



Member of the Executive Council
For Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

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Netesimondzawo

Departement van Landbou,
Landelike Ontwikkeling,
Grond en Ongewing Sake

umNyango weZelimo
UkuThuthukiswa kweeNdawo zemaKhaya,
iNarha neeNdaba zeBhoduluko

**POLICY AND BUDGET VOTE No. 5
2025/2026 FINANCIAL YEAR
BY MEC HON. BK. MOEKETSI (MPL)
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Theme: “Driving Impact Through Collaboration, Execution, and Results”

Honourable Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, M.C Masilela

Honourable Deputy Speaker, S. Masango

Chief Whip of the Majority Party

Honourable Premier, M.P Ndlovu

Members of the Executive Council and Provincial Legislature

The Provincial Secretary of the governing party, Cde M.G Chirwa

Leaders of the alliance

Leader of the Official Opposition and all political parties represented

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Hon. Collen Sedibe

Chairperson of the House of Traditional and Khoi-san Leaders and all traditional leaders
present

Director-General, Ms. M.M. Skosana

HOD of the Department, Mr. C.M. Chunda, and fellow Heads of Departments

Representatives from the African National Congress, Organised Agriculture, Business, and
Labour

Esteemed Mayors, Councillors, Farmers, Guests, Members of the Media, and the Public

Ladies and Gentlemen

A. INTRODUCTION – A NEW ERA FOR AGRICULTURE

Honourable Speaker,

1. It is with deep humility and a firm sense of duty that I stand before you to table the 2025/2026 Policy and Budget Vote for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs.

2. This budget is a strategic instrument—crafted not only to align with the Honourable Premier Mandla Padney Ndlovu's State of the Province Address—but to fulfil the aspirations of our people in rural and marginalised areas.

3. **Madam Speaker**, we are heeding the Premier's three key directives to ensure the successful operationalisation of the Mpumalanga International Food Market by the end of July 2025, to maximise production and strengthening support to smallholder farmers through enhanced infrastructure, extension services, and targeted funding, and to prioritise agro-processing, with a strong emphasis on developing agri-hubs and driving rural empowerment across the province.

4. As we table this Policy and Budget Vote during Mandela Month, we are reminded that the true measure of our freedom lies not only in our democratic institutions, but in our people's ability to live with dignity—rooted in access to land, food, and opportunity.

5. In the words of Che Guevara, "The sovereignty of a nation is measured by its ability to feed its people." This is more than a revolutionary ideal—it is a call to action. Food security is not merely about production, it is about power, dignity, and the right of a nation to determine its own destiny.

6. This vision finds deep resonance in the historic words of Oliver Tambo, who affirmed that "we seek to create a united, democratic and non-racial society in which the people shall govern and where the land shall belong to those who work it." His call remains relevant as we strive to undo the legacy of dispossession and inequality.

7. And as Mama Albertina Sisulu so powerfully reminded us, "Landlessness and hunger strip our people of their dignity. Until this is addressed, our struggle is not complete." Her words echo the urgency of our mission—to transform rural economies, restore land to rightful owners, and ensure that no South African goes to bed hungry.

8. **Madam Speaker**, this year, our resolve is underpinned by a national milestone: for the first time, under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa presides over the Group of Twenty (G20).

9. As the first African country to assume this honour, it signals a shift—a global recognition of Africa's voice in agriculture, food security, climate resilience, and trade integration.

10. Economists agree that this is our moment to place African agriculture at the centre of the world's policy conversation.

B. POLICY CONTEXT – TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

11. Mpumalanga remains a predominantly rural province—but one with immense agricultural potential, favourable climatic conditions, and abundant resources.

12. We do not ignore our challenges—rising inequality, climate change, youth unemployment, and an ageing farmer population.

13. Yet, we see these as building blocks. As President Mandela reminded us, "A society that does not value its older generation denies its roots and endangers its future."

14. Today I say: a society that does not invest in its youth and rural economy cannot transform.

15. Our response? A policy and budget agenda grounded in collaboration, precision in execution, and measurable results.

16. We are aligning to the 7th Administration's Strategic Priorities—particularly Inclusive Growth, Job Creation, and Poverty Reduction—supported by the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS), the District

Development Model (DDM), the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Agrarian Agricultural Master Plan (AAMP).

C. DRIVING INCLUSIVE GROWTH: KEY FLAGSHIPS

Mpumalanga International Food Market (MIF)

17. **Honourable Speaker**, in pursuit of inclusive growth and sustainable job creation, we are proud to highlight one of the province's flagship interventions—the imminent operationalisation of the Mpumalanga International Food Market (MIF).

18. We have not only created a trading platform; we have built a gateway—linking our farmers, from Smallholder, Emerging Farmers to Large-scale Farmers by bridging the gap and providing access to buyers in local wards, townships, province and nationwide. We have further managed to secure partnerships in Oman and China which will enable our farmers to be players in the global supply chains.

19. This facility will displace barriers, reduce reliance on localised and unreliable farm-gate procurement, and enable equitable sustained supply into various demand and value chains.

20. Together with the Department of Small Business Development and our Market Operator, we are piloting 30 “Food Market Squares” in 30 wards—out of a targeted 400.

21. These outlets will be operated by local SMMEs selling fresh vegetables, grain, meat, and dairy—with 1,600 SMMEs expected to benefit by the end of the MTDP.

22. The Mkhuhlu AgriHub continues to coordinate supply to 32 hospitals and six boarding schools—working with 101 smallholder farmers.

23. Additionally, we are completing repairs at the Mkhondo AgriHub, expanding fresh produce distribution in Gert Sibande District spread across all the municipality in the District.

D. REVOLUTIONIZING FINANCE: THE MPUMALANGA AGRO FUND

24. Honourable Speaker, Today, we officially announce the Mpumalanga Agro-Fund—a transformative R400 million blended finance partnership designed to drive inclusive agricultural development within the Province.

25. This is a strategic undertaking between DARDLEA and National Empowerment Fund. This agro-fund is open to other strategic partners and various agreements of collaboration are underway.

The Strategic Partners includes:

- National Empowerment Fund (NEF)
- Land Bank;

Sanlam Insurance with tailored risk mitigation solutions for both farmers and investors;
The MIF ensures market access through guaranteed market access for all enterprises.

The expected impact is:

- Creation of 1,200 new agro-processing jobs by 2027
- Focused investment in key value chains: grains, poultry, cannabis, and aquaculture
- Direct support to strategic zones such as the Nkangala Grain Corridor and the Mkhondo AgriHub

LEGISLATIVE BACKING: THE NUTRITION SOURCING BILL

26. **Honourable Speaker**, the Mpumalanga Nutrition Sourcing Bill has been published for public comment and marks a bold legislative step towards agricultural transformation.

At its core, the Bill seeks to:

- Ensure stable and reliable market access for emerging farmers, empowering them to become active participants in the provincial food economy.
- Retain and reinvest public expenditure within Mpumalanga, ensuring that our public nutrition programmes directly benefit local producers and enterprises.

A UNIFIED CALL TO ACTION

27. Honourable Speaker, as we advance the Mpumalanga Nutrition Sourcing Bill and pursue broader efforts to transform the agricultural sector, it is essential to recognise that lasting success will require a coordinated commitment from all key stakeholders.

- To our banking and financial partners: We call on you to recognise the economic potential of black farmers—not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of sound investment. These farmers are the future of food security, local enterprise, and inclusive growth. By providing accessible financing and tailored support, you are not just backing individuals—you are investing in the long-term prosperity of Mpumalanga.
- To our farmers—both established and emerging: The tools are in your hands. The Agro Fund and the Nutrition Sourcing Bill were designed with you in mind. Use them. Leverage these instruments to build resilient farming operations, uplift your communities, and secure your rightful place in the provincial economy. Your participation is not optional—it is vital.
- To this Honourable House: Your leadership and commitment are central to realising our vision. I now present to you the plans that will accelerate agricultural transformation in Mpumalanga. Let us unite behind legislation that drives inclusion, unlocks opportunity, and builds an economy that serves all our people—especially those who have been historically excluded.

Mpumalanga Agri-Park

28. Honourable Speaker, The Agri-Park in Secunda continues to grow as a model of integrated production, agro-processing, and training.

29. Poultry and piggery infrastructure has been completed, and we now shift focus to tunnels, aquaponics, and shade-net facilities.

30. **Honourable Speaker**, this is more than just a park. It is a functional economic ecosystem—designed with the specific intent to uplift rural communities, create sustainable livelihoods, and demonstrate the power of agriculture as a driver of social and economic transformation.

E. STRATEGIC FOCUS ON TARGETED GROUPS

31. Our focus remains clear: youth, women, and persons with disabilities must be central to the agricultural revolution.

32. This year, we will operationalise the Inkanyezi Poultry Project at Chief Albert Luthuli, and activate “Eggsellent by Lebo at Thembeisile Hani Municipality,” both female-owned enterprises.

33. As we approach the Women month, we are conscious about the role women play in this sector. We continue with the focus of empowering women in Agriculture and Rural development and Environment. We will strengthen the empowerment of these women to ensure that we streamline all activities of farming, agro- processing and environment.

34. In Nkangala, the “Grain Corridor” strategy is bearing fruit with support to Thembeisile Hani Grain farmers in Thembeisile Hani municipality, Dr JS Moroka grain farmers, Bakgatla Co-op both in Dr JS Moroka Municipality.

35. The revival of the Senteeko Tea Estate in the City of Mbombela —now restituted to Shamile CPA—includes electrification, sewer upgrades, and factory design.

36. There are farmers in the Bushbuckridge local municipality who will be supported with irrigation systems and perimeter fencing for vegetable production like Danica Primary Cooperative and Elmorah Green.

F. REDUCING POVERTY & THE COST OF LIVING

Phezukomkhono Mlimi Programme

37. The Phezukomkhono Mlimi Programme represents a strategic shift in addressing food insecurity—not through temporary handouts, but by empowering communities to produce their own food and build sustainable livelihoods. This approach focuses on enabling self-sufficiency, resilience, and dignity.

38. In 2025/26, we will support 13,000 households, establish 690 food gardens, and cultivate 18,000 hectares—creating 520 EPWP jobs in the process.

Masibuyel' Esibayeni

39. Mpumalanga continues to demonstrate its strength in livestock production, proudly ranking among the top five provinces nationally. However, our farmers still face challenges that limit their ability to scale and fully benefit from this potential. Through the Masibuyel' Esibayeni initiative, we are committed to changing that.

40. This year, 66 projects will receive livestock sets—benefiting 512 farmers and creating 68 jobs.

41. We are restoring value chains by investing in processing and abattoir infrastructure.

42. We are piloting a new technology on our research farms that uses biometric tracking and Global positioning system (GPS) for livestock, alongside air quality monitoring stations equipped with early detection systems. This integrated approach aims to combat the high levels of livestock and infrastructure theft.

43. We acknowledge the difficulties faced by the poultry commercial farmers in Nkangala District, who were adversely impacted by the collapse of the Daybreak market. We are collaborating with them as they seek to identify alternative markets.

G. ANIMAL HEALTH AND EXPORTS

44. **Honourable Speaker**, the battle against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) has been hard fought.

45. There have been six outbreaks recorded since April—but thanks to strong collaboration with the national department, we have controlled the disease and reopened an abattoir sustaining over 1,400 jobs.

46. A national FMD Indaba has started yesterday and continuing today where all Provinces are deliberating on finding permanent solutions, and we are confident that export markets—including China, Botswana, and eSwatini—will reopen.

47. We have recruited 22 new veterinary graduates and will deploy more animal health technicians to high-risk areas.

H. SKILLS, RESEARCH & AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

48. We are boosting soil labs and GIS mapping to support precision agriculture.

49. Mpumalanga holds potential in aquaculture, especially warm freshwater systems.

50. We will provide inputs, training, and market facilitation for this emerging sector.

51. Through mentorship and accredited training, we will capacitate youth, women, and people with disabilities to become agripreneurs.

52. We continue to train farmers in South African Good Agricultural Practices (SAGAP) and Hazards Analysis Critical and Control Point (HACCP) certification for food safety measures to ensure that they are ready to supply the markets.

I. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & CLIMATE ADAPTATION

53. Honourable Speaker, our constitutional duty is clear—we must protect the environment for current and future generations.

54. This year, we will:

- Expand biodiversity stewardship and partnerships with schools
- Ensure fair transition to a low-carbon economy through worker retraining and green investment
- Improve turnaround times for Environmental Impact Assessment's (EIA) to under 60 days
- Enforce environmental crime prosecutions

Air Quality Monitoring

55. Our six air monitoring stations in Nkangala, Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni will remain fully operational. We will introduce low-cost sensors and strengthen pollution reduction enforcement.

Waste Management and Circular Economy

56. Through the Zonda Insila programme, we will create 249 EPWP jobs in waste collection and recycling.

57. Community awareness campaigns and stronger municipal partnerships will address illegal dumping and landfill compliance.

J. COLLABORATION FOR RESULTS: THE DELIVERY MODEL

58. Our delivery is rooted in the District Development Model (DDM).

59. We are aligning budgets and plans across municipalities, traditional councils, and provincial departments.

K. CONCLUSION – AN ECONOMY ROOTED IN RURAL TRANSFORMATION

60. This Budget is a declaration of hope. It is an investment in our youth, women, persons with disability and smallholder farmers.

61. Let us all rally behind the call: “Let Agriculture Grow and Green Mpumalanga!”

VOTE 5: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS 2025/2026

62. **Madam Speaker**, it is my request that this House approves the 2025/26 budget for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, *Vote 05, which is R1,615,634,000 (One billion, six hundred fifteen million, six hundred thirty-four thousand rand)*

1. Administration: Two hundred and seventeen million, eight hundred and thirty-seven thousand Rands (R217,837 000)
2. Sustainable Resource Management: Seventy-six million, five hundred and forty-six thousand Rands (R 76,546 000)
3. Agricultural Producer Support and Development: Seven hundred and twelve million, two hundred and eighty-nine thousand Rands (R712 289 000)
4. Veterinary Services: One hundred and fifty-five million, seven hundred and five thousand Rands (R155,705 000)
5. Research and Technology Development Services: Seventy-three million, forty thousand Rands (R73,040 000)
6. Agricultural Economics Services: One hundred and fifty-nine million eight hundred and sixty-seven thousand Rands (R159,867 000)
7. Structured Agricultural Education and Training: Twenty-nine million six hundred and ninety-eight thousand Rands (R29,698 000)
8. Rural Development Coordination: Twenty-five million eight hundred and eighty-three thousand Rands (R25,883 000)

9. Environmental Affairs: One hundred and sixty-four million, seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand Rands (R164,769 000)

TOTAL ALLOCATION: One billion, six hundred and fifteen million, six hundred and thirty-four thousand Rands (R1,615,634 000)

L.CLOSING REMARKS

63. **Madam Speaker**, I would like to commence by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their unwavering support throughout my journey.

64. I also wish to sincerely thank the African National Congress, its Leagues, the Alliance, and the broader Mass Democratic Movement for their continued confidence in me and for making this moment possible.

65. I am deeply honoured by the opportunity given to me by the Honourable Premier Mr Mandla Padney Ndlovu to serve as a member of the Executive Council. I accept this responsibility with humility and commitment.

66 Acknowledgement is due to my predecessor, the former MEC, Ms Nompumelelo Hlophe, for the solid foundation she laid—one that we will continue to build upon as we move the department forward.

67. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Portfolio Committee, led by Hon. Collen Sedibe, and the steadfast team under the leadership of HOD Mr. Cain Mfana Chunda. Their unwavering dedication, oversight, and collaborative spirit have been instrumental in advancing the department's objectives and ensuring good governance.

68. Lastly, heartfelt salute is extended to our farmers, stakeholders, and the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-san Leaders, under the leadership of Kgoshi Mathupa Lameck Mokoena, for their invaluable contributions.

69. Let us execute with discipline. Let us collaborate with resolve. Let us deliver results.

Thank you. Ke a leboga. Siyabonga. Ndza Khensa



