CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

ANNEXURE 44

NATIONAL TREASURY
MFMA CIRCULARS 129 AND 130

MUNICIPAL BUDGET CIRCULARS FOR THE 2025/26 MTREF

2025/26 BUDGET (JUNE 2025)

NATIONAL TREASURY

MFMA Circular No. 129

Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003

Municipal Budget Circular for the 2025/26 MTREF

CONTENTS:

Introduction

This budget circular provides guidance to municipalities with their compilation of the 2025/26 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 (*m*SCOA) 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, *m*SCOA 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

The National Treasury has lowered its 2024 economic growth forecast to 1.1 per cent, from the 1.3 per cent projected in the 2024 Budget Review, weighed down by stop-start economic growth and stubborn inflation in the first half of the year. The economy has since strengthened in response to the suspension of power cuts since March 2024, improved confidence following the formation of the government of national unity in June, better than-expected inflation outcomes in recent months and reduced borrowing costs. All these factors are expected to continue to support the economy over the period ahead.

GDP growth is projected to average 1.8 per cent from 2025 to 2027, up from 1.2 per cent in the preceding three years. The pace of growth is still being limited by persistent – though gradually easing – constraints, particularly in logistics infrastructure. Faster growth depends largely on maintaining macroeconomic stability, the continued implementation of structural economic reforms, improving state capabilities and supporting higher infrastructure investment.

The following macro-economic forecasts must be considered when preparing the 2025/26 MTREF municipal budgets.

Table 1: Macroeconomic performance and projections, 2023 - 2027

Fiscal year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimate	Forecast		
CPI Inflation	5.9%	4.6%	4.4%	4.5%	2.5%

Source: Medium Term Budget Policy Statement 2024.

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.

Growth in household consumption expenditure is expected to improve to 1.2 per cent in 2024, up from 0.7 per cent in 2023. Households have seen growth in real incomes as this year progressed and inflation has cooled, while consumer confidence has been buoyed by several factors, including stable electricity supply and expectations of improving financial conditions following a September cut in interest rates. Real purchasing power is expected to be bolstered by a further moderation in inflation and lower interest rates supporting household balance sheets. The newly implemented two-pot retirement system, which allows consumers to withdraw a portion of their savings before retirement, may also boost household consumption over the next few years depending on the eventual use of the withdrawn funds.

During 2024, headline inflation has cooled to its lowest rate in over three years, supported by lower food and transport prices. Underlying inflation – measured by the core inflation rate, which excludes volatile items such as food, non-alcoholic beverages, fuels, and energy – has also moderated to two-year lows, supported by lower imported inflation. Headline inflation is projected to stabilise around the midpoint of the 3–6 per cent inflation target range in the medium term. Lower food prices, a stronger rand and comparatively low oil prices present favourable risks. Meanwhile, unfavourable risks to the outlook include higher administered prices and unfavourable weather conditions for agriculture.

Even though confidence of the consumers has been uplifted by the improved economy, households are still struggling to pay municipal accounts and that has a negative impact on municipal own revenues. It is therefore noted that variations in regional specifics are possible, however, any variation of assumptions must be explicitly set out and well explained in the budget narratives, in the absence of which the Treasuries will refer the budget back to council for alignment to the macroeconomic performance projections.

2. Key focus areas for the 2025/26 budget process

2.1 Local government conditional grants allocations

Over the 2025 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the government proposes an allocation of 9.8 per cent to local government. Local government funding is projected to increase from R184.8 billion in 2025/26 to R197.9 billion in 2027/28. In 2025/26, this comprises R106.1 billion for the local government equitable share, R16.8 billion from the general fuel levy sharing with metros, and R61.8 billion for both direct and indirect conditional grants. The increased allocations to local government reflect the government's commitment to social protection as a cornerstone of its fiscal strategy, ensuring ongoing support for indigent populations and the expansion of critical infrastructure through conditional grants. These figures represent the preliminary fiscal framework outlined in the 2024 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement. The final details will be provided in the 2025 Budget Review.

Notable changes to the conditional grants system

Government has finalised its review of the conditional grant system and developed a range of reforms based on the results. These reforms are aimed to rationalise conditional grants and enhance their effectiveness and will be implemented from 2025/26.

In the metro space, National Treasury remain committed to consolidating grants to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Starting with the 2025 Budget, the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG direct) and the Programme and Project Preparation Support Grant (PPPSG)will be consolidated. Over the 2025 Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF), further reforms will include integrating the Municipal Systems Improvement Grant (MSIG) and the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG indirect) into the budget baselines of the Department of Cooperative Governance and the National Treasury, respectively. Both departments will still earmark these to ensure that these allocations are used for their original purposes.

Additionally, the non-metro components of the NDPG direct will be merged with a portion of the PPPSG, and the grant will be redesigned to better serve its objectives. Most of other proposed reforms being discussed currently are planned for medium- to long-term implementation.

NT advise municipalities to utilise the indicative numbers that were presented in the 2024 Division of Revenue Act when developing the 2025/26 MTREF calculations. It is crucial to also consider the

proposed changes to baselines that were presented in the 2024 MTBPS, as they may have an impact. NT recommend this must be prioritised in all budgetary planning for the upcoming fiscal year. In terms of the outer year allocations (2027/28 financial year), it is proposed that municipalities conservatively limit funding allocations to the indicative numbers as presented in the 2024 Division of Revenue Act for 2025/26. The Division of Revenue Bill, 2024, which includes the annexures outlining allocations to each municipality is available at:
https://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2024/default.aspx

Division Of Revenue Amendment Bill, 2024 (DoRAB)

Additional funding to the Municipal Disaster Recovery Grant – R684 million is added to the Municipal Disaster Recovery Grant (MDRG – Recovery) to fund the reconstruction and rehabilitation of municipal infrastructure damaged by the flood and storm surges that occurred in various parts of the country between December 2023 and July 2024. This will benefit several municipalities in five provinces with the following breakdown: Eastern Cape municipalities (10): R319 million; Free State municipalities (4): R48 million; KwaZulu-Natal municipalities (7): R152 million; Limpopo municipalities (4): R88 million; and Mpumalanga municipalities (4): R77 million.

Reprioritisation from the Public Transport Network Grant – R300 million is shifted from the Public Transport Network Grant (PTNG) to the Taxi Relief Fund to fund the extension of the programme. While the fund was introduced as a relief measure during the height of the COVID- 19 pandemic, it has been extended and forms part of the work that the Department of Transport is undertaking in the formalisation of the taxi industry.

Rescheduling of BFI funding in the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant – reduction of R225 million to the allocation of Drakenstein Local Municipality in the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) to align to the revised implementation plan and cashflow projections for the sanitation infrastructure upgrade project funded through the BFI.

Roll-over – R29 million is rolled over in the MSIG to complete projects related to the development of the Smart Cities Framework, Capital Expenditure Framework, Data Management Project, and Records Management Project.

Changes to conditional grant frameworks and allocations

The framework of the MDRG – recovery will be amended to ring-fence the additional funds for the repair and reconstruction of municipal infrastructure damaged by the disasters that occurred between December 2023 and June 2024.

The framework of the RBIG will be updated to amend the ring-fenced BFI amount for Drakenstein Local Municipality's sanitation infrastructure upgrade project.

The framework of the PTNG is amended to reflect the revised 2024/25 baseline following the reprioritisation towards the Taxi Relief Fund.

The framework of the MSIG is amended to account for the approved roll-over in the 2024/25 financial year.

Details per municipality, of the changes to allocations for the municipal disaster recovery grant, municipal systems improvement grant, public transport network grant and regional bulk infrastructure grant that have been described in Part 2 of the explanatory memorandum to the DoRAB will be gazetted. These changes per municipality are shown in **Annexures D** to **E and Appendix A** of the DoRAB.

All amended frameworks will be gazetted in terms of section 15(2) of the 2024 DoRA, after consulting Parliament.

2.2 Metropolitan Municipalities Trading Services Reform performance incentive

The provision of water, sanitation, electricity, and solid waste management are in a significant decline, resulting in poor reliability, safety, and accessibility of these services. The immediate cause of service decline is long-term and systemic underinvestment in maintaining, rehabilitating, and expanding infrastructure assets. Fundamental weaknesses in the structure and management of trading services underpin and exacerbate underinvestment in trading services infrastructure and assets. Currently, trading services face negative cash flows, placing at risk overall metropolitan municipalities (refers herein as metros)'s finances and their ability to support the necessary investments and contribute to the financial health of the entire municipality. Thus, there is a growing risk to municipal finances from the impact of failing trading services and an urgent need to incentivise the turnaround of trading services/ utilities to improve performance and increase investment in infrastructure.

A new feature of the conditional grant structure from 2024/25 is a performance incentive for metros who agree to embark upon specific trading services reforms, subject to performance on accountability, financial and operational performance metrics. The purpose of the Metro Trading Services performance incentive is to support and incentivise the turnaround of metro trading services to functional utilities that can access loan finance.

The incentive programme is currently planned to run over six years, from 2024/25 to 2030/31, and will cover water and sanitation (W&S), electricity and energy (E&E), and solid waste management (SWM). Maximum performance incentive amounts will be allocated to metros through the annual Division of Revenue Act, based on household and poverty indices. The envisaged scale of the incentive is such that, with commensurate internally generated funding, metro trading services capital expenditure can more than double compared to the current baseline.

To access the performance incentive, most metros have already developed Trading Services Reform Strategies, with two annexures (A1: Institutional Road Map, and A2: Business and Investment Plans) for their Water and Sanitation and Electricity and Energy Trading Services. (See Guidance Note 2: Assessment Criteria, Process and Timeframes, Metro preparations for the introduction of trading services infrastructure financing reforms). The date for submission of Solid Waste Management A, A1 and A2s is 31 July 2025. The guidance note is accessible at this link on the National Treasury website.

Metros with acceptable reform strategies for W&S and E&E will need to develop a third Annexure to their sector-specific Trading Services Reform Strategies, namely Annexure 3: Performance Improvement Action Plan (PIAP). Each A3: PIAP will have approximately 40 indicators across three performance areas (Accountability, Financial and Operational (W&S or E&E or SWM).

For each indicator, metros will specify their starting points, ambitions, programmes to accomplish the ambitions, and annual targets for the six years of the programme. The A3: PIAP as agreed to by National Treasury and passed by the metro council will become the metro's trading service **performance contract** against which incentive allocations are confirmed or adjusted, through the Division of Revenue Act. The Council-approved sector-specific A3: PIAP must be submitted to National Treasury as part of the metro's submission of budget documentation.

Metros are currently receiving formal feedback on submissions already made. Workshop briefings, a Guidance Note, and direct support will be provided to enable metros to complete the A3: PIAP template.

For metros seeking to access the incentive, the second day of the Mid-year Budget and Performance Review (MYBR) engagements will be dedicated in assessing the readiness for trading services reform and the details of A3: PIAP. Metros should submit a complete first draft A3: PIAP prior to the MYBR engagement.

Similarly, for metros seeking to access the incentive, the Budget and Benchmark engagements will devote time to assess investment plans, commercial initiatives, of trading services. Metros should be ready for the meeting with a final A3: PIAP.

Metros who have been or are unable to generate satisfactory Trading Services Reform Strategy documents will have further opportunities (with assistance of NT) to join the programme in future.

2.3. Reporting requirements for Disaster Allocations

National Treasury has in the previous circular (MFMA Circular No. 126 dated 07 December 2023) indicated that municipalities that receive their disaster funding before the start of the municipal year, i.e., 01 July, but after the end of the national financial year, 31 March, do not need to request a rollover as any deemed unspent disaster fund transferred to municipalities during that period (01 April to 30 June) will be regarded as an automatic rollover. This consideration is done because funding for this form of a disaster would have been transferred from the new year's allocation. Therefore, National Treasury will support that these unspent monies be carried over into the new municipal year's budget. The contents of MFMA Circular No 126 are not repeated here as the position still holds.

Disaster response funding for local government is provided for in the Division of Revenue Act, 2024 (Act No. 24 of 2024) (DoRA) through the Municipal Disaster Response Grant schedule 7B (MDRG 7B); and the Municipal Recovery Grant schedule 5B (MDRG 5B).

Funds from the MDRG 7B allocations are unallocated until a classification of a disaster by the Head of National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) in terms of Section 23(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002). This grant provides for the immediate release of funds for disaster response if an occurrence cannot be adequately addressed in line with section 2(1)(b) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002).

The MDRG 5B funds longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction of municipal infrastructure damaged by a disaster.

Section 25 of the 2024 DoRA provides that:

(3) (a) The transferring officer may, with the approval of the National Treasury, make one or more transfers of a Schedule 7 allocation to a province or municipality for a classified disaster, within 100 days after the date of the classification of the disaster.
(c) The National Treasury must, within 21 days after the end of the 100-day period envisaged in paragraph (a), by notice in the Gazette, publish all transfers of a Schedule 7 allocations made for a classified disaster.
(f) The funds approved in terms of paragraph (a) must be included in municipal adjustments budgets.

Any additional disaster funding that may be approved by the National Treasury through section 19 (6) of the DoRA which states that "On a joint request by the transferring officer and the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), the National Treasury may approve that a conditional allocation in Schedule 4, 5 or 6, or a portion thereof, be reallocated to pay for the alleviation of the impact of a classified disaster or the reconstruction or rehabilitation of infrastructure damage caused by a classified disaster", must comply with all the reporting requirements in the DoRA. Before the National Treasury approves a reallocation, the receiving officer of the conditional allocation in Schedule 4 or 5 or the transferring officer of a Schedule 6 allocation must confirm that the affected funds are not committed in terms of any statutory or contractual obligation”. These funds upon approval constitute a part of the total disaster allocation for that financial year and must comply with the framework conditions of the disaster funding.

Upon approval by the National Treasury either through section 25(3)(a) or section 19(6), municipalities are required to follow all reporting prescripts in terms of the DoRA. In terms of the duties of receiving officer in respect of schedule 5 or 7 allocations, section 12 requires municipalities to report expenditure and transfers received monthly, not later than 10 working days after the end of each month. Further, a municipality must submit a quarterly non-financial performance report within 30 days after the end of each quarter. Lastly, municipalities must evaluate the financial and non-financial performance of the municipality, in respect of programmes partially or fully funded by a schedule 5 allocation and submit such evaluation to the transferring officer and the relevant provincial treasury within two months after the end of the 2024/25 financial year applicable to a municipality. The reporting must also comply with the framework of the Disaster grant.

In addition to the reporting requirements outlined in section 12 of the DoRA, municipalities must adhere to the reporting guidelines specified in the disaster management frameworks. Municipalities are required to implement all approved projects and ensure that allocated funds are used for their intended purposes. Municipalities should submit disaster assessment reports and funding requests, signed by the Accounting Officer, to the Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC) within 14 days of the disaster classification. Additionally, municipalities must provide a performance report, including supporting evidence (such as payment certificates, photographs, and invoices) demonstrating the progress of project implementation, to the PDMC within 30 days after the end of the quarter in which the funds were utilised. National Treasury may withhold and / or stop any funds due to the municipality that does not adhere to the reporting requirements in the DoRA.

In terms of any disaster funding that municipalities receive between 01 July and 31 March and have not been spent by the end of the municipal year, 30 June, a request for a rollover is required and it is not deemed automatic. This is slightly different from an instance wherein disaster response funds are transferred to municipalities after the end of the national financial year, 31 March.

2.4. Budgeting and reporting of the Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP)

The DoRA provides for the allocation to ensure access to electricity through provision of capital subsidies to Eskom and municipalities for the eradication of the household’s electrification backlogs and to ensure universal access to electricity.

These allocations are made to Eskom for the Eskom areas of supply and to municipalities for their areas of supply. This allocation criteria on the electrification programme follows the powers and functions (licensed and unlicensed) to both municipalities and Eskom. However, there are instances where some allocations that are within the Eskom areas of supply, are made to municipalities. This is done to accelerate the delivery of the electrification services and the eradication of backlogs.

National Treasury has therefore issued the *m*SCOA Circular No. 16 dated 16 October 2024 to provide more detailed guidance on the budgeting for these forms of funding. Municipalities are therefore requested to follow the *m*SCOA Circular No. 16.

2.5. Stopping and reallocation guidelines

The Division of Revenue Act provides that in instances where municipalities reflect a serious or persistent material breach of the Act (DoRA and MFMA), i.e., non-compliance against the provisions of the Acts, non-compliance against grant framework and significant under-expenditure, National Treasury may at its discretion or at the request of the transferring officer stop and reallocate the conditional grants from non-complying municipalities to best performing municipalities.

Following the 2024/25 mid-year expenditure reports (second quarter report) in terms of section 10 of the 2024 DoRA and sections 71 and 72 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) (MFMA), National Treasury annually considers invoking sections 18 and 19 of DoRA.

In terms of DoRA, National Treasury utilises the reported information from both municipalities and the transferring officers in terms of section 10 and section 71 of the DoRA and MFMA, respectively. The second quarter reports dated 31 December annually is targeted as a benchmark to determine whether municipalities have adequately performed against the total allocations made. Various conditional grant frameworks give guide on the conditions required for compliance and as a measure of the performance of the municipalities.

Transferring officers are required as part of section 12 of DoRA (duties of the transferring officer) to assess and monitor the performance of the municipalities against the conditional grants and recommend to National Treasury that underperforming municipalities should be considered for stopping, while best performing municipalities are considered for additional funding in terms of sections 18 and 19 of DoRA (stopping and reallocation). In terms of section 18(2) of DoRA, a request by a transferring officer or a receiving officer to stop the transfer of a schedule 4B or 5B allocation, or a portion thereof must be submitted to the National Treasury by **31 January 2025**.

National Treasury is required in terms of sections 17, 18 and 19 of DoRA and section 38 of the MFMA to consult municipalities and afford them an opportunity to make a written representation as to why their conditional grants should not be stopped. Only after National Treasury has consulted and engaged municipalities on this intention (stopping), would the Treasury decide to either stop or not stop. Therefore, the stopping and reallocation process is a consultative "process" for which National Treasury must decide on. Recommendations from all relevant stakeholders, i.e., transferring officers and provincial treasuries are considered before the National Treasury decides.

The following questions form part of the decision when National Treasury writes to municipalities to consider stopping the allocation due to persistent underspending and non-compliance against the provisions of the legislations:

- Why expenditure reported as at 31 December 2024 is below 40 per cent;
- Progress report against approved projections (provide list/ names of approved projects);
- Representation on the cash coverage for grants transferred (Liquidity ratio) and all committed unspent funds must be ringfenced;
- Representation on the initial cash flow projections against actual performance;
- Progress report on any approved rolled over for 2023/24 financial year;
- Commitment that the allocated funds are committed and that they will be fully spent by the end of the financial year, 30 June 2025, i.e., commitment that the municipality will not request rollover against the funds proposed to be stopped;
- Representation on all projects awarded after the second quarter of the municipal financial year as at 31 December 2024;

- Representation on any commitments made against Supply Chain Management Regulation 32 projects in terms of the Supply Chain Management policy and chapter 11 of the MFMA and progress made against these projects;
- Declaration by the municipality on the amount that should be stopped by National Treasury;
- All reporting must be accurate and aligned to *m*SCOA system and
- An acceleration plan against the 2024/25 approved implementation plan.

According to section 19 of DoRA, when a schedule 4B or 5B allocation, or a portion thereof, is stopped in terms of section 18, the National Treasury may, after consultation with the transferring officer and the relevant provincial treasury, determine the portion of the allocation to be reallocated, as the same type of allocation as it was allocated originally, to one or more provinces or municipalities, on condition that the allocation must be spent by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Reallocation is therefore based on availability of funding, with priority being reallocation of funds within the same district or a province. Priority is also given to the best performing municipalities, municipalities with ready projects for implementation, committed multi-projects that could be brought forward, etc i.e., A maximum expenditure of 70 per cent against original allocation is used as an indicator for reallocation. In terms of stopping of the allocations against slow spending municipalities, a 40 per cent benchmark is used to engage municipalities whether their funds should be stopped or not. It is important to note that a representation from municipalities in terms of section 38(2) (a) of the MFMA and a recommendation from the transferring officer/ provincial treasury is considered before National Treasury can stop the funds.

3. Revenue Management

The weak economic growth continues to impact municipal finances, and this has strained consumers' ability to pay for services as communicated in MFMA Circular No. 89. Coupled with this conundrum is the marginal growth in national transfers as compared to the past. These two critical factors necessitate municipalities to function optimally, suggesting that municipal operations, processes, and procedures must be efficient. Inefficiencies in this space are guaranteed to manifest on municipal finances. Although some municipalities have managed these challenges well, others have fallen into financial distress and face liquidity challenges. Subsequently, municipalities are unable to meet their payment obligations to Eskom, water boards and other creditors. Therefore, municipalities must maximise their revenue generating potential and collect what is due to them and concurrently, eliminate wasteful and non-core spending. Municipal budgets will be scrutinised to ensure that municipalities adequately provide for their core mandate and to service their debt obligations. Municipalities must ensure that expenditure is limited to the maximum revenue collected and not spend money that they do not have.

National Treasury encourages municipalities to maintain tariff increases at levels that reflect an appropriate balance between the affordability to poorer households and other customers while ensuring that the tariffs are cost reflective for the financial sustainability of the municipality. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is forecasted to be 4.4 per cent; therefore, municipalities are required to justify all increases more than the projected inflation target for 2025/26 in their budget narratives and pay careful attention to the differential incidence of tariff increases across all consumer groups. In addition, municipalities should include details of their revenue growth assumptions for the different service charges in the budget narrative.

3.1 Revenue enhancement and Improved debt collection

Although different methods and tools are available to municipalities for improving revenue and debt collection through external sources, National Treasury would like to encourage municipalities to productively make use of the available revenue tools developed and available.

A useful method to ensure that all properties in the municipality are levied as per the 2014 Amended Property Rates Act and the municipality's tariffs and rates policies, is the correct use of the **National Treasury Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tool**. Except for property rates, other statistical data of consumers, like the number of users for different services (although it will not perfectly match) can also be benchmarked against.

The correct use of **National Treasury Cost Reflective Tariff** and **Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tools**, together with the statistical data from the municipal billing system, must be utilised to ensure the maximum levying of revenue. Unfortunately, these tools cannot be used successfully if the input data is not correct and / or output is not correctly interpretated.

The **Smart Meters Grant Roll-Out and RT29-2024** Transversal Tender (available to all government institutions) are both useful not only to improve revenue in municipalities, but also to assist in improving debt collection. Not only can water and electricity losses be reduced, but cash can be generated up front.

By making use of the available tools and smart metering systems, municipalities will be in a better position to prepare cost-reflective tariffs and credible funded budgets, budgets that align with actual revenues and expenditures.

Municipalities must focus on increasing collection rates, curbing material losses, and aligning their budgets with actual financial realities.

3.2 Maximising the revenue generation of the municipal revenue base

Property Rates

Reference is made to MFMA Circulars No. 93, paragraph 3, 98 paragraph 4.1 and 123 paragraph 5.1. The emphasis in these MFMA Circulars is to ensure that municipalities are using their entire revenue base for the revenue budget projections. The status quo remains; however, it is essential that municipalities reconcile their most recent consolidated valuation roll data to that of the current billing system to ensure that revenue anticipated from property rates is realistic. The municipalities should implement a data management strategy and develop internal capacity to perform these reconciliations and investigations to improve completeness of billing.

The periodic general valuation of properties can result in significant changes in the market values of properties, especially where regular supplementary valuations are not done during the period of validity of the valuation roll. In the year in which a new valuation roll is implemented, where the general valuation of properties results in significant increases in the market values of a significant proportion of the properties, it would be advisable to reduce the cent in the Rand rates for categories of rateable properties for which the greater proportion of the market values increased significantly in the general valuation. To do this, the municipality must run various permutations of different cent in the Rand rates against different categories of properties to ascertain the rates payable against the different permutations.

The use of the Valuation Roll Reconciliation tool of National Treasury, can assist to test the various permutations of tariffs. After running the different permutations, the municipality can then determine cent in the Rand rates for the different categories of rateable properties that do not cause rates shocks that increase the rates payable by property owners excessively.

Municipalities are referred to the Department of Cooperative Governance's practice note in this regard, which is contained in the Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act General Guidelines (March 2020) which can be found at the following link:

https://www.cogta.gov.za/index.php/municipal-property-rates/

Requirements for a billing report

The Billing report must at a minimum provide the following per each property:

- Market value;
- Property category;
- Amount billed;
- Unique property identifier (linked to the Valuation Roll);
- Property owner;
- Rebate value;
- Exemption value; and
- Reduction value.

Although the format of the billing reports will vary across municipalities, the billing report will always have the above-mentioned specifics for any municipality regardless of the financial system used as they all use the valuation roll as the basis to update the municipal financial system. Municipalities are advised to engage their service providers in ensuring that there is a standardised billing report that considers the minimum billing report requirements.

Part A and Part B Register

Reference is made to the Municipal Property Rates Act – section 23 of the MPRA reads as follows:

1. A municipality must draw up and maintain a register in respect of properties situated within that municipality, consisting of a Part A and Part B;
2. Part A of the register consists of the current valuation roll of the municipality, including any supplementary valuation rolls of the municipality prepared in terms of section 78;
3. Part B of the register must specify which properties on the valuation roll or any supplementary valuation rolls are subject to – (a) an exemption from the rate in terms of section 15; (b) a rebate on or a reduction in the rate in terms of section 15; (c) a phasing-in of the rate in terms of section 21; or (d) an exclusion referred to in section 17 (1) (a), (e), (g), (h) and (i);
4. The register must be open for inspection by the public during office hours. If the municipality has an official website or another website available to it, the register must be displayed on that website; and
5. A municipality must at regular intervals, but at least annually, update Part B of the register. Part A of the register must be updated in accordance with the provisions of this Act relating to the updating and supplementing of valuation rolls.

Based on the cited section, municipalities are expected to comply with the provisions of section 23 of the MPRA to ensure that the latest information is used in the reconciliation process. All revenue foregone as supported by municipal policies due to municipal reductions rebates and exemptions must be accounted for in the Part B register and all subsequent supplementary rolls performed are accounted for using a Part A register.

Furthermore, municipalities are also advised and expected to comply with section 8(1) of the MPRA in terms of the billing methodology that should be specified within their policies to ensure that the correct categories (based on the selection made by the municipality) are used in the reconciliation process. A further test would be to reconcile this information with the Deeds Office registry.

In accordance with the MFMA Circular No. 93, municipalities are once more requested to submit their reconciliation of the Valuation roll, Part A register of the billing system to National Treasury on a quarterly basis by no later than the 10th working day after the end of the quarter. A detailed action plan must accompany the reconciliation where variances are noted.

A copy of the Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tool template is available as **Annexure A** of this Circular.

The information must be uploaded by the municipality's approved registered user(s) using the GoMuni Upload Portal at: https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin.

3.3 Setting cost reflective tariffs

It is important that municipalities periodically conduct cost of supply studies in the provision of each basic service. Municipalities must ensure that when tariffs are designed that consumption charges for services are only based on consumption and all other variable costs and fixed costs e.g., salary and wages, etc. should be covered by a fixed charge. Municipalities must ensure that when tariffs are designed, capital repayment of loans are included in the provision for depreciation that must be budgeted for.

During the budgeting process, provision must be made for revenue to be generated by the tariffs levied for services to address the maintenance of infrastructure. Repairs and Maintenance need to be sufficiently covered in Employee Related Costs, Contracted Services, Operational Expenditure, and Inventory Consumed. New infrastructure developments in a municipal area of jurisdiction should be obliged to consider and incorporate efficiency sources of energy available such as solar or wind to respond to the ongoing global energy crisis. Using the latest format of the Cost Reflective Tariff Tool after the upload of the Adjustments Budget, again after the Tabled Budget (Draft Budget) and again after the Council Approved Budget, municipalities will be able to have a better understanding of the cost reflectiveness of its tariffs and future tariff adjustments successfully explained.

It is important to note that the Cost Reflective Tariff Tool's outcome is dependent on a well-structured budget with all applicable revenue and expenditure items included.

The latest version, National Treasury Tariff Tool Linked Vol. 2 of 27 November 2024, is available as **Annexure B** of this Circular. This latest Volume 2 now replaces the Tariff Setting Tool - 05 November 2019 mentioned in MFMA Circular No. 98.

The populated Cost Reflective Tariff Tool, must be uploaded by the municipality's approved registered user(s) using the GoMuni Upload Portal at:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin.

3.4 Consumer Deposits and securities

Credit control policies must be reviewed and amended to include the raising of consumer deposits, the authority to raise deposits must be deleted where it is still in the Electricity and Water by-laws, this must be included in the credit control and debt collection by-laws. Deposits must be equal or more than two months bulk accounts from water services authorities and Eskom.

3.5 Contracts with customers

All municipalities should ensure that their service agreements with customers address the following matters:

- Requirements of POPIA;
- Digital and Physical Domicile for the delivery of notices;
- Acceptance of liability in the case of proven tampering of services;
- Acceptance of Magistrates Court Jurisdiction if in arrears and legal action has been taken;
- Acceptance to adhere to Municipal policies and by-laws;
- Acceptance and approval to be handed over to third party if in arrears inclusive of credit bureau;
- Acceptance to give access to meter readers to read meters;
- Municipality accept to render promptly bills; and
- Municipality accept to limit the estimation of consumption on meters.

3.6 Indigent Management

It is critical to progressively manage the restriction of free basic services to national policy limits. Therefore, free basic services to indigent households must be restricted. Where any unlimited supply or supply above national policy limits is provided, the budget narrative must explicitly articulate how this is funded, also in a context of facilitating adequate asset management and adequate provision for related debt impairment and ability to maintain payment of Eskom, bulk water, and other creditors.

Establishing and maintaining credible indigent register – It is important that the municipalities undertake the following actions to conduct quality control and monitor the indigents:

- Check accuracy and identify any overstatement of the indigent debtor which will enable municipalities to confirm the accuracy of the reported number of indigent debtors;
- Proactively identify indigent citizens and accelerate the registration process through data-driven indigency status verification, as a precursor to tabling applications to Council for approval;
- Verify the status of indigents on the current indigent register thereby reducing the risk of citizens benefiting from the indigent subsidy when they do not qualify for it anymore;
- Create a verifiable indigent register which reduces performance audit risk through the provision of monthly controls and credible, third party, data-driven evidence to support the validity of households registered as indigent;
- Use the insight provided regarding indigents to make any necessary amendments to current Indigent Policy; and
- Municipalities are advised to work closely with DCoG and their respective provincial counterparts to simplify its indigent management registration processes – even consider qualifying criteria that can be independently checked without requiring a hefty administration burden on indigent households that are already financially constrained, including facilitating such on-site close to where indigents may reside. It is noted that the municipality needs to report on all indigent households for water and energy within its demarcation also in the Eskom supplied areas since the LGES: Free basis services (FBS) allocation is targeted at the demarcation. The municipality must therefore focus in its 2024/25 MTREF Schedule A submission to report on all indigent households (also in Eskom supplied areas).

3.7. Voluntary restriction of notified maximum demand (NMD)

Municipalities are advised that Eskom agreed with National Treasury that once a municipality in principle agreed to a Notified Maximum Demand (NMD) restriction with National Treasury, Eskom will within 30 days of National Treasury request advise on its ability to restrict the NMD at bulk supply points in that municipality. Eskom will restrict the NMD or not charge any NMD exceedance charges and penalties to the municipality until 30 June 2027 or earlier as may be agreed between National Treasury and the municipality. Should any municipality with the electricity function not be able to maintain its Eskom bulk account, it is strongly urged to make an application to the National Treasury for such a voluntary restriction of its NMD by Eskom. The application must include a council resolution to the effect that council approves and agrees to such a voluntary restriction and the effective date thereof. National Treasury will then make an application to Eskom for this purpose.

3.8. Pro-actively managing collection of municipal revenue in Eskom supplied areas

The National Treasury notes that in the context of the Electricity Regulation Act, 2006 (ERA) existing section 21(5) prohibiting Eskom to cut supply in their areas to assist municipalities to collect on rates, water, wastewater and refuse removal – municipalities have no other tool but the restriction of water to collect in Eskom supply 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. The process before the supply of water is restricted/ limited, must honour the water supply rights of the indigent as well as the administrative processes and procedures, as contained in the municipal by-laws and policies read with section 4(3)(a) of the Water Services Act.

3.9. Eskom Bulk Tariff increases

The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) is responsible for the price determination of the bulk costs of electricity. In the municipal financial year 2024/25, bulk electricity costs increased by 12.7 per cent, a slight decrease as compared to 15.0 per cent in the 2023/24 municipal financial year.

Given the absence of an approved tariff increase by Eskom and no approval of Eskom tariff application available yet for the 2025/26 financial year, municipalities are cautioned to not only use the National Treasury Cost Reflective Tariff Tool, but also to do the Cost of Supply Study as prescribed by NERSA.

3.10. Organ of State Debt

The reconciliation of Organ of State debt begins with the municipal statement as the foundational document, serving as the baseline for reviewing and verifying all transactions, balances, and outstanding amounts between the municipality and the respective organ of state. This statement ensures that the reconciliation process is rooted in the municipality’s official financial records. Technical and provincial advisors must meticulously analyse the statement to confirm that it accurately reflects all billed amounts, payments received, adjustments made, and any interest or penalties applied. By starting with the municipal statement, the process systematically identifies discrepancies and allows for their resolution through collaboration with the municipality and the organ of state.

Using the municipal statement as the starting point, the municipality will cross-check it against the organ of state’s financial records, identifying mismatches or omissions. The detailed analysis will uncover issues such as unrecorded payments, incorrect billing, or misallocated funds. Once all discrepancies are resolved and the accounts are reconciled, the verified amounts become final and binding. It is imperative that all accounts verified during this reconciliation process are settled in full. This ensures that both the municipality and the organ of state fulfil their financial obligations, promoting accountability and reducing long-standing debt burdens.

As part of the reconciliation, municipalities must apply their credit control and debt collection policies, which are also applicable to Organ of State accounts. These policies ensure structured and proactive debt management, including efforts to engage the organ of state to finalise payment agreements for the settled amounts. Additionally, any credits or overpayments identified during reconciliation must be processed promptly by the municipality through issuing credit notes or adjusting in their financial systems. Evidence supporting reconciled balances, credits, or any adjustments must be retained to ensure compliance with financial management standards and to maintain transparency.

Finally, once the reconciliation is complete and all parties agree on the verified balances, the municipality must formally sign off on the reconciled accounts. This step signifies the accuracy and acceptance of the financial records. The organ of state must then ensure that all verified accounts are settled in full without delay, demonstrating its commitment to sound financial management and equitable treatment of debtors. By enforcing credit control measures and focusing on timely settlement, the municipality not only improves its financial position, but also strengthens relationships with organs of state, fostering a culture of accountability and mutual respect.

4. Funding of municipal budgets and other management issues

4.1. Funding of municipal budgets

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. To this effect, National Treasury will only allow municipalities to turn around from an unfunded budget position to a funded position within three years, of which in each year there should be measurable progress in terms of the improvement in the collection rate and cost containment initiatives. Failure for the municipalities to show visible progress each year, such municipality will not be allowed to table an unfunded budget. On monthly basis, these municipalities are required to submit progress reports to the GoMuni Portal which must be closely monitored by the respective Provincial Treasuries.

Also note that all municipalities that adopted funded budgets in 2024/25, will not be allowed to adopt unfunded budgets in 2025/26 and going forward, this implies that such budget will be referred by National/ Provincial treasury for review until the funded position is achieved. This is to enforce compliance with Section 18 of the MFMA and to encourage prudent financial management which includes collecting what is due to a municipality and paying for services rendered.

4.2. Employee related Costs

The salary and wage collective agreement were signed by the parties of the South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC) on Friday, 6 September 2024 and municipalities are expected to implement the agreement with immediate effect as from 1 July 2024.

In respect of the 2025/26 financial year, all employees covered by this agreement shall receive, with effect from 1 July 2025, an increase based on the average CPI percentage for the period 1 February 2024 until 31 January 2025, plus 0.75 per cent. The publications of Statistics South Africa shall be used to determine the average CPI.

In case the average CPI percentage for the period 1 February 2025 until 31 January 2026 is less than 4 per cent, it will be deemed to be 4 per cent, and if the average CPI percentage for this period is higher than 7 per cent, it will be deemed to be 7 per cent.

Municipalities that wish to be exempted from the collective agreement for this financial year, should apply 30-days from the date of approval of the budget of the municipality by the municipal council, or 30 June 2025. The onus to prove the case for the granting of exemption lies with the applicant municipality, and guidance is provided by SALGA.

If the municipality has missed the deadline to apply for exemption, and still wishes to do so, then the municipality will have to apply for condonation for the late referral and must show good cause of the referral as the panellist has the power to condone any failure to meet timelines. The panellist has the powers to grant full or partial exemption, and a municipality can apply to be exempted from any provision in the agreement.

In addition, the municipality must ensure that it enlists responses to all the indicators in terms of Sections 138 and 140 of the Municipal Finance Management Act. All the above are intended to ensure that municipalities find it easier to file appropriate exemption applications backed by relevant financial information.

4.3. Remuneration of Councillors

Municipalities are advised to budget for the actual costs approved in accordance with the Government Gazette on the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act: Determination of Upper Limits of Salaries, Allowances and Benefits of different members of municipal councils published annually between December and January by the Department of Cooperative Governance. It is anticipated that this salary determination will also consider the fiscal constraints. Municipalities should also consider the guidance provided above on salary increases for municipal officials during this process. Any overpayment to councilors contrary to the upper limits as published by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs will be irregular expenditure in terms of section 167 of the MFMA and must be recovered from the councilor(s) concerned.

4.4. Municipal Pension Fund Contributions

It has been observed that municipalities have defaulted on their responsibility to ensure that 3rd party payment obligations are met, despite deductions being made from employees' salaries. This has put several municipal employees in a very unfortunate situation where they have no funds in their pension fund accounts despite salary deductions having been made.

We wish to refer accounting officers to their fiduciary responsibilities as outlined in section 61(2)(a) of the MFMA, in terms of which an accounting officer may not act in a way that is inconsistent with the duties assigned to accounting officers of municipalities in terms of the MFMA. The failure to pay over deductions to pension funds is inconsistent with section 65(2)(f) of the MFMA which requires the accounting officer to ensure that the municipality complies with its tax, levy, duty, pension, medical aid, audit fees and other statutory commitments. Equally of importance is to ensure that payments to these statutory bodies are prioritised, or suitable arrangements are made with them towards settling their accounts.

Such failure constitutes an act of financial misconduct in terms of section 171(1)(b) of the MFMA, which provides that the accounting officer of a municipality commits an act of financial misconduct if he or she deliberately or negligently fails to comply with a duty imposed by a provision of the Act on the accounting officer of a municipality.

Additionally, the above failure also constitutes a financial offence in terms of section 173 of the MFMA, read together with the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings. Section 173 of the MFMA provides that the accounting officer is guilty of an offence if that accounting officer, amongst others, deliberately or in a grossly negligent way contravenes or fails to comply with section 65(2)(f) of the MFMA.

Municipalities must therefore ensure that measures are put in place to ensure that salary deductions for pension fund contributions are paid over to the pension funds. In addition, those municipalities who have outstanding pension fund contributions are advised to ensure that any outstanding payments are paid over by latest end of the 2024/25 financial year, failure which will result in punitive measures being implemented against relevant municipalities.

Equally important is to ensure that payments to these statutory bodies are prioritised, or suitable arrangements are made with them towards settling their accounts. The two bodies must be equally urged to ensure that they provide suitable attachments when they issue their invoices to the municipality so that there is clarity of payments being made.

4.5. Unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure reduction and implementation of consequence management

Section 62(1)(d) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (MFMA) requires an accounting officer of a municipality to take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised, irregular, or fruitless and wasteful expenditure (UIFWE) and other losses. Section 62(1)(e) of the MFMA obligates the accounting officer to ensure that disciplinary or, when appropriate, criminal proceedings are instituted against any municipal official who has allegedly committed an act of financial misconduct or an offence in terms of Chapter 15 of the MFMA.

We have noted that many municipalities still have high UIFWE disclosed in their annual financial statements. The high UIFWE balances confirms that more still needs be done by the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) in line with section 32 of the MFMA to address the balance of UIFWE. Municipalities are continuing to incur UIFWE year-on-year, which is indicative of ineffective preventative.

In addition to the above, many municipalities are still not establishing disciplinary boards or ensuring that the board in place to investigate allegations or instances of financial misconduct are functional. The disciplinary board is an independent advisory body that assists the council with the investigation of allegations of financial misconduct and is required in terms of regulation 4(1) of the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings, 2014. Therefore, the establishment of a disciplinary board is a legislative requirement.

Therefore, municipalities are required to submit an action plan that must address timelines for the establishment of the disciplinary board (where one does not exist) as well as addressing the backlogs of financial misconduct investigations. The action plan must address the period from 02 January 2024 to 31 August 2025. The action plan should include monthly calendar actions that will allow the monitoring of the compiled action plan.

The action plan should include the following information:

a. a plan to process the UIFWE balances up to 30 June 2024 by 31 August 2025 and how future UIFWE will be prevented with specific UIFWE prevention controls;
b. the key process changes (including administrative processes) the municipality will implement to ensure that the UIFWE balances are processed to adhere to the August 2025 deadline; and
c. the process to be followed to establish and appoint members of the disciplinary board and address the backlog of financial misconduct referrals to the disciplinary board.

The above action plan must be approved by council together with the 2024/25 adjustments budget and should be submitted to the National Treasury through the MFMA helpdesk at mfma@treasury.gov.za by the latest end of February 2025.

4.6. Special Adjustment Budget to authorise 2023/24 Unauthorised Expenditure

Section 28(2)(g) of the MFMA, read with regulation 23(6) of the Municipal Budget and Reporting (MBRR), provides the circumstances and the timelines within which the municipality must adjust its budget in relation to the unauthorised expenditure incurred during the previous financial year.

Regulation 23(6)(a) of the MBRR requires that the budget be dealt with as part of the adjustments budget contemplated in sub-regulation (1) of the MBRR. In terms of sub-regulation (1), an adjustments budget referred to in sections 28(2)(b), (d) and (f) of the MFMA may be tabled in the municipal council at any time after the mid-year budget and performance assessment has been tabled in the council but not later than 28 February of the current year. Additionally, in terms of regulation 23(6)(b), a special adjustments budget must be tabled in the municipal council when a mayor tables the annual report in terms of section 127(2) of the MFMA, which may only deal with unauthorised expenditure from the previous financial year which the council is being requested to authorise in terms of section 32(2)(a)(i) of the MFMA.

Therefore, municipalities are reminded to take this opportunity to table and approve an adjustments budget in relation to the unauthorised expenditure which was incurred during the 2023/24 financial year in line with section 28(2)(g) of the MFMA, read with regulation 23(6).

5. Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (*m*SCOA)

5.1. Release of Version 6.9 of the Chart

On an annual basis, the *m*SCOA chart is reviewed to address implementation challenges and correct chart related errors. Towards this end, Version 6.9 is released with this circular. Version 6.9 of the chart will be effective from 2025/26 and must be used to compile the 2025/26 MTREF. The linkages to chart version 6.9 can be downloaded from GoMuni on the following link under the *m*SCOA/ List *m*SCOA WIP account linkages menu option:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin

The reports on the Local Government and Reporting System (LGDRS) are populated from financial and non-financial data strings. Municipalities must use the linkages on GoMuni referred to above and not the formulas in the regulated MBRR Schedules when generating their data strings.

The MBRR Schedules (A to F) and non-financial data string (A1S) was also aligned to chart version 6.9. A protected version of the MBRR Schedules for version 6.9 of the A1S are available on the MFMA Webpage on the link below:

http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/Municipal%20Budget%20and%20Reporting%20Regulations/Pages/default.aspx

Municipalities must verify that the A1S data string does not contain spaces and special characters prior to submission to the GoMuni Upload portal as this will result in the data not pulling through on table A10 of the A1 system generated schedule.

All municipalities must prepare their 2025/26 MTREF budgets using the budget modules of their integrated systems solution, generate their financial and non-financial data string and produce the Schedule A1 directly from the integrated systems solution. The manual preparation of these documents outside the integrated systems solution is not allowed in terms of the *m*SCOA Regulations.

For the National Treasury to consider a new chart change in version 6.10 of the chart, the issue must be logged with all relevant detail, supporting documents and screenshots (where applicable) on the *m*SCOA Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) portal by 31 August 2025. The *m*SCOA FAQ portal can be accessed by all registered GoMuni users on the following link:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin

Importantly, when a FAQ is logged, it is considered by the FAQ committee after it has been investigated. If the FAQ members do not find grounds for a chart change, the FAQ will be closed with an explanation. If there is merit for a chart change in the next version of the chart, the matter is referred to the *m*SCOA Technical and Steering Committees for recommendation and approval. This process only concludes by the end of October annually. The FAQ process will therefore not provide quick responses to queries.

If a query pertains to GoMuni related issues (such as the **A**, **B** and **C** Schedules) and not a chart change, then an email with all relevant detail, supporting documents and screenshots must be send to lgdataqueries@treaury.gov.za.

It should also be noted that *m*SCOA Circulars No 9, 10, 11 and 12 have also been aligned to *m*SCOA chart version 6.9 and the addendums to these circulars are released with this circular and will be published on the MFMA webpage. The addendums to these circulars can be accessed on the following link:

https://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/MunicipalRegulationsOnAStandardChartOfAccountsFinal/Pages/default.aspx

5.2. Future chart changes

The following chart changes are still under consultation and if approved, it will be effected in chart version 6.10:

5.2.1. Cost capitalisation to assets (current and non-current)

The National Treasury has received multiple requests through the *m*SCOA FAQ database to include items for Cost Capitalisation to Assets (current and non-Current) in alignment with the principle applied to Employee Related Costs (Cost Capitalisation to PPE). The requested items pertain mainly to the following categories:

- Employee Related Cost
- Depreciation
- Contracted services (such as maintenance)
- Consumables and materials
- Other operating costs etc

In terms of the Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP), GRAP 1.104 states that *an entity shall present an analysis of expenses using a classification based on either the nature of expenses or their function within the entity, whichever provides information that is reliable and more relevant.*

Municipalities provide this analysis based on the nature of the expenses.

GRAP 12 further requires that *Inventories paragraphs 19 to 28 must be considered to determine which costs must be included in the cost price of inventory.* In terms of paragraph 19 *the cost of inventories shall comprise all costs of purchase, costs of conversion and other costs incurred in bringing the inventories to their present location and condition.*

This GRAP standard specifically requires that any conversion costs be accounted for as part of the cost of inventory, rather than being expensed according to their nature. These costs may include labour and other expenses for personnel directly involved in the conversion process, such as water purification, as well as any attributable overheads.

When costs related to water inventory are capitalised in accordance with GRAP 12.19, no expense is recognised at the time of incurrence since a capital item is created. The expense is only recognised when the water inventory is distributed, at which point it is recorded as "Inventory consumed". This will reflect the nature of the expense incurred.

This is similar in principle to costs that are capitalised to property, plant, and equipment in accordance with GRAP 17.22. GRAP 17.22 outlines that examples of directly attributable costs that should be capitalised as part of the cost of an item of property, plant, and equipment (PPE) include expenses such as employee costs related to the construction or acquisition of the PPE, site preparation, delivery, installation, and assembly costs, among others. Once the PPE is ready for use (i.e., when it becomes available for its intended purpose), an expense is recognised in the form of "Depreciation". This depreciation represents the nature of the expense incurred over time, rather than the individual costs that were initially capitalised.

Therefore, it would not be correct to analyse and present the cost items incurred per GRAP 12.19 as the expense items outlined in the requirements of GRAP 1.104. The actual expense, by nature, is the "inventory consumed" expense, which reflects the consumption of the inventory rather than the individual costs incurred during its acquisition or conversion.

Given the current lack of consistency and the fact that only a few municipalities are accurately accounting for cost capitalisation, a guide will be issued once the consultation process with National Treasury's Office of the Accountant-General, the Accounting Standards Board (OAG), and the Auditor-General (AGSA) has been concluded.

5.2.2. Entity reporting

Currently the Local Government Database and Reporting System (LGDRS) does not make provision for the separate submission of data strings for municipal entities. However, NT is in the process of developing data strings for entities for implementation in chart version 6.10. In the interim, municipalities must verify the VAT 201 return information directly with their entity. It should be emphasised that SARS is using the *m*SCOA data strings submitted to the GoMuni Upload portal for their verification processes relating to VAT 201 returns, and municipalities should ensure that their consolidated data strings are credible, as incorrect data will negatively impact this process.

5.2.3. SARS binding general ruling BGR74

This binding general ruling issued by SARS under section 89 of the Tax Administration Act 28 of 2011 sets out the VAT treatment of supplies of goods or services made by municipalities to the national or provincial government under each contracting method. This BGR does not determine the contractual agreement between the parties but gives the VAT implications based on the nature of the transaction and the contractual capacity of the parties to the agreement. Note that the BGR 74 must be interpreted with the Value-Added Tax Act 89 of 1991.

In applying the principles of BGR 74, it is possible for municipalities to recognise output tax liabilities which they previously did not recognise. Municipalities must make appropriate payment arrangements with SARS to settle their previous unrecognised output tax liabilities due to SARS while ensuring that current output tax liabilities are settled without delay. While municipalities under BGR 74 may need to recognise output tax liabilities, municipalities should also recognise possible previously unrecognised input tax deductions, for example, in the case of VAT expenditure incurred while completing certain housing programmes.

In accordance with the guidelines outlined in mSCOA Circular No. 12: Guidance on Value Added Tax (VAT), where municipalities are the developers for housing projects (excluding where the housing project relates to rental stock), municipalities can deduct the input tax on VAT expenditure incurred in the payment of housing and other contractors, which they have contracted in the course of constructing the houses. The VAT 409 Guide for Fixed Property and Construction for Vendors provides further guidance on the issue of low-cost housing.

In accordance with section 65(2)(f) of the MFMA, the municipality must comply with its tax commitments. Failure by the accounting officer of a municipality to comply with the duty imposed by section 65(2)(f) of the MFMA, which relates to tax commitments, not only constitutes an act of financial misconduct in terms of section 171(1)(b) of the MFMA, but also a financial offence in terms of section 173 of the MFMA. In terms of MFMA Circular No. 74, municipalities were advised to refrain from engaging tax consultants or other external service providers in preparing and reviewing their VAT returns. Where municipalities appoint tax consultants and other service providers to assist with the preparation, submission, review or correcting of VAT returns, the expenditure incurred in paying for the tax consultants and other service providers constitutes fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

5.2.4. Costing segment

The costing segment includes provisions for secondary cost allocation and categorise charge-out and recoveries separately. This approach ensures that there is a clear distinction in costs associated with both internal allocations and external recoveries, allowing for more accurate financial management and reporting. Due to the inconsistent implementation of the costing segment across municipalities, the National Treasury will review the costing segment in 2025. Changes to the principles in the Project Summary Document (PSD) as well as the *m*SCOA chart version 6.10 are envisaged.

5.3. Improving *m*SCOA data strings credibility

5.3.1 Balance Sheet Budgeting

Balance sheet budgeting refers to the practise where the revenue and expenditure transactions, as well as the financial impact of these transactions on the statement of financial position, are included in the budget. In other words, all the planned transactions must be included in the budget. The debiting and crediting of all the transactions that will transpire in the ensuing financial year equates to balance sheet budgeting; thus, planning for the expense as well as the accrual, and payment of the liability. The revenue and expenditure must be accrued in the control accounts at correct posting levels and payments made and received. The correct combination of the *m*SCOA segments must also be used to ensure that data strings are credible. The PSD provides guidance on data string combinations.

Financial system solutions should be set-up correctly for balance sheet budgeting.

5.3.2 Use of external service providers

When municipalities appoint external service providers, they must ensure that these service providers have the expertise and skills to comply with the *m*SCOA Regulations. Section 5(2) of these regulations states that:

(2) The financial and business applications or systems used by a municipality or municipal entity must—

(a) provide for the hosting of the general ledger structured in accordance with the classification framework determined in terms of regulation 4(2);

(b) be capable of accommodating and operating the standard chart of accounts;

(c) provide a portal allowing for free access, for information purposes, to the general ledger of the municipality or municipal entity, by any person authorised by the Director-General or the Accounting officer of the municipality.

This means that service providers appointed by the municipality **must** comply with the following requirements when performing the work that they were appointed to do:

- Have sufficient working knowledge to use the *m*SCOA accounts and regulated segments correctly;
- Use systems and tools that comply with the provisions of the *m*SCOA Regulation 5(1) and (2);
- Use the data available on the integrated financial system solution of the municipality to:
    - Prepare key documents such as the IDP, budget, in-year reports, AFS, asset registers, etc.; and
    - Develop analysis tools and dashboards for the municipality.

When an external service provider uses excel spreadsheets or systems and tools that are not *m*SCOA compliant and populate these spreadsheets and tools from data outside of the system solution, it has a detrimental impact on the credibility of data string submitted to the GoMuni Upload portal as the data will not be aligned to the data in the spreadsheets and tools of the external service provider. This compromises the intention of *m*SCOA to have one version of the truth for reporting to municipal management, council, provincial and national government.

*m*SCOA requires planning, budgeting, transacting, and reporting to be done directly in and from the integrated financial system solution. Furthermore, the MFMA and the Preferential Procurement Regulations (2022) that became effective on 16 January 2023 allows for the blacklisting of companies to do business with the state for a period of up to 10 years for non-performance and other malpractices such as not complying with legislative requirements.

5.3.4 Use of modules on integrated system solution

The *m*SCOA Regulations required municipalities to acquire integrated system solutions from 01 July 2017 to enable the seamless integration of information to the General Ledger on the core financial system. Whereas most municipalities have complied with the Regulations, a number of municipalities are not fully utilising the modules available on their integrated system solution. Instead, they are purchasing the same modules from third-party system providers, and this constitutes fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Often these third-party modules and sub-systems do not integrate seamlessly with the core system solution to ensure smooth and efficient operations; thereby necessitating manual intervention to integrate and consolidate reporting.

Where third-party modules/ sub-systems are being used by municipalities, it is important to ensure that monthly and year-end adjustments are processed in the core system solution and not in the third-party modules/ sub-systems to achieve accuracy in financial reporting and prevent discrepancies in information. It should also be noted that the rules for integration between the core system solution and third-party modules/ sub-systems must be set by the core system provider and the latter is not required to integrate with any third-party module/ sub-system provider unless this has been agreed upon in the service level agreement.

5.3.5 Audited Actuals (AUDA) Data String vs Annual Financial Statements (AFS)

The *m*SCOA data string assessments performed by the national and provincial treasuries identified that there is generally poor alignment between the audited data strings submitted to the GoMuni Upload portal and the AFS submitted and audited by the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA).

Adjusting journals agreed upon with AGSA must be processed in the core financial system and not in the AFS Tool. The misalignment has a direct impact on the opening balances that is critical to the statement of financial position and cash flow.

Municipalities must ensure that the pre-audited (PAUD), audited (AUDA) and restated (RAUD) data strings are carefully reviewed before submission thereof to the GoMuni Upload portal. The Trial Balance, audit data strings and AFS must be in perfect alignment before submission.

5.4. Ownership of data on municipal systems

Section 65(2)(e) of the MFMA requires that monies owed by the municipality must be paid within 30 days of receipt of an invoice. Often when municipalities default for extended periods on payments to municipal system providers, system support is suspended until payment has been received or a payment plan has been agreed to. National Treasury supports that penalties are imposed by creditors for the non-payment of services and goods that were delivered. However, it must be emphasised that the ownership of the data contained in municipal systems rests with the municipality and in cases where services are suspended, the municipality should still be able to access their data. Also, where there is a migration to another system solution, the data on the legacy system must be transferred to the municipality. This applies to data stored on a server owned by the municipality, off-site server owned by a third party or in the cloud.

It is therefore important that the service level agreement entered with system providers clearly outlines the format and procedures related to access to data to minimise operational disruptions and ensure that legislative deadlines are met.

5.5. Budget override and virement

In terms of Sections 15 of the MFMA, a municipality may incur expenditure only within the limits of the amounts appropriated for the different votes in a council approved budget. However, National and Provincial Treasuries often identify transactions against items where no budget has been allocated in their data string analysis. This is a clear indication that the budget controls in the integrated system solution have been overridden. The National Treasury has instructed system vendors to ensure that strict controls are in place when the budget is overridden on the system as this bad practice circumvents the build-in system controls that should eliminate unauthorised and irregular expenditure.

Municipalities must review their Virement policy annually and ensure that it aligns with the principles and guidance in *m*SCOA Circular No. 8 (29 April 2020). Virements may only be made between existing budget provisions and must be included in an adjustments budget.

Accounting Officers are reminded that once the council has approved the annual budget for the financial year, it must be locked, and any amendments to the budget can only be made through the adjustments budget process, in accordance with the MBRR.

From the 2025/26 MTREF, municipalities will be required to report on their virements through the submission of a separate data string on virements in the form of a virement string and budget report. Validation rules applicable to the virement data string will be communicated in due course.

5.6. Regulation of the minimum business processes and technical specifications for *m*SCOA

In terms of Regulation 6(1) and 7(1) of Municipal Regulations on Standard Chart of Accounts (2014), the Minister of Finance may determine the minimum business process requirements and system requirements for municipalities and municipal entities to enable the implementation of the regulations.

In 2024, extensive work was done regarding the regulations. The project consists of the following main outputs and planned time frames:

No	Output	Planned Time Frame
1	Review and update the minimum business processes for *m*SCOA	April 2024 to March 2025
2	Develop standard operating procedures for *m*SCOA	February 2025 to April 2025
3	Review and update the minimum technical specifications for *m*SCOA	April 2025 to Oct 2025
4	Align the current ICT due diligence assessment for mSCOA to the updated *m*SCOA requirements	
5	Develop Regulations on the minimum business processes and technical specifications for *m*SCOA	Oct/November 2025
6	Training on the new Regulations	November 2025 to Feb 2026

The comments and inputs received at the working groups engagements and via the dedicated email box on the minimum business processes for *m*SCOA have been considered and incorporated as applicable. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide their final inputs **by 31 January 2025** to *m*SCOARegs@treasury.gov.za

All presentations and draft documents for comments can be located on the MFMA Webpage under *m*SCOA – Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts/ Regulations on Minimum Business Processes and Technical Specifications for *m*SCOA/ Working Groups on the following link:

https://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/MunicipalRegulationsOnAStandardChartOfAccountsFinal/mSCOA%20Minimum%20Requirements/Forms/AllItems.aspx

6. Muni eMonitor, FMCMM and Audit Action Plan System

6.1 Muni eMonitor

National Treasury launched and rolled out the Muni eMonitor System in November 2023 to strengthen the capacity and capability of municipalities and municipal entities to comply with the provisions of the MFMA and its regulations, to improve information flows for public accountability, to enhance monitoring, oversight, support measures and effective reporting by various stakeholders in municipalities, municipal entities, provincial treasuries, and National Treasury. Numerous capacity-building sessions were undertaken with various stakeholders, and Muni eMonitor champions were identified in every municipality and provincial treasury. More information on the system is also provided in MFMA Circular No. 125 on National Treasury's website.

The system consists of two main components, namely: the MFMA legislated calendar with the Actions Management function and the Evaluations Questionnaire function. The implementation plan of the two main components is as follows:

MFMA legislated calendar with the Actions Management function – All Actions appearing under the legislative calendar for each month must be processed within the specific month that they appear in the calendar.

Evaluations Questionnaire – Evaluations (covering various financial management disciplines) will be published by National Treasury (on a quarterly and ad hoc basis) for municipalities to complete and submit on the system within the deadlines stipulated by National Treasury (These evaluations replace the previous reporting requirements that municipalities were required to complete in Excel).

It has been noted that since the launch and rollout of the system, there are still municipalities/ municipal entities that have not completed and submitted the Actions Management and Evaluation Questionnaire on the Muni eMonitor system. Please note that sections 74 and 104 of the MFMA state that the Accounting Officer of a municipality/ municipal entity must submit to the National Treasury such information, returns, documents, explanations, and motivations as may be prescribed or as may be required. Therefore, to avoid any possible non-compliance, municipalities are requested to complete and submit both the Actions Management and Evaluation Questionnaires within the timeframes/ deadlines stipulated in the system.

Furthermore, it has also been noted that some municipalities are reporting information without adequate review and verification of the accuracy of the information provided by the municipality/ municipal entity. Municipalities/ municipal entities are advised that National Treasury will be using the information submitted on the Muni eMonitor system as input into the MFMA Compliance report, and thus, the onus lies with municipalities/municipal entities to submit credible information on the system to ensure that the report correctly reflects the situation at their institution.

6.2 Audit Action Plans

It is mandatory that municipalities and municipal entities develop their Audit Action plans on the FMCMM and Audit Action Plan web-enabled system and monitor and report on the implementation of the developed action plans to address the findings on the system. It has been noted that a few municipalities are still preparing and monitoring audit action plans outside of the web-enabled system.

Municipalities are reminded that the completion of the Audit Action Plan on the web-enabled system is one of the criteria required for the disbursement of the Equitable Share. Therefore, to avoid any possible withholding of the grant, municipalities are requested to develop, monitor, and report on the implementation of the Audit Action Plan on the FMCMM and Audit Action Plan web-enabled system.

6.3 Financial Management Capability Maturity Model (FMCMM)

MFMA Circular No. 114 documents the annual implementation plan for the completion of the FMCMM assessment. It breaks down the completion of the 21 modules over a 12-month period. It has been noted that many municipalities are still not completing the FMCMM on the web-enabled system and/ or are not developing action plans to address internal control deficiencies identified through the assessment.

The Auditor General of South Africa has repeatedly reported that the system of internal controls at municipalities is either not in place or ineffective. Furthermore, the 2022/23 audit outcomes indicate that 42 per cent of municipalities (excluding outstanding audits) are still receiving negative audit outcomes, thereby highlighting weaknesses in financial management and internal control deficiencies.

We have also noted a strong correlation between municipalities scoring low in specific modules and them having audit findings in those same disciplines. Therefore, it is requested that municipalities prioritise the completion of the FMCMM assessment (in line with MFMA Circular No. 114) as well as complete the development and implementation of the generated action plans to address the internal control deficiencies identified and to put in place risk mitigation strategies to ensure that weaknesses identified are addressed proactively so that they do not adversely impact on the future audit outcomes.

7. SERVICE DELIVERY BUDGET AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS (SDBIP)

7.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the top-layer of SDBIP

SDBIPs serve as a critical performance management tool, aligning municipal KPIs with budgets and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to enable effective monitoring of service delivery performance, as emphasised in MFMA Circular No. 13. To operationalise IDPs, municipalities translate the broader strategic objectives outlined in IDPs into specific, measurable, and monitorable performance indicators and targets in the SDBIP. A distinguishing feature of the SDBIP is its emphasis on measurability. National Treasury has observed ongoing challenges in structuring and revising key KPIs within the SDBIP during the financial year. These challenges stem from misalignment between the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), budget, and SDBIP, leading to ineffective performance monitoring and reporting.

To address these issues, municipalities are advised to adhere to the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) and guidance outlined in related MFMA Circulars. Specifically, MFMA Circular No. 13 emphasises the importance of aligning the SDBIP with the IDP and budget to ensure cohesive planning and execution. Additionally, MFMA Circular No. 88 provides guidance on standardised set of indicators, aiming to improve the quality of performance information across municipalities.

Overcrowding of KPIs in the SDBIP

Municipalities continue to include an extensive number of KPIs in their strategic scorecard or top-layer SDBIP or without aggregating departmental output indicators or lower layer SDBIP, despite the guidance outlined in MFMA Circular No. 13. This high volume of indicators in top-layer SDBIPs can dilute focus and make monitoring cumbersome. Municipalities are therefore encouraged to streamline their indicators by consolidating KPIs in the top-layer SDBIP, focusing on most critical indicators in achieving strategic objectives, ensuring a more manageable and effective monitoring process.

Clarity of objectives

Many KPIs lack clarity regarding their alignment with municipal objectives and intended service delivery outcomes outlined in the IDPs. This raises concerns about the 'ultimate objective' of these indicators, questioning their relevance and purpose. Additionally, municipalities duplicate KPIs across multiple functional areas or departments, resulting in redundant reporting efforts. Municipalities are urged to align all KPIs with the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and strategic objectives or priorities outlined in IDPs, this will enable better monitoring of progress, identifying performance challenges, and taking timely corrective actions. Reference is made to the Framework of Managing Performance and Programme Information (FMPPI) for further guidance on performance management.

7.2. Adjustments to the SDBIP

Municipalities adjust KPIs during the financial year, generally following adjustments budgets under Section 28 of the MFMA. While these KPI adjustments may be necessary to respond to unforeseen circumstances, underperformance of revenue or policy changes, some municipalities use this process to manipulate original KPIs to avoid accountability for underperformance. This practice undermines transparency, as original KPIs are excluded from Section 52(d) reports or Annual Performance Reports (APRs), compromising the municipal council's role to exercise oversight, and limiting stakeholders' ability to assess actual performance against initial KPIs and targets.

Adjustments to KPIs are driven by either external or internal factors. External factors include but are not limited to, significant changes in external circumstances, unforeseeable or unavoidable expenditure referred to in Sections 28(2)(c) and 29, national policy developments or changes to nationally prescribed indicators. Internal factors include, adjustments budgets as contemplated in Section 28(2) (a, b, d, e, and f), wording errors and poorly defined KPIs.
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7.3. Criteria for adjusting KPIs in the SDBIP

The following criteria outline the conditions under which a municipality may amend the KPIs in the SDBIP during the financial year:

Internal factors
• Only KPI targets may be adjusted due to under-collection of revenue or reprioritisation of funds, in terms of the council-approved adjustments budget referred to in Section 28(2) (a, e & d) of the MFMA. • Only KPI targets may be adjusted during the financial year, in line with Section 28(2)(b), to account for additional funding or resources that have become available during the financial year, enabling the revision or acceleration of spending programme already prioritised in the IDP. • KPI description may be revised to correct errors in the wording. An explanation for the correction must accompany the revision. • KPIs may be adjusted to align with changes in municipal circumstances or emergencies, provided these adjustments remain consistent with the strategic objectives and priorities outlined in the IDP. The reasons for these changes must be clearly explained in the revised SDBIP.
External factors
• KPIs may be adjusted in response to amendments to legislation, government policies, or frameworks introduced by national or relevant provincial departments, affecting original KPIs. The related legislation or policy must be referenced and documented as evidence for the change. • KPIs may be changed to respond to natural disasters, unforeseeable or unavoidable expenditures referred to in Sections 28(2)(c) and 29 of the MFMA. The reasons for these changes must be adequately justified. • KPIs may change because of revisions to nationally prescribed indicators as contemplated by the applicable legislation or circular. An explanation for these KPI revisions must be articulated in the SDBIP, referencing the relevant legislation, framework or circular.
Cross-cutting conditions
• Municipalities must reflect all KPI changes in their SDBIPs and APRs, providing clear and justifiable reasons for each change and detailing the process followed.

• Both the original and revised KPIs must continue to be reported on in the Section 52(d) of the MFMA and the APR for accountability and transparency.
• KPI changes <u>are prohibited</u> during the fourth quarter of the financial year (April – June). Only KPI changes in relation to natural disaster or unavoidable or unforeseen expenditure will be permitted during the fourth quarter of the financial year.

7.4. Alignment of the adjustments budget and adjustments to the SDBIP

When a municipality adjusts its KPIs during the financial year, it must align the changes with the provisions of Section 28 of the MFMA and the Municipal Budgeting and Reporting Regulations (MBRR). The table below outlines the different types of adjustments budgets and their linkage to SDBIP adjustments:

Types of adjustments budget	Timeframes	Sections of MFMA and MBRR	SDBIP KPIs in-year changes
Adjustments due to under-collection of revenue	Anytime	S.28(2)(a)	Only changes to KPI targets are allowed
Main adjustments budget	February – after the tabling of the mid-year budget assessment and performance Only one adjustments budget referred to in Section 23(1) except S.28(2)(b)	S.28(2) (b, d & f) Reg. 23(1&2)	Allows for amendments to the SDBIP to address underperformance or realignment with revised priorities and allocations. This is subjected to the conditions outlined above
Additional funds from national / provincial government	60 days after the approval of the relevant national / provincial adjustments budget	S.28(2)(b) Reg. 23(3)	Only changes to KPI targets are allowed
Unforeseen and unavoidable expenditure	Within 60 days of expenditure being incurred	S.28(2)(c), 29(3) & 32 Reg. 23(4), 71 & 72	KPIs may be adjusted to reflect changes in resources or priorities caused by these expenditures
Roll-over of municipal funds	Before 25 August	S.28 (2)(e), Reg. 23(5)	Linked to revisions of the SDBIP to include projects and targets funded by rolled-over amounts
Authorisation of unauthorised expenditure	During main adjustments budget in February. After tabling of the annual report for that year (7 months after the financial year end)	S. 28(g), 32, 127(2) Reg. 23(6)	No changes to KPIs are allowed

All SDBIP adjustments must be tabled and approved in council.

National Treasury further discourages excessive or unjustified KPI revisions during the financial year as such practices distort municipal performance monitoring and reporting.

N.B This guidance relating to in-year KPI changes in SDBIP should be read in conjunction with guidance provided in the MFMA Circular No. 88 – Addendum 6.

8. The Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations

8.1. 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 012-315 5171 012-315 5807	Matjatji.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za Pitso.Zwane@Treasury.gov.za Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
Free State	Sifiso Mabaso Cethekile Moshane	012-315 5952 012-315 5079	Sifiso.mabaso@treasury.gov.za Cethekile.moshane@treasury.gov.za
Gauteng City of Tshwane and City of Johannesburg City of Ekurhuleni	Matjatji Mashoeshoe Pitso Zwane Oreal Tshidino Willem Voigt Makgabo Mabotja Enock Ndlovu Kgomotso Baloyi Lunathi Dumani	012-315 5553 012-315 5171 012 315 5090 012-315 5830 012-315 5156 012-315 5866 012-315 5866	Matjatji.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za Pitso.Zwane@Treasury.gov.za Oreal.Tshidino@Treasury.gov.za WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za Makgabo.Mabotja@treasury.gov.za Enock.Ndlovu@treasury.gov.za Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za Lunathi.dumani@treasury.gov.za
KwaZulu-Natal eThekwini uMhlathuze	Kgomotso Baloyi Lunathi Dumani Kevin Bell Sifiso Mabaso Matjatji Mashoeshoe Pitso Zwane	012-315 5866 012-315 5725 012-315 5952 012-315 5553	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	Sifiso.Mabaso@treasury.gov.za Jabulile.ngwenya@treasury.gov.za
Mpumalanga	Mandla Gilimani Liyasa Nxozi	012-315 5807 012 315 5613	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za liyasa.nxozi@treasury.gov.za
Northern Cape	Mandla Gilimani Liyasa Nxozi	012-315 5807 012 315 5613	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za liyasa.nxozi@treasury.gov.za
North West Mafikeng	Willem Voigt Makgabo Mabotja Khanyisile Khosa 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 Enock Ndlovu Khanyisile Khoza Kgomotso Baloyi Sifiso Mabaso	012-315 5830 012-315 5385 012-315 5866 012-315 5952	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za Enock.Ndlovu@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

9. Submitting budget documentation and A schedules for the 2025/26 MTREF

9.1. Submissions to the National Treasury

Municipalities are reminded to submit documents and queries to the correct portals/ mailboxes. These portals/ mailboxes are:

- https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/welcome (GoMuni Upload Portal) – All documents required in terms of legislation by approved registered users, including: *m*SCOA Data Strings; Budget-related, in-year and year-end documents and schedules (A, B and C); Revenue and MFRS Documents (as per MFMA Circular No. 126) procurement spent reports, etc.:
- lgdataqueries@treasury.gov.za – Database related and submission queries;
- lgdocuments@treasury.gov.za – Only Provincial Treasuries may send contact details to lgdocuments@treasury.gov.za ; and
- *m*SCOA Regulations@treasury.gov.za – all inputs and comments relating to the intended mSCOA Regulations on the minimum business processes and system specifications; and
- Rolloverapplication@treasury.gov.za – all rollover applications and queries related to the conditional grants.

Any document/ queries that are submitted to the incorrect portal/ mailbox will not be processed and the submission status report will continue to reflect the documents as outstanding.

9.2. Time frames for submission

The LGDRS will be locked at 00:00 on the 10th working day of every month for the submission of data strings due, as required in terms of section 71 of the MFMA. Closed periods will not be opened to correct errors or to accommodate non-submission of data strings, regardless of whether a Schedule G application was done or not.

Municipalities must therefore verify the credibility and accuracy of the information in their financial system prior to closing the month on the ERP system and submitting the *m*SCOA data strings to the LGDRS. In 2025, functionality will be added to the GoMuni Upload portal that will require accounting officers and Chief Financial Officers to sign-off on the accuracy and completeness of the data strings prior to the submission thereof.

The GoMuni Upload portal can be accessed by registered users on the following link:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin

Since the 2020/21 MTREF, municipalities are no longer required to submit hard copies of all required documents including budget related, Annual Financial Statements and Annual Reports to National Treasury via post or courier services. PDF versions of documents must be submitted to the GoMuni Upload portal.

9.3. Updating of contact details on GoMuni

Municipalities are reminded to update their contact details on the LGDRS as and when changes occur. Often emails containing important information and deadlines are returned and do not reach the intended LGDRS users due to outdated contact information of users. From 01 July 2024, municipal officials must update their own contact details on the LGDRS. Updates made by municipal officials on the LGDRS are validated and approved for upload by the Contacts Administrators within each municipality that was nominated by the Municipal Manager for this purpose.

Municipalities that have not yet nominated Contact Administrators to validate and approve changes in contact details for their municipality are requested to nominated two officials by 30 January 2025 to ensure that the contact details for their respective municipality are always up to date. Nomination forms can be requested from lgdataqueries@treasury.gov.za. Municipal Contacts Administrators will be trained in a virtual session to perform this task.

Registered LGDRS users can download the contact details for their municipality on the LGDRS by logging-in to GoMuni on the following link and then accessing the report under Database/Contacts/Reporting/Contact information:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin

9.4. Training on GoMuni

The training schedule and GoMuni links for 2025 to assist those users that require new or refresher training on how to draw reports on the LGDRS, is available on the GoMuni/ Go Training portal on the following link:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/portal

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
06 December 2024

NATIONAL TREASURY

MFMA Circular No. 130

Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003

Municipal Budget Circular for the 2025/26 MTREF

CONTENTS:

Introduction:

This budget circular provides guidance to municipalities with their compilation of the 2025/26 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 (*m*SCOA) 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, *m*SCOA 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 2025 to 2027. Medium-term growth will be underpinned by household consumption on the back of rising purchasing power, moderate employment recovery and wealth gains. 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 2025/26 MTREF municipal budgets.

Table 1: Macroeconomic performance and projections, 2023 - 2028

Fiscal year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimate		Forecast	
CPI Inflation	6.0%	4.4%	4.3%	4.6%	4.4%

Source: National Treasury Budget Review 2025.

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.

Headline inflation declined to 2.9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024, resulting in average inflation of 4.4 per cent for the year. Consumer inflation is projected to average 4.3 per cent in 2025 and 4.6 per cent in 2026, picking up slightly as the value-added tax (VAT) increase pushes up prices. The VAT effect is seen mainly in core inflation, which, after averaging 4.3 per cent in 2024, is projected to rise to 4.6 per cent in 2026. Lower global crude oil prices are expected to support muted fuel price inflation.

Due to weaker economic growth and other economic factors such as the current VAT increase which puts added pressure on households, households will likely struggle to pay municipal accounts which will impact negatively on municipal own revenues. It is therefore noted that variations in regional specifics are possible, however, any variation of assumptions must be explicitly set out and well explained in the budget narratives, in the absence of which the Treasuries will refer the budget back to council for alignment to the macroeconomic performance projections or for clear articulation of all the factors affecting the tariffs.

VAT Increase

In the Minister's Budget speech on 12 March 2025, two increases in the standard rate of VAT were announced. The first-rate increase of 0.5 percentage point applies from 1 May 2025, and the second-rate increase of 0.5 percentage point will apply from 1 April 2026. SARS has issued the following guidelines in this regard:

- A Pocket Guide on the VAT rate increase on 1 May 2025; and
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to guide vendors and the public on the first rate increase effective from 1 May 2025 and to ensure consistency on certain practical and technical aspects of implementing the change to the VAT rate. More guidance on the second-rate increase will be communicated in due course.

Municipalities should also refer to **VAT 404 – Guide for Vendors**. These guidelines are available on the SARS website **www.sars.gov.za**.

2. Key focus areas for the 2025/26 budget process:

2.1. Local government allocations

Over the 2025 MTEF, the local government equitable share and direct conditional grants amount to a total of R552.7 billion, made up of R332.4 billion in the local government equitable share, R52.9 billion in the general fuel levy sharing with metros and R167.4 billion in direct conditional grants. Direct transfers to local government grow in line with inflation, increasing at an annual average of 4.4 per cent over the MTEF, with the local government equitable share growing at a slightly higher rate (5.2 per cent).

Review of the Municipal Capacity Building Programme

As part of the next phase of the ongoing review of local government capacity-building programmes, the National Treasury will consolidate its financial management support initiatives into a unified Local Government Financial Management Capability Development Programme. This integrated programme will provide a comprehensive framework for equipping municipalities with the tools, knowledge and resources needed to strengthen governance and improve service delivery. By streamlining existing initiatives and fostering collaboration, the programme aims to deliver targeted, impactful and sustainable support to municipalities across the country.

The programme will align with the National Treasury's Capability Development Framework and adopt a differentiated approach tailored to the unique needs and maturity levels of municipalities. Key features include pre-grant capacity assessments to identify gaps, multi-year grants to build sustainable in-house capabilities and a municipal scorecard to monitor progress and link it to grant allocations. Collaboration with partners such as South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) and academic institutions will ensure the design and delivery of customised capacity-building packages. Beyond financial management, the programme will serve as a foundation for a broader government-wide initiative to integrate capability development across all municipal functions, including governance and service delivery. This cohesive, long-term strategy underscores the importance of a unified effort to achieve sustainable municipal development and improve outcomes for communities nationwide.

Update on the conditional grant for smart prepaid meters

As indicated in the 2024/25 financial year, the National Treasury now oversees the smart meters grant as an indirect grant through a transversal contract to regulate distribution quality and costs. This grant aims to enhance energy efficiency and support the integration of renewable energy to better meet consumer needs.

Over the 2025 MTEF period, the grant will continue to support municipal debt relief efforts by focusing on municipalities already enrolled in the program. Over time, the grant is expected to expand to additional municipalities, aiming to enhance financial sustainability and management. This grant is allocated R2.3 billion over the 2025 MTEF.

Improving regulatory levers and reforms

By enhancing the usage of regulatory frameworks in the conditional grants system, the government is taking steps to ensure that municipalities prioritise critical projects and utilise resources effectively. The use of results from the Department of Water and Sanitation's Watch Reports in the prioritisation of water and sanitation projects funded from general-purpose grants such as the integrated urban development grant (IUDG), municipal infrastructure grant (MIG) and the urban settlements development grant (USDG) will improve the quality and impact of these projects. Further, requiring municipalities to use the results of green drop, blue drop and no drop assessments in planning and prioritising projects will drive greater accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds, promoting sustainable and effective service delivery.

2.2. Post 2024 MTBPS changes

Since the tabling of the 2024 MTBPS, additional changes have been proposed to local government allocations. These include:

- Shifting R245 million over the MTEF period from the MIG to the IUDG. This follows Alfred Duma Local Municipality qualifying to participate in the IUDG;
- Shifting R494 million in 2025/26 from the direct component of the MIG to the indirect component to address wastewater infrastructure issues in 21 municipalities;
- Introducing a new Urban Development Financing Grant (UDFG). The baseline of this grant is funded from the metro component of the neighbourhood development partnership grant (NDPG) (R924 million over the MTEF period) and 80 per cent of the programme and project preparation support grant (PPPSG) (R981 million over the MTEF period);
- Introducing a new Urban Development Financing Grant (UDFG). The baseline of this grant is funded from the component of the neighbourhood development partnership grant (NDPG) (R924 million over the MTEF period) and 80 per cent of the programme and project preparation support grant (PPPSG) (R981 million over the MTEF period);
- Expansion of the Water Financing Component in the 2024/25 Urban Settlement Development Grant to electricity and solid waste management, in addition to water and sanitation, in the Trading Services Component of the 2025/26 Urban Settlement Development Grant framework. This component introduces a condition that a minimum of 56 per cent of the USDG be allocated to water and sanitation, electricity and energy; and solid waste management services capital infrastructure projects aligned to metro-approved trading services investment plans of the grant;
- An additional R450 million in 2025/26, from the Public Employment Programme;
- Additional funding from the Budget Facility for Infrastructure that will flow through the UDFG is as follows:
    - City of Johannesburg: R578 million in 2026/27 and R533 million in 2027/28 for a wastewater project.

  - eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality: R56 million in 2025/26, R109 million in 2026/27 and R101 million in 2027/28 for a project to address non-revenue water.
- Merging the non-metro component of the NDPG and the remaining 20 per cent of the PPPSG into a single grant (called NDPG), with a baseline of R1.4 billion over the MTEF period;
- A reduction of R435 million in 2025/26 and increases of R425 million in 2026/27 and R660 million in 2027/28 to the public transport network grant (PTNG) to align with the revised implementation plan and cash flow projections for the City of Cape Town's MyCiTi programme, funded from the Budget Facility for Infrastructure;
- An additional R225 million in 2026/27 to the regional bulk infrastructure grant (RBIG) allocation for Drakenstein Local Municipality. This adjustment, carried through from the 2024 Division of Revenue Amendment Act, aligns with the municipality's revised implementation plan and cash flow projections; and
- Discontinuing the municipal systems improvement grant (MSIG). Its baseline will be redirected to the Department of Cooperative Governance and earmarked for national government to support municipalities.

2.3. Review of the local government fiscal framework

The aim of the review is to critically examine the financial viability of the local government fiscal framework (LGFF) and identify key factors influencing its effectiveness, stability, and long-term sustainability. This will be achieved by conducting an in-depth examination of existing policies, practices, and mechanisms governing the allocation, management, and utilisation of fiscal resources at the local government level. The review will be mainly centred around the following thematic areas:

- Overall LGFF baseline profile of distressed and optimally functioning local governments institutions and refinement of LGFF problem statement;
- LGES formula;
- Local government expenditure reviews;
- Fiscal leakages in local government; and
- Additional revenue considerations, including existing revenues options, including those that are undersubscribed, and exploring new additional own revenue sources and improved municipal borrowing for strengthening infrastructure investment and maintenance.

2.4. Update on the review of the conditional grants

In September 2024, government concluded a comprehensive review of the conditional grant system and developed reforms based on the findings. These reforms, which will be implemented progressively over the next three years, are designed to rationalise the conditional grant framework, integrate certain grants into the provincial equitable share and national departments' budget vote, and enhance the overall effectiveness of the system. This initiative underscores government's commitment to improving service delivery while ensuring the prudent management of public resources.

The review process was underpinned by an extensive consultation phase conducted between July and December 2024 during which the National Treasury presented the findings and recommendations arising from the review. Most of the proposed reforms are intended for medium- to long-term implementation, with a select number of reforms being prioritised for the short-term and will be introduced during the 2025 MTEF period.

Further consultations are planned to follow the tabling of the 2025 Budget. These engagements will include impact assessments and preparatory work to ensure the successful rollout of the proposed changes. The reforms aim to address systemic challenges within the grant system and are guided by the principles of equity, efficiency, and sustainability. Key areas of reform include the following:

I) *Enhancing differentiation and effectiveness in the grant system:* A central objective of the reforms is to introduce greater differentiation within the grant system to address the diverse needs of municipalities. This includes reducing the growing reliance on grants by metropolitan municipalities while providing targeted support to municipalities with limited capacity. By addressing service delivery challenges and locational disparities, the reforms aim to create a more responsive and equitable system. Specific measures under this initiative include refining allocation methodologies to balance equity and efficiency considerations, strengthening co-funding requirements to promote shared responsibility and sustainability, reducing restrictive earmarking and ring-fencing to allow for greater flexibility in the use of funds, introducing or enhancing performance-based incentives to drive accountability and improve outcomes, and improving the alignment of related grants to reduce fragmentation and duplication; and

II) *Rationalising the number of grants:* As part of the reforms, the number of conditional grants allocated to subnational governments will be streamlined to address the duplication of grants and mitigate the administrative burdens associated with the proliferation of funding streams. By simplifying the grant system, government aims to improve efficiency and reduce reporting requirements, enabling municipalities to focus on service delivery. Proposed measures include:
- Merging water reticulation grants to create a unified funding mechanism for water infrastructure;
- Consolidating energy grants to streamline support for energy-related projects;
- Combining urban development grants to enhance the coordination of urban infrastructure investments; and
- Discontinuing grants that are better suited as provincial programmes, such as those for road maintenance, sports development, and capacity-building initiatives.

These reforms represent a decisive step towards a more efficient and effective intergovernmental fiscal framework. By addressing systemic inefficiencies and aligning resources with service delivery priorities, government reaffirms its commitment to fostering sustainable development and improving the quality of life for all citizens. The implementation of these reforms will be closely monitored to ensure that they achieve their intended objectives while maintaining fiscal discipline and accountability.

2.5. Funding for Local Economic Development (LED) Programmes

National Treasury is mindful of the essential role played by municipalities in driving economic development and job creation to mitigate inequality and attract private investment. In addition to the infrastructure grants, municipalities also receive about 66 per cent of their allocations in unconditional grants, which can be utilised to fund operational parts of the LED initiatives. However, it is important to note that economic development does not rely solely on a single funding pot, but on various forms of government programmes and grants. This includes support and initiatives from the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition funded by provinces through their equitable share.

Whilst there is a call for the creation of a conditional grant, it is worth noting that the creation of a dedicated grant for LED initiatives comes with its challenges. In the past, when such grants were introduced, government institutions reprioritised funds that were initially funding the LED programmes, leading to over-reliance on conditional grants. This dependence undermines the purpose and sustainability of these programmes, as their funding is primarily dependent on the availability of funds from the fiscus and the performance of the economy. Therefore, there is a need to align conditional grants with economic development areas while also ensuring their integration with other government spheres to support the developmental mandate effectively.

In addition, it is also crucial for municipalities to provide essential services such as electricity, water, and sanitation efficiently. The efficient provision of these services is crucial for attracting private investment, fostering economic growth, and promoting a conducive environment for businesses to thrive. Therefore, National Treasury urges municipalities to prioritise the provision of these services to enhance economic development and improve the quality of life for their residents.

2.6. Metro Trading Services Reform Incentive

Background – the background to the metro trading services performance incentive grant was outlined in the 2024/25 Budget Circular under the heading `Reforms to improve the efficiency and financial sustainability of metro trading services. The local government grant review process and the metro trading services reform process are converging into an incentive grant to incentivise a turnaround in the performance of metro trading services.

Progress made – Over the last year metro municipalities have engaged in substantial preparatory work regarding turnaround and reform strategies in Water and Sanitation and Electricity and Energy. Metros have in respect of each of these trading services prepared Trading Services Reform Strategies (A) with annexures A1 (Institutional Road Maps), and A2 (Business and Improvement Plans). They are currently preparing Annexure A3 (Performance Improvement Action Plans)[1]. All submissions are assessed by interdepartmental teams from the Departments of Water and Sanitation, Mineral Resources and Energy, DCoG, DHS, National Treasury and SALGA.

Programme planning and assessment framework – the incentive grant framework is currently planned to run for six years from 2025/26 (Year 1) to 2030/31 (Year 6). Year 1 focuses on establishing the necessary accountability, financial transparency, and strategic planning foundations for the five subsequent years (Years 2 to 6) of strategy implementation.

Metros will have three planning opportunities

Development of version 1 of the Annexure A3: Performance Improvement Action Plan (A3: PIAP v1) (indicative targets for all indicators, accompanied by firm targets to achieve minimum commitments in year 1) to be approved by Council alongside metro budget documents by June 2025.

Development of version 2 of the A3: PIAP v2 (with minimum commitments achieved, and realistic annual targets for all indicators) to be approved by Council with metro budget documents by June 2026.

Development of version 3 of the A3: PIAP v3 (with minimum commitments retained and an opportunity to reset annual targets) to be approved by Council with metro budget documents by June 2028 (details provided in Guidance Note 4).

The intention of the incentive programme is that incentive grant allocations should be awarded to metros according to independently assessed performance against the targets of their reform strategies as set out in the relevant A3-PIAP.

Special arrangements are necessary to determine the provisional incentive allocations provided for under the Division of Revenue Bill (2025) for years 1 and 2 of the programme. In these

[1] See https://mfma.treasury.gov.za/Guidelines/Documents/Trading%20Services for Guidance Notes and Resource Documents issued to assist.

cases, performance will be assessed against the commitment to (year 1) and achievement of (year 2) minimum commitments as follows:

- **YEAR 1**: Metro Councils who in Year 0 (2024/25, i.e. by the end of this municipal financial year), pass a satisfactory A3 PIAP v1 with minimum commitments, will be awarded the Year 1 allocation as finalised in the National Adjusted Budget process;
- Draft submissions from participating metros were reviewed during the 2025 Mid-year Budget, and final submissions will similarly be assessed during 2025 Budget and Benchmarking engagements during April to May 2025. Assessment and independent confirmation will be undertaken and submitted to the National Treasury;
- **YEAR 2 and 3:** Similarly, Metro Councils who in Year 1 (2025/26, i.e. by the end of June 2026) achieve the eight minimum commitments and pass a satisfactory A3 PIAP v2, will be awarded the Year 2 and Year 3 allocations as finalised. This is appropriate since planned spending for those years will by then be based upon well-substantiated business turnaround and financial strategies;
- Draft and final submissions will be reviewed and assessed during the Mid-year Budget and Performance and Budget and Performance engagements, and final submissions to metro Council will need NT approval. Assessment and independent confirmation will be undertaken and submitted to the National Treasury; and
- **YEARS 4, 5 and 6:** Once strategy implementation is underway, incentive allocations for any year (Y) will depend upon metro performance against numerical targets set for year (Y-2). This must be assessed after financial year end, but early enough during year (Y-1) to enter the budget process for Year (Y). The earliest this can apply is for Year 4, based on assessed performance in Year 2. This arrangement will determine incentive allocations for Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Independent assessments will be conducted annually, to confirm that minimum commitments remain in place, and to assess performance against targets.

Indicative incentive allocations

The indicative incentive allocations per metro per financial year are based on poverty-weighted population formula. Annexure W1 to the 2025 division of revenue sets out indicative figures which represent the maxima potentially available to metros currently participating in the programme, based on the assessed status of each metro trading services strategy as at 15th of January 2025 (they include solid waste management from Year 2 (2026/27).

The indicative allocations are not yet actual budget allocations. Firm announcements regarding Year 1 (2025/26) incentive grant allocations will be included in the National Adjusted Budget in October 2025 and confirmed in allocation letters. Metros will accommodate these incentive allocations in their own adjustments budget as soon as possible but not later than the 28th of February 2026.

Adverse or disclaimed audit findings

No metro which has received an adverse or disclaimed financial audit for the previous financial year will be eligible to access their incentive grant award in the forthcoming year.

Re-opening of incentive grant window

As previously communicated, Solid Waste Management is scheduled for inclusion in the incentive programme from Year 2 (2026/27) onwards. Metros wishing to include solid waste management in their trading services reform strategies should submit the necessary documentation according to the following schedule:

a. **Council-approved Trading Services Reform Strategy (A)** which is due on 31st of July 2025 which includes Annexure A1 (Institutional Road Map) and Annexure A2 (Business and Improvement Plan);
b. **Draft Annexure A3 version 1 (Performance Improvement Action Plan)** at the Mid-year review stage which is due in January 2026;
c. **Final draft Annexure A3-PIAP version 1** at the Budget and Benchmark stage during April 2026; and
d. **Council approved A3-PIAP version 1** due by June 2026.

Note: This re-opening of the incentive grant window also applies to metros which (a) have not previously met eligibility requirements in the water and sanitation or electricity and energy trading services, and (b) seek another opportunity to enter the programme. Such metros should follow the same schedule as above.

2.7. Alignment between the Metro Trading Service Reform and MFMA Circular No.88

The implementation of MFMA Circular No. 88 continues in all categories of municipalities. In December 2024, Addendum 6 of the MFMA Circular No. 88 was published providing an update on the preparation of statutory planning and reporting documents required for the 2025/26 Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF). Addendum 6 provided guidance to the municipalities on in-year changes to indicators in the Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and guidance for ‘estimate’ values in indicator reporting. Further guidance on indicator revisions and definitional clarification was also provided.

Selected MFMA Circular No. 88 indicators are also being used to track the performance of the metros as part of the A3 PIAP: Performance Improvement Action Plan of the Metro Trading Service Reform (MTSR). In line with the rationalisation and standardisation objective of the MFMA Circular No. 88 reform, this ensures that there is alignment and line of sight across various reporting frameworks. Furthermore, this promotes consistency in planning, budgeting, and reporting while reinforcing the overall objectives of the reform agenda. The MTSR targets water and sanitation, electricity and energy and solid waste management in the metropolitan municipalities focusing on institutional performance and accountability, financial performance, governance and operational or service delivery performance. Although the MFMA Circular No. 88 reporting and the MTS reforms are complementary reforms, the MTS is a targeted reform linked to a performance incentive grant. Where possible the MTSR utilises the MFMA Circular No. 88 indicators, as reflected in MTSR Guidance Note 4 Addendum that was circulated to the metros on the 3rd of March 2025. However, noting the targeted business operations turnaround required of MTS, several performance indicators outside the MFMA Circular No. 88 process have been developed for operational monitoring and reporting distinct from the statutory plans and reports in which all MFMA Circular No. 88 indicators find expression.

Future reporting on the selected MFMA Circular No. 88 indicators that form part of the A3 PIAP should be sourced from the MFMA Circular No. 88 reporting platform to ensure seamless integration between the two reforms. At this stage, the exact modalities and protocols to derive reporting efficiencies between the A3 PIAP and the MFMA Circular No. 88 reporting platform are still being confirmed, and municipalities should expect further guidance from the National Treasury on the coordination and synchronisation of reporting.

This section should be read in conjunction with paragraph 2.3 of the MFMA Circular No. 88 Addendum 6.

2.8. Three-year and one-year capital appropriations

To facilitate the delivery of large capital projects, section 16(3) of the MFMA allows a municipality to appropriate capital budgets for three financial years, i.e. the budget year and the following two years of the MTREF. The aim of such multi-year capital appropriations is to:

- lock the council into funding the full cost of large capital projects so as to ensure their successful completion;
- facilitate the forward planning of capital projects and programmes; enable the municipality to initiate procurement processes for capital projects in the two outer years of the MTREF (given the funds are appropriated) and so ensure improved levels of capital spending; and
- enable funding for such capital projects to be brought forward in terms of section 31 of the MFMA to facilitate more rapid project implementation (although National Treasury would prefer municipalities to the use of the mid-year adjustments budget for this purpose).

Municipalities are encouraged to use these provisions of the MFMA appropriately, and ensure they divide their capital budgets correctly between the 'multi-year expenditure' and the 'single year expenditure' sections on Tables A5A and A5. Further information can be obtained in MFMA Circular No. 58.

2.9. 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 remains relevant, and are still applicable for the release of equitable share instalments in the 2025/26 financial year.

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.

2.10. Criteria for the rollover of conditional grant funds

In terms of Section 21 of the Division of Revenue Act, 2024 (Act No.24 of 2024) (DoRA) in conjunction with the Division of Revenue Amendment Act, 2024 (Act No. 48 of 2024), any conditional allocation or a portion thereof that is not spent at the end of the 2024/25 financial year reverts to the National Revenue Fund (NRF), unless the rollover of the allocation is approved in terms of subsection (2). 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 2024 DoRA, municipalities must include the following information with their submission to National Treasury:

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 2024 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 2025; or
b) Proof of project tender and tender submissions published and closed before 31 March 2025 or with the appointment of contractor or service provider for delivery of service before 30 June 2025 in cases where additional funding was allocated during the course of the financial year of the project;
c) Incorporation of the Appropriation Statement; and
d) Evidence that all projects linked to an allocation will be fully utilised by 30 June 2025 (attach cash flow projection for the applicable grant).

4. A progress report (also reflecting percentages) on the status of each project's implementation that includes an attached legible implementation plan);
5. The value of the committed project funding and the conditional allocation from the funding source;
6. Reasons why the grants were not fully spent during the year on the original allocation per the DoRA;
7. Rollover of rollovers will not be considered. Municipalities must therefore not include previous year's unspent conditional grants as rollover request;
8. An indication of the time period within which the funds are to be spent if the rollover is approved; and
9. 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 2025, 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 2024 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 2025;
3. Accurate disclosure of grant performance in the 2024/25 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 2024/25 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 2025 is equivalent to 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.

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

1. The entire 2024/25 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 2024/25 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 2025. All invoices issued to the municipality before 31 March 2025 should be paid within the same year against the allocated conditional grants. i.e. invoices must be paid within 30 days.

2.11. Unspent conditional grant funds for 2024/25

The process to ensure the return of unspent conditional grants for the 2024/25 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 2025 conditional grant expenditure reports according to Section 71 of the MFMA reflecting all accrued expenditure on conditional 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 2025. The unspent grant values must be determined based on the guidance that was provided in *m*SCOA 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 2024 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 2025.

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 22 October 2025;

Step 5: National Treasury will communicate the unspent conditional grants amount by 12 November 2025. 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 19 November 2025; and

Step 6: Any unspent conditional grant funds that should have but has not been repaid to the National Revenue Fund (NRF) by 19 November 2025, and for which a municipality has not requested a repayment arrangement, will be offset against the municipality's December 2025 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.

2.12. 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 Bill will make provision that the cash flows be synchronised to achievements in line with the Annexure A3: Performance Improvement Action Plan (A3: PIAP).

Municipalities must submit all rollover applications and queries related to the conditional grants to Rolloverapplication@treasury.gov.za.

3. Revenue Management

3.1. Prioritise funding the Electricity Revenue Protection Program

Past years' increasing electricity tariffs continue to strain consumers' ability to afford this service. Municipalities as a result are at higher risk of non-technical losses particularly related to theft and illegal by-passing. Many municipalities do not have dedicated Revenue Protection staff in place or have reduced their operational funding for Revenue Protection culminating in an overall reduced collection and related strain on cash flow and the ability to pay creditors. Municipalities are advised to prioritise the following Revenue Protection measures in the 2025/26 and future MTREFs:

- A dedicated Revenue Protection Unit for Electricity administered by the senior manager responsible for the municipal Electricity Infrastructure Directorate taking into consideration the recommendations and standards the recommendations and standards set-out in NRS055 (Code of Practice for Revenue Protection);
- Allocating adequate funds in the budget to fund the municipality's Electricity Revenue Protection Unit's operational needs;
- In allocating funding, the business threat of increasing non-technical losses to the municipality's particular specifics must be considered to achieve a balance, while ensuring the Revenue Protection staff organogram and operational program is adequately funded and able to fulfil its role; and
- The municipality to demonstrate in its MTREF submission that a percentage of the revenue from the Energy function is ring-fenced to fund the municipal Revenue Protection Program operational need(s) towards developing the program to fruition.

3.2. Revenue Management Assessment Tool

Every municipality, in anticipation of the annual budget process and the review of critical revenue management related policies should assess and review its revenue management value chain to identify any gaps, duplications and / or inefficiencies for alignment with the approved organogram and related delegations. Refer to MFMA Budget Circular No. 126 (Annexure B: Submission checklist: Revenue Management Documents) and MFMA Budget Circular No. 128 (Item 7.3 contained in Annexure A). The municipality must submit its review to the National Treasury in the format of the Municipal Revenue Management Assessment Tool – to be uploaded to the National Treasury GoMuni upload portal annually as part of the Revenue Management Documents that are required.

The Revenue Assessment Tool was developed through the collaboration of the National Treasury, the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) and SALGA. The initiative created the opportunity for stakeholders to acknowledge the fragmented and diverse nature of support provided to municipalities in this area often resulting in duplicated efforts and little systemic change across municipalities and the need for a Single Integrated Revenue Management Framework (SIRMF).

The SIRMF is a national framework for revenue management that guides and outlines the intervention and leadership role both municipalities and oversight bodies should play in addressing challenges relating to the revenue management value chain and ultimately financial sustainability. The SIRMF emphasises the significant role of National and Provincial Government in supporting municipalities in the process of revenue management improvement and how the relevant departments will coordinate their support and their monitoring and evaluation role(s).

The SIRMF was designed on the existing statutory framework, with an emphasis on compliance. Within the scope of related tasks and responsibilities, the SIRMF provides direction on how municipalities may enhance revenue management as a major approach for increasing the municipality's viability and sustainability. Completing the Municipal Revenue Assessment Tool can assist the municipal council, senior management team and oversight bodies to assess, understand and improve critical revenue management practices of the municipality.

The tool provides an indication of gaps, flaws, duplications, inefficiencies and risks in the existing revenue value chain that could compromise or affect whether the revenue component of the budget sufficiently caters for long-term planning and is credible and funded. It further provides a comprehensive overview of current revenue management processes by identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need improvement. The tool focuses on eighteen (18) critical areas within the revenue management value chain and helps pinpoint specific areas for optimising revenue collection processes.

National Treasury is in the process of institutionalising and implementing the tool, this includes conducting training throughout provinces.

The tool is comprehensive and must be completed by all municipalities during the 2025/26 MTREF with a thorough review of the revenue value chain, thereafter this exercise will only be necessary in every alternate year. However, municipalities with revenue collection rates below 85 per cent and all municipalities participating in Debt Relief must annually undertake this exercise until they achieve an average annual collection of 95 per cent as outlined in MFMA Circular No. 71.

The tool was already rolled out during the 2024/25 financial year and the National Treasury provided training. The Municipal Revenue Assessment Tool is attached as **Annexure A** of this Circular.

3.3. Cost Reflective Tariff Tool

As part of the budget process, the municipality must annually undertake an assessment to determine if the intended / implemented tariffs are cost reflective, whether all critical cost components were considered in the tariff calculation(s), whether the Local Government Equitable Share component relating to basic services were allocated to the actual service(s) and to demonstrate that the Revenue Component of the budget is credible and funded; etc. To facilitate this exercise, the municipality must complete and submit this calculation(s) / tariff assessment in the format of the National Treasury Tariff Tool as part of its tabled, adopted and adjustment MTREF submissions to the National Treasury GoMuni portal. The Cost Reflective Tariff Tool outcomes must also be reported to and approved by Council as part of the respective tabled and adopted MTREF submissions.

If the Tariff Tool indicates significant tariff shortfalls, any major tariff increases should be phased-in over two to three years and can be approved for the outer years (2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29). Thus, the indicative tariffs can be phased in over a period of three years.

The latest format of the National Treasury Tariff Tool that must be used and submitted is attached as **Annexure B** of this circular.

3.4. Electricity Tariffs

Cost of Supply Study (COS) for electricity tariff applications

On 20 October 2022, the Nelson Mandela Bay Chamber of Business issued a ruling outlining the requirements that municipalities must comply with when determining tariffs. The ruling found NERSA's Guideline and Benchmark method for approving municipal electricity tariffs unlawful and invalid. The court ordered that all electricity tariff applications from 2024/25 Financial Year, should be supported by a Cost of Supply (COS) study. Municipalities are reminded of the critical importance of complying with the court order, failing which, municipalities would be in breach of the court order and in contempt of court. The need for conducting a COS timeously and adhering to the timelines set by NERSA for the submission of applications is imperative as these cannot be approved by NERSA without the COS.

NERSA has indicated that it will be able to process and decide on municipal tariff applications based on Cost of Supply (COS) studies for the financial year 2025/26 by the end of June 2025 for the implementation in the new Financial Year. However, the Minister of Finance will engage NERSA to conclude this process sooner, to allow municipalities sufficient time to take account of the approved tariffs in the finalisation of their budgets. Tariff applications will not be considered unless they are supported by a Cost of Supply study. NERSA has indicated that the approval of Eskom's Retail Tariff Plan (RTP) and Eskom's Retail Tariff Structural Adjustment (ERTSA) for FY2025/26 is anticipated prior to 15 March 2025. Following the ERTSA decision, municipalities will be informed of the outcome to assist them in formulating their individual tariffs, which will then be approved for implementation in FY2025/26.

From the 2025/26 MTREF, municipalities will be required to submit the following documents pertaining to electricity tariff applications to the GoMuni Upload portal:

- NERSA D Form and COS study submitted to NERSA. For the 2025/26 tariff increase, municipalities with the tabled budget and thereafter 31 October 2025 (i.e. applications pertaining to 2026/27 tariff increases and beyond); and
- NERSA tariff approval with the tabled budget.

3.5. Municipal Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tool

Reference is made to MFMA Circulars No. 93 (paragraph 3), No. 98 (paragraph 4.1), No. 123 (paragraph 5.1), and particularly No. 126, (paragraph 3.1). To ensure the municipality's rates base is complete, and aligns to the business process and system requirements articulated in Annexure B of MFMA Circular No. 80 (08 March 2016) and the Municipal Property Rates Act (MPRA) (section 23): Part A: Register of the latest consolidated general valuation roll (GVR), and the MPRA categories, the municipality need to monthly perform the reconciliation in the format of the National Treasury Municipal Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tool.

The municipality must submit the completed tool together with the related documentation to the National Treasury GoMuni portal as follows:	**Timeframe**
1. The municipality's list of Property Rates tariffs approved by council for the financial year reported on together with the Council resolution that approved such.	Annually

2.	The municipality's time schedule for implementing its new general valuation roll (GVR) (aligned to the MPRA).	Annually
3.	The Municipal Property Rates Act (MPRA) (section 23): Part A Register of the latest consolidated general valuation roll (GVR).	Annually
4.	Municipality Valuation Roll Reconciliation – undertake monthly but only required to submit quarterly.	Quarterly
5.	Property Rates Transaction List (for the 3rd month of every quarter).	Quarterly

To assist municipalities in complying with these requirements, the National Treasury will provide follow-up training.

3.6. Prohibition on vending system(s) / third party vending solutions without consulting the National Treasury

Recently there have been several iterations on private service offerings of vending system(s) / solution(s) offered to municipalities. These include service provider(s) funding metering solutions for municipalities parallel to a pre-paid solution (requiring a vending platform) – these service providers then collect on behalf of the municipality in exchange for a fee. However, in several cases, the service provider does not pay over to the municipality what is collected and / or claim a fee that is out of proportion to what is reasonable. This is worsened by many municipalities not weekly / monthly undertaking the appropriate reconciliation of what they provide / sell (also via pre-paid) against what revenue they receive in return from the service provider(s). *As an Example*: Most recently a municipality in Eastern Cape was victim to an arrangement where the service provider offered the municipality R60 million funding but will takeaway almost R540 million at the end of the arrangement causing significant harm to the community and official(s) of that municipality and may leave the municipality worse off than initially.

The MFMA, read together with the recently assented Public Procurement Act, provide a clear framework for procurement in local government. The MFMA regulatory framework in terms of section 116 read with MFMA Circular No. 62 furthermore provide clear guidance on how amendments to contracts should be undertaken. Any offerings beyond the initial scope of the contract, in our view, should not be considered as a contract amendment, but rather a change or extension of scope, which warrants a whole new or separate procurement process.

The National Treasury therefore confirms that with immediate effect, no municipality may enter into and / or extend any related vending system(s) / solution(s) without consulting and obtaining the written input of the National Treasury and the relevant Provincial Treasury. Should any municipal official and / or political office bearer fail to honour this prohibition, she/ he could render themselves personally liable for any related financial loss over and above potential criminal liability for financial misconduct.

In addition, third party vending solutions used by municipalities must align to the integration requirements set out in Annexure B of MFMA Circular No. 80 (08 March 2016). In terms of the requirements, third party solutions must, without (manual) intervention or manipulation, integrate and constantly balance with the core financial system solution. The rules for integration are determined by vendor of the core system solution. Where the core system solution already provides the necessary functionality offered by the third-party vendor and the municipality has already paid for the functionality and / or are paying annual licencing fees to access this functionality, such expenditure will constitute wasteful and fruitless expenditure and should be dealt worth accordingly.

The municipality should send any request for the written input of the National Treasury together with the signed and / or proposed contract for such a service offering to: both RevenueManagement@treasury.gov.za and mfma@treasury.gov.za for the attention of Mr. Sadesh Ramjathan, Director: Local Government Budget Analysis: Revenue Section, and Mr. Wayne McComans, Chief Director: MFMA Implementation and parallel to the relevant Provincial Treasury.

3.7. Training Tools by the National Treasury

Revenue Management Assessment Tool

Municipalities must submit the Revenue Management Assessment Tool annually as set-out above. Training was already undertaken across all provinces during the 2024/25 financial year. The National Treasury will facilitate follow-up training during 2025/26 upon request only to municipalities, provincial treasuries and technical advisors deployed to municipalities and provincial treasuries. Municipalities and provincial treasuries can request training via the relevant Provincial Treasury who is responsible to coordinate requests for training. It is noted that any National Treasury deployed technical advisor may directly request training from the National Treasury as may be required. Requests for training and any related queries must be directed to RevenueManagement@treasury.gov.za and Sadesh.ramjathan@treasury.gov.za for the attention of Mr. Sadesh Ramjathan.

Tariff Tool

Municipalities must undertake a tariff assessment in the format of the National Treasury Tariff Tool as explained above. The National Treasury will facilitate follow-up training during the first quarter of the financial year 2025 and thereafter upon request only to municipalities, provincial treasuries and technical advisors deployed to municipalities and provincial treasuries. Training must be scheduled for a **full day** and would be more relevant towards municipal processes if scheduled:

- Before and/ or during the **Adjustments Budget preparation** (for re-allocations);
- Before and/ or during the **Tabled Budget process** (to evaluate tariff changes); or
- Before the **final MTREF submission** to Council for approval.

Municipalities and provincial treasuries can request training via the relevant Provincial Treasury. Any National Treasury deployed technical advisor may directly request training as may be directed to National Treasury as may be required. Requests for training and any related queries must be directed to RevenueManagement@treasury.gov.za and Sadesh.ramjathan@treasury.gov.za for the attention of Mr. Sadesh Ramjathan.

Municipal Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tool

The National Treasury confirms the guidance already provided in MFMA Circular No. 129 to the effect that municipalities must reconcile valuation rolls monthly and submit such quarterly to the National Treasury together with the related documentation set-out above.

The National Treasury will facilitate follow-up training during the first quarter of the financial year and thereafter upon request only to municipalities, provincial treasuries and technical advisors deployed to municipalities and provincial treasuries on Municipal Valuation Roll Reconciliation Tool. Training must be scheduled for at least **two full days** and can be facilitated at any time since municipalities perform this task monthly. Municipalities and provincial treasuries can request training via the relevant Provincial Treasury. Any National Treasury deployed technical advisor may directly request training as may be required. Requests for training and any related queries must be directed to RevenueManagement@treasury.gov.za and Sadesh.ramjathan@treasury.gov.za for the attention of Mr. Sadesh Ramjathan.

4. Budget and other management issues:

4.1. 2025/26 Municipal Budget Tabling Timelines

The National Treasury would like to advise the municipalities that late tabling of the 2025 National Budget in Parliament does not really affect the timelines of the preparations/ conclusion of the municipal budget process. The 2025 National Budget was tabled by the Minister of Finance on 12 March 2025 which implies that Provincial Governments have two weeks thereafter to table the 2025 Provincial Budgets in the Provincial Legislatures, i.e. 31 March 2025. This is in line with the PFMA – Treasury Regulations. Municipalities have sufficient time to accommodate the allocations in the DOR Bill in their 2025/26 MTREF Budgets before tabling on 31 March 2025, that is 19 days or two weeks to table the budget before 31 March 2025.

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 on the 27 March 2025. Given that municipalities have 10 months to prepare their upcoming budgets prior to tabling it in Council for consideration, National Treasury has previously 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 budgets were already in an advance stage of preparations, they will have between tabling and the adoption stage of the budget (end of May 2025) 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.

4.2. Management of Water Tankers

There is a growing trend of water challenges in most municipalities in the country which is spiraling out of control. This is a direct threat to municipalities' financial sustainability and could lead to a lack of trading in this key source of municipal revenue.

Most municipalities have tried to procure water tankers to close the gap in areas which are increasingly experiencing sporadic water supply challenges. As a result, the municipalities are not able to trade, leading to less revenue and an unprofitable water business.

It has emerged in the recent Mid-year Budget and Performance Review engagements that contracted water tankers have developed as a business rather than a stop gap measure.

As such, municipalities are encouraged to protect their revenue through avoiding protracted long contracts of water tankers. Where possible the municipality should use its internal water tankers as a temporary measure with a clear intention to restore the service.

If the municipality provides a long-term service, such as water for informal settlements, it is advised that tanks should be purchased and refilled with municipal water tankers. The aim should always be to strike a balance between the provision of service and protecting municipal revenue. Proper checks and balances must be considered as well as internal controls to avoid abuse in this regard and to ensure that in the event that the Office of the Auditor General Africa of South investigates these services, the use of water tankers and water tanks is based on sound business principles.

4.3. Asset Management

According to Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (Table A9), the municipalities were advised to allocate 60 per cent of the total Capital Expenditure budget to new acquisition while the remaining 40 per cent to renewal and upgrading of the new assets.

Given the current challenges of aging and dilapidated infrastructure faced by the municipalities, which contributes to high level of losses, municipalities are advised **to allocate at least 60 per cent** of the capital expenditure to renewal/ upgrading of the existing assets while 40 per cent should acquire new assets.

The National Treasury realised that year-on-year, municipalities priorities the acquisition of new assets and the existing assets are being neglected to a dilapidated condition. Another factor which causes a factor is lack of maintenance during the lifespan of the assets which National Treasury encourages the municipalities to allocate at least 8 per cent towards repairs and maintenance as outlined in MFMA Circulars No. 55 and 71.

5. Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (*m*SCOA):

5.1. Go Live on Version 6.9 of the Chart

*m*SCOA version 6.9 will go live on 24 March 2025, whereafter municipalities will be able to upload their tabled budget (TABB) and tabled project files (PRTA) data strings for the 2025/26 MTREF on the GoMuni portal.

After going live on version 6.9 of the chart, all the reports available on the LGDRS will be aligned to *m*SCOA chart version 6.9. This includes the format of the Section 71 report for Q3 and Q4 of 2024/25 and the adjustments budget for 2024/25.

The Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR) Schedules (A to F) and non-financial data string (A1S) was also aligned to version 6.9 of the chart. A **protected** version of the MBRR Schedules for version 6.9 of the chart and A1 Schedule is available on the on the MFMA Webpage on the link below:

http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/Municipal%20Budget%20and%20Reporting%20Regulations/Pages/default.aspx

The reports on the Local Government and Reporting System (LGDRS) are populated from financial and non-financial data strings and both strings are required for the data to pull through correctly on the reports available on the LGDRS. Municipalities must use the linkages on GoMuni referred to above and not the formulas in the regulated Municipal Budget and Reporting (MBRR) Schedules when generating their A schedule from the financial system.

In terms of the *m*SCOA Regulations, municipalities must generate the regulated MBRR schedules that is tabled and adopted by Council directly from their integrated financial system solutions and not import or captured it on their system solutions at a later stage. This is necessary to ensure that there is 'one version of the truth', namely the data in the integrated financial system solutions is the same as the report tabled and adopted by Council and the information submitted to the National Treasury and other stakeholders.

5.2. mSCOA data strings credibility

Municipalities must verify the credibility and accuracy of the tabled budget (TABB) and project file (PRTA) data strings **prior and post** to uploading it to the National Treasury Local Government Database and Reporting System (LGDRS). These data strings will be the sole source used by National and Provincial Treasuries to analyse and determine if the municipality's budget is funded, and the credibility is therefore of utmost importance.

Registered users from municipalities, provincial treasuries and National Treasury have full access to their data on the LGDRS and can draw the information to verify the accuracy of the figures for their respective municipalities or province (in the case of provincial treasuries). The LGDRS reports can be accessed by registered users on the following link:

https://lg.treasury.gov.za/ibi_apps/signin

5.3. Submission of virement information

From the 2025/26 MTREF, municipalities will be required to report on their virements through the submission of a separate data string, as well as a report on virements done by the municipality. This submission must be done monthly to the GoMuni Upload Portal and should be generated from the core financial system. The validation rules applicable to the monthly IYM submission will also be applied to the virement data strings.

The attached **Annexure D** provides guidance on the layout and information required on the virement budget report, while **Annexure E** provides the layout of the virement data strings.

This will enable national and provincial treasuries to keep track of the virements done when they do their Section 71 analysis. The virements will be reflected in a separate report and will not form part of the consolidated Section 71(7) reporting to provincial legislatures or the consolidated Section 71 publication issued by the National Treasury. For the consolidated S71 reporting and publication, performance will only be compared to the adopted budget in the first eight months of the year and the adjustments budget in the last four months of the year.

Municipalities must review their virement policy annually and ensure that it aligns with the principles and guidance in MFMA Circulars No 12, 51 and 88 and *m*SCOA Circular No. 8 (29 April 2020). Virements may only be made between existing budget provisions and must be included in an adjustments budget. The Council approved virement policy must be submitted as part of the budget documents on Go Muni. Please note that documents must be submitted individually and not as a batch.

5.4. Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP)

Cabinet has recently approved the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) for 2024 to 2029. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) will issue the MTDP in due course. These revised priorities, reflecting the new administration's vision, will be integrated into *m*SCOA version 6.10. For *m*SCOA budgeting and reporting in the 2025/26 MTREF, municipalities should continue using the IUDF and MTSF priorities as per *m*SCOA version 6.9.

5.5. Upgrading and procurement of *m*SCOA system solutions and/or functionality

From March 2023, the National Treasury has alerted municipalities that the minimum business processes and system specifications for *m*SCOA will be regulated and that municipalities should exercise extreme caution when changing or upgrading their integrated financial system solutions to avoid procuring system functionality that might not comply with the said regulations. Municipalities are reminded to implement the due diligence processes set out in MFMA Budget Circulars No. 93, 98, 107, 112, 123 and *m*SCOA Circulars No. 5 and 6 **prior** to procuring new or upgrading system functionality to protect them from making incorrect decisions in this regard.

This also applies when 3rd party system functionality is procured that is required to integrate with the core system solution.

Importantly, if an open tender process is not followed (e.g. when Section 33 or 116 of the MFMA and SCM Regulations 36 (deviations) are utilised), **the market must be tested prior to embarking on procurement**. The municipality must be able to substantiate that the product, service or similar offering is not available elsewhere in the market at a cheaper cost and that using these procurement vehicles have significant economic or financial value benefits to the municipality. Where legislation requires that the views of the National Treasury must be sought, the relevant documentation must be emailed to mfma@treasury.gov.za. If the processes required in term of legislative are not followed, a contract might be found invalid by a court of law.

5.6. Issues pertaining to the regulations on the minimum *m*SCOA requirements

National Treasury is currently in the process of developing business processes, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and minimum system specifications to underpin the Regulations of the minimum business processes and system specifications for *m*SCOA.

All the required business processes, procedures and systems functionality pertaining to the Regulations will be made available to municipalities **at no cost** in a format that can be imported, customised and utilised in a process modelling tool of their choice. Municipalities are cautioned against incurring unnecessary expenditure to procure specialised software and tools or appoint service providers to adapt and customize their business processes, especially as the requirements have not been finalised yet.

It must further be emphasized that the documents released for comments on the MFMA Webpage are the sole property of the National Treasury and may only be used for the intended purpose of providing comments on the proposals. **Any company that sells or distributes these documents or parts thereof for any other purposes without the explicit written permission of the National Treasury will be blacklisted on the basis of Intellectual Property Violations (i.e. unauthorized distribution of government documents)**.

It should also be noted that the intention of the recent demonstrations on the systems used by municipalities that was conducted by the National Treasury was to determine key implementation gaps as per MFMA Circular No. 80 (dated 08 March 2016). These gaps must be addressed by the respective municipalities in their *m*SCOA municipal road maps. National Treasury shared the observations with system vendors with a view that gaps in system functionality should be further explored and addressed by them. The demonstrations were not on any specific systems in the market but on modules used by a specific municipality to give effect to the requirements of MFMA Circular No 80. **It will therefore be unacceptable and a misrepresentation for any system vendor to claim that their respective system was found compliant by the National Treasury**.

5.7. Special adjustments budget to authorise unauthorised expenditure

In terms of regulation 23(6)(b) of the MBRR, council may authorise unauthorised expenditure in a special adjustments budget tabled in council when the mayor tables the annual report in terms of section 127(2) of the MFMA. This special adjustments budget **may only deal with unauthorised expenditure from the previous financial year which the council is being requested to authorise in terms of section 32(2)(a)(i) of the MFMA**. This process may not be used to condone poor planning, budgeting, or financial management after the adoption of the budget.

Detailed guidance in this regard was provided in MFMA Circular No. 68 (dated 13 October 2021).

Further development work with regard to this matter will be undertaken during 2025 and proper guidance will be provided in subsequent MFMA Budget Circulars. For now, municipality should continue with the current practices until further notice. Under no circumstances should municipalities require their systems vendors to open their financial systems especially where the Auditor General of South Africa have already signed off on their annual audited financial statements.

Municipalities are also reminded of the guidance provided in our email dated 21 August 2024 on the *Submission of the 2023/24 Annual Financial Statements (AFS) – (Pre-Audit Information)* and *m*SCOA Circular No. 15 (08 July 2024) on the period closures controls for the following periods.

- **Month 12**: The financial year ends in month 12 (as at 30 June of the financial year). Month 12 (4th Quarter section 71 reports) represents the **preliminary outcome** information. The closing balances of month 12 must be programmatically transferred in the core financial system to the opening balances of the new financial year in month 01 of the new reporting period;
- **Period 13** when the AFS are prepared during July and August annually. Period 13 represents the **pre-audit outcome** information (the AFS as submitted to the AG;
- **Period 14** represents the **audit outcome** information (the AFS on which the AGSA has expressed an opinion. Audit approved journals must be processed in period 14; and
- **Period 15** when the adjustments to the AFS following the approval of the adjustments budget to authorise and legalise unauthorised expenditure referred to in Regulation 28(6) of the MBRR is effected.

The AFS submitted to AGSA must reconcile with the pre-audited (PAUD, CRPA and DBPA), audited (AUDA, CRAU, DBAU) and restated (RAUD) data strings submitted to the GoMuni Upload portal and these data strings must be submitted as end-results and NOT movements when submitting the *m*SCOA data strings. Importantly, any transactions that were processed as part of the preparation and auditing of the AFS after year-end (month 12) in period 13, 14 and 15 must be reflected in the corresponding month of the new financial year by using net movements. The net movements will result in either an increase or decrease in the new financial year in the corresponding month of month 01 to 03 of the current financial year. E.g. changes in period 13 must be reflected in month 02 or 03 of the new financial year. A similar process is applicable when restatements of previous financial year figures occur and when material errors are identified which impacts on the previous years' AFS and must be corrected in period 15.

With regards to year-end information, the aim is to collect three sets of information (preliminary, pre-audited and audited). This ensures that the latest outcome information is always available to inform planning and budget decision making process for national, provincial and local government.

6. Submitting documents to the GoMuni Upload Portal:

6.1. Submission of additional reports

In addition to the virement policies that must be uploaded to GoMuni Upload portal from 01 July 2025, the following changes pertaining to document submissions to the GoMuni Upload portal must be noted:

Uploading of Section 41 Reports on prices and payments for bulk resources

From the 2025/26 MTREF, the Department of Water and Sanitation, Eskom, and Water Boards will be required to upload their monthly Section 41 reports on the GoMuni Upload portal to enhance transparency and oversight. This will replace the current email submission process. Training on the upload procedure will be provided to all relevant stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition.

Municipal Procurement Plans

MFMA Circulars No. 62 (dated 20 August 2012) and 94 (dated 08 March 2019) requested for the submission of annual municipal procurement plans. From the 2025/26 MTREF, municipalities will be required to upload their annual procurements plans in PDF format on the GoMuni Upload portal. These plans should encompass comprehensive information on planned procurements, estimated costs, and the proposed procurement strategies. Both draft and final procurement plans should be submitted with the annual tabled and adopted budget documentation.

Revenue related and debt relief documentation

All municipalities are required to annually upload the Revenue Management related documents as per the Document Submission Checklist attached as **Annexure C** to the GoMuni Upload Portal. These documents must be submitted in the specified format and within the timeframes indicated. Also note that items 15 and 17 in **Annexure C** are only relevant to Municipal (Eskom) Debt Relief participants and item 19 to both Municipal (Eskom) and Water Debt Relief participants. In relation to items 15, 17 and 19, all other municipalities must submit a “Not Applicable” form to prevent these items reflecting as outstanding.

6.2. Submission and sign-off of key tabling dates

In the past, the National Treasury requested information on an annual basis from municipalities on the actual tabling dates of legislated processes such as the various budget processes, AFS and Annual Report. This information was submitted through an excel spreadsheet. From 01 July 2025, municipalities will be required to enter the legislative tabling dates directly on the GoMuni portal, replacing the manual spreadsheet process.

Additionally, the Accounting Officer of each municipality will be required to sign-off on the accuracy of the captured dates on the LGDRS.

Further guidance on the submission and sign-off procedures will be provided in due course.

7. The Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations:

7.1. 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 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 Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za Lunathi.dumani@treasury.gov.za
KwaZulu-Natal eThekwini uMhlathuze	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 Khosa 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	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.adams@treasury.gov.za

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19 March 2025