Featured SET policy:

Fighting corruption (Chapter 14, NDP)

In a series of articles, the NSTF is unpacking the National Development Plan (NDP). The focus is on understanding it from a science, engineering, technology (SET) perspective. The NDP is seen as a blueprint/guiding document for South Africa. The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.

- The complete document – 'National Development Plan – vision for 2030'
- The executive summary – 'National Development Plan 2030, Our future – make it work, executive summary'.

NDP chapter: **Overview**
This considers the context and background of the NDP. See 1 – Understanding the context of the National Development Plan (NDP). It also sets the stage for understanding what makes a developmental state. See 2 – The National Development Plan and the developmental state. There is also a summary of the plan and key targets and actions.

NDP chapter 1**: Key drivers of change**
The synopsis is called 3 – Science and technology as drivers of development

NDP chapter 2: **Demographic trends**
The synopsis is called 4 – Demographic trends PLUS the NDP's 5th anniversary

NDP chapter 3: **Economy and employment**
The synopsis is called 5 – National system of innovation and R&D critical for growing the economy

An economy that will create more jobs

NDP chapter 4: **Economic infrastructure**
The synopsis is called 6 – Developing a strong network of economic infrastructure – transport, energy, water resources, and ICT

Transition to a low-carbon economy

NDP chapter 5: **Transition to a low carbon economy**
The synopsis is called 7 – Transitioning SA to a low carbon economy that responds to climate change

An inclusive and integrated rural economy

NDP chapter 6: **Inclusive rural economy**
The synopsis is called Section 8 of the NSTF series – An inclusive rural economy

NDP chapter 7: **Positioning South Africa in the world**
The synopsis is called Section 9 of the NSTF series – Positioning South Africa in the world (Chapter 7, NDP)

Reversing the spatial effects of apartheid

N DP chapter 8: **Transforming human settlements**
The synopsis is called Section 10 of the NSTF series – Transforming human settlements (Chapter 8, NDP)

Improving the quality of education, training and innovation

NDP chapter 9: **Improving education, innovation and training**

Quality healthcare for all

NDP chapter 10: **Promoting health**

Social protection

NDP chapter 11: **Social protection**

NDP chapter 12: **Building safer communities**	Building safer communities	
NDP chapter 13: **Building a capable state**	Reforming the public service	
NDP chapter 14: **Fighting corruption**	Fighting corruption	
NDP chapter 15: **Transforming society and uniting the country**	Transforming society and uniting the country	

Chapter 14, National Development Plan – Fighting corruption

According to the National Development Plan (NDP), the vision for 2030 is zero tolerance for corruption. "In 2030, South Africa will be a society in which citizens do not offer bribes and have the confidence and knowledge to hold public and private officials to account, and in which leaders have integrity and high ethical standards. Anti-corruption agencies should have the resources, independence from political influence, and powers to investigate corruption, and their investigations should be acted upon."

This chapter makes it clear that for South Africa to develop and to be an effective state, we need good governance and accountability. According to UNESCO, 'governance' refers to structures and processes designed to "ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation". Accountability is about providing an account on how responsibilities are carried out and how resources are used.

The NDP notes that good governance and accountability are achieved "through a system of institutional checks and balances". This includes Parliament, oversight institutions, and the judiciary. Governance and accountability work with a high standard of ethics and building integrity. Openness and transparency are also seen as critical.

Corruption is defined by the NDP as "the misuse of an official position for personal gain". In 2011, when the NDP was published, it was already noted that South Africa had high levels of corruption.

The NDP sees overcoming corruption and the lack of accountability using a comprehensive approach. It includes "political will, sound institutions, a solid legal foundation and an active citizenry that holds public officials accountable".

South Africa has fairly extensive legislation and a number of institutions to promote accountability and governance. The legislation includes the Bill of Rights, Promotion of Access to Information Act, Promotion of Access to Justice Act (2000), Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (2004), Public Finance Management Act (1999) and Municipal Finance Management Act (2003).

The NDP singled out four areas to focus on:
Building a resilient anti-corruption system for the South African context

- **An anti-corruption system needs to be free from political interference.** According to the NDP, the "institutional independence of anti-corruption agencies is contentious, since they are all accountable to the Executive".
- **Designated entities need to have the capability and resources**, including increased funding and specialised teams. Designated anti-corruption agencies include: South African Police Service, Special Investigations Unit, Assets Forfeiture Unit, and the Public Service Commission. The Public Protector and the Auditor-General also investigate corruption. The NDP recommends sharing and coordination, as well as distinct and separate functions to reduce duplication.
- **Leaders need to take action.** This means political will and support for anti-corruption agencies.

- **Public servants should be more accountable.** The NDP recommends making public servants legally accountable as individuals for their actions, particularly with public resources. Mechanisms to promote ethical conduct need to be implemented and enforced within government departments. Further actions include ensuring corrupt officials can't work in public service again.
- **Citizens and the private sector should not engage in corrupt practices** – even in the smallest way. The NDP recommends increased public awareness campaigns, as well as reporting mechanisms. Beyond what has already been set up by business, suggested ideas include establishing a structure to report private sector non-compliance and to include corruption cases in annual reports.
- **Support for individuals and the media:** Individuals should be able to speak out against corruption. The media should be freely able to expose corruption.
- **State information should be openly available to citizens.** There should be an enforcement mechanism and a specialist adjudicatory body such as an information regulator. The NDP also recommends freely available 'open data'. According to the NDP: "Open data is information that is made actively available without a request from an individual."
- **Judicial governance and the rule of law need to be strengthened.** This includes ensuring the independence and accountability of the judiciary.

Strengthen the protection of whistle-blowers to create a culture of exposing wrongdoing.
- **The Protected Disclosures Act (2000) needs to be reviewed** and then government departments need to develop policies to implement the act. The act doesn't provide enough protection, including inadequate security and confidentiality for whistle-blowers.
- **The NDP notes there is "no public body** tasked with providing advice and promoting public awareness, and no public body dedicated to monitoring whistleblowing".

Improve oversight over procurement procedures for increased accountability, particularly with large and long-term tenders
Beyond designing cost-effective procurement systems that enable effective government, there should be a tiered system to review tenders depending on their value. This would include differentiated safeguards and procedures.

Empower the tender compliance monitoring office to investigate corruption and the value for money of tenders.
The Office of the Accountant General in the National Treasury "is responsible for promoting and enforcing the effective management of revenue and expenditure in departments", as well as monitoring the proper implementation of public sector financial management acts. This includes setting and monitoring procurement practices. The NDP proposes including value for money as part of this.