

# P20 Youth Parliament



**national planning  
commission**

Department:  
The Presidency  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**NPC's Proposals to drive Youth Economic Participation, Employment and Opportunities**

**13 June 2025**



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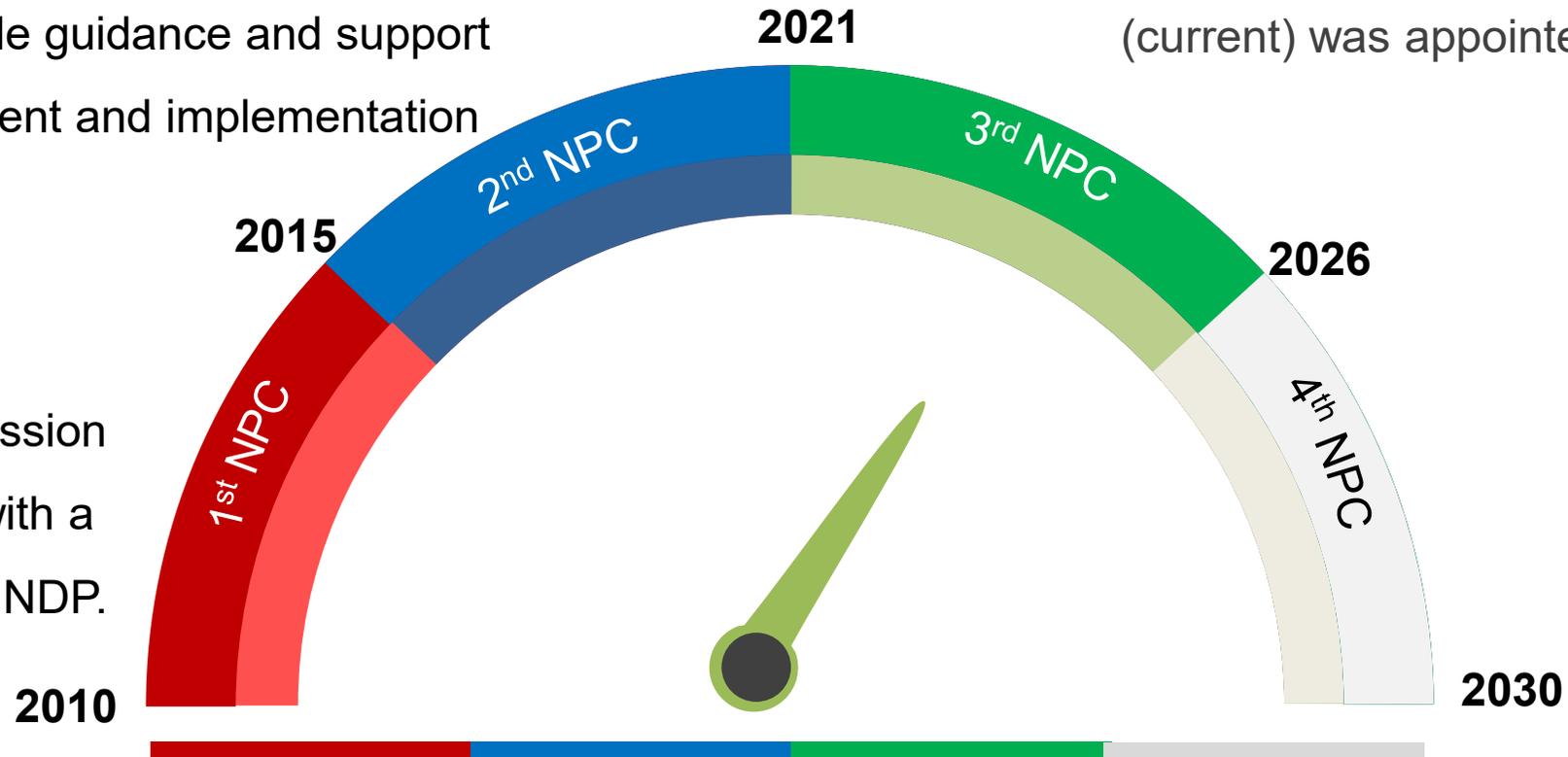
# Introduction to the National Planning Commission

Establishment through the revised Green Paper: National Planning Commission of 2010

**2015:** Second NPC was formed with a mandate to provide guidance and support for the measurement and implementation of the NDP.

**2021:** Third Commission (current) was appointed.

**2010:** First Commission was established with a mandate to create NDP.



An independent expert advisory body and think-tank with a mandate to take long-term, cross-cutting research and an independent approach to the country's development agenda, incl YOUTH<sup>3</sup>

# Integration of Youth in the NDP

NPC 3 has resolved to graduate from approaching youth development as a cross cutting issue but rather to **embed the socio-economic participation of youth in all 15 chapters of the NDP**

## Integrating youth in areas of:

1. Labour intensive future facing industries of the economy- not just as employees of organizations but as job creators in formal and informal sectors (Ch 3)
2. The production of economic infrastructure and the roll out of services such as electricity, water, sanitation, telecommunications, and public transport (Ch 4)
3. Scaling up of environmental sustainability and a climate change resilient, low-carbon economy and society (Ch 5)
4. The up and downstream agricultural sector that drives economic growth, creates jobs, rural development, and enhances food and nutrition security of the country (Ch 6)
5. Transforming South Africa into a globally competitive country through aspects such as increasing intra-regional trade and foreign direct investment (Ch 7)

6. Transforming rural and urban spatial planning (Ch 8)
7. Improving the basic and post-school education, skills development, and the national research and innovation system (Ch 9)
8. Enhancing the national health system (Ch 10)
9. Addressing the socio-economic vulnerabilities and livelihoods of those most at risk (Ch 11)
10. Building safer communities for people to feel safe at work, school, and at home (Ch 12)
11. Building a capable and developmental state that drives the country's development agenda (Ch 13)
12. Building an anti-corruption system that drives accountability for both public and private sector officials and institutions (Ch 14)
13. Driving social cohesion and a united South Africa (Ch 15)

# Integration of Youth in the NDP

## **NPC Youth Diagnostic Advisory:**

- ✓ Mapping of Youth development ecosystem players to strengthen the national Youth machinery
- ✓ Consultations with civil society to benchmark the country's catalytic programmes towards Youth skills and employment pathway programmes
- ✓ Consultations with NPC NDP chapter leads to identify challenges and opportunities within the economy, social, and governance work streams
- ✓ Engaging with evidence-based data to review the impact of youth unemployment, especially on despondent youth who are not in education or economic activity

We have also evaluated the targets of the current youth policy instruments:

- ✓ Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP)
- ✓ National Youth Plan (NYP)
- ✓ Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS)

Intended to drive national youth policy targets with the NDP indicators, to adequately track progress against the NDP's youth targets, beyond 2030

# Analysis of Youth priorities and indicators across key national policies

The alignment amongst the 3 national youth policies (MTDP, NYP, IYDS) is encouraging, as often the policy is often muted in the catalytic advancement of youth

<b>MTDP Strategic Priority 1: Drive Inclusive Growth and Job Creation</b>	<b>MTDP Strategic Priority 2: Reduce Poverty and Tackle the High Cost of Living</b>	<b>MTDP Strategic Priority 3: Build a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State:</b>
<b>NYP Priority Area: Economic Transformation, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation</b>	<b>NYP Priority Area: Economic Transformation, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation &amp; Quality Education, Skills &amp; Second Chances</b>	<b>NYP Priority Area: Effective and Responsive Youth Development Machinery</b>

## Challenges and Opportunities identified

### 1. National Youth Plan (NYP)

The NYP term is aligned to the end period of the current NDP. The Department of Women, Youth, Persons with Disabilities has formed a steering committee to undertake a mid-term review of the policy. The M&E framework for NYP has been developed and adopted by Cabinet. However, there is an absence of targets and benchmarks, despite clear, high-level indicators provided

### 2. Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP)

While there was a clear intention for youth mainstreaming, it has not been integrated across all priority areas. There is an opportunity for targets to be aligned with NYP M&E framework. The institutionalisation of effective youth development interventions are a strong focus across the MTDP, which is positive and there is clear alignment with NYP

### 3. Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS)

The current IYDS term ends this year and this presents an opportunity for new IYDS to align with MTDP indicators and the NDP

# NPC Proposal 1: NPC Economic Pathway for Youth

**Shared by government and the private sector to put South Africa on a path to address challenges of particularly youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality**



1. Give particular attention to the promotion of youth employment. This must centre on ensuring there is a coordinated and targeted youth employment strategy, bolstering an eco-system of public and private sector interventions such as those under the Jobs Fund, the Youth Employment Service, the President's Youth Employment Intervention, and Public Employment Stimulus
2. Call to action to develop the skills and expertise of employable young graduates and professionals in implementing a sustainable just energy programme with energy security for all and net zero carbon emissions
3. Implement practical partnerships between the state and sector-focused private sector bodies to promote investment, exports, and job creation in future-facing sectors where South Africa retains strong opportunities, for especially to occupy. These include sectors, subsectors and Special Economic Zones related to ICT, Global Business services, Renewable Energy, Tourism, Mining, Construction, and Agriculture
4. Enable affordable financing for owned small business, including youth owned businesses. Small businesses and micro-enterprises must be allowed a special dispensation to reduce their compliance burdens and incentivize them to create employment. Further reiterating that the NDP anticipated most new jobs in South Africa being generated by small businesses
5. Develop digital infrastructure (with particular focus on townships and schools), which will significantly benefit faster adoption of new technologies and integration of 4IR-related education opportunities for young students
6. Unlock the potential of the Agriculture sector, including for young farmers, graduate and youth throughout the value chain, by dealing with financing challenges, land reform, automated production and processing, logistical constraints, and administration of irrigation rights, including long-term water uses and availability

# NPC Proposal 2: Expanding Youth Employment Opportunities

Rethinking youth unemployment to a new approach, informed by the unique experiences of youth and the diverse economic opportunities of our changing world

## 1. Youth transitions into the global labour market

Adopt flexible labour practices that recognizes, stimulates, and protects youth in short term, precarious and multiple task-based work, enabling youth to obtain multiple income streams beyond 1 full time “job”, in both in South African and global markets

- Investing in digital skills, infrastructure and subsidizing connectivity in especially township and rural communities for youth to access such opportunities online
- Enabling access to credit for gig workers in government and private financial services
- Creating short term contract opportunities in public procurement in local communities for youth to take up in government information, technology and innovation services
- Validating gig work as legitimate experience for future work and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth

## 2. National Youth Employment Accelerator (NYEA)

This initiative matches unemployed youth with work opportunities in public infrastructure, green economy, health, and technology sectors. The NYEA operates through a digital matching platform, modelled after India's National Career Service Portal

## 3. Youth Service Corps Expansion

Modelled on Kenya's National Youth Service, this program would combine civic service, technical skills training, and income support, targeting school-leavers in rural and township areas

## 4. Youth Employment Zones (YEZs)

YEZs would be special economic zones with youth-focused tax incentives, business support, and employment services. Brazil's Youth Inclusion Zones offer a similar model that integrates municipal and private sector support.

youth, beyond 2030

# NPC Proposal 3: Youth Economic Participation, Funding and SMME Development

## 1. Sector Masterplans

Evaluate and identify market opportunities across priority value chains for youth, setting annual targets in the 21 sector master plans for public and private sector parties to procure products and services from youth-owned businesses

## 2. Youth Startup Policy and Funding Frameworks

**African Union Startup Model Law Framework:** Develop a startup legislation that characterizes and creates a supportive regulatory environment for a fast-growing youth startup culture. Includes risk-based funding, insurance, foreign exchange controls, tax schemes for investors, and capacitating youth startups with access to specialized digital skills

- **Tunisia Startup Act:** Enabled a 72% increase in startup funding between 2019 and 2021, with a 75% rise in the number of businesses receiving the official “startup” label.
- **Senegal’s Startup Act:** Saw startups raise USD 353 million for the country
- **Youth Startup Fund (YSF):** Combining seed grants, concessional loans, and business mentorship for youth-led SMMEs. I.e. Indian "Startup India" program . This can be integrated and coordinated through existing fund of funds structures such as the SME Fund, DTIC draft Transformation Fund, Startup20 task force, even beyond South Africa’s G20 Presidency

## 3. Research, development, and innovation investment for Youth in Formal and Informal Economies

Implement strategies to radically increase the state of a localized commercial innovation sector, that is led by youth-led businesses, and youth in urban, township, and rural localities. includes increasing collaborations between universities and TVETs and local economic development to research and invest in the development of commercial innovation products, and lowering the cost of IP development and market penetration for youth/ students

## 5. Youth Digital Economy Integration Program

This program targets young people with digital training (AI, coding, UX/UI, fintech) and helps them access remote jobs. Examples include Indonesia's “1000 Startups” movement and Rwanda's Digital Ambassadors Program

## 6. Red Tape Reduction Taskforce

A public/private partnership taskforce to streamline regulatory processes for registering youth businesses in formal, township, and rural markets. South Korea’s One-Stop Business Portal offers a digital template

## 7. Incubation Networks

Aggregate new and existing incubators in townships and rural areas, to capacitate and centrally and attract global market channels and private investor capital for youth-owned products and services, in partnership with universities and TVETs

# NPC Proposal 4: Enabling Job-Rich, Future-Facing Sectors

## 1. Green Economy

A programme to upskill and employ Youth in solar panel installation, recycling cooperatives, and biodiversity conservation. Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative shows how environmental restoration can create youth jobs

## 2. Creative and Cultural Economy

An intervention for youth to receive training and funding for local content creation, design, gaming, and performing arts. Nigeria's "Creative Industry Financing Initiative" offers a scalable financing model

## 3. Social Economy

Support for youth cooperatives in health, elderly care, early childhood development, and food distribution will create jobs with social value

## 4. Digital, Knowledge and Innovation Economies

Expand youth financial and non-financial programs that are built on creating, sharing and applying knowledge including education, research, consulting, media

- The Innovation Hub: An enabling platform for young researchers, designers and innovators to nurture ideas into commercial ready products and services
- DSTI Decadal Plan (2022-2032): Recognises youth as a driver for the National System of Innovation (NSI)
  - Youth Technology Innovation Programme (YTIP) by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), supporting early-stage innovations and supports the development of disruptive new products
  - Grassroots Innovation Programme (GIP), supporting young innovators from underprivileged communities
  - DST-NRF Internship Programme and New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) to promote youth employment in academia and research institutes
- Stellenbosch University LaunchLab: A Venture Studio model that rapidly accelerates and launches scalable startups into the market through ideation processing, global investment, operational and technical skills

## 5. Public Procurement Reform

A new regulation to reserve at least 30% of small public procurement contracts for youth-owned businesses

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# **NPC Proposal 5: Revitalizing Youth-Centered Economic Policy**

## **1. Youth Economic Advisory Panel**

This panel, modelled after Canada's Youth Council, is to provide policy recommendations directly to the Presidency and Parliament

## **2. Youth Impact Assessments (YIAs)**

All proposed national policies and bills to include a mandatory YIA to evaluate implications for youth employment, access to services, and future skills development

# NPC Proposal 6: Building an Inclusive Rural Economy

## 1. Agriculture and Food System Reform

Introduce smart agriculture and food safety technologies accessible to youth. India's eNAM (National Agriculture Market) platform offers a useful model

## 2. Agricultural Technical Training

TVET colleges with smart-farming demonstration units, partnering with AgriSETA to roll out specialized agro-processing certificates

## 3. Youth Agribusiness Parks

Built in high-potential rural districts, modelled after Ghana's Agri-Industrial Parks, and offer training, production facilities, and financing support

## 4. Land Access and Reform

Prioritize land redistribution for youth cooperatives and entrepreneurs, accelerating water license allocation, and targeted support for young farmers

## 5. Agro-Processing Incentive Scheme

Special tax credits and grants to support youth-led businesses in food processing, preservation, and packaging

## 6. Commercial Market Integration

- Create pathways for commercial off-take agreements for youth-led agri businesses, for example targets for the 23 National Fresh Produce Markets to source from youth farmers, developing growers programmes with targeted export markets for young farmers, along the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).
- Develop a programme that centrally coordinates and assists young farmers with the process and costs of meeting global trade standards (i.e. Global Gap), leveraging local produce by young farmers to supply into global markets
- Introduce central distribution centers with subsidized tariffs, for young farmers and distributors to manage cross boarder trade cost efficiently
- Subsidize agricultural insurance to support young farmer's land and crop against climate risks and market disruptions

# Implementation and Monitoring Framework

- 1. Establish a Youth Development Results Framework aligned to G20/NDP**
- 2. Develop an annual Youth Development Impact Report to be tabled in Parliament**
- 3. Create a Youth Participation Platform for monitoring delivery via mobile/web tools**
- 4. Launch a public dashboard to track key metrics**
  1. Youth employment rate
  2. Youth SMME support uptake
  3. Youth business investment rate
  4. Youth business growth rate

# Conclusion and Recommendations

South Africa's youth represent both its greatest asset and its most urgent development priority. The interventions proposed here form a comprehensive, integrated roadmap to empower youth through sustainable employment, enterprise development, rural transformation, and inclusive growth

## Key NPC Recommendations:

- 1 Adopting a Presidential Youth Development Compact to coordinate efforts**
- 2 Prioritizing intergovernmental coordination and youth-led implementation**
- 3 Mobilising public, private, and international partners in resourcing the agenda**
- 4 Prioritizing existing catalytic programmes**

**THANK YOU**

