

1 – Understanding the context of the National Development Plan (NDP)

In a series of articles, starting with this newsletter, the NSTF will be unpacking the National Development Plan (NDP). The particular focus will be on understanding it from a science, engineering, technology (SET) perspective. Not only does the implementation of the NDP affect every person in South Africa but it has overriding implications on how SET programmes and funding will be managed.

What is the NDP?

Blueprint for SA: The NDP is seen as a guiding document for South Africa. It was released in 2011 and is positioned as a blueprint for tackling South Africa’s challenges. In 2012, Cabinet adopted the NDP as a long-term vision and plan for the country.

NDP aims: The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the [NDP executive summary](#): “South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.”

NDP documents:

- The complete document – ‘[National Development Plan – vision for 2030](#)’
- The executive summary ‘[National Development Plan 2030, Our future – make it work, executive summary](#)’.

How did the NDP come about?

Background to NDP’s creation: The National Planning Commission (NPC) was appointed in May 2010 to draft a vision and national development plan. The NPC Diagnostic Report, released in June 2011, set out South Africa’s achievements and shortcomings since 1994. It identified a failure to implement policies and an absence of broad partnerships as the main reasons for slow progress. It set out 9 primary challenges.

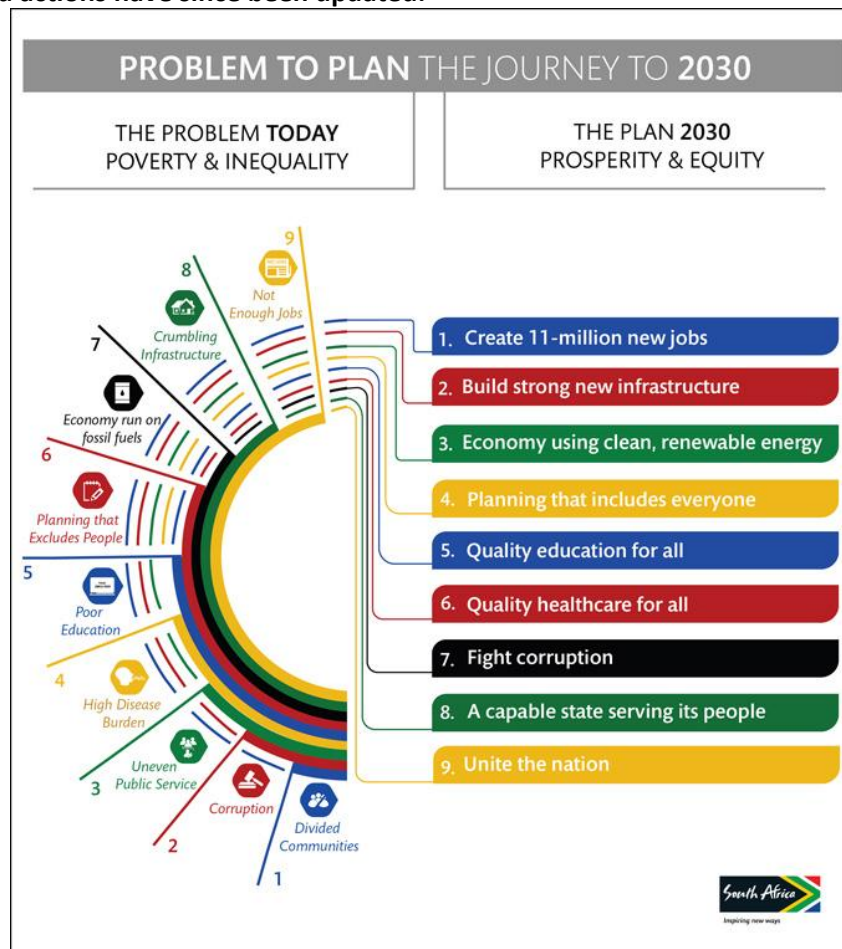
NPC Diagnostic Report challenges	Summary of NDP 2011 actions
Too few people work	An economy that will create more jobs
The quality of school education for black people is poor	Improving the quality of education, training and innovation
Infrastructure is poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained	
Spatial divides hobble inclusive development	Reversing the spatial effects of apartheid
The economy is unsustainably resource intensive	Transition to a low-carbon economy
The public health system cannot meet demand or sustain quality	Quality healthcare for all
Public services are uneven and often of poor quality	Reforming the public service
Corruption levels are high	Fighting corruption
South Africa remains a divided society	Transforming society and uniting the country
	An inclusive and integrated rural economy
	Social protection
	Building safer communities

The NDP positioned the following as key ingredients for success:

- The active efforts of all South Africans
- Growth, investment and employment
- Rising standards of education and a healthy population

- An effective and capable government
- Collaboration between the private and public sectors
- Leadership from all sectors of society

Challenges and actions have since been updated:



<https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/governance/ndp/the-national-development-plan-a-vision-for-2030>) The NSTF will be going into more detail in the specific sections as part of this series.

How is the NDP being implemented?

The first cycle of implementation processes: In a media briefing in 2013, Minister in The Presidency: National Planning Commission, Trevor Manuel, spoke about the implementation processes. Here are some of the points:

- Three phases have been identified.
 - Critical steps to be taken in 2013 to unlock implementation – including preparing the 2014-19 [Medium Term Strategic Framework](#) (MTSF) as the first five-year building block
 - 2014-2019 planning cycle
 - 2019-2024 and 2024-2029 planning cycles
- The NDP is a plan for the whole country.
- The Plan will shape budget allocation over the next 17 years.
- Planning and implementation should be informed by evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.

2014-2019 MTSF: It was made clear that activities and planning of government departments need to align to the NDP. The [2014-2019 MTSF](#) was developed to assist with implementation and includes

key outputs and actions. The aim is to ensure policy coherence, alignment and coordination across government's plans, including the alignment of budgeting processes.

It identifies indicators and targets from the NDP and other plans, such as:

- [The New Growth Path](#) which sets the trajectory of economic development
- [National Infrastructure Plan](#) which guides the rollout of infrastructure to improve people's lives and enable economic growth
- [Industrial Policy Action Plan](#) which focuses on promoting investment and competitiveness in leading sectors and industries

It is structured around 14 priority outcomes: education, health, safety and security, economic growth and employment, skills development, infrastructure, rural development, human settlements, local government, environment, international relations, an effective public sector, social protection, nation-building and social cohesion.

The Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) is responsible for monitoring progress. For more detailed information go to ['The National Development Plan unpacked'](#).



Operation Phakisa : Operation Phakisa is one of the mechanisms for implementing the NDP. It's a fast-results delivery programme launched in July 2014. ('Phakisa' means 'hurry up' in Sesotho.) It involves setting clear plans and targets, monitoring of progress and making results public. It was originally developed and successfully implemented by the government of Malaysia.

According to the [Operation Phakisa website](#): "Operation Phakisa is a cross-sector programme where various stakeholders engage to implement initiatives and concrete actions to address constraints to delivery in a prioritised focused area for public accountability and transparency."

It also looks to improve cooperation between government, organised business, civil society and organised labour. This includes working on detailed problem analysis, priority setting, intervention planning, and delivery. Its projects include the [Ocean Economy Lab](#), [Health Lab](#) and [Education Lab](#).

Operation Phakisa is monitored by the DPME.



The Vision 2030 Summit: The [Vision 2030 Summit](#) was held on 21 June 2017, under the endorsement of the National Planning Commission. Its aims were:

- Raise awareness and position the NDP as a South African plan and not merely a government plan.
- Unpack the NDP into an easy-to-understand, practical document; outlining how government departments, provinces, municipalities, state-owned enterprises and agencies are aligning themselves to it.
- Promote and encourage public-private partnership investment opportunities in provincial and local government.

- Discover innovations, solutions, plans and initiatives that can help fast-track the realisation of goals set by the business and investor communities.
- Reinforce private and public sector support for and commitment to the NDP.
- Take stock of where we are, where we should be, and the way forward for the nation to achieve its NDP objectives.

Challenges to the NDP

COSATU says NDP not address real unemployment problems: The Human Sciences Resource Council's (HSRC) newsletter ([HSRC Review October/November 2014](#)) published an article 'Navigating the government's development path'. The authors note that the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has said that "the NDP did not address the real problems around unemployment because it was silent on industrialisation. It said that for the government to generate decent jobs, it had to revamp the manufacturing sector, which would generate the right mix of decent jobs in the economy and complement the services sector. Instead of industrialisation, the NDP puts more emphasis on small- and medium-scale enterprises in the services sector as the main drivers of future economic growth, perpetuating the tradition of unskilled low-wage labour in the country."

HSRC research says problems in implementation, delivery and human capacity: In terms of challenges to the NDP's successful implementation, the authors say that SA has the capacity to formulate policy but the challenge is being able to translate these into "implementable programmes and projects along the different tiers of government – provinces, municipalities and local government – culminating in achieving the set goals and objectives within the designated timeframes". This includes questioning the quality and capacity of people at the three levels of government to align the NDP with their plans. There are three key areas that are problematic: "the ability to implement policy, enforce legislation and deliver services".

SACP and NUMSA's concerns: The M&G article '[Radebe sticks to his NDP guns](#)' (2 July 2017) notes that the South African Communist Party (SACP) has "criticised the NDP as a social pact that imposes no legal obligation on government or on business and labour to implement it". Implementation of the NDP was discussed at the ANC's policy conference running from 30 June to 4 July 2017. Minister in the Presidency: planning, monitoring and evaluation, Jeff Radebe, is recommending a legal framework to ensure the NDP is implemented. The article also notes that the metalworkers' union Numsa "described the plan as a liberal version of the government's former Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy".