



national treasury

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National Treasury
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MEDIA STATEMENT

TREASURY HOLDS FIRST ROUND OF WORKSHOPS ON FISCAL ANCHORS, BROAD PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TO FOLLOW

The National Treasury held a first round of consultative stakeholder workshops on its Fiscal Anchors Discussion Document, released on 12 March 2025. The workshops mark the opening stage of a broader consultation process aimed at strengthening the sustainability, credibility, and transparency of South Africa's fiscal framework.

The Discussion Document outlines how slow economic growth and persistent budget deficits have led to a tripling of public debt over the last 15 years. This has forced the government to spend more on interest payments, crowding out services and investment. In response to this challenge, the Document proposes two broad reform options: 1) a Numerical Fiscal Rule, and 2) an enhanced Parliamentary Procedures Model.

As a first step, the National Treasury convened three workshops with a broad group of experts with a direct interest in macro-fiscal issues:

- **Civil society organisations (workshop held in Pretoria on 28 July 2025),**
- **Participants in the debt-capital markets (workshop held in Sandton on 30 July 2025), and**
- **Academics (workshop held in Cape Town on 7 August 2025)**

Each forum provided an opportunity for participants to respond to the Discussion Document, share their perspectives on fiscal challenges, and raise ideas for how to move forward. These discussion forums elicited valuable insights into the issues covered by the Document. While it was not an explicit objective of these engagements to achieve consensus on the fiscal framework or rules reform, the dialogue was robust and dynamic, and it was apparent that there are a number of crucial areas of shared concern. The National Treasury valued the opportunity to hear the different range of views on South Africa's macro-fiscal challenges and discuss how these can be addressed in the future and is looking forward to similarly constructive engagements in the future.

What was discussed:

Participants engaged actively with the issues raised in the Discussion Document. A number of themes recurred across the sessions:

- **Fiscal sustainability is a guiding objective:** All participants recognised the importance of maintaining sustainable public finances and the risks posed by rising debt and debt-service costs.
- **Linking fiscal anchors to budget reforms:** Many highlighted that fiscal rules alone are insufficient unless complemented by improvements in budget planning, prioritisation, implementation, and accountability.

Nkwama wa Tiko • Gwama la Muvhuso • Nasionale Tesourie • Lefapha la Bosetshaba la Matlotlo • uMnyango wezezimali • Litiko leTetimali taVelonkhe
Tirelo ya Matlotlo a Bosetshahaba • Tshebeletso ya Matlotlo a Naha • UMnyango weziMali • Isebe leNgxowa Mali yeLizwe

- **Focus on the quality of spending:** Across all sessions, participants underlined the need to strengthen efficiency and the impact of public spending.
- **Diversity of views on design options:** Some participants strongly opposed the introduction of strict numerical fiscal rules, while others were in support of an adjusted numerical rule that legally constrained debt while allowing for robust growth in capital spending. All participants were in support of a principle or standards-based approach rooted in transparency, accountability, and constitutional rights, while some cautioned that they might be insufficient to affect fiscal dynamics in the short term and their effectiveness would depend on their institutional implementation. The risks of complexity and rigidity were also noted.
- **Attention to broader impacts:** Several contributions stressed the importance of understanding the social, developmental, and distributional implications of fiscal choices, alongside technical considerations.
- **Deeper analysis of fiscal issues:** Many participants called for opportunities for deeper and more collaborative analysis of important fiscal issues such as the distributional impacts of tax policy and the cost of South Africa's debt relative to its peers.

These perspectives reflect the diversity of South Africa's public debate, surfacing key issues, testing ideas, and setting the stage for further engagement.

A first step in a broader process:

The workshops were an important first step in Treasury's commitment to an open, inclusive dialogue on fiscal anchors and fiscal policy. They demonstrated both the seriousness with which stakeholders are approaching the issue and the value of structured engagement.

"We are encouraged by the thoughtful contributions made during these initial workshops. This was the beginning of a much wider conversation. We look forward to hearing from many more voices in the months ahead."[Enoch Godongwana, MP]

Building on the success of these first workshops, government will host public webinars, followed by a conference alongside the consideration of the 2026 Budget. In the months ahead, government will have further public engagements, including a larger conference. The conference will provide a formal platform for broad public participation and expert contribution, culminating in a published conference report. This report will feed into the preparation of a refined Treasury proposal for consideration later in 2026. Written submissions are invited ahead of the conference, with selected contributions to be presented during the event.

How to participate:

Interested parties are encouraged to read the Discussion Document and submit their written feedback to: fiscal.policy@treasury.gov.za by the 15th of December 2025. The Discussion Document and presentations shared at the workshops are available on the National Treasury website.

For any enquiries, please contact Media@treasury.gov.za.

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