role different sectors of society need to play in reaching that goal.

As a long-term strategic plan, it serves four broad objectives:

1. Providing overarching goals for what we want to achieve by 2030.
2. Building consensus on the key obstacles to us achieving these goals and what needs to be done to overcome those obstacles.
3. Providing a shared long-term strategic framework within which more detailed planning can take place in order to advance the long-term goals set out in the NDP.
4. Creating a basis for making choices about how best to use limited resources.

The Plan aims to ensure that all South Africans attain a decent standard of living through the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality. The core elements of a decent standard of living identified in the Plan are:

- Housing, water, electricity and sanitation
- Safe and reliable public transport
- Quality education and skills development
- Safety and security
- Quality health care
- Social protection
- Employment
- Recreation and leisure
- Clean environment
- Adequate nutrition

The NDP has been approved and adopted by government and has received strong endorsement from the broader society. The focus now shifts to how the NDP will be implemented.

2. Implementation phases

The NDP and its proposals will need to be implemented in the right order over the next 17 years.

This process of prioritisation and sequencing will take place in three broad phases:

a. Critical steps to be taken in 2013 to unlock implementation. The following actions will be undertaken during 2013:

- Implement programmes that do not require additional resources and long lead times
- Identify critical first steps to unlock implementation
- Preparation of the 2014-19 MTSF as the first five-year building block of the NDP
- Focus on areas where implementation of existing policies needs to improve
- Focused dialogues to overcome obstacles to implementation.

b. 2014-2019 planning cycle. The 2014-2019 planning cycle should be viewed as the first in a series of five-year planning cycles that will advance the goals of the NDP. The equivalent planning cycle at local government level will be equally important.

c. 2019-2024 and 2024-2029 planning cycles. This phase of the NDP will be used to initiate the remaining activities. It will build on previous cycles and be informed by the review of performance.

3. Integration into government plans

The planning processes carried out by departments and other government entities will have a vital role to play in bringing the vision and proposals contained in the NDP to life.

NDP proposals are being incorporated into the existing activities of departments and broken down into the medium and short-term plans of government at national, provincial and municipal level. The NDP provides the golden thread that brings coherence and consistency to these different plans.

Government has already started a process to align the long term plans of departments with the NDP and to identify areas where policy change is required to ensure consistency and coherence. Each government programme will have to be backed by detailed implementation plans which clearly set out choices made, actions that need to be undertaken and their sequencing.

Key steps to facilitate this integration include:

- The Presidency is leading the formulation of the 2014-2019 MTSF (Medium Term Strategic Framework) in consultation with departments.
- The Presidency and National Treasury will work with departments to clarify roles and responsibilities, ensure that plans and budgets are aligned, and develop clear performance indicators for each programme.
- Departmental strategic plans, annual performance plans and programme plans will need to be evaluated by the Presidency to determine alignment with the NDP prior to submission to Parliament.
- Monitoring and evaluation will be used to identify obstacles to implementation, to facilitate reflection on what works, and to continuously improve implementation.

As mentioned above, implementation of the NDP in government requires a process of breaking down the plan into key outputs and activities to be implemented by individual departments or groups of departments.

In this regard, we have started to develop the 2014-2019 MTSF with the aim of having it ready for approval by Cabinet as soon as possible after the 2014 elections. This will enable the new administration to focus on implementation as soon as possible after taking office.

The MTSF will be precise and clear in identifying indicators and targets to be achieved in the 2014-2019 period, similar to the existing delivery agreements for the 12 outcomes. The MTSF will contain the following for each of the outcomes:

- a) Key targets from the NDP and from other plans, such as the New Growth Path, National Infrastructure Plan, and Industrial Policy Action Plan
- b) Current baseline for each target and the MTSF (2014-2019) target based on consideration of a trajectory to 2030
- c) Key outputs and actions to achieve the target and department(s) responsible.

The NPC and the Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency are jointly leading the process of developing the MTSF.

This process requires intensive engagements and negotiations with individual departments, groups of departments and clusters to obtain agreement on the detailed contents of the MTSF.

DPME, the NPC, DCOG and line function national departments responsible for concurrent functions will also be engaging with the provincial Offices of the Premier, the relevant provincial departments and municipalities regarding the provincialisation and localisation of the national targets, for inclusion in provincial and municipal strategic plans.

This intensive engagement and negotiation process to work out detailed implementation plans for the 2014-2019 period will be the major focus during 2013. However, in the meantime, some of the key proposals for change in the plan are already being implemented by national and provincial departments in the current financial year. For example:

- a) National Treasury is in the process of appointing a government Chief Procurement Officer to strengthen procurement systems so that they deliver value for money
- b) The Minister of Public Service and Administration has started to develop proposals for restricting the business interests of public servants and to work on frameworks for improving performance incentives and the application of consequences for poor performance.
- c) The Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission is driving and monitoring the process of accelerating the development of the economic infrastructure required to enable increased economic growth
- d) The Minister of Economic Development is coordinating and monitoring the various economic growth and job creation drivers in the New Growth Path
- e) The Minister of Health is implementing the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMCT) programme, and has already initiated antiretroviral (ARV) therapy for all eligible people living with HIV, and is already progressively improving TB prevention and cure and addressing HIV and TB co-infection
- f) The Minister of Basic Education is ensuring that parents receive their children's ANA results, and that Provincial Education departments have programmes that use ANA results to improve school performance
- g) The Minister of Higher Education is ensuring that FET lecturers are being trained as part of improving the quality of FET colleges.

There is a high level of correlation between the NDP priorities and the current 12 priority outcomes, and this correlation enables us to maintain continuity in the planning and monitoring and evaluation processes of government. Government will therefore continue with the focus on outcomes in the 2014-2019 period, with minor adjustments. For example, we are considering adding an additional outcome on social protection and to split outcome 12 into two outcomes on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of government and nation building, given the importance attached to these issues in the NDP. Coordination of implementation will continue as before, with implementation forums (clusters and Minmeecs or their equivalents) coordinating and driving implementation of each outcome.

4. The role of different sectors of society

The NDP is a plan for the whole country. Government will engage with all sectors to understand how they are contributing to implementation, and particularly to identify any obstacles to them fulfilling their role effectively.

The NDP sets out ambitious goals for poverty reduction, economic growth, economic transformation and job creation. The private sector has a major role to play in achieving these objectives.

Long-term planning and investment in the future is just as important for the private as the public sector. Government is clearly stating its commitment to the NDP, and it is important that the private sector does the same.

Where the private sector faces obstacles, sectoral dialogues will take place to identify how these obstacles can be addressed within the parameters laid out by the NDP.

High-level leadership meetings will be held regularly between government and business, government and labour, and government and civil society. These will provide a route for focused dialogue to discuss the contribution of each sector to the implementation of the NDP, identify blockages and develop a common understanding of how obstacles will be overcome.

These high-level meetings will be underpinned by more focused stakeholder engagements. These stakeholder engagements will be intended to find solutions to specific challenges and construct frameworks that enable stakeholders to hold each other accountable.

5. Core implementation principles

The effective implementation of the Plan depends on our ability to build unity in action through the following principles:

- **Broad ownership** - The Plan enjoys wide support from all sections of society. The best way to sustain this support is by ensuring broad engagement at every level of implementation. It is important that the implementation phase builds on this sense of broad ownership by enabling different sectors and individuals to contribute their skills, resources and expertise.
- **Continuous capacity building** - Capacity building needs to be treated as an on-going process. It requires that all sectors constantly strive to improve their own performance. This includes measures to strengthen the capacity and developmental commitment of the state.
- **Policy consistency** - Many successful reform initiatives have policy consistency and stability of leadership as common features. The Plan is designed to bring about change over a period of nearly two decades and this requires a degree of policy consistency. Policy changes must be approached cautiously based on experience and evidence so that the country does not lose sight of its long-term goals.
- **Prioritisation and sequencing** - Not all proposals will be implemented at once. Priority will be given to policies that need to be implemented immediately because other actions cannot be implemented until these steps have been taken; policies and plans that have long-term implications and lock in future choices; areas where the core objective is to improve the implementation of existing policies; areas where the first task is to build consensus, improve trust, build capacity or agree on the division of responsibilities before implementation can take place. Particular attention will be given in the initial stages to the three objectives that the NPC has identified as being especially important for the success of the Plan: (a) improving the quality of learning outcomes, (b) creating

jobs and promoting inclusive growth, and (c) strengthening the capacity and developmental commitment of the state.

- **Clarity of responsibility and accountability** - The Plan calls for the tightening of the accountability chain. An important step towards this is to ensure that all activities necessary to implement a programme are clearly spelt out including the timeframe and responsibility for implementation, as well as oversight and monitoring mechanisms that will help identify blockages.
- **Continuous learning and improvement** – It is important to figure out how to make things work before trying to implement at a large scale. Implementation needs to be a learning process, so that plans can evolve based on the experience of departments and the results of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.
- **Coordinated action** - The NDP provides an overarching policy framework to bring greater coherence to the work of government. However, many coordination problems relate to implementation and in these areas issues will need to be resolved through regular day-to-day interactions.

6. Conditions for successful implementation

The successful implementation of the NDP depends on:

- Breaking the Plan into manageable chunks
- Developing detailed programme plans
- Building on the broad support for the Plan
- Building trust and confidence among key role-players
- Strengthening public sector capacity
- Streamlining reporting procedures
- Consistent messaging

7. Financing

The Plan will shape resource allocation over the next 17 years. The Plan supports government's intention to gradually shift resources towards investment that grows the economy, broadens opportunities and enhances capabilities.

As a result, other parts of the budget will need to grow more slowly. This will only be possible if we achieve greater value for money in many established areas of government activity; that is why much of the Plan focuses on how we can get better at what we do.

8. Provincial government

The Plan identifies the task of improving the quality of public services as critical to achieving transformation. This is not an easy objective and it will require provinces to focus on identifying and overcoming the obstacles to achieving improved outcomes.

The provincial planning process should therefore be used to focus on the proposals that are made in areas of core provincial responsibility such as education and health.

Some of these proposals require policy changes at the national level, but there are many areas where provinces can start work immediately on improving the quality of what is already being done.

This applies, for example, to strengthening the capacity of education districts to provide quality support to schools and to ensuring procurement systems deliver value for money.

It is essential that provinces engage with these areas of the NDP in detail, identify specific priorities where they can commit themselves to improving outcomes and then develop focused plans for how this can be achieved.

In the process, each province has the opportunity to lead the way in demonstrating the potential for how we can get better at what we do.

Priority steps provinces need to take in implementing the NDP include:

- Engage in detail with areas of the NDP that relate to core provincial priorities and identify specific proposals where implementation can start immediately. Most of these will be proposals relating to how to improve the implementation of existing policies.
- Use the provincial five-year plan to focus attention on how to improve outcomes in core provincial functions, such as education and health.
- Pay greater attention to the quality of management within departments with a view to ensuring that public servants are both challenged and supported so that they can contribute fully to the work of their departments.
- Address weaknesses in procurement systems to ensure a greater focus on value for money.
- Strengthen administrative relations between provincial departments and their national counterparts.

9. Local Government

The Plan highlights the need to strengthen the ability of local government to fulfil its developmental role. Municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) need to be used more strategically to focus attention on critical priorities in the NDP that relate to the mandate of local government such as spatial planning, infrastructure and basic services.

Like provincial planning processes, municipal IDPs should be used to focus on aspects of the NDP that fit within a municipality's core responsibilities. This would allow the IDP process to become more manageable and the participation process more meaningful, thus helping to narrow the gap between the aspirations contained in these documents and what can actually be achieved.

To do this effectively, the IDP process needs to be led by municipal staff, not outsourced to consultants.

As for provinces, there are also many areas where municipalities could start implementation immediately by engaging with aspects of the Plan that speak to their core competencies and identifying how they can action proposals for improving implementation.

10. Monitoring and reporting

Planning and implementation should be informed by evidence-based monitoring and evaluation. There are already monitoring and reporting processes in place for government priorities, plans and policies. Integration of the NDP into these plans will enable implementation of the Plan to be monitored through existing processes. The Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) has responsibility for overseeing progress against many of these objectives through the outcomes approach, and will have overall responsibility for monitoring progress.

It is also important that we are able to keep track of our progress against the NDP as a whole. This includes identifying unforeseen circumstances that may hamper progress or identifying serious blockages that need to be addressed. This will require a more strategic and high-level form of monitoring that will be carried out by the NPC drawing on data that is already collected by DPME and other sources so as to minimize the reporting burden.

Since the implementation of the Plan will be a shared responsibility between government and social partners, it will be important to interact with organizations in other sectors to assess progress and identify blockages.

11. The role of leadership and accountability

Political leadership is critical for effective implementation. The President and Deputy President will be the lead champions of the Plan within Cabinet, in government and throughout the country.

Premiers and Mayors will need to be visible and active champions of the Plan, with their offices being the catalytic agencies to drive implementation at provincial and municipal levels.

Cabinet has the responsibility for making the necessary prioritisations, sustaining momentum and ensuring that public confidence in the NDP remains high.

Cabinet will be responsible for overseeing implementation and facilitating the resolution of coordination challenges. At an administrative level, this coordination role will be played by FOSAD Management Committee. Where there are blockages, the Presidency will mediate discussions between the different parties responsible for implementation in order to find a practical way of removing the blockage.

12. Getting the incentives right

Effective implementation will require a constant desire to improve. Too often the incentives do not encourage people to make the extra effort. In the public service, there are few consequences for public servants who do not perform, and sometimes the incentives can encourage people to do things that are inimical to the public good.

Similarly, we see from the many businesses that are failing to invest in growing their businesses or recruiting and training young talent that the private sector also faces many disincentives to taking decisions that will benefit it in the long term.

The long-term framework provided by the NDP should help to address some of these incentive problems; others will be identified and addressed through the processes of focused dialogue described above.

The steps the NDP identifies as necessary to improve the capacity of the state will also be important in this regard, as the state (at national, provincial and local levels) needs to be proactively involved in identifying and overcoming obstacles to implementation.