

National Dialogue Steering Committee (NDSC) Workshop

Commissioning Framework: Roadmap, Methodology and Digital Platform Workstreams

1. Purpose of the Workshop Commission

The purpose of this workshop session is to enable the National Dialogue Steering Committee (NDSC) to provide strategic guidance and policy direction on three interrelated workstreams:

1. National Dialogue Roadmap and Pilot Implementation
2. Dialogue Methodology and Facilitation Architecture
3. Digital Platform / Dialogue App

These workstreams form the operational backbone of the National Dialogue process, ensuring that the dialogue is citizen-led, evidence-based, inclusive, and capable of producing actionable outcomes.

The workshop must therefore clarify key governance, operational, and methodological questions before the pilot phase is launched.

2. Pilot Phase: Key Strategic Questions

The Steering Committee must consider the following questions to guide the design and implementation of the National Dialogue pilot phase.

2.1 Timeline and Sequencing

- What is the timeline for launching the pilot phase, considering the broader national calendar, including the upcoming elections?
- Should the pilot phase be formally adopted and approved by the Steering Committee before implementation by the end of this workshop.
- What are the **key milestones** from pilot initiation to national rollout?

2.2 Pilot Leadership and Coordination

- Who will **lead and coordinate the pilot implementation**?
- Should **provincial coordinators** be appointed to manage the process at provincial level?
- What role should **community anchor organisations and active civic leaders** play in driving the pilot process?
- How will responsibilities be divided between:
 - Steering Committee (governance and oversight)

- Secretariat (administration and coordination)
- Facilitators (dialogue implementation)

2.3 Ground-Up Community Engagement

The National Dialogue must remain **people-centred and grounded in community realities**.

Key considerations include:

- How will the process ensure **direct engagement with communities**, including rural and underserved areas?
- Should **community immersion activities** (such as community walkabouts or listening sessions) be incorporated to understand lived realities?
- How will existing **local structures, community networks, and civil society formations** be integrated into the dialogue process?

2.4 Facilitation and Capacity Support

- Who will **facilitate the dialogue processes**, particularly at ward and community level?
- What **training and accreditation framework** will be used for facilitators?
- What **support systems** will be provided to facilitators to manage complex or sensitive discussions?
- What **remuneration framework** will apply to facilitators and coordinators?

2.5 Operational Methodology

The Steering Committee must clarify the **methodological model for dialogue implementation**.

Key questions include:

- How will **ward-level dialogues** be structured and facilitated?
- How will **sectoral and community dialogues** be incorporated into the broader process?
- How will **public engagement venues, logistics, and facilitation teams** be coordinated?
- How will the process ensure **balanced participation across sectors and communities**?

2.6 Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability

The dialogue process must include **strong monitoring and evaluation systems**.

Key issues include:

- What **reporting systems** will track dialogue outcomes from **ward level to national level**?
- How will dialogue outputs be **aggregated, analysed and synthesised**?
- How will the process ensure **transparency and accountability** in reporting outcomes?

The Steering Committee must ensure that the process remains **data-driven, people-led, and capable of producing measurable outcomes**.

fe2a8a01-914c-40bf-bfb8-eb208ce...

2.7 Safeguarding Independence

The Steering Committee must ensure that the dialogue process remains:

- **Non-partisan**
- **Protected from political interference**
- **Credible and trusted by citizens**

Clear governance structures must therefore be established to protect the **independence and integrity of the dialogue process**.

3. Digital Dialogue Platform (Dialogue App)

3.1 Purpose

The development of a **National Dialogue Digital Platform (App)** is proposed as a key tool to support the dialogue process.

The platform would serve as a **digital backbone for citizen participation, data collection, and dialogue tracking**.

3.2 Strategic Value of the Dialogue App

The proposed app supports the core guiding principles of the National Dialogue:

Inclusivity

- Enables participation from citizens across all communities.

- Allows voices from **every household and community to be captured.**

Transparency

- Provides visible and traceable documentation of dialogue outcomes.

Independence

- Supports a **citizen-led process protected from elite capture.**

Action

- Ensures dialogue outcomes are translated into **clear priorities and policy actions.**

3.3 Key Design Principles

The proposed platform should include:

- Availability in **all 11 official languages**
- **Real-time data collection and reporting**
- **Ward-level tracking of dialogue inputs**
- Integration with the **Dialogue Secretariat digital systems**
- Compliance with **POPIA and data protection regulations**

The platform will generate **baseline data on community priorities**, enabling:

- Identification of systemic challenges
- Evidence-based policy responses
- Improved resource allocation
- Ongoing tracking of dialogue outcomes.

3.4 Hybrid Participation Model

The dialogue process must allow **both digital and in-person participation**, ensuring:

- Accessibility in **rural and connectivity-constrained areas**
- Complementarity between **community dialogues and digital inputs**
- Inclusion of citizens who may not have digital access.

4. Governance and Oversight

The Steering Committee will retain responsibility for:

- Providing **strategic policy direction**
- Safeguarding the **integrity of the dialogue process**
- Ensuring the dialogue remains **citizen-led and inclusive**
- Overseeing the **implementation and reporting framework**

The operational implementation will be managed through the **Secretariat, coordinators, facilitators, and partner organisations.**

5. Conclusion

The National Dialogue represents a **historic opportunity for democratic renewal, national healing, and collective ownership of South Africa's future.**

The pilot phase, methodology framework, and digital platform must therefore be designed to ensure that the process is:

- **Grounded in communities**
- **Inclusive and transparent**
- **Evidence-based**
- **Capable of producing actionable outcomes**

The NDSC workshop is therefore requested to **provide strategic guidance and decisions on the key questions outlined above**, enabling the Secretariat and implementation partners to proceed with the **pilot phase and national rollout of the dialogue process.**