

# Public Sector MANAGER

## Minister Chikunga

on government's  
commitment to  
ending GVBF

## Urgent need for equal education for children with disabilities

AG report

## Good luck to the Matric Class of 2025

your future starts now



G20  
SOUTH AFRICA 2025





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# From 16 Days of activism to 365 Days of Safety

**E**ach year, from 25 November to 10 December, South Africa joins the world in marking the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. For our nation, this is not just a date on a calendar; it is a call to conscience.

Three decades into democracy, the promise of safety and dignity remains unfulfilled for too many women and children. We see it in the numbers, but we feel it most in the stories of families torn apart; of girls whose futures are stolen; of women who face danger in the very places meant to shelter them. For them, this campaign is not symbolic, it is personal.

Launched globally in 1991, and adopted in South Africa in 1998, the 16 Days movement links 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to 10 December, which is International Human Rights Day. Its message remains enduring and simple: violence against women is a violation of human rights.

My task, as Minister in The Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, together with the whole-of-government and society, is to ensure that this message becomes a lived reality.

The question the public rightly asks is: What has 16 Days achieved? The answer is that the campaign has evolved from awareness to accountability, driving reforms that are beginning to bear fruit.

Through the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF), adopted in 2020, government, civil society,







Image: GCIS

business and communities now work from one coordinated plan. It has strengthened prevention programmes, improved the justice system, expanded survivor services and opened new avenues for women's economic power so that safety and dignity are experienced, not promised.

Institutionally, progress is visible. The National Council on GBVF Act of 2024, has established a soon to be appointed permanent, multi-sectoral council to coordinate, monitor and hold the system to account. More than R1.6 billion has been mobilised to fund shelters, psychosocial support, policing capacity and community prevention efforts, while gender-responsive budgeting ensures that every commitment is matched by real resources.

Citizens are also proving that change is possible at local level. Through the End GBVF Collective's 100-Day Challenge,

police officers, prosecutors, social workers, health professionals and community activists have joined forces to tackle specific bottlenecks.

Districts that piloted the model report shorter case backlogs, quicker survivor referrals and renewed public trust. This is what it means to move from events to impact, from 16 Days of Activism to 365 days of activism, accountability and change.

Ultimately, the true measure of the campaign is not the number of marches or speeches, but the number of lives protected, the speed of response and the certainty that justice is served.

Under South Africa's Chairship of the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group, we placed three priorities at the heart of our Presidency: ending GBVF, advancing women's financial inclusion, and investing in the care economy; because

safety, income and care are inseparable.

Through this work, we have emphasised that stronger laws, fair access to finance and shared care responsibilities together form the foundation of a society free from violence. When women have assets and income, they have choices; when care work is recognised and supported, households are more stable; and when violence is prevented and punished, families and economies thrive.

To carry this vision beyond our Presidency, South Africa is driving three legacy projects that turn policy into daily practice. The Positive Masculinity Initiative, which intends on engaging men and boys in schools, workplaces, faith and cultural spaces to model respect, take responsibility and intervene early.

The National Care Economy Strategy to build a society that values care as social and economic infrastructure –creating

jobs, reducing women's vulnerability and lowering the stress that fuels violence in homes.

The Disability Inclusion Nerve Centre to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are fully visible and supported in justice systems and economic opportunities. Together, these legacy projects show that preventing violence is not only a moral imperative but a measure of inclusive development.

As Minister, I am clear about the task before us. Safety is systemic. We will end GBVF when we change how men behave, how money flows, how care is shared and how our institutions serve survivors – every single day.

I call on every sphere of government to budget with evidence, deliver with urgency and report with transparency. I call on business to invest in prevention and workplace safety; on faith and cultural leaders to champion positive masculinity; on educators and health workers to be the first line of protection; and on every South African to reject the silence that shelters abuse.

If we hold this line, with accountability, inclusion and care, we will make the promise of our Constitution real for every woman and every child. That is the legacy we owe this generation and the standard by which history will judge us. ♦



# Standing together with the Matric Class of 2025:

## Guidance, resources and support

**A**s the Class of 2025 sits for their final National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, we extend our full support and encouragement to every learner across the nation. This is a pivotal moment – one that not only assesses their academic achievements but also reflects years of hard work, perseverance and personal growth.

This period, however, comes with immense pressure. It is a critical time when learners require the collective support of parents, caregivers, educators and communities. To the Class of 2025, we commend your determination and perseverance. Remember that your value is not defined by a single examination. You have already

demonstrated resilience and capability and always know that you do not walk this journey alone.

For parents and guardians with children writing their examinations, this can also be a period of considerable stress. Your role during this time is vital. The emotional support provided at home can make a meaningful difference in how learners navigate this demanding phase. Encourage healthy routines, such as adequate sleep, nutritious and balanced meals, and regular study breaks. While we all aspire to see our children suc-



Nomonde  
Mnukwa,  
GCIS Acting  
Director-General.



"To every learner: your journey does not end here.  
Whether you achieve distinctions or encounter setbacks,  
there are opportunities ahead".

ceed, let us be careful not add to the pressure by expecting only perfect results. Let us be present, listen with empathy and reassure them that their effort and commitment matter most. Should you observe signs of distress, please seek assistance without hesitation.

Support is always available for those in need of emotional or psychological assistance. The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) continues to offer a dedicated weekly support group specifically for matric learners, focusing on stress and anxiety management, study techniques and emotional wellbeing. The Department of Basic Education also deploys Learner Support Agents in schools to identify vulnerable learners, provide emotional and mental health support, and facilitate referrals to social welfare and health services.

To ensure that no learner is left behind, government has put in place various support measures for the different outcomes that the learners will get from the exams. Learners intending to

pursue tertiary education but have no funding can apply for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). The scheme offers comprehensive funding covering tuition, accommodation, transport and learning materials for eligible students at public universities, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges.

Applications for the 2026 academic year are open until 15 November 2025.

The Khetha Career Guidance Services offers counselling and career advice to assist learners in making informed decisions about their educational and career pathways.

Learners who may not qualify for university admission or who do not pass their exams are also catered for through a range of programmes, including:

- TVET colleges, which provide practical, industry-aligned training in fields such as information technology, engineering, hospitality and healthcare;
- bridging and extended programmes at selected

universities and colleges, designed to help learners meet entry requirements for further study; and

- youth development initiatives, such as the Youth Employment Service and programmes offered by the National Youth Development Agency, which offer skills training, internships and entrepreneurship support.

For those who will need to improve their results or rewrite subjects, the Second Chance Matric Support Programme

provides free tutoring, study materials and exam preparation. The programme is available nationwide and includes face-to-face classes, online resources and televised lessons.

To every learner: your journey does not end here. Whether you achieve distinctions or encounter setbacks, there are opportunities ahead. Keep believing in your potential, and know that government has programmes to support you every step of the way. Remember, these exams are a milestone, not the final destination. ♦

### Contact information:

- **Second Chance Matric Support Programme**  
Call Centre: 0800 202 933  
Email: [SecondChance@dbe.gov.za](mailto:SecondChance@dbe.gov.za)  
Website: [education.gov.za](http://education.gov.za)
- **Khetha Career Development Services**  
Helpline: 086 999 0123 | SMS/Please Call Me: 072 204 5056 | Email: [careerhelp@dhet.gov.za](mailto:careerhelp@dhet.gov.za)  
Website: [careerhelp.org.za](http://careerhelp.org.za)
- **SADAG Matric Support Group**  
Helpline: 0800 567 567 | WhatsApp Chatline (08:00 – 17:00): 087 163 2050 | Website: [sadag.org](http://sadag.org)
- **DBE Psychosocial Support Services**  
Website: [education.gov.za](http://education.gov.za)
- **NSFAS:** <https://www.nsfas.org.za/>

# NPA's SOCA unit leads collaborative effort to combat GBVF



Photo: Supplied

Advocate Pule Mathaha.

**A**s South Africa joins the global community in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children – observed annually from 25 November to 10 December – government continues to intensify its efforts to combat gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), a crisis so severe it has been described as a pandemic.

One of the key drivers in this

fight is the National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) Sexual Offences and Community Affairs (SOCA) unit, which continues to show that collaboration is essential in addressing GBVF. Through the Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs), the unit provides victims of sexual and domestic violence with integrated, victim-centred services that not only seek justice but also aim to restore dignity and hope.

## Integrated approach

TCCs are interdepartmental centers established by the NPA's SOCA in close collaboration with the departments of Health, Social Development and the South African Police Service (SAPS).

In an interview with *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine, Advocate Pule Mathaha, the NPA's Provincial Manager TCCs in Gauteng, explained that

the centres are court-directed in nature. As such, the SAPS primarily plays a role in opening case dockets and investigating crimes reported at these centres, which predominantly involve cases of GBVF.

"Once dockets are opened, the NPA guides investigations within the dockets and ensure that the three main objectives of the TCCs – ensuring an increase in conviction rates, reducing



the cycle time of cases so that they are finalised quicker and ensuring that there is no further secondary victimisation of the survivors of GBV – are further achieved within the courts,” he explained.

These matters are handled by sexual offences courts, which are designed to increase conviction rates and reduce the time it takes for cases to be finalised. Ultimately, the goal is also to prevent secondary victimisation of GBV survivors during the judicial process.

TCCs are established within government hospitals, where comprehensive medical services and expertise are readily available.

Mathaha explained that the Department of Social Development complements the forensic medical services by provid-

ing psychosocial support to survivors of GBV. This integrated approach ensures that all essential services for survivors are delivered within a single facility, thereby preparing them for the court process that often follows (pretrial services).

## Challenges

While the unit has made significant inroad, challenges still remain.

“The main challenge is that the NPA has only established 66 TCCs so far in almost two decades yet the need is far broader. This makes addressing GBVF cases challenging, especially in the areas where there are no TCCs. We only have seven centres in Gauteng, yet the population is by far the highest in the country,” he said.

The TCC model is heralded

as one of the most effective approaches globally for addressing GBVF, with countries around the world benchmarking it.

“The fact that they are multi-sectoral or interdepartmental in nature makes them the best approach in dealing with GBVF effectively as all the needs of a victim are met within one facility,” he added.

“Ultimately, the prosecution of GBVF matters ensures that all protective measures within our law are effectively applied,” he said.

Mathaha said that survivors of sexual offences often experience multiple forms of abuse, including domestic violence and neglect. He noted that sexual exploitation is a major component of the broader human trafficking crisis. As a result, a comprehensive approach, such

as the one mandated within the SOCA unit, is essential to ensure that victims receive holistic protection and support.

## Victim-centred approach

He further stated that the training provided by Specialist Advocates within the SOCA unit addresses all aspects of its mandate, including the various forms of abuse that survivors may face. TCCs he added, are designed to address these same issues comprehensively.

Each of the four government departments involved in the TCC model operates under its own mandate, guided by protocols and Memoranda of Understanding signed to ensure coordinated and effective service delivery.

Mathaha explained that within the TCC model, while each department has its specific role, they all share a common objective: placing the victim at the centre of service delivery. He added that just as the NPA operates through its SOCA unit, the Department of Health contributes through its Forensic Medical Services unit, the SAPS through the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) unit and the Department of Social Development through its victim empowerment



and psychosocial services. In addition, registered non-profit organisations and non-governmental organisations work alongside these departments to address the scourge.

“A combination of these services within the TCCs has only proved remarkable so far because it is a collaborative effort of units with a similar mandate from each department”

Mathaha also highlighted the role of State Advocates within TCCs, stating that they provide legal guidance and training to stakeholders. They also support the SAPS through prosecutor-guided investigations, ensuring that cases are thoroughly investigated and effectively prosecuted.

## Increased convictions

Mathaha said forensic medical services play a critical role in conducting proper medical examinations and collecting swabs for DNA analysis. This collaboration, he said, often of serial rapists for instance, and that the majority of cases with positive DNA evidence result in high conviction rates. They “also provide a health service that in most cases saves a victim from contracting sexually transmitted infections and pregnancies”.

The State advocates on the

other hand, “are not only involved during the TCCs pretrial services provision, rather they are the link between the TCCs and the Sexual Offences Courts where these cases are prosecuted ensuring that the victims are empowered throughout the litigation process,” said Mathaha.

## Child survivor support

The TCC model and the criminal justice system offer a plethora of protective services offered to young survivors of GBV. These include psychosocial services, medical examination, testifying through Intermediaries, and ensuring that their information

is not shared outside the courts. Other services include receiving court preparation, testifying through CCTVs and allowing them to write victim impact statements to demonstrate how the crime affected them, which further ensures high conviction rates and a wholistic delivery of justice. ♦



Thuthuzela Care Centres provide survivors of abuse with services to seek justice and get psychosocial support

Photo: DOJ/Facebook



# DIABETES

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# Manopole's vision for a transformed Northern Cape



Photo: Northern Cape Provincial Government

Northern Cape Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform MEC Mase Manopole.

**W**hen Northern Cape Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform MEC Mase Manopole speaks about her work, her passion for empowerment stands out. Her vision is clear – to leave behind a legacy defined by transformation, inclusion and sustainable development.

Central to this vision is her

dedication to placing women, youth and previously disadvantaged communities at the forefront of agricultural and environmental progress in the province.

In a recent interview with *Public Sector Manager* magazine, Manopole reflected on her department's achievements, challenges and aspirations. "In 2023/24, our department

achieved 77% of its planned annual targets," she said. "In the main, it is because of the partnerships and collaborations we have with NGOs [non-governmental organisations] that assisted us. Our budget constraints pose challenges, but we have to look for and find strategic partners to ensure that we achieve our objectives".

Despite limited resources, she credits her department's success to the dedication of its officials. "We have committed officials who are devoted to the cause, and that enables us to reach our goals," she explained.

## Good governance

The MEC understands that good governance begins with sound financial management. "We have developed audit action plans to ensure that we are prudent in how we manage funds," she explained. "In areas where we see wastage, we are developing strategies to mitigate it. We are also looking at recruiting qualified and specialised

officials to assist us".

She noted that for the past few financial years, there have been several funded vacancies in financial management that the department has been unable to fill due to a provincial moratorium. "We have requested the Premier to lift the moratorium because our department has been identified for success in Operation Clean Audit," she said.

Given the Northern Cape's vast in size and sparse population, Manopole acknowledges the unique challenges that come with the province's allocation under the Division of Revenue Act of 2025. However, she remains optimistic, explaining that they have identified opportunities that will sustain their services.

## Equal distribution of resources

Agriculture currently contributes around 7% to the Northern Cape economy, but Manopole's target is to raise that figure to 10% over the medium term. "To achieve that, agro-processing will be key. We want to drive transformation in this space," she emphasised. "We plan to support at least 10 women entrepreneurs to move into the commercial agro-processing sector".

Transformation is also a major focus in the conservation and biodiversity sector. "We have to



“The Northern Cape LandCare program is a community-based initiative supported by the provincial government to promote sustainable agricultural land resource management through activities like SoilCare, WaterCare, VeldCare, and JuniorCare. Its goal is to optimize the productivity and sustainability of natural resources to improve food security, job creation, and the quality of life in the province”.

transform the sector,” Manopole said. “We have approved the Game Donation Policy, and in the last financial year, we implemented its first phase. We are currently screening and assessing the farms that applied. We want previously disadvantaged communities to benefit from the wildlife economy”.

## A province rich in natural resources

The province’s environmental and coastal potential is also key part of her vision. “Not many people are aware that we have a coastline; that we have a beach in the Northern Cape,” she remarked with a smile. She highlighted the planned development of green hydrogen in the region, along with the construction of a new port at Boegoebaai. She also explained that they were supporting the provincial Department of Eco-

nomic Development by ensuring that progress was aligned with environmental preservation.

Referring to the Northern Cape as “the new growth frontier of our country,” Manopole expressed confidence that the province’s largely untapped resources will eventually allow it to “stand tall” as a driving force for national development.

## Viticulture and tourism

Among the opportunities that excite the MEC most are those in viticulture and tourism. “We have water rights covering about 750 hectares that have not been developed. We want to encourage young people and women to get involved in this sector,” she said.

“Developing vineyards in these areas can help unlock new growth for our rural com-

munities.” Manopole also envisions the province becoming a leading eco-tourism destination. “We have unique flora and fauna, and our landscapes are breathtaking,” she said. “We must protect our succulent plants and reptiles from poaching and promote the Northern Cape as a place to experience biodiversity and natural beauty”.

## Job creation

In July, Manopole tabled Budget Vote 12 – a R735 million investment in the future of agriculture, environment and rural development. The 2025/26 commitments include the creation of 750 new job opportunities and 210 environmental job opportunities; support for 1 300 subsistence producers through food security initiatives; R8.875 million allocated to eight LandCare projects creating 50 Expanded Public Works

Programme opportunities; over R205 million directed to empowering women and youth through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and Ilima/Letsema; and the launch of a Digital Extension Support System for smallholder farmers.

“This Budget is an instrument of transformation,” she said during her Budget Vote. “It is a call to action for inclusive growth, smart farming, resilient ecosystems and a more equitable rural economy.”

For Manopole, the road ahead is about more than meeting targets; it is about changing lives. “I want to see a Northern Cape where no young person feels excluded from the agricultural economy,” she said. “A province where women lead farms, manage processing facilities, and own the land they work on. That is the legacy I want to leave.” ❖

# Inspiring change

## through education and leadership

In the heart of Vhembe District, Limpopo, at Mphagane Primary School, a young educator is redefining what it means to teach, lead and serve. At just 29, Avhasei Messie Raphalalani has become a beacon of hope and transformation in her community – a teacher, leader and youth advocate whose work continues to inspire both learners and her colleagues.

Her dedication has not gone unnoticed. Raphalalani has been listed among the *Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans*, nominated for the 2025 National Teaching Awards, and honoured by Inside Education as both the Most Dedicated Educator and Excellence Educator. Yet, behind these accolades is a story of resilience, compassion and an unshakable belief in the power of education to change lives.

"I was inspired to become a teacher because I believe that education is the most powerful tool to transform lives and communities," she reflects. "Growing up in a rural area, I witnessed how education could open doors for children who might otherwise be limited by their circumstances."

Her journey was not without challenges. After the passing of her



Avhasei Messie Raphalalani.



father, her mother, who she describes as a determined and courageous woman, became the family's sole provider.

"She worked as a taxi driver in one of the busiest and most dangerous cities in Gauteng. Her resilience and determination taught me the value of hard work, service and perseverance".

## The inspiration

She also draws inspiration

from the Tshishonge family, educators who embodied the compassion and commitment she now strives to emulate.

"They had an unwavering desire to make a positive impact in learners' lives, regardless of where those learners came from. Their belief in every child's potential inspired me to follow the same path".

For Raphalalani, teaching has always been more than a job. "It is a calling, a way to give hope, empower young minds, and create opportunities for others, just as others did for me".

## True leadership

As the Acting Departmental Head at Mphagane Primary School, Raphalalani leads with

purpose and humility. "My leadership style is collaborative, transformational and people-centred," she explains.

"Leadership is not defined by position or authority, but by influence, vision, and the ability to inspire others towards a shared purpose."

She credits her Principal, as a guiding influence. "I am fortunate to serve under a leader who models humility, consistency and excellence. He has taught me the importance of servant leadership. Through his mentorship, I have learned that great leaders create more leaders, not followers".

Raphalalani fosters a culture of teamwork and innovation. "I strive to ensure that every teacher and learner feels seen, supported and inspired to reach

their full potential. When teachers feel valued and empowered, excellence naturally reflects in learner achievement".

## Recognition for excellence

Being nominated for the 2025 National Teaching Awards was a milestone in Raphalalani's career.

"Winning at both the cluster and provincial levels on my first attempt was humbling. It was affirming to see that dedication and passion for teaching could be recognised on such a scale". But for her, the recognition extends beyond personal achievement. "These awards are not just about me — they represent the collective effort of teachers, learners, and communities striving for excellence. They remind

"Winning at both the cluster and provincial levels on my first attempt was humbling. It was affirming to see that dedication and passion for teaching could be recognised on such a scale".

us that our work matters."

Her commitment to excellence extends to the wellbeing of her learners. Mphagane Primary School gained recognition for winning the Rama Good Breakfast Nutrition Project, which Raphalalani attributes to teamwork and community engagement.

"The project succeeded because it combined education, collaboration and practical support. It taught learners, educators and parents the importance of a healthy breakfast in boosting focus and growth".

## Empowering colleagues with digital skills

One of Raphalalani's most impactful initiatives has been the after-hours ICT training

programme for teachers. "With my principal's encouragement, I began facilitating computer skills classes after school. Many teachers were trained in traditional methods, so I wanted to help them embrace modern digital tools that could enhance teaching and learning," she says.

The results have been remarkable. "The programme has improved lesson planning, classroom engagement and confidence in using technology. When our school received the MST Grant, teachers were already prepared to integrate digital tools into their teaching.

"Seeing my colleagues em-

brace technology and transform their teaching practices has been deeply rewarding." For her, the project is about more than technology – it is about empowerment. "Investing in teacher development enriches not just educators, but learners too. It prepares them for the digital world."

### Youth empowerment

Beyond the classroom, Raphalalani's passion for youth empowerment found expression through the StopTheSpot Youth Organisation (SYO), which she founded in 2018.

"Growing up in Tshipako Vil-

lage, I saw how lack of access to education, sanitary products, food and clothes contributed to school dropouts," she says.

SYO was born from a desire to change that. The organisation focuses on mentorship, leadership, education and community development.

"We run programmes that promote education, health awareness, gender equality and cultural preservation. We also work to eradicate tribalism and encourage unity."

Through SYO's mentorship and skills initiatives, young people receive guidance on academic and career choices.

"Many participants have gained confidence, improved focus in school and developed a sense of responsibility towards their communities," she says proudly.

### Equitable access to quality education

Raphalalani envisions a future where rural schools are models of excellence and innovation. "My hope is to see equitable access to quality education for every child, regardless of their background. I dream of schools that are well-resourced, with digital tools and empowered teachers delivering engaging learning experiences"

Through SYO and her work at Mphagane Primary School, she continues to push for this transformation. "If we combine formal education with mentorship and life skills programmes, we can help rural learners not only succeed academically, but also develop leadership, confidence and social responsibility."

Even with her many responsibilities, Raphalalani remains steadfast. "What keeps me motivated on challenging days is seeing the impact of my work – from a learners gaining confidence, teachers mastering a new skill to young people finding direction," she says. ❖



Raphalalani's youth empowerment initiative, StopTheSpot Youth Organisation (SYO), mentors young people making career and education decisions. Credit: StoptheSpot Youth Organisation.





World leaders are looking for new ideas and new ways of doing things, it's our time to lead. We have a lot to offer as South Africans, learnt during our struggle for liberation and from our own journey after 30 years of freedom and democracy.





Photo: CSIR

# Protecting SA against cybercrimes and identity theft

**W**ith the alarming rise in cyber-attacks threatening national security and personal privacy, South Africa faces an urgent challenge – and Dr Jabu Mtsweni is on the frontlines.

As the Head of the Information and Cyber Security Research Centre and a Chief Researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), he leads a dynamic team of researchers, technologists and software developers who are dedicated to outsmart cyber criminals through a strategic, multi-pronged approach aimed at protecting the country's digital infrastructure and sensitive information.

In a recent Interview with

*Public Sector Manager* magazine, Mtsweni said his career highlight was “the opportunity to establish and grow the Information and Cyber Security Research Centre at the CSIR”.

Taking on this responsibility in 2019, Mtsweni started with a nascent team and centre, but through impactful leadership, it has grown the annual revenue to over R100 million and expanded his team from 30 to close to 90 personnel.

## Innovative solutions

He acknowledged that cybercrimes and identity theft are a challenge globally, but he leads a team that works tirelessly to combat this in South Africa through innovation. One of the

team's innovations is the Virtual Cybersecurity Operations Centre (VSOC), which provides real-time monitoring and threat mitigation, “helping the public and private sectors to quickly respond to cyber threats and attacks,” he explained.

The VSOC operates 24/7, providing detection, analysis and investigation of cyber threats. It also provides services like incident handling, security posture analysis, and reporting.

This directly improves service delivery by ensuring organisations can maintain compliance and quickly respond to potential threats. Within the VSOC, there is the Indigent Registers System, which helps municipalities with reliable and accurate

administration of their indigent registers – a crucial aspect for improving service delivery to vulnerable communities. It includes a national portal for enrolment, self-service kiosks and handheld devices for mobile identification and verification. The system has been piloted in several municipalities in Gauteng and North West, where it has shown significant relevance.

## Improving service delivery

The system also offers the following:

- **Fraud prevention:** It helps municipalities detect fraud and ensures that only deserving households receive



essential free basic services.

- **Improving data integrity:**

The system addresses the challenge of unreliable data, allowing for more efficient and effective service delivery.

- **Empowering communities:**

By streamlining the application and verification process, it makes it easier for indigent households to access the services they are entitled to.

## Combating identity theft

To directly combat identity theft, Mtsweni and his team developed the patented VeristicPrint

biometric system, which makes it difficult for criminals to commit fraud.

They have also created advanced digital forensics and cybercrime combatting platforms that assist law enforcement agencies.

The CSIR also collaborates with government departments and institutions to strengthen national security and digital resilience to build cybercrime investigation capabilities, investigate and mitigate complex digital crimes.

The CSIR's Centre for Information and Cybersecurity also

provides strategic support to various law enforcement agencies to ensure they remain competent in combating cybercrime.

"These technological solutions are complemented by our strategic partnerships with key institutions, including the South African Police Service and the Special Investigating Unit, to provide the technical expertise needed to combat sophisticated cybercrimes," explained Mtsweni.

In addition, the CSIR works with the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation to develop local cybersecurity

capabilities, as well as with the Cybersecurity Hub to conduct national cybersecurity surveys and support citizens and private sector to deal with cybercrime and incidents.

## Recognition

Over the years, Mtsweni has won several awards, and this serves as a testament to his commitment to both scientific advancement and fostering the next generation of leaders.

These include the Emerging Leader Award at the CSIR Excellence Awards in 2016, the Best Paper Award at the South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists Conference in 2018, the Chief Researcher Award in 2023, National Research Foundation-Rated Researcher (C2), being named one of the Top 50 Cybersecurity Professionals in South Africa in 2024 and being awarded a prestigious NSTF-South32 Award at the National Science and Technology Forum in 2025.

## Groundbreaking research

Based on the national cybersecurity surveys released by the CSIR at the end of 2023/24 – conducted and published under Mtsweni's leadership – South Africa faces a significant



Photo: Freepik

The CSIR's Cyber Security Research Centre is dedicated to protecting SA's digital infrastructure from cyber attacks.

challenge in its cybersecurity posture.

These were among the first surveys of their kind by the CSIR. Key findings shared by Mtsweni reveal the current state of cybersecurity in the country.

● **Prevalence of Cyberat-**

**tacks:** 47% of organisations

reported between one and five cybersecurity incidents in the past year. A concerning 88% of organisations admitted to at least one security breach, with 90% of those being targeted multiple times.

● **Preparedness and Aware-**

**ness:** Only 32% of organisations indicated that more than half of their employees have received cybersecurity awareness training in the past year. Just 41% are assessing and monitoring cyber threats daily, exposing a critical gap in detection and response.

● **Skills Gap:** The cybersecurity skills shortage remains a major challenge, with 63% of cybersecurity roles across the country either partially or entirely unfilled.

● **Common Threats:** Malware and phishing attacks were identified as the most common cyber threats faced by organisations.

Mtsweni advised public institutions to identify potential risks before they lead to a full-scale cybercrime event, to uncover hidden vulnerabilities and threats that may have been missed by other security tools.

"Public institutions should consider performing proactive digital forensic readiness and vulnerability assessments. While the exact frequency can depend on the institution's risk profile, budget and regulatory requirements, a good practice is to conduct these assessments annually or bi-annually as part of a comprehensive cybersecurity audit"

He added that digital forensic investigations should be performed immediately and as a standard procedure in the aftermath of any security incident, such as a cybercrime, data breach or network intrusion.

### Leading in protecting information and cybersecurity

Citing recent global reports and indices, Mtsweni said South Africa is considered one of the leading countries in Africa in terms of protecting information and cybersecurity, though it still faces significant challenges compared to some developed nations.

According to the *International Telecommunication Standards Global Cybersecurity Index 2024* report, South Africa has been placed in Tier 2, categorised as "Advancing" in its cybersecurity maturity behind seven other African countries.

"Other reports, such as one by Statista, have also placed South Africa as the 4th most prepared country in Africa to fight cyberattacks. While South Africa is one of the leaders on the African continent, it still has work to do to reach the same level as global leaders in cybersecurity," he said. ♦

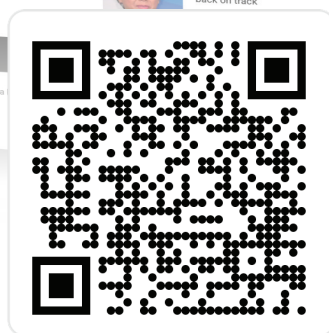
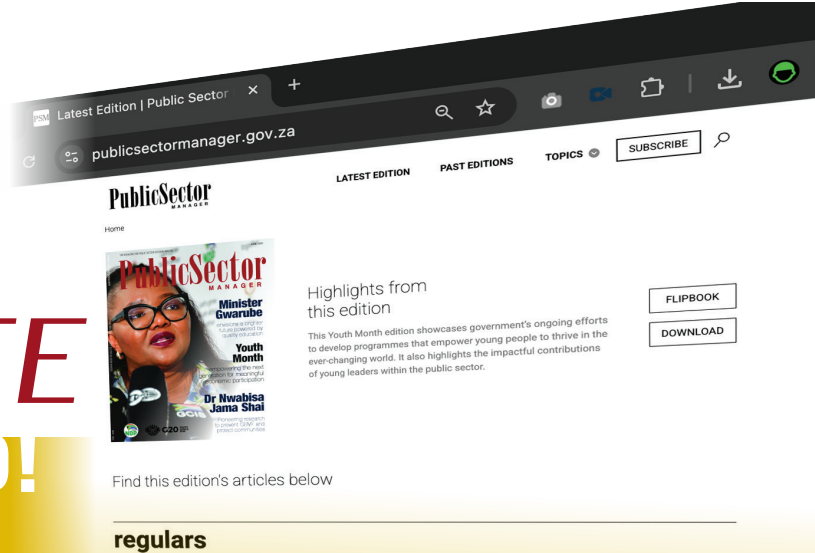


Photo: CSIR

Dr Jabu Mtsweni is the Head: Information and Cyber Security Research Centre and Chief Researcher at the CSIR.



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Government Communication and Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





# South Africa is serious about fighting financial crime and corruption



Photo: GCIS

**O**ur country's exit from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list bodes well for the integrity and reputation of our financial system, for our status as an investment

destination and for the economy as a whole.

The FATF is a global body that aims to tackle global money laundering and terrorist financing. In 2023, South Africa was

put on its 'grey list' for falling short of certain international standards.

Just over two years since the FATF identified deficiencies that had rendered South Africa

increasingly vulnerable to financial crimes, the dedication of a multidisciplinary team led by the National Treasury has culminated in our formal exit from the grey list.

In its statement, FATF welcomed the 'significant progress' South Africa has made in improving its anti-money laundering and countering terrorism financing regime, and called for these improvements to be sustained.

This milestone is a boost for South Africa's international reputation and global standing. Grey listing results in a country being seen as risky for investors. The practical implications are that countries have greater difficulties obtaining credit and access to international financial services. There is reduced foreign direct investment and even

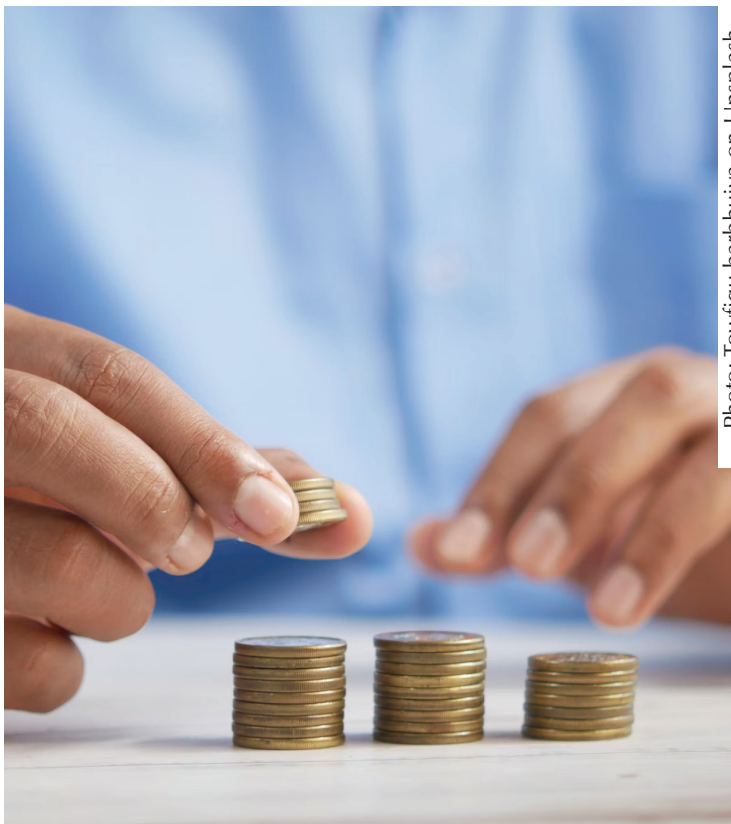


Photo: Towfiqu barbhuiya on Unsplash

capital outflows, and restrictions on cross-border transactions.

International investors seeking to do business in any country need assurance that its financial system is clean, transparent, robust and compliant with global standards.

The perception of increased risk affects citizens and businesses financially. The cost of living and doing business can increase as a result of a weakened currency. As international borrowing becomes more expensive for businesses and governments, there is less fiscal space for social spend-

ing and tax pressures increase. Investor hesitancy leads to less foreign direct investment, which in turn impacts job creation and sustaining existing jobs.

The impact of South Africa's exit from the FATF grey list will reduce pressure on citizens, businesses and the government. Ultimately, the return of international financial confidence and a reduced risk perception will attract more foreign direct investment. As our currency strengthens, the cost of living for citizens and doing business will improve.

The far-reaching regula-

tory and institutional reforms we have instituted as part of the FATF process are a clear demonstration of South Africa's commitment to improving the business and investor climate, and to ongoing reform.

The mandate of the Financial Intelligence Centre was expanded in 2022, when its founding legislation was strengthened to allow for more effective monitoring and detection of complex financial crime.

Legislative amendments have been made to enable for more stringent reporting regulations around beneficial ownership. This is so we know who ultimately owns, controls and benefits from a company, not just those who are listed as shareholders on paper.

These changes will make it much more difficult for individuals and syndicates to funnel the proceeds of their corrupt activities through complex webs of shell companies, trusts and companies owned by friends and relatives.

To close high-risk loopholes around terrorism financing, we have introduced regulatory amendments to enable the investigation and prosecution of such cases. We are committing more government spending to countering money-laundering and terrorism financing.

The state capture era led to a near hollowing out of state capacity and the weakening of key institutions involved in upholding the integrity of our financial system. But we are steadily rebuilding them.

Exiting the grey list demonstrates that our anti-money laundering system is beginning to act against corruption and other financial crimes. It lays the basis for further improvements. It is a signal of our collective determination to ensure that the malfeasance of the past is well behind us.

We will make sure that the FATF decision does not result in complacency but supports increased vigilance. Much work remains to be done to reduce and prevent financial crimes, and ensure speedier investigations, prosecutions and convictions of those committing such crimes.

With the necessary regulatory frameworks in place, our focus must now be on improving and strengthening implementation. We will also sustain enforcement within both public and private institutions and deepen international collaboration. ♦

**\*This message was first published on 27 November 2025**



# AG calls for urgent action to improve education for children with disabilities

**A**uditor-General (AG) Tsakani Maluleke has urged government to intensify its efforts in providing equitable and quality education for children with disabilities. Presenting the National Audit Office's performance audit report on South Africa's progress in addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities, Maluleke acknowledged the positive strides made but highlighted several critical deficiencies that require urgent attention.

As a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), South Africa is committed to monitoring and reporting its progress towards achieving the set targets, with the aim of making significant advancements by 2030. The audit specifically assessed the country's progress towards SDG 4.5, focusing on ensuring equal and equitable quality education for children with disabilities by 2030.

## Audit focus

The report emphasises that South Africa is expected to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to eradicating poverty, ending discrimination and reducing inequalities that hinder individuals from reaching their full potential.

"To assess the commitment to the SDG principle of leaving no one behind, the AGSA selected the SDG 4.5 target, which calls for eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations by the year 2030," explained the AG.

Maluleke added that the AGSA's audit specifically narrowed its focus to providing equal and equitable quality education for children with disabilities,



Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke.

Photo: AGSA



examining key aspects such as the legal and policy framework, data management, collaboration, resource allocation and monitoring support.

## Deficiencies in policy implementation

Several deficiencies were identified in the implementation of policies. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) did not fully implement the provisions of the *2001 Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education*. Similarly, the early childhood development provisions outlined in the *2016 White Paper on Disability Rights* were not fully implemented by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD).

The AG also noted that limited support from district-based teams has negatively impacted

the quality of education provided to learners with disabilities.

"Also, inadequate tracking and provision of quality education to children aged between zero and four years will affect the attainment of SDG 4.5 target by 2030," cautioned the AG.

## Data and information management

On data and information management, the audit found that the DBE did not ensure accurate and consistent data capture of learners with disabilities in the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). Inconsistent reporting was also noted among key role-players regarding the number of children with disabilities in the country.

Maluleke stressed the importance of accurate and consistent data to set realistic targets and

effectively monitor progress towards SDG 4.5. She added that understanding the number of children with disabilities attending school – and those not attending – is crucial for effective planning and resource allocation.

## Resource allocation

The audit identified several issues with resource allocation, including:

- Inadequate provision of specialised transport for learners with disabilities. Learners who required such transport were not provided with it, and those using mainstream scholar transport did not receive the necessary support.
- Unsuitable school infrastructure that did not cater to the needs of learners with disabilities.
- A shortage of qualified

teachers trained in inclusive education and special needs education.

- Inadequate provision of assistive devices for children with disabilities.

## Monitoring and support

The report also highlighted several monitoring and support issues:

- Delayed responses to requests for assistance for learners with severe disabilities.
- A lack of effective monitoring and support for full-service schools, preventing children with disabilities from receiving equal education.

## Call to action

In response, the AG urged the departments of education and other key stakeholders to take

"The provision of equal and equitable quality education for children with disabilities is a fundamental human right, as outlined in the Constitution, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international frameworks".



The Auditor-General of South Africa's performance audit report assesses South Africa's progress in addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities.

immediate action to address these issues in order to meet the SDG 4.5 targets. Maluleke's recommendations included introducing measures to address the educational needs of children with disabilities under the age of five, ensuring that strategies are in place for those not attending school, improving resource allocation and strengthening inter-departmental collaboration.

## Government response

Maluleke acknowledged that government had begun addressing some of the audit's findings. For example, Basic Education Minister has established a ministerial task team to review the the 2001 *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Educa-*

*tion*, with a draft report already produced.

The DBE has also partnered with the British Council to train in-service teachers and develop a curriculum for initial teacher education in specialised needs education. Additionally, steps are being taken to improve data accuracy in SA-SAMS.

## Collaboration

The DBE has forged partnerships with other government departments to offer integrated support for learners with disabilities. These include working with the DWYPD to improve access to education, aligning with the 2016 *White Paper on Disability Rights*, collaborating with Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

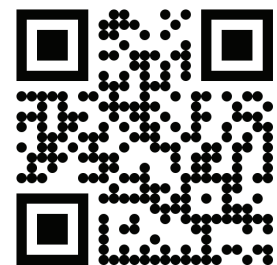
and the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies to provide ICT and assistive devices to special schools, and partnering with the departments of Justice and Constitutional Development, and Social Development to monitor educational programmes for children in conflict with the law.

The provision of equal and equitable quality education for children with disabilities is a fundamental human right, as outlined in the Constitution, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international frameworks. While the report recognises the achievements made to date, Maluleke concluded by emphasising that urgent action is still needed to address the identified

deficiencies to ensure better outcomes for children with disabilities.

"The different role players in the accountability ecosystem all have a responsibility to drive, deepen and insist on accountability that will ensure the betterment of our children's lives through equal, equitable and quality education," concluded the AG. ♦

**\*Scan QR Code to access the full report**







South Africa is working to build a better and more inclusive economy to meet the needs of all its citizens. We seek a world system which works and that is equal, fair and just so that more people around the world benefit.



# New Bana Pele

## registration drive to help ECD centres get officially registered

**T**he Department of Basic Education (DBE) has launched a nationwide mass registration drive aimed at registering the majority of unregistered Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes across South Africa. This initiative comes in response to findings from the 2021 ECD Census, which revealed that at least half of all early learning programmes, including ECD centres, playgroups and day mothers, remain unregistered under the Children's Act of 2005.

The Bana Pele ECD registration process aims to make it easier for ECD programmes to register through a simplified, user-friendly online system. This initiative is part of govern-

ment's broader goal to ensure that every young child in South Africa has access to quality early learning. Government envisions all registered ECD programmes providing three key essentials:

- ◉ Quality learning and development opportunities,
- ◉ A safe and nurturing environment, and
- ◉ Access to nutritious food.

"Registration is the first step in making this possible. The goals of the mass registration drive are, therefore, to pull every ECD programme into the regulatory net and to support ECD programmes in all communities to comply with legal requirements, by recognising the different contexts in which they operate,"

stated the DBE in a statement.

### Stages of registration

The new registration process will follow three stages that every ECD programme must complete.

- ◉ **APPLY:** The ECD programme submits an initial application using an online form or WhatsApp Bot and receives a Bronze certificate as confirmation.
- ◉ **COMPLY:** The programme then submits the required supporting documents and undergoes site visits to ensure compliance with prescribed norms and standards.
- ◉ **COMPLETE:** Once fully compliant, the programme is

awarded a Silver or Gold certificate, depending on the level of compliance achieved.

### Key changes

The new Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive introduces several key changes aimed at streamlining and supporting the ECD registration process:

- ◉ A simplified Bronze registration process will be introduced, which can be completed at dedicated one-stop shops operated by Education Districts during a special, time-limited window.
- ◉ The DBE and provincial authorities will offer structured support to help ECD programmes meet full registration

## Bana Pele

### ECD Registration Drive



and municipal compliance requirements.

- Provinces and districts will ensure that every Early Learning Programme is able to submit a complete registration application within one year.

## Stakeholder involvement

The new registration process is intentionally designed to include the active support and involvement of ECD sector partners and stakeholders, including NGOs and ECD forums or associations. NGOs have a vital role to play in the mass registration drive, as many have established relationships with ECD programmes and possess the capacity and resources to assist in facilitating the registration process.

"Local NGOs will therefore be invited to support the mass registration drive by assisting ECD programmes with applications (at APPLY stage) and site compliance (at COMPLY stage). ECD formations and associations are critical as a support and information sharing networks to build trust and credibility of the messages designed for owners, principals and practitioners of ECD programmes and centres," read the statement.

The new mass registration process will be rolled out in a phased approach to allow for thorough testing of the sup-

porting tools and to ensure that provinces and districts are fully prepared for the new reform. All applications will now be submitted through the new online platform, eCares (Early Childhood Administration and Reporting System), which has already been extensively tested in Gauteng. The platform will be gradually introduced across most provinces by the end of 2024.

Unregistered ECD programmes have several options to register via the Bana Pele system, including:

- Online application through the DBE's eCares platform at:** <https://dbecares.dbe.gov.za/user-registration/>.
- WhatsApp notification:** Unregistered ECD programmes will receive notifications via WhatsApp, including detailed information about the registration process and a link to the application form, sent from the WhatsApp number 087 725 2059.
- NGO support:** NGOs operating within Education Districts will provide support where applicable. They will assist members of ECD forums by offering information on the Mass Registration Drive and hosting application submission workshops or "clinics".
- MRD outbound contact centre:** ECD programmes and centres will receive direct phone calls from the



MRD Contact Centre at 010 476 1004, where they will be guided step-by-step through the online registration process.

## Benefits of the new registration system

- Provides a less intimidating registration process for the ECD sector and the public, encouraging more programmes to register as legitimate providers committed to child safety.
- Supports ECD programmes and centres throughout the registration process to help them meet minimum norms and standards. Municipalities will play a vital role in guiding and assisting centres in meeting these requirements, in line with a developmental approach.
- Enables registered ECD programmes and centres to operate within a formal regulatory framework, ensuring they are subject to official oversight.
- Allows programmes to apply

for the ECD subsidy for eligible children, granting access to state funding that can enhance the quality of services offered.

- Improves access to funding and helps eliminate disproportionate resource allocation, particularly benefiting children in low-income communities and addressing the ongoing cycle of underfunding and lower quality services for vulnerable families.

For reliable guidance on the eCares platform registration, including helpful videos and frequently asked questions about the Mass Registration Drive, ECD programmes are encouraged to scan the QR code below: ❖





# Towards inclusive communication:

## PanSALB and GCIS push for SASL integration



Photo: Supplied

Deputy Minister for Women, Youth and People with Disabilities Mmapaseka Steve Letsike and SASL Interpreter, Ms Nomsa Mathebula.

beyond recognition towards full implementation of the SASL across all spheres of public life.

### Inclusive government communication

As part of its broader initiative to promote language equity, PanSALB has called for strategic collaboration with GCIS to embed SASL into official government communication. A proposal was made for a workshop to be held at the GCIS to equip government communicators with the tools and knowledge required to integrate the SASL effectively into public messaging platforms and align practices with the SASL Charter.

The GCIS's leadership in government communication

In celebration of the International Day of Sign Languages, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), in collaboration with the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), hosted a commemorative event at the GCIS' Head Office in

Pretoria. Held under the theme; "No Human Rights without Sign Language Rights," the event reinforced government's commitment to inclusion, accessibility and linguistic rights.

The celebration marked a significant step forward,

following the constitutional recognition of the South African Sign Language (SASL) as the country's 12th official language. Through artistic expression, keynote addresses and stakeholder engagement, the event highlighted the need to move

was viewed as placing it in a pivotal position to champion linguistic accessibility across departments. The collaboration is expected to ensure that government messaging reaches all citizens equitably, including the Deaf community.

## Celebrating Deaf culture and expression

The event began with a moving SASL poetry performance by Zohra Moosa, whose powerful piece explored themes of identity, resilience and the lived experience of Deaf individuals in a hearing-centric society.

Her expressive use of sign language offered the audience a window into the deaf culture and its rich visual language.

Another highlight was a performance by Zulfah Shabodien, who presented a metaphoric poem titled "Decolonisation" in the SASL. Her piece drew connections between the historical suppression of indigenous languages during colonialism and the ongoing marginalisation of the SASL, calling for a deeper understanding of decolonisation within a multilingual democracy.

## Implementation and collaboration

Keynote addresses underscored

government's continuous commitment to linguistic rights and inclusion. Sport, Arts and Culture Deputy Minister Peace Mabe acknowledged the historic milestone of the SASL's official language status and urged government departments to prioritise implementation.

"Recognition is not enough; implementation must follow. Every public institution must be accessible to the Deaf community," she stated.

Echoing the same sentiments, Deputy Minister for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Mmapaseka Steve Letsike, highlighted the importance of intersectional approaches to disability inclusion. She emphasised the need to empower Deaf women and youth through inclusive education, employment and civic participation.

## Sector engagement

Stakeholders from various organisations working within the Deaf sector also contributed to the programme, showcasing

initiatives in interpreter training, Deaf education and assistive communication technologies.

Their message was clear: access to professional SASL services is not optional, it is a fundamental human right.

The event served as a learning curve for many in attendance, inspiring new perspectives on accessibility and inclusion.

Practical tools, Apps and resources, including CONVO, REAH Sign Communicate, and others were introduced, offering attendees pathways to bridge communication gaps and promote accessible engagement in both personal and professional contexts.

The event also emphasised respectful interaction guidelines, such as maintaining eye contact, avoiding shouting and being patient. These everyday practices contribute significantly to fostering inclusive environments.

SASL National Language Body member Zohra Moosa.

## Committing to lasting inclusion

More than just a commemorative event, the event served as a reminder of the essential role language plays in achieving equality.

As South Africa continues to implement the SASL as an official language, events like this underscore the collective responsibility of institutions and individuals alike to support linguistic inclusion, not only during Disability Rights Awareness Month but every day. ❖

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**\*For more information on PanSALB's SASL initiatives or upcoming workshops, visit [www.pansalb.org](http://www.pansalb.org)**

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Photo: Supplied



Siyabulela Makunga.

Photo: ATokelo Makwala/  
Competition Commission

# BRICS Report reveals

## grain sector is under pressure

**T**he formation of the cooperation of BRICS Competition Heads of Authorities necessitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between competition regulation authorities from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Signed at Saint-Petersburg (Russian Federation) on 19 May 2016, this MoU envisioned, among other things, the recognition of the need to promote long-term sustainable and rapid development of their respective economies while affirming that “ef-

fective enforcement of their competition laws are of crucial importance for growth and efficiency in the economy and the protection of consumers”.

### Reimagining multilateral economic order

At the 9th BRICS International Competition Conference, hosted by the Competition Commission of South Africa, in Cape Town in September 2025, over 300 delegates that included heads of BRICS competition authorities, universally agreed that BRICS has grown and

undergone necessary transformation to become a central pillar in the global economic order that champions fairness, inclusivity and the aspiration of the Global South. It became evident that amidst ongoing fractured multilateralism, BRICS competition authorities are poised to play a leading role in this reimagined multilateral economic order.

The conference included a series of topical conversations, ranging from sustainability and trade to digital markets and artificial intelligence. The conversations cre-





Photo: Aleksandarlittlewolf/freepik

ated an important platform for the exchange of best practices, views and recommendations between competition practitioners and representatives from BRICS nations and other jurisdictions. BRICS working groups also provided updates and insights on competition regulation in the pharmaceutical, digital markets and food sectors.

## A look into the grain sector

Of note, the BRICS Competition Law and Policy Centre have already taken a momentous step towards this – with a recent research study and subsequent report into the grain sector. The study offered an innovative approach to analysis from the

perspective of global processes. Traditional antitrust analysis of the grain market has focused primarily on horizontal competition – interaction at the same level of the supply chain.

However, to gain a deeper understanding of market dynamics in the BRICS countries, an analysis of vertical competition was conducted, which involved examining the relationships between different levels of the supply chain, including producers, traders, infrastructure operators and financial intermediaries – from the field and port to the consumer. Researchers paid particular attention to the activities of global grain traders through the prism of the economic and technological

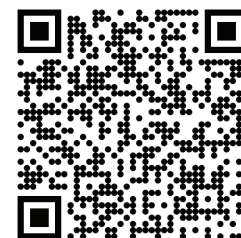
changes that markets are undergoing today.

According to the authors of the study, the global grain market has long been controlled by an oligopoly of major agricultural traders known as ABCD+ (ADM, Bunge, Cargill, Louis Dreyfus Company + COFCO, Olam). This concentration of market power, as well as certain structural features of this market, make it vulnerable to price fluctuations and various types of speculative behaviour, which negatively affects both grain producers and consumers.

First and foremost, the report proposes involving the antitrust regulators of the BRICS countries in the design of the BRICS Grain Exchange as a single plat-

form, where pricing will be more transparent and, most importantly, hedging mechanisms will be more transparent. The grain exchange has already been initiated by the leaders of the BRICS countries, and if implemented correctly, it could be a step towards reducing price volatility, increasing pricing transparency, and improving the quality of market competition in the global grain market. ♦

\*Scan QR Code below to access the full report



# Institutionalising women, youth and persons with disabilities' inclusion

**F**ive years after adopting the Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework (GRPBMEAF), South Africa stands at a crossroads. The promise of full institutionalisation of women, youth and persons with disabilities (WYPD) priorities into every plan, budget and accountability process is still unevenly realised.

The current performance data tells two stories: one of institutions demonstrating measurable commitment and another of inconsistent or minimal application of the framework. The gap between the two reveals that the framework is effective where there is strong leadership, sufficient capacity and clear accountability. However, it is struggling to take root where these conditions are absent. In some cases, weak performance is due to non-submission or poor-quality reporting, under-

scoring administrative issues rather than a total absence of mainstreaming.

## Why the GRPBMEAF matters

The GRPBMEAF is more than a compliance tool; it serves as a structural blueprint for mainstreaming inclusion of WYPD priorities within governance. The ten interconnected pillars - from national and institutional planning, responsive budgeting and policy alignment to legislation, capacity building and performance management - are designed to ensure that WYPD priorities are embedded as standard practice across the public sector.

When implemented with rigour, these pillars align budgets and resources with equity outcomes, enabling inclusive economic growth, targeted empowerment programmes and public services designed for universal access.

The framework also repositions South Africa as a global leader in gender-responsive governance, reclaiming its early leadership from the 1990s.

## National department performance

National departments show a wide performance gap. The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) and the Department of Small Business Development achieved full reporting compliance, reflecting both mandate alignment and leadership commitment. The departments of Employment and Labour, and International Relations and Cooperation recorded 13% submission, signalling systemic accountability and prioritisation gaps.

## Across the GRPBMEAF pillars:

- Country and institutional

planning (Pillars 1 & 2) improved steadily, with institutional planning reaching 70% in the eighth report.

- Policy priorities (Pillar 3), monitoring and auditing (Pillar 5), and other systems integration (Pillar 7) saw declines, suggesting difficulties in sustaining transformation.
- Performance management (Pillar 9) is improving, yet capacity building and advocacy (Pillar 10) remain at just above 50%.

## Provincial performance

All nine provinces participated in the GRPBMEAF reporting, but results are uneven. Gauteng leads with 100% reporting, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape at 88%, Limpopo and Mpumalanga achieved around 75%, while the Free State lags at 38%, risking further margin-

alisation of WYPD in provincial governance.

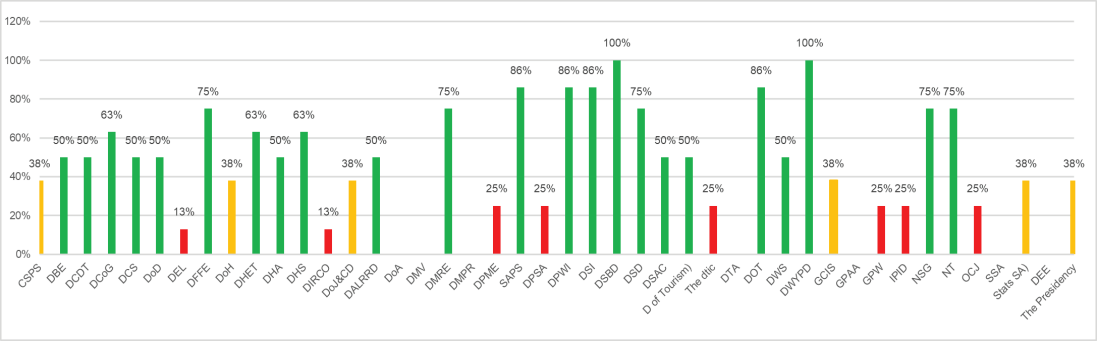
Better-performing provinces combine political will with strong administrative coordination, ensuring consistent integration of WYPD priorities into strategic plans and budgets. They show a more balanced performance across pillars, supported by effective data systems and responsive budget frameworks.

Provinces with weaker results often struggle due to fragmented planning systems, limited gender-disaggregated data, and inconsistent gender-responsive practices leading to uneven progress on transformation targets.

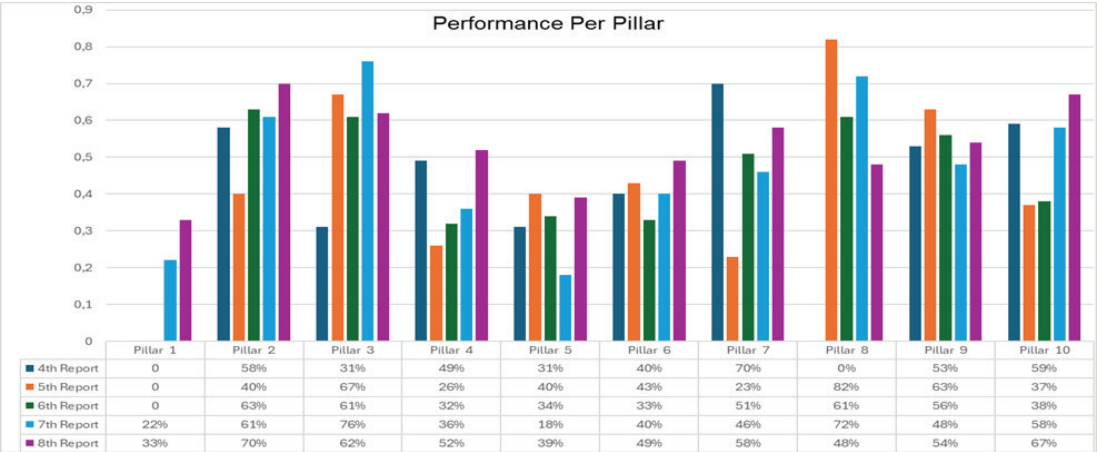
## SOEs and local government

While reporting focuses on national and provincial performance, State-Owned Entities (SOEs) and local government remain critical blind spots. Many SOEs have minimal engagement with the GRPBMEAF and municipal integration has not yet reached a consistent standard.

Given their substantial budgets and influence on service delivery, mainstreaming WYPD priorities in these sectors is non-negotiable. The next phase will prioritise targeted technical support, enforcement



Compliance levels of national departments with the GRPBMEAF reporting requirements.



Performance of national departments across the ten GRPBMEAF pillars.

mechanisms and leadership engagement to close this gap.

## Proof it works

Where leadership, political will and technical capacity converge, the framework delivers results. The DWYPD's 100% compliance, paired with ongoing capacity-building support, has driven wider adoption across government. Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal demonstrate that full integration of WYPD priorities can be achieved

without compromising other mandates.

Successes lead to improved data quality, better budget alignment to and enhanced service delivery for WYPD.

## The cost of delay

Notwithstanding successes achieved, uneven performance across institutions highlights structural weaknesses due to weak planning and prioritisation of WYPD in core programmes, poor quality or absent disaggre-

gated data and limited technical capacity and inconsistent application of the GRPBMEAF.

If unresolved, these gaps will hinder transformation goals, perpetuate poverty, inequality and unemployment as well as reduce the credibility of South Africa's commitments on both domestic and global platforms.

## The road ahead

The past five years have proven that institutionalising WYPD priorities is effective when

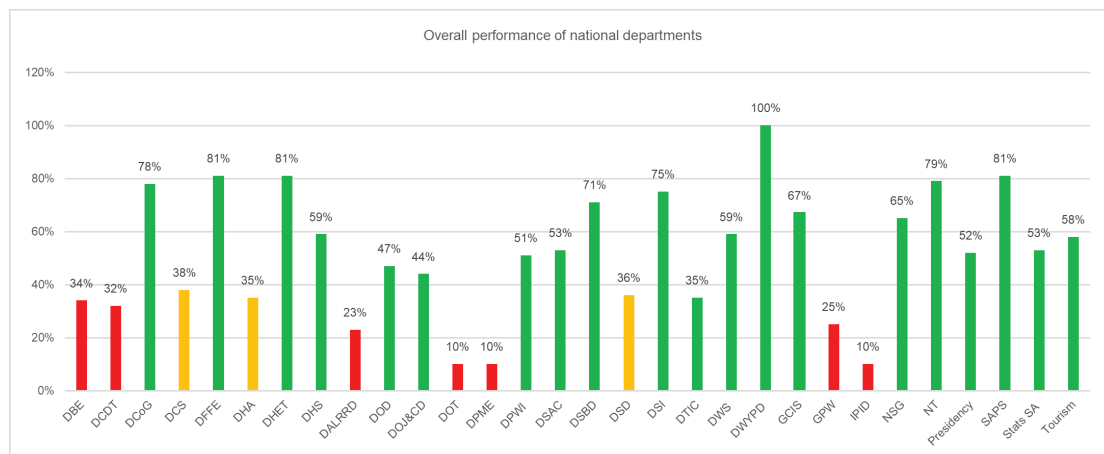


leadership, capacity and accountability align. Where these conditions exist, results are visible. However, many institutions lag behind resulting in the framework becoming mere compliance without systematic change.

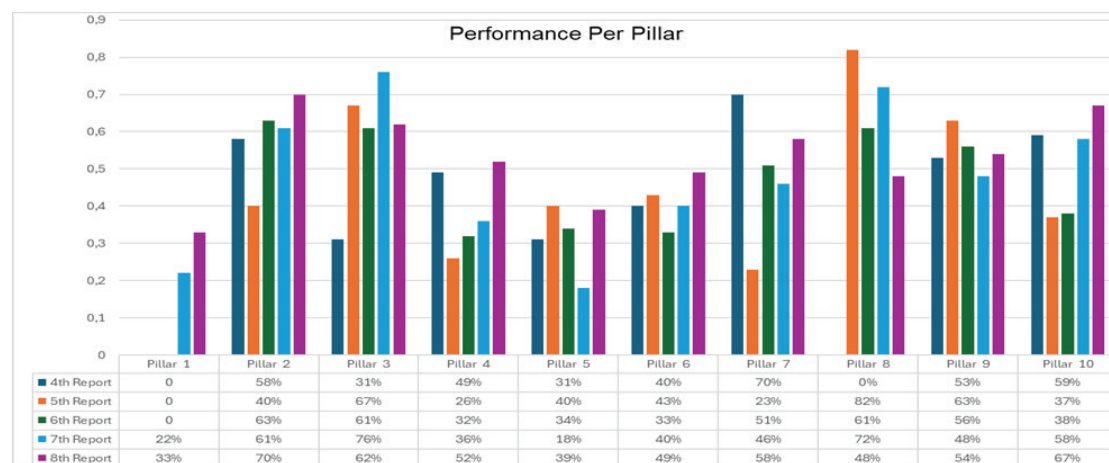
## The gaps can be reduced through:

- ◉ Institutionalising compliance as a non-negotiable standard embedding WYPD responsiveness into strategic plans, budgets and performance agreements.
- ◉ Investing in capacity and data systems, enabling all institutions to produce, analyse and apply gender-disaggregated evidence in decision-making.
- ◉ Enforcing accountability mechanisms, rewarding better performance and addressing persistent under-performance decisively.

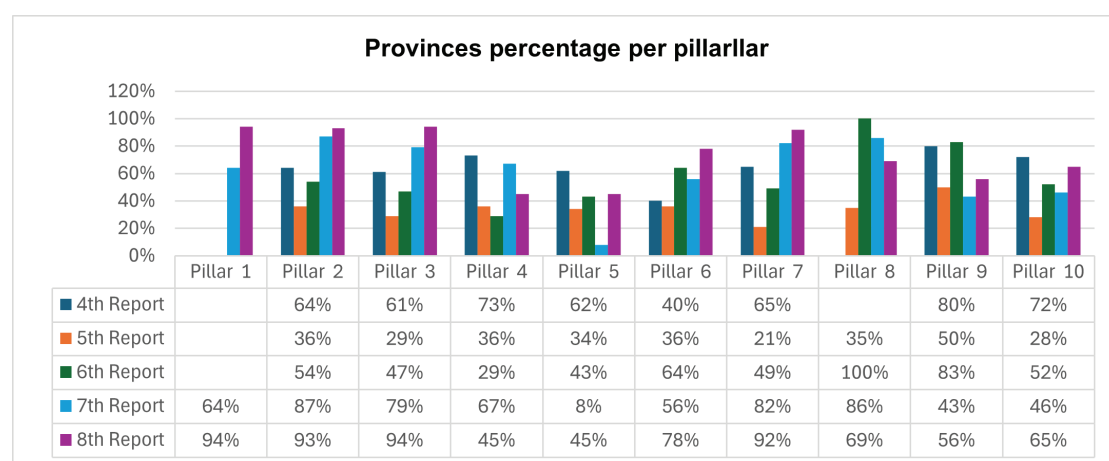
Future reporting cycles must demonstrate structural integration of the GRPBMEAF into government operations. The framework can become a governance discipline, influencing resource allocation and policy outcomes. With urgency and intent, the framework can shift from partial adoption to full institutionalisation, transforming governance and delivering tangible change for WYPD. ♦



Comparative scores of national departments across all GRPBMEAF indicators.



GRPBMEAF reporting compliance levels by province.



Provincial performance across the ten GRPBMEAF pillars.



3 November - 3 December

# DRAM 2025

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# Study highlights urgent need for public sector skills reform in the Free State

**T**he Public Service in the Free State is a significant component of the provincial economy, encompassing government services, healthcare, education, and municipal operations. However, this sector faces a critical shortage of skilled professionals in both traditional and emerging occupations. Persistent gaps in healthcare, engineering, and information and communication technology (ICT) threaten service delivery, while the growing demand for digital transformation

expertise remains largely unmet. The absence of structured workforce development programmes limits the sector's ability to train and retain qualified personnel. Additionally, government employment struggles to compete with private-sector opportunities, further exacerbating staffing challenges.

A recent study aimed at developing a provincial sector skills plan for the Free State reveals significant findings regarding skills demand and supply in the

province. These findings relate to key skills change drivers, skills gaps, partnerships, and strategic recommendations. This opinion piece draws on insights from this study, conducted by the University of Free State as a strategic initiative by the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA) in partnership with the Free State provincial government. PSETA, as one of the 21 sector education and training authorities, plays a critical role in facilitat-

ing targeted skills planning and quality learning interventions across government institutions. This study represents a foundational step in aligning skills development efforts with the specific mandates of the legislative sector.

## Key findings

The Public Service in the Free State faces significant challenges in meeting occupational demands, mainly due to skill shortages, misalignment between



education and job requirements, and evolving workforce needs. Critical skills in engineering, ICT, and cybersecurity remain scarce, forcing government agencies to outsource expertise. Additionally, universities produce graduates who lack the practical skills required for government roles, leading to inefficiencies in service delivery.

Emerging trends such as digital transformation require new competencies in data analytics and online service management. Without strategic interventions, these gaps will continue to undermine public sector efficiency and innovation.

## Education and training

The education and training system in the Free State faces significant challenges in aligning with labour market demands, leading to high graduate unemployment, skills shortages, and weak vocational training outcomes. The empirical findings indicate that curricula in higher education institutions (HEIs) are regarded as outdated and do not adequately prepare students for emerging industry needs in renewable energy, ICT, advanced manufacturing, and agribusiness. TVET colleges struggle with low enrolment, limited industry partnerships, and outdated training models,

making it difficult for graduates to secure employment. Furthermore, concerns are expressed about graduate readiness, insufficient practical training, and skill mismatches.

Addressing these gaps requires a strategic overhaul of curricula, increased employer engagement, stronger vocational training incentives, and funding for research and innovation that directly supports the province's economic growth and workforce development.

## Strategic alignment

While numerous partnerships exist between government entities, educational institutions, and private sector stakeholders in the province, the findings reveal that many lack strategic alignment with the province's broader economic and social development goals. The disjointed nature of these agreements often results in limited impact, as there is no clear roadmap linking partnership objectives to long-term developmental priorities.

Additionally, while agreements are frequently signed, their implementation remains slow and lacks structured coordination. Without proper strategic alignment and coordination, many of these partnerships fail to deliver tangible outcomes that contribute to sustainable economic growth and social transforma-

tion.

The empirical findings indicate that engagement between the provincial government entities and private sector industries remains superficial, with minimal effort to align training programmes with evolving labour market demands. A notable disconnect between workforce development strategies and industry needs results in persistent skills mismatches that hinder economic progress. Furthermore, collaboration between government and industry on skills forecasting and workforce planning is limited, preventing proactive measures to address future labour market shortages. Without stronger industry linkages and targeted initiatives to bridge these gaps, the skills development ecosystem will continue to fall short of preparing individuals for the workforce.

## Fragmented collaboration

While public-private partnerships (PPPs) have the potential to address skills shortages and improve workforce readiness, the empirical findings suggest that existing collaborations in the Free State remain fragmented and poorly coordinated. Successful skills initiatives exist but operate in isolation, lacking a centralised database to track progress and impact. The

disconnect between training initiatives and job placement opportunities weakens the overall effectiveness of PPPs in addressing industry-specific skills needs.

## Strategic recommendations

Through strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of skills planning and development, enhancing feedback mechanisms, and establishing a comprehensive workforce development framework, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:

**Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of skills planning and development:** M&E of skills development faces significant challenges relating to structural deficiencies and capacity constraints in the M&E process. The following recommendations are proposed to prioritise M&E from a skills planning and development perspective.

- ◉ Develop a standardised M&E framework for skills development aligned with national and provincial strategies.
- ◉ Improve training impact assessments through structured data collection.
- ◉ Align M&E reports with workforce planning to improve capacity-building efforts.



Roundtable with PSETA and TUT on ICT skills of public servants.

Image: PSETA X account

- ◉ Strengthen policy enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with M&E requirements.
- ◉ Improve interdepartmental collaboration through regular information-sharing sessions.
- ◉ Establish a centralised M&E database accessible to all relevant departments.

**Enhance partnerships:** The empirical evidence shows that educational partnerships must be enhanced, industry partnerships strengthened, strategic partnerships established, and PPPs increased. The following

recommendations are proposed to prioritise such partnerships.

- ◉ The provincial skills development forums should include representatives from HEIs and TVETs.
- ◉ Advisory Boards of HEIs and TVETs should include representatives from the Free State Provincial Government and its entities.
- ◉ Joint identification and design of programmes by the provincial government and HEIs that could fill skills gaps and meet the skills supply required by the Public Service in the province.

- ◉ Form partnerships with industry to identify interventions to address critical skills shortages.
- ◉ Establish a forum comprising industry stakeholders, provincial government representatives, HEIs that will conduct skills forecasting and workforce planning for the province.
- ◉ Form strategic PPPs that can support the skills supply of a Free State province Public Service that is responsive to the social and economic goals of the province.
- ◉ Form PPPs to identify

interventions towards addressing critical skills shortages.

- ◉ Develop PPPs to identify interventions for addressing critical skills shortages.

#### **Establish a workforce development framework:**

Workforce interventions must focus on strategic upskilling, targeted recruitment, enhanced training initiatives, location-based incentives, and industry and educational partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability. Without these measures, the Public Service in the province may face severe operational inefficiencies in the future. Increased investment in employee training and digital skills development is essential.

The following recommendations are proposed to prioritise the development of such a framework.

- ◉ Undertake a skills audit.
- ◉ Establish a competency-based training evaluation system.
- ◉ Develop a comprehensive workforce development framework. ♦

**\*This article is based on research conducted by the University of the Free State on the Provincial Sector Skills Plan for the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA). The authors write in their personal capacity, and the views expressed in the article are theirs, not that of PSETA or the university.**

# SUPPORTING ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION



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# KwaZulu-Natal's investment agenda ready to take-off

**T**he KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference 2025, which was recently at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban, has confirmed the province's status as a leading investment destination in South Africa.

Building on the success of the 2024 edition, which secured pledges worth R85.2 billion this year's event surpassed expectations, targeting R95 billion in new investment commitments and drawing significant interest from both local and international investors.

The conference was officially launched earlier this year by KwaZulu-Natal's MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Reverend Musa Zondi, as part of a concerted effort to attract sustainable and inclusive economic growth to the province.

## Creating value chains

Speaking during the launch, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN) Chief Executive Officer Sihle Ngcamu outlined a



Trade & Investment  
KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN)  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sihle Ngcamu.

clear vision for the event. He said the focus would be on attracting a diverse range of capital projects, particularly those requiring between R100 million and R300 million, to allow the province to drive industrial development through well-established value chains. Ngcamu, who was permanently appointed as CEO of TIKZN in September 2024, following a year in an acting capacity, played a key role in

steering the event's strategic direction. Under his leadership, the conference took a pragmatic approach to aligning public and private sector investment, with particular focus on infrastructure readiness.

"We brought key infrastructure players on board – including Transnet, Eskom, SANRAL, and various water boards – whose projects will underpin the successful rollout of new invest-

ments. These public infrastructure commitments are essential in catalysing private sector interest and ensuring long-term viability of the projects," he added.

## New projects

Ngcamu is of the view that investment must also speak directly to people's lives, particularly in rural areas, adding that there were projects that were already packaged and are ready for investors. Two of these are in the Zululand District.

"One involves the creation of an industrial park around the airport of Ulundi so we can revitalise the node. The second project will deal with the issue around eco-tourism and leverage on the rich heritage of the region, especially Emakhosini Valley, he explained"

Other flagship projects include the Drakensberg cable car in the Uthukela District, an airport relocation plan in King Cetshwayo to expand Richards Bay's aviation capacity and a feasibility study nearing completion for a clothing and textile special economic zone in Umzinyathi.

"Those developments must go where they are really needed [in order] to grow the outer lying districts so that we do not congest cities like Durban and Pietermaritzburg, he added."

But Ngcamu is clear-eyed about the current global environ-



Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal CEO, Sihle Ngcamu at the China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO), where KwaZulu-Natal products were showcased earlier this year.

ment. “We have in recent times seen a decline in terms of global inflows... While our traditional markets are still critical for us, we think that it is time that we start opening up to more markets”.

## International engagements

To that end, TIKZN has been active internationally. “Two months ago, the entity attended the FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation) engagements. Three months ago its leadership was in Japan and China again in September, a team was in Algeria for an export market exhibition. We are in the markets that we feel will be supportive of KwaZulu-Natal as the export hub of the country, with the two major ports that we have, we feel we are positioned as a gateway. While the difficult times are here, we feel there are great opportunities that we can still leverage.”

The agency’s strategy is clear:

“We are positioning KwaZulu-Natal as an export-led location where foreign investments will come to establish and export to the rest of the continent.

## Addressing geopolitical tensions

Ngcamu said the conference also focused on the impact of global geopolitical tensions on investor confidence. He noted that the conference actively addressed these concerns by engaging key industry and policy stakeholders to reaffirm South Africa’s position as a viable and attractive investment destination.

This is expected to “pave the way forward” and instil renewed confidence in the country’s trade and investment landscape, despite broader global uncertainty.

Ngcamu also emphasised the importance of ensuring that small businesses benefit meaningfully from the investment

drive. The conference featured Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) from across KwaZulu-Natal, offering them a platform to showcase their products and services to potential partners and investors.

He also explained that a dedicated “deal room” was created specifically to foster commercial linkages between large corporations and emerging enterprises. The intention, he said, was to create real opportunities for collaboration between established companies and small businesses or start-ups, supporting a more inclusive and integrated provincial economy.

## Cutting red tape

Perhaps most importantly for investors, Ngcamu emphasised that KwaZulu-Natal is taking decisive steps to cut through bureaucratic red tape – one of the most common barriers to investment. He made it clear that

regulatory delays would not be allowed to derail progress.

“If we do not have systems in place to manage regulatory approvals efficiently, we will face bottlenecks that clog the system of government,” he explained. To address this, TIKZN, under the guidance of the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, established a dedicated Project Brokering Unit. This mechanism is designed to streamline approvals by bringing all relevant stakeholders into one coordinated, project-specific forum.

“It is not just a general meeting,” Ngcamu said. “We take one project, identify the necessary regulatory approvals and the authorities involved, and then build a committee around that project. All the key role-players sit around the table to map out a way forward”.

Projects that receive investment pledges are elevated to catalytic status, a designation that ensures oversight and support from the KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet, adding weight and urgency to their implementation.

Ngcamu reaffirmed that KwaZulu-Natal is open for business and ready to deliver. His leadership, strategy, and unwavering message point to one mission: positioning the province as Africa’s premier investment gateway, anchored in inclusive and sustainable growth. ♦

# Why ancient African botanicals are the future of *skincare*

Modern dermatology and traditional ethnobotany are finding common ground. Science is now validating what African cultures have understood for centuries: the earth provides powerful solutions for skin health. This is not about fleeting trends, but about a profound legacy of botanical science. Today's environmental stressors and demanding lifestyles create complex skin challenges that many synthetic solutions struggle to address gently. This is where the enduring wisdom of African remedies offers a path forward.



Deep Moisturizing Rooibos Infused African Shea Body Butter 250ml: **R99**

Ingredients like Rooibos, Shea Butter and Marula Oil are foundational pillars of these traditional African skincare secrets. They represent a history of resilience, nourishment and healing.

## Rooibos for skin clarity and calm

Originating exclusively from the

Cederberg mountains of South Africa, Rooibos was first cherished as a healing tea. Its power, however, extends far beyond a soothing beverage. When used in skincare, it becomes a premier solution for inflammation and pigmentation.

Its unique antioxidant profile, containing aspalathin and nothofagin, is exceptionally

effective at neutralising the free radicals that lead to premature aging. This is a core reason why rooibos in skincare is so effective.

This antioxidant action has a direct impact on hyperpigmentation. By calming inflammation, Rooibos helps reduce the triggers for post-inflammatory





## Marula oil for youthful radiance



hyperpigmentation, a common concern for many.

It also gently inhibits tyrosinase, the enzyme responsible for the overproduction of melanin that causes dark spots. Its ability to soothe redness and calm active breakouts makes it an ideal ingredient for anyone seeking an even, clear complexion.

### Shea Butter for deep nourishment and repair

Revered as a 'skin superfood' in West Africa, Shea Butter is a powerful emollient focused on barrier restoration and deep nourishment. Its rich composition is what makes it so effective for healing and protection. The primary shea butter benefits for skin come from its unique blend of natural compounds.

- **Rich Fatty Acids:** Oleic and stearic acids are crucial for replenishing

lipids in the skin's barrier, effectively locking in moisture and preventing dehydration.

- **Vitamins A, E and F:** This trio works together to protect the skin from environmental damage while promoting healthy cell regeneration.

The main function of Shea Butter is to restore the skin's natural defences, making it more resilient against pollutants and dryness. While its texture is rich, it is non-comedogenic and suitable for most skin types. Its anti-inflammatory properties are excellent for soothing conditions like eczema and can help reduce the appearance of acne scars and stretch marks by supporting skin repair.

### Marula oil for youthful radiance

Sourced from the treasured

Marula tree in Southern Africa, Marula Oil is celebrated for its anti-aging and radiance-enhancing properties. Unlike the richer Shea Butter, Marula Oil has a remarkably lightweight and fast-absorbing texture, making it a versatile addition to any skincare routine. Its power lies in a potent combination of antioxidants, including high concentrations of Vitamins C and E, alongside essential amino acids like L-arginine.

This synergistic blend works to fight free radical damage from pollution and UV exposure while supporting the skin's natural collagen production. For modern skin concerns, this translates to improved elasticity and a visible reduction in fine lines. Many people wonder about using marula oil for face acne.

Its natural antimicrobial properties help keep pores clear and



prevent breakouts, making it a surprisingly effective oil for combination or blemish-prone skin without causing congestion. It delivers hydration and a youthful glow without a heavy feel.

## Integrating African botanicals into your routine



Organic Rooibos & Coffee Stretchmarks & Cellulite Body Scrub – Buff, Brighten & Smooth Naturally 250ml: **R109**

## Integrating African botanicals into your routine

Incorporating these powerful ingredients into your daily life is straightforward when you know what to look for. Following a few simple steps can help you achieve the best results for your skin.

- ◉ **Select high-quality formulations:** Always look for products where the botanical is a primary ingredient, not an afterthought hidden at the bottom of the list. This ensures you are getting a potent, effective product

and is the mark of the best natural skincare South Africa has to offer.

- ◉ **Target your concerns:** Apply products strategically. For example, using a Rooibos-infused Vitamin C cream in the morning provides excellent protection against daily oxidative stress and serves as one of the best natural remedies for pigmentation.
- ◉ **Learn to layer:** You can combine these ingredients for comprehensive care. A rich Shea Body Butter is perfect for targeted dry areas like elbows and knees, while a lighter Marula Oil

Black African Organics is an award-winning cosmetic manufacturing company and natural beauty brand. We harness ancient African tradition with modern science, to deliver ground-breaking results for African skin and hair. Established in 2015, Black African Organics was born out of the mission to empower African women to embrace their natural selves and feel confident in their skin.

For more information, visit: <https://www.blackafrican.co.za/> or follow us on Facebook @Black African Organics, Instagram @blackafricanorganics and LinkedIn: Black African Organics (Pty) Ltd

can be applied to the face for overnight hydration and repair.

- ◉ **Choose consciously:** Support brands committed to ethical and sustainable sourcing. This not only ensures product quality but also honours the communities that have stewarded this botanical knowledge for centuries. ♦

*\* Prices correct at the time of publishing.*



Moroccan Argan, Vitamin E and Rosehip Organic Anti-Stretchmarks Skin Firming and Repair Tissue Oil 200ml: **R129**

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# Fehmz's Prawn Coconut Curry

I love seafood, especially prawns. Problem is my kids love them just as much. This is a way to stretch prawn meat for a cost effective and crazy delicious meal. I love the combo of coconut and prawns, as it gives a Thai feel to it. It goes very well with garlic bread or a sticky jasmine rice. The best part? You can whip it up in 20 minutes max.





## Prawn coconut curry

(SERVES 4 - 6)

### Ingredients:

#### Step 1:

- 3 tablespoons peri-peri oil
- 1/3 cup ghee (clarified butter that is lactose-free)
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
- Handful of curry leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 large garlic clove, crushed
- 1 level teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon Universal Red Magic Masala Paste
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, crushed
- 1/3 cup desiccated coconut
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander powder
- Pinch of garam masala
- 1 heaped teaspoon tamarind paste
- 1 heaped teaspoon chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika

- 1 stalk chopped lemongrass (optional)
- 2 onions, grated or blitzed in the food processor

#### Step 2:

- 2 kg prawns, peeled and deveined
- 2 tomatoes, liquidised
- Pinch of sugar
- 2 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tin (340 g) coconut cream

### To garnish:

- Chopped coriander
- Squeeze of lemon

### Method:

#### Step 1:

- In a large saucepan on medium heat, add the peri-peri oil and ghee with the cumin seeds and curry leaves.
- Heat gently then add the balance of ingredients except for the onions. Fry the spices and marinade until slightly fragrant.

- Add the onions to the same pot and sauté for about 2-3 minutes.

#### Step 2:

- In a clean shallow pan, add the prawns and fry in ghee, for 1 minute on each side to sear and release the flavour. Remove the prawns from the pan.
- Now add the tomatoes, sugar and tomato paste. Simmer into a curry.
- Return the prawns to the saucepan once the oil skims to the top.
- Pour in the coconut cream to complete the cooking.
- Garnish with chopped coriander and a squeeze of fresh lemon.
- Serve with jasmine rice or turn this into a delicious pasta by folding in one packet of freshly boiled al dente linguine plus one ladle of pasta water. ❖



### About Fehmz:

Fehmida Jordaan, more affectionately known as "Fehmz", is one of South Africa's most vibrant and bubbly social media influencers, sharing her passion for food, travel and lifestyle. A Johannesburg city girl, Fehmz has gained a loyal fanbase across the country and internationally, becoming a fan favourite when she appeared as a celebrity chef on the SABC 3 cooking show, Ready, Steady, Cook. Authentic and real, her vibrant personality brings energy, colour and bold flavours to recipes, influenced by her Muslim heritage. Fehmz loves tea and sharing the simple things in life. She is married with two children. This recipe appears in her debut cookbook, Damn Good Food, launched in October by Jonathan Ball Publishers. It is available for purchase at all local bookstores. Follow @Fehmz on Instagram, Tiktok Facebook and Youtube.

# Bela-Bela and its relaxing hot springs



Go hot air ballooning at Mabula Game Lodge.

**R**ound up your family and friends and head for this charming historic town in the Waterberg bushveld. Bela-Bela offers you relaxing hot springs to swim in, mountains to climb and hike, unspoilt landscapes and many well-preserved wilderness areas. Frolic in their fun water world or take a game drive if you love wildlife and birds. Bela-Bela means "boiling boiling" in Setswana, which refers to the hot springs that are this town's main attraction.

Pack your swimming costumes and towels. Bela -Bela's ancient hot springs remain nature's gift and you can swim, soak, slide down watery tunnels or just lie in the shade and relax.

## Something for everyone

This is a hiking, game-viewing, cycling and wandering country. Big skies and red sandstone mountains, abundant game and remarkable birdlife.



Bela-Bela is home to a series of water attractions like hot springs, pools and fountains.





Quad biking for the whole family



Waterberg Mountains..

Take your pick from a number of reserves, including Mabula, Kunkuru and Sondela. Lapalala Wilderness has long been at the heart of conservation in the Waterberg, and here you can meet two orphaned rhinos, one black, the other white, and find out about their history and habitat.

Birds, from ducks, sandpipers and kingfishers to storks, buzzards and fish eagles, are the main attraction at the nearby Nylsvley Nature Reserve. Nylsvley's floodplain is the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere and is one of the top birding spots in the country.

From cycling to marathon running, there's also lots of

sporting action in Bela-Bela. Over 15 000 people from around the country gather at Mabalingwe Nature Reserve near Bela-Bela annually for the Mabalingwe Lion Man Mountain Bike Race, one of the most popular mountain-bike events in South Africa.

The Warmbaths Dam, some 8 km from town, is a popular spot for water sports and fishing. There are excellent golf courses in the area, many of them with wild animals sharing the greens.

You can also take a guided tour at the Thaba Kweni Crocodile Farm near Bela-Bela, one of the largest commercial crocodile farms in the country. ♦

## Tips:

- **How to get there:** Bela-Bela is approximately 200 km from Johannesburg on the N1 highway.
- **Best time to visit:** Spring and Autumn going into Winter.
- **Getting around:** Self-drive is best, especially if you want to explore the beauty of the surrounding area at your own pace. There are guided tours and game drives available at various game reserves.
- **What to pack:** Hats, sunscreen, swimming gear, cameras, walking shoes and good company.
- **Where to stay:** The Welgevonden Game Reserve has many excellent five-star camps; Lapalala Wilderness has assorted budget accommodation from self-catering wilderness camps to a hotel. There are many B&Bs, guesthouses and lodges dotted in and around Bela-Bela and the Waterberg area as well.



For more information, scan this QR code



Game drives and bird watching.



## South Africa's G20 Presidency

- Let's show the world our unique ways of solving challenges on the principles of ubuntu, solidarity, peace, equality, justice and fairness.

