



NATIONAL TREASURY

MFMA Circular No. 134

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Municipal Budget Circular for the 2026/27 MTREF

CONTENTS:

1. THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY AND INFLATION TARGETS	2
2. KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR THE 2026/27 BUDGET PROCESS	3
2.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONDITIONAL GRANTS AND UNCONDITIONAL GRANTS ALLOCATIONS	3
2.2 POST 2025 MTBPS CHANGES	4
2.3 REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL FRAMEWORK	5
2.4 UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF THE CONDITIONAL GRANTS	5
2.5 WATER CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA	6
2.6 IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEGRADATION ON THE ECONOMY	6
2.7 METRO TRADING SERVICES REFORM (MTR)	7
2.8 CRITERIA FOR THE RELEASE OF THE EQUITABLE SHARE	9
2.9 CRITERIA FOR THE ROLLOVER OF CONDITIONAL GRANT FUNDS	10
2.10 UNSPENT CONDITIONAL GRANT FUNDS FOR 2025/26	11
2.11 ROLLOVER OF THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FINANCING GRANT: METRO TRADING SERVICES COMPONENT	12
3. BUDGET AND OTHER MANAGEMENT ISSUES	12
3.1 2026/27 MUNICIPAL BUDGET TABLING TIMELINES	12
3.2 TIMELINE FOR APPROVING THE REVISED SERVICE DELIVERY AND BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SDBIP) FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF THE ADJUSTMENT BUDGET	13
3.3 CAUTION TO MANAGE TRANSITION RISK	13
3.4 WARNING NOT TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS HAVING FUTURE BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS AS PART OF ELECTIONEERING	14
3.5 COST REFLECTIVE TARIFFS	14
3.6 BUDGETING FOR A FUNDED BUDGET	14
4. MUNICIPAL STANDARD CHART OF ACCOUNTS (MSCOA)	14
4.1 ALIGNMENT OF CASH FLOW LINKAGES	14
4.2 GUIDANCE ON SUBMISSION OF MSCOA ROADMAPS	15
4.4 STAGE 3 VALIDATION	16
4.5 RETENTIONS	17
4.6 VIREMENT DATA STRINGS AND REPORT	17
4.7 THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FINANCING GRANT	18
4.8 REPORTING PERTAINING TO THE METRO TRADING SERVICES REFORM	18
5. SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS TO THE GOMUNI UPLOAD PORTAL	19
5.1 SUBMISSION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	19
ALL ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:	20
6. THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET AND REPORTING REGULATIONS	20
6.1 ASSISTANCE WITH THE COMPILATION OF BUDGETS	20
ANNEXURE A – PREVIOUS MFMA CIRCULARS	23

Introduction

This budget circular provides guidance to municipalities with their compilation of the 2026/27 Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF). It is linked to the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR) and the Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (mSCOA) and strives to support municipalities' budget preparation processes so that the minimum requirements are achieved.

Among the objectives of this budget circular is to demonstrate how municipalities should undertake annual budget preparation in accordance with the budget and financial management reform agenda by focussing on key "game changers". These game-changers include ensuring that municipal budgets are funded, revenue management is optimised, assets are managed efficiently, supply chain management processes are adhered to, mSCOA is implemented correctly and that audit findings are addressed. Municipalities are reminded to refer to the annual budget circulars of the previous years for guidance in areas of the budget preparation that are not covered in this circular.

1. The South African economy and inflation targets

GDP growth is expected to average 1.8 per cent from 2026 to 2028. Medium-term growth will be underpinned by household consumption supported by further gains in real purchasing power, moderately stronger wage growth, easing inflation, wealth gains from rising asset prices, improved consumer sentiment and better credit conditions. Continued investments in renewable energy and easing structural constraints are expected to support higher investment. Key factors for achieving faster economic growth and creating much-needed jobs include greater collaboration with the private sector in energy and transport, rapid implementation of structural reforms, easing of regulatory constraints and increased infrastructure investment.

The following macro-economic forecasts must be considered when preparing the 2026/27 MTREF municipal budgets.

Table 1: Macroeconomic performance and projections, 2025 - 2029

Fiscal year	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	Estimate	Forecast		
CPI Inflation	4.4%	3.2%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%

Source: National Treasury Budget Review 2026.

Note: the fiscal year referred to is the national fiscal year (April to March) which is more closely aligned to the municipal fiscal year (July to June) than the calendar year inflation.

Inflation is expected to increase from 3.2 per cent in 2025 to 3.4 per cent in 2026, driven by higher food prices (particularly meat due to supply disruptions linked to foot-and mouth disease). Inflation is forecast to ease to 3.3 per cent in 2027 and 3.2 per cent in 2028, but risks from geopolitical tensions, exchange rate volatility, administered prices and animal disease outbreaks remain elevated. The reduction of the inflation target to 3 per cent with a 1 percentage point tolerance band will structurally reduce inflation, helping to protect real income levels.

In April 2024, the National Treasury initiated a comprehensive review of the budget process, with the goal of identifying and implementing reforms that would enhance the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of public resource allocation. It has resulted in a set of accountable reform proposals outlined below.

Targeted And Responsible Savings (TARS) and Spending Reviews

These MTEF guidelines introduce a new mechanism entitled Targeted and Responsible Savings (TARS), which is intended to identify and remove low-priority or underperforming programmes from the budget to reduce aggregate expenditure and, where appropriate, reallocate funding towards the priorities of governments outlined in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP).

In line with the government's commitment to identify wasteful, inefficient, underperforming, and low priority programmes and ensure a more streamlined and effective allocation of resources. At national level the following initiatives are being utilised for the identification of programmes to be included the TARS process:

- Spending reviews;
- Previous work should be updated where appropriate to inform implementation;
- Outcomes of new sectoral reviews such as the Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and the review of infrastructure conditional grants should be implemented;
- New data driven approaches;
- Use of technology to eliminate double dipping in social grants and other programmes (e.g. community works programme);
- Annual audit of ghost workers and payroll irregularities;
- Updated proposals on public entity and departmental rationalisation;
- Resolve inefficiencies in public sector wage bill;
- Implement personnel expenditure review completed by the Department of Public; Service and Administration (DPSA);
- Finalise extended review of public entities remuneration; and
- Technical baseline analysis and institutional reviews to ensure that departments and public entities are appropriately aligned to mandates.

All municipalities are encouraged as part of the annual municipal budget preparations process to progressively introduce the same approach which will enable the Council of a municipality to consider more appropriate the trade-offs when policy choices are made in conclude the budget for a specific cycle. Depending on the response observed by the National Treasury, further guidance will be issue in future.

2. Key focus areas for the 2026/27 budget process

2.1 Local government conditional grants and unconditional grants allocations

For the 2026/27 financial year, the overall direct allocations to local government amount to R182.3 billion, made up of R110.1 billion in the local government equitable share; R54.7 billion in direct conditional grants and R17.5 billion in the General fuel levy sharing with metros. These allocations alleviate some of the financial pressures, particularly in basic services, where the costs of providing services are rising. The overall direct allocations to local government grow by an annual average rate of 3.1 per cent and the local government equitable share and related allocations grow by 4.4 per cent over the 2026 MTEF period.

Notable changes to the conditional grants system

Given the ongoing review of the conditional grants system, there are several local government reforms proposed to conditional grants. The reforms are aimed at streamlining funding flows, reducing duplications, and aligning recurrent obligations with the appropriate funding base:

- The merger of the baselines of the integrated national electrification programme grant, and the energy efficiency demand side management grant in 2026/27 to focus on energy

efficiency and renewable energy programmes that can lead to more sustainable energy provision and enable the achievement of long-term energy security goals;

- The Infrastructure Skills Development Grant (ISDG) will remain under the management of the National Treasury for the next three financial years when it will cease to exist as a conditional grant. To assist this transformation, the grant has ceased the intake of new graduates to allow the current graduate cohort to complete their training; and
- To protect infrastructure investment from municipal dysfunction, a general clause has been introduced in the 2026 Division of Revenue Bill. It will enable the National Treasury to redirect infrastructure grants from local municipalities that have proven incapable of implementation to the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent or capable district municipalities.

2.2 Post 2025 MTBPS changes

There are a number of reductions, several further cuts beyond the CPI adjustments and reprioritisations proposed in the 2025 MTBPS and these are effected to make funds available for other government priorities. These include:

Reprioritisations

- A shift of R300 million in 2026/27 from the municipal infrastructure grant to the Department of Cooperative Governance's vote for the once-off gratuity payment to outgoing councillors after the local government elections;
- A shift of R536 million in 2026/27 from the direct component of the municipal infrastructure grant to the indirect component to address infrastructure delivery issues; and
- A shift of R19.2 billion (R5.7 billion in 2026/27, R6.4 billion in 2027/28 and R7.1 billion in 2028/29) from the urban settlements development grant to the metro trading services component of the urban development financing grant to strengthen core utility functions; and an additional incentive allocation of R8.6 billion over the MTEF period towards the metro trading services component of the urban development financing grant, confirmed from the provisional allocations made in 2025.

Reduction

- The public transport network grant will be reduced by R8.3 billion over the MTEF period as part of the Targeted and Responsible Savings (TARS) process. This total reduction includes the R3 billion saving previously identified during the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), as well as further reprioritisations of R1.3 billion in 2026/27, R1.5 billion in 2027/28, and R2.5 billion in 2028/29. These additional funds are redirected to PRASA to accelerate the modernisation and replacement of critical rail signalling infrastructure.

Addition

- An addition of R2.1 billion over the MTEF period to the regional bulk infrastructure grant for a regional wastewater treatment works project in Polokwane, funded through the Budget Facility for Infrastructure.

Further reductions

- To make funds available and support the continuation of the implementation of the Presidential Employment Stimulus, reductions have been made on some conditional grants from the 2026 financial year. A reduction of R491 million in 2026/27 from the informal settlements upgrading partnership grant; a reduction of R784 million in 2026/27

from the integrated national electrification programme (Eskom) grant and a reduction of R921 million in 2026/27 from the municipal infrastructure grant.

Discontinuation

- The discontinuation of the indirect neighbourhood development partnership grant, with its baseline of R219 million over the MTEF shifted to the Vote of the National Treasury and earmarked to support government's infrastructure reforms.

Correction

- The correction of the BFI allocations for eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, allocated through the urban development financing grant. The full allocation of R379 million for the non-revenue water project was erroneously allocated to eThekweni instead of being split between the municipality and the Infrastructure Fund as per the agreed work package. eThekweni's allocation in the urban development financing grant is reduced by R144 million over the MTEF and allocated to the Infrastructure Fund.

2.3 Review of the local government fiscal framework

Government continues to be fully committed to a comprehensive review of the local government fiscal framework, and the Budget Forum has approved a detailed programme of action to guide this work, including detailed terms of reference and the procurement of specialist expertise to undertake the technical analysis. The review will consider the financial viability, effectiveness, stability and long-term sustainability of the local government fiscal framework, through a detailed examination of the policies, practices and mechanisms that govern how resources are allocated, managed and used at municipal level, because this examination is crucial to understanding the current state of local government finance. The work is organised around five core thematic areas: a national baseline profile of the local government fiscal framework, including distressed and better-performing municipalities, and refinement of the problem statement, the local government equitable share formula, local government expenditure reviews, fiscal leakages in local government, and additional revenue options, including undersubscribed existing instruments, new own-revenue sources and improved municipal borrowing to enhance infrastructure investment and maintenance.

Oversight and engagement structures have been established, including a Reference Group to provide expert input and validate findings, with four meetings aligned with key deliverables, a Working Group to coordinate technical inputs and monitor progress, with online meetings every two months, and a Core Project Management Group to manage execution, research and reporting, with fortnightly meetings. The review also provides for interviews and up to four online sessions with chief financial officers, municipal managers and senior planners from a sample of 32 municipalities, to ensure that the findings are credible, evidence-based and grounded in municipal realities.

The work will be undertaken over the 2026 MTEF period, and therefore, for this review to succeed and to reflect the realities on the ground, it is essential that all municipalities provide the requested data as a matter of urgency, including complete and reliable personnel information. Consequently, we urge those municipalities that have not yet submitted the required datasets to do so without delay, so that the analysis can be robust, comparable and fully representative of the sector.

2.4 Update on the review of the conditional grants

The review process has been underpinned by extensive consultation processes since July 2024 during which the National Treasury presented the findings and recommendations of the review.

Most of the proposed reforms are intended for medium- to long-term implementation, while a select few have been prioritised for short-term introduction within the 2025 MTEF period. Further consultations have been conducted following the tabling of the 2025 Budget, focusing on reforms earmarked for medium- to long-term implementation. These ongoing engagements include impact assessments and preparatory work aimed at ensuring the successful rollout of the proposed changes. Over the 2026 MTEF period, government will roll out several local and provincial government reforms aimed at streamlining funding flows, reducing duplication, and aligning recurrent obligations with the appropriate funding base. These reforms are detailed in part 5 of the Explanatory Memorandum to the 2026 Division of Revenue under the relevant conditional grants.

2.5 Water crisis in South Africa

Water services across South Africa are becoming increasingly unreliable. Too many communities now experience intermittent supply, infrastructure failures and declining water quality.

105 out of 144 Water Service Authorities (WSAs) scored poor or critical in terms of the performance of their drinking water systems (Blue Drop) and/or wastewater systems (Green Drop) in the most recent reports. This means that water and sanitation services are failing in 73 per cent of WSAs – widespread failure of municipal water and sanitation services indicates a systemic problem. By September 2025, 53 out of the 105 worst performing WSAs had not yet produced corrective action plans to address their 2023 Blue, Green and No Drop report results.

At the same time, water demand is expected to exceed supply in several regions due to population growth, urbanisation, inefficient water use and climate change.

These pressures are already evident in major economic centres across the country, impacting on development and economic growth. Although South Africa is naturally water-scarce, the current crisis is primarily driven by municipal infrastructure and governance failures, while the uncertainty introduced by climate change multiplies all water related risks.

High water losses, ageing and poorly maintained infrastructure, weak financial management as well as growing municipal debts to water boards are placing the entire water value chain at risk. Water revenues are rarely reinvested into maintaining and upgrading infrastructure.

The Department of Water and Sanitation is advancing legislative and policy reforms. In parallel, the Metro Trading Services Reform, which was initially conceptualised around water services, utilises a performance-linked incentive grant to reward metros for improved governance, financial and operational performance. This reform will ensure that revenues from water and sanitation are reinvested directly into critical infrastructure to turnaround the vicious cycle of deteriorating water services in all eight metros (**Annexure A** – Water Scarcity issues dealt with in previous budget circulars).

2.6 Impact of infrastructure degradation on the economy

Widespread infrastructure failures, ageing assets and persistent underinvestment are increasingly constraining economic growth and service delivery across South Africa. Water, sanitation, electricity and transport infrastructure has been particularly affected.

The absence of functional and well-maintained basic service infrastructure disrupts business operations, increases operating costs and undermines investor confidence, stifling development and GDP growth. Industries that depend on reliable bulk services, such as mining, manufacturing, agriculture and logistics are impacted, with outages and service interruptions reducing productivity and raising the cost of doing business.

Deteriorating infrastructure also places growing fiscal pressure on municipalities, as emergency repairs and service backlogs drive a deteriorating and reinforcing negative cycle of increasing costs and decreasing service outcomes. Without sustained investment in maintenance, rehabilitation and expansion of infrastructure, these constraints will continue to weaken local economies, limit job creation and reduce the competitiveness of key economic centres.

To address these challenges, National Treasury has introduced a R54 billion performance-based incentive for metropolitan municipalities to support reforms in their trading services: water, sanitation electricity and solid waste services. The Metro Trading Services Reform is designed to ensure that revenue generated from these services is reinvested into maintaining and improving core infrastructure, strengthening the reliability and sustainability of municipal water services. Once trading services are ring-fenced and operating as viable utilities, can sustainably transfers to the rates account support other municipal functions such as roads, security and community services. The performance grant has been designed to incentivise metros to provide additional investment from their own revenues and loans to double the value of the reform to R108 billion. This investment in improved infrastructure will not only boost local economies but also unlock new investment opportunities.

2.7 Metro Trading Services Reform (MTSR)

The Metro Trading Services Reform (MTSR) is implemented through the Metro Trading Services component of the Urban Development Financing Grant (UDFG). This component of the UDFG provides a performance-based incentive to strengthen accountability, financial sustainability and operational performance in the water and sanitation, electricity and energy, and solid waste management trading services of metropolitan municipalities.

All metros must ensure that their 2026/27 MTREF reflects the indicative allocations published in the 2026 Division of Revenue Bill/Act and confirmed through Budget Allocation Letters issued by National Treasury. These performance-based incentive allocations may only be spent in support of the relevant trading services reform strategy and must be reported on accordingly.

Metro trading services participate in the reform in two cohorts, with differentiated requirements in 2026/27:

- **Cohort 1, entered the reform in 2025/26, includes:**
 - *Water and Sanitation:* Buffalo City, City of Cape Town, City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane, eThekweni and Mangaung.
 - *Electricity and Energy:* Buffalo City, City of Cape Town, City of Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane and eThekweni.
- **Cohort 2, entering the reform in 2026/27, includes:**
 - *Solid Waste Management:* all metros.
 - *Water and Sanitation:* Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Bay.
 - *Electricity and Energy:* Mangaung and Nelson Mandela Bay.

2.7.1 Cohort 1: Programme Year-2 (2026/27)

For Cohort 1 trading services, 2026/27 constitutes Year-2 (first full year of implementation).

In advance of 2026/27:

Prior to the commencement of the 2026/27, Cohort 1 metros were required to finalise, cost and obtain Council approval for each trading service's A3-PIAP v2.

Draft A3-PIAP v2 documents must:

- Be presented at the 2025/26 Mid-Year Budget Review (MYBR) in January/February 2026;

- Be presented again during the 2026/27 Benchmarking Engagements (April/May 2026); and
- Demonstrate alignment between the costing of reform activity packages and the draft 2026/27 MTREF.

The final Council-approved A3-PIAP v2 (by 30 June 2026) must:

- Reflect the metro's final sectoral allocation decision within the permissible ranges; and
- Be fully costed and consistent with the 2026/27 Council-approved budget tables.

During 2026/27:

- Metros must maintain all eight Minimum Commitments (M1-M8); and
- Metros must report against the full set of indicators as defined in Guidance Note 4, Annexure A (and in the Programme Operations Manual (POM)).

For Cohort 1, 2026/27 is the first year in which trading services performance is assessed against Council-approved targets. It is not a preparatory or "dry run" year. Achievement against these targets will be assessed between July-Sept 2026.

Failure to achieve or maintain Minimum Commitments may result in withholding and reallocation of incentive funds in accordance with DoRA and the POM.

2.7.2 Cohort 2: Programme Year-1 (2026/27)

For Cohort 2 trading services, 2026/27 constitutes Year-1 (entry year).

In advance of the 2026/27 year:

- Cohort 2 metros received indicative allocations for their trading services for 2026/27 in the 2026 DoRB;
- Metros must finalise and obtain Council approval of A3-PIAP v1 by 30 June 2026;
- The eight Minimum Commitments (M1–M8) must be formally made by 30 June 2026; and
- Cohort 2 trading services should allocate their 2026/27 incentive to reform-related expenditure (e.g. reform start-up costs and reform-related capital expenditure).

During 2026/27:

- The eight Minimum Commitments (M1–M8) must be achieved by 30 June 2027; and
- Preparatory reforms, institutional restructuring, financial modelling, and business and investment planning must be completed by 30 June 2027.

2.7.3 Reporting and Independent Verification

The Independent Verification Agent (IVA) verifies compliance with Minimum Commitments and performance against programme indicators.

Metros need to plan and budget for the forthcoming financial year, taking account of any positive or negative variance in expected incentive grant allocations for the forthcoming financial year. In other words:

- Performance for the **2025/26 financial year** will be independently verified between July-September 2026. The result of this verification **may affect Cohort 1's 2027/28 budget allocation and cohort 2's 2026/27 adjustments budget.**
 - Cohort 1's performance for 2025/26 will be assessed on a binary basis (in place / not in place), rather than through weighted proportional scoring, since the expected deliverable is a complete PIAP v2 with firm targets, supported by the business plan and budget which are two of the minimum commitments (M5 and M6).

- Cohort 2's performance for 2025/26 will be assessed based on submission of Council resolution to achieve the Minimum Commitments and approval of the A3: PIAP v1.
- Performance for the **2026/27 financial year** will be independently verified during July-September 2027. The result of this verification **may affect the metro's 2028/29 budget allocation**.

Metros are required to upload all performance claims and supporting evidence to the National Treasury MTSR online portal, scheduled to become operational in early 2026. Metros must ensure that internal data governance, reporting systems and management arrangements are aligned to enable timely and complete evidence submissions.

While the MTSR requires quarterly and annual reporting necessary for performance verification and incentive administration, these requirements are designed to leverage existing municipal reporting systems, including *m*SCOA financial reporting; Section 71 monthly and quarterly reporting; MFMA Circular No. 88 performance indicators; and standard conditional grant reporting frameworks. The reform seeks to strengthen existing systems rather than create parallel reporting processes or impose unnecessary administrative burdens.

2.7.4 Guidance documents and Programme Operations Manual (POM)

The Metro Trading Services Reform Programme Operations Manual (POM) will be released following the 2026 National Budget. The POM sets out the detailed institutional, financial, reporting, verification, governance and risk management procedures for implementation of the MTSR and administration of the UDFG-MTS component. The POM defines Minimum Commitments and performance indicators; specifies reporting templates and timelines; details IVA processes; and clarifies disbursement, stopping and reallocation provisions.

A number of Guidance Notes and related Annexures have been prepared to guide metros on the expectations of the MTSR performance incentive. These guidance documents set out what metros are expected to achieve in line with the reform to qualify for the incentive.

The Grant Framework in the 2026 DORB for the UDFG (MTS component) provides the expected outcomes, outputs, conditions and responsibilities for the performance incentive grant.

Metros must therefore implement the MTSR in accordance with the Grant Framework in the DoRB, the DoRA, the MFMA, its regulations and Circulars (including this Circular), related national legislation and policy, as well as MTSR Guidance Notes and their annexures and the POM.

2.8 Criteria for the release of the Equitable Share

The criteria for the release of the equitable share which were covered in MFMA Circulars No. 122 remain relevant and are still applicable for the release of equitable share instalments in the 2025/26 financial year.

Municipalities must put systems and processes in place to comply with the criteria for the release of the equitable share. For example, to formally assign/delegate this to a responsible official, include it in performance agreements, have a council policy, create a standard operating procedure, and add this requirement as a SDBIP indicator.

Failure to comply with the criteria will result in National Treasury invoking Section 38 of the MFMA which empowers National Treasury to withhold a municipality's equitable share if the municipality commits a serious or persistent breach of the measures established in terms of

Section 216(2) of the Constitution which includes reporting obligations set out in the MFMA and National Treasury requests for information in terms of Section 74 of the MFMA.

2.9 Criteria for the rollover of conditional grant funds

In terms of Section 21 of the Division of Revenue Act, 2025 (Act No. 2 of 2025) (DoRA) in conjunction with the Division of Revenue Amendment Act, 2025 (Act No. 12 of 2025), any conditional allocation or a portion thereof that is not spent at the end of the 2025/26 financial year reverts to the National Revenue Fund (NRF), unless the rollover of the allocation is approved in terms of subsection (2) of the DoRA. Furthermore, the receiving officer, provincial treasury and national transferring officer is required to prove to National Treasury that the unspent allocation is committed to identifiable projects, in which case the funds may be rolled over.

When requesting a rollover in terms of Section 21(2) of the 2025 DoRA, municipalities must include the following information with their submission to National Treasury. Municipalities must submit all rollover applications and queries related to the conditional grants to Rolloverapplication@treasury.gov.za.

1. A formal letter, signed by the accounting officer addressed to the National Treasury requesting the rollover of unspent conditional grants in terms of Section 21(2) of the 2025 DoRA;
2. A list of all the projects that are linked to the unspent conditional grants and a breakdown of how much was allocated, spent and the balance per project;
3. The following evidence indicating that work on each of the projects has commenced, as applicable to the specific rollover(s):
 - a) Proof that the service provider was appointed for delivery of the project before 31 March 2026;
 - b) Proof of project tender and tender submissions published and closed before 31 March 2026 or with the appointment of contractor or service provider for delivery of service before 30 June 2026 in cases where additional funding was allocated during the course of the financial year of the project;
 - c) Incorporation of the Statement of Comparison of Budget and Actual Amounts; and
 - d) Evidence that all projects linked to an allocation will be fully utilised by 30 June 2026 (attach cash flow projection for the applicable grant);
 - e) A progress report (also reflecting percentages) on the status of each project's implementation that includes an attached legible implementation plan);
 - f) The value of the committed project funding and the conditional allocation from the funding source;
 - g) Reasons why the grants were not fully spent during the year on the original allocation per the DoRA. This includes the Municipal Disaster Recovery and Response grants for transfers made during the 2025/26 financial year and not fully spent by 30 June 2026;
 - h) Rollover of rollovers will not be considered. Municipalities must therefore not include previous year's unspent conditional grants as rollover request;
 - i) An indication of the time period within which the funds are to be spent if the rollover is approved; and
 - j) Proof that the Municipal Manager and Chief Financial Officer are permanently appointed.

No rollover requests will be considered for municipalities with vacant or acting Chief Financial Officers and Municipal Managers for a period exceeding 6 months from the date of vacancy; this also includes acting appointments because of suspensions of either MM or CFO that are more than 12 months.

If any of the above information is not provided or the application is received by National Treasury (Intergovernmental Relations Division) after 31 August 2026, the application will be declined.

In addition, National Treasury will also consider the following information when assessing rollover applications; and reserves the right to decline an application should there be non-performance by the municipality in any of these areas:

1. Compliance with the in-year reporting requirements in terms of Sections 71 and 72 of the MFMA and Section 12 of the 2025 DoRA, including the Municipal Manager and Chief Financial Officer signing-off on the information sent to National Treasury;
2. Submission of the pre-audited Annual Financial Statements to National Treasury by 31 August 2026;
3. Accurate disclosure of grant performance in the 2025/26 pre-audited Annual Financial Statements, (i.e., correct disclosure of grant receipts and spending in the notes to the AFS);
4. Despite the fact that local government is required to comply with different norms and standards prescribed by different legislations, municipalities are expected to fully comply with the provisions of DoRA that relate to rollover processes and disclose conditional grant performance in the 2025/26 pre-audited Annual Financial Statements (i.e. Cash coverage and unspent conditional grants in the Statement of Financial Position) in order to verify grant expenditure; and
5. Cash available reflected in the Statement of Financial Position and Cash Flow Statements and the bank (net position including short-term investments) as at 30 June 2026 is equivalent to, or exceeds, the unspent amount at the end of the financial year. If the amount that is requested for rollover is not entirely cash-backed, such a rollover will not be approved. National Treasury will also not approve portions of rollover requests based on what is available in the bank.

It should be noted that under no circumstances will the National Treasury consider requests to rollover:

1. The entire 2025/26 allocation to the municipality. In cases where the rollover request is more than 50 per cent of the total allocation, National Treasury will approve the rollover amount up to 50 per cent of the 2025/26 allocation;
2. Rollover request of the same grant for the third consecutive time. In a case where a municipality is applying for rollover as a result of additional funding, the application will be carefully considered;
3. Funding for projects procured through Regulation 32 and 37 of the Municipal Supply Chain Management Regulations (Gazette No.27636) – Projects linked to additional funding and disasters are exempted; and
4. A portion of an allocation where the proof of commitment for the rollover application is linked to invoices that were issued before or on 31 March 2026. All invoices issued to the municipality before 31 March 2026 should be paid within the same year against the allocated conditional grants. i.e., invoices must be paid within 30 days.

2.10 Unspent conditional grant funds for 2025/26

The process to ensure the return of unspent conditional grants for the 2025/26 financial year will be managed in accordance with Section 21 of the DoRA. In addition to the previous MFMA Circulars, the following practical arrangements will apply:

Step 1: Municipalities must submit their June 2026 conditional grant expenditure reports according to Section 71 of the MFMA reflecting all accrued expenditure on conditional

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grants and further ensure that expenditure reported to both National Treasury and national transferring officers reconciles;

- Step 2: When preparing the Annual Financial Statements, a municipality must determine the portion of each national conditional grant allocation that remained unspent as at 30 June 2026. The unspent grant values must be determined based on the guidance that was provided in mSCOA Circular No. 13 in as far as VAT, retention and interest is concerned; and
- Step 3: If the receiving officer wants to motivate in terms of Section 21(2) of the 2025 DoRA that the unspent funds are committed to identifiable projects, the rollover application pack must be submitted to National Treasury by no later than 31 August 2026.

National Treasury will not consider any rollover requests that are incomplete or received after this deadline.

- Step 4: National Treasury will confirm in writing whether or not the municipality may retain any of the unspent funds as a rollover based on criteria outlined above by 23 October 2026;
- Step 5: National Treasury will communicate the unspent conditional grants amount by 16 November 2026. A municipality must return the remaining unspent conditional grant funds that are not subject to a specific repayment arrangement to the National Revenue Fund (NRF) by 24 November 2026; and
- Step 6: Any unspent conditional grant funds that should have but have not been repaid to the National Revenue Fund (NRF) by 24 November 2026, and for which a municipality has not requested a repayment arrangement, will be offset against the municipality's 09 December 2026 equitable share allocation.

All other issues pertaining to Appropriation Statement and reporting on approved rollovers are addressed in the Annexure to MFMA Circular No. 86.

2.11 Rollover of the Urban Development Financing Grant: metro trading services component

The normal rules regarding rollovers will apply to the incentive grant. Essentially the Budget allocated during the National MTEF and reflected in the annual Division of Revenue Act will make provision that the cash flows be synchronised to achievements in line with the Annexure A3: Performance Improvement Action Plan (A3: PIAP).

While deadline for the submission of the rollovers, dates 31 August, earlier submission in the case of the Urban Development Financing Grant will receive a response promptly.

3. Budget and other management issues

3.1 2026/27 Municipal Budget Tabling Timelines

The 2026 National Budget was tabled by the Minister of Finance on 25 February 2026, which implies that Provincial Governments have two weeks thereafter to table the 2026 Provincial Budgets in the Provincial Legislators, i.e., 12 March 2026. This is in line with the PFMA – Treasury Regulations. Municipalities have sufficient time to accommodate the allocations in the DOR Bill in their 2026/27 MTREF Budgets before tabling on 31 March 2026.

The transfers from provinces to municipalities which are supposed to be included in provincial budgets and gazetted by provinces, should for all practical reasons also be available. Given that municipalities have 10 months to prepare their upcoming budgets prior to tabling it in Council for consideration, National Treasury have always advised municipalities to use the outer years

of the Annual DoRA as projections, add inflation to calculate the third year of the MTREF, when finalising the tabled budget.

For those municipalities where the budget was already in an advanced stage of preparations, they will have between tabling and the adoption stage (end of May 2026) to include and accommodate all the transfers for both national and provincial governments. This will allow National and Provincial Treasuries to verify and reconcile the transfers with the DoR Bill and provincial Gazettes.

3.2 Timeline for approving the revised Service Delivery and Budget Implementation plan (SDBIP) following the approval of the adjustment budget

Section 54(1)(c) of the MFMA provides that the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) may be revised following the approval of an adjustments budget. However, the MFMA and the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR) do not explicitly prescribe the timeframe within which the revised SDBIP must be approved after the adjustments budget has been approved by council. The absence of a specified timeframe may result in inconsistent interpretations and practices across municipalities. To address this gap and ensure consistent application, the National Treasury provides the following guidance to ensure that the approved adjustments budget informs the revised SDBIP:

- Council must approve the revised SDBIP during the same council meeting where the adjustments budget is approved, if there are no structural changes to the SDBIP; and
- If the adjustments budget results in structural changes to service delivery targets or key performance indicators (KPIs), the council must approve the revised SDBIP within ten (10) working days of the adjustments budget's approval. This will ensure that any changes to service delivery targets or KPIs stemming from the adjustments budget are included in the revised SDBIP within the ten (10) working days.

Although the MFMA allows municipalities to revise the SDBIP after the adjustments budget has been approved, these revisions should not result in excessive or unnecessary changes. Significant KPI changes must be clearly justified and must follow the criteria set out in paragraph 7 of the MFMA Circular No. 129.

The National Treasury discourages excessive changes to KPIs during mid-year adjustments, as these changes may undermine effective performance monitoring and accountability.

3.3 Caution to manage transition risk

Municipalities are cautioned to adhere to the guidance provided in paragraph 3 (pages 4 and 5) of the Budget Circular No. 107 as the outgoing council may be tempted to prepare budget with unrealistically low tariff increases, additional absorption of unskilled staff, writing off debtors which can still be pursued and an over-ambitious capital expenditure programme. The outcome of this approach will undoubtedly be an unfunded municipal budget that threatens the municipality's financial sustainability and service delivery for the incoming Council after the elections".

National and Provincial Treasuries will be closely monitoring tabled budgets, collection rates and expenditure for any indications that the above guidance is not adhered to and appropriate consequences will be applied.

Municipal officials and councillors are reminded that interference in the implementation of the municipality's approved credit control policy may constitute an offence in terms of section 173(5)(a) of the MFMA. Offences in terms of the MFMA can result in a fine or imprisonment for up to five years, if convicted. In addition, the failure to properly implement the approved credit

control policy of the municipality by an official may constitute financial misconduct in terms of section 171 of the MFMA. In such a case, the municipality must investigate and, where necessary, institute disciplinary proceedings.

3.4 Warning not to enter into contracts having future budgetary implications as part of electioneering

Various municipal Councils in the past had entered into long-term contracts towards the end of their term therefore unfairly and carelessly financially committing the new Council.

Therefore, the current outgoing Council must not enter into such contacts and if there is a need, the Council should follow Section 33 of the MFMA in full. Failure to comply with such will lead to Section 216(2) being imposed until such a contract is nullified.

3.5 Cost reflective tariffs

In line with the guidance provided in MFMA Circular No. 132, municipalities need to complete the cost reflective tariff tool. If tariffs are not cost reflective already, the municipality needs to set out a path to achieve cost-reflective tariffs over the 2026/27 MTREF period.

At the time of issuing this circular NERSA has not yet confirmed the approved bulk costs municipalities must provide for in 2026/27. Municipalities must communicate clearly to the public that the electricity tariffs communicated in their tabled budgets may need to be adjusted once these are confirmed. Municipalities are advised to closely follow further guidance from NERSA.

3.6 Budgeting for a Funded Budget

National Treasury has observed over the years that many municipalities that adopt unfunded budgets are adopting **budget funding plans** as a mere compliance exercise. There is very little progress made to turn around from an unfunded budget position, to a funded one. As communicated before with the release of MFMA Circular No. 129 (issued during December 2024), this will be the last year than a funding plan as an instrument to facilitate measurable progress will be allowed. The enforce of compliance with Section 18 of the MFMA will now start taking precedence.

4. Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (mSCOA)

4.1 Alignment of cash flow linkages

In terms of GRAP 2, cash flows should be classified in accordance with the nature of the activity to which they relate (operating, investing or financing) which requires that:

- Both operating and investing activities for *Interest, Insurance Refund and Retentions* must be accounted for based on the nature of the transactions; and
- The *Interest on short-term investment* (greater than 90 days but less than 12 months) and *long-term investments* (more than 12 months) must be populated within investing activities. Short-term investments are disclosed on the Statement of Financial Performance on table A4 of the A1 Schedule.

To give effect to this GRAP standard:

- A new operational funding source, namely *Insurance Refunds*, has been created under the Investing Activities of tables A7 and SA30 of the A1 Schedule in version 7.1 of the mSCOA chart;

- The VAT Receipts will be populated using the Bank Deposits (IA001001 – "DEPOSITS") and VAT Receipt funding source. The VAT Control account receipts will not be used for this purpose; and
- *Construction Contract Revenue* will no longer form part of *Sales of Goods and Rendering of Services and Development Charges* will no longer form part of *Operational Revenue*. A new funding source was created to allow for the separate population of *Construction Contract Revenue* and *Development Charges* as part of *Other Revenue* on table SA30 of the A1 Schedule.

The structure of table A7 of the A1 Schedule and relevant cash flow linkages has also been aligned to the *m*SCOA chart version 7.1. The updated linkages to supporting table SA30 that populated table A7 are attached as **Annexure B: Cash Flow Linkages**.

4.2 Guidance on submission of *m*SCOA roadmaps

Municipalities are reminded that the municipal *m*SCOA Road Maps must be revised annually as part of the annual budget process. The draft and final *m*SCOA Road Maps must be:

- Tabled and adopted in Council as part of the supporting documents to the budget; and
- Submitted in PDF format to the GoMuni Upload portal for review by National and Provincial Treasuries.

Going forward, municipalities are required to utilise the FMCMM web-based system to conduct self-assessments of their *m*SCOA road maps. This high-level self-assessment will identify gaps in *m*SCOA implementation that should be incorporated into and addressed through the municipal *m*SCOA Road Map. The e-road map must align with the objectives, tasks, and activities outlined in the municipality's comprehensive (traditional) *m*SCOA road map.

Accordingly, in addition to the draft and final *m*SCOA road maps submitted by municipalities as part of their tabled and adopted budget documents, the *m*SCOA e-road map (i.e. the high-level action plan generated through the FMCMM system) must be attached to the comprehensive (traditional) *m*SCOA road maps. The *m*SCOA road map and annexed e-road map must be submitted as a single consolidated PDF document and not as separate documents.

As articulated in MFMA Circular No 112 dated 6 December 2021, municipal *m*SCOA Road Maps should cover the following implementation areas:

- **System landscape** – does the municipality has access to updated ICT hardware, software and licenses that is sufficient to run the chosen financial management systems solution?
- **Governance and institutional arrangements** – are there a functional *m*SCOA steering committee or equivalent structure consisting of representatives from all business units, that meet regularly to monitor and report on *m*SCOA related issues to Management Committee (MANCO), Executive Committee (EXCO) and Council? Furthermore, did the municipality appoint a suitably qualified System Administrator and the required IT securities are in place?
- **System functionality** – is the functionality of the system complying with the minimum business processes and system specifications articulated in MFMA Circular No 80; is the municipality utilising the core financial system solution and its modules optimally; and are 3rd party sub-systems seamlessly integrating with the *m*SCOA enabling financial system?
- **Proficiency** of municipal officials to use the financial system – are the relevant municipal officials sufficiently capacitated on all system modules and functionalities to use the financial systems solution; are relevant officials in the organisation familiar with the *m*SCOA chart, balance sheet budgeting, and movement accounting; and have change

management taken place to ensure that *m*SCOA is institutionalised as an organizational reform and not only a financial reform?

Importantly, the municipal *m*SCOA Road Map should not be confused with the roadmaps used by system vendors for system upgrades, new developments, error-correction patches, updates, or training. The municipal *m*SCOA Road Map is broader than system functionality and must be developed and owned by the municipality. It should therefore not be prepared or driven by system vendors or external consultants.

The e-road map is intended to enhance oversight and monitoring by municipalities and provincial treasuries with respect to the implementation of *m*SCOA at municipal level.

4.4 Stage 3 validation

The development and piloting of the stage 3 validation to verify the credibility of *m*SCOA data strings submitted to the Local Government Database and Reporting System (LGDRS) has not been concluded and will only be introduced in the 2027/28 MTREF. This validation will automate the data string analysis currently undertaken by the National and Provincial Treasuries, and data string submissions that fail this validation will be rejected.

In preparation for the implementation of the stage 3 validation and ensure that credible data strings are submitted to the GoMuni Upload portal, municipalities should request their system vendors to incorporate additional validation rules within their municipal system solutions. At a minimum, these validation rules should address and resolve the following common errors identified in the submitted data strings:

- **Correct usage of the funding segment:** Some municipalities are not utilising the funding segment as per the guidance in the Project Summary Document (PSD), e.g. funded transactions are linked to non-funding transactions. The National Treasury will implement an addition validation to ensure the adherence of the principles of the PSD and ensure accurate populating of the Cash Flow Statement in chart version 7.2.
- **Unbundling of the Salary Clearing and Control Account:** A number of municipalities are not correctly unbundling the salary clearing and control accounts in accordance with the accounts prescribed in the *m*SCOA Chart of Accounts. This results in reporting inaccuracies relating to outstanding salary payments and third-party liabilities associated with payroll transactions;
- **Population of the cash flow tables:** The cash flow tables (A7, SA30, B7, SB30, C7 and SC30) in the A1 Schedules are not being fully and correctly populated by municipalities during the budgeting and transactional processes. Guidance on the updated linkages to supporting table SA30 that populated table A7 are attached as **Annexure B: Cash Flow Linkages** of this circular;
- **Opening balances:** Currently, the opening balances at year end (M12 as at 30 June) of the previous financial year are not being correctly rolled over to the first month (M01 as at 01 July) of the new financial year. In addition, these balances are not being updated to reflect the pre-audited (PAUD) and audit (AUDA) adjustments in the current financial year within the applicable open period(s). This validation rule(s) should test whether the opening balances have been rolled over correctly and balances off to zero. National Treasury will implement a validation rule to ensure that opening balances equal to zero in the third stage validation in chart version 7.2;
- **Function:** Currently, the use of the function segment by municipalities is not aligned with the guidance provided in the PSD for the function segment. Each function should net off to zero and should reflect a mini trial balance (Identified Revenue, Assets, Liabilities, Expenditure and Net Assets) (i.e., identified revenue, assets, liabilities, expenditure, and net assets) linked to the appropriate function and sub-function. The stage three validation should identify where budget allocations have not been allocated to the correct item within

a function or sub-function. In addition, all sub-functions are expected to balance to zero; and

- **Region:** The usage of the regional segment by municipalities is not aligned with the guidance provided in the PSD for the regional segment. Municipalities must ensure that each regional segment used balances to zero. Furthermore, each region should reflect a mini trial balance i.e., identified revenue, assets, liabilities, expenditure, and net assets) linked to the appropriate region or ward.

4.5 Retentions

In accordance with GRAP 19.18, accruals represent liabilities for goods or services that have been received or supplied but have not yet been paid, invoiced, or formally agreed with the supplier. For financial reporting and contract management purposes, once work has been certified as completed, the municipality becomes legally obligated to pay the full value of the work performed, inclusive of VAT, to the supplier.

A retention represents a delayed payment and not a reduction in the amount payable for the work performed. It therefore reflects only a timing difference in the settlement of the liability and does not reduce the contract price. Consequently, the full certified amount must be recognised, with the retention portion recorded as a liability until it becomes contractually due for release.

Accordingly, when work has been completed, the retention amount must be recognised inclusive of VAT and recorded to the Retention Liability account, with the VAT portion allocated to the Input VAT Accrual account, as this reflects the municipality's full obligation for the work performed.

However, given that most municipalities account for VAT on a payment basis with the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the claiming of VAT can only occur once the retention invoice has been received, recognised and paid. The VAT should therefore be processed against Input Tax General (for operational projects) or Input Tax Capital (for capital projects), as applicable.

Where a municipality accounts for VAT on an invoice basis with the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the VAT may only be claimed once the retention invoice has been received and recognised. In such cases, the VAT must also be processed against Input Tax General (for operational projects) or Input Tax Capital (for capital projects), as applicable.

4.6 Virement data strings and report

From the 2025/26 MTREF, municipalities report on their virements through the submission of a separate data string and report on virements to the GoMuni Upload portal.

*m*SCOA Circular No. 8, dated 24 April 2020 (as revised on 29 April 2020) has been updated to include the requirements of the virement data string and virement report. In accordance with the key principles set out in *m*SCOA Circular No. 8, municipalities are reminded of the following:

- **Virement Policy Alignment:** Municipalities must review their virement policies annually to ensure alignment with the principles and guidance contained in the circular and the broader *m*SCOA regulatory framework;
- **Multi-Dimensional Budgeting:** As a business reform, *m*SCOA requires multi-dimensional budgeting and the recording of transactions across the seven *m*SCOA segments. The circular provides guidance on how virements (budget transfers) must be managed within this framework;
- **Restrictions on Virements:** Virements may only take place within a function or its sub-functions and must utilise the same source of funding;

- Enable spatial transformation, economic inclusion, and growth.

To participate in the reform, Metros must maintain eight minimum commitments. The National Treasury's annual *m*SCOA Compliance Assessment (previously referred to as the *m*SCOA ICU desktop assessment), which has been incorporated into the FMCMM web-based system from the 2026/27 MTREF, will be used to validate compliance with Indicator A2 relating to *m*SCOA compliance.

The intention is that each Metro, based on its current level of compliance, will implement plans and targets to achieve full compliance by Year-6 (Y6) of the reform. In the first year of the reform (Y0), the score obtained in the 2024/25 *m*SCOA Compliance Assessment, which was shared with metros during the mid-year budget and performance engagements, will serve as the baseline position. Thereafter, year-on-year improvements in the *m*SCOA Compliance Assessment scores will be expected as Metros progress towards achieving their targets.

The results of the *m*SCOA Compliance Assessment (downloaded from the FMCMM web-based system), together with the *m*SCOA Road Map submitted to GoMuni Upload platform to address gaps in implementation, will be used by the Independent Verification Agent (IVA) as evidence of achievement for this indicator.

Metros are also reminded that Indicator M7 requires that separate financial statements, prepared in the *m*SCOA aligned Specimen AFS format, must be compiled and submitted for each trading service, aggregated to the consolidated Metro AFS.

5. Submitting documents to the GoMuni Upload Portal

5.1 Submission of additional information

In line with its commitment to improving transparency and accountability, the National Treasury requested the following information from municipalities via a letter from the Director-General of the National Treasury:

Procurement Spend Information

An *Instruction on Procurement Information Transparency* has been issued by the National Treasury for the publication of the dashboard and requesting procurement information from procurement systems of all departments, public entities and constitutional institutions. The published information will include, but is not limited to, supplier and ownership details, the nature, value, quantity of procurement transactions, and payments made to suppliers. It is intended that similar procurement information will be published in respect of local government in the procurement payments dashboard. The prescribed template is attached as **Annexure C**.

Employee Information

The National Treasury has additionally committed to improving transparency and accountability in personnel systems. A data driven ghost worker audit has been initiated at national and provincial government. It is intended that the ghost worker audits will be extended to local government. The information requested will be used for this initiative. The prescribed template is attached as **Annexure D**.

Audit management reports

Municipalities are required to upload all the communication of findings (COFAFS), as well as the final audit management report issued by the Auditor General to the LGDRS. With effect

from the 2026/27 MTREF, the COFAFS will be added as an upload option on GoMuni Upload. Please note that these reports, as issued by the Auditor-General, must not be altered in any way.

The National Treasury understands the sensitivity associated with the Auditor-General's management report. Municipalities are assured that the management reports are exclusively for internal use by National and Provincial Treasuries to determine the key areas that our municipal support programmes should target.

Should your municipality not be in possession of the management report, kindly provide us with a formal letter of permission to obtain the said report directly from the Office of the Auditor-General South Africa. The letter of permission must be on an official letterhead of the municipality and signed by the Accounting Officer (Municipal Manager).

All enquiries should be directed to:

INFORMATION REQUIRED	SUBMISSION PLATFORM	SUBMISSION DATE	QUERIES
1 Procurement Spend Report	GoMuni Upload Portal at https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/welcome	Within 10 working days after the end of each month	Thys Blom at Thys.Blom@treasury.gov.za
2 Employee Related Data	Central Supplier Database (CSD) at www.csd.gov.za	Templates available under the GoPublic / Template Library portal	csdoos.support@treasury.gov.za
3 Management Reports and COFAFS		By no later than the 10th working day in January annually	

The templates are can also be accessed under the GoPublic / Template Library portal on https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/portal/Template_Library.

The procurement spend and employee information should be available on municipal procurement systems and HR sub-systems of all municipalities. Municipalities should liaise with their respective system vendors to extract this information in the required templates format directly from their relevant systems.

This information is requested in terms of sections 5(2)(c), 33(3) and 74 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (MFMA).

6. The Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations

6.1 Assistance with the compilation of budgets

If municipalities require advice with the compilation of their respective budgets, specifically the budget documents or Schedule A, they should direct their enquiries to their respective provincial treasuries or to the following National Treasury officials:

Province	Responsible NT officials	Tel. No.	Email
Eastern Cape Buffalo City	Matjatji Mashoeshoe Pitso Zwane Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5553/ 0609242914 012-315 5171 012-315 5807/0661198036	Matjatji.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za Pitso.Zwane@Treasury.gov.za Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
Free State	Cethekile Moshane	012-315 5079	Cethekile.moshane@treasury.gov.za
Gauteng City of Tshwane and City of Johannesburg City of Ekurhuleni	Matjatji Mashoeshoe Pitso Zwane Willem Voigt Makgabo Mabotja Khanyisile Khoza Kgomotso Baloyi Lunathi Dumani	012-315 5553 012-315 7538 012-315 5830 012-315 5156 012-315 5866/082 887 2968	Matjatji.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za Pitso.Zwane@Treasury.gov.za WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za Makgabo.Mabotja@treasury.gov.za khanyisile.khoza@treasury.gov.za Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za Lunathi.dumani@treasury.gov.za
KwaZulu-Natal eThekweni uMhlatuze	Kgomotso Baloyi Lunathi Dumani Kevin Bell Sifiso Mabaso Matjatji Mashoeshoe Pitso Zwane	012-315 5866 012-315 5725 012-315 5952/060 923 7343 012-315 5553/060 326 6885 012 315 7538	Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za Lunathi.dumani@treasury.gov.za Kevin.Bell@treasury.gov.za Sifiso.mabaso@treasury.gov.za Matjatji.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za Pitso.Zwane@Treasury.gov.za
Limpopo	Sifiso Mabaso Jabulile Ngwenya	012-315 5952/060 923 7343	Sifiso.Mabaso@treasury.gov.za Jabulile.ngwenya@treasury.gov.za
Mpumalanga	Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5807	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
Northern Cape	Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5807	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
North West Mafikeng	Willem Voigt Makgabo Mabotja Khanyisile Khoza Cethekile Moshane	012-315 5830 012-315 5156 012-315 5079	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za Makgabo.Mabotja@treasury.gov.za khanyisile.khoza@treasury.gov.za Cethekile.moshane@treasury.gov.za
Western Cape Cape Town George	Willem Voigt Khanyisile Khoza Kgomotso Baloyi Sifiso Mabaso	012-315 5830 012-315 5385 012-315 5866/082 887 2968 012-315 5952/ 060 923 7343	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za khanyisile.khoza@treasury.gov.za Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za Sifiso.Mabaso@treasury.gov.za
Technical issues on GoMuni Website	Data management		lgdataqueries@treasury.gov.za
Local government Conditional Grants			Sello.mashaba@treasury.gov.za Pretty.mavhungu@treasury.gov.za Marvin.ngobeni@treasury.gov.za Akanyang.modise@treasury.gov.za Sandra.admams@treasury.gov.za
Municipal (Eskom) and or Water Debt Relief and Smart Metering	LGBA: Revenue Section (Sadash Ramjathan)		revenue@treasury.gov.za

Contact



national treasury

Department:
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Post Private Bag X115, Pretoria 0001
Phone 012 315 5009
Fax 012 395 6553
Website <http://www.treasury.gov.za/default.aspx>

JH Hattingh
Chief Director: Local Government Budget Analysis
20 March 2026

Annexure A – Previous MFMA Circulars

Water scarcity issues dealt with in previous MFMA Circulars

Municipalities were reminded in the following MFMA budget Circulars to treat water as a scarce resource as follows:

MFMA Circular	Reference no. and Description	Comments
MFMA Circular No: 51	3.2 Water tariffs must be cost-reflective	South Africa faces similar challenges with regard to water supply as demand growth outstrips supply. Better maintenance of infrastructure, new dam construction and cost-reflective tariffs will ensure that the supply challenges are managed in future.
MFMA Circular No: 54	5.2 Water tariffs must be cost-reflective	There continues to be an urgent need to promote the careful use of water. Ensuring that water is correctly priced is the most effective means getting households and businesses to conserve water.
MFMA Circular No: 55	3.3 Water tariffs must be cost-reflective	To mitigate the need for water tariff increases, municipalities must put in place an appropriate strategy to limit water losses to acceptable levels. In this regard municipalities must ensure that water used by its own operations is charged to the relevant service and not simply attributed to water 'losses'.
MFMA Circular No: 58	3.4 Water and sanitation tariffs must be cost-reflective	To mitigate the need for water tariff increases, municipalities must put in place an appropriate strategy to limit water losses to acceptable levels. In this regard municipalities must ensure that water used by its own operations is charged to the relevant service and not simply attributed to water 'losses'.
MFMA Circular No: 67	5.6 Municipal water infrastructure grant and non-revenue water	According to the latest National Non-Revenue Water Assessment Report (The state of nonrevenue water in South Africa, Report TT522-12: www.wrc.org.za); recently released by the Water Research Commission and the Department of Water Affairs, more than 50 per cent of municipalities cannot provide a water balance. These municipalities cannot determine whether demand for water exceeds supply or quantify the extent to which non-revenue water influences water security and financial sustainability.
MFMA Circular No: 74	Water and sanitation tariffs must be cost-reflective	To mitigate the need for water tariff increases, municipalities must put in place an appropriate strategy to limit water losses to acceptable levels. In this regard municipalities must ensure that water used by its own operations is charged to the relevant service and not simply attributed to water losses.
MFMA Circular No: 78	5.2 Water and sanitation tariff increases	In light of the current drought being experienced across large parts of the country, and to mitigate the need for water tariff increases, municipalities must put in place appropriate strategies to limit water losses to acceptable levels. In this regard municipalities must ensure that water used by its own operations is charged to the relevant service and not simply attributed to water losses.
MFMA Circular No: 79	4. Revenue management	Demand management is becoming increasingly necessary as the country faces water shortages and an unstable electricity supply. The approach to tariff setting should consider all these factors and strive to achieve an equitable balance. It is anticipated that the cost of providing municipal services will grow at a faster rate than the transfers from national government. Resource scarcity will most likely increase the cost of bulk purchases in respect of water and electricity beyond the country's inflationary targets.

MFMA Circular No: 85	4.3 Water and sanitation tariff increases	In light of the current drought experienced across large parts of the country, water is now a scarce resource that must be conserved. Municipalities must put in place appropriate strategies to curb water losses as a result of leakages. The ageing infrastructure is a contributing factor as many municipalities have historically inadequately provided for repairs and maintenance and renewal of water infrastructure.
MFMA Circular No: 89	3.3 Water tariff increases	The prevailing drought makes it difficult for some municipalities to improve revenue generation from this service. It is now more important to improve demand management, infrastructure maintenance, loss management, meter reading and tariff setting in respect of water services.
MFMA Circular No: 91	1. The South African economy and inflation targets	The drought experienced in several provinces poses significant risks to agriculture and tourism for the period ahead, and this may threaten jobs in these sectors. The current water crisis in the Western Cape and other provinces will affect economic growth. While the drought's impact is uncertain much depends on how long it will prevail; the extent to which specific catchment areas are affected; and the success of mitigation measures.
MFMA Circular No: 93	3.3 Water tariff increases	Drought conditions make it difficult for some municipalities to improve revenue generation from this service. It is now more important to improve demand management, infrastructure maintenance, loss management, meter reading and tariff setting in respect of water services.
MFMA Circular No: 98	4.2 Setting cost reflective tariffs	Technical losses are related to physical losses out of the system. In the case of water, this is due to pipe bursts and leakages or due to overflows on storage tanks.
MFMA Circular No: 99	1. The South African economy and inflation targets	The declining economic growth which might be impacted on further by the Corona virus pandemic and international companies closing down as a result, the deteriorating state of the finances for state-owned entities, continued high unemployment and water and electricity shortages will put pressure on the ability of municipalities to raise revenue. Municipalities are therefore advised to follow a conservative approach when projecting their revenue and to eliminate any waste and unnecessary expenditure.
MFMA Circular No: 112	7. Funding choices and management issues	Strictly control the use of costly water tankers and fix the water infrastructure to enable the sustainable provision of water. Curbing the consumption of water and electricity by the indigents to ensure that they do not exceed their allocation.
MFMA Circular No: 115	7. Funding choices and management issues	Strictly control the use of costly water tankers and fix the water infrastructure to enable the sustainable provision of water; Curbing the consumption of water and electricity by the indigents to ensure that they do not exceed their allocation.
MFMA Circular No: 126	3.7 Pro-actively managing collection of municipal revenue in Eskom supplied areas	Until ERA is amended it is critical that municipalities update their By-laws and policies to facilitate and legally allow the restriction of water as part of proper credit control for municipal revenue collection in Eskom supplied areas.

MFMA Circular No: 128	2.6. Reforms to improve the efficiency and financial sustainability of metro's trading services	Due to years of neglect and inadequate infrastructure maintenance, South Africa's municipalities face severe utility services issues, including in water, wastewater, and electricity. A loss of essential management and technical skills has also contributed to the decline in service quality and reliability. Metro water services alone suffer from an investment gap of R9 billion per year. These inefficiencies threaten economic growth and job creation and increases poverty. Government transferred substantial monetary allocations to local government in the successive Budgets to support water services, but the outcome and value for money of these transfers is low. To address this, an incentive grant system is being explored for 2025/26 to increase investments, change management and governance structures, promote professional management, and ensure transparency, starting with metros.
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