

# **Estimates of National Expenditure**

**2026**

**National Treasury  
Republic of South Africa**



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The 2026 Estimates of National Expenditure is compiled using the latest available information from departmental and other sources. Some of this information is unaudited or subject to revision. Also included are tables containing information on programme-specific personnel expenditure, conditional grants to provinces and municipalities, public-private partnerships and information on donor funding. Expenditure information at the level of site service delivery is included, where appropriate. This publication, as well as PDF documents of individual votes, are also available on [www.treasury.gov.za](http://www.treasury.gov.za).

For more information, please contact:

Communication Services  
National Treasury  
Private Bag X115  
Pretoria  
0001  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0)12 315 5944  
Email: [media@treasury.gov.za](mailto:media@treasury.gov.za)

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	i
<b>Information contained in the chapters of the Estimates of National Expenditure</b> .....	xxxiii
1 The Presidency .....	1
2 Parliament .....	11
3 Cooperative Governance.....	13
4 Government Communication and Information System .....	33
5 Home Affairs .....	49
6 International Relations and Cooperation .....	69
7 National School of Government .....	85
8 National Treasury.....	93
9 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation .....	151
10 Electricity and Energy.....	165
11 Public Service and Administration.....	195
11a <i>Centre for Public Service Innovation*</i> .....	211
12 Public Service Commission .....	217
13 Public Works and Infrastructure .....	229
14 Statistics South Africa.....	257
15 Traditional Affairs.....	275
16 Basic Education .....	287
17 Higher Education.....	307
18 Health.....	339
19 Social Development .....	373
20 Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.....	397
21 Civilian Secretariat for the Police Service .....	417
22 Correctional Services.....	429
22a <i>Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services*</i> .....	443
23 Defence .....	451
24 Independent Police Investigative Directorate.....	481
25 Justice and Constitutional Development.....	491
26 Military Veterans.....	515
27 Office of the Chief Justice.....	523
28 Police.....	533
29 Agriculture.....	551
30 Communications and Digital Technologies .....	575
31 Employment and Labour .....	613
32 Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment .....	641
33 Human Settlements .....	683
34 Mineral and Petroleum Resources .....	715
35 Science, Technology and Innovation .....	743
36 Small Business Development .....	783
37 Sport, Arts and Culture.....	799
38 Tourism .....	839
39 Trade, Industry and Competition .....	855
40 Transport.....	925
41 Water and Sanitation .....	987
42 Land Reform and Rural Development.....	1025

\* These are government components within votes



# Foreword

The 2026 Budget marks an important milestone in meeting National Treasury's fiscal policy objectives for South Africa. In line with the expectation that government debt as a percentage of GDP would stabilise in 2025/26 and decrease over the medium term, debt-service costs are also expected to decrease over the period ahead, ensuring the protection of expenditure on public services and priority programmes.

This budget also marks a strengthened focus on the quality of expenditure across government programmes. A review of the budget process in 2024 resulted in Cabinet approving the budget guidelines and timelines, a reorganisation of the budget structures and a strengthening of baseline analysis to identify spending areas that are inefficient, ineffective and low priority for rationalisation and scaling down. To this end, R12 billion over the MTEF period was identified in the first round of National Treasury's targeted and responsible savings initiative. These funds will be reprioritised towards priority spending areas that include building capacity in the Department of Defence, the Office of the Chief Justice, Statistics South Africa, the Border Management Authority and the Public Service Commission.

Consolidated government expenditure is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 3.9 per cent, from R2.58 trillion in 2025/26 to R2.89 trillion in 2028/29. The budget remains highly distributive, with an estimated 60 per cent of main budget expenditure allocated to the social wage. Although compensation of employees accounts for the largest share of expenditure by economic classification over the medium term, payments for capital assets is the fastest growing expenditure line item. This reflects government's continued effort to change the composition of expenditure and implement the fourth pillar of the economic strategy to scale up infrastructure investment.

In line with inflation expectations, budget estimates in 2026/27 and 2027/28 have been rebased, resulting in a reduction in allocations of R19.4 billion from the 2025 Budget. However, the 2026 Budget maintains the real value of departmental budgets and spending on compensation of employees is consistent with the current wage agreement.

The measures outlined in the 2026 Budget reinforce government's commitment over the medium term to restoring fiscal stability, improving the quality of public spending and sustaining investment in priority services and infrastructure.

The budgets presented in this publication are the result of extensive bilateral and function group engagements with national departments. There were also wide-ranging intergovernmental consultations on budgets at the provincial and local levels on issues of concurrent functions and the coordination of service delivery. Cabinet considered and ultimately approved the budgetary proposals emanating from these consultations.

I would like to extend special thanks to all contributors and government colleagues who helped to make this publication possible, particularly the advice of my colleagues in the technical committee on the budget, the support of the Minister and Deputy Ministers of Finance, and the excellent efforts of the National Treasury team.

**Dr Duncan Pieterse**  
**Director-General: National Treasury**

