



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# BUDGET

**VOTE 4 2025/26**

*Building Resilience for Sustained Inclusive  
Growth and Economic Transformation*



**Rev. Musa Zondi**

MEC for Department of Economic  
Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs



**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**



# **BUDGET POLICY SPEECH 2025/2026 DELIVERED TO THE KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE BY MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, REV MUSA ZONDI ON 24 APRIL 2025**

*Building Resilience for Sustained Inclusive  
Growth and Economic Transformation*





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

### RECOGNITION OF DIGNITARIES

Madam Speaker, Honourable Nontembeko Boyce;

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ms. Mmabatho Tembe;

The Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, Honourable Mr Thami Ntuli;

Honourable Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Executive Council;

Members of the Royal Family Present;

Amakhosi and Izinduna;

Esteemed Members of this august House;

Representatives of all of our social and economic partner formations;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Your Worships, the Mayors and councillors;

Distinguished Guests;

Members of the media present;

Ladies and Gentlemen





## Introduction

Honourable Speaker,

The work of economic development cannot wait — and in KwaZulu-Natal, it isn't.

We present this 2025/26 budget in a time of rising urgency, but also rising opportunity. It is a time that demands boldness, coordination, and a relentless focus on implementation.

This is a budget that prioritises catalytic interventions, expands our industrial and energy capacity, backs rural and township enterprise, and positions tourism and environmental resilience as drivers of growth.

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs remains focused on its core mandate: ***driving inclusive and sustainable economic development, accelerating job creation, advancing industrialisation, and ensuring that growth contributes to the elimination of poverty and economic inequality.***

We carry forward the theme:

***“Building Resilience for Sustained Inclusive Growth and Economic Transformation.”***

Honourable Speaker, this is not a slogan. It is a working agenda. And to realise it, we are taking bold steps — right now.







## Balancing the Economy Across KwaZulu-Natal

This budget is driven by a core priority of the 7th Administration:

That no one must be left behind.

While Durban remains our gateway for trade, logistics, and investment, economic development must reach every part of our province, not just the metros, but the deepest rural communities, small towns, and emerging nodes of opportunity.

Honourable Speaker, we are:

- Supporting industrial resurgence in Newcastle, Colenso, and Richards Bay;
- Driving township economic revitalisation in every single district, with focused interventions already underway in places like Mandeni, Nongoma, Ezakheni, KwaMashu, and Mbazwana.
- Reviving small town commercial nodes like Vryheid, Ulundi, Harding, and other outlying towns.
- And investing in infrastructure that connects rural production to urban markets, and also builds confidence in new investment destinations, and closes historical development gaps.

We remain committed to the growth and empowerment of Black Industrialists.

Through targeted programmes and strategic partnerships, we will continue to support their participation in key sectors of the provincial economy — recognising their critical role in building a transformed, inclusive industrial base.

In this way, we are taking the economy to the people, not waiting for people to find the economy.





## Energy and Industrialisation

Honourable Speaker, through the 2024 KwaZulu-Natal Investment Conference, our province secured R85.2 billion in private-sector investment commitments, with the potential to create over 82,000 permanent jobs.

As Richards Bay has been designated to be South Africa's Energy Hub - a move that positions KwaZulu-Natal at the centre of the country's energy future, we are doing everything in our power to accelerate and consolidate its development. With peak demand already exceeding 6,700MW, the need for local generation and alternative sources of energy is urgent and well-established.

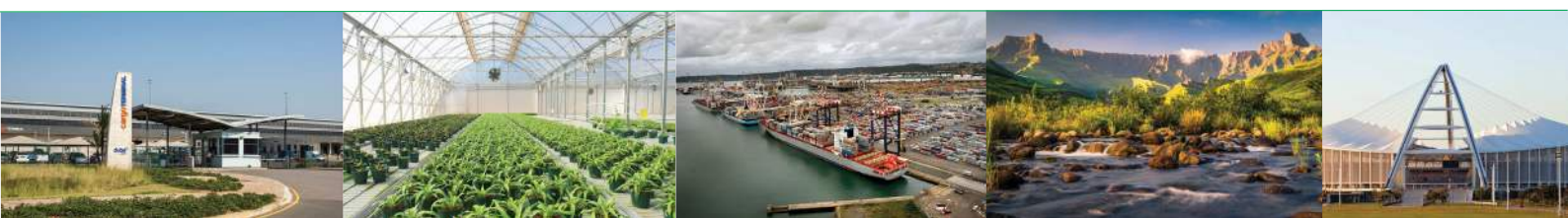
To advance this, the Department, in partnership with the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone, will, this year, host the KZN Energy Indaba. This Department-led initiative will bring together energy stakeholders to accelerate KwaZulu-Natal's leadership in the national transition.

Honourable Speaker, The Colenso Power Project, while privately funded, is a catalytic investment supported by the Department through packaging and facilitation. Valued at R9.78 billion, it features a hybrid base-load power facility with clean fuels, hydrogen, and battery storage, marking a national-scale anchor for the uThukela District.

It is impossible to speak about industrial renewal without mentioning ArcelorMittal South Africa (AMSA). We are supporting the revitalisation of AMSA, which remains a key anchor in the province's steel manufacturing value chain and a catalyst for supplier development and industrial jobs.

For decades, AMSA has stood as a pillar of Newcastle's economy, supporting jobs, SMMEs, and broader industrial activity.

It is in this context that we welcome the recent announcement by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Honourable Parks Tau, confirming that national government is developing a support plan to stabilise and reposition AMSA's Newcastle operations.





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

The provincial government stands ready to partner in this effort, ensuring that infrastructure, energy, and logistical challenges are addressed.

Our goal is to see AMSA re-emerge as a flagship steel and beneficiation hub, contributing to local manufacturing, export competitiveness, and the broader economic recovery of the northern region. This is not only about protecting existing jobs, important as this is, it is about restoring Newcastle's rightful place in our industrial future.

In Newcastle, we are also working towards revitalising the former Karbochem site into a modern industrial park, with warehousing, liquid storage, labs, and logistics infrastructure - creating new energy and manufacturing opportunities for the northern part of the province.

Honourable Speaker, KwaZulu-Natal remains a national leader in automotive manufacturing, anchored by major investors such as Toyota South Africa, based in Prospecton. Toyota continues to drive innovation and resilience in our manufacturing base, including its investment in hybrid vehicle production, localisation of components manufacturing, and supplier development. Through partnerships with the private sector and support from our Department, we are working to strengthen the full automotive value chain, from logistics to skills development and black industrialist participation.

## Township and Informal Economy

We have always recognised the pivotal role that the township and rural economy plays in the broader economic development strategy of KwaZulu-Natal.

We are pleased to announce that we have finalised the KZN Informal Economy Masterplan: a blueprint to formalise, support, and elevate informal businesses through licensing systems, compliance support, and investment in shared infrastructure.





The Bulk Buying Programme, also known as the Zimele Bulk Buying Scheme, led by Ithala Development Finance Corporation and piloted in Mandeni, enables township and rural retailers to source stock affordably through grants - shifting purchasing power back into local hands because we want everyone to benefit, and no one to be left behind.

In addition to the above, we are actively facilitating other catalytic investments to boost small towns' economic growth and development.

This includes:

- The Princess Mkabayi Mall in Vryheid, which is now fully operational;
- The Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Mall in Empangeni, revitalising the commercial heart of the north. This will boost the development and growth of the retail sector in Umhlathuze Municipality;
- A major expansion project underway at Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) to drive industrial activity and associated enterprise support;
- The expansion and modernisation of the NPC-Hauxin Cement Factory in the Ray Nkonyeni Municipality, in the South Coast;
- The KwaDukuza Precinct Value Centre, combining retails and logistics access in a high-growth node, adding a much-welcomed development in KwaDukuza Municipality;
- And the upcoming Sappi Expansion Project valued at R10.8 billion, in Umkomaas in the South Coast. This will significantly bolster agro-processing, packaging, and value-addition in the forestry economy.

These developments form part of a deliberate shift, to unlock investment in areas that have historically been left behind. This will help to stimulate inclusive growth that bridges the rural-urban divide, as well as areas which have experienced stagnant economic and industrial growth.







## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

Honourable Speaker, as announced by the Honourable Premier, KwaZulu-Natal will soon embark on one of the most ambitious infrastructure undertakings in its history, the launch of the Bullet Train Project.

We, sadly, noted that some Honourable Members have no full grasp and appreciation of what a project of this magnitude will entail for KwaZulu-Natal. This is a bold future-facing infrastructure project which has a potential to improve domestic mobility of goods and passengers between KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. It also has a potential to improve and enhance regional trade.

As the Department, we fully support and applaud this initiative. It represents a bold step toward economic recovery, job creation, and modernising our provincial transport infrastructure, which are vital elements towards provincial economic growth and expansion.

This project is not just about trains, it is about injecting momentum into our economy, creating thousands of jobs, and putting people back to work, not only when the train becomes operational, but during its construction and planning phases.

It is a flagship job creation initiative, and the first of its kind for KwaZulu-Natal. We are committed to supporting the necessary infrastructure upgrades and facilities improvements, and to ensuring that this project helps change the face of transport in our province for generations to come.

## Cannabis as Emerging Industrial Sector

Our rural economy strategy also includes the formalisation and expansion of the cannabis and hemp sector, not as a side show project, but as part of a centrally focused legitimate industrial economic activity.

In this regard, we are piloting a Shared Cannabis Processing Facility in Bergville, in partnership with the CSIR and IDC. This will help support oil and fibre production and incubate small growers, ensuring traditional producers enter the value chain meaningfully.





Honourable Speaker, we are also supporting the establishment of Empilweni Herbs Distribution Pharmacy in Mtubatuba. Traditional Health Practitioners (THPs) continue to play a vital role in delivering culturally rooted and accessible healthcare to many communities in KwaZulu-Natal. In recognition of this, and in alignment with our commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use, we are proud to announce the establishment of the Empilweni Distribution Pharmacy for Traditional Health Practitioners, located at the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve.

This initiative, led by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, represents a ground-breaking step in supporting THPs with sustainable and ethical access to medicinal plants and animal by-products essential to their work. It will serve as a regulated hub for the sourcing, certification, training, and sustainable distribution of traditional medicinal materials.

Key features of the pharmacy include:

- Certified supply of medicinal plants and animal byproducts, ethically sourced from Ezemvelo's protected areas;
- Quality control and assurance, improving the safety and reliability of traditional medicine;
- Training programmes for THPs on sustainable harvesting, biodiversity protection, and conservation-compliant practices;
- Collaborative engagement with local communities and other stakeholders.

This is not just a health intervention, it is a sustainability solution. By reducing illegal harvesting pressures, the pharmacy protects biodiversity while preserving the integrity and dignity of traditional healing.

The Empilweni Pharmacy will empower practitioners, support community health, and ensure that KwaZulu-Natal remains a leader in harmonising indigenous knowledge systems with conservation imperatives.





## Tourism and Cultural Economy

Honourable Speaker, tourism is one of KwaZulu-Natal's greatest economic assets and we are repositioning it not just as a sector, but a strategic pillar of economic recovery and regional development.

In 2024, the province welcomed 3.2 million domestic and 620,000 international visitors, generating over R2 billion in revenue.

This success is not accidental. It is the result of consistent investment in tourism infrastructure, marketing, events, and destination readiness.

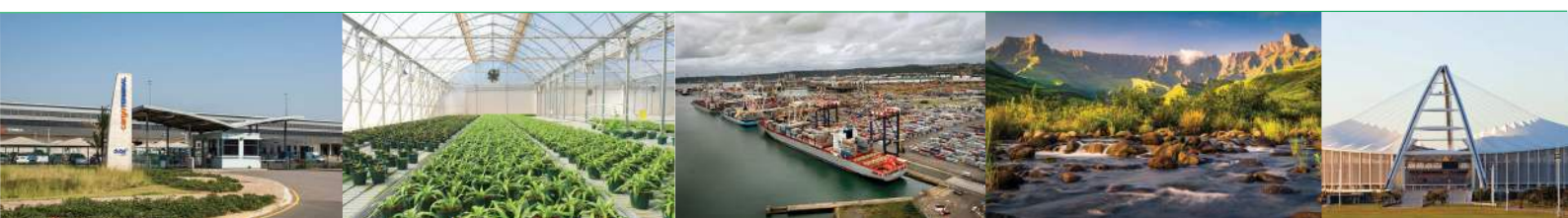
We are working closely with relevant stakeholders to grow KwaZulu-Natal's air connectivity.

King Shaka International Airport remains a strategic asset, and we are pursuing partnerships with global carriers, including efforts to secure a direct route from Air France, as well as exploring new routes to India and the United Kingdom. At the same time, the Department is supporting the repositioning of regional airports to boost domestic access, unlock regional tourism circuits, and stimulate new investment corridors. We have already started doing some work in Margate, Newcastle and Richards Bay.

Richards Bay is poised to embark on a new expanded airport in keeping with rapid local industrial developments in the area.

The Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Airport in Ulundi has undergone some vital repairs in its terminal facilities, improved safety compliance, and has received an additional R500,000 allocation for firefighting infrastructure and hangar refurbishment.

The Mkhuze Airport, in the heart of northern KZN, is also being developed toward CAT 4 compliance, with plans underway to procure Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) vehicles.





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Honourable Speaker, as we speak about the future of air connectivity and aviation-linked infrastructure, it is important to highlight the role of skills development in advancing this sector.

Today, we are joined by two exceptional young graduates, Mr. Sduduzo Manzini and Miss Phumlani Ntshangase, both from Mtubatuba in uMkhanyakude District, who are the proud products of the KZN EDTEA Aeronautical/Mechanical Engineering Bursary Programme.

Phumlani Ntshangase became the first graduate of this flagship initiative when he completed his Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering with a specialisation in Aeronautics from the University of Pretoria in 2024. He now serves in the Eskom Graduate Engineer Training Programme.

Following closely behind him, Sduduzo Manzini is set to graduate from the same programme this May. Together, they represent the Department's commitment to building a pipeline of technical talent that is rooted in rural KwaZulu-Natal, but capable of lifting our province into the skies of innovation.

These young engineers were fully supported by the Department — from tuition and accommodation, to stipends and study resources, and their presence here today is testament to the transformative power of focused investment in youth.

We salute them and the promise they hold for KwaZulu-Natal's industrial and aviation future.

Honourable Speaker, our approach is clear, and that is why the Department is prioritising supporting catalytic tourism projects through public sector coordination and investor facilitation, and this includes enabling infrastructure like the long-awaited Cable Car Project, which will unlock cross-border tourism potential.







## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

Honourable Speaker, while we understand the delays that have been experienced with respect to the much-anticipated Cable Car Project, which is to be located strategically in Okhahlamba - in the majestic Drakensberg, we are doing everything in our power to fast track the take-off for this project without further delays.

This is not a standard domestic tourism development, it is a cross-border initiative involving two countries (South Africa and Lesotho) and two provinces (KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State). Understandably, this has made coordination complex and at times, slow.

But we are making progress. We are not working in isolation as KwaZulu-Natal or South Africa alone. Rather, we will be actively engaging our counterparts to move toward a shared agreement and coordinated implementation. We realise that it has not been easy, but we hope to find each other, and we in KwaZulu-Natal, are committed to seeing this iconic, job-creating and destination-defining project through.

### **Positioning Durban as Africa's Conference Capital**

Our work to promote Durban as Africa's conferencing and business tourism hub continues. We remain committed to retaining Africa's Travel Indaba, one of the continent's largest travel trade shows, here in KwaZulu-Natal, and we are actively working with industry partners and national stakeholders to ensure it remains a provincial asset. We have the infrastructure. We have the hospitality capacity. We have the story, and the track record. In this regard, we shall be doing everything in our power to engage with the Minister of Tourism, to ensure that KwaZulu-Natal continues to play this role.





## Flagship Leisure Investments and Cultural Tourism Anchors

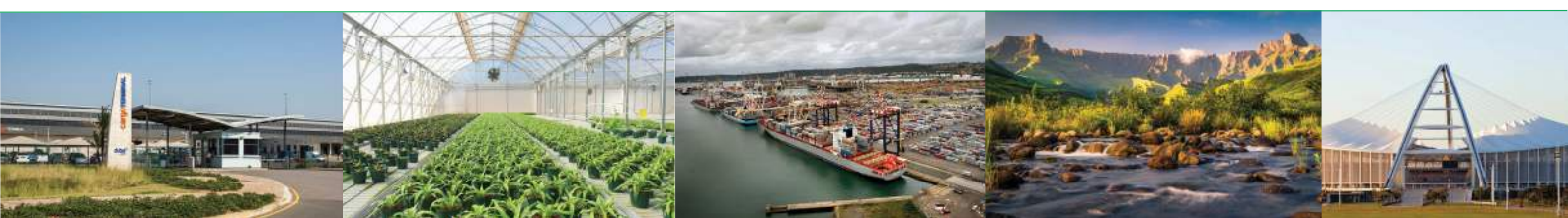
We are proud to announce that Club Med Resort at Tinley Manor is now nearing completion, and preparing to open in July 2026. This R2 billion investment will create over 2,000 permanent jobs, alongside a luxury safari lodge in Pongola. Club Med will offer a globally unique beach and safari experience – the first in Sub-Saharan Africa.

We are also supporting anchor projects in cultural tourism, including:

- The development of the Emakhosini Valley of the Kings initiative, which will establish a major cultural heritage tourism attraction in Zululand;
- Infrastructure upgrades in sites tied to Zulu Royal Family history, as well as sites that preserve liberation memory;
- The KZN Film Strategy, which recognises the province's natural beauty and potential for location-based storytelling and production.

We also emphasise that tourism development should be driven through our public entity, which is the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority (KZNTAFA). Following the recent merger, KZNTAFA now integrates both tourism and the film sector, giving us a strategic platform to grow the province's brand and creative output in both tourism development and film production.

Film production, in particular, holds immense potential. As a province rich in breath-taking landscapes, culture, and heritage, KwaZulu-Natal should not only be a location for film production, but we should be a storyteller. Through KZNTAFA, we are creating incentives and infrastructure to unlock this potential to attract both local and global productions.





## Environmental Affairs and Nature Conservation

Honourable Speaker, economic transformation must walk hand in hand with ecological stewardship, and in KwaZulu-Natal, the green economy is not a future vision, it is an active, growing sector. Through our Department's environmental programmes, we are creating jobs, building climate resilience, and restoring ecosystems - while ensuring that communities are at the centre of conservation efforts.

### Invasive Species Programme

This year, we have allocated R74 million to invasive species control.

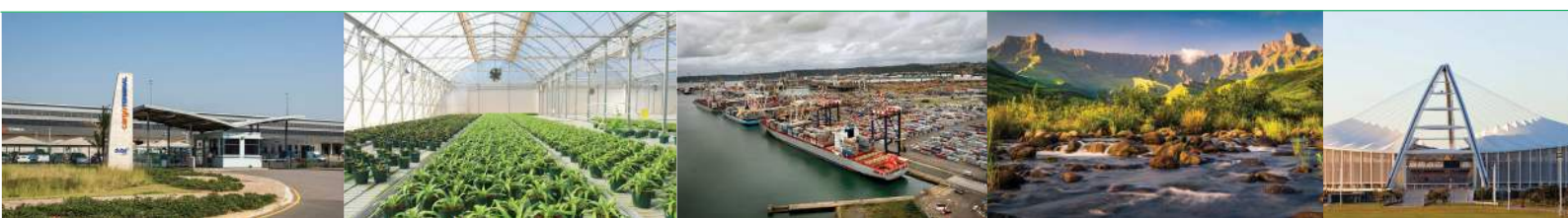
This programme will:

- Clear more than 61,000 hectares of land;
- Create over 2,275 EPWP job opportunities;
- And improve biodiversity outcomes across priority bioregions.

### Green Infrastructure and Climate Innovation

The Department has also invested in:

- Biodigesters, solar energy systems, and the province's first electric vehicle fleet unit;
- The Transformative Riverine Management Programme in iLembe District, which merges climate adaptation, river restoration, and job creation;
- And the rollout of low-carbon pilot projects in collaboration with academic institutions and local municipalities.





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

### Green Skills and Climate Partnerships

We are building a new generation of climate-smart workers.

Through partnerships with the National Business Initiative, TVET colleges, and international organisations, we are:

- Training youth in renewable energy, ecological restoration, waste beneficiation, and carbon project development;
- Supporting small, green SMMEs to enter the biodiversity and climate adaptation sectors;
- And promoting community-based conservation enterprises that link protected areas with local economies.

This is the foundation of a sustainable biodiversity economy, where nature and livelihoods thrive together.

### Building Climate Resilience in Rural Areas

We are particularly focused on ensuring that rural communities - often the hardest hit by climate shocks — are equipped to adapt and thrive.

Our programmes prioritise:

- Restoration of degraded agricultural land;
- Water security and catchment protection, and
- Sustainable use of natural resources to ensure long-term food and livelihood security.

By linking climate action to economic opportunity, we are turning vulnerability into resilience and rural empowerment.







## Waste Economy

Honourable Speaker, through our waste economy interventions, the Department supported six municipalities - three rural and three urban, with a combined total of R3.2 million during the 2024/25 financial year, as part of the Cleanest Municipality Competition (CMC). Additionally, we extended support to 24 Wastepreneurs, investing R3 million to bolster their enterprises, which in turn sustained over 100 permanent jobs in the waste sector.

These Wastepreneurs continue to play a vital role in job creation and environmental sustainability, and we will expand our support for them in the current financial year (2025/26). Through EDTEA's Waste Jobs Programme, we created 1,055 jobs in 2024/25 alone, and we are committed to creating even more in the year ahead.

Furthermore, we will intensify efforts to register private waste enterprises under the Waste Norms and Standards, unlocking further employment opportunities and contributing to the growth of the waste economy across KwaZulu-Natal.

## Institutional Realignment and Restructuring

### KZN Umnotho Fund

One of the boldest interventions in this budget is the restructuring and repositioning of the Operation Vula Fund, now renamed the KZN Umnotho Fund.

We are determined to make a fundamental shift in how we approach inclusive enterprise development in order to reach the poorest of the poor throughout the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

We have acknowledged the historical shortcomings of the OVF: delayed disbursements, poor alignment to sector needs, and inconsistent delivery on its promise to uplift entrepreneurs.





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

This year, Umnotho Fund has been allocated R100 million, and this will be ring-fenced for enterprise development — with disbursements guided by a new operational model currently being finalised. The KZN Umnotho Fund represents a renewed commitment by this administration to leave no entrepreneur behind — and to ensure that small, often invisible enterprises have the tools and financial means they need to grow and thrive. Further details will be announced in due course in this regard.

### **Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife**

Honourable Speaker, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife is one of KwaZulu-Natal's jewels and strategic assets. It deserves more support and help from all of us. One of the major short-comings facing this entity is that it is grossly underfunded and this hampers its ability to perform optimally.

As a result, the organisation has struggled to meet its conservation and tourism mandates, and its credibility with communities and stakeholders continued to face challenges. In spite of this, we dare not give up on Ezemvelo. We are committed to rebuilding it through financial injection and restructuring, strategic leadership, integration into the biodiversity economy, and alignment with ecotourism objectives led by KZNTAFA. The entity will be embarking on revamped operations through a comprehensive commercialisation programme. We want to assure members of this house that commercialisation does not mean privatisation of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Honourable Speaker, with negatives, are the positives:

Rhino poaching has declined in the province, this is because of our dehorning programme, technology-enhanced patrols, and smarter fencing systems coordinated through Ezemvelo. Protecting biodiversity is essential for our ecotourism economy, and we will continue strengthening this frontline defence.

### **Ithala SOC**

Honourable Speaker, we would be irresponsible if we do not say anything about Ithala SOC which is popularly known as Ithala Bank.





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

Most of the woes facing this institution are caused by the fact that it is caught in a regulatory gap - a gap that parliament can help close. The Financial Matters Amendment Act of 2019, as it stands, excludes provincial entities from being licensed banks. Yet, parliament's own records show there was an intention to allow Ithala to continue operating under exemptions, pending further deliberations. What is needed now is not only regulatory certainty, but a major transformation exercise to ensure that Ithala SOC continues to stand as a pillar of development, equality, and opportunity in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

Ithala is not just a financial institution, but is an instrument of transformation, empowerment, and inclusive development. Ithala SOC is not just an institution which provides banking services to the people of KwaZulu-Natal. It is a symbol of hope for the people of KwaZulu-Natal, particularly the rural poor, the township entrepreneur, the informal trader, the pensioner, and the SASSA recipient who cannot afford to be excluded from financial services because they live far from urban centres. Let me be clear: the proposed closure or liquidation of Ithala would not just mean the loss of jobs. It would result in a financial disaster for communities that have no alternative service provider. It would endanger over R2.5 billion in cash deposits, mostly from low income individuals, SMME's and cooperatives. It would compromise access to housing, vehicle, and business finance in areas commercial banks ignore. Honourable Speaker, the vision of Ithala SOC has always been aligned with the country's national agenda, which is — financial inclusion, economic redress, and building a capable developmental state.

## Entities: Driving Delivery in the Real Economy

Honourable Speaker, in order for the Department to fulfil its constitutional mandate, we have a number of entities that play a vital role in the delivery of its services.

We have reduced our public entities from 12 to 10, merging overlapping mandates and improving efficiently. KZN Gaming and Betting Board and KZN Liquor Authority, are now KZN Economic Regulatory Authority. The KZN Film Commission and Tourism KZN, are now Tourism and Film Authority





Our ten public entities are not just administrative extensions – they are delivery arms of economic development in this province. They give form to our policies, scale to our interventions, and continuity to our long-term transformative and economic development agenda.

Each one plays a specific and strategic role:

1. Dube TradePort Corporation (DTPC) supports our aerotropolis strategy, automotive and agro-logistics investments;
2. Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife manages our conservation estate and drives community-linked biodiversity initiatives;
3. KwaZulu-Natal Economic Regulatory Authority (KZNERA), simplifies and streamlines oversight in the liquor, betting, and gambling sectors. We are pleased to announce that we will soon be introducing in this house, comprehensive amendments to the KZN Liquor Act in order to level the playing field, to transform the industry and to balance the harmful effects of the liquor industry with imperatives of economic development.
4. KZN Tourism and Film Authority (KZNTAFA), focuses on tourism development, markets our province and unlocks the potential of the film and creative economy;
5. KZN Sharks Board continues its dual mandate of marine safety and ocean economy education;
6. Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN) is our lead agency for inward investment promotion and export growth;
7. Ithala Development Finance Corporation (IDFC) remains our strategic pillar for the development of commercial and industrial parks, to ensure financial inclusion and township enterprise funding;
8. KZN Growth Fund packages blended finance for catalytic infrastructure projects;
9. Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) anchors industrialisation in the northern corridor; and
10. The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) provides policy intelligence, economic research, and innovation support.







## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

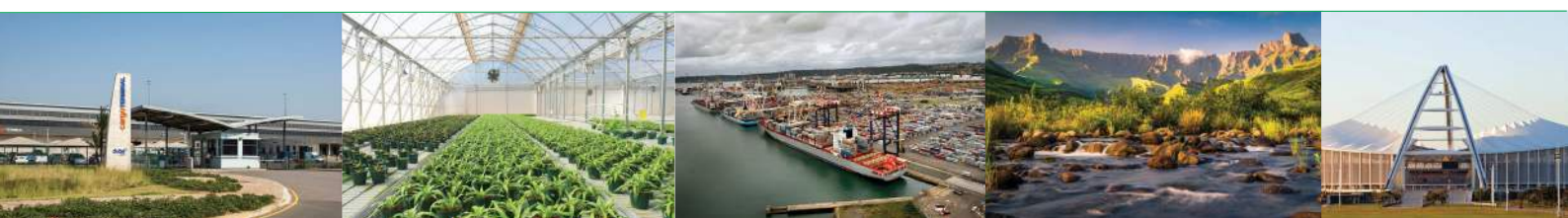
### Conclusion

Honourable Speaker, the Department will continue to explore avenues to bolster the oceans economy as this presents KwaZulu-Natal with another vital and essential area of economic growth and development.

KwaZulu-Natal has a coastline of more than 600km, which presents this province with more opportunities to develop this hugely untapped economic industrial potential. Working hand-in-hand with various institutions, we hope to harness this huge sleeping giant into a significant contributor to the economy of KwaZulu-Natal in order to expand economic activities and to help reduce poverty and unemployment.

This is a budget rooted in urgency, guided by policy, and driven by delivery.

From energy and industrial growth, to township revitalisation, environmental recovery, and tourism resurgence - we are repositioning KwaZulu-Natal as a province of resilience, opportunity, and economic dignity.





## Acknowledgments

As we reflect on this theme, we recognize that resilience, inclusivity, and transformation are not standalone objectives. They are interdependent pillars that together form the foundation of a prosperous KwaZulu-Natal. This budget is more than a financial plan; it is a blueprint for an inclusive future, one that leaves no one behind.

Honourable Speaker, the successes we have achieved and the bold vision we have outlined for the future would not be possible without the dedication, collaboration, and unwavering support of many stakeholders. It is, therefore, fitting to acknowledge and express my deepest gratitude to those who have contributed to this journey of growth, resilience, and transformation.

I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Honourable Premier Thamsanqa Ntuli for his strategic leadership and steadfast commitment to economic transformation and inclusive growth. His vision for a resilient and prosperous KwaZulu-Natal has been the guiding light for our endeavours.

To my fellow Members of the Executive Council, thank you for your collaboration, wisdom, and tireless dedication to the people of KwaZulu-Natal. Your strategic insights and unwavering commitment have been pivotal in shaping this budget.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our social partners: business, labour, and civil society, whose invaluable support and collaboration have strengthened our resolve. The economic challenges of the past year have reminded us of the importance of solidarity and collective action. Together, we have confronted adversity, embraced change, and built the foundations for a resilient economy.

To the business community, thank you for your continued support, investment and confidence in our province. Your commitment to innovation, growth, and social responsibility drives our economy forward.

To labour unions, your advocacy for fair wages, decent work, and social justice has ensured that our economic policies remain inclusive and equitable. We appreciate





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

your role in ensuring a stable labour relations environment which is vital for economic growth.

To civil society organizations, your continued engagement and advocacy for social justice, environmental sustainability, and community development have enriched our policies and programs. Your commitment to the welfare of our communities is deeply appreciated.

To the Head of Department, Mr. Nhlakanipho Nkontwana, and the dedicated team at the Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, thank you for your commitment, hard work, and dedication to service excellence. Your efforts have been instrumental in translating our vision into action, ensuring that our policies are effectively implemented to benefit all citizens.

To the Head of Ministry, Mr. Archie Khumalo, thank you for your steadfast leadership, sound counsel, and commitment to excellence in public service. Your ability to manage complex demands with calm efficiency, while ensuring smooth operation of this Office, is deeply appreciated. Your contribution has been vital in ensuring that the mandate is carried out with precision, professionalism, and integrity. I also extend my gratitude to the Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers of our public entities. Your strategic leadership, innovation, and collaborative approach have driven economic transformation and inclusive growth across our province.

To the Honourable Members of this Legislature, thank you for your commitment to robust debate, accountability, and oversight. Your role in ensuring transparency and good governance has strengthened our democracy and enhanced the effectiveness of public spending.

To the people of KwaZulu-Natal, your resilience, hope, and unwavering faith in our vision inspire us every day. This budget is a promise to you, a promise to build a better future, to create opportunities, inspire new hope, and to leave no one behind.

Lastly and not least, Amakhosi aseNdlunkulu have continued to make a positive contribution as champions of development in their areas by making sure that the activities of the Department are extended to the rural areas.





Honourable Speaker, as we move forward, let us do so with the spirit of resilience. Let us embrace the challenges with courage, the opportunities with boldness, and the future with hope. Let us be guided by the principles of inclusivity, equity, and transformation.

Our collective success depends on our ability to work together, innovate, and adapt to the changing needs of our society. As we build a resilient and inclusive economy, let us remember that we are stronger together, united by a shared vision of prosperity and progress.

In the face of challenges, let us remain resolute. In the pursuit of opportunities, let us be bold. And in the realization of our shared aspirations, let us be united.

Together, we have the strength to overcome any obstacle, the courage to seize every opportunity, and the vision to create a legacy of prosperity that endures for generations to come.

Let us move forward with confidence, purpose, and unity as we build a thriving, inclusive, and resilient KwaZulu-Natal that benefits all its people.







## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

### Budget Announcement

Madam Speaker, our entities are the strategic levers that propel the department's mandate in priority sectors germane to the growth of the province. With this realization, we have allocated a budget of R2.397 billion to our entities as follows:

This amounts for 66% of the total budget allocation to the Department.

ENTITY	2025/26 ALLOCATION (R'000)
1. Dube TradePort Corporation (DTPC)	513,101
2. Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife	968,156
3. KwaZulu-Natal Economic Regulatory Authority	149,626
4. KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority	257,515
5. KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board	73,442
6. Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal	111,305
7. Ithala Development Finance Corporation	86,904
8. KwaZulu-Natal Growth Fund Agency	39,947
9. Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone	136,436
10. Moses Kotane Research Institute	60,546
<b>Total Budget for Entities</b>	<b>R 2,396,978</b>





## KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**GROWING  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
TOGETHER**

In addition, I now table the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs budget for consideration by this House.

PROGRAMME	(R'000)
<b>1. Administration</b>	368,473
<b>2. Integrated Economic Development Services</b>	350,170
<b>3. Trade &amp; Industry Development</b>	939,362
<b>4. Business Regulation &amp; Governance</b>	230,284
<b>5. Economic Planning</b>	47,705
<b>6. Tourism Development</b>	384,008
<b>7. Environmental Management</b>	1,286,996
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATION</b>	<b>3 606 998</b>

In total, I now move the budget of Three Billion Six Hundred and Six million Nine Hundred and Ninety-Eight thousand only

**(R3 606 998 000)** for the 2025/26 financial year, I so move.

I thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Rev. Musa Zondi, MPL**

**MEC for Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs**



PR 85/2025  
ISBN: 978-1-77997-603-1

**Title of Publications:**

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development and  
Environmental Affairs Budget Speech 2025/2026



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



270 Jabu Ndlovu Street,  
Pietermaritzburg 3200



033 264 2500



033 264 2672



info@kznedtea.gov.za



www.kznedtea.gov.za

edtea\_kzn | @edteakzn | kznedtea | kznedtea | kznedtealive | @kzn.edtea