



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

TREASURY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

VOTE 6 BUDGET SPEECH 2025/26



MR FRANCOIS RODGERS
MEC FOR FINANCE

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Budget Address by Mr Francois Rodgers (MPL) MEC for Finance On tabling of the Vote Six Budget at the Legislature 25 April 2025

Honourable Speaker, Ms. Nontembeko Boyce;
Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ms. Mmabatho Tembe;
Honourable Premier, Mr. Thami Ntuli;
Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Executive Council;
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature;
Members of the diplomatic corps;
Chairperson of the KZN Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders,
Inkosi Shinga;
All traditional leaders;
Director General, Dr. Nonhlanhla Mkhize;
Head of Department, Ms. Carol Coetzee;
All Heads of Departments and Senior Management:
CEOs of Public Entities;
People of KwaZulu-Natal;
Members of the media;
Business leaders;
Distinguished guests;

Introduction

Madam Speaker, the Democratic Alliance continues to play its role in the Government of Provincial unity particularly in the building of a capable and ethical state. Our focus remains resolute, this is a government that builds not breaks. This is a government whose energy is focussed on addressing poverty and inequality through the creation of a sustainable economy which will result in job creation.

Unnecessary expenditure must become a habit of the past, every single rand needs to be spent on achieving our objectives.

In the KZN Treasury team, we have demonstrated that it is possible to deliver services and conduct duties to our fullest potential while cutting down on the nice-to-haves considering our prevailing fiscal challenges. Treasury alone has saved close to R20 million since June last year. We will channel those funds to service delivery priorities.

The KZN Treasury has now adopted its statement of “inspiring and enabling financial stability”.

The Provincial Treasury plays a critical role in the provincial fiscus and has developed a robust Provincial Financial Recovery Plan to address the current challenges facing the province. Given the extent thereof, we envisage that we will only start to see a significant shift in two to three years, but this will require decisive leadership. I am pleased that the Honourable Premier is committed to drive this process as the Political Champion of the plan. The Treasury team will be leading the following strategic workstreams with the respective departmental representatives fully participating therein:

- Departmental Specific Interventions and Financial recovery plans (Department of Health, Education, Social Development and Transport, Ithala and municipalities in distress)
- Revenue Optimisation
- Expenditure Reduction and Optimisation
- Fiscal and Financial Governance
- Information Technology
- Communications and messaging

In the previous budget speech, various commitments were made, and I will be presenting the progress thereof as well as highlighting the new focal areas for 2025/26 under each programme.

1. PROGRESS AND SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITMENTS FOR 2025/26 PER PROGRAMME

Madam Speaker, allow me to now deal specifically with Provincial Treasury’s commitments for 2025/26 in terms of our primary service delivery objectives and funding of each of Provincial Treasury’s programmes for the coming year.

Full details are contained under Vote 6 of the Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) and in the five-year Strategic plan ending 2030 and the Annual Performance Plan of the department.

We are pleased to announce that our preliminary year-end results indicate that we have spent 96.3% of our budget at the end of the 2024/25 financial year and achieved 95% of all targets set whilst a further 11 indicators were overachieved due to the increase in demand for services. These achievements took place during a year where the baseline of the department's budget was cut by R25,320 million resulting in the freezing of 36 posts due to unaffordability. The Department has saved over R6million due to adherence to the cost cutting instruction note and other strategic decisions from my ministry – we don't just talk-the-talk but we walk-the walk! The department also had savings due to a number of vacant posts resulting from both ±34 resignations during the year and additional posts created in the revised Provincial Internal Audit Services structure, but good progress has been made in filling more than 79 posts during the year. In anticipation of the savings and understanding the need to resource the provincial financial recovery plan, we suspended R22 million to be directed for this critical purpose.

The department's overall budget 2025/26 increased year on year by R29,289 million against the 2024/25 main appropriation, it remains below the inflationary increase and we continue to have spending pressures with the historic baseline reductions due to the continued national fiscal consolidation stance, seeing a net budget cut of R24,989 million from the baseline for 2025/26 to a total budget of R710 million which I am tabling today for Vote 6.

1.1. REVENUE

Provincial Treasury is a key contributor to the provincial revenue and has planned to collect R341 million in 2025/26 mainly derived from investing provincial resources and earning optimal levels of interest. This amount has declined from previous years as the availability of cash and the interest rates have declined in the province.

1.2. EXPENDITURE PER PROGRAMME

Provincial Treasury (PT) receives an allocation of approximately R710,910 million in the 2025/26 financial year. The fiscal consolidation stance saw an amount of R27,549 million being cut from our budget, being Provincial Treasury's contribution to the budget cuts made by National Treasury while an allocation of R2,560 million was made resulting from the refund of bank service charges being reinvested into the biometric access system for the province.

As mentioned earlier we have R22m suspended from 2024/25 which will be directed for the provincial financial recovery plan.

Honourable Speaker, the table below indicates the allocation of the budget for the 2025/26 financial year. In the main the overall budget amounts to approximately R710 million. This table shows the budget allocation per programme as follows:

No.	Programme	Line Function	Budgeted Amount
1.	Programme 1	Administration	R228, 693 million
2.	Programme 2	Sustainable Resource Management	R53,270 million
3.	Programme 3	Financial Governance	R241,176 million
4.	Programme 4	Internal Audit	R112,715 million
5.	Programme 5	Municipal Financial Management	R74,336 million
	TOTAL BUDGET		R710,190 million

PROGRAMME 1: ADMINISTRATION BUDGET OF R228,693 MILLION

This programme is responsible for the executive and strategic functions of the department and includes the overall managerial and corporate responsibilities of Provincial Treasury. The programme sees an inflationary increase of 3,8% in its allocation.

Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity

The department finalised an evaluation study on the impact of its support to municipalities in relation to annual financial statements in November 2024. The findings of the study provided valuable insights which are being considered to further strengthen our assistance at local government. Another evaluation study is currently being undertaken within the local government space, focusing on assessing the effectiveness of risk management support provided by KZNPT. The objective of these evaluations is to measure the impact of the support provided by Provincial Treasury and identify areas of improvement.

Progress in filling vacant positions

One of the key reasons for historic under-spending in the Department was due to the high level of vacancies in the Department due to newly created posts resulting from two structural reviews in 2020 and 2023 respectively. The Department finalized 65 out of the committed 103 vacant funded posts, with 58 employees accepting offers and commencing employment during 2024/25.

ICT Digital Transformation Strategy

The department continues to digitally transform and successfully migrated on-premises Microsoft applications to the cloud. This transition has improved resilience and enabled services to be available off premise. Furthermore, greater emphasis was on digital skilling of the workforce. The development and implementation of an eLearning portal will assist with educating and training of staff. The portal is hosted on the SITA cloud platform to improve accessibility. The department has procured an Artificial Intelligence tool with the intention of training and deploying the tool to enable staff to be proficient in this area. Lastly, the department is finalizing the development of a chatbot for its website. The aim of the chatbot is to improve and assist visitors in the navigation of the website.

Gender-based violence and femicide initiatives

Whilst the department does not have a direct role to play in the general public, we are determined and committed to contribute by empowering our work force who in turn will take this knowledge into their communities. In this regard we had ten (10) gender-based initiatives during the year with all our valued staff.

Focus for 2025/26

The priority as articulated in my opening comments in respect of the strategic role Treasury would be playing in the Provincial Financial Recovery Plan, will be required to drive, co-ordinate and report on the progress, challenges and interventions to ensure that the province is able to not only become financial stable but also to ensure an accumulation of reserves to serve to assist with the impact of climate change and the extent of the disasters and damages to government infrastructure.

It is clear that we cannot attain financial stability on our own, hence all critical stakeholders to this task have been brought on board including stakeholder engagement with organised labour in order to consult and solicit their views on the Provincial Financial Recovery Plan.

Communication is an integral part in the execution of this plan, hence a programme to constantly engage stakeholders on developments has been designed.

The CFO's office will continue to monitor compliance with applicable financial prescripts in the areas of supply chain management, expenditure control, budget and reporting, taxation, revenue management, asset management and loss control to maintain the track record of 16 years of clean audits. The unit will also pay special attention in acquisition and contracting in order to achieve the best value for our budget.

PROGRAMME 2: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BUDGET OF R53,270 MILLION

The programme sees an inflationary increase of 4,4%. Programme 2 continued to support departments in their quest to fill funded critical posts. In line with the cost containment instruction note, we assessed all requests for the filling of posts and ensured that departments are supported in this regard. We have maintained our service standards by adhering to a turnaround time of 48 hours to give a response to all the submissions that we received.

The province was set to overspend its budget at the end of the financial year with the projected loss decreasing throughout the year due to the various interventions introduced. We have had various engagements with these departments to assist them to turn around their finances and we remain committed to working with all departments to make sure that the province remains financially stable.

The provincial own revenue collection has shown a negative outcome of undercollection of R33 million due to the under collection of health patient fees and reduction in interest earned in our bank account.

The Infrastructure Support Team successfully completed their assignments wherein they were assisting eight municipalities with their immovable asset registers. This will assist these municipalities to manage their assets better as well as to avoid negative findings by the Auditor-General.

As indicated in my speech last year, we supported the Department of Health to enter into a new PPP agreement for the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital. The MEC for Health may provide more details in her speech on this, save to say the department successfully awarded the new PPP contract and we are pleased that the province will continue to render the excellent services that this facility is known for.

Having tabled the provincial budget in the house on 25th March, our main task now is to ensure that the appropriated funds are spent on service delivery and that the province does not overspend its budget. In this regard, we will continue to monitor very closely how the departments spend their budgets. We will timeously inform the Provincial Executive Council of the status of the provincial finances. We will continue to provide our detailed reports to the Finance Portfolio Committee to ensure that the committee is well capacitated to play its oversight role on over the finances of this province.

The Economic Analysis unit finalised the analysis of the funding for schools that cater for learners with special needs. We will be engaging the department of education on the findings of this study as we believe that the recommendations contained in that report will greatly assist these learners. The research on the learner transport identified inefficiencies and recommendations for policy amendment which should assist with the current spending pressures if implemented accordingly.

The drafting of the KZN Gaming and Betting Tax Bill has been finalised. This process took longer than anticipated due to the various levels of consultations that were required to be undertaken. In the 2025/26 financial year, the Bill will be introduced in the House in order for the necessary legislative process to be followed. We anticipate that the Bill will bring in more revenue and address transformation in the sector.

Focus for 2025/26

The fiscal situation continues to be extremely tight. The additional allocations announced in the provincial budget are not sufficient to meet the ever-increasing demands for government services. We will review the current budgeting system to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The Treasury Budget Guidelines workshop that is held annually in June will guide departments on how to overhaul their budgets in line with the available resources.

In the 2025/26 financial year we will focus on revenue enhancement. We will engage with various departments that are generating revenue for the province to ensure that we maximise on provincial own revenue collection. We will also be identifying new revenue sources guided by the relevant legislative prescripts.

The amended PPP Regulations have been gazetted by National Treasury and we will endeavour to capacitate all provincial government departments and public entities on the requirements of these regulations so that they will be able to identify possible PPP projects and adhere to the legal prescripts. I will be holding a PPP conference in May 2025 to encourage private sector participation as this is the time now more than ever that we need to encourage PPPs to enhance service delivery and FastTrack key infrastructure projects in order to stimulate the economy and create much needed jobs.

PROGRAMME 3: FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE BUDGET OF R241,176 MILLION
The programme sees an inflationary increase of 5% on its 2025/26 main budget allocation.

SCM Suitability Assessments were undertaken to assess the extent of compliance with SCM prescripts which revealed non – compliance and poor contract management. Recommendations aimed at strengthening the internal control environment were made to our respective clients and follow ups were made to determine the extent of implementation of these recommendations to ensure we see the required shift.

As members would be aware, government employees are prohibited from doing business with the state. In this regard the Treasury team continues to support departments and public entities through continued monitoring of companies registered on CSD that are owned by employees of the state and accordingly report these to the relevant provincial institutions for further action which is then tracked by my team. The initial number of employees has been reduced from 6 439 to 3 519 a 50% reduction as at 1 February 2025 with further work still required by institutions.

Capacity building on Supply Chain Management, Contract Management, Central Suppliers Database and Bid Committees was provided to various provincial institutions. In addition, support and guidance was provided to provincial institutions through the review of 33 Supply Chain Management policies including Standard Operating Procedures aimed at enhancing compliance and creating further business efficiencies.

Operation clean audit focussed on financial and asset management support to Departments and Public entities. In addition, numerous technical opinions were issued resulting in addressing contentious accounting and audit matters. Frequent engagements with the Auditor-General have assisted with resolving contentious audit findings on behalf of provincial institutions.

Five (5) Departments received clean audits, compared to seven (7) clean audits in the previous year. Eight (8) Departments received unqualified audit opinions compared to six (6) in the prior year and one (1) Department received a qualified audit opinion in the current and prior year. Twelve (12) Public Entities achieved clean audits, compared to eleven (11) in the prior year while three (3) achieved unqualified audit opinions, compared to five (5) in the prior year. The number of Public Entities that received qualified audit outcomes regressed to two (2) compared to one (1) qualification in the prior year.

Support to suppliers to resolve payment disputes continued, as well as the Condonation of Irregular Expenditure incurred by provincial institutions. The unit also monitored the submission of mandatory information, monthly submission of key accounts and the monitoring of the payment of suppliers within 30 days. The provincial position has worsened with an increase in the number and rand value of suppliers not being paid within 30 days due to budget and cash constraints. The compliance rate on the number of invoices paid by KZN Provincial Departments within 30 days decreased by 16.2% to 72.53% in the current year. As of 7 January 2025, invoices totalling R5,5 billion have been captured on the system but not released for payment (the majority of which are as a result of no cash to process such payments). A further R3,4 billion of accruals and payables not recognised, i.e. invoices not captured on the system, is due for payment.

The department is an accredited South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) training office that currently runs a three-year training programme, accepting graduates that were recipients of the Thuthuka Education Upliftment Fund (TEUF), who upon completion will be eligible for registration as Chartered Accountants (CAs). Since its inception, the programme has benefited twenty-seven (27) trainees from the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, with the department receiving its first intake of trainees in 2016 and managing the process annually.

Through the programme, the department has produced nineteen (19) CAs with four (4) candidates recently successfully completing the final board examination process. The programme currently supports eight (8) active trainees who are at various stages of the three-year training contract.

Provincial Integrated Financial Management Systems Support

The KZN Province is one of the provinces to secure BAS payment processing using Biometrics Access Control System (BACS) and recently upgraded the BACS to implement the advanced cyber security system thus protecting BAS against any form of a cyberattack threat.

The process of implementing the LOGIS system into all departments is still on track, however, has been hindered by the high staff turnover in my department. The filling of the critical vacant post is at the final stages and shall assist in continuing with the LOGIS implementation in the coming financial year. Currently only the Department of Health, KZN Provincial Treasury, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and KZN COGTA are using LOGIS but have not fully implemented the solution. LOGIS shall play a crucial role in managing the budget commitments through its purchasing module that is fully integrated with BAS. The system enables improved management of accruals and monitoring of expenditure against the budget. Two critical National Treasury financial management modules (Invoice tracking and electronic AFS templates have been developed using the Logis platform). The timeframe for all departments to go live on the system will be approximately 18 months.

Focus for 2025/26

The department will embark on a drive to encourage provincial institutions to capture their contracts onto the contract management system. This will assist in improving contract management thus reducing irregular expenditure emanating from poor contract management. Support will be provided to the municipalities through the review of both quotations and bid management processes, and recommendations will be provided to reduce irregular expenditure.

Furthermore, the department will partner with National Treasury to assist provincial institutions with institutionalisation of the Strategic Procurement Framework. This will assist supply chain managers to plan, manage and develop the supply base and to create an understanding of the categories of goods and services in government's spending, their intended use and the sources of supply.

The strategic sourcing guideline has been developed and it will be issued to the province during the month of May 2025. This guideline will include price benchmarking on certain commodities to further ensure value for money for the province for commonly procured items.

Processes and the strategic focus of this programme will be on the implementation of the Provincial Financial Recovery Plan of the province. Specific focus will be on the Department of Education, the Department of Health, Department of Transport and the Department of Social Development. The major focus areas will be the following :

- Employee head count
- Accruals reduction
- Irregular and unauthorised expenditure reduction
- Complete analysis of the IYM's
- Analysis of cost drivers and alignment of expenditure to legislation on key government programs
- Reduction of spend on infrastructure not funded by conditional grants
- Analysis of pharmaceutical inventory
- Evaluation of viability of all Community Health Care Centres.

Provincial Treasury has looked at a number of Procurement systems used by other Government Departments and has received approval from National Treasury for the implementation of an existing procurement system. This is in line with the strategy to drive efficiencies across the whole Province in Supply Chain Management, to reduce SCM non-compliance and ensure value for money.

The Provincial Treasury has a significant number of data sets, which through appropriate Data Analysis technologies, must guide decision makers to make informed decisions based on accurate and timely information.

We are in the process of establishing the appropriate capacity and system and the first deliverable has been a dashboard on financial management and governance indicators for each provincial department. This will enhance oversight as executive authorities will have a bird's eye view on the critical financial aspects of their department in order to provide any required intervention or support. It is anticipated that this will be rolled out in May 2025.

PROGRAMME 4: INTERNAL AUDIT BUDGET OF R112,715 MILLION

The programme sees an inflationary increase of 3,8% on its 2025/26 main budget allocation. Internal audit services were provided to 12 provincial departments during the 2024/25 financial year, with the exception of the Department of Health which commenced with the setting up of its own function. Departments of Education and Transport, were also approved to set up their own functions but this process has not been concluded. The unit conducted over 120 risk-based audit assignments across these departments to assess the effectiveness of controls implemented by departments and review compliance to various legislative prescripts and policies.

Transversal audits on Transfer payments, SCM, performance information and mainstreaming of vulnerable groups were completed together with IT audits across various departments. The unit also reviewed the implementation on the Provincial Consequence Management Framework and provided recommendations for improvement.

The unit has increased its focus on financial processes after the capacitation of the financial audits component. Specific high risk financial processes were identified in departments for audit.

The unit reviewed the adequacy of departments' AG audit improvement plans and conducted follow up reviews on resolved matters on the consolidated audit logs. These follow ups covered all audit areas, including the specialised audit areas of financial audits, performance audits and IT audits. The four performance audits on consulting services have been completed. All matters raised by internal audit were reported to the Cluster audit & Risk Committees and matters have been raised with respective MECs as part of the quarterly MEC reporting.

The Risk Management framework was rolled out to all 13 departments, and the province established the Provincial Risk Management Committee (PRMC). Although there is a draft provincial risk profile in place, PRMC processes need to be enhanced to ensure that profile is approved, and risk mitigation action plans are monitored by the Committee. The unit also supported all departments on Business Management Continuity training. Twenty-two risk assessments were facilitated at various municipalities as well the review of 6 internal audit functions.

IT reviews on several IT Systems, IT Governance matters and risks related to cyber security were performed. PIAS also commenced with three performance audits on infrastructure projects which included Department of Education, Department of Social Development and Department of Public Works. These audits are progress and will be finalised in the 2025/2026 financial year. A consulting project on overpayments relating to staff debt was performed at the Department of Education and has provided the Department with recommendations to improve processes relating to termination of staff, recovery of debts from in-service and out-of-service staff and clean-up of staff establishment on PERSAL. This was a critical review as the department loses up to R250million a year on staff debt. Follow-Up reviews on resolved findings related to various processes and value for money audit findings were implemented as part of tracking the implementations of audit action plans and recommendations. Audit reviews have been conducted across all Departments on the maturity of risk management to provide assurance on the level of compliance with the Provincial Risk Management Framework. PIAS was subjected to a Quality Assurance Review by the IIA and received a general conformance rating whilst recommendations are currently being implemented to further enhance the work of the shared service and to conform to the global internal audit standards.

The draft provincial internal control framework was developed and consulted with provincial departments with implementation in the next year.

Focus for 2025/26

PIAS will continue with value for money audits on infrastructure projects in other Departments, a special focus on consultants' services and municipal support services. Transversal audits will be performed on the implementation of and compliance to the costcutting instruction note.

Given the developments in technology, IT audits focusing on various automated systems, governance issues and related cyber security matters will be performed.

As part of the Provincial Financial Recovery Plan, the Department has identified certain governance processes that require streamlining. This is aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency; and ensuring that efficiencies and productivity are improved. These areas include the reporting and coordination of the Provincial Forensics Investigations Unit, the centralisation of the internal audit function, enhancing audit committee oversight, implementing a strategy to enhance critical financial management competencies and skills, reducing Unauthorised, irregular and fruitless and wasteful expenditure, enhancing performance agreements for all HODs and Exco members to include critical financial related indicators, enforcement of certain prescripts such as Section 18.2(f) of the PFMA on the withholding of funds, and enhancing financial reporting to MECs.

PROGRAMME 5: MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BUDGET OF R74,336 MILLION

The programme sees an inflationary increase of 4,2% on its 2025/26 main budget allocation. Programme 5 provides oversight, technical support and guidance to delegated municipalities. Of the fifty-four municipalities in KZN, thirty-six municipalities tabled funded draft budgets and eighteen tabled unfunded budgets for 2024/25. However, through further engagements and support to municipalities by KZN PT for delegated municipalities and National Treasury for the non-delegated municipalities, the funding position of the 2024/25 Approved Budgets improved, resulting in forty-eight municipalities approving funded budgets and only six municipalities approving unfunded budgets.

The Municipal Accounting and Reporting sub-programme support and monitor municipalities with financial management and compliance with the Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP) and relevant legislation. With the support of the KZN Provincial Treasury, two municipalities improved during the 2023/24 audit cycle from an unqualified audit opinion with findings to a “clean” audit or as it is technically known, unqualified audit opinion with no findings. These municipalities are the uMshwathi and Richmond Local Municipalities. Furthermore, KZN Provincial Treasury was able to assist the eDumbe, Big 5 Hlabisa, KwaDukuza, Maphumulo, Johannes Phumani Phungula and uMzimkhulu Local municipalities to maintain their clean audits.

In addition to the AFS Review initiative, the Municipal Accounting and Reporting sub-programme also conducted Financial Management Support projects at five municipalities. The Mpofana and Jozini local municipalities which were supported by Provincial Treasury improved their audit opinions during the 2023/24 audit cycle from a qualified audit opinion to an unqualified audit opinion with findings. The support further assisted three municipalities namely the eMadlangeni and Ulundi local municipalities and the Harry Gwala District Municipality to maintain their unqualified with findings audit opinions.

The Municipal Revenue and Debt Management sub-programme assists and provides technical support to delegated municipalities on revenue and debt management through various initiatives. Three cash management projects are being implemented at iMpendle, Nkandla and eMadlangeni Local Municipalities to assist the municipalities with cash management through cost containment and debt management. The objective is to ensure that sufficient liquidity exists for municipalities to service their debts and unspent conditional grant cash back. Intensive revenue and debt management support was provided to the Ulundi local municipality to strengthen policies, processes, controls and financial records. Assistance was also provided with transferring skills to municipalities to implement National Treasury's Revenue Management Tools.

In addition, the sub-programme continued to assist the four delegated municipalities partaking in the Eskom Debt Relief Programme namely Ulundi, Endumeni, Mthonjaneni and Mpofana. As a result Ulundi Municipality was approved for a 1/3 debt write-off of historical Eskom debt. Although municipalities are complying with the majority of debt relief conditions, they are still not able to pay their Eskom current accounts in full which may result in them being removed from the programme.

Focus for 2025/26

An analysis was undertaken by National Treasury and COGTA in identifying municipalities facing various challenges in partnership with my department. The Department has developed the Municipal Support Plan which details the support that will be provided to various KZN municipalities, this forms part of the combined provincial plan which is monitored by Operation Clean Audit Committee (OPCA) chaired by CoGTA.

Seven municipalities will be supported with the review of their Annual Financial Statements and six municipalities will be provided with the Financial Management Support initiative.

Many of the KZN municipalities have cash constraints which is exasperated by the current economic climate restricting the ability of communities to pay for services provided by municipalities. The Provincial Treasury will therefore continue to assist municipalities through budget support as well as the cash management initiative which will be rolled out to seven municipalities based on the availability of resources to enhance cash management. Four municipalities will be supported in their reporting to National Treasury on the Eskom Debt Relief programme.

Skills transfer is a key element of the Provincial Treasury's support initiatives.

Municipal officials will be provided with on-the-job training and training workshops during the implementation of the support initiatives. The Provincial Treasury will also conduct quarterly CFO forums and/or training workshops to discuss pertinent issues to enhance municipalities' knowledge and to remain up to date on all technical aspects of municipal finance.

CONCLUSION

Allow me, Madam Speaker, to express my appreciation to HoD Carol Coetzee, Senior Management and all Provincial Treasury staff who contributed toward the compilation of this speech and will be delivering on my commitments tabled today.

To my entire team at the ministry, thank you for your guidance, support and encouragement.

To members of this House, the Premier, Members of the Provincial Executive Council, Members of the Legislature, the Finance Committee under the capable steer of Honourable Dlungwane, my political home – the Democratic Alliance – thank you for your unwavering support and guidance thus far. It is now my privilege to table this budget before you for your consideration.

I thank you.

[illegible]

