

NATIONAL DIALOGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA

A Citizen-Led Process for National Renewal

COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ROADMAP

PART 1

Pilot Phase to Full Rollout

Date: April 2026

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The National Dialogue of South Africa represents one of the most defining undertakings in the country's democratic journey since 1994. It is a citizen-led process designed to address South Africa's most pressing challenges: inequality, declining trust in public institutions, widespread poverty, and growing disillusionment - particularly among the youth.

1.1 Origins of the National Dialogue

The current call for a National Dialogue was made by former President Thabo Mbeki on 30 April 2024. President Cyril Ramaphosa expressed his support on 1 May 2024 at COSATU's May Day Rally, and formally committed to the process in his 2025 State of the Nation Address.

In August 2025, the Convention Organising Committee (COC) was formed as an emergency intervention following the collapse of the Preparatory Task Team (PTT). The 1st National Convention on 15-16 August 2025 at UNISA, attended by over 1,000 delegates from more than 200 structures.

1.2 Guiding Principles

- Inclusivity - every sector, community, and demographic has a seat at the table
- Transparency and Accountability - openness in decisions, resources, and outcomes
- Independence - safeguarding the Dialogue from partisan capture
- Sustainability - a foundation for long-term renewal, not a fleeting event
- Action-Orientation - dialogue that translates into compacts, reforms, and tangible change

1.3 Governance Structures

Structure	Role and Function
Head of State (President)	Convenor of the National Dialogue; calls the National Convention; appoints the EPG and Steering Committee
Eminent Persons Group (EPG)	32 prominent South Africans who champion and guide the Dialogue; act as moral authority and guarantors of credibility
Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)	Chaired by the Deputy President; provides government enabling support, funding within PFMA, and policy alignment
Steering Committee	Citizen-led strategic body with 104 members across 39 sectors (and still counting); sets priorities, coordinates workstreams and report to the Head of State.

2. NATIONAL DIALOGUE ROADMAP OVERVIEW

The National Dialogue roadmap outlines a phased, citizen-led process spanning 2026–2027.

For the **April to August 2026** implementation window, the immediate focus is on **sector-led ward-based pilot dialogues**. Each of the 39 sectors will be supported to implement **5 pilot dialogues** (totaling **195 ward-based pilot dialogues**). These pilots will be **led by the sectors**, conducted in specific wards, and will simultaneously advance sector-specific thematic priorities while testing the operational systems required for national scale-up.

This dual-purpose approach enables the process to achieve both sector-driven content generation and ward-level delivery testing within the same set of activities. The content of the dialogues will focus primarily on the lead sector's thematic issues, while remaining inclusive and responsive to broader community concerns through an intersectional lens and rapid response mechanisms.

Kagiso Trust will continue with its separate stream of externally supported dialogues (45 pilots), which will contribute findings to the national synthesis but will remain outside the direct operational control and funding of the Secretariat.

2.1 Impact Pillars

All dialogues are anchored on three impact pillars:

- **Radical Reforms:** Propose and lobby for constitutional, legislative, policy, or social change. These form the core of the People's Pact.
- **Rapid Responses:** Fast-track community, civil society, and state action on immediately identified challenges via the Rapid Response Framework.
- **Rebuild the Nation:** Invest in active citizenry, civic education, community development, and healing from collective trauma.

2.2 Scale and Reach Targets

Dialogue Type	Target Volume	Estimated Reach
Sector Dialogues	N/A	All sectors and sub-sectors
Ward-Based Dialogues	13,500	1.3 million people directly
Citizen-Initiated Dialogues	50,000	1.5 million people
School-Based Dialogue Day	All schools nationwide (approximately 22,000-23,000 schools)	Nationwide learner participation across classrooms
Post Schooling Education & Training Institutions (PSET) Dialogues, including Private Institutions Dialogues	+/- 150 institutions	+/- 500,000 students
Radio Dialogues (public, commercial & community)	180	5 million people (indirect)

Webinar Dialogues	5,000	250,000 people
Digital & Social Media	Ongoing	3-5 million impressions
TOTAL TARGET	-	Minimum 10 million South Africans

3. PHASED IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

3.1 Route to the 2nd National Convention

The roadmap should be read as one continuous implementation pathway from targeted pilot testing and sector preparation to national synthesis and, ultimately, the 2nd National Convention.

- **Ward-based Pilot Dialogues (April – August 2026):** Delivery of 195 sector-led ward-based pilot dialogues (5 per sector across 39 sectors). These will be funded and supported by the National Dialogue Secretariat. Sectors will drive implementation in selected wards, with the Secretariat providing catering, free venue support, recording, and data upload. Facilitators will be contributed by the sectors and civil society organisations. The pilots will rigorously test facilitation models, data capture, rapid response escalation, intersectionality, community mobilisation, and procurement/logistics systems.
- **Kagiso Trust:** 45 ward-based pilot dialogues coordinated and funded independently by Kagiso Trust. These will run in parallel and feed insights into the national process.
- **Pause and Refine (September – December 2026):** Consolidation of lessons from all 2026 pilots, refinement of tools, protocols, training models, and procurement processes in preparation for the national relaunch.
- **National relaunch (January 2027):** use Dialogue Day in schools and a broader relaunch campaign to reintroduce the National Dialogue at scale and signal a transition from pilot implementation to mass participation.
- **Scale dialogue delivery (January - August 2027):** roll out ward-based, citizen-initiated, school-based, higher education, media, webinar, and digital dialogues using approved category-specific planning models.
- **Synthesis and consolidation (August - September 2027):** aggregate dialogue outputs into municipal, provincial, sectoral, and national synthesis products, ensuring that reforms, rapid responses, and rebuild-the-nation proposals are clearly separated and evidenced.
- **Prepare the Convention package (September - October 2027):** translate validated dialogue outputs into draft resolutions, synthesis reports, commitments registers, and People's Pact inputs for the 2nd National Convention.
- **2nd National Convention (October - November 2027):** convene delegates to consider the synthesised national inputs, adopt the People's Pact, and agree the institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring, and continuation of the National Dialogue beyond the Convention.

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities and Deliverables
Phase 0: Preparation	Completed (Aug-Sep 2025)	1st National Convention held; COC handover report completed; Steering Committee nomination process initiated

Phase 1: Pilot Phase	April - August 2026	45 ward-based pilot dialogues coordinated and funded by Kagiso Trust, run by the ManCo through the Secretariat including
		preparation and implementation, test methods and reporting tools, and build the evidence base required for scale-up. The approach will use virtual, clustered, or physical formats as approved for testing of facilitation, logistics, and reporting systems.
		195 sector-led ward-based pilot dialogues (5 per sector × 33 sectors + 6 subsectors). Sectors select and drive implementation in specific wards. Secretariat provides catering, free venue support, recording, and data systems. Facilitators contributed by sectors. Comprehensive testing of facilitation, intersectionality, rapid response mechanisms, dialogue app, and local procurement processes. Training of sector-appointed facilitators on intersectionality, multi-sectoral issues, rapid response, and app usage.
		Initiate and finalise logistics related to SCM for ward-based facilitators other services. Finalise planning, preparation and mapping of the ward based dialogues
Strategic Pause	September - December 2026	Pause in large-scale rollout to accommodate Local Government Elections; refinement of systems, tools, and methodology
Phase 2: Dialogue Day (National Relaunch)	January 2027	Dialogue Day across all schools nationally in the first week of the academic calendar; relaunch of the National Dialogue project at scale
Phase 3: Full Rollout	January - August 2027	13,500 ward-based dialogues funded through NEDLAC budget; citizen-initiated, digital, media, school-based, and highereducation dialogues continue at scale, informed by lessons from the 45 pilots and the 2026 sector dialogue stream
Phase 4: Sectoral Synthesis	August - September 2027	Sectoral convenings across university campuses around the country to synthesise inputs toward the national compact
Phase 5: 2nd Convention	October - November 2027	Adoption of the People's Pact as a new founding social compact; establishment of a continuing National Dialogue structure

Phase 6: Monitoring and Evaluation	Post-November 2027	Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and implementation tracking of commitments flowing from the People's Pact
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4. PILOT AND SECTOR DIALOGUE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4.1 Purpose and Strategic Logic

The April to August 2026 implementation period is designed to do two things at once: test practical community dialogue delivery through the 45 Kagiso Trust-supported pilots, and organise a structured sector dialogue process led by the Secretariat. Together, these two streams should generate operational lessons, validated content, and planning discipline ahead of the 2027 scale-up. The document should therefore treat the Secretariat stream primarily as a sector-coverage and content-generation programme, rather than as a second fixed site-based pilot allocation.

4.2 Scope

- The April to August 2026 implementation scope comprises two coordinated streams. The first stream is the delivery of 45 Kagiso Trust-supported pilot dialogues. The second stream is a Secretariat-led sector dialogue process across 39 sectors. Sector dialogues should be planned flexibly: some sectors may require one national virtual dialogue, while others may need clustered or provincial dialogues that cover multiple provinces in one sitting.
- For planning purposes, sectors may use a clustered model in which one dialogue covers multiple provinces. Using this approach, the Secretariat can plan for approximately four to five provincial or clustered dialogue touch points per sector where justified, while retaining the principle that the final number of engagements must be driven by approved sector proposals rather than by a rigid quota.
- Each sector should determine the most appropriate pathway based on footprint, organisational density, geography, and urgency. This means the sector dialogue stream may include virtual consultations, clustered multi-province dialogues, and selected national or physical convenings where there is a clear operational case.
- Each approved dialogue, including the ward-based dialogues supported by Kagiso Trust, whether pilot or sector dialogue, must have a named implementation lead, a facilitation plan, a venue or platform plan, a stakeholder map, and a content management pathway before it proceeds.
- Final ward or locality names for the 45 ward-based dialogues coordinated by Kagiso Trust, and final dates and formats for sector dialogues, must be issued through approved implementation annexures and reconciled to the central programme tracker.

4.3 Site Selection Principles

Sites are selected based on the following criteria:

- Poverty and unemployment - communities with high dependency ratios and sustained economic exclusion
- Gender-based violence and community safety - urban and rural contexts
- Informal settlements and infrastructure stress - insecure tenure, overcrowding, inconsistent service delivery
- Environmental and industrial harm - mining, coal, petrochemical, pollution-related health risks
- Climate and disaster vulnerability - flood-prone, drought-affected areas
- Migration and border dynamics - border towns and transit corridors
- Rural isolation and declining local economies - limited state presence, long travel distances

- Energy transition pressures - renewable energy developments and traditional energy infrastructure

4.4 Dialogue Preparation and Delivery Process

- Sectors will appoint facilitators and assume ownership of implementation.
- A dedicated **facilitator training programme** will be conducted prior to rollout, covering intersectionality, management of multi-sectoral issues, rapid response escalation, and utilisation of the dialogue app.
- Each dialogue must have a named implementation lead, facilitation plan, stakeholder map, and content capture plan.
- Rapid response processes will be activated, including timely notification to ward councillors.

4.4.1 Preparation sequence- ward based dialogues coordinated by Kagiso Trust

- Step 1 - Site scoping and confirmation: confirm the pilot ward or locality, demographic profile, language needs, local risks, community dynamics, and implementing lead.
- Step 2 - Preparatory meeting with existing structures: convene ward committees, traditional leaders where applicable, community organisations, sector stakeholders in the area, and other relevant local formations to confirm the purpose, process, mobilisation approach, and rules of engagement.
- Step 3 - Stakeholder mapping and mobilisation plan: identify priority participants, under-represented groups, transport considerations, accessibility needs, and local communication channels.
- Step 4 - Venue and operations planning: confirm the venue, seating format, registration flow, sound, branding, sanitation, emergency protocols, accessibility, catering model, and content-capture arrangements.
- Step 5 - Facilitation and content briefing: assign facilitators, rapporteurs, psychosocial support personnel where needed, and oversight representatives; issue the approved brief, issue log template, consent protocol, and reporting pack.
- Step 6 - Dialogue delivery: run the session using the approved ND methodology, ensure balanced participation, record attendance and outputs, and classify content under reforms, rapid responses, and rebuild-the-nation themes.
- Step 7 - Immediate close-out: conduct a same-day team debrief, secure all attendance registers, notes, recordings, consent records, and incident logs, and confirm any rapid-response referrals.
- Step 8 - Validation and escalation: verify the summary with the provincial coordinator and Secretariat, classify action items, and upload the final pilot pack to the central repository.

4.4.2 Preparation sequence- sector based dialogues coordinated by the Sectors/ Secretariat

Sector dialogues require a differentiated architecture because sectors vary in size, provincial spread, digital readiness, and the complexity of the issues they wish to surface.

- Each sector must have one designated sector convenor or focal point accountable for preparation, invitations, moderation support, content consolidation, and liaison with the Secretariat.
- Every sector must submit a dialogue proposal to the Secretariat by end of April 2026. The proposal should include the sector's priority topics, draft agenda, proposed dates, proposed format, implementation plan, and indicative budget or expenditure requirements.
- At minimum, the proposal pack should state the sector's focal issues, draft agenda, preferred dates, proposed format, provincial or clustered coverage plan, participant categories, mobilisation approach, facilitation requirements, content-capture plan, and proposed budget or expenditure.
- Sectors will determine the dates, times and venues where their 5 dialogues will be implemented. The Secretariat will pay for all costs related to the sector/ sub-sector as per the submitted costing in line with the framework

for the funding of the dialogues. All costs for the dialogues will be paid directly to the service providers by the Secretariat using the procurement policies and procedures of NEDLAC.

- Every sector dialogue series must end with a documented synthesis note that consolidates recurring demands, reform proposals, urgent actions, and recommendations for the national process.

4.4.3 Planning rule for sector dialogue volume

For planning purposes, the sector dialogue stream should be understood as a 33-sector and 6 sub-sector process using flexible coverage pathways with 5 dialogues each to be undertaken. This creates an indicative planning footprint of approximately 195 sector and sub-sector touchpoints across the provinces and districts (locations) programme. These 195 sector/ sub-sector engagements must flow from sector proposals, Secretariat approval, and available funding support.

Format	Description and Application
Ward-Based and Sector/ sub-sector Dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted by trained facilitators in local communities at ward level • Minimum 4 hours • Structured around the 8-stage meta-architecture • Facilitator-to-participant ratio of 1:60 • Maximum 300 participants per dialogue
Citizen-Initiated Dialogues	Hosted by citizens, individuals, and organisations; includes existing community meetings, conferences, stokvels, book clubs; registered via National Dialogue tech platform; outcomes uploaded to national repository
Hybrid Dialogues	Combines in-person and online participation; useful for urban areas with connectivity and for diaspora engagement
Rural Offline Dialogues	Conducted without internet connectivity; outcomes captured via offline app with sync-on-connect capability; designed for deep rural and low-data environments
Broadcast Dialogues	Partnerships with media outlets including the Big Debate, SABC, community radio; call-in format; tracked via media monitoring systems
Social Media Dialogues	X Spaces, Instagram Lives, TikTok, WhatsApp groups; tracked with standardised hashtags (#NationalDialogue + topic + location); archived for analysis

4.4.4 Dialogue category planning framework

The roadmap should use one standard planning framework across all dialogue categories so that each event type is planned coherently, but it should also distinguish clearly between the support model for Kagiso Trust pilot dialogues and the support model for sector dialogues.

- **Ward-based dialogues** require the most detailed event planning model because they involve community mobilisation, local risk management, physical venue operations, psychosocial safeguarding, and structured reporting.
- **Sector dialogues** require a convenor-led model with preparatory meetings, stakeholder categorisation, proposal submission by end of April 2026 (no later than 30 April 2026), supported through a funding framework approved by the Steering Committee on recommendation of ManCo based on the approved budget with specific costs paid directly by NEDLAC to 3rd party service providers.
- **Citizen-initiated dialogues** require a lighter support model focused on registration, orientation, minimum standards, reporting templates, and quality assurance rather than full central logistics.
- **School-based dialogues** require a systems implementation model led with the education authorities, teacher orientation, age-appropriate methods, and standardised classroom capture tools.
- **PSET and private institutions dialogues** require campus-by-campus institutional planning aligned to academic calendars, student structures, and later sectoral synthesis processes.
- **Broadcast, webinar, and digital dialogues** require communications-led planning, moderation protocols, platform governance, content archiving, and misinformation management rather than venue-heavy planning.
- **Hybrid and rural offline dialogues** require additional planning for connectivity, offline capture, device management, sync-on-connect processes, and backup paper tools.

4.6 Dialogue Formats Tested in Pilot

Dialogue Day will be implemented as a nationwide classroom-based dialogue process across all schools in South Africa (approximately 22,000-23,000 schools).

Each classroom will host a facilitated dialogue led by the class teacher, who will undergo facilitator orientation through the National School of Government.

The model will require close cooperation with the Department of Basic Education to ensure practical implementation, curriculum alignment, and the development of age-appropriate methodologies. This is particularly important for primary school learners, who cannot be engaged in the same way as high school learners. The Department of Basic Education will therefore need to support the development of differentiated models for primary and secondary school participation.

Engagement with the Minister and Department of Higher Education and Training will be required to determine how universities and TVET colleges participate, as the timing and academic calendar may not align in the same way as the school system.

5 Preparatory Meetings

Upon approval of this pilot implementation roadmap, the sectors should inform their stakeholders about the process. The Secretariat and ManCo should support this stakeholder reporting engagements to prepare for the roll-out of the sectoral and sub-sectoral dialogues.

After each sectoral and sub-sectoral engagement, the ManCo should be provided with confirmed dates, venue names, sector Chairpersons, rapporteurs, attendee categories, and key decisions arising from each meeting so that the roadmap can show the build-up to each pilot dialogue, not only the dialogue event itself.

Meeting / Engagement	Purpose	Status	Date

Stakeholder preparatory meeting	General stakeholder alignment on pilot approach, roles, planning assumptions, and implementation readiness	Held / date to be confirmed	April 2026 - exact date to be confirmed
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ANNEXURE A: DETAILED COSTING FRAMEWORK BY DIALOGUE TYPE

Important note: This annexure is structured as a costing framework rather than a final approved budget. The costing framework will be guided by the following costing templates:

A1. Ward-based dialogue costing template

Cost item	Cost basis	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Subtotal	Funding / status note	Comment
Venue	In-kind venue support / confirmation record	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	Confirmed in kind / paid	UNISA or other partner venue where available
Facilitation team	Lead facilitator, co-facilitators, rapporteur, capture officer	Per event team	TBC	1 team	TBC	To be confirmed	Based on approved honorarium model
Participant mobilisation	Invitations, outreach, local notices, calls, community liaison	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	May vary by district
Registration materials	Registers, name tags, pens, packs, stationery	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	Standard pack
Branding	Directional signage, registration branding, banners, backdrops as required	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	Use standard branding list
Catering	Tea, water, lunch or approved refreshment model	Per participant / per event	TBC	TBC	TBC	To be confirmed	Apply approved catering norms
Audio-visual / PA	Microphones, speakers, extension leads, projector where needed	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	Depends on venue package
Content capture	Recording, note-taking, transcription support, data upload	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	Recording only where approved

Security and safeguarding	Security, crowd management, safeguarding focal support	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	Risk-based	Mandatory where risk assessment requires
Interpretation / accessibility	Language support, sign language, accessibility aids	Per event	TBC	TBC	TBC	Need-based	Triggered by participant profile
Transport support	Targeted participant or official support where approved	Per person / per event	TBC	TBC	TBC	Exceptionbased	Only where policy allows

A2. Sector dialogue costing template

Cost item	Cost basis	Unit	Rate	Quantity	Subtotal	Funding / status note	Comment
Virtual platform / technical hosting	Approved platform support for virtual sector dialogue	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	Secretariat support	Default sector model
Participant data support	Approved data provision for virtual participants where required	Per participant / batch	TBC	TBC	TBC	Secretariat support	Apply only to approved participants and packages
Sector coordination	Stakeholder convening and sector liaison support	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	Can include sector anchor support
Facilitation and moderation	Moderator, co-facilitator, rapporteur, capture support	Per event team	TBC	1 team	TBC	To be confirmed	Scaled to attendance and format
In-kind venue logistics	Venue booking and basic onsite setup for approved physical dialogues	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	In-kind where available	Use UNISA or other partner venue where confirmed
Catering	Refreshments and meals for approved physical dialogue exceeding 5 hours	Per participant / per event	TBC	TBC	TBC	Conditional support	Not automatic; duration threshold applies
Travel and accommodation	Approved support for essential delegates only where specifically justified	Per approved traveller	TBC	TBC	TBC	Policy-based	Exception item, not default

Recording and synthesis	Recording, summary notes, synthesis support	Per event	TBC	1	TBC	To be confirmed	Linked to content governance
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ANNEXURE B: TEMPLATE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PILOT AND SECTOR DIALOGUES

1. **Purpose:** To set out the mandate, scope, governance, outputs, logistics and accountability arrangements for an approved National Dialogue pilot or sector event.
2. **Objectives:** Create a safe and inclusive platform for dialogue; surface community or sector priorities; identify rapid response actions; collect proposals for reform and nation rebuilding; ensure standardised content capture and reporting.
3. **Scope:** Applies to ward based dialogues supported Kagiso Trust and Secretariat-supported sector dialogues approved for implementation during the April to August 2026 period, as well as other formats specifically approved under the National Dialogue roadmap.
4. **Convening authority:** Convened under the authority of the National Dialogue governance framework and coordinated by the National Dialogue Secretariat together with Kagiso Trust, sector convenors, and relevant provincial or sector structures as applicable.
5. **Participants:** Participants should reflect the intended stakeholder mix, including community leadership, civil society, youth, women, persons with disabilities, sector representatives, local institutions and other relevant stakeholders. Sector dialogues must define the categories of participants and the basis for invitations in the approved proposal.
6. **Roles and responsibilities:** National Dialogue Secretariat: standards, approvals, data support for approved virtual dialogues, in-kind venue facilitation for approved physical dialogues, reporting and escalation. Kagiso Trust or sector convenors: local or sector planning, mobilisation, proposal submission, and implementation coordination. Facilitators: process management, inclusion, neutrality, and content capture. Logistics team: venue or platform setup, catering where approved, registration, safety and supplier management. Oversight team: compliance, incident management and sign-off of outputs.
7. **Deliverables:** Approved dialogue proposal where required; attendance register; agenda; facilitator roster; issue log; recommendations log; rapid response referrals; incident log if applicable; final event report; uploaded outputs to the central repository.
8. **Governance and decision-making:** Operational decisions are taken by the designated event lead in line with approved protocols. Any material deviation from approved scope, budget, participants or format must be escalated for approval before implementation.
9. **Duration and format:** Kagiso Trust public pilots should ordinarily run for a minimum of four hours and follow the approved facilitation architecture. Sector dialogues should default to virtual formats unless a physical format is approved; where a physical sector dialogue exceeds five hours, catering may be provided in line with the approved support framework.
10. **Ethics, safety and safeguarding:** The event must comply with safeguarding, data protection, neutrality, non-discrimination and first-do-no-harm principles. This includes clear escalation pathways for distress, disruption, harassment, misinformation or political capture.
11. **Reporting requirements:** A draft event report should be completed within 48 hours and a validated final report submitted within the prescribed reporting window together with attendance, outputs, supporting evidence, and confirmation that the event complied with the approved proposal.
12. **Approval:** This ToR becomes operational once approved by the Steering Committee through ManCo and attached to the event pack or approved sector proposal.