

NATIONAL DIALOGUE STEERING COMMITTEE (NDSC)

Workshop Commission Note

Roadmap, Methodology and Digital Platform Workstreams

1. Purpose of the Commission

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

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

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

The workshop seeks to clarify key **governance, operational, and methodological questions** prior to the launch of the **pilot phase of the National Dialogue**.

2. Context

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

For the dialogue process to achieve legitimacy and impact, it must be:

- **Citizen-driven and community-rooted**
- **Inclusive across all sectors of society**
- **Evidence-based and data-informed**
- **Protected from politicisation or elite capture**
- **Capable of translating dialogue outcomes into concrete action**

The pilot phase will therefore play a critical role in **testing the dialogue architecture, refining the methodology, and establishing the systems required for national rollout**.

3. Key Issues for Steering Committee Guidance

The Steering Committee is invited to provide direction on the following strategic issues.

3.1 Pilot Phase: Timeline and Sequencing

The Steering Committee is requested to consider:

- The **timeline for initiating the National Dialogue pilot phase**, taking into account the national calendar and upcoming elections.
- Whether the **pilot phase should first be formally adopted and approved by the Steering Committee before implementation**.
- The **key milestones** from pilot initiation to broader national rollout.

3.2 Leadership and Coordination of the Pilot

Clear coordination mechanisms are required to ensure the effectiveness of the pilot phase.

The Steering Committee is requested to consider:

- Who will **drive and coordinate the pilot implementation process**.
- Whether **provincial coordinators** should be appointed to support the dialogue process at provincial level.
- The role of **community anchor organisations, civil society networks, and local leaders** in facilitating the process.
- The division of responsibilities between:
 - Steering Committee (strategic governance and oversight)
 - Secretariat (administrative coordination)
 - Facilitators and partners (dialogue implementation)

3.3 Community-Based and Ground-Up Engagement

The National Dialogue must remain **firmly grounded in community realities**.

The Steering Committee is invited to consider:

- Mechanisms to ensure **direct engagement with communities across all provinces**, including rural and underserved areas.
- The integration of **existing local structures, community networks, and civil society organisations** into the dialogue process.
- The possibility of **community listening sessions or local immersion activities** to better understand the lived experiences of citizens.

This approach reinforces the principle that the dialogue process must be **people-led and grounded in the lived realities of South Africans**.

3.4 Facilitation Framework and Capacity Support

The effectiveness of the dialogue process will depend heavily on the **quality and credibility of facilitators**.

The Steering Committee is invited to consider:

- The framework for **recruiting and training dialogue facilitators**.
- The **support systems and operational guidance** required for facilitators.

- The development of a **remuneration and support framework** for facilitators and coordinators.
- The establishment of a **national training programme for dialogue facilitators**.

3.5 Dialogue Methodology

The Steering Committee must clarify the **methodological approach for the dialogue process**, including:

- The structure and format of **ward-level dialogues**.
- The integration of **sectoral dialogues and community consultations**.
- The use of **public venues and community spaces** for dialogue engagements.
- Mechanisms to ensure **balanced participation across sectors and communities**.

The methodology must enable the dialogue process to **track issues from the grassroots level to national consolidation**.

3.6 Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability

A credible dialogue process requires strong monitoring and reporting systems.

The Steering Committee is invited to consider:

- The design of **monitoring and evaluation systems** to track the dialogue process.
- The reporting architecture for **aggregating outcomes from community level to national level**.
- Mechanisms for ensuring **transparency and accountability in documenting dialogue outcomes**.

The process must ensure that dialogue outcomes are **properly documented, analysed, and translated into policy and action**.

4. Digital Dialogue Platform (Dialogue App)

The workshop will also consider the development of a **National Dialogue Digital Platform (App)** to support the dialogue process.

Strategic Purpose

The digital platform would:

- Support **broad citizen participation**
- Enable **real-time documentation of dialogue inputs**
- Generate **baseline data on community priorities**
- Track dialogue outcomes from **ward level to national level**

Guiding Principles for the Platform

The platform should advance the core principles of the National Dialogue:

Inclusivity

Capturing voices from citizens across communities and households.

Transparency

Ensuring dialogue inputs and outcomes are documented and traceable.

Independence

Safeguarding the citizen-led nature of the dialogue process.

Action

Translating dialogue outcomes into concrete priorities and policy responses.

The platform should also:

- Be available in **all 11 official languages**
- Integrate with the **Dialogue Secretariat digital systems**
- Comply with **POPIA and national data protection requirements**.

5. Hybrid Participation Model

To ensure broad accessibility, the dialogue process should adopt a **hybrid participation model**, combining:

- **In-person community dialogues**
- **Digital participation mechanisms**

This approach will ensure inclusion of communities with **limited digital connectivity**, while still enabling efficient data collection and analysis.

6. Expected Outcomes of the Workshop

The workshop is expected to provide guidance on:

1. The **timeline and structure of the pilot phase**.
2. The **leadership and coordination architecture for implementation**.
3. The **methodological framework for dialogue engagements**.
4. The **facilitation and training framework**.
5. The **monitoring, reporting and accountability system**.
6. The **development and role of the digital dialogue platform**.

These decisions will enable the Secretariat to proceed with the **operationalisation of the National Dialogue pilot phase and subsequent national rollout**.