



Mr Mandla Ndlovu
Mpumalanga Premier

POLICY & BUDGET VOTE

2026/27

"Mpumalanga, a Province that works for all"

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Mpumalanga Provincial Government



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MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT:
OFFICE OF THE PREMIER, VOTE 1 (2026/27) PRESENTED BY THE PREMIER,
MR MANDLA PADNEY NDLOVU, IN THE LEGISLATURE
DATE: 11 JUNE 2026**

Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Hon **Makhosazana Masilela**

Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Hon **Sam Masango**;

The Chief Whip of the governing Party, Hon **Eva Makhabane**;

Hon Members of the Executive Council;

Hon Members of the Legislature;

The Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders,
and President of CONTRALESA, **Kgoši Mokoena**;

Amakhosi who are present here today;

The Director General of Mpumalanga Province, Ms **Maggie Skosana**; HODs and all
officials of the Government;

Our esteemed community members, family and friends present in the gallery;

The media houses and those following this session through various Media Platforms;

Avuxeni, Sanibonani, Lotjhani, Dumelang, Good morning, Goeie môre.

Introduction

1. Madam Speaker, before I resume with my speech ngithanda ukusho ukuthi, singurhulumende weMpumalanga sithanda ukudlulisa ukudabuka okukhulu kanye namazwi enduduzo emndenini wasebukhosini, nestjhabeni samandebele nakizo zonke izakhamuzi zeMpumalanga ngokukhothama kweNgwenyama uMakhosonke wesibili.
2. uNgwenyama bekungumholi wesintu ohlonitjhw khulu, osebenzele isitjhaba sakhe ngokuzinikela, nangokuhlonipheka. Sihlanganyela nesizwe soke ekulileni ngokulahlekelwa okukhulu kangaka. Kwangathi umphefumulo wakhe ungaphumula ngokuthula okungapheliko.
3. We are also comforted by President Cyril Ramaphosa's noble decision to grant the King a State funeral as this will provide a dignified send off for Ingwenyama.
4. Madam Speaker and honourable members, it is both an honour and a privilege to address you today on this important occasion, where we gather to reflect on the achievements of the previous financial year and priorities for the 2026/27 financial year for the Office of the Premier.
5. This policy and budget speech's overarching theme is: ***Strengthening governance, accountability, and coordinated planning to drive socioeconomic development to fix local government, and build a capable, ethical, and developmental state,*** and marks a critical moment in our governance cycle.
6. We are meeting during youth month, where we will be commemorating the 50 years of the 1976 student uprising. Which is popularly known as June 16 or Youth Day.
7. Former President Thabo Mbeki said **"the youth of 1976 used stones and barricades against repressive forces, today's youth should use education and skills to fight poverty and unemployment."**

8. We have to invest in the development of our youth. As I reflect on resilience in the face of challenges, I am reminded of the words of President Oliver Reginald Tambo, when he said: ***“A nation that does not take care of its youth does not deserve its future.”***
9. These words continue to guide us as we build a capable state that invests in its people, strengthens institutions, and advances the cause of development.
10. Despite a constrained fiscal environment, this administration has demonstrated resilience, focus, and commitment to improving the lives of our people.
11. Over the past year, we have strengthened institutional capacity within the Office of the Premier, established critical monitoring and evaluation systems, and enhanced coordination across departments.
12. The successful completion of five evaluation studies, the operationalisation of the Infrastructure Monitoring Unit, and the implementation of service delivery agreements for Members of the Executive Council are clear indicators of our commitment to accountability and results.
13. Through the Premier’s Youth Development Fund, we have supported numerous enterprises and generated thousands of job opportunities, while strategic partnerships with higher education institutions, the private sector, and international collaborators have created new avenues for investment and innovation.
14. These achievements, while encouraging, also serve as a reminder that much work remains to be done. They give us a strong foundation on which we will build in the 2026/27 financial year, and I will discuss them further in my speech.

STRENGTHENING PROVINCIAL PLANNING SYSTEM

15. Madam Speaker, we started the new financial year by developing the 2026/27 Provincial Programme of Action as an annual implementation plan for our five-year Medium-Term Development Plan.
16. The Provincial Programme of Action for 2026/27 represents not just a document,

but a strategic commitment to the people of our province. It is a commitment to deliver services efficiently, equitably, and transparently.

17. As we develop this Programme of Action, we are guided by the priorities of government, the needs of our communities, and the imperative to accelerate socio-economic development.
18. Our plans are not ambitious but realistic, coordinated, and responsive to the challenges we face, including unemployment, inequality, and service delivery backlogs.
19. Equally important is our forward-looking approach as we review the 2026/27 plans from provincial departments. This process enables us to assess how well departmental strategies align with provincial and national priorities, ensuring continuity, sustainability, and greater impact over time.
20. Through such assessments, we strengthen our planning systems, identify gaps, and refine our methods to achieve better outcomes.
21. This year's signing of annual service delivery agreements by our MECs demonstrates accountability in practice.
22. These agreements are not just ceremonial; they are binding commitments that specify clear targets, performance indicators, and responsibilities.
23. For the first time, we have conducted Performance Assessments of MECs against the Service Delivery Agreements signed in the last financial year, 2025/26.
24. These performance assessments will reinforce the principle that leadership must be accountable for results and that public resources must translate into tangible benefits for our citizens.
25. As we move forward, we reaffirm our collective responsibility to work collaboratively across departments, break down silos, and strengthen coordination.

26. Effective governance requires unity of purpose, disciplined implementation, and continuous monitoring and evaluation.
27. Madam Speaker, as we deepen our commitment to accountability and disciplined implementation, we draw inspiration from former President Thabo Mbeki, who reminded us that: **“Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity. Trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times”**
28. This enduring message calls on us to remain steadfast, innovative, and resilient as we confront the complex challenges facing our province.

EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

29. Madam Speaker, we are maintaining our efforts to enhance the institutional capacity and mechanisms to monitor the effective implementation of the Medium-Term Development Plan.
30. The imperative to reduce unemployment, poverty, and inequality drives our commitment to adopting and implementing a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework that measures and promotes the achievement of short-, medium-, and long-term results.
31. To this end, through our Cluster Coordination mechanisms, we will be ready to undertake a mid-term review of progress at a provincial level, based on the three strategic priorities of the Government of National Unity.
32. Accelerating inclusive economic growth and job creation remains a key priority on our provincial development agenda. This is being pursued through a strategic focus on high-impact sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, tourism, construction, and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), while intensifying targeted interventions aimed at addressing the persistent challenge of youth unemployment.
33. Priority interventions include expanding agricultural value chains, enhancing food security, and unlocking tourism potential through infrastructure development

and regional integration.

34. The transition to a low-carbon economy presents new opportunities for economic diversification into new economic sectors such as the green economy, renewable energy value chains and energy sector reforms.
35. Driving industrialisation and investment promotion by fast-tracking all catalytic infrastructure projects remains one of our key strategic interventions.
36. To provide momentum to our economic transformation programme and foster a coordinated approach to development, I will establish the Premier's Advisory Economic Panel by the end of the second quarter. The Panel will advise and guide the Province on strategic investment decisions and support the effective implementation of our socio-economic development strategies and plans.
37. Strengthening partnerships with the private sector, academia, and civil society, coupled with a steadfast commitment to governance reform, will underpin our efforts to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic growth across the Province.
38. Madam Speaker, the rise in criminality continues to threaten the safety of our communities and undermine economic development.
39. Crimes such as gender-based violence, drug trafficking, and infrastructure vandalism require a coordinated and decisive response.
40. We will strengthen collaboration between law enforcement agencies, community structures, and other stakeholders to enhance crime prevention, improve policing visibility, and support integrated safety initiatives at the local level.
41. To achieve these, efforts will be directed at monitoring equitable access to social services, healthcare, education and skills development, as well as initiatives aimed at promoting social cohesion.
42. Madam Speaker, central to our human development agenda is the strengthening of skills development and coordination across sectors.

43. In this regard, we are reinforcing the role of the Provincial Human Resource Development Council as a strategic platform to align education, training, and skills development with the economic needs of our province.
44. This Council will bring together government, business, labour, and academic institutions to ensure that our skills pipeline responds directly to priority sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and digital innovation.
45. It will also monitor the implementation of skills development programmes and promote better coordination across all spheres.
46. Madam Speaker, while we recognise the critical role of local government in service delivery, we must also honestly acknowledge the persistent challenges facing many of our municipalities.
47. In response, we will intensify provincial support and oversight through targeted interventions, including strengthening administrative leadership, enforcing consequence management, and improving financial governance systems.
48. Working with CoGHSTA and SALGA, we will prioritise the stabilisation of distressed municipalities and ensure that local government becomes a reliable vehicle for development.
49. Good governance cannot be complete without stability and good performance of Departments, Local Government, Public Entities, and our law enforcement agencies.
50. In partnership with the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), the Cluster will coordinate and oversee the implementation of District Development Plans, ensuring integrated service delivery and spatially targeted investments.

51. Madam Speaker, in the previous financial year, we committed to conducting five evaluation studies. I am pleased to report that we have concluded the following planned studies:
- The evaluation of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme implemented by COGHSTA,
 - The Tourism Safety Monitoring programme through the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison (DCSSL),
 - The *Phezukomkhono Mlimi* implemented in the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA),
 - The Premier's Youth Development Fund in the Office of the Premier (OTP), and
 - The Louisville Road Paving project through the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.
52. The studies have revealed a hybrid of intended and unintended outcomes and highlighted a mixture of weaknesses and strengths in the implementation processes of these interventions.
53. After handing over these reports, custodian departments should develop improvement plans to address the findings and implement recommendations emanating from the evaluation studies.

STRENGTHENING RESEARCH SERVICES

54. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to address you on three essential pillars aimed at strengthening research services to enhance service delivery across the province: These are the Provincial Research Agenda, the Service Delivery Monitoring Tool, and the Post-EXCO Outreach Reports.
55. Firstly, the Provincial Research Agenda is a fundamental pillar of evidence-based policymaking.
56. In a context where resources are scarce and community needs are high, it is vital that our decisions are based on reliable data, comprehensive analysis, and applicable research.

57. The Research Agenda helps us identify priority areas, understand emerging challenges, and develop interventions that are both effective and sustainable.
58. It ensures that the government does not act in isolation but is guided by knowledge, innovation, and the lived experiences of our citizens.
59. Secondly, the Service Delivery Monitoring Tool represents our commitment to accountability and performance. It provides a systematic approach to tracking progress, measuring outcomes, and identifying service delivery gaps across departments.
60. This tool, Madam Speaker, allows us to move beyond assumptions and depend on real-time information for guiding corrective actions.
61. It further enables leadership to respond quickly to challenges, enhance efficiency, and ensure that services are delivered to communities in a timely and fair manner.
62. Equally important are the Post-EXCO Outreach Reports. These reports serve as a critical feedback mechanism between government and the people, capturing the concerns, expectations, and experiences of communities following Executive Council outreach programmes. They provide valuable insights that enable government to respond more effectively to community needs and strengthen accountability, responsiveness, and participatory governance.
63. Madam Speaker, by bringing these three elements together, we establish a strong governance framework. The Provincial Research Agenda guides our planning, the Service Delivery Monitoring Tool guarantees effective implementation, and the Post-EXCO Outreach Reports offer feedback for ongoing improvement.
64. As we move forward, we will strengthen coordination, invest in data and systems, and cultivate a culture of responsiveness within our institutions. We will ensure that research translates into action, monitoring leads to improvement, and community voices shape our priorities.

EFFECTIVE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

- 65.** Madam Speaker, the effective management of information and knowledge management is increasingly central to building a capable and responsive state.
- 66.** At the heart of a modern, developmental government lies its ability to harness knowledge, to learn from experience, to share information efficiently, and to apply insights to improve decision-making and service delivery. The development of the Provincial Knowledge Management Policy is therefore a foundational step.
- 67.** This policy will establish a structured framework to guide the creation, capture, sharing, and utilisation of knowledge across departments.
- 68.** It aims to ensure the preservation of valuable institutional memory, the replication of best practices, and the promotion of innovation throughout the public service.
- 69.** Central to this entire ecosystem is the maintenance of the Provincial Knowledge Management Central Repository. This repository serves as a single, accessible platform for storing and sharing information, research, lessons learned, and best practices.
- 70.** It is a vital resource that promotes transparency, avoids duplication of efforts, and enhances efficiency across government. By maintaining and continuously improving this repository, we ensure that knowledge remains accessible, relevant, and secure for all users.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT UNIT

- 71.** Through this newly established unit in my office, there are two critical initiatives that are essential for strengthening governance, enhancing policy coherence, and advancing the development agenda of our province.
- 72.** These are the development of the Provincial Policies Database and the review of key provincial macro policies, particularly the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path.

73. In an increasingly complex governance environment, access to accurate, up-to-date, and well-coordinated policy information is essential. The development of the Provincial Policies Database is therefore a strategic intervention aimed at consolidating all provincial policies into a single, accessible, and well-managed platform.
74. Madam Speaker, equally important is the review of our provincial macro policies, especially the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path in collaboration with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
75. This policy has acted as a guiding framework for promoting economic growth, job creation, and inclusive development within our province.
76. By setting a 15-day deadline for Heads of Department to submit their performance agreements, we are signalling our unwavering commitment to performance, accountability, and effective governance. This administration is prepared to work, prepared to be held accountable, and prepared to lead in delivering tangible results for our people.
77. We will continue to monitor and assess our performance and where there is non-performance, there will be consequences. This is our commitment to a professionalised, capable, and servant-led provincial government.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT MONITORING AND REPORTING

78. The long-awaited Project Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit within the Office finally began its work in November last year. It will assist in the monitoring of the implementation of infrastructure projects, to ensure better delivery of the planned infrastructure.
79. A comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation framework for infrastructure projects in the province has been created, serving as a tool that guides how infrastructure projects are monitored, reported and evaluated.
80. Madam Speaker, we cannot speak about infrastructure planning and delivery without acknowledging the devastating disaster that recently affected parts of our province.

81. Severe weather conditions resulted in widespread damage to critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and public facilities, severely disrupting communities and local economies.
82. In response, we are working closely with relevant departments and national partners to prioritise the rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected infrastructure, while integrating climate-resilient designs into future projects to safeguard our province against similar events.
83. We are further exploring partnerships with the Infrastructure Finance and Implementation Support Agency (IFISA) and Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), among others, as strategic, catalytic infrastructure partners that operate at a scale to build bankable pipelines, mobilise Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), and private sector capital to enable delivery, strengthen institutions, and drive measurable impact.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

84. We have established a strategic partnership between the *Longnan* Municipal Government of the People's Republic of China and the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, with the main objectives focused on industrial cooperation, cultural tourism exchange, talent identification, infrastructure development and good governance.
85. The Mpumalanga Provincial Government has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Mpumalanga, outlining clear areas of collaboration, including the hybrid rice project, research and development, knowledge management, and training and development, amongst others.
86. This collaboration allocates 1.2 million hectares to Hybrid Rice cultivation, which will produce 14.4 million tons annually with an estimated turnover of over R40 billion rand.

87. The Hybrid Rice project is expected to create at least 388,000 jobs across all phases. Additionally, this partnership will focus on projects such as advanced maize, sorghum, and vegetable production, and will be implemented through the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs.
88. The Office has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services (MERSETA) to train unemployed youth in technical trades, including artisan development, apprenticeships, graduates' development programmes, and skills development.
89. These efforts aim to address high unemployment by equipping young people with technical skills, enabling them to become employable within the province.
90. Madam Speaker, we are pleased to report that my Office is in the advanced stages of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF).
91. This collaboration aims to promote and facilitate sustainable Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) by providing both financial and non-financial support to black-owned businesses.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

92. In 2025, South Africa took on the G20 Presidency, marking a significant milestone in its global leadership. Ahead of the main G20 activities, a series of outreach and preparatory efforts were carried out across the country to promote inclusive participation and align with national development priorities.
93. As part of the G20 host provinces, our province successfully hosted six G20 Ministerial Meetings and twelve G20 Working Groups with the aim of promoting global economic growth, harnessing the power of technological innovation, especially digitalisation, and tackling challenges influencing the global economy.
94. During the 2026/27 financial year, the Office initiated preparations to establish a formal partnership with Taita Taveta County (Province) in Kenya. This partnership

is envisaged to strengthen bilateral cooperation and knowledge exchange in identified priority areas.

95. South Africa is acting as the Interim Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from November 2025 to August 2026, following Madagascar's decision to relinquish its Chairship due to internal political developments.
96. South Africa will therefore officially assume the SADC Chairship in August 2026. To support this mandate, our country officially launched the South African SADC National Committee (SASCOM) on 13 November 2025.
97. The establishment of SASCOM offers a structured mechanism to promote broader stakeholder participation, ensuring coordinated national input into South Africa's engagement with SADC processes and programmes.
98. Mpumalanga Province will support and coordinate activities related to both the interim role and the upcoming South African Chairship programme.

REVIEWED ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

99. Madam Speaker, the success of any organisation in achieving its vision and goals depends on its human resource capacity. To achieve this vision, we have restructured our organisation to ensure that the Office is fit for purpose.
100. Furthermore, we are committed to strengthening the entire Provincial Government by monitoring the implementation of the revised organisational structures of departments, in line with the priorities of the 7th Administration.
101. Following a thorough review and restructuring within the Office, a strategic decision has been made to decentralise and transfer the internal audit function to the respective departments.
102. This reform is driven by our aspiration to improve provincial audit outcomes. By strengthening internal controls at a source and enabling proactive risk management within departments, we aim to reduce audit findings, enhance the credibility of financial and performance reporting, and progressively move the

province towards clean audit outcomes across all institutions.

- 103.** Importantly, this shift does not dilute our oversight role. The Office of the Premier, working together with Provincial Treasury, will continue to retain a strategic coordination and monitoring role to ensure uniformity in standards, adherence to professional frameworks, and alignment with provincial priorities.

PREMIER'S DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

- 104.** The Premier's Office has been implementing the Premier Discretionary Bursary with an objective of supporting academically deserving students in accessing institutions of higher learning to obtain qualifications that will enhance their employability.
- 105.** Since the inception of this bursary programme, it has supported graduates across diverse disciplines, including medicine, engineering, agriculture, law, aviation, business science, and information technology.
- 106.** For the 2026 academic year, we have awarded 27 bursaries totaling R4 million across various fields of study. The bursary recipients are beneficiaries of Mpumalanga Province with more than 60% being females.
- 107.** By investing in the education of the girl child, we are not only empowering individuals but also strengthening families, communities, and the broader economy.
- 108.** Our approach is therefore balanced and inclusive, promoting gender parity while creating equitable opportunities for all young people in the province to realise their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

MPUMALANGA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND

- 109.** Madam Speaker, in the 2025/26 financial year, the Office of the Premier had set aside R103 million for the Premier's Youth Development Fund to propel 54 youth enterprises of the Province to participate in the economy.
- 110.** We have invited a few of these beneficiaries, and I request them to stand in the following order:

- **Ms Sfeziwe Mkhabela from Project Artour (Pty) Ltd.** A manufacturing and clothing company in the City of Mbombela. This enterprise has the capacity to produce high-quality, professional and industrial workwear. We encourage the private sector and businesses to support this entrepreneurship.
 - **Mr Mmanoko Malapile of MJM Investment (Pty) Ltd,** based in the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, has successfully established a fully compliant car mechanical workshop that is registered with the Retail Motor Industry Organisation. I wish to encourage Hon. Members to support this local enterprise by considering it for their vehicle servicing and mechanical maintenance needs.
 - **Mr Sizwe Khaba of Youth Minds Poultry Farm (Pty) Ltd** from Msukaligwa Local Municipality. This company is at the final stage of operationalisation and will soon produce a minimum of 5000 broilers per month.
111. Our intervention for youth empowerment is impactful and yields positive results for the youth in the province. 2307 job opportunities have been created through the funded enterprises since the inception of this fund in 2021.
112. As part of our commitment to youth development, the Provincial Youth Development Strategy is underway. This strategy will strengthen the planning and implementation of youth-targeted programmes to grow the province's economy and to address high youth unemployment.

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL AIDS COUNCIL (MPAC)

113. Madam Speaker, the Provincial Implementation Plan for HIV, STIs and TB for 2023-2028, as well as the Global Alliance plan to end AIDS in children, has been developed and will be adopted by the Executive Council in the current financial year. The main objectives of these plans are to accelerate prevention, increase access to treatment, overcome social and structural barriers and ensure sustainable people-centred care.
114. We have centred HIV treatment and prevention on ultra-long-acting injectables, including Lenacapavir (LEN), to improve adherence, expand prevention

coverage, and enhance long-term health outcomes. On 5 June 2026, the President, together with the National Department of Health and the Provincial Department of Health, launched this programme in our province at the Gert Sibande District Municipality, within the Govan Mbeki Municipality.

- 115.** In support of civil society in the province, we have concluded the sector assessments and audits conducted at local municipalities. In the current financial year, we will focus on municipal-level civil society elections.
- 116.** The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is celebrated annually to promote the rights, inclusion, and well-being of persons with disabilities. The commemoration serves as a platform to demonstrate government's commitment to inclusivity, enhance responsiveness to the needs of persons with disabilities, and address issues that affect their full and equal participation in society.

PARTICIPATION OF TARGET GROUPS IN PROCUREMENT

- 117.** Madam Speaker, The Office is making significant strides in advancing procurement objectives, particularly in broadening participation in public procurement opportunities for designated groups.
- 118.** During the year under review, the Office exceeded its targets for women owned enterprises, achieving 42% against a target of 40%, and for youth owned enterprises, achieving 45% against a target of 30%. However, the Office did not achieve its targets for enterprises owned by persons with disabilities and military veterans.
- 119.** We acknowledge this shortcoming and remain committed to implementing targeted interventions for the 2026/27 financial year. The Office will focus on broadening economic participation by ensuring that companies owned by persons with disabilities and military veterans participate fully in our procurement and supply of goods and services.

TACKLING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE (GBVF)

- 120.** Madam Speaker, as part of tackling Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in the Province, we have launched the Mpumalanga Provincial Council on GBVF, which I have the honour to chair, with the assistance of my co-chair, Ms Nomalanga Ngwenya, a member of Civil Society Organisations.
- 121.** This structure serves as a provincial accountability platform, providing updates on the implementation of the Provincial Strategic Plan on GBVF, approved in November 2024.
- 122.** We are intensifying our efforts to combat the scourge of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). In response to the President's declaration of GBVF as a national disaster, we have ensured that our departmental and municipal plans are aligned to address this challenge.
- 123.** Furthermore, we have strengthened and expanded GBVF prevention programmes and interventions aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, raising awareness, and fostering safer communities.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

- 124.** Madam Speaker, the Mpumalanga Provincial Government places strong emphasis on transparency and accountability as fundamental components of accountability to the 5.3 million members of our province's population.
- 125.** In the previous financial year, we reported to this August house that we had approved a five-year Integrated Provincial Communication Strategy to ensure the effective flow of communication between the government and communities.
- 126.** The Strategy is vital to entrench transparency and responsiveness anticipated by the communities, using various platforms, such as media, digital platforms and public engagement sessions.
- 127.** The Office of the Premier is determined to intensify communication with communities, thereby entrenching transparency and accountability.

128. In this current financial year, we will conduct three EXCO Outreach programmes to maximise public engagement.

FIGHTING FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

129. Public resources are entrusted to us for the benefit of our people, and we have a duty to protect them.

130. Any official found to be involved in acts of fraud, corruption, or maladministration will face decisive disciplinary and legal consequences.

131. To institutionalise ethical behaviour, EXCO has approved the reviewal of our Provincial Anti-Corruption Strategy. This strategy is rooted in the vision of integrity, accountability, and effective governance, to be achieved by stabilising the interphase between political and administrative relations and strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms.

132. Madam Speaker, as part of implementing the Provincial Anti-Corruption Strategy, we will work closely with COGHSTA and SALGA to ensure that Municipalities also adopt the Code of Ethical Leadership in Local Government for Municipal Councillors.

133. We continue to monitor Departments and Municipalities on compliance with the Public Service Integrity Framework. We have enhanced our efforts to capacitate communities to detect and report fraud, corruption, and maladministration through rigorous awareness campaigns across Local and District Municipalities, including Departments.

134. Working with Institutions of Higher Learning like the University of Pretoria, we have a programme of capacitating and developing our Investigators to sharpen their investigations and align with the challenges presented by the changing environment, such as Artificial Intelligence.

135. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to state that the Vetting Field Unit sub-directorate is operational, and our collaboration with SSA through an MOU will ensure that the vetting processes are finalised within a reasonable period.

136. We will introduce and institutionalise lifestyle audits for senior officials and targeted categories of employees across the provincial administration. These audits will serve as a proactive measure to detect unexplained wealth, prevent corruption, and reinforce ethical conduct.
137. Madam Speaker, the success of our plans depends not only on policy and resources, but on the integrity, discipline, and commitment of those entrusted with implementation. We must collectively uphold the highest standards of ethical leadership and service to our people.
138. Madam Speaker, this week, our Mpumalanga International Food Market welcomed its first client, Green Farms Nuts Co., which has begun storing its macadamia produce on site. This marks an important milestone, as the White River based company previously had to incur additional costs by transporting and storing its produce in Gauteng.
139. This development highlights the market's practical value as a strategic investment that supports local farmers and agro-processors, reduces operational costs, creates employment opportunities, and enhances export capacity by bringing storage and market access.
140. It is therefore an honour, Madam Speaker, to table the budget of the Office of the Premier, Vote 1, and I accordingly request the House to approve the amount of **R 505 959 000.00 (Five Hundred and five Million, nine Hundred and fifty-nine Thousand Rand)** for the 2026/27 financial year, allocated as follows:
- **Programme 1: Administration**
R 197 190 000.00 (One Hundred and ninety-seven Million one Hundred and ninety Thousand Rand)
 - **Programme 2: Institutional Development Support and Integrity Management**
R 241 591 000.00 (Two Hundred and Forty-one Million five Hundred and ninety-one Thousand Rand)
 - **Programme 3: Policy, Research, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**
R 67 178 000.00 (Sixty-seven Million, one Hundred and seventy-eight Thousand Rand).

I Thank You, Siyabonga, Re a leboga, Ha khensa, Siyathokoza

