



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2026 BUDGET

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND RESOURCE MATTERS (IRM) CLUSTER

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 BUDGET: IRM CLUSTER

20 MARCH 2026

**PARLIAMENTARY
RESEARCH UNIT (PRU)**

WWW.PARLIAMENT.GOV.ZA



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 BUDGET: INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND RESOURCE MATTERS CLUSTER

Contents

1.	2026 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS.....	3
2.	VOTE 3: COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE	4
3.	VOTE 9: PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (PME).....	6
4.	VOTE 11: PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION	9
5.	VOTE 15: TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS	12
6.	VOTE 29: AGRICULTURE	14
7.	VOTE 32: FORESTRY, FISHERIES, ENVIRONMENT	16
8.	VOTE 38: TOURISM	19
9.	VOTE 42: LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT	21

1. 2026 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The 2026 Budget Review states that the Local Government Equity Share, which funds the provision of free basic services to 11.2 million households, is allocated R342.6 billion over the medium term.

A total of R19.2 billion will be shifted from the *urban settlements development grant* to the *urban development financing grant* over the medium term to reverse the deteriorating performance of, amongst others, water and sanitation and solid waste management in metropolitan municipalities. Investments in water infrastructure are prioritised over the medium term.

Of the overall budget of R1.214 trillion, a total **R188.3 billion (15,5%)*** is allocated to departments within the Intergovernmental and Resource Matters Cluster

* Excludes direct charges against National Revenue Fund (NRF).

A total of R8.2 billion is allocated over the medium term to settle about 985 land restitution claims. The agricultural land holding account will spend R3.4 billion to fund the acquisition and redistribution of 144 000 hectares of land. The Department of Agriculture will allocate R7.7 billion through the Agricultural Support Programme and the LandCare programme to support 180 000 land reform beneficiaries.

This Bulletin reviews the budget allocations to eight of the Departments under the IRM cluster's purview. Table 1 shows the 2025/26 main and adjusted appropriation¹, the 2026/27 main appropriation² and percentage increases for each Vote under the Intergovernmental and Resource Matters Cluster, as well as the share of total appropriated funds.

Table 1: Departments within the Intergovernmental and Resource Matters Cluster

Vote	Department R million	2025/26	2025/26	2026 /27	2025/26-	2026/27
		Main Appropriation	Adjusted Appropriation	Appropriati on	2026/27 ³ Percentage Increase/ Decrease	Percentage Share of Total Appropriated Funds per Vote
3	Cooperative Governance	131 624.1	132 624.1	135 009.9	1.8%	11.1%
9	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	509.1	514.1	533.0	3.7%	0.0%
11	Public Service and Administration	564.7	565.6	596.7	5.5%	0.0%
15	Traditional Affairs	195.5	195.5	342.8	75.3%	0.0%
29	Agriculture	7 609.7	7 946.4	7 841.9	-1.3%	0.6%
32	Forestry, Fisheries and Environment	9 080.7	9 144.0	9 127.4	-0.2%	0.8%
38	Tourism	2 434.9	2 434.9	2 540.6	4.3%	0.2%
42	Land Reform and Rural Development	9 820.6	10 468.1	10 355.2	-1.1%	0.9%

¹ An adjusted appropriation is a modification to a government's main budget, increasing or decreasing funds during a financial year through an [Adjustments Appropriation Bill](#).

² ENE, 2026

³ Based on the adjusted allocations.

2. VOTE 3: COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE

The Department of Cooperative Governance receives R135 billion in 2026/27, which is an increase of 1.8% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R132.6 billion, increasing to R141.5 billion in 2027/28 and 145.9 billion in 2028/29. The Vote has five Programmes:

- Administration
- Local Government Operations and Support
- Policy, Governance and Local Government Administration
- National Disaster Management Centre
- Community Work Programme

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS⁴

The Department of Cooperative Governance will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Extending access to basic services and supporting local government.
- Mitigating disaster risk and enhancing resilience.
- Providing income support through public employment.

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following areas pertaining to the Department of Cooperative Governance:

- **Declaration of national disaster:** Government has classified the floods in Limpopo and Mpumalanga a national disaster. This has enabled national and provincial government to prioritise funding to address the most pressing needs of the people affected.
- **Local government performance:** A new R54 billion incentive for metropolitan municipalities to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services has been implemented. A far-reaching overhaul is underway to address the root causes of dysfunction in many municipalities. To this end, Government will finalise the revision of the White Paper on Local Government in 2026. The White Paper will re-imagine the way local government works and address the complex and fragmented nature of the current system. Proposed changes will consider the reality that some municipalities can take on more functions than others, which necessitates a differentiated approach to municipal powers and responsibilities.
- **Improve service delivery:** Government will ensure that senior officials in local government have the required qualifications and are appointed through an independent process, free from political interference. Where municipalities fail, the ability of national government to intervene more quickly and to direct corrective measures in the interests of serving South Africans better, will be strengthened. Progress was reported in stabilising eThekweni metropolitan municipality, while the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality still deals with collapsing infrastructure, financial mismanagement and electricity and water interruptions.

⁴ ENE, 2026

Table 2: SONA⁵ and MTEF priorities for Vote 3 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET⁶
Classification of floods in Limpopo and Mpumalanga as national disaster.	Mitigate disaster risk and enhance resilience.	R2.1 billion is allocated to the National Disaster Management Centre Programme over the MTEF to support the mitigation of disaster risk and to enhance resilience.
Implementation of R54 billion incentive for metropolitan municipalities to reform their water, sanitation and electricity services.	Extend access to basic services and support local government.	R342.6 billion is earmarked for transfers to municipalities to supplement their operational and administrative costs, as well as the provision of free basic services over the MTEF.
Improving service delivery	Provide income support through public employment.	The Department plans to enhance governance and oversight and better align community work activities with municipal priorities and skills development. Therefore, the community work programme is allocated a budget of R10.4 billion over the MTEF.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- **Disaster Management:** The Department is expected to manage an increasing number of natural disasters, which impact municipal infrastructure. However, the budget allocation for the National Disaster Management Centre is reduced by R26.1 million from the 2025 MTEF allocation. This is concerning considering the increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters.
- **Programme 3: Policy, Governance and Local Government Administration:** experiences a significant increase under sub-programme 5 (Municipal Governance), with an allocation of R365.2 million, compared to R58 million in the previous year. This includes an allocation of R300 million under households for councillors who will not return after local government elections, which is in line with Government's pronouncement in the 2025 Adjusted Estimates of Expenditure that funds would be reprioritised in the 2026/27 financial year to pay a once-off gratuity to outgoing councillors. Parliament should use its oversight role to ensure that payments comply with legislation and national guidelines; only eligible councillors receive the gratuity and calculations follow approved formulas.

⁵ SONA, 2026

⁶ Figures from the ENE

3. VOTE 9: PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (PME)

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) receives R533 million in 2026/27, which is an increase of 3.7% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R514.1 million, increasing to R550.6 million in 2027/28 and R567.7 million in 2028/29. The Vote has five Programmes:

- Administration
- National Planning Coordination
- Sector Monitoring Services
- Public Sector Monitoring and Capacity Development
- Evidence and Knowledge Systems

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS⁷

PME will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Coordinating and strengthening the national planning system across Government.
- Implementing reforms for State-owned enterprises through the establishment of a State-owned holding company.
- Monitoring the implementation and achievement of Government programmes and priorities.
- Conducting research, evaluation and data-driven analysis to support evidence-based planning and intervention.

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following areas pertaining to PME:

- **Service delivery.** Citizen engagement through the roll-out of the national public dialogues to the rest of the country. These dialogues aim to provide citizens with an opportunity to raise concerns, aspirations and plans. The outcomes of the dialogues will inform the formulation of a national compact and the next phase of the National Development Plan (NDP) after 2030.
- Phasing in of a centralised model to **manage State-owned Enterprises (SOEs)** that will set standards, improve governance and ensure financial sustainability to ensure that SOEs deliver on their mandates. This includes the finalisation of the National State-owned Enterprises Bill.
- **Professionalising the Public Service.** This includes passing of the Public Service Amendment Bill, which aims to protect key public service appointments from political interference. It also aims to ensure that capable and qualified people are appointed to senior positions, based on merit.

Table 3: SONA⁸ and MTEF priorities for Vote 9 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ⁹
Service delivery	Improve the quality of service delivery by monitoring frontline services and resolving citizens' complaints through the presidential hotline.	R186.8 million under Programme 4: Public Sector Monitoring and Capacity Development over the MTEF.

⁷ ENE, 2026

⁸ SONA, 2026

⁹ Figures from the ENE

	Monitor the performance of national and provincial departments, as well as municipalities, to facilitate targeted interventions.	R195.7 million under Programme 3: Sector Monitoring Services over the MTEF.
	Track progress on Vision 2030 targets through technical support and the deployment of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) integrated reporting system.	R7.7 million under Programme 5: Evidence and Knowledge Systems over the MTEF.
Management of State-owned Enterprises (SOEs)	Prioritise the enactment of the State-owned Enterprises Bill and engage in processes to establish a centralised State-owned holding company.	R36.1 million under Programme 1: Administration over the MTEF.
Professionalising the Public Service.	Monitor and strengthen capabilities and governance across the public sector. Implement capacity development measures to improve planning, monitoring and evaluation, including revival of the management performance assessment tool.	R76.6 million under Programme 4: Sector Monitoring and Capacity Development over the MTEF.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- Management of State Owned-Enterprises (SOEs):** Following the dissolution of the Department of Public Enterprises in the 2024/25 financial year, the responsibility for overseeing the reform of SOEs shifted to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). The establishment of a centralised SOE holding company is a major structural reform with long-term implications. Parliament should monitor and oversee progress towards the enactment of the National State-Owned Enterprises Bill and timelines for establishing the holding company; governance frameworks, board appointment processes, and legal structuring of the new entity; as well as whether the R36.1 million allocated for SOE reform activities is spent efficiently.
- Professionalising the Public Service:** The DPME is tasked with monitoring public service capabilities within national and provincial governments on an ongoing basis. The Department reports that it aims to strengthen public sector capability and governance through tools such as the revived Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT). Over the medium term, R76.6 million is allocated for this purpose. Parliament should monitor and oversee the implementation and institutionalisation of MPAT within national and provincial departments; as well as interventions to address governance failures.

- **Service delivery:** Oversight of service delivery is important to ensure that Government delivers the services it undertakes to deliver in an effective, ethical and equitable manner. Through oversight, Parliament can ensure that Government accounts for its actions, protect constitutional rights and build public trust. The Department has allocated R186.8 million over the medium term to improve the quality of service delivery. Parliament should monitor and oversee the achievement of targets such as cross-sectoral site visits; responsiveness to and resolution rates of cases managed through the Presidential Hotline; as well as the quality and impact of citizen-based monitoring programmes.
- **Oversight of the National Planning System and Alignment to the NDP & MTDP:** The DPME is responsible for ensuring coherence between the National Development Plan (NDP), the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP 2024–2029), departmental strategic plans and budget allocations. If these strategic documents do not align, implementation is fragmented, which impacts delivery negatively. The Department has budgeted R7.7 million over the medium term to develop and implement the MTDP integrated reporting system to improve reporting on the Plan across Government. Parliament should monitor and oversee the development and implementation of the plan, specifically the delivery and quality of integrated MTDP monitoring reports (2 per year); and follow-up on systemic issues identified through monitoring, e.g. chronic underperformance and governance breakdowns.

4. VOTE 11: PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) receives R596.7 million in 2026/27, which is an increase of 5.5% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R565.6 million, increasing to R616.1 million in 2027/28 and 635.3 million in 2028/29. The Vote has five Programmes:

- Administration
- Human Resource Management and Development
- Negotiations, Labour Relations and Remuneration Management
- e-Government services and Information Management
- Government Service Access and Improvement

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS¹⁰

DPSA will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Intensifying the fight against corruption
- Reducing Government's wage bill
- Ensuring adherence to the Batho Pele principles
- Reviewing and developing regulations for the implementation of the Public Service and Public Administration Management Acts

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following areas pertaining to DPSA:

- **Build an ethical, capable and developmental State with committed, honest and skilled public servants:** This will be achieved through measures such as professionalising the Public Service, enforcing ethics and accountability and preventing the re-hiring of public servants facing or undergoing disciplinary action.
- **Professionalising the public service:** Government has passed legislation to professionalise the Public Service. This includes the Public Service Amendment Bill, which aims to protect key public service appointments from political interference. It also aims to ensure that capable and qualified people are appointed to senior positions, based on merit.
- **Intensifying the fight against corruption (mandatory lifestyle audits and registry for disciplinary cases):** In 2025, 93% of all senior public servants across departments complied with mandatory lifestyle audits. Further, Government is establishing a central registry for disciplinary cases across all spheres of government to prevent people who are facing or have undergone disciplinary action from being employed elsewhere in the State.

¹⁰ ENE, 2026

Table 4: SONA¹¹ and MTEF priorities for Vote 11 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ¹²
Build an ethical, capable and developmental State with committed, honest and skilled public servants	Improve implementation of the Batho Pele principles by monitoring other departments' implementation of the revised Batho Pele programme and submitting an evaluation report on the impact and relevance of the implementation of the revised programme.	R52.2 million under Programme 5: Government Services Access and Improvement programme over the MTEF.
Professionalise the public service	Implement amendments to the Public Service and Public Administration Management Acts. Develop additional regulations and other legislative provisions to enhance the basic values and principles governing the public service.	R40.9 million under Programme 1: Administration over the MTEF.
Intensify the fight against corruption through lifestyle audits and central disciplinary register.	Continued guidance and technical assistance to other departments on conducting lifestyle audits on certain categories of staff. Monitor and report on lifestyle audit investigations. A central disciplinary register was developed to address the lack of consequence management.	R85.5 million under Programme 3: Negotiations, Labour Relations and Remuneration Management over the MTEF.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- **Corruption:** Corruption and poor consequence management undermine public trust in Government and service delivery. The Department plans to intensify the fight against corruption over the medium term, which will be funded under Programme 3: Negotiations, Labour Relations and Remuneration Management. However, the budget allocation to the sub-programme under which these activities will be funded (Public Administration, Ethics, Integrity and Disciplinary Technical Assistance Unit) decreases significantly by 18% in nominal terms. This renders the sub-programme's ability to deliver on its mandate questionable. Given the importance of these initiatives, Parliament should monitor implementation of the anti-corruption measures, including lifestyle audits, disciplinary management, ethics regulations, and whistleblower protections.
- **Professionalisation of the Public Service:** Professionalisation of the Public Service is important to improve service delivery, build public trust, stabilise the political-administrative

¹¹ SONA, 2026

¹² Figures from the ENE

interface, and ensure efficient management of resources. To this end, the Department aims to review legislation and develop regulations to ensure full implementation of the Public Service and Public Administration Management Amendment Acts. This will be funded under Programme 1: Administration, through the Legal Services sub-programme. However, the sub-programme receives a marginal increase of 1.6% in its budget allocation. When considering the effect of inflation, the sub-programme in effect experiences negative growth. Given the importance of legislative alignment to ensure that the public administration framework is modern, coherent and responsive, Parliament should monitor and oversee the development of the regulations within the confines of the allocated budgetary allocations.

5. VOTE 15: TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

The Department of Traditional Affairs receives R342.8 million in 2026/27, which is an increase of 75.3% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R195.5 million, decreasing to R265.5 million in 2027/28 and then increasing again in 2028/29 to R274.4 million. The Vote has three Programmes:

- Administration
- Research, Policy and Legislation
- Institutional Support and Coordination

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS¹³

The Department of Traditional Affairs will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Strengthening governance and safety in customary initiation practices.
- Facilitating economic development and providing adequate resources.

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following area pertaining to the Department of Traditional Affairs:

- **Involvement of traditional leaders in local development programmes:** Government proposes more structured cooperation between municipalities and traditional and Khoi-San leadership institutions to enable community engagement and shared problem-solving.

Table 5: SONA¹⁴ and MTEF priorities for Vote 15 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ¹⁵
More structured cooperation between municipalities and traditional and Khoi-San leadership institutions to enable community engagement and shared problem-solving.	Facilitating economic development and providing adequate resources. The Department will continue to monitor and support 70 traditional councils over the MTEF period in the establishment and implementation of socio-economic development partnership agreements with municipalities.	R31.9 million is allocated over the MTEF under Programme 3: Institutional Support and Coordination (Intergovernmental Relations and Partnership sub-programme).

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- **Programme 3 (Institutional Support and Coordination):** consumes the largest portion of the Vote allocation (63.9%). It also experiences the most significant increase (131%) from R94.8 million in 2025/26 to R219.2 million in 2026/27. This includes a transfer of R49 million to the

¹³ ENE, 2026

¹⁴ SONA, 2026

¹⁵ Figures from the ENE

Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (Commission). Parliament should monitor and oversee:

- The work of the Commission to ensure it delivers measurable outcomes aligned with the budget transferred.
 - Performance indicators relating to infrastructure development and socio-economic partnerships, both susceptible to delays and procurement risks. These partnerships involve sectors such as mining, agriculture, infrastructure, and enterprise development. Partnerships require coordination across municipalities and traditional leadership, as well as strong intergovernmental mechanisms.
- Programme 2 (Research, Policy and Legislation) experiences an increase from R31.1 million in 2025/26 to R55.2 million in 2026/27. The largest increase was observed under sub-programme 2 (Policy and Legislation), which experienced an increase from R7.5 million in 2025/26 to R29.5 million in 2026/27. This sub-programme develops national policies and legislation for the traditional affairs sector, while monitoring and facilitating their implementation. Under this programme Parliament should monitor and oversee:
 - The implementation of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (2019), which requires accurate recognition processes, support to traditional councils, and compliance with legislative frameworks.
 - Customary initiation, which is a high-risk cultural practise, with historical safety concerns. The significant increase in allocation to this programme is mainly due to the establishment of the National Initiation Oversight Committee secretariat to oversee the implementation of the Customary Initiation Act (2021). Parliament should monitor the work of the Secretariat closely to ensure it delivers on its mandate.

6. VOTE 29: AGRICULTURE

Agriculture receives R7.8 billion in 2026/27, which is a decrease of 1.33% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R7.9 billion, increasing to R8.1 billion in 2027/28 and R8.4 billion in 2028/29. The Vote has four Programmes:

- Administration
- Agricultural Production, Biosecurity and Natural Resources Management
- Food Security and Support
- Economic Development, Trade and Marketing

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS¹⁶

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Conducting research and development to improve market access.
- Reducing biosecurity risks.
- Improving agricultural production.

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following key areas pertaining to DoA:

- **Farmer Support:** the recruitment of 10 000 new extension officers to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity.
- **Biosecurity:** the roll-out of mass vaccination of the national herd of 14 million cattle over the next 12 months against the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) virus. Declaration of the disease as a national disaster.

The following allocations should be noted in the Vote:

- **Programme 2 on Agricultural Production, Biosecurity and Natural Resources Management** is allocated R2.5 billion, which represents more than 33% of the total budget of the DoA. The sub-programme on 'inspection and quarantine services' receives R505 million (a slight decrease of R8 million from 2025/26), and the sub-programme on 'animal production and health' is allocated R357 million (a significant increase of R102 million from 2025/26). This is in line with the SONA pronouncements on the FMD outbreaks.
- **Programme 3 on Food Security and Support** is allocated R3.2 billion, which represents more than 41% of the total budget of the DoA, but experiences a decrease of R318 million from 2025/26. Notwithstanding the SONA and MTEF targets, the DoA plans to support the commercialisation of 370 smallholder producers by providing financial support through the blended finance model, and to place 1 000 unemployed agricultural graduates on farms in each year across provinces. The sub-programme on sector capacity development (which mainly deals with capacitation of extension officers and agricultural colleges) is allocated R169 million, representing a significant decline of about 36% compared to the 2025/26 allocation of R266 million.

¹⁶ ENE, 2026

- **Programme 4 on Economic Development, Trade and Marketing** is allocated R924 million, which represents 11.8% of the allocation to the DoA (an increase of R41 million compared to the 2025/26 allocation). It can be assumed that the increase in the 2026/27 allocation will be utilised for the activities aimed at improving market access for the sector, as outlined in the MTEF priorities.

Table 6: SONA¹⁷ and MTEF priorities for Vote 29 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ¹⁸
Farmer Support	Improve agricultural production [number of households and smallholder producers supported per year (60 000); number of producers supported through the blended funding scheme per year (100)].	An amount of R10 billion (including farmer support, national extensions support and sector capacity development is allocated over the MTEF to facilitate and promote food security and agrarian reform programmes.
Biosecurity	Reduce biosecurity risks [number of animal disease surveillance surveys conducted per year (3); number of plant pest surveillance surveys conducted per year (3)].	R1.35 billion allocated over the MTEF to oversee livestock production, game farming, animal and plant health, natural resources, disaster management, and biosecurity.
Market access	Conduct research and development to improve market access.	The Department will transfer R1.24 billion to the Agricultural Research Council over the MTEF.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- **Farmer support and development programmes:** The Department’s plan to recruit 10 000 new extension officers to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity has not been adequately budgeted for. Parliament needs to conduct adequate oversight over this pronouncement made during SONA. Notably, this matter was previously announced in the 2021 Budget Speech (by the now late former Minister of Finance), but did not materialise, due to insufficient budget allocation to implement this commitment.
- **Improvement of national biosecurity:** the roll-out of the mass vaccination campaign needs effective oversight to ensure that it is implemented effectively and efficiently.

¹⁷ SONA, 2026

¹⁸ Figures from the ENE

7. VOTE 32: FORESTRY, FISHERIES, ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) receives R9.12 billion in 2026/27, decreasing by 0.2% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R9.14 billion, increasing to R9.8 billion in 2027/28 and R10.1 billion in 2028/29. The Vote has nine programmes:

- Administration
- Regulatory Compliance and Sector Monitoring
- Oceans and Coasts
- Climate Change and Air Quality
- Biodiversity and Conservation
- Environmental Programmes
- Chemicals and Waste Management
- Forestry Management
- Fisheries Management

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS¹⁹

Over the MTEF period, the DFFE Department will focus on the following priorities:

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Creating jobs and work opportunities in the sector.
- Building and safeguarding South Africa's conservation estate

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following key areas pertaining to DFFE:

- **Climate resilience and adaptation:** Responding to extreme weather events and strengthening resilience, including support for areas affected by recent catastrophic flooding in Limpopo and Mpumalanga.
- **Green economy, jobs and infrastructure:** Government has committed more than R1 trillion in public investment over the medium term in infrastructure development and maintenance (including energy, water and transport). Furthermore, more than 2.5 million opportunities have already been created through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, with the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community Work Programme continuing.
- **Biodiversity, conservation and oceans:** While SONA 2026 did not provide detailed biodiversity-economy or oceans-economy announcements, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) remains responsible for biodiversity and conservation, oceans and coasts, and chemicals and waste. These remain central to achieving climate resilience, protecting ecosystems and supporting sustainable rural and coastal livelihoods.

¹⁹ ENE, 2026

Table 7: SONA and MTEF Priorities for Vote 32 and Funds Allocated

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET
Climate resilience and adaptation	Support the implementation of the Climate Change Act (2024) by guiding provinces, metropolitan and district municipalities to comply with its statutory planning requirements.	R2.1 billion under Programme 4: Climate Change and Air Quality over the MTEF. This includes R275 million specifically included for the implementation of the Act.
Green economy, jobs and infrastructure	Generate 71 880 work opportunities and 45 873 full-time equivalent positions through Expanded Public Works programmes, such as Working for Ecosystems, Wetlands, Water, Forests, Fisheries, etc.; implement projects and initiatives involving restoring and rehabilitating degraded ecosystems.	R8 billion under Programme 6: Environmental Programmes over the MTEF.
Biodiversity, conservation and oceans	Expanding South Africa's conservation estate; undertake facility upgrades and infrastructure modernisation, ecological restoration, and biodiversity management across iconic sites, such as the Kruger National Park, iSimangaliso Wetland Park and Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden; capacity building and skills development programmes for communities.	R4.5 billion under Programme 5: Biodiversity and Conservation over the MTEF.

SONA 2026 did not introduce major new policy shifts for DFFE but reinforced existing priorities around climate resilience and infrastructure-led growth. The Department's allocations therefore largely reflect continuity rather than expansion.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

In the context of fiscal consolidation and rising climate risks, several issues warrant close parliamentary scrutiny:

- **Negative growth in the baseline:** When considering the adjusted allocation to the Department in 2025/26, its budget allocation decreases from R9.14 billion to R9.12 billion between 2025/26 and 2026/27 in nominal terms. Once inflation is factored in, this may constrain programme expansion and enforcement capacity.
- **Environmental Programmes growth over the outer years:** Programme 6: Environmental Programmes, increases significantly over the MTEF (from R2.35 billion in 2026/27 to R2.87 billion in 2028/29 (22%)). Oversight should assess whether this growth translates into measurable environmental outcomes and sustainable job creation.

- **Climate financing versus mandate expansion:** With the implementation of the Climate Change Act and increasing disaster events, Parliament may wish to assess whether allocations to Climate Change and Air Quality over the MTEF are sufficient to support sectoral emissions targets, adaptation planning and monitoring.
- **Entity sustainability under fiscal pressure:** Biodiversity and Conservation allocations must sustain transfers to SANParks, SANBI and other entities. Oversight should consider whether real-term pressures affect conservation capacity, revenue generation and service delivery.
- **Fisheries and forestry transformation:** Monitoring implementation of the Forestry Master Plan, support to small-scale fishers, and strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance systems remains critical to ensuring equitable access and compliance.
- **Waste management and circular economy implementation:** Chemicals and Waste Management must address persistent municipal waste challenges. Oversight should assess implementation of extended producer responsibility and pollution control measures.

8. VOTE 38: TOURISM

Tourism receives R2.5 billion in 2026/27, which is an increase of 4.3% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R2.4 billion, increasing to R2.6 billion in 2027/28 and R2.7 billion in 2028/29. The Vote has four Programmes:

- Administration
- Tourism Research, Policy and International Relations
- Destination Development
- Tourism Sector Support Services

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS²⁰

Over the MTEF period, the Department of Tourism will focus on the following priorities:

- Accelerating growth and development in the sector.
- Enhancing and maintaining core tourism assets and infrastructure and creating work opportunities.

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following areas pertaining to Tourism:

- **Infrastructure development and maintenance:** The Department will allocate R959.9 million over the medium term towards infrastructure maintenance and beautification programmes, skills development and capacity-building programmes.
- **Promote cultural attractions:** targeted support will be provided towards community-based tourism enterprises and community museums over the medium term.
- **Improved visa processes:** while the mandate for visas does not reside with the Department, in support an amount of R4.5 billion will be transferred to South African Tourism over the medium term. Through these funds, the Entity will market and promote the country in several source markets, in turn increasing both leisure and business travellers into the country.
- **Regulate small enterprises:** the Department will allocate R118 million over the medium term to support community-based enterprises in registering as businesses, obtaining required licenses and registering for tax.

Table 8: SONA²¹ and MTEF priorities for Vote 38 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ²²
Infrastructure development and maintenance; promote cultural attractions	Enhancing and maintaining core tourism assets and infrastructure and creating work opportunities. Key activities include infrastructure maintenance and beautification programmes in state-owned attractions in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Northern Cape, as well	R959.9 million is allocated under Programme 3: Destination Development over the MTEF.

²⁰ ENE, 2026

²¹ SONA, 2026

²² Figures from the ENE

	as skills development and capacity-building programmes.	
Regulate small enterprises	Enhancing and maintaining core tourism assets and infrastructure and creating work opportunities. Includes assistance to community-based entities to register as businesses, obtain the required licenses and register for tax.	R118 million is allocated under Programme 3: Destination Development over the MTEF.
Improved visa processes	Accelerating growth and development in the sector. Leverage South Africa's natural, cultural and economic diversity, improving infrastructure and safety, streamlining visa processes and enhancing marketing to showcase its value and unique offerings and strengthen the country's position as a destination of choice.	R553.9 million is allocated under Programme 4: Tourism Sector Support Services over the MTEF.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- Over the next three years, the Department plans to transfer an estimated R4.5 billion (57.1%) of its budget to **South African Tourism**. As the body responsible for marketing and promoting tourism globally, the entity plays a pivotal role in increasing both domestic and international tourist arrivals. However, the entity has experienced several governance challenges over the past two years. It is advised that the Committee closely monitors both its performance and spending.
- A decrease in allocation can be observed under **Programme 2** (*Tourism Research, Policy and International Relations*) from R1.4 billion in 2025/26 to R1.3 billion in 2026/27. This programme focuses on policy and strategy, research and bilateral agreements in the Department. The allocation to South African Tourism decreases from R1.3 billion (2025/26) to R1.2 billion (2026/27). This is concerning, due to the Entity's role in marketing destination South Africa and the withdrawal of the TOMSA levy fund by Tourism Business Council South Africa. The levy fund was an additional source of revenue to the Entity for its marketing and promotion activities. Marketing of tourist products results in increased demand and an increase in tourism's contribution to economic growth and employment creation.
- Under **Programme 4**, the budget allocations for the *Enterprise Development and Transformation* sub-programme and *Tourism Incentive Programme* have been reduced. These sub-programmes are critical towards transformation, funding of emerging and existing enterprises and providing incentives towards greening of facilities and market access programmes.

9. VOTE 42: LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Land Reform and Rural Development (DLRRD) receives R10.3 billion in 2026/27, which is a decrease of 1.1% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R10.4 billion, increasing to R10.7 billion in 2027/28 and R11 billion in 2028/29. The Vote has four Programmes:

- Administration
- Land Administration
- Land Reform and Restitution
- Rural Development

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS²³

DLRRD will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Accelerating land reform.
- Finalising restitution claims.
- Creating opportunities for young people in rural areas.
- Fast-tracking socio-economic projects.
- Administering land under the Department’s control to ensure spatial transformation.

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The SONA of 2026 outlined the following areas pertaining to DLRRD:

- Government will reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.
- The Department will finalise outstanding restitution claims in District 6 through the construction of Phase 4 houses.
- Government will establish a professional State Property Company to transform the 88 000 buildings and five million hectares of land owned by the State into professionally managed engines of growth and development.
- Government has committed more than R1 trillion in public investment over three years to build and maintain infrastructure. This will include infrastructure in rural areas.

Table 9: SONA²⁴ and MTEF priorities for Vote 42 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ²⁵
Poverty reduction	Create opportunities for young people in rural areas through the National Service Youth Corps Programme (NARYSEC). After training, these young people are deployed in various rural communities to increase productivity and improve standards of living.	R885.6 million allocated for the NARYSEC Programme under Programme 4: Rural Development over the MTEF.

²³ ENE, 2026

²⁴ SONA, 2026

²⁵ Figures from the ENE

Finalise restitution process in District 6	Expedite the finalisation of outstanding claims (869) lodged before 1998	R11.9 billion allocated under Programme 3: Land Reform and Restitution over the MTEF.
Infrastructure development and maintenance	Fast-track socio-economic projects to improve quality of life in villages. Complete 99 infrastructure projects.	R1.6 billion allocated under Programme 4: Rural Development over the MTEF.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Committee:

- Accelerating land reform with post-settlement support provided to beneficiaries to ensure redistributed land remains productive at an estimated cost of R4.6 billion.
- Finalisation of 869 outstanding claims lodged before 1998 at an estimated cost of R11.9 billion. This includes the construction of phase 4 houses for District 6 alluded to in SONA 2026.
- The construction of 99 infrastructure projects over the medium term, which includes 15 animal and veld projects, 9 irrigation schemes, 15 agriparks and 60 socio-economic (access roads and bridges) projects. Since irrigation schemes and agriparks are the mandate of the Department of Agriculture (DoA), there should be coordination between the Department and the DoA, as well as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) regarding access roads and bridges.

Sithabiso Buthelezi
Chief Researcher
sibuthelezi@parliament.gov.za

Cluster Researchers

Ester Saptoe
Senior Researcher: PSA & PME
esaptoe@parliament.gov.za

Jeanie le Roux
Researcher: CoGTA
jleroux@parliament.gov.za

Nontobeko Qwabe
Researcher: Agriculture
nqwabe@parliament.gov.za

Nondumiso Dumakude
Researcher: Forestry, Fisheries, Environment
ndumakude@parliament.gov.za

Sisanda Loni
Researcher: Tourism
ssowazi@parliament.gov.za

Tembisa Siyo-Pepeteka
Researcher: Land Reform and Rural
Development
tpepeteka@parliament.gov.za

What we do:

The Research Unit offers research support to individual Members of Parliament, to Committees and to the Houses. Researchers proactively provide:

- ✓ Summaries and analysis of Bills
- ✓ Analysis of the State of the Nation Address (SONA), Budget Votes, Annual Performance Plans, Quarterly Performance and Expenditure Reports, and Annual Reports
- ✓ Briefing papers in support of Committee meetings on topical oversight issues
- ✓ Comparative studies and international best practices
- ✓ Briefing papers to prepare for oversight visits and on-site oversight visit support
- ✓ Papers in support of House debates

On request, researchers will provide briefings and presentations to Committees, as well as research support to individual Members of Parliament.

Our Values

Non-partisan
Impartial
Objective
Confidential
Quality: Methodologically
sound and timely

Feedback



For any comments or feedback, please
email **Sithabiso Buthelezi**
sibuthelezi@parliament.gov.za



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

