



SA-TIED

Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development

MEDIA STATEMENT

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NATIONAL TREASURY AND PARTNERS LAUNCH SA-TIED PHASE III TO DEEPEN EVIDENCE-BASED ECONOMIC POLICYMAKING IN SOUTH AFRICA

New phase of research-policy partnership to run from 2026 to 2029, with renewed commitment from the European Union, the United Kingdom, and UNU-WIDER

PRETORIA — The National Treasury, together with its partners, has launched the third phase of the Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED) programme, reaffirming a shared commitment to grounding South Africa's economic policy decisions in rigorous, co-produced evidence. The launch took place at the closing of the SA-TIED Phase II Close-Out Conference on 24 March 2026.

SA-TIED is a research-policy partnership between the National Treasury of South Africa, the South African Revenue Service (SARS), and the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), with financial support from the European Union and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Now entering its third phase, the programme works to close the gap between research and policy implementation by embedding evidence directly within government systems and building analytical capacity.

Speaking at the launch, Deputy Minister of Finance, Dr David Masondo, highlighted the programme's significance at a moment of heightened domestic and global uncertainty.

"At its core, SA-TIED is anchored on a simple and yet powerful principle — good policy must be grounded in credible evidence. Better evidence leads to better policy, and better policy leads to better outcomes for our people," said Deputy Minister Masondo.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Phase II: A record of achievement

Phase II has produced a substantial body of evidence directly informing South Africa's policy priorities. Over 130 research papers have been published, with 65% authored or co-authored by South African researchers and 63% featuring women as authors or co-authors. More than 200 participants, half of them from government, have been trained in advanced economic modelling, econometrics, spatial analysis, and data science, building skills that will endure well beyond the programme's lifecycle.

A defining achievement of Phase II has been the growth of the National Treasury Secure Data Facility (NTSDF), one of the first such institutions in the Global South, which links anonymised administrative tax data. The facility has supported over 65 researchers in the past year alone and has directly informed government policy outputs. It is increasingly recognised as a model for responsible administrative data use, with several countries already seeking to replicate the approach.

Research under SA-TIED has addressed six core areas central to South Africa's development agenda: enterprise development for job creation and growth; public revenue mobilisation for inclusive development; structural transformation, labour markets, and inequality dynamics; macro-fiscal analysis and policy modelling; food, energy, and water in the context of climate change; and reform implementation and delivery

Phase III: Deepening the foundation

Phase III, running from 2026 to 2029, will consolidate and expand on these gains. It will focus on a set of core priorities, including strengthening the link between research and policy implementation, expanding access to administrative datasets and building state capability through training, skills development, and greater integration of research within government. Phase III also introduces a new emphasis on public expenditure efficiency, reflecting the reality that, in a constrained fiscal environment, the question is no longer only how much the state spends, but how effectively it spends.

Incoming UNU-WIDER Director Patricia Justino, who takes up her role on 1 May 2026, spoke to the importance of sustaining this work in the current global climate.

"Research is not a luxury, if anything, it is needed more than ever. In times of uncertainty, bad decisions become very costly, short-term thinking becomes very tempting, and political pressure can crowd out careful thinking. What SA-TIED has built is something very rare: trust between research and policymaking. That trust is the foundation on which Phase III will be built," said Justino.

International partnership renewed

The launch brought together senior representatives from South Africa's key international partners, each reaffirming their commitment to the programme's next phase.

EU Deputy Ambassador Fulgencio Garrido Ruiz described SA-TIED as embodying three core elements of the EU–South Africa strategic partnership: *"Innovation, partnerships, and commitment, to go where the evidence leads us, as opposed to being driven by short-termism and opportunism."*

British High Commissioner Antony Phillipson highlighted the critical role of evidence in navigating complex and fast-moving policy challenges: *"A sophisticated, targeted evidence base is vital to ensuring that our responses are rooted in an understanding of what works and the trade-offs inherent in any policy choice."*

SARS Deputy Commissioner Johnstone Makhubu reaffirmed SARS' strategic commitment to data-driven policymaking: *"We see tax administration data as the lifeblood of research and economic policy design. We gather data with the end in mind, not only for tax administration purposes, but also for research."*

Resources:

Deputy Minister's address: ([YouTube link](#))

Partner reflections (EU, UKFCDO, SARS, UNU-WIDER): ([YouTube link](#))

Conference photographs (with caption sheet): ([WeTransfer link](#))

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