



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030



agriculture, rural development,
land & environmental affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ABSA	Amalgamated Banks of South Africa
ADA	Agricultural Development Agency
ADC	Agricultural Development Committee
Agbiz	Agricultural Business Chamber
Agri SETA	Agricultural Sector Education Training Authority
AI	Avian Influenza
AMT	Agrimark Trends
APAP	Agricultural Policy Action Plan
BFAP	Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy
BMI	Business Monitor International
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CEC	Crop Estimates Committee
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CS	Community Survey
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
EU	European Union
FPSU	Farmer Production Support Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Global-GAP	Global Good Agricultural Practice
GNP	Government Nutrition Programme
GVA	Gross Value Addition
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
ID	Identity Document
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IGC	International Grains Council
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
MYPE	Mid-Year Population Estimates
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
PKM	Phezukomkhono Mhlali
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SA-GAP	South African Good Agricultural Practice
SAPS	South African Police Service
SERO	Socio-Economic Review and Outlook
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SOPA	State of the Province Address
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
US	United States
ZIP	Zonda Indlala Programme
ZIP	Zonda Insila Programme

Executive Authority Statement

It gives me great pleasure to present the five-year strategic plan of the department. This plan serves as a clear roadmap for the department to achieve its overarching mission of fostering sustainable agricultural growth, enhancing rural development, advancing equitable land reform, and ensuring environmental protection in the province. Agriculture continues to be one of the key pillars of our economy, and we must reinforce sustainable farming practices to protect and utilize our natural resources effectively.

Importantly, the department has in the development of this plan, taken into the central core of this strategic document, the importance of our constitution. A constitution that enshrines the rights of all South Africans to a healthy environment, sustainable development, and equitable access to natural resources.

This is a very interesting time in the history of our country wherein we are navigating through the Government of National Unity without losing focus to the goals that we set for ourselves 30 years ago.

As we navigate this critical time in our country's history, we remain committed to realizing the goals set 30 years ago. The ANC-led government in this province continues to ensure that the manifesto of the ruling party finds expression in the planning of all sectors, including agriculture and environmental management. The ANC manifesto's priorities of job creation, reducing the cost of living, and building a capable state, aligns perfectly with the government's broader strategic objectives.

This ANC led provincial government is striving to ensure that the manifesto of the ruling party is finding expression in the planning of all sectors including agriculture and environment. We emphasized this because Agriculture is one of the pillars of economy in the province while we are ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources through our farming practices. It is interesting to note that there is a good synergy between the Government of National Unity's priorities and the ANC manifesto. Both focus on, as in the manifesto:

- a. **Put South Africa to work, and "drive inclusive growth and job creation"**
- b. **Tackle the high cost of living, and "reduce poverty"**
- c. **Defend democracy and advance freedom, and "build a capable, ethical and developmental state"**

The department continue to pursue the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals especially goal 1 No Poverty, goal 2 Zero Hunger and goal 8 Decent employment and economic growth**. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on poverty eradication, zero hunger, and decent employment, remains at the core of our approach.

The department continues also to align its work with the National Development Plan (NDP), which serves as our blueprint for agricultural and rural transformation. Chapter 6 of the NDP emphasizes the importance of integrating rural areas into the broader economy, and our strategies reflect this commitment.

Noting that this NDP is the product of inputs and perspectives of thousands of individuals, communities, businesses, government and more. As such it speaks the mind of many South Africans. In the main this plan contains a series of proposals to achieve on two of its key objectives that are to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. It is a critical framework for integrating rural areas into broader agricultural initiatives.

The NDP also serves as a basis for all sector specific master plans. In agriculture for example we have the Agricultural Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP).

The unfortunate part is that despite the above assertion, we still have more than 400 CPA land of which the majority are not in production. This is not good since as a department we are expected that everyone has access to affordable and healthy food as indicated in the bill of right.

Agriculture remains a vital pillar of Mpumalanga's economy, and the sector's potential to create jobs, contribute to food security, and stimulate local economies cannot be overstated. As a province rich in natural resources and agricultural diversity, we are uniquely positioned to transform our rural areas into thriving, productive hubs that offer tangible opportunities for economic advancement. This strategic plan is a testament to our government's commitment to harnessing these opportunities for the benefit of all.

Over the next five years, we aim to address critical challenges, such as rural poverty, land inequities, and the need for inclusive market access for smallholder farmers, particularly those in previously disadvantaged communities. At the same time, we are committed to enhancing the province's resilience to climate change, promoting sustainable farming practices, and ensuring the responsible use of our land and natural resources. Central to our efforts will be the support of emerging farmers, the development of infrastructure that enables efficient market participation, and the fostering of value-chain development to increase the competitiveness of our agricultural sector. It is indeed exciting to be part of the period that will look into improving the lives of the people. "Every Mhlali is a farmer, every space is production site"

The next five years are critical in maintaining agriculture as a leader and a cornerstone of our provincial economy, providing livelihoods to millions and holding immense potential to drive job creation, food security, and economic transformation. Rural development is equally central to our mandate, as we strive to uplift our communities through improved infrastructure, market access, and support for smallholder farmers and agri-businesses.

However, despite our efforts, we acknowledge that over 400 Communal Property Associations (CPAs) in the province still have underutilized land. To address this, the department in partnership with the Department: Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) implement a targeted capacity-building programs, facilitated access to funding, and strengthened mentorship initiatives to enhance productivity on CPA-owned land. This remains a critical concern, as equitable land access and agricultural productivity are essential for food security and economic inclusion. The department is intensifying interventions to assist CPAs in unlocking the potential of their land through tailored support programs, improved extension services, and partnerships with the private sector

Our strategic plan places particular emphasis on fostering inclusive growth and sustainable practices in agriculture. This includes supporting emerging farmers, promoting agro-processing initiatives, and driving support to land reform farms in a way that ensures both equity and productivity. Furthermore, environmental sustainability is an integral part of our strategy, as we recognize that the long-term health of our province depends on our ability to balance agricultural development with responsible land use, conservation, and climate resilience.

The strategic priorities set out in this document align with the national development agenda, emphasizing inclusivity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. This plan reflects our shared vision of an agricultural sector that uplifts rural communities, contributes to job creation, and ensures that land reform serves as a lever for both social justice and economic productivity.

Lastly, we must ensure that our plans include a focus on women, youth, and people with disabilities. These groups, often marginalized, must be empowered to contribute meaningfully to the agricultural economy. It is our responsibility to break down systemic barriers and create opportunities for all.

I would like to acknowledge the department's leadership and stakeholders for their valuable contributions to this comprehensive plan. The success of this strategy hinges on strong partnerships with the private sector, communities, and all spheres of government. I invite all stakeholders to continue working with us as we strive to build a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future

for our province. Together, we can realize the full potential of this province's agriculture and rural development to make a meaningful impact on the lives of our people.

I like to thank all stakeholders that engaged fully in during the session, bringing their expertise and passion to the table. Our strategies will guide not only our work for the next year but also the future of our province.



Ms N.E Hlophe (MPL)
Executive Authority of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs

Accounting Officer Statement

It is with a profound sense of responsibility and commitment that I present the five-year strategic plan of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, and Environmental Affairs. This plan demonstrates our steadfast dedication to advancing agriculture, promoting sustainable rural development, addressing land reform, and protecting the natural environment within Mpumalanga Province.

Our strategic direction is firmly aligned with national and provincial priorities, particularly those outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) and Mpumalanga Vision 2030. Through these frameworks, we are committed to tackling the persistent challenges of inequality, unemployment, and poverty that disproportionately affect our rural communities.

The next five years are pivotal for positioning Mpumalanga as a leader in agricultural productivity, environmental management, and socio-economic development. Agriculture remains the backbone of our provincial economy, supporting millions of livelihoods and offering significant potential for job creation, food security, and economic transformation. Rural development is equally central to our mission, as we aim to uplift our communities through enhanced infrastructure, better market access, and support for smallholder farmers and agri-businesses.

It is with great optimism and commitment that I present this five-year strategic plan for the operationalization of the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market (MIFPM). This landmark initiative is poised to revolutionize the agricultural and economic landscape of our province, serving as a crucial link between local producers and global markets.

The establishment of the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market is not only a testament to our government's dedication to stimulating growth in the agricultural sector but also a vital step toward addressing food security, economic inclusivity, and job creation. It will provide our farmers, especially smallholder and emerging farmers, with a world-class platform to showcase their products, ensuring access to competitive markets and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices.

Over the next five years, our strategic focus will be on building the necessary infrastructure, enhancing market access, promoting value-chain development, and fostering partnerships that will ensure the market's long-term success. Key to this strategy is the empowerment of our farmers, capacity building, and ensuring that the MIFPM operates as an inclusive, efficient, and accessible hub that supports local economic development and integration with international trade.

Our approach is grounded in collaboration with all stakeholders—government, private sector, and communities. Together, we will work toward positioning the as a leading player in both domestic and international fresh produce markets.

This strategic plan emphasizes inclusive growth and sustainability in agriculture. We will prioritize support for emerging farmers, encourage agro-processing initiatives, and advance land reform in a way that fosters both equity and productivity. Environmental sustainability is a key pillar of our approach, as we recognize the importance of balancing agricultural development with responsible land use, conservation, and climate resilience.

This document outlines our key objectives, goals, and action plans designed to ensure the Department plays a leading role in unlocking the province's natural and agricultural potential. The department has ensured collaboration with stakeholders—farmers, communities, the private sector, and all levels of government—is strengthened as that is essential to achieving this vision and delivering lasting improvements for the people we serve.

The department is acutely aware of the challenges it faces, particularly climate-related disasters such as floods, heatwaves, and wildfires that have caused significant losses for farmers. While we are working on mitigation and adaptation strategies, limited resources present ongoing challenges.

Nevertheless, we remain committed to addressing these threats to food security and exploring opportunities for expanding production into new markets, both locally and internationally.

Aging equipment, particularly a fleet of outdated tractors, is another obstacle to increasing agricultural output. As such, we will focus on repairing and potentially replacing machinery to support mechanization, a critical component in enhancing food production.

Mpumalanga's strength in animal production, especially in large stock, positions us well for growth in this sector. With the upcoming Mpumalanga International Food Market that will include meat and meat products handling, we will intensify our efforts to expand animal farming.

This strategic plan was shaped by extensive stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the voices and needs of our communities are reflected. Our priorities and objectives are clear, and we are committed to transparency and accountability throughout its implementation. It focuses on addressing the needs of Mpumalanga's agricultural communities with clear priorities and accountability.

Over the next five years, we aim to address critical challenges, such as rural poverty, land inequities, and the need for inclusive market access for smallholder f

armers, particularly those in previously disadvantaged communities. At the same time, we are committed to enhancing the province's resilience to climate change, promoting sustainable farming practices, and ensuring the responsible use of our land and natural resources. Central to our efforts will be the support of emerging farmers, the development of infrastructure that enables efficient market participation, and the fostering of value-chain development to increase the competitiveness of our agricultural sector.

This plan outlines our roadmap to realizing this vision. It defines the strategic objectives, operational plans, and key performance indicators that will guide our actions in making the Mpumalanga International Food Market a catalyst for growth and prosperity over the next five years.

The department has considered the recommendations from stakeholder engagements and various outreach programs. These recommendations aim to address the challenges faced by agricultural households in Mpumalanga, focusing on increased productivity, market access, sustainability, food security, and economic opportunities for smallholder farmers.

Let us move forward with purpose, ensuring that we leverage this market as a beacon of opportunity for the people of Mpumalanga, uplifting our communities and transforming our agricultural sector.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders, and staff who contributed to the creation of this strategic plan. Your commitment and passion for advancing agriculture and rural development in our province are truly appreciated.



Mr CM Chunda

Head: Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs

Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the management of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs under the guidance of Hon N.E Hlophe.
- Takes into account all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs is responsible.
- Accurately reflects the Impact and Outcomes which the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs will endeavour to achieve over the period 2025 – 2030.

Dr. M.P.L. Mabelane
Chief Director: Corporate Services

Signature: Mabelane

Ms. N. Mafu
Chief Director: Rural Development and Land Reform

Signature: [Signature]

Dr. M.C. Dagada
Chief Director: Farmer Support and Development

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Dr. M.S. Kgaphola
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Ms. P.N. Ntuli
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Accounting Officer

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Approved by:

Hon. N.E Hlophe
Executive Authority

Signature: [Signature]

PART A: OUR MANDATE

1. CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, is an integral part of the South African Public Service established in terms of section 197 of the Constitution and read with section 7 (1) and 7 (2) of the Public Services Act of 1994.

The Department derives its core mandate from the provisions of schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in accordance with section 104 (1) b and the sections 24,25 and 27 of the Constitution.

As a concurrent national and provincial legislative competency listed in schedule 4 of the Constitution, the Department, as part of the system of concurrent governance, derives its administrative mandate from both National Parliament and Provincial Legislature.

2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY MANDATES

2.1. LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

The Department derives its mandates from a number of Acts and policies. These include but are not limited to the following:

Agriculture, Rural Development, Land Environmental Affairs related acts

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
Comprehensive Rural Development Framework Version 2 of 2009	To achieve social cohesion and development of rural areas by ensuring improved access to basic services, enterprise development and village industrialisation
Agricultural Product Standards Act 1990 (Act Number 119 of 1990)	Sets standards for all agricultural products
Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act 43 of 1983)	Provides framework for the protection of all-natural resources such as water, soil and vegetation. Good sustainable farming practices are promoted using this legislation
Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture, November 2001	Policy framework that guides the agricultural development imperatives in South Africa
The Labour Tenant Act, 1996 (Act 3 of 1996)	Sets the criteria to qualify individuals as a labour tenant
AgriBEE Framework of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2004	Establishes the guiding principles for broad based black economic empowerment in agriculture in a manner that seeks to build on the experience of transformation efforts over the past decade
National Water Act 36 of 1998	Regulates water allocation
Plant Breeders' Rights Act 15 of 1976	Regulates registration of plants
Plant Improvement Act 53 of 1976	Regulates the improvements of plants

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
Agricultural Products Standards Act 119 of 1990	Provides for the standardisation of quality norms for agricultural and related products
Animal Diseases Act 35 of 1984	This Act provides measures for the control of animal diseases as well as animal parasites and promotes animal health
Animal Protection Act 71 of 1962	Relates to the prevention and protection of animals against any form of cruelty
Fertilisers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 36 of 1947	Provides for the registration and regulation of fertilizers, farm feeds, agricultural remedies, stock remedies, sterilizing plants and pest control operators
Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act 54 of 1972	Controls the sale, manufacture and importation of foodstuffs, cosmetics and disinfectants. This act protects the consumer against foodstuff that is harmful or detrimental to his/her health (including products from animal origin)
Meat Safety Act 40 of 2000	Promotes meat safety and safety of animal products, which includes standards in respect of abattoirs and the importation and exportation of meat
Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act 19 of 1982	Provides for the registration and control of people practising a veterinary profession and para-veterinary profession, which include veterinarians, animal health technicians and laboratory technologists
Animal Identification Act 6 of 2002	Provides for the registration of animal identification marks and matters related to it
Livestock Improvement Act 62 of 1998	Provides for the breeding, identification and utilisation of genetically superior animals in order to improve the production and performance of animals in the interest of South Africa
The Marketing of Agricultural Products Act 47 of 1996	Provides for the establishment and enforcement of regulatory measures to intervene in the marketing of agricultural products, including the introduction of levies on agricultural products
Medicines and Related Substances Control Act 101 of 1965	Makes provision for the registration and control of medicine intended for human and animal use and the registration of medical devices
Stock Theft Act 54 of 1972	To provide for the prevention of and control of theft of livestock
Performing Animal Protection Act 24 of 1935	Regulates the exhibition and training of performing animals and the use of dogs for safeguarding
Health Act 63 of 1977	Provides for various issues associated with human health including the hygiene requirements for food premises and the transporting of food (products of animal origin)
Perishable Products Export Control Act 9 of 1983	Regulates the control of export of perishable products

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
South African Abattoir Corporation Act 120 of 1992	Regulates the abattoir industry

Environmental Management Related Acts

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
National Environment Management Act, Act 107 of 1998	The Act aids in providing for co-operative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote cooperative governance and procedures for co-ordinating environmental functions exercised by organs of state.
The Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation 543, 544, 545, 546, and 547 in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, as amended	The purpose of these Regulations is to regulate the procedure and criteria as contemplated in Chapter 5 of the Act relating to the submission, processing and consideration of, and decision on, applications for environmental authorisations for the commencement of activities in order to avoid detrimental impacts on the environment, or where it cannot be avoided, ensure mitigation and management of impacts to acceptable levels, and to optimise positive environmental impacts, and for matters pertaining thereto.
National Environment Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003	Provides for the protection and conservation of ecologically viable areas representative of South Africa's biological diversity and its natural landscapes and seascapes
Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004	Provides for the management and conservation of South Africa's biodiversity within the framework of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998; the protection of species and ecosystems that warrant protection; the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from bioprospecting involving indigenous biological resources; the establishment and functions of a South African National Biodiversity Institute; and for matters connected therewith
Air Quality Act, 39 of 2004	To reform the law regulating air quality to protect the environment by providing reasonable measures for the prevention of pollution and ecological degradation and for securing ecologically sustainable development while promoting justifiable economic and social development; to provide for national norms and standards regulating air quality monitoring, management and control by all spheres of government; for specific air quality measures; and for matters incidental thereto
Waste Act, 59 of 2008	To reform the law regulating waste management in order to protect health and the environment by providing reasonable measures for the prevention of pollution and ecological degradation and for securing ecologically sustainable development; to provide for institutional arrangements and planning matters; to provide for national norms and standards for regulating the management of waste by all spheres of government; to provide for specific waste management measures; to

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
	provide for the licensing and control of waste management activities; to provide for the remediation of contaminated land; to provide for the national waste information system; to provide for compliance and enforcement; and to provide for matters connected therewith

Administrative Related Acts

The Department is guided by some of the following administrative related acts:

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
Public Finance Management Act	To regulate financial management in the national government and provincial governments; to ensure that all revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities of those governments are managed efficiently and effectively; to provide for the responsibilities of persons entrusted with financial management in those governments; and to provide for matters connected therewith
Public Service Act no. 103 of 1994	To provide for the organisation and administration of the public service of the Republic, the regulation of the conditions of employment, terms of office, discipline, retirement and discharge of members of the public service, and matters connected therewith
Labour Relations Act no. 66 of 1995	To advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace
Promotion of Access to Information Act no.2 of 2000	To give effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights; and to provide for matters connected therewith
Promotion of Administrative Justice Act no.3 of 2000	Gives effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair as well as to the right to written reasons for administrative action as contemplated in section 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
Higher Education Act 101 of 1997	To regulate higher education; to provide for the establishment, composition and functions of a Council on Higher Education; to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public higher education institutions; to provide for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor; to provide for the registration of private higher education institutions; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education; to provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws; and to provide for matters connected there with
South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995,	To provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework and for this purpose to establish the South African Qualifications Authority; and to provide for matters connected there with

Legislative Mandate	Purpose / Aim
Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998	To regulate further education and training; to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public further education and training institutions; to provide for the registration of private further education and training institutions; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in further education and training; to provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of laws; and to provide for matters connected therewith

2.2. POLICY MANDATES

i) Agriculture:

The sector draws its mandate from the White Paper on Agriculture. The mandate is aligned with Chapter 6 of the National Development Plan (NDP), which calls for an integrated, inclusive economy through expanded agricultural activity, effective land reform, and sustainable rural development.

The department's work is linked to GNU Priority 1 of the draft 2025-2030 Medium Term Development Plan, focused on economic transformation and job creation.

The department's interventions are aimed at reducing poverty and inequality while creating employment by addressing challenges in agriculture, land reform, and rural development. Over the medium term, the department will prioritize improving agricultural production, revitalizing infrastructure, accelerating support to land reform, and enhancing research and development to strengthen the agricultural value chain. developing agricultural value chains, providing inputs, monitoring production and consumption, and facilitating rural development

ii) Rural Development:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa serves as the foundation for all activities related to rural development. Under Section 41(1b), it mandates that all three spheres of government—national, provincial, and local—have a shared responsibility to deliver basic services and meet the needs of their communities.

According to Chapter 14, Schedule 4, Part A of the Constitution, rural development falls under the concurrent legislative authority of both national and provincial governments. At the national level, this responsibility is held by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development (DALRRD), which is tasked with policy development, strategy, legislation, programs, and oversight. At the provincial level, rural development is managed by the provincial departments of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Chapter 7, Section 152 of the Constitution assigns local governments the responsibility to:

- Provide democratic and accountable governance to local communities.
- Ensure sustainable delivery of services through Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).
- Promote social and economic development through local development plans and programs.
- Promote a safe and healthy environment.
- Encourage and support community participation in local government affairs.

iii) Environmental Management:

The department's environmental mandates are shaped by various policies, including:

- **White Paper on Environmental Policy for South Africa (1996):** Focuses on regulating and managing all environmental activities in the province and developing provincial policies that align with national objectives for integrated environmental management.
- **White Paper on Integrated Pollution and Waste Management:** Provides a national framework for pollution control across land, air, and water.
- **White Paper on National Climate Change Response Strategy:** Guides South Africa's efforts to mitigate the effects of global warming, coordinating strategies and actions from different government bodies and aligning them with global climate change frameworks such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

2.3. INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES RELATED TO THE FIVE-YEAR PLANNING PERIOD

In April 2024, South Africa held its 7th democratic elections at both national and provincial levels. Following these elections, the new government's manifesto needed to be translated into actionable plans by all state institutions across various spheres. As outlined in Section 1, agriculture is a concurrent function according to South Africa's Constitution, meaning both national and provincial governments share legislative responsibilities for the sector. Consequently, the strategies of provincial departments must align with the goals of both spheres of government. Agriculture, being a vital part of the economy in rural areas, has been repeatedly identified as the most competitive economic sector in Mpumalanga's three district municipalities, as highlighted in the Provincial Socio-Economic Review and Outlook (SERO).

In Mpumalanga, agriculture often surpasses other sectors like manufacturing and mining, which experience frequent volatility. Therefore, the provincial department must account for local government strategies and priorities when developing its own agricultural policies. Moreover, international bodies like the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) have recognized agriculture as a key driver for achieving global development objectives.

However, the potential contribution of Mpumalanga's agricultural sector to various policies and strategies is limited by natural and socio-economic resources. Factors such as land availability, water resources, climate conditions, and human capital (skills, education, knowledge, and managerial capacity) influence the types of products that can be produced and the farming systems that can be implemented. Additionally, economic structures, including market access, technology, production capacity, and available capital, also play a significant role.

UN Sustainable Developmental Goals

The 2023 Sustainable Development Report (SDR) highlights key challenges and recommendations for global sustainability. The following are some of the challenges noted as related to the **agriculture** and **the environment** in Mpumalanga Province:

1. **Agriculture and Food Systems (SDG 2):** Progress toward ending hunger and achieving sustainable agriculture was noted to be severely off-track globally. The report noted that by 2030, lot more people may still suffer from hunger, with rising obesity and significant greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU), which contribute nearly 25% of global GHG emissions.

This situation is critical for Mpumalanga, where agriculture is a central livelihood whilst also faced with relatively high level of soil and air pollution emanating from mining and power stations respectively. Thus the department is focused on enhancing sustainable agricultural practices, improving productivity, and mitigating emissions as essential for addressing food security and environmental challenges.

2. **Environmental Degradation:** The SDR stresses that pathways to achieving climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and water quality targets are insufficient. It noted that without dramatic changes, including shifts toward sustainable land use, better water management, and reductions in deforestation, regions like Mpumalanga face worsening environmental degradation.

As the province, rich in biodiversity and dependent on natural resources, the department is developing policies and strategies that are pro adoption of sustainable practices to avoid deforestation, conserve biodiversity, and reduce emissions.

3. **Global and Local Finance for Sustainable Development:** Low- and middle-income countries, such as South Africa, were noted to require urgent access to affordable, long-term capital to invest in sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and rural development.

For Mpumalanga, the department is in the process of developing Blended Finance Preferential Procurement Bills as an attempt to enhance reforms in provincial financial systems as crucial for mobilizing resources to improve agricultural practices, reduce environmental impacts, and strengthen rural livelihoods.

4. **Biodiversity and Land Use:** The SDR noted that the current trends show widening gaps in biodiversity protection and land use management.

For Mpumalanga, these issues are vital as its natural ecosystems are under threat from unsustainable mining, industrial and farming practices and land degradation. The report suggests significant investment in monitoring systems to prevent deforestation, protect biodiversity, and ensure sustainable land use.

The department has noted that the Mpumalanga's agricultural and environmental sectors are closely tied to the global goals outlined in the SDR. To safeguard the province's future, the department has developed programs that focus on and encourage strategic investments in sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and financial mechanisms as essential for sustainable development.

Agenda 2063

At the 21st Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) in May 2013, leaders initiated "Agenda 2063," a long-term growth agenda for Africa, leading to the creation of 'Agenda 2063, launched in 2015. One key aspiration focuses on modernizing agriculture to boost productivity, value addition, and ensure food security, using science, technology, and indigenous knowledge. This vision is translated into 17 under "A Call to Action," with targets like eliminating hunger, increasing intra-African agricultural trade, and empowering women and youth through better access to land, financing, and resources.

From the provincial department's perspective, goals that hold particular importance set to be achieved by 2063 for this action include¹:

- Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production
- Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities
- Full gender equality in all spheres of life
- Engaged and empowered youth and children
- Capable institutions and transformative leadership in place

¹ Agenda 2063, The AFRICA We Want, Framework Document: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework_document_book.pdf

Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP):

Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) have developed other actions aimed to industrialize economies through agribusiness, address climate change via climate-resilient agriculture, and promote regional trade. Agriculture's importance was already recognized in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), established in 2003, where leaders committed to investing 10% of national budgets in agriculture and achieving 6% annual growth. This commitment was reaffirmed in the 2014 Malabo Declaration, with goals to end hunger by 2025, double agricultural productivity, and create jobs in agricultural value chains.

The 4th Biennial Review (BR) report under the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) reveals critical insights for **agriculture** and **environmental**. The report assesses Africa's progress on the Malabo Declaration (2014), which aims to accelerate agricultural growth, improve livelihoods, and ensure sustainable practices by 2025².

However, the continent, including Mpumalanga, remains largely off-track in meeting these targets.

1. Agriculture:

- Africa's agricultural transformation was noted to have shown **slow progress** in areas like improved seed use, soil health, fertilizers, and post-harvest management.

These are key areas relevant to Mpumalanga's agricultural sector.

- The report further stressed on the importance of **sustainable agricultural practices** to address food security challenges,

These are pertinent for Mpumalanga, where agriculture is central to rural livelihoods. Achieving **food security** and improving **nutrition** remain critical, with the continent struggling to meet SDG 2 (end hunger and promote sustainable agriculture).

- Efforts to boost **intra-African trade** in agricultural commodities are falling short, despite the ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The department had noted this as a possible advantage that the Mpumalanga can benefit from expanding agricultural trade within Africa. However, this requires greater integration into regional markets.

The department has developed programs such as Mpumalanga International Food market as a conduit towards aiding this process.

2. Environmental Sustainability:

- The report highlighted the urgent need to tackle **climate change** and **environmental degradation**, with mining, agricultural, and expansion of human settlement activities contributing to deforestation, soil depletion, and greenhouse gas emissions.

In Mpumalanga, the department has adopted several **climate-resilient agricultural practices** and better **land management** that are crucial to mitigate these impacts.

- The report noted that the **Post-Malabo Agenda** emphasized on building **sustainable food systems** that are resilient to environmental and economic shocks.

In Mpumalanga, the department's programs are focused on promoting **sustainable land use**, improving **biodiversity conservation**, and fostering **climate-smart**

² 4th CAADP Biennial Review Report and Post-Malabo Roadmap; <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20240320/african-union-launches-4th-caadp-biennial-review-report-and-post-malabo>

agriculture to protect the natural resources and ensure long-term agricultural productivity.

The department has prioritized sustainable agricultural transformation, environmental conservation, and regional trade to align with Africa's broader agricultural and environmental goals. mechanisms are necessary to meet these challenges and advance rural development in the province

Mpumalanga's agricultural sector faces significant risks from climate change, extreme weather events, and economic instability. Thus this Strategic Plan notes that the strategic actions, such as investing in climate adaptation, sustainable agriculture, and resilient infrastructure, are crucial to mitigate the adverse effects forecasted by the report. The department continuously review these challenges and opportunities and adjust its plans accordingly.

Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS)

The **Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (2002-2015)** outlines comprehensive measures to address hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity, which are particularly relevant for **Mpumalanga** province, where agriculture and environmental sustainability are key components of local livelihoods³.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation highlighted the following as some of the areas as recommended and related to the Mpumalanga province

Key Agricultural Focus Areas⁴:

1. Increasing Household Food Production and Trade:

- Access to **productive resources** like land, technology, and credit is essential to empower small-scale farmers, The department has developed several programme such as Masibuyele Emasimin and others in Mpumalanga.
- Promoting **small-scale irrigation** and **rainwater harvesting** is critical, especially in rural areas that face water scarcity.
- Investments in **environmentally sustainable technologies** for agriculture and agro-processing target small-scale producers. The department has developed programs such as Agricultural Smart Boxes, which are already boosting production for the local farming economy.
- **Linking land reform** with other farmer support services within the department's programs. These include Greening Mpumalanga Program and Government Nutrition Program that improves access to markets and financial services, can help ensure sustainable land use in Mpumalanga.

2. Improving Access to Markets and Trade:

- The strategy emphasizes **removing import duties** and protecting local farmers from unfair trade practices, which can enhance the competitiveness of Mpumalanga's agriculture sector.
- **Improved trade systems**, including infrastructure and information, are vital for connecting rural farmers in Mpumalanga to broader markets.

3. Job Creation and Income Generation:

- **Labour-intensive public work programmes** in rural areas can help address food insecurity while also improving infrastructure and creating jobs in Mpumalanga.
- Promoting **diversified job creation** through local economic development and strengthening **off-farm income generation** are also critical for rural areas in Mpumalanga.

³ FAOLEX Database: The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa, <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC149624/>

⁴ FAOLEX Database: The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa, <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC149624/>

Environmental Sustainability⁵:

1. Sustainable Agriculture:

- Investing in **sustainable agricultural technologies** and **protecting natural resources** is vital to balancing food production with environmental conservation in Mpumalanga.
- The strategy promotes **rainwater harvesting** and **irrigation technologies**, which are key in the province's water-stressed areas.

2. Food Security and Environmental Management:

- Infrastructure investments** and **improved food distribution systems** aim to move food to areas with production deficits, addressing regional food insecurity in Mpumalanga.
- The department has already developed strategies and programs that calls for **environmentally friendly farming practices**, focusing on long-term sustainability and mitigating the impact of climate change.

The department has adopted these strategies and focuses on **boosting small-scale agriculture**, **sustainable farming practices**, and **improving food access and trade** as is critical for Mpumalanga's agricultural sector and environmental sustainability. These efforts aim to create more resilient food systems and promote rural development in the province

National Development Plan (NDP) and Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP)

To address the challenges facing the country, the National Planning Commission (NPC) developed a draft National Development Plan (NDP), released in November 2011. The NDP includes 15 chapters, but Chapter 6, "An Integrated and Inclusive Rural Economy," is particularly important for the provincial department. It calls on South Africa's agricultural sector and its value chains to create one million jobs by 2030, with a focus on export-oriented, labor-intensive irrigated farming, and aims to transfer 20% of white-owned land to black ownership.

The Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DPME) translated the NDP into an implementation plan and a Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for 2020/21 to 2024/25. However, during the Cabinet Lekgotla on July 13-14, 2023, a new Programme of Priorities for the Government of National Unity (GNU) was approved. This would be reflected in the draft Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) for 2024-2029, outlining strategic priorities and key interventions. The MTDP will serve as the 5-year plan for the 7th Administration of the GNU and as an implementation framework for the NDP, the long-term plan guiding South Africa toward Vision 2030⁶.

The MTDP development process has included:

- A review of the methodology, shifting from the MTSF 2019-2024 to the MTDP 2024-2029.
- An analysis of the development context, using sources such as the DPME 30-Year Review, NDP 10-Year Review, Indlulamithi Scenarios 2035, and sector workshops.
- FOSAD workshops and meetings, resulting in an MTDP discussion document for Cabinet Lekgotla.

The MTDP priorities will guide the department's interventions over the next five years. The department's Annual Performance Plan (APP) will align its indicators and targets with the MTDP priorities, enabling an annual review and update of its responsiveness.

⁵ FAOLEX Database: The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa, <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC149624/>

⁶ Office of the Premier, Macro Policy, Draft Provincial Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), Presentation September 2024

Following the Provincial Planning Lekgotla and the Opening of the Legislature on July 31, 2024, the Premier announced three Strategic Priorities for the 7th Administration⁷:

1. Inclusive economic growth and job creation
2. Reducing poverty and addressing the high cost of living
3. Building a capable, ethical, and developmental state

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature has considered these Strategic Priorities to shape the draft detailed Provincial MTDP for 2024-2029, with the Mpumalanga Provincial Government focusing on:



Source: OTP Macro Policy Presentation

2.4. RELEVANT COURT RULINGS

- Constitutional Court Ruling of July 2010 declared the Development Facilitation Act unconstitutional
- Constitutional Court Ruling of August 2010 declared certain Sections of the Communal Land Rights Act unconstitutional

⁷ Office of the Premier, Macro Policy, Draft Provincial Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), Presentation September 2024

PART B: OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

1. VISION

Vibrant, equitable, and sustainable communities with a united and transformed agricultural and environmental sector.

2. MISSION

To facilitate an integrated, comprehensive, sustainable environmental & agricultural development in communities through ensuring social cohesion and collaboration by all sectors of society.

3. VALUES

Guided by the principles of Batho Pele, we will render services particularly based on the following values:

- Result orientated, diligent and professional staff
- Responsive to the needs of all citizens, particularly the poor, women, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Driven by community-based development.
- A learning organization that is participatory in its approach and grows from its experiences and new knowledge and innovations.
- Promote and improve effective, efficient and responsive Departmental systems and use of resources
- Act with honesty, ethical, impartial and with integrity.

4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

(A) EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:

4.1. AGRICULTURAL MASTER PLANS

i) Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan:

Mpumalanga has vast agricultural potential and a competitive advantage in many agricultural commodities. The sector plays a vital role in the province's economy. To harness this potential and ensure food security, the department initiated the development of an Agricultural Master Plan. During the planning stage, the national Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP) was introduced by the National Department, incorporating Mpumalanga's inputs.

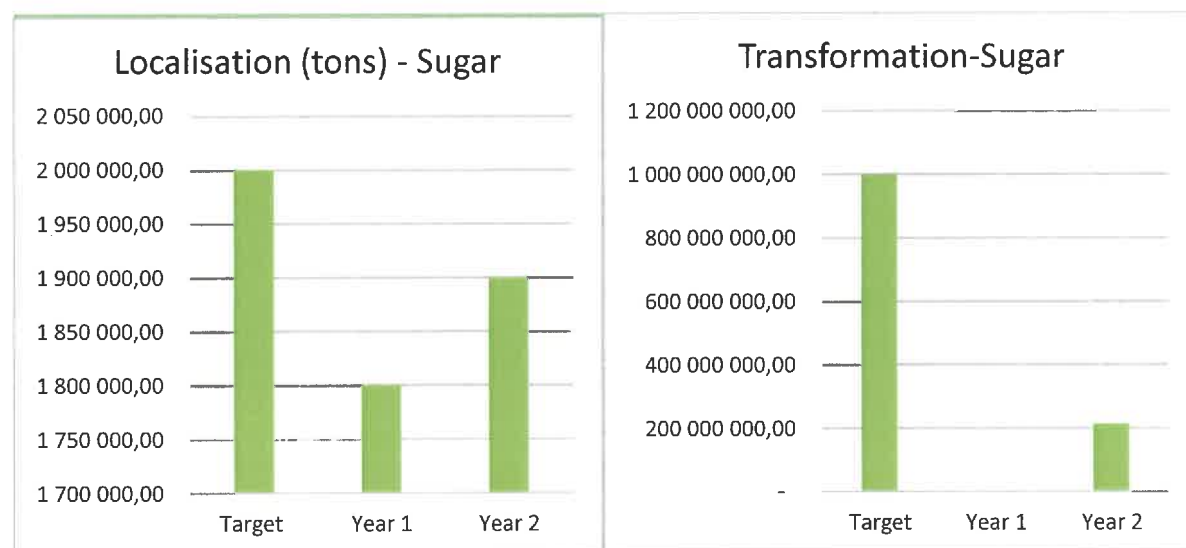
The Master Plan serves as a roadmap for developing the agricultural sector, increasing productivity, generating employment opportunities, and fostering rural development, thereby driving broader economic growth.

In the period under review, Sector Masterplans such as Agriculture and Agro-processing Masterplan (AAMP) was developed and approved in 2022.

Alongside commodity specific master plans have been developed and implemented. Recently these included the one for poultry, and sugar value chains wherein there has been significant improvement in the as indicated below in the diagrams. The cannabis masterplan is under development.

ii) Sugar Masterplan

Diagram: Performance of Sugar Masterplan since 2019

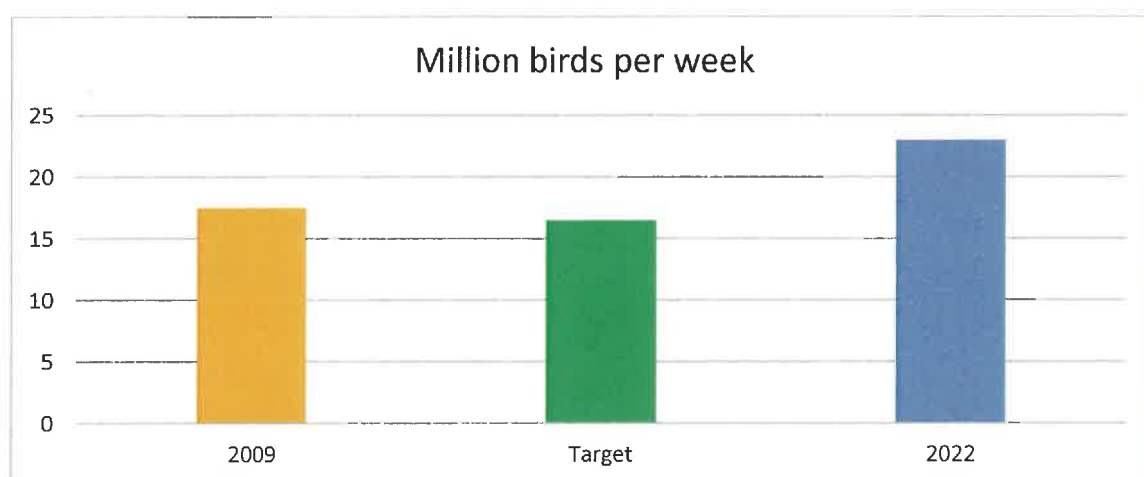


Source: DPME 30 Year Review, Figure 65

iii) Poultry Masterplan

The South African poultry industry, with a gross value of more than R23 billion (US\$3 billion), is the country's largest individual agricultural industry and contributes more than 17% to agriculture's GDP. Broiler production makes up most of the poultry industry.

Diagram: Poultry Masterplan target against production



Source: DPME 30 Year Review, Figure 66

Although South Africa produces less than 1.5 % of the world's broiler meat, it is the primary producer in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with almost 80% of total broiler production.

Still, it is unclear how much of this can be attributed to land reform or communal farmers' productivity through agro-processing facilities, including agriparks / FPSU⁸

4.2. RECENT STATISTICS RELEVANT TO AGRICULTURE.

4.2.1. The 30 Year Review of South Africa's Democracy (1994 – 2024) reports

The 30 Year Review of South Africa's Democracy (1994 – 2024) reports the agriculture as one of the inherited capabilities that is needed to be taken forward in contributing to the economic development of the South Africa's first democratically-elected government⁹.

It further notes the importance of climate change and environmental sustainability together with agriculture as part of the key priorities of the STI Decadal Plan (2022 – 2032).

The report highlighted the "active youth involvement in establishing a transformative and proficient state to eradicate poverty, unemployment, and inequality in South Africa" as advocated in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2012. Emphasising on "Support for enterprise and cooperatives, exemplified by graduate placement under the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme" amongst others.

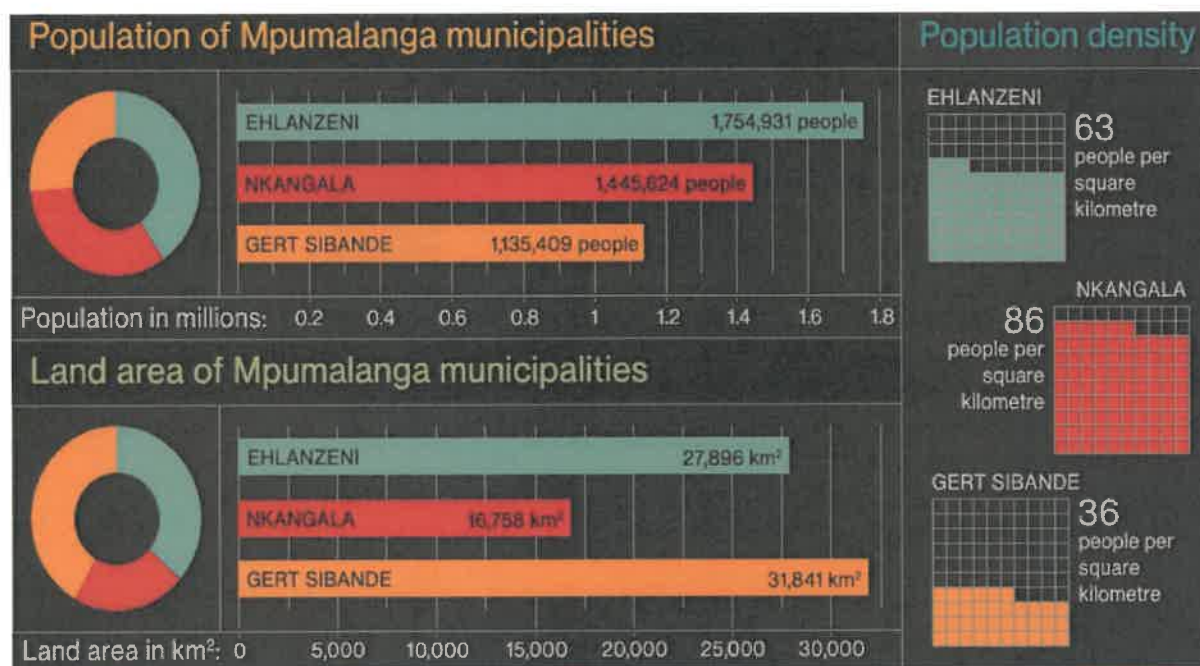
4.2.2. Population Growth and Distribution in Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga Province has experienced steady population growth, with the majority of its population residing in rural areas.

⁸ <https://www.dpme.gov.za/publications/30-Year>

⁹ <https://www.dpme.gov.za/publications/30-Year>

The following picture depicts the population spread and density. The picture notes that amongst others has the lowest land area of 16,758km² of the three but with the highest population density of 86 people per km²¹⁰



Source: Data Statistics South Africa Community Survey 2016, Municipality demarcation Board 2016

According to the Census 2022, about 5.1 million people live in Mpumalanga. It makes about 8.3% of the SA population. Of these 52% are females. The province represents about 2nd highest population growth rate of 2.3% p.a. The population is relatively young with about 64% of the population is below 35 years reflecting a growing workforce that presents both challenges and opportunities for employment and skills development. There are an estimated 1.4 million households growing at 2.7% p.a..¹¹

- **Migration and Social Services:**

However, urbanization is accelerating, with people increasingly migrating to towns and cities for economic opportunities. Migration patterns are influencing the demographics of the province, with many people moving to urban centres for better economic opportunities.

The projected Mpumalanga population number is 6.1 million in 2030 and between 11 and 12 million by 2060. City of Mbombela has the largest population in the province, followed by Bushbuckridge and Nkomazi. These 3 Municipalities with Thembisile Hani, should be the largest populations 2060 according to CSIR projections. This is estimated to have a significant implication for infrastructure, basic service delivery, as well as job opportunities¹²

- **Agricultural Dependency**

¹⁰ Presentation by Mpumalanga Office of Commission on Restitution of land Rights 18-20 sept, Blydepoort

¹¹ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

¹² Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

A significant portion of the population in rural Mpumalanga depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, either through smallholder farming or employment in the agricultural sector.

A significant portion of Mpumalanga's population resides in rural areas, where agriculture is the primary source of livelihoods. Many smallholder farmers and rural households depend on subsistence farming, while commercial farming remains a key economic driver.

4.2.3. AGRICULTURE AS A KEY ECONOMIC DRIVER

Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan Hand Book has noted that, agriculture, plantation forestry, mining, and ecotourism driven by wildlife and nature-based adventure sports—are the pillars of Mpumalanga's economy. The agricultural sector is the largest land user in the province, with 19% of the land surface under cultivation, followed by plantation forestry, which occupies 9%. Additionally, 7% of the province consists of 'old lands' or secondary grasslands no longer under cultivation. The high-altitude grasslands are ideal for growing commercial softwood timber, such as pine, while the warmer savanna regions are suited to fruit, sugarcane, and hardwood timber like blue gum. Both the grassland and savanna areas are also widely used as rangelands for livestock by commercial and subsistence farmers. Increasingly, farmers are transitioning to game farming or mixed game and livestock operations¹³.

The 30 Year Review of South Africa noted that "the performance of South African agriculture is strongly influenced by weather occurrences". Further noted that "historically, there has been a severe country-wide drought in at least one year of each preceding decade (the most powerful being in 1966, between 1982 and 1984, and from 1992 to 1993)". The period from 1994 to 2008 was an exception to this trend¹⁴.

It further noted that agriculture remains a vital component of Mpumalanga's economy, contributing significantly to provincial GDP and employment. The province is known for its production of key crops such as maize, sugarcane, citrus, and subtropical fruits, as well as livestock farming. Commercial agriculture plays a dominant role, but the plan highlights the growing importance of supporting smallholder and emerging farmers to ensure equitable economic growth and rural development.

The economic growth of the agricultural sector in the province was noted to have recovered in 2024 and projected to do so to 2028 as indicated in the table below.

Table: Economic Growth of Agriculture in Mpumalanga¹⁵

1996-2023	2019-23	2024-2028
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total economy = 1.8% p.a. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint 2nd slowest growth Primary agriculture = 2.7% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th fastest growth Secondary agriculture = 1.9% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd fastest growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total economy = 0.2% p.a. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint 3rd slowest growth Primary agriculture = 6.0% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd fastest growth Secondary agriculture = -0.3% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd slowest decline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total economy = 1.7% p.a. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint slowest growth Primary agriculture = 0.8% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowest growth Secondary agriculture = 1.7% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd slowest growth

Source: Mpumalanga SERO 2024

¹³ Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan HandBook. https://conservationcorridor.org/cpb/Lotter_et_al_2014.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.dpme.gov.za/publications/30-Year>

¹⁵ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

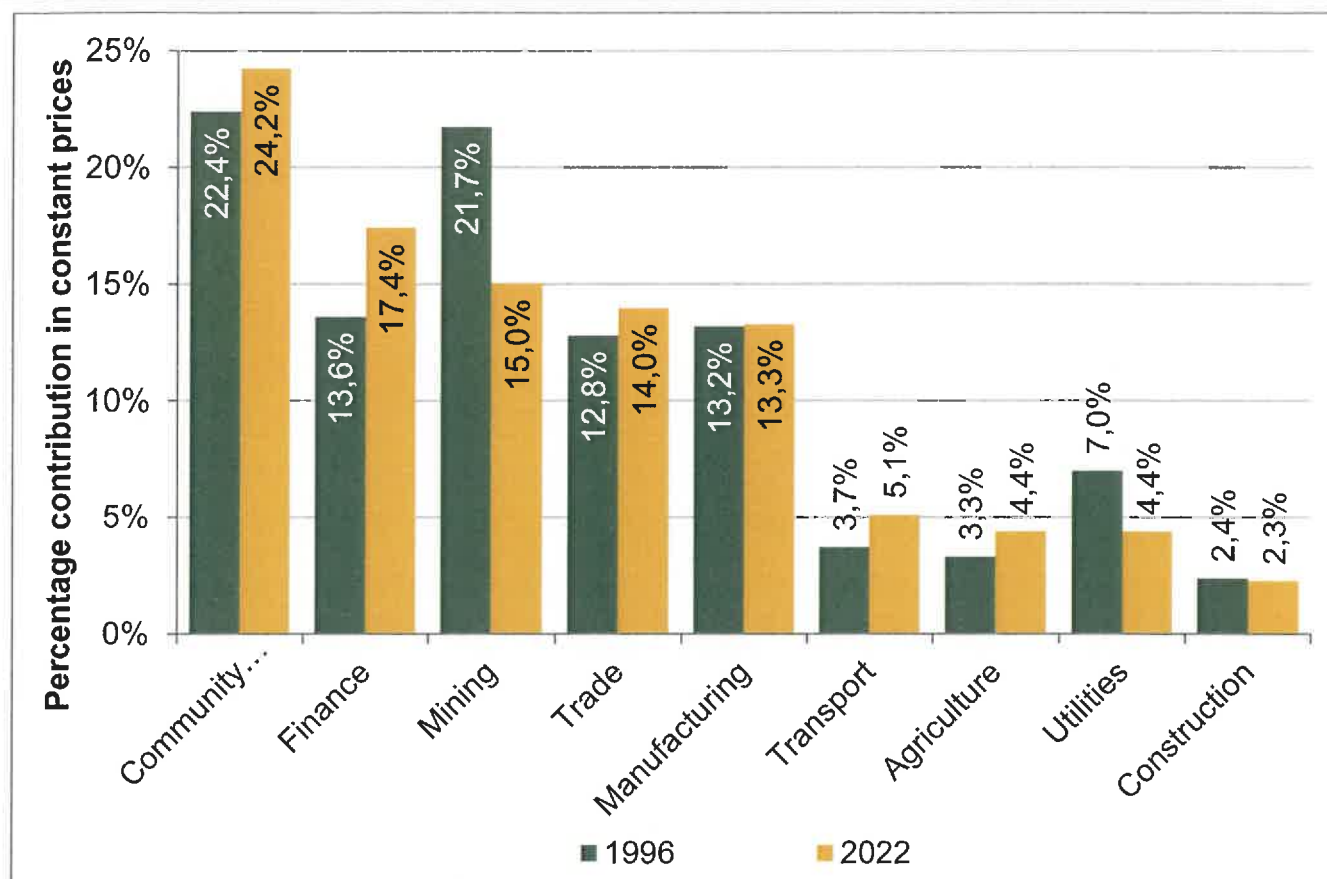
4.2.4. Economic Contribution by Industries

Between 1996 and 2022, agriculture in Mpumalanga saw a steady increase in its contribution to the provincial economy. The share of primary agriculture rose from 3.3% in 1996 to 4.4% in 2022, highlighting its growing role within the broader economic framework. Secondary agriculture maintained a consistent contribution of around 4.1% during this period. Compared to other sectors like mining and manufacturing, which faced fluctuations, particularly due to external factors like global economic shifts and local challenges, agriculture showed more resilience. Mining, for instance, saw a decline from 21.7% to 15%, while agriculture's relatively stable growth reflects its enduring importance to Mpumalanga's economy

The diagram below shows the economic contribution by industries in the period between 1996 and 2022

Diagram: Economic Contribution by Industries¹⁶

¹⁶ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024



Source: Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

4.2.5. Agricultural input to real GDP Growth Rate per Industry in Mpumalanga, 2013-2023

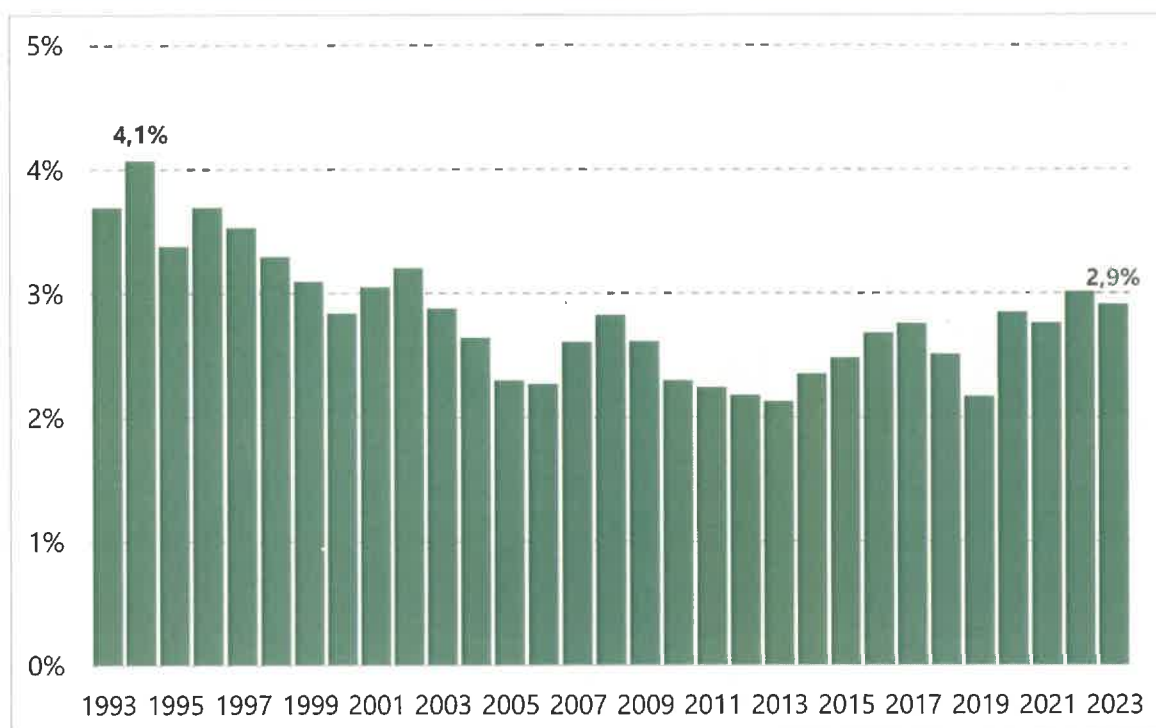
Between 2013 and 2023, the agriculture sector in Mpumalanga experienced fluctuations in real GDP growth, reflecting both resilience and challenges. Agriculture saw notable peaks in 2013 (6.5%) and 2021 (6.2%), but also sharp contractions in 2019 (-7.1%) and 2023 (-5.4%)¹⁷.

Nationally the contribution of agriculture, forestry & fishing to total value added has fluctuated negatively over the years in the last 30 years to 2,9% in 2023 from 4.1% in 1994 as indicated in the diagram below ¹⁸.

Diagram: Contribution of Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing to Total Value Added has shifted 1994 - 2023

¹⁷ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

¹⁸ Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Second quarter 2024 (P0441) *Current prices

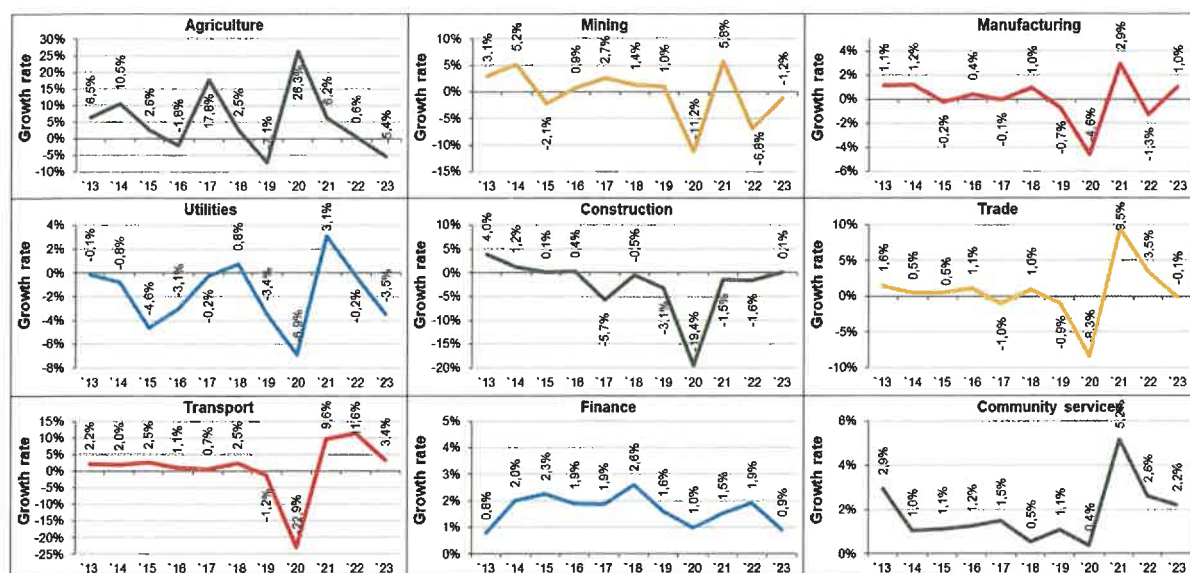


In Mpumalanga, agriculture often outperformed sectors when compared to other industries like manufacturing and mining, which faced consistent volatility. Mining, for instance, had strong growth in 2016 (8.6%) but struggled with negative growth in multiple years, including 2022 (-6.8%) and 2023 (-1.2%)¹⁹.

Manufacturing, despite a recovery in 2018 (9.7%), posted negative growth several times, including in 2015 (-2.4%) and 2020 (-4.6%). Other sectors like utilities, construction, and transport also faced frequent contractions, especially in the late 2010s and early 2020s. While trade and finance showed some recovery after 2020, agriculture remained one of the more stable industries overall during the period.

The diagram below shows the Real GDP Growth Rate per industries in the period between 2013 and 2023.

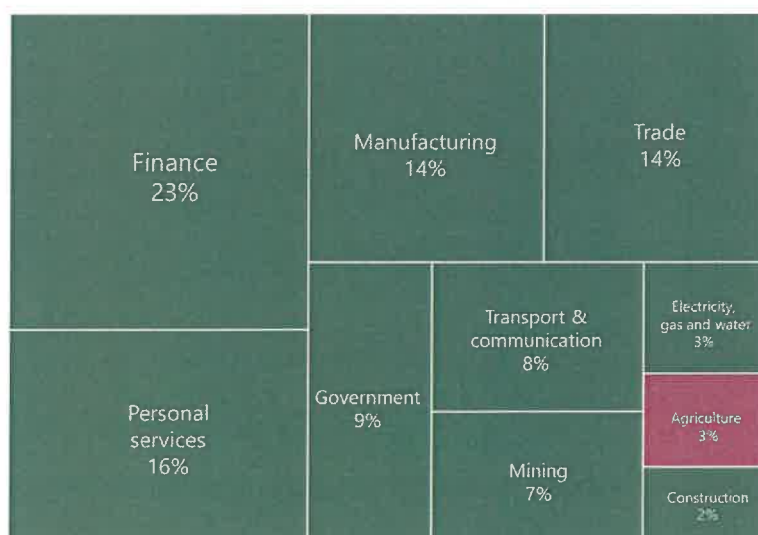
¹⁹ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

Picture: Real GDP Growth Rate Per Industry in Mpumalanga, 2013-2023²⁰

Nationally percentage contribution by agriculture, forestry & fishing sectors was 3% of SA economic production to R6,31 trillion total value added in 2023²¹.

The diagram below shows the percentage contribution of industries to the economic production.

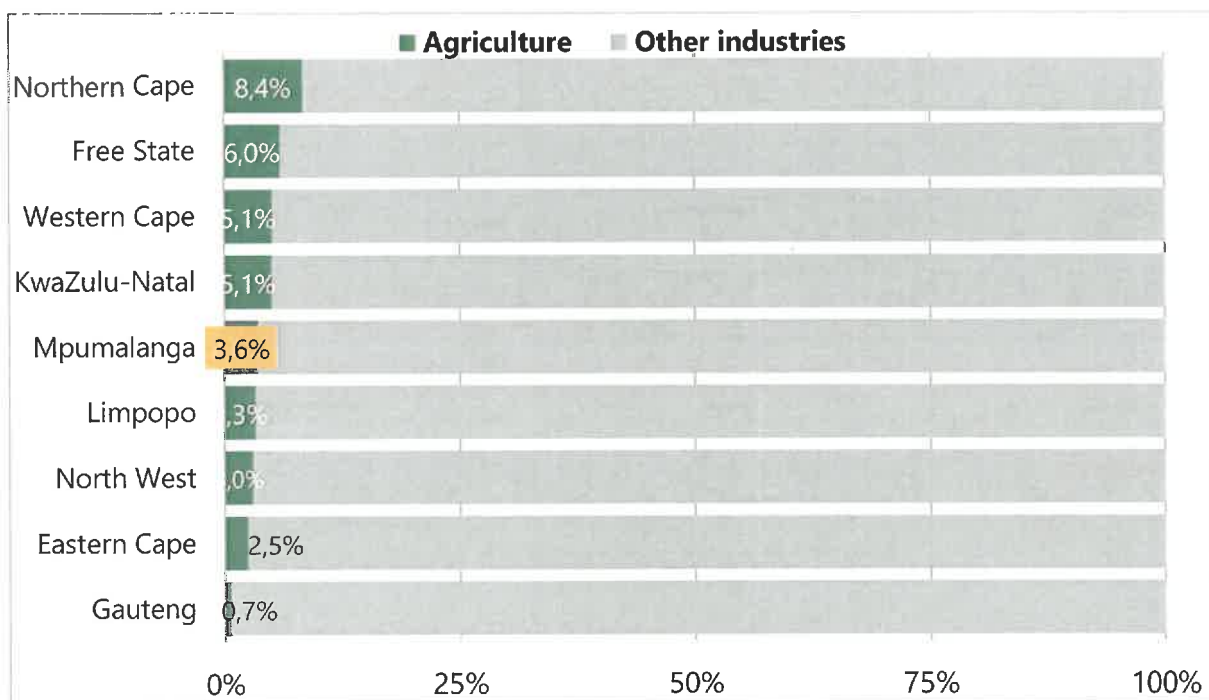
Diagram: Percentage Contribution of Industries to the Economic Production.



In Mpumalanga, contribution of agriculture to provincial value added was 3.6%, fifth nationally in 2022 as indicated in the diagram below.

²⁰ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

²¹ Stats SA: An exploration of agricultural statistics available from Stats SA, 18 September 2024, at DARDLEA Meeting, Ms Magadi Gainewe

Diagram: Contribution of agriculture to Provincial Value Added, 2022*

4.2.6. Farming units involved in the Commercial Agriculture Industry in Mpumalanga.

According to Census of Agriculture Provincial Statistics: Financial and production statistics: Mpumalanga, 2017, the total number of farms/ farming units involved in the commercial agriculture industry in 2017 was 2 823. The largest proportion of farms was in mixed farming (1 211 farms or 43,0% of the total), followed by farming of animals (661 or 23,4%) and growing of cereals and other crops (628 or 22,2%). The district municipality with the highest number of farms in 2017 was Gert Sibande (1 524 farms or 54,0% of the provincial total), followed by Ehlanzeni (655 or 23,2%) and Nkangala (644 or 22,8%)²²

4.2.7. Agriculture contribution in labour market in Mpumalanga

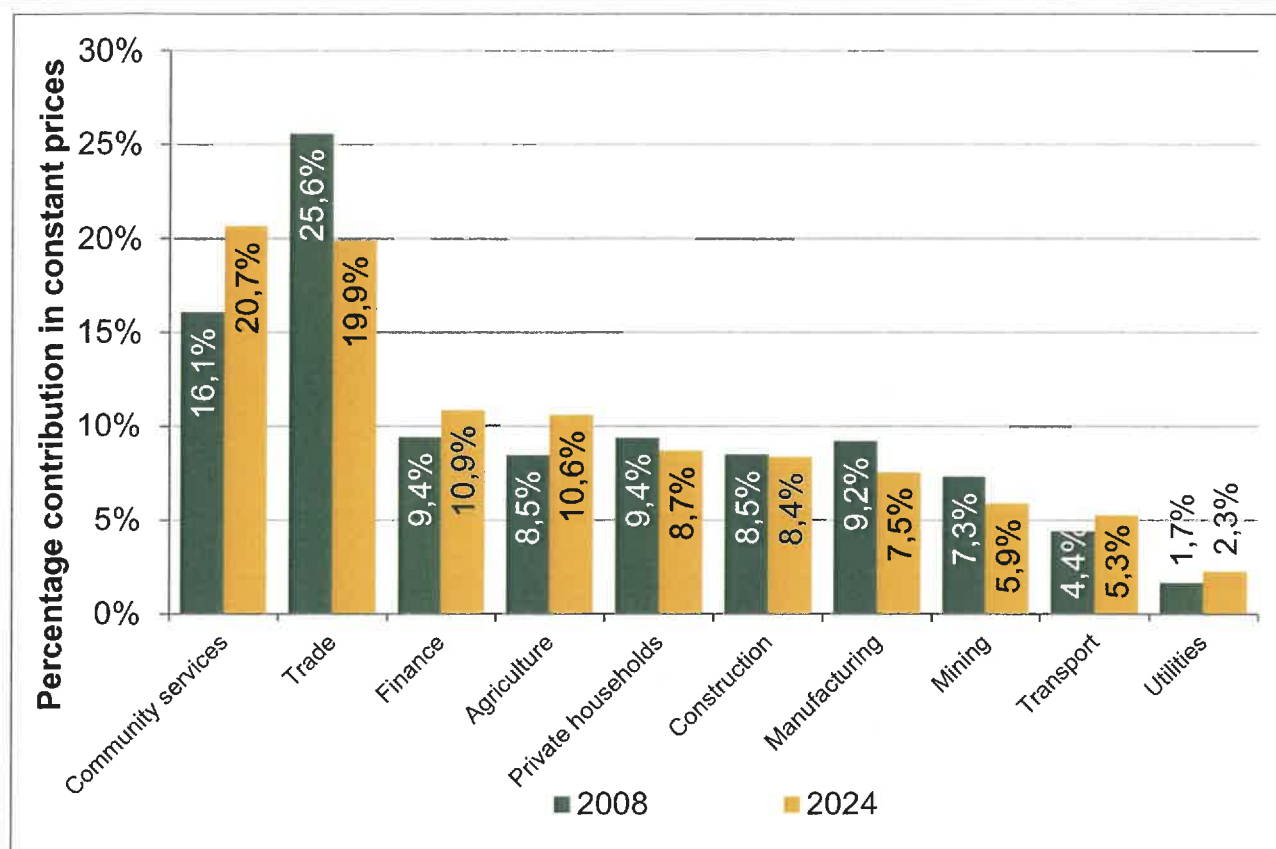
The agriculture sector plays a significant role in Mpumalanga's labour market, contributing to both primary and secondary employment. Between 2008 and 2024, primary agriculture's share of total employment increased from 8.5% to 10.6%, while secondary agriculture saw a rise from 1.4% to 2.0%. This growth highlights agriculture's importance in providing job opportunities, particularly in a province with high unemployment rates. Despite the province facing a net loss of jobs in sectors like mining and manufacturing over recent years, agriculture has maintained job growth, with 25,673 jobs added between 2023 and 2024 alone

The diagram below shows the employment contribution per industries in the period between 2008 and 2024

Diagram: Employment Contribution by Industries²³

²² https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1856&PPN=Report-11-02-09&SCH=7915

²³ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024



4.2.8. Employment In Commercial Agriculture

According to the Census of Agriculture Provincial Statistics: Financial and production statistics: Mpumalanga, 2017, the total number of persons employed in commercial agriculture on 30 June 2018 was 73 319, down from 86 890 on 28 February 2007 (-15,6%). In terms of employment, the major commercial agriculture activity in 2017 was horticulture (27 485 employees or 37,4% of the total), followed by mixed farming (20 540 or 28,0%) and growing of cereals and other crops (13 175 or 18,0%)²⁴

4.2.9. Provincial Job Gains/Losses Per Industry

Over the last 10 years, agriculture has made a significant contribution to job gains in Mpumalanga. From 2014 to 2024, the agriculture sector added 45,223 jobs, making it one of the top-performing industries in terms of employment growth. In contrast, sectors such as mining and manufacturing faced considerable losses, with mining shedding 28,808 jobs and manufacturing losing 18,585 jobs during the same period. Agriculture's consistent job creation highlights its critical role in stabilizing employment in the province, especially in the face of declines in other key industries like trade and utilities.²⁵

The diagram below shows the Provincial Job Gains/Losses Per Industry per industries in the last 10 years

²⁴ https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1856&PPN=Report-11-02-09&SCH=7915

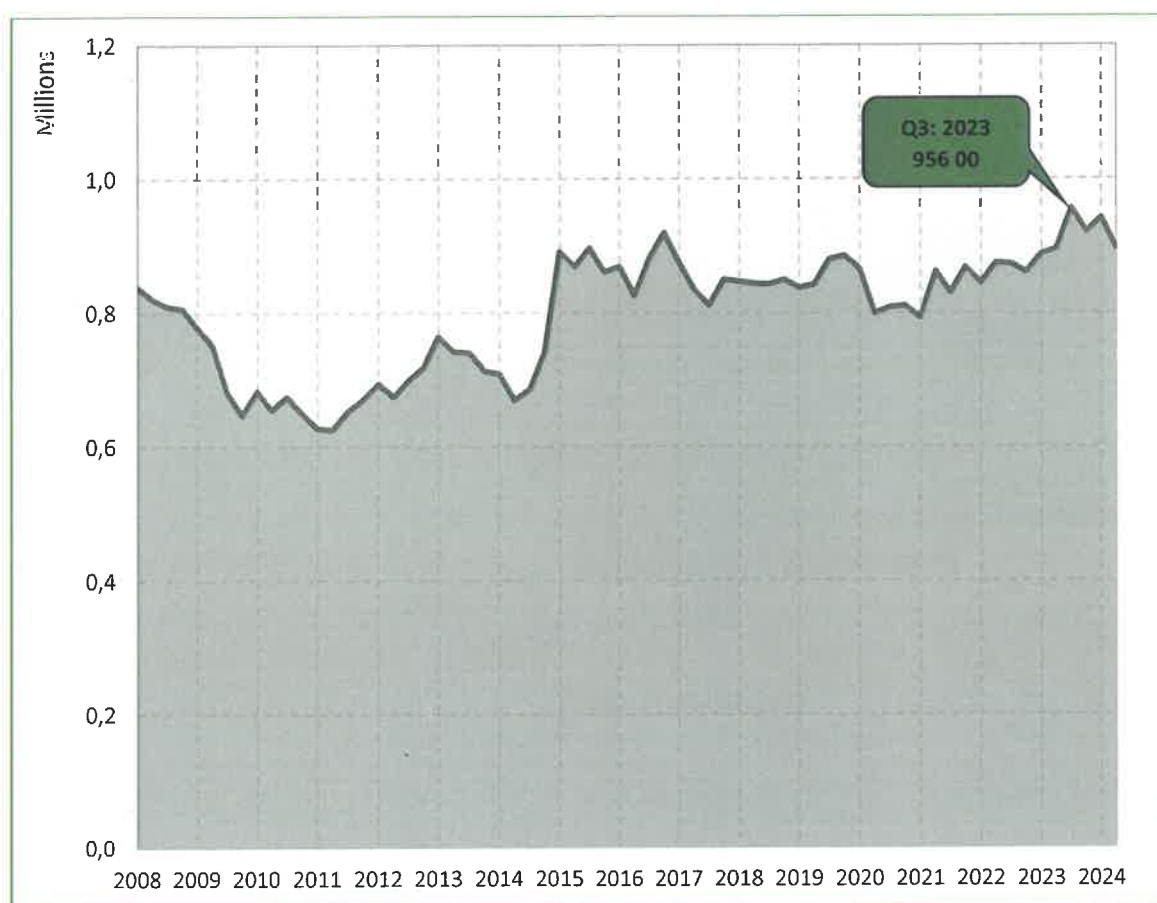
²⁵ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

Table: Provincial Job Gains/Losses Per Industry (Last 1, 2, 5 & 10 Years)

Industry	Q2 2024 employment level	10-year change (Q2 2014 to Q2 2024)	5-year change (Q2 2019 to Q2 2024)	2-year change (Q2 2022 to Q2 2024)	1-year change (Q2 2023 to Q2 2024)
Agriculture	126 244	45 223	25 688	22 577	25 673
Mining	70 137	-28 808	2 568	-427	3 641
Manufacturing	89 903	-18 585	-11 217	9 587	8 809
Utilities	27 048	4 462	-12 873	-7 448	-1 995
Construction	99 742	11 558	-9 672	8 848	1 683
Trade	237 072	-165	-20 223	1 358	-13 946
Transport	62 613	12 089	-3 107	-6 960	4 797
Finance	129 475	24 148	-13 794	18 530	9 433
Community services	246 246	13 019	-1 352	-39 103	-13 449
Private households	103 705	1 845	-6 003	18 246	10 102
MP net job gains/losses	1 192 185	64 786	-50 857	25 208	33 901
SA net job gains/losses	16 652 333	1 558 090	339 627	1 090 475	306 140

Similarly, Nationally, in the period 2008 to 2024, agricultural employment reached its peak in Q3: 2023 as indicated in the table below²⁶

²⁶ Stats SA: An exploration of agricultural statistics available from Stats SA, 18 September 2024, at DARDLEA Meeting, Ms Magadi Gainewe

Diagram: National Agricultural Employment in the period 2008 to 2024,

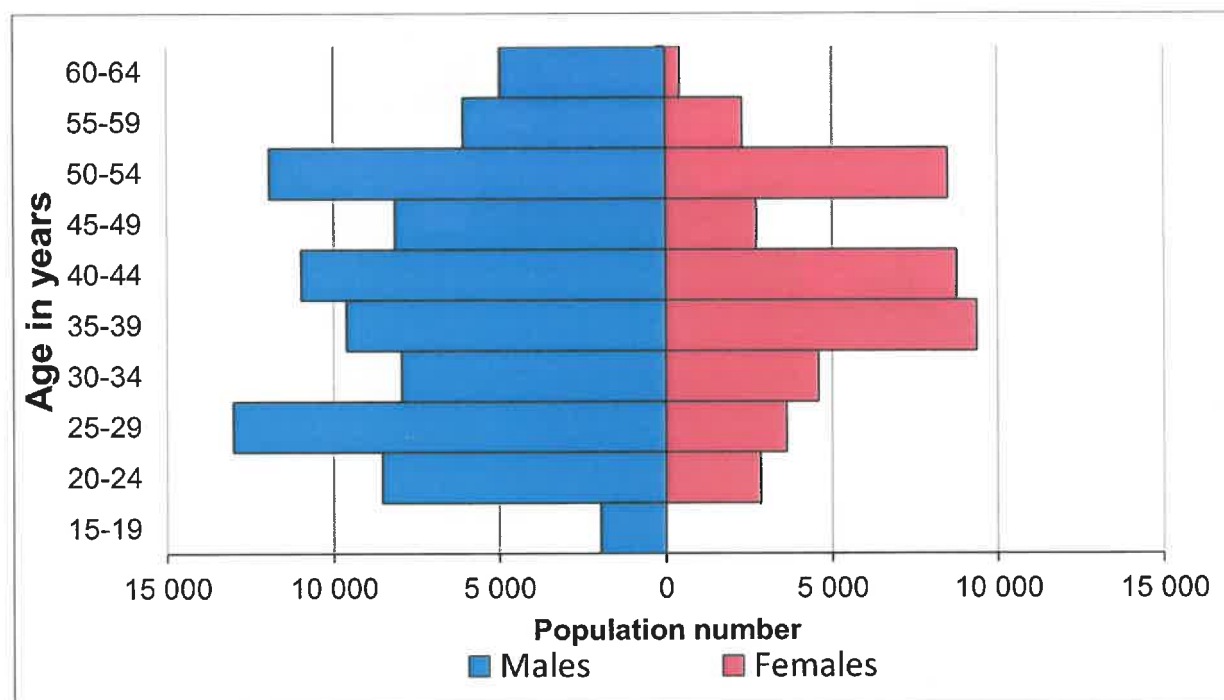
4.2.10. Mpumalanga Agriculture Employment by Age & Gender

Agriculture in Mpumalanga plays a vital role in providing employment across various age groups and genders. As of 2024, 65.9% of those employed in agriculture are male, while 34.1% are female, showcasing a gender gap in the sector. In terms of age distribution, the majority of agricultural workers are adults, with 66.4% being aged 35 and older, while 33.6% are classified as youth (ages 15-34). This indicates that while agriculture offers opportunities for younger workers, it remains more heavily reliant on an older, more experienced workforce²⁷.

²⁷ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

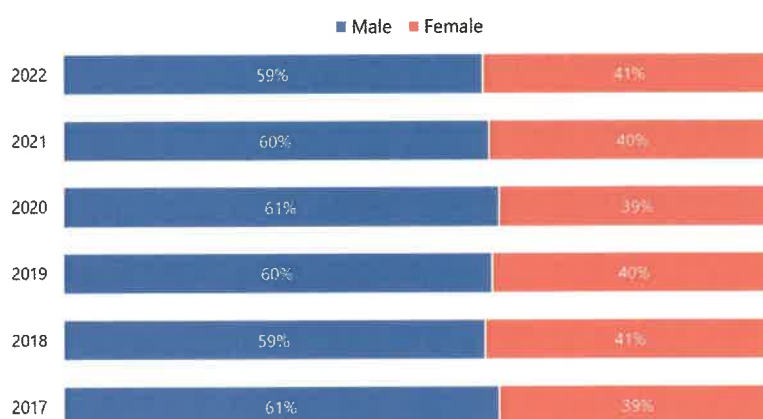
The diagram below shows the Provincial Agriculture Employment by gender and age

Diagram: Mpumalanga Agriculture Employment by Age & Gender



Nationally, in 2022, just over four in ten employees in the agricultural industry were women. The following diagram shows the percentage breakdown of the workforce by male and female at the national level.²⁸

Diagram: Percentage breakdown of the workforce by male and female



4.2.11. Mpumalanga Agriculture Employment by Education Level

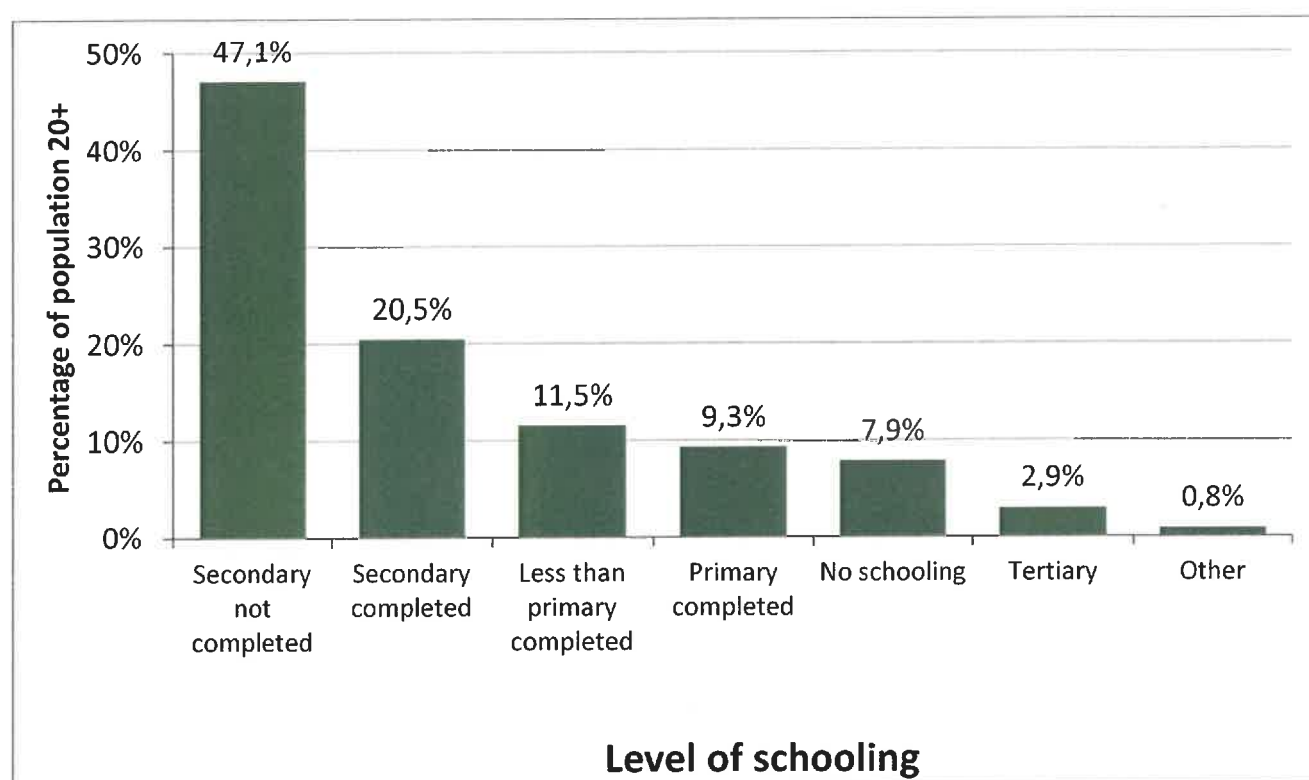
²⁸ Stats SA: An exploration of agricultural statistics available from Stats SA, 18 September 2024, at DARDLEA Meeting, Ms Magadi Gainewe

Mpumalanga faces a skills gap, especially in technical and agricultural expertise. The youth, who form a significant portion of the population, often lack the skills needed to thrive in the formal agricultural sector and broader economy.

Agriculture in Mpumalanga provides employment across a broad spectrum of education levels, highlighting its role in offering opportunities to workers with varying qualifications. A significant portion of the agricultural workforce comprises individuals with lower levels of formal education. Workers with secondary education not completed form the largest group, indicating that agriculture serves as an important source of employment for those without advanced qualifications. Additionally, there is a smaller proportion of workers with tertiary education, reflecting that while the sector offers opportunities for higher-skilled workers, it predominantly supports individuals with primary or secondary-level education²⁹.

The diagram below shows the Provincial Agriculture Employment by education level

Diagram: Mpumalanga Agriculture Employment by Education Level³⁰



The total number of persons employed in commercial agriculture on 30 June 2018 was 73 319, down from 86 890 on 28 February 2007 (-15,6%). In terms of employment, the major commercial agriculture activity in 2017 was horticulture (27 485 employees or 37,4% of the total), followed by mixed farming (20 540 or 28,0%) and growing of cereals and other crops (13 175 or 18,0%)

Mpumalanga's labour market in relation to agriculture is its resilience in job creation, particularly in contrast to other sectors facing employment challenges. Despite overall provincial job losses in industries such as mining, manufacturing, and utilities, agriculture has consistently contributed to employment growth. From 2022 to 2024, agriculture added 25,673 jobs, reinforcing its role as a critical sector for economic stability. Moreover, the sector plays a vital role in employing individuals with lower education levels, which is crucial in a province where unemployment, especially among

²⁹ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

³⁰ Mpumalanga State of Economy Report (SERO), DEDT, 2024

youth and females, remains a significant concern. This underscores the importance of agriculture in addressing unemployment and supporting economic inclusion.

4.2.12. Detailed Analysis of Mpumalanga Households Involved in Agriculture for the 5-Year Strategic Document

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of agricultural households in Mpumalanga as referenced from the Census 2022 Statistical Release report³¹.

The analysis focuses on key aspects such as household involvement in agriculture, trends over time, the nature of agricultural activities. This analysis will inform a five-year plan to support agriculture, food security, and rural development.

The analysis shows that agricultural activities in Mpumalanga are primarily small-scale, backyard-based, and focused on subsistence rather than commercial production

i) Agricultural Household Trends (2011–2022)

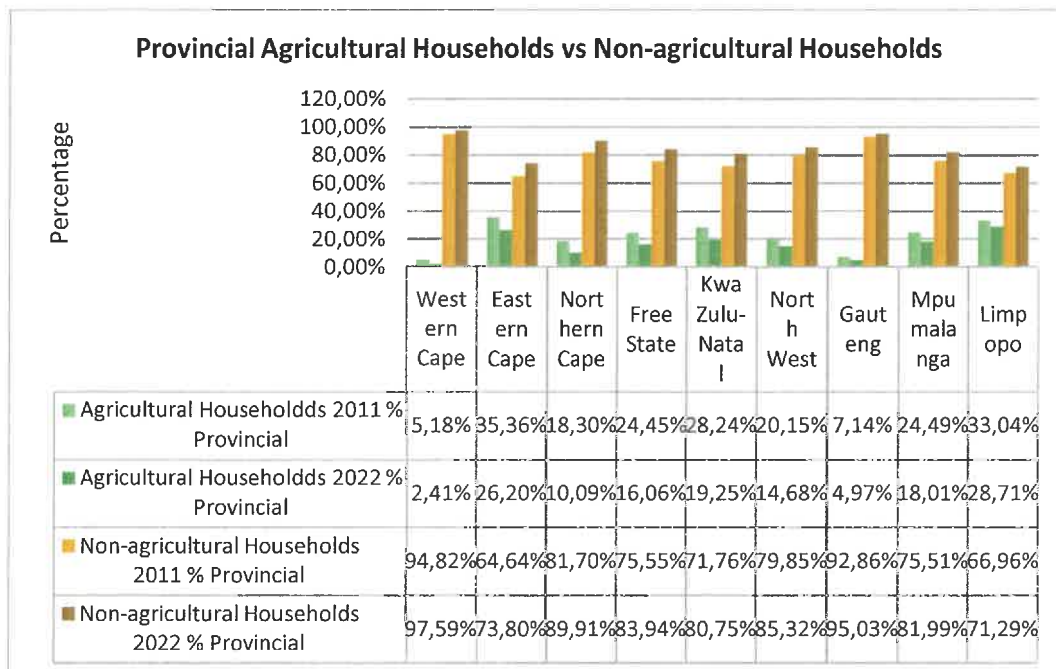
In Mpumalanga, households engaged in agricultural activities represent a significant portion of the province's rural and semi-rural economy. Census 2022 shows an increase in percentage of household 10.7% (256 117) of all households are agricultural households compared to 9.7% in 2011 (263 389) though the actual numbers of households has decrease. This is against a backdrop of an increase to 7.6% (1 165 604) households in 2022 against 7.0% (812 076) in 2011. This indicates a significant increase of household who has abandoned activities in agriculture³².

- **Decline in Agricultural Households:** Mpumalanga has experienced a decline in agricultural households over the past decade. Agricultural involvement in Mpumalanga has seen a notable decline over the last decade, dropping from **24.49%** in 2011 to **18.01%** in 2022. This shift reflects increasing urbanization, challenges in accessing productive land, and limited market opportunities.
- **Increase in Non-Agricultural Households:** Correspondingly, non-agricultural households have risen to **81.99%**, underscoring the growing detachment of households from traditional agricultural practices.

This reduction mirrors national trends, indicating a shift away from agricultural participation, which can be attributed to urbanization, economic shifts, and limited land access. However, agriculture remains a critical livelihood for a significant portion of the population, especially in rural areas.

³¹ https://census.statssa.gov.za/assets/documents/2022/P03014_Census_2022_Statistical_Release.pdf

³² https://census.statssa.gov.za/assets/documents/2022/P03014_Census_2022_Statistical_Release.pdf



Source: P03014_Census_2022_Statistical_Release.pdf – Table 9.1

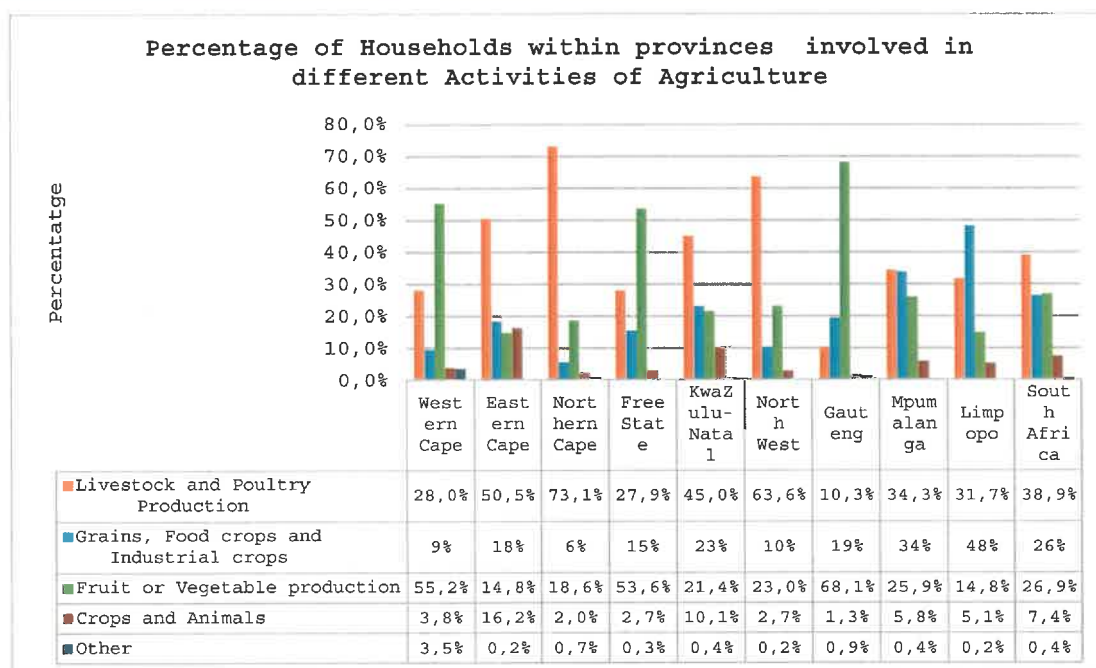
ii) Types of Agricultural Activities

Mpumalanga households engage in various agricultural activities, with a significant focus on subsistence farming. The breakdown includes:

- **Livestock and Poultry Farming (34.3%):** This is the most common agricultural activity in the province, with a focus on cattle, goats, and poultry. The reliance on livestock for food security and income generation is notable³³.
- **Grains, Food, and Industrial Crops (34%):** Households producing maize and other staple crops play a crucial role in ensuring local food security.
- **Fruit and Vegetable Production (25.9%):** Although less common, horticulture offers potential for market expansion, especially with support in accessing better markets.
- **Mixed Crop and Animal Farming (5.8%):** A smaller proportion of households are involved in diversified farming systems, combining crops with livestock.

This distribution shows a strong reliance on livestock and crop farming, but the relatively low levels of fruit and vegetable farming indicate potential growth areas for higher-value agricultural products.

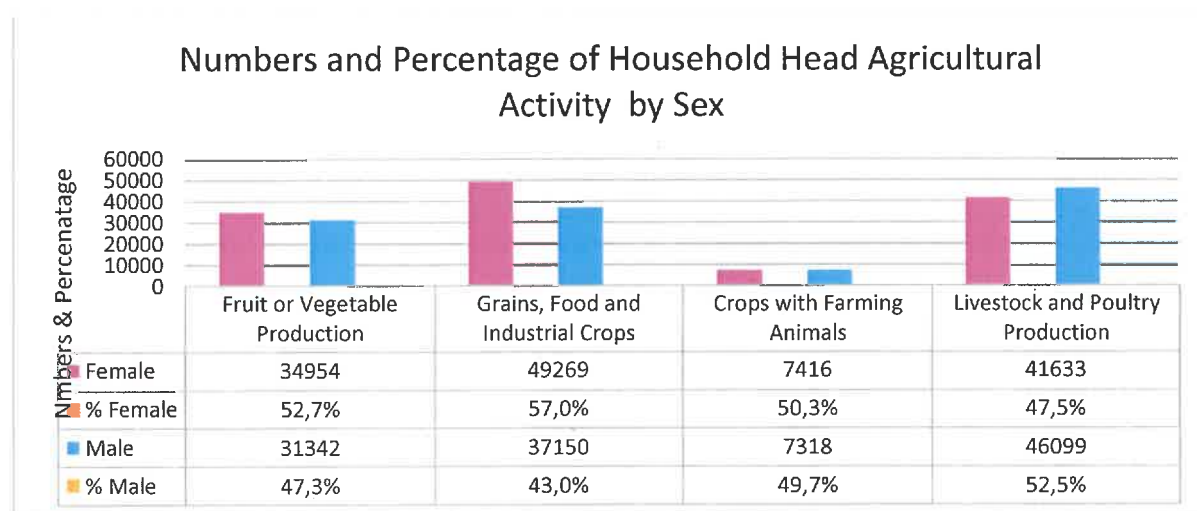
³³ Stats SA, Census 2022 Agricultural Households



Source: P03014_Census_2022_Statistical_Release.pdf – Table 9.3

iii) Number of Household Head Agricultural / Commodity Activity by Sex in Mpumalanga

In Mpumalanga the number of Female Headed Agricultural households dominated the three commodities such as Fruits or Vegetable at 52,7%; Grains, Food and Industrial Crops at 57%; and Combine Crops and Animals at 50,3%. Male only dominate the Livestock and Poultry productions at 52,5%³⁴.



Sources: Census 2022, Agricultural Households, Tables 3.24; 3.25; 3.26; & 3.27

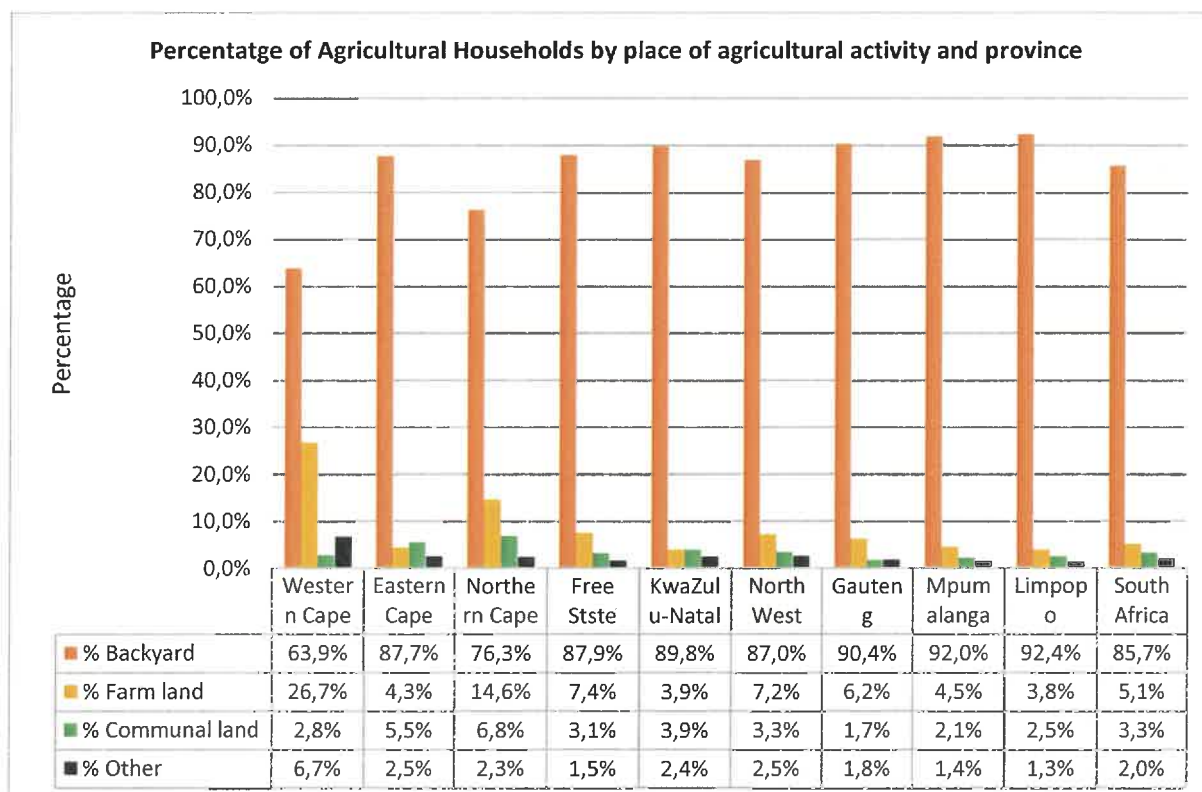
iv) Place of Agricultural Activity

The majority of Mpumalanga households engage in agricultural activities on their residential properties. Agricultural households in Mpumalanga largely practice backyard farming:

³⁴ Stats SA, Census 2022 Agricultural Households

- **Backyard Farming (92%):** Backyard plots are predominantly used for vegetable and small livestock production³⁵.
- **Farmland (4.5%):** A small percentage of households use larger plots of farmland, highlighting limited access to arable land.
- **Communal Land (2.1%):** Communal land farming is still practiced, though declining as rural populations shift to more urbanized settings.

This heavy reliance on backyard farming indicates a need for policies that expand access to farmland and communal land, as well as efforts to scale up subsistence farming into more productive agricultural ventures.



Source: P03014 Census 2022 Statistical Release.pdf – Table 9.5

v) Purpose of Agricultural Activity

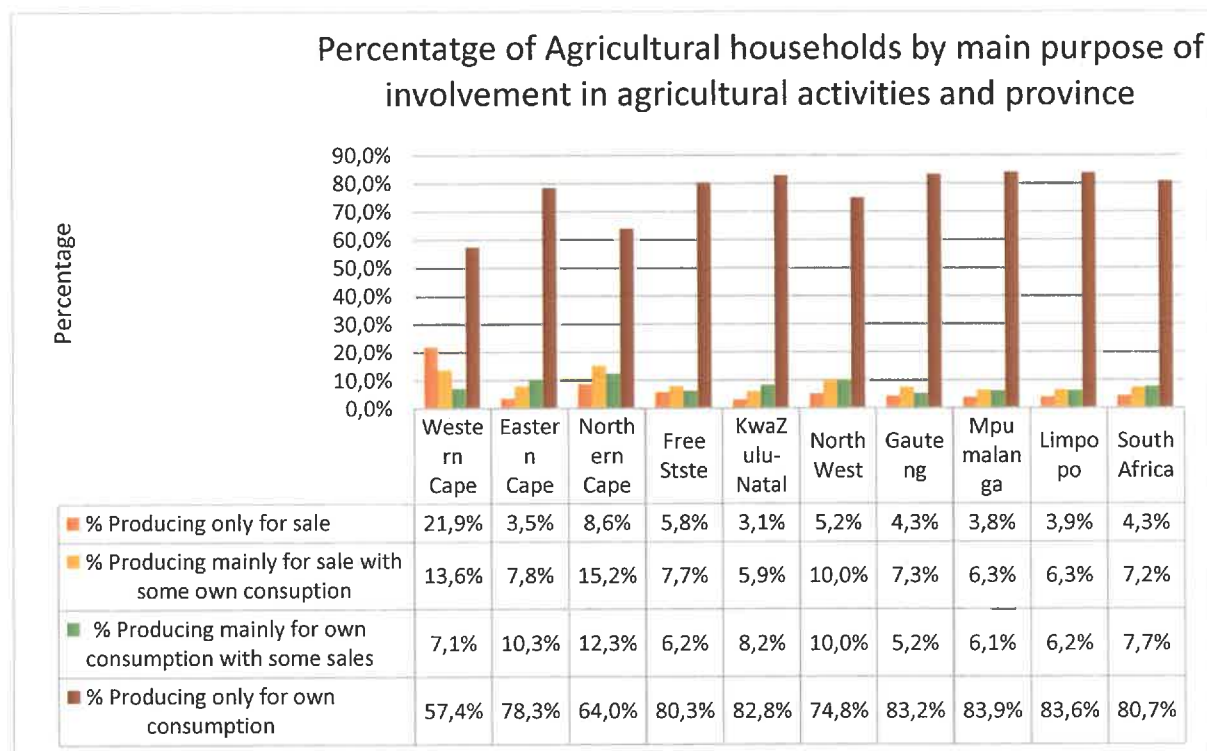
A key characteristic of agriculture in Mpumalanga is its subsistence nature, with limited market participation:

- **Producing Only for Own Consumption (83.9%):** The overwhelming majority of households farm solely for household consumption, reflecting high levels of food insecurity and the need for self-sufficiency³⁶.
- **Mixed Consumption and Sales (6.1%):** A small proportion of households engage in farming for both own use and small-scale sales.
- **Producing Mainly for Sale (6.3%):** Only a minority of households are market-oriented, selling most of their produce.

³⁵ Stats SA, Census 2022 Agricultural Households

³⁶ Stats SA, Census 2022 Agricultural Households

This suggests that agricultural production is largely driven by food security concerns, rather than commercial purposes. However, there is potential to develop programs that encourage households to shift towards market-oriented production, especially for households with surplus yields



Source: P03014 Census 2022 Statistical Release.pdf – Table 9.7

4.2.13. Summary of Challenges Identified under Agricultural Households

Challenges that the institution has faced in carrying out its planned work, and mechanisms to address these over the planning period.

The following are some of the agricultural households challenges:

- **Limited access to land:** The overwhelming majority relies on backyard plots, which are insufficient for scaling up production.
- **Limited Market Access:** With most households producing for subsistence, few have the infrastructure or networks to sell their produce. The small percentage of households producing for sale suggests challenges in accessing formal markets, due to inadequate infrastructure, high transaction costs, and lack of market information.
- **Land Access:** Access to arable land remains constrained, with the majority of farming occurring on small backyard plots. Communal and farmland use remains low.
- **Resource Constraints:** Many households lack access to critical agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, quality seeds, water resources, and farming tools. Households face constraints in terms of access to inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and modern farming technologies, affecting productivity.
- **Climate Vulnerability:** Changing climate patterns, including drought and erratic rainfall, pose significant threats to agricultural productivity in the province. Most of regions face risks from climate change, particularly droughts, which affect crop yields and livestock health

4.2.14. Opportunities for Development based on the Agricultural Household Analysis

To support and mitigate on the Agricultural Households to grow and actively participate in the sector the following were noted.:

- **Expanding Land Access:** Facilitating access to more farmland, especially communal lands, can help households expand beyond subsistence farming.
- **Supporting Livestock Farming:** Given that livestock production is significant, improving veterinary services, access to quality feed, and animal husbandry practices can boost productivity.
- **Boosting Market-Oriented Farming:** The department will encourage the shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture by supporting market access initiatives, creating value chains, and offering business training.
- **Promoting Market Integration:** Establishing cooperatives or local markets where small-scale farmers can sell their produce can help shift production towards commercial farming.
- **Improving Infrastructure:** Investments in storage, irrigation, and transport infrastructure will be critical in reducing post-harvest losses and improving market participation.
- **Water and Irrigation Infrastructure:** Investment in sustainable water infrastructure and rainwater harvesting technologies will be essential, especially for areas dependent on rain-fed agriculture
- **Land Reform and Access Programs:** There is a clear need for expanded land access initiatives, particularly targeting emerging farmers who could benefit from larger, more productive plots.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Programs promoting climate resilience through drought-resistant crops, water conservation, and sustainable farming practices could mitigate the impact of climate change.
- **Youth and Women Empowerment:** Targeted programs to engage youth and women in agriculture will be crucial for revitalizing the sector. Offering incentives and training can encourage these groups to participate in higher-value agriculture.

4.2.15. Women, Youth, and People Living with Disabilities In Agriculture and Environment in Mpumalanga

Evidence-based analysis of priorities relating to women, youth and people with disabilities, where appropriate.

i) Agricultural Households by Sex of Household Head

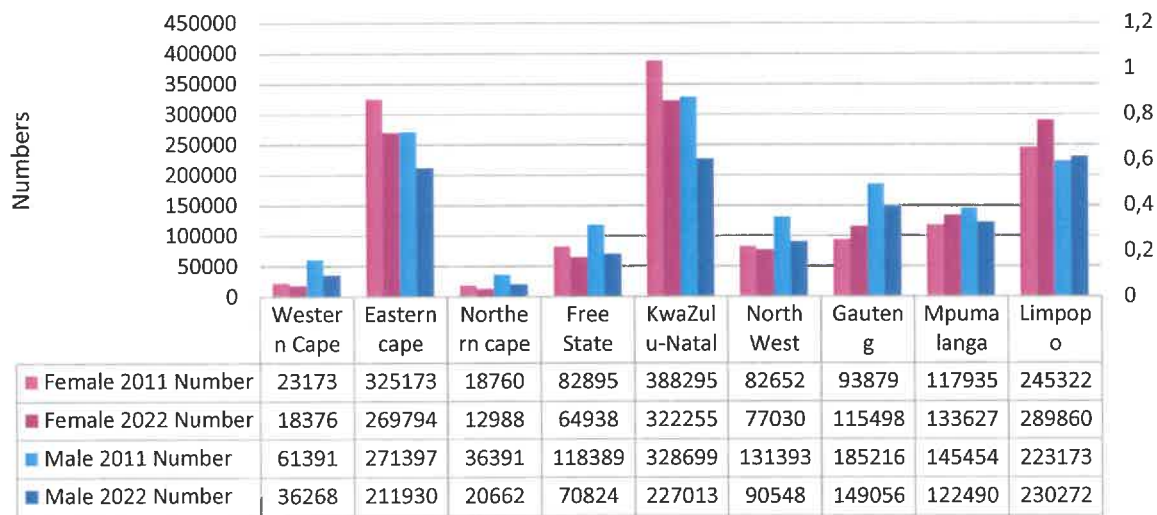
Census 2022, Agricultural Households, shows a general trend of decline in number of households for both genders. However, under the same period, the percentage representation for women increased. This indicated proportional increase by women headed agricultural households

The graphs indicate number of households and the proportional representation against genders:

Diagram: Number of agricultural households by sex of household head³⁷

³⁷ Stats SA, Census 2022, Agricultural Households

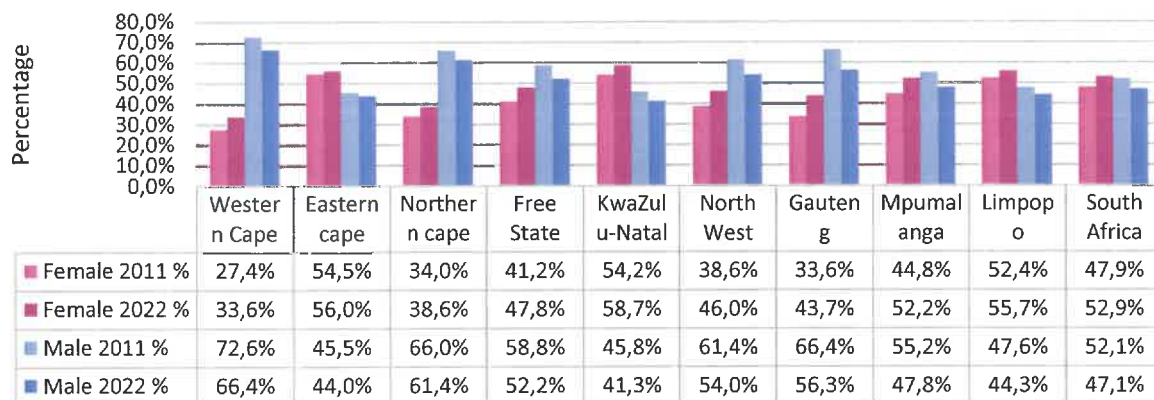
Number of agricultural households by sex of household head



Source: Stats SA, Census 2022, Agricultural Households, Table 3.3

Diagram: Percentage Representation of agricultural households by sex of household head³⁸

Percentage Representation of agricultural households by sex of household head



Source: Stats SA, Census 2022, Agricultural Households, Table 3.3

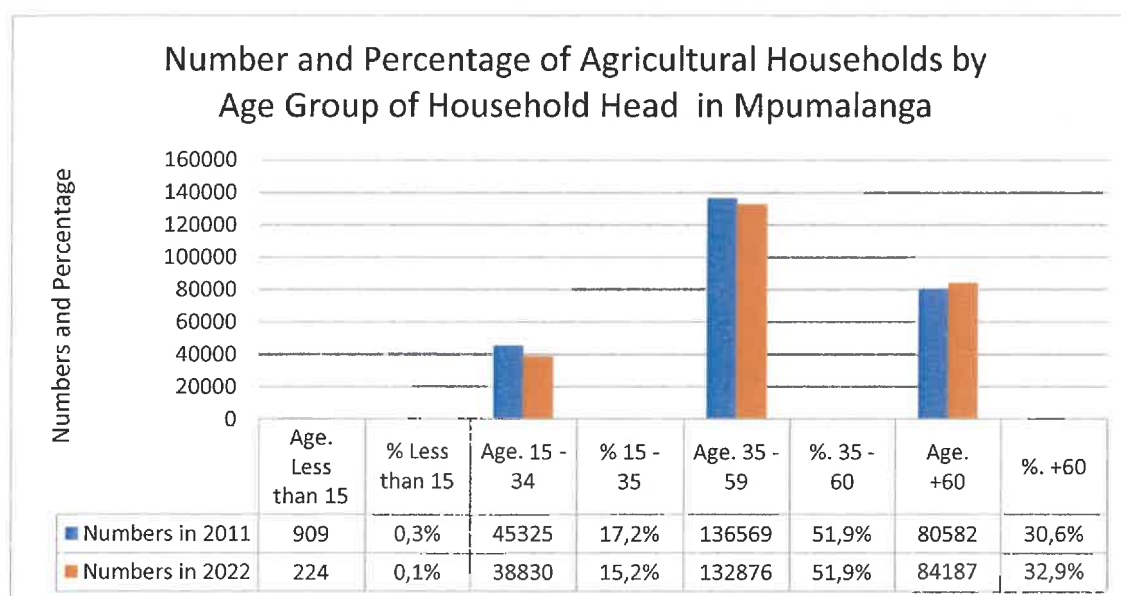
ii) Number of Agricultural Households by Age Group of Household Head and Mpumalanga in 2011 and 2022

Stats SA Census 2022 indicates that decrease in number and representation in the age cohort of less than 15 years; 15 - 35 years; and 35 - 59 years at both census of 2011 and 2022.

The proportional representation has also decreased for all the cohort with the exception of increase from 30,6% to 32,9% for the age cohort +60 years³⁹.

³⁸ Stats SA, Census 2022, Agricultural Households

³⁹ Stats SA, Census 2022 Agricultural Households



Source: Census 2022, Agricultural Households, Table 3,35

Mpumalanga's population is relatively young, and youth unemployment is high, especially in rural areas.

iii) Challenges Identified

a) Women in Agriculture

- **Underrepresentation in Commercial Agriculture:** Women in Mpumalanga are significantly underrepresented in commercial agriculture and tend to participate more in **subsistence farming**, particularly in **backyard farming**. Most female farmers produce primarily for **household consumption** rather than for sale.
- **Barriers:** Key challenges faced by women include **limited access to land**, finance, and agricultural inputs. Women often rely on communal land or small backyard plots due to structural inequalities in land ownership.
- **Opportunities for Empowerment:** Policies that promote women's access to land and resources, as well as targeted training in sustainable agricultural practices, can enhance their productivity and role in market-oriented agriculture.

b) Youth in Agriculture

- **Low Participation:** The participation of youth in agriculture in Mpumalanga is relatively low, with younger generations migrating to urban areas in search of non-agricultural jobs.
- **Lack of Opportunities:** The lack of access to land, limited agricultural education, and financial barriers are some of the reasons youth are dissuaded from engaging in agriculture.
- **Potential for Growth:** Engaging youth through **agricultural training programs**, mentorship, and financial incentives, as well as promoting innovative practices like **urban agriculture** and **technology-driven farming**, can attract more youth to the sector.

c) People Living with Disabilities in Agriculture

- **Minimal Participation:** The inclusion of people living with disabilities in agriculture is minimal due to barriers such as **physical limitations**, lack of access to **adaptive farming technologies**, and **limited resources**.

- **Challenges:** Accessibility to land, infrastructure, and financial support are major constraints. Farming equipment and facilities are often not designed to accommodate people with disabilities, further limiting their participation.
- **Inclusion Initiatives:** Promoting **inclusive agricultural programs** that provide accessible technologies and financial support, and ensuring equal opportunities for people living with disabilities, can improve their participation in agriculture.

d) Environmental Involvement

- **Women, youth, and people living with disabilities** also face barriers in contributing to environmental conservation and climate-smart agriculture due to socio-economic and infrastructural challenges.

4.2.16. Summary Analysis of Agricultural Households in relation to Race in Mpumalanga

The Stats SA Census data provides insights into the racial composition of agricultural households in Mpumalanga, highlighting disparities in land access, types of farming activities, and the purpose of agricultural production.

The racial dynamics of agricultural households in Mpumalanga reveal significant disparities in land access and farming practices. Black African households are predominantly involved in subsistence farming with limited access to farmland, while White households are more engaged in commercial agriculture. These differences highlight the need for targeted land reform and support programs to improve access to resources and markets for historically disadvantaged racial groups in Mpumalanga.

i) Black African Agricultural Households

- **Majority Representation:** Black African households form the majority of agricultural households in Mpumalanga.
- **Subsistence Farming:** A significant proportion of Black African agricultural households are engaged primarily in **subsistence farming**. Around **83%** of these households produce **only for their own consumption** (SOUTH AFRICA STATS SA C...).
- **Backyard Farming:** Most Black African agricultural households rely on **backyard plots** for farming due to limited access to farmland and communal land.

ii) White Agricultural Households

- **Market-Oriented Farming:** White agricultural households tend to engage in more **market-oriented farming**, with a higher percentage producing **mainly for sale**. White households are more likely to farm on larger plots of **farmland** rather than backyards (SOUTH AFRICA STATS SA C...).
- **Land Ownership:** White households have greater access to farmland, and many of these households participate in commercial agriculture, contributing to the provincial economy.

iii) Coloured Agricultural Households

- **Mixed Farming Purpose:** Coloured households participate in both subsistence and market-oriented agriculture. A significant number produce mainly for their own consumption, but some also engage in limited sales (SOUTH AFRICA STATS SA C...).
- **Backyard and Communal Land Use:** Like Black African households, many Coloured households farm in backyards or communal lands, with limited access to large tracts of farmland.

iv) Indian/Asian Agricultural Households

- **Small Proportion:** Indian/Asian households represent a smaller portion of agricultural households in Mpumalanga.
- **Market and Subsistence Balance:** This group engages in both subsistence and market-oriented farming, with a tendency to focus on **producing for sale** and **own consumption** (SOUTH AFRICA STATS SA C...).

4.3. RECENT STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ON LAND REFORM ISSUES

Mpumalanga is one of the provinces where forestry is the second economic driver, the first being mining. The companies that are operating in the forestry sector in the province are SAPPI, MONDI, SAFCOL and MTO. Communities and families have lodged claims on forestry areas operated by these companies. In the process of settling claims on the forestry land it has proved to be difficult due to the uncooperative nature of the companies, which will have a huge impact on the province meeting the APP. The province requires intervention with the forestry sector to resolve long outstanding perceived settlement models, which we are expected to implement.

The following table shows the land claims statistics information as of 18 September 2024:

Table: Land claims statistics Information

Category	No of claims per category
Total claims lodged in 1998	6637
Total Claims Settled	3380
Total claims transferred to other Provinces	703
Total claims dismissed	983
Total Claims Outstanding	1571

The following table shows the land claims statistics information as at 18 September 2024:

CATEGORIES	TOTAL RLCC MPUMALANGA
Settled claims (Number)	3380
Rural (Number)	2122
Urban (Number)	1258
Households (Number)	62386
Beneficiaries (Number)	330768
Female Headed (Number)	21118
People With Disabilities (Number)	58

CATEGORIES	TOTAL RLCC MPUMALANGA
Private land (hectares)	410341,37ha
State land (hectares)	147909,42ha
Total hectares (private and state land)	558250,785ha

Challenges in finalising land claims

The following are the challenges identified during the process

- Refusal of OVG offers by landowners
- Complex and overlapping community claims
- Factions/in-fighting amongst beneficiaries and boundary disputes
- Restoration of commercial land to the claimants who do not have sufficient skills to manage farms
- Claims lodged against settlement areas, where claimants seek physical restoration
- Untraceable claimants
- Budget allocation that affects capital and human resource

Land Reform and Equity

Land ownership patterns in Mpumalanga reflect the historical inequalities of South Africa, with much of the arable land still under the control of commercial farmers. There is a high demand for land reform to enable emerging farmers and previously disadvantaged communities to gain equitable access to land for productive agricultural use

Land Reform and Access to Land

Land reform remains a critical issue in Mpumalanga, with many citizens calling for equitable access to land for farming and other economic activities. The province has large tracts of land under commercial farming, while many emerging farmers and rural residents face barriers to land ownership.

Land Reform and Economic Transformation

Mpumalanga's economy is still shaped by historical patterns of land ownership, with large commercial farms controlling much of the arable land. Land reform is crucial to unlocking the economic potential of marginalized communities and promoting inclusive growth.

Recommendations:

- Prioritizes accelerating land redistribution and support programs that ensure both equitable access and sustainable use of land resources.
- Partner with the relevant stakeholders to outline initiatives to expedite land redistribution and support for new landowners to ensure both equitable access and productive land use.
- Prioritize and emphasizes redistributing land to emerging farmers and providing the necessary support (training, financial aid, infrastructure) to ensure that these farmers contribute to the provincial economy and increase agricultural productivity.

4.4. RECENT STATISTICAL RURAL ANALYSIS ON DEVELOPMENT

The rural landscape in Mpumalanga, like other rural areas in South Africa, faces significant challenges rooted in historical and political inequality, particularly from the apartheid era. Former homeland areas in Mpumalanga are characterized by high levels of poverty, overcrowding, lack of basic infrastructure (such as water, electricity, and roads), limited economic opportunities, and inadequate access to skills development and rural finance.

Post-1994, the government aimed to address the marginalization of rural communities, focusing on improving access to resources like land and water, education, rural infrastructure, and government services. However, migration trends have further complicated the rural landscape. The rural population has decreased significantly, with many people moving to urban areas in search of better opportunities. This exodus has led to a decline in rural populations and the rise of informal settlements in cities, often lacking essential services and infrastructure⁴⁰.

Agriculture and mining remain central to rural economies in Mpumalanga, but much of the rural population relies on subsistence farming. While commercial agriculture drives external investment, improving infrastructure and support for small-scale farmers is targeted to assist in the transition of subsistence farming to commercial levels. This will lift many unemployed individuals out of dependency on social grants and make rural communities more economically productive.

In addition to agriculture and mining, rural development efforts by the department are on facilitating secondary and tertiary sector activities such as manufacturing, processing, and local business, which are critical to supporting rural livelihoods. These sectors are interconnected with urban economies, highlighting the importance of holistic development approaches⁴¹.

Government interventions, especially through social grants, play a significant role in sustaining rural households. In provinces like Mpumalanga, where a large proportion of the population lives in rural areas, social grants form a critical part of the rural economy's social infrastructure.

Many rural areas in Mpumalanga lack essential infrastructure, including reliable road networks, irrigation systems, and storage facilities, limiting the ability of smallholder farmers to maximize agricultural output and access larger markets.

4.5. RECENT STATISTICS RELEVANT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

Environment has in the last MTSF 2019 – 2024 being part of the Priority 8: Cross-cutting theme, linked to the NDP thematic areas of objective Environmental Sustainability. It forms one part of the Section 152(1) of the Constitution's five objectives of local government i.e. "To promote a safe and healthy environment". Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, enshrines one of the rights of all people in the country to "Everyone has a right to: An environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being (Clause 24)"⁴²

The 30 Years Review Report of South Africa noted the importance and significant improvement that local government sphere plays in ensuring a healthy environment for all. It noted that "the proportion of households whose refuse is removed by a local authority, private company, community members

⁴⁰integrated-rural-development-sector-strategy-2023.pdf, development-sector-strategy-2023.pdf

<http://www.daff.gov.za/images/Quick%20Links/integrated-rural->

⁴¹integrated-rural-development-sector-strategy-2023.pdf, development-sector-strategy-2023.pdf

<http://www.daff.gov.za/images/Quick%20Links/integrated-rural->

⁴² 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

at least weekly or less increased from 65.4% in 2016 to 66.3% in 2022, the highest this figure has been since 1996⁴³

The report further encouraged “support municipalities to reduce their environmental impact through waste minimisation and remediation”⁴⁴. Looking at programs like Zonda Ntsila programme conceived and implemented by the department over the last MTSF period.

The report noted that as a country there has “Good progress” in terms of “Promoting women’s role in the environment / green economy”.

Historically, Mpumalanga is one of the provinces that has areas that were the consequence of forced removals uprooted black communities from their homes and moved them to segregated townships on the outskirts of cities or to underdeveloped “homelands”. These forced removals and resettlements of communities often resulted in the disruption of natural ecosystems, changes in land use patterns, deforestation and changes in land cover, contributing to overall environmental degradation⁴⁵.

These areas together with the existing townships with informal settlements are characterised by insufficient infrastructure, waste management structures, and sanitation, which contributed to environmental pollution and contamination of water resources,

4.5.1. Mpumalanga Biodiversity

The Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan (MBSP) had in 2014, noted that Mpumalanga’s rich geological formations make mining a major land use for resources such as gold, chromium, iron, platinum-group metals, coal, and granite. However, half of the province’s natural habitat has been irreversibly altered, primarily by large-scale agriculture, plantation forestry, and mining. There was then also a rapid increase in applications for prospecting and mining rights, with over 70% related to coal. These activities not only caused habitat loss but also negatively impact water security, as wetlands are drained for cultivation, plantation forestry lowers the water table, and poorly managed mining operations affect water quality. Despite these challenges, mining, agriculture, and forestry are vital to the economy. The department in partnership with Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency MTPA developed The Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan (MBSP) that was aimed to guide future development to minimize risks to biodiversity and ecosystem health.

4.5.2. Water And Air Pollution and Land Degradation:

In addition, as the province houses 12 of the power stations with related coal mines the environment have suffered from the inadequate attention given to regulations and a lack of consideration for ensuring environmentally sustainable practices. Environmental consequences that remain include air and water pollution, soil degradation, desertification and deforestation and human displacements. This has also caused massive atmospheric emissions (of carbon dioxide - CO²- the principal greenhouse gas), which has made the highveld area one of the most air-polluted hotspots in the world.⁴⁶

⁴³ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

⁴⁴ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

⁴⁵ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

⁴⁶ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

The department has significantly contributed to making significant strides in ensuring improvements in air quality, by establishing 5 ambient air quality monitoring stations contributing to over 130 nationwide. Despite this, the report noted that “pollution trends show that the country needs to meet the national ambient air quality standards on some of the pollutants, especially in the metropolitan municipalities and the priority areas of the Highveld, Vaal Triangle and Waterberg-Bojanala”

The report further noted that Water security and access remain a growing concern. A concern that poor wetlands management, polluted and unhealthy river systems, and varying rainfall patterns contribute to declining water quality and quantity.

“The province has thousands of wetlands and several important river systems, including, amongst others, the headwaters of the Vaal, Olifants, Nkomati, Crocodile and Usuthu Rivers. This means that Mpumalanga’s natural landscapes are not only important for the rich biodiversity they harbour, but also because they are critically important for regional and international water security”⁴⁷.

The department has over the years noted the same concerns and has developed some program to mitigate these challenges. Some of these programmes are linked directly with agricultural programs such as water harvesting and others.

4.5.3. Red Data-Listed Species Loss

Although Mpumalanga covers only 6% of South Africa’s land surface, it hosts around 21% of the country’s plant species diversity and significantly contributes to high levels of endemism in plants, mammals, and fish. This biodiversity is concentrated in four centres of endemism and species richness, primarily located in the Drakensberg Afromontane Region along the province’s high-elevation eastern mountains. These areas are characterized by groups of plants with similar geographic distributions, often linked to the underlying geology, and contain numerous narrowly endemic, Red Data-listed species at risk from habitat modification. These regions may also harbor undiscovered or cryptic animal species⁴⁸

4.5.4. Protected Areas,

Mpumalanga has 117 protected areas, covering 1,591,418 hectares of land, which are categorized by ownership and management into four types: state-owned (73%) and privately-owned (contract nature reserves or protected environments). Conservancies, which lack legal protection, are excluded from ecosystem protection assessments. Many of these areas were originally established to conserve specific large mammals or located in areas of low economic value, such as poor soils or high altitudes, rather than to protect a representative sample of the province’s biodiversity. This has resulted in a bias towards savannas, while the more vulnerable grasslands remain underrepresented. A previous biodiversity assessment found that while the existing protected areas contribute to biodiversity targets, the network is still not fully representative of Mpumalanga’s biodiversity⁴⁹.

4.5.5. Climate Change

Climate change is a significant global risk due to its wide-ranging impacts on ecosystems, societies, and economies. In response, South Africa has introduced several key policy and legislative interventions⁵⁰:

⁴⁷Mpumalanga Biodiversity, Sector Plan Hand book: https://conservationcorridor.org/cpb/Lotter_et_al_2014.pdf

⁴⁸ Mpumalanga Biodiversity, Sector Plan Hand book: https://conservationcorridor.org/cpb/Lotter_et_al_2014.pdf

⁴⁹ Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan HandBook. https://conservationcorridor.org/cpb/Lotter_et_al_2014.pdf

⁵⁰ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

- **National Climate Change Response Policy (2011):** Provides a framework for mitigation and adaptation strategies, aiming for a climate-resilient, low-carbon economy. Its objectives include managing climate change impacts (e.g., disaster management) and contributing to global efforts to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations.
- **National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2020):** Focuses on coherent adaptation planning across society to build resilience against climate change impacts, such as temperature changes, shifting precipitation, and rising sea levels.
- **Climate Change Bill (2023):** Regulates climate change-contributing activities and enhances adaptive capacity, resilience, and vulnerability reduction.

The Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan Hand Book report had also predicted that Mpumalanga including northeastern South Africa, climate change has already led to notable temperature increases, with 11 of the 12 years between 1995 and 2006 ranking among the warmest since 1850. Observed trends include more frequent heat waves, fewer cold days, nights, and frosts, earlier spring events (like flowering and bird migration), and shifts in plant and animal distribution. Future climate models project further increases in minimum, average, and maximum temperatures, along with more frequent and intense droughts, even in areas with increased rainfall, such as the Mpumalanga escarpment. Total annual rainfall is expected to rise by 85 to 303 mm, with more rain occurring in autumn, winter, and spring⁵¹

4.5.6. Just Energy Transition

Mpumalanga Provincial Spatial Development Framework of 2028 had noted that the Mpumalanga coalfields, which form part of the middle Ecca Group within the Karoo Supergroup, were rapidly getting depleting. It further noted a study by the Council for Geo-Sciences and Eskom that revealed that coal reserves in Mpumalanga had then significantly declined, dropping from 28.1 billion tonnes to 12.4 billion tonnes (DMR Industry Overview, 2014).⁵²

The Just Energy Transition has formed one of the 24 strategic thrusts that the 30-Year Review have been identified and recommended for high priority attention when planning the immediate term towards 2030, and for the next 10 to 30 years⁵³

Framework and the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan. This involves building stronger partnerships between government, business, society, academia, and civil society, while committing to increased investments to tackle air pollution and climate challenges. A key focus is on empowering citizens through education and awareness about climate change, including its effects, mitigation and adaptation strategies, and early warning systems. For example, in South Africa, communities are being encouraged to understand their role in the transition to renewable energy and how they can contribute to reducing carbon emissions through sustainable practices like energy conservation and tree planting. This approach ensures that the shift towards a low-carbon economy benefits everyone, especially vulnerable groups, while maintaining economic stability.

4.5.7. Environmental Legislation, Key Policies, and Programmes

Over the years, a range of progressive and transformational policies, programmes, legislation and regulations have been enacted to address environmental management issues.

⁵¹ Mpumalanga Biodiversity Sector Plan HandBook. https://conservationcorridor.org/cpb/Lotter_et_al_2014.pdf

⁵² Mpumalanga Provincial Spatial Development Framework project. <https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Phase2.pdf>

⁵³ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

The National Development Plan 2030 (NDP 2030) emphasises the rights-based approach and sets specific targets towards a low-carbon and sustainable economy and building resilience against climate change.

The Consultative National Environmental Policy Process (CONNEPP) was initiated at the onset of democracy, in August 1995, giving rise to the current regime of environmental laws. These included the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) to enable the government to implement its environmental management policy

The 30 Years Review Report of South Africa reported that in 2005, the government established the Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI), or "the Green Scorpions," to enhance compliance with national environmental laws through a network of officials at various government levels. This law enforcement extends to justice and police sectors for prosecuting environmental crimes. In 2006, the cooperative governance forum MINTECH WG4 was formed to coordinate environmental compliance efforts between national and provincial bodies.

In 2023, the National Integrated Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking (NISCWT) was approved to empower law enforcement in preventing wildlife trafficking. Additionally, environmental authorizations like Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), Water Use Licence Applications (WULAs), and Atmospheric Emissions Licences (AEL) have been streamlined to enhance efficiency in managing the environmental impacts of development projects⁵⁴.

As stated above, the department has revised its organisational structure to try and fully comply in responding to these opportunities and challenges.

4.5.8. Targeted Strategies for Environmental Sector.

a) Water Resource Management

Focus is on improved water management strategies, including the adoption of water-efficient farming techniques, rehabilitation of water catchment areas, and investments in irrigation infrastructure to safeguard water availability for both agricultural and domestic use.

b) Biodiversity and Conservation Priorities

Develop programmes and projects that emphasizes the integration of biodiversity conservation with agricultural development, promoting policies that protect natural habitats while supporting sustainable agricultural practices

c) Environmental Assets and Natural Resource Management.

Develop a balanced approach that supports economic development while promoting sustainable land use, protecting ecosystems, and addressing environmental degradation.

d) Tourism and Conservation as Economic Assets

Developed programmes that encouraged investment and importance of preserving the province's biodiversity and natural heritage, not only for environmental sustainability but also for their contribution to tourism, which is an important economic sector. Sustainable agricultural practices are essential to maintaining the health of these ecosystems

⁵⁴ 30 Years Review Report of South Africa

e) Climate Change and Agricultural Resilience

Developed programmes that promotes climate-resilient farming practices, water conservation strategies, and investments in climate-smart technologies to protect the agricultural sector and maintain its economic contribution.

f) Environmental Vulnerabilities and Climate Change

Mpumalanga faces significant environmental challenges, including land degradation, deforestation, and the impacts of climate change, such as irregular rainfall, droughts, and water scarcity. These environmental stressors threaten agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.

Roll out programmes that encourage sustainable farming practices, conservation efforts, and climate resilience strategies to mitigate these risks and protect the province's natural resources.

g) Environmental and Climate Concerns

Developed programs and initiatives aimed at promoting climate-resilient farming practices, sustainable land management, and conservation efforts.

h) Agricultural Land Use and Sustainability

Developed programs and projects promote sustainable agricultural methods, such as agroecology, organic farming, and conservation agriculture, to ensure long-term productivity and environmental health.

(B) INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

The internal environment analysis focuses on aligning the organizational structure of the Department to effectively deliver on its mandate. The aim is to ensure that the department is equipped with the necessary resources, personnel, and operational capabilities to meet its strategic goals and serve the agricultural sector, rural development, land administration, and environmental protection needs of the province.

The following are key focus areas:

i) Mandate Review

The core mandate of the department includes promoting sustainable agricultural development, ensuring equitable land use, advancing rural development, and protecting the environment. The organisational structure is thus designed to support policy formulation, program implementation, and service delivery in these areas.

ii) Current Organisational Structure

The Department has in the last two years embarked on the strategic review exercise on the then organisational structure that was last developed in 2010. The process reflected on the appropriateness of the organisational structure to deliver on the directives and new mandate that manifested themselves in the last twelve years. The review established that the organisational structure has since become and inappropriate to respond to the service delivery need and challenges that the Department was required to address

The revised structure has been approved and is in its initiation stage of implementation. It is currently being evaluated to determine how well it aligns with the department's mandate. This includes an assessment of:

- Departmental divisions and their alignment with key focus areas (agriculture, rural development, land reform, environmental affairs)
- Communication channels and decision-making processes
- Roles and responsibilities within units

iii) Capacity and Resources

Concurrently the department's human resources and technical capacity are evaluated and capacitated to ensure there are sufficient and well-trained staff in areas that were noted to have faced challenges due restructuring and natural attrition.

In addition, a recruitment process is underway to fill critical vacancies by recruiting capable staff to close the gap of the high turnover rate at different levels of the Department.

iv) Leadership and Governance

The department continuously review and strengthen its Leadership and Governance structures. An analysis of the leadership structure, including executive decision-making roles, governance policies, and accountability mechanisms, ensures that they foster efficient service delivery.

v) Process Efficiency

Focus in the five years is to enhance governance frameworks to ensure accountability, transparency, and stakeholder engagement. Foster collaborative leadership that encourages interdepartmental cooperation and public-private partnerships.

The department has also established dedicated units focused on strategic areas such as climate-smart agriculture, sustainable agro-processing, and rural innovation and infrastructure. It is emphasising on strengthened integration between agriculture and environmental units to promote sustainability.

vi) Technology and Innovation

The department has continuously ensured that it maintain and strengthen its Technology and Innovation. The IT section has in the last three financial years obtained a clean audit report. The department's use of technology and innovation is assessed to identify gaps that may hinder effective service delivery.

The department's investing in modern technologies has started to fruits by significant improvement in efficiency and ensured the department remains agile in a dynamic agricultural and environmental environment.

The department has adopted an advanced agricultural technology, geographic information systems (GIS) for land management, and digital tools for project planning and implementation and environmental gas emission monitoring.

vii) Process Optimization

To ensure that the department is dynamic with the trends around it, it has ensured that it put more emphasis on refining and repurposing the operating model and creating the requisite capacity by recruiting critical skills to implement, monitor and evaluate government programmes against the GNU and Provincial priorities in the next five years leading to more efficient and impactful service delivery in the sectors mandated to.

viii) Strengthening the empowerment of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities

The department has managed to attain the fair representation in women, youth and disabilities. It is largely a youthful at the executive level with domination by women at various levels. The Department managed to have on average 2% of staff being people with disability in the past five years.

The department supports the empowerment of designated groups through both procurement spending and staff composition. Over the past five years, the Department's workforce has, on average, included 50% women, 50% youth, and 2% people with disabilities. Going forward, the Department is committed to maintaining a staff composition that accurately reflects the demographics of these designated groups within South African society.

(C) STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The following is the table indicating the current status and the recommendations by the stakeholders at the The Taking Legislature to People (TLP) in September 2024 in Mkhondo

Table: Stakeholder Consultation September 2024:

ORGANISATION / COMMODITIES	PRESENTATION COMMODITY	PROPOSED INTERVENTION COMMODITIES	BY	DEPARTMENT'S COMMENT
AFASA	<p>Union request to form part on the development of the Departmental plans.</p> <p>Union share concerned that the Provincial Disaster management committee is not on board, farmers are affected by lack of support.</p> <p>Agri insurance for farmer's is very expensive, Stock theft remain a challenge in the farming sector.</p> <p>Mining sector has taken some of the agricultural land and continuation of illegal mining remain a challenge.</p> <p>Vandalism of Agricultural infrastructure and export opportunity still a challenge to our farmers a special black farmer's.</p> <p>Some of business vendors are not from the province who supply correctional services and health with food.</p>	The Union request the department to consider processing the request as the department develop its plans for the coming financial years.		The union has since attended the departmental strategic plan and actively participated. The union is has also agreed to form part of the consultative process going forward
GRAIN SA	The sector is affected by mechanization support special the subsistence and small holder farmers.	Request the department to inject more resource on mechanization and develop a model to manage the mechanization.		The union has since attended the departmental strategic plan and actively participated. The union is has also agreed to form part of the consultative process going forward
POTATO SA	Potato production value chain start from 5ha. The Company have a transformation entity that deal with economic opportunity in the sector e.g. every Potato have a leavy on it that bring meaning benefit to our farmers. Potato have opportunity for bursaries from graduate to post graduate.	Potato SA is available to help farmers who are interested farming with Potato's. and those youth who want to pursue their carrier in Agriculture.		The association is part of the ongoing potato trials with the department
BEKALB BAYER	Presented on science Gemo seed cultivars are adaptable to draught and climate change pattern.	Encourage farmers to buy from reputable outlet, this will help to prevent loss of income		The company is part of the trial and farmers' day programs

ORGANISATION / COMMODITIES	PRESENTATION COMMODITY	PROPOSED INTERVENTION COMMODITIES	DEPARTMENT'S COMMENT
		through poor quality seed.	
DFDC	Presented on the Gert Sibande region to have the potential to contribute meaningful to GDP of the Province, the sector has the capacity to create 1000 job per 1000 ha. There are more economic opportunities in the sector this include production of Juice, fruit etc.	Requested the department to invest also on the Deciduous fruit industry since the province have good soil and climate on the high veld that make the province to be at advantage on Market since the fruit mature earlier than the other Region in the Country.	The council has since attended the departmental strategic planning session and is part of the ongoing trial with the department. Several consultative and planning processes were held.
Cannabis Association MP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the most established and high-growth segments within the cannabis industry is medical cannabis. With its potential to alleviate symptoms of various medical conditions, the demand for medical cannabis products and services continues to rise. To form part of the Hamp consortium is at the value R2000,00. 	The Association encourage farmers to form part of the consortium. The	The association is part of the ongoing consultative process and trials with the department

The following is the table listing the key stakeholders and the purpose of the of the collaboration.

Table: Stakeholders and Purpose:

STRATEGIC PARTNER	PURPOSE	TANGIBLE ONGOING COLLABORATIVE WORK DONE TO DATE	FUTURE PLANS	TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP
RCL FOODS	Sugar Cane Fields Crop diversification on Trust/CPA farms	<p>Formed Multi-stakeholder Forum with Local Municipality, DHS, Sugar industry, land reform communities.</p> <p>Topics/Issues (Risks & Opportunities);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crop diversification and cane expansion; Conversion of agric land including invasion; Re-allocation of water rights for agric expansion; and Sand mining and its impact on agriculture. 	Frequency: Quarterly with stream meetings in between.	Working arrangement
	Empowerment of sugar and sub-tropical fruits producers	The department has seconded one (1) official to work with RCL Foods officials. RCL Foods officials are also invited to present to farmers during	Research on best suitable cultivars through South African Sugar Research Institute (SASRI) and	Working arrangement

STRATEGIC PARTNER	PURPOSE	TANGIBLE ONGOING COLLABORATIVE WORK DONE TO DATE	FUTURE PLANS	TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP
		farmers' days and field visits. One official has been seconded to serve on the Provincial Extension Coordinating Forum (PECF) that sits quarterly	ARC through the Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Crops(ITSC)	
ARC	Seed Business Incubator in Mpumalanga establishment.	Incubation Programme for establishing four categories of seed businesses (Legumes, Fruits, Vegetables and Cannabis) Incubation to provide activities such as to training and support for seed producers	Economically-viable propagation and distribution of new selected cultivars developed. Participative and empowering processes that involve smallholder farmers and agricultural advisors. Introduction of planting material and developing seed stocks for novel products with focus niche commodity such on cannabis.	Working arrangement
	Collaboration in adaptive research for new cultivar seed	Suitable WEMA seed cultivars identified for MP, ground nuts, cow peas, chick pea , sweet potato trials in progress	Intensify adaptive research for climate resilience cultivars and crops (e.g. casava)	Working arrangement
Deciduous Fruit Development Chamber (DFDC)	Development and expansion of deciduous fruit production in Mpumalanga Province through technical and infrastructure support to the producers and the Extension Practitioners	Departmental Task Team conducted a pre-feasibility study and identified six potential producers. Engaged ARC to start conducting a feasibility study on those identified projects.	Identification and assessment of current and potential deciduous producers to ascertain availability of natural resources and infrastructural needs	MOU signed with Department
Grain South Africa (GSA)	Development and capacity building of african grain producing farmers, and to contribute to household and national food security through the optimal use of the natural resource available to each farmer	Promoted Conservation Agriculture (CA) and have procured and distributed No-Till equipments (planters) to the study groups with 2533,8 ha planted under CA	Increase the number of already established study groups Promote the use of Conservation Agriculture (CA)	SLA signed with Department
NERPO (Kaonafatso ya Dikgomo-KYD)	Commercialization of livestock producers	4x trainings already conducted by KYD. Two for livestock producers and two for Extension Practitioners with one practical workshop planned for the 30 th March 2021 at Irene.	Capacity building of livestock producers	SLA signed with Department
Citrus Growers Association	Development and capacitate citrus producing farmers in the Province	Invitations of the Citrus Growers Association (CGA) officials to present to farmers during farmers' days and field visits	Mobilisation and training of farmers to venture into citrus production	Working arrangement

STRATEGIC PARTNER	PURPOSE	TANGIBLE ONGOING COLLABORATIVE WORK DONE TO DATE	FUTURE PLANS	TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP
Potato SA	Development and capacity building of african potato producing farmers in the province	Invitations of the Potato SA (PSA) officials to present to farmers during farmers' days and field visits. Have established four cultivar trials in Gert Sibande district	Increase the number of already established potato cultivar trial sites	Working arrangement
Cotton SA	Development and expansion of land for cotton production	Invitations of the Cotton SA officials to present to farmers during farmers' days and field visits. One official has been seconded to serve on the Provincial Extension Coordinating Forum (PECF) that sits quarterly	Increase the number of farmers and hectares producing cotton to inform the establishment of a ginnery	Working arrangement
SAMIC	Development and expansion of land for macadamia production	Invitations of the Macadamia officials to present to farmers during farmers' days and field visits. One official has been seconded to serve on the Provincial Extension Coordinating Forum (PECF) that sits quarterly	Mobilisation and training of farmers to venture into macadamia production	Working arrangement
UMP	DARDLEA collaborate with UMP in terms of Agricultural research and training where UMP is part of the Mpumalanga Agricultural Research Committee (MARC) and the Provincial Agricultural Education and Training Forum (PAETAF).	The MARC is chaired by Head of the School of Agriculture and PAETAF is chaired by the Dean. 18 Research projects approved and in the process of developing an agricultural training strategy for the province Mentorship for the researchers and Soil laboratory technical staff	Offer agricultural experiential learning opportunities for students of UMP Collaboration in agricultural research	MoU signed with the Province
Omnia Fertilizer Company, Bayer Agrochemicals and Pioneer Seed Company	The Department is collaborating with Inputs Companies namely Omnia, Bayer and Pioneer in implementing a simulation project to show case the different cultivars under different practices	A simulation project at Athole Research Farm to showcase the performance of different cultivars, under different practices and farming conditions	To conduct similar projects under different climatic zones in the province	Working arrangement
South African Natural Biodiversity institute (SANBI) and UKZN	S To scale-up climate change adaptation strategies for smallholder farmers	In the process of applying for the Green Climate Fund to implement nature-based solutions for transformation of smallholder farmers' systems that are vulnerable to climate change impacts in Mpumalanga.	To institutionalize climate change resilience and adaptation strategies in farmer support programmes and to scale up climate change adaptation strategies by the sector	MoU will be signed once the funding has been approved
National Skills Fud (NSF)	National Skills Fud (NSF) for implementing the Mpuamalanga Rural Skills and Learnership Programme (MRS�P).	516 youth completed skills development 847 completed learnership qualification in agricultural production, agro-processing and mechanizatio	8 learnerships qualifications targeting 940 youth is to be implemented in 2021/22 and 2022/23	MoA siged with NSF

STRATEGIC PARTNER	PURPOSE	TANGIBLE ONGOING COLLABORATIVE WORK DONE TO DATE	FUTURE PLANS	TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP
Partner with ICLEI-International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and University of Cape Town	Promote sustainability for development and creates systemic change in environment (i.e rural &urban areas) , and promotes rapid response to climate change and ecosystem inequalities.	Currently finalizing the development of Just Transition Plan for the Province	Development of Just Transition Plan for the Province and Implementation of the local initiatives for low carbon emission projects	MOU signed with the Department
USAID-LED	Strengthen the capacity of public sector to plan, finance, implement and report on low emissions development projects	Developed Mpumalanga Climate Change Mitigation Strategy, Greenhouse Gas Inventory and provided capacity building to the Provincial and local municipalities officials in form of training on Web Development tool.	Provide technical support for the Implementation of the Climate Change Mitigation strategy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory, introduce and initiatives low carbon technologies for renewable energy projects	Developed Mpumalanga Climate Change Mitigation Strategy, Greenhouse Gas Inventory and provided capacity building to the Provincial and local municipalities officials in form of training on Web Development tool.
PETCO, ABI Coca Cola and Plastic SA,	Waste Intervention projects - PETCO, ABI Coca Cola and Plastic SA,	Provided Capacity building to waste recyclers, in form of training by PETCO and ABI Coca cola, supplied the waste recyclers with waste collection equipment's, i.e 100 x litter pickers, establishment of waste buyback center for Bophelo Waste recyclers worth R500 000. from PETCO, 10 000 refuse bags from Plastic SA,	Resource Mobilization and capacity building to waste recyclers and waste Project (i.e ZIP), provide accredited training and provide waste equipment's	Working on agreement/ mou to be signed
SAPS, IUCMA,NPA, Human Rights Commision	Enforcement of environmental legislation - partner with enforcement agencies SAPS, IUCMA,NPA, Human Rights Commision.	Partnered with the Department in ensuring compliance and enforcement, through road blocks, joint operations, and prosecution of all environmental cases within the province.	Increase and strengthening of enforcement actions against environmental management legislations	SAPS (MOU with Minister which must be implemented by all provinces and Legislation legal requirements to work with all other enforcement agencies
NEDBANK , and Rand Water	Establishment of water conservation and Greening projects	NEDBANK, supported the Province in Greenest Municipality Competition by providing prize awards for the winning municipalities and issuing complementary gifts. Rand Water – partnered with the department in establishment of food gardens and water harvesting projects which benefited rural communities especially women in B	Capacity building on food security projects including water harvesting and food gardening projects for rural communities	Working on agreement

STRATEGIC PARTNER	PURPOSE	TANGIBLE ONGOING COLLABORATIVE WORK DONE TO DATE	FUTURE PLANS	TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP
University of Johannesburg, University of Mpumalanga, University of KwaZulu Natal, CSIR Human Research Council SANBI	Climate Change: - to conduct Climate Change Intervention research projects	The academic, and Research institution partnered with the department by conducting, research projects, on climate change impacts related to water, agriculture, forestry and biodiversity	Develop research papers on i.e Climate Change, Biodiversity, Waste, GHG, for Provincial implementation, provide official capacity on research projects that seeks to address greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy and project initiatives for low- carbon emission	Working on agreement
Exxaro, ESKOM Columbus, RCL foods, SAMANCOR, SAPPI Ngodwana	To contributes and promote renewable energy projects in line with to the Provincial GHG emission to reduction plan for low-carbon economy	The industries partnered with the department by implementing renewable energy projects for low carbon emission and greenhouse gas reduction	for the initiating and implementation of greenhouse reduction projects which promotes socio-economic and environmental benefits and that move towards low- carbon	Working agreement

(D) SWOT ANALYSIS

The department maintains a strong position in the province, supported by the region's significant agricultural potential and valuable environmental resources. However, ongoing challenges such as limited financial capacity, skills shortages, and external threats like climate change present constant hurdles.

By leveraging prospects in areas like agro-processing, climate-smart agriculture, public-private partnerships, and the stable political environment, the department is actively working to improve farming and rural livelihoods, promote sustainable land use, and build resilience against future risks. Over the next five years, the focus will be on advancing land reform support, sustainability, market access, and youth engagement to boost agricultural productivity and drive rural development in the province.

The following are some of the key issues as noted under the SWOT and TOW analysis:

SWOT ANALYSIS:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Rich Agricultural Resources: The province is highly fertile, known for producing key agricultural products like maize, sugar, citrus, and forestry. The department leverages this diversity to boost production and promote market-oriented farming, with plans to expand farmland access to support growth. ii) Strategic Mandate: The department's mandate spans agriculture, rural development, land management, and environmental sustainability, allowing for a comprehensive approach to provincial development. iii) Support for Small-Scale Farmers: There is a strong focus on promoting smallholder farming and improving rural livelihoods through land reform and access to agricultural inputs, aligning with national policies. iv) Environmental Focus: The integration of environmental affairs ensures that agricultural growth is balanced with sustainable resource use and conservation, crucial for biodiversity and ecosystem protection. v) Partnerships and Collaboration: Collaborations with other government departments, private sector entities, NGOs, and commodity groups enhance the department's capacity to implement conservation, rural development, and food security initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Limited Financial Resources: Budget constraints restrict the department's ability to fully implement projects, particularly in supporting smallholder farmers and addressing environmental issues. ii) Capacity and Skills Gaps: A shortage of skilled personnel, especially in rural areas, veterinary services, and environmental roles, affects the department's ability to provide adequate support to farmers and the business sector. iii) Slow Land Reform Process: Delays in land reform hinder agricultural development and land use optimization, limiting opportunities for small-scale farmers to expand. The department is working to improve efficiency in land reform and resource allocation to enhance access to land and promote commercial farming. iv) Bureaucratic Delays: Internal inefficiencies and slow bureaucratic processes often delay key projects, including enforcement, infrastructure development, rural development, and irrigation access. v) Data and Information Management: Challenges in data collection, management, and analysis impede effective decision-making, particularly in tracking farmer development, land reform progress, rural development, and environmental sustainability.

SWOT ANALYSIS:

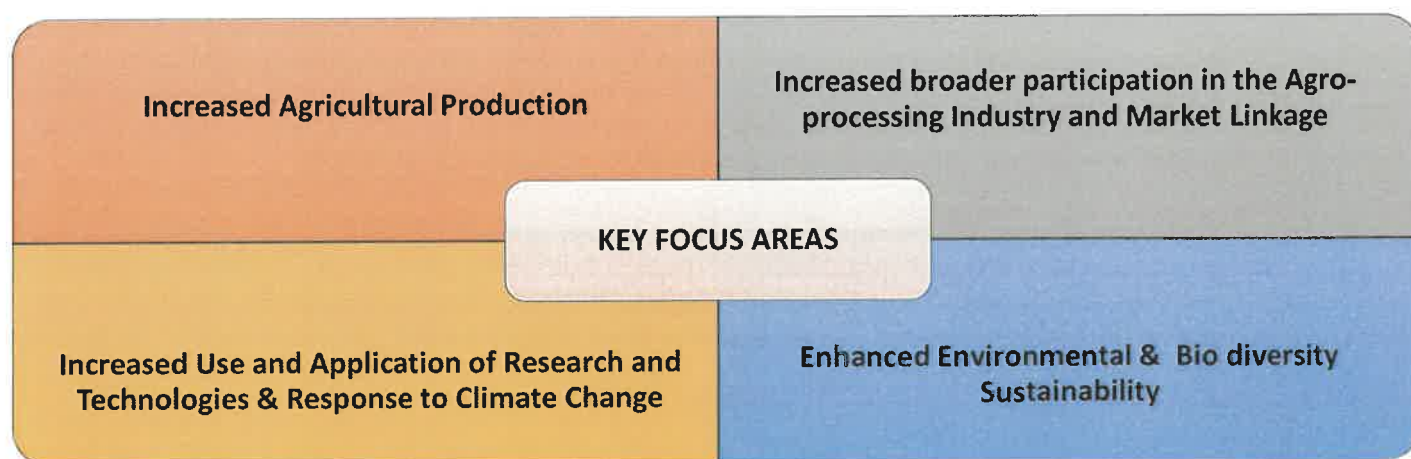
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Expanding Agricultural Markets: The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and national policies aimed at boosting exports present opportunities to grow regional and international agricultural markets. The department is developing the Mpumalanga International Food Market and investing in market infrastructure to help farmers access broader markets and increase their income. ii) Agro-processing and Value Addition: Expanding the agro-processing sector can increase farmer income, create jobs, and stimulate rural economies, particularly benefiting youth and women. iii) Climate-Smart Agriculture: The department promotes climate-resilient farming practices, such as climate-smart techniques and water-efficient irrigation, to improve productivity and sustainability. Programs like the Smart Box aim to enhance food security while protecting natural resources. iv) Land Redistribution and Rural Development: Accelerating land reform provides opportunities for increased agricultural productivity and rural economic growth. The department collaborates with the Mpumalanga PSSC Office to facilitate this. v) Green Energy Initiatives: Investing in renewable energy, such as solar for rural communities, can enhance agricultural efficiency and reduce costs, supporting environmental sustainability. vi) Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Collaborating with the private sector brings potential funding, technology, and expertise for advancing farmer development, environmental protection, and agricultural growth. vii) Environmental Conservation and Agri and Eco-tourism: Mpumalanga's biodiversity offers opportunities for agri and eco-tourism, which can complement agriculture and create alternative income streams for farmers and rural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Climate Change: Increasing impacts of climate change, such as frequent droughts and changing weather patterns, threaten agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability. The department is promoting climate-resilient practices, like drought-tolerant crops and improved livestock management, to mitigate these risks. ii) Land Degradation and Soil Erosion: Intensive agricultural practices without proper conservation measures are leading to land degradation, jeopardizing long-term agricultural viability. The department aims to make farming more appealing and profitable for youth to counter urban migration. iii) Water Scarcity and Water Rights: Limited water availability and water rights issues pose significant risks to agriculture and rural livelihoods, emphasizing the need for effective water management and infrastructure. iv) Political and Policy Uncertainty: Unstable national policies and delays in policy implementation related to agriculture and land reform could disrupt progress in rural development and environmental management. v) Pests and Diseases: Climate change is increasing the spread of pests and crop diseases, which particularly threatens small-scale farmers with limited resources for managing these risks. vi) Economic Downturn: Economic challenges, including high unemployment and poverty in South Africa, can negatively impact rural development and reduce the department's ability to secure funding for crucial projects. vii) Increased Crime: Rising crime, including theft at departmental projects, delays or halts project implementation, affecting sustainability.

5. KEY DRIVERS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECTORS:

Even after three decades of democracy, the farming and agriculture sector remains predominantly dominated by white commercial farmers, with males making up the majority. In response, the government, through the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development (DALRRD), has committed to promoting greater participation by black farmers, women, youth, and individuals with disabilities. To achieve this, programs such as the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), Land Care, Ilima Letsema conditional grants, AgriBEE funds, Blended Funding, Jobs Fund, and Mafisa have been designed to provide targeted support. The department creates an enabling environment for farmers to access these resources by offering advisory services, assisting with business plans, and forming partnerships.

The key areas identified for accelerated impact are summarized in the figure below:

Key Departmental Focus Areas:



Under this key focus area, the department has developed the following priority intervention towards achieving this.

5.1. Provincial Agricultural Bills

The department is in the process of getting the following provincial based bills passed:

5.1.1. Increased Blended Funding Scheme (BFS) for emerging farmers and SMME

- Provide an opportunity to create a just, inclusive, thriving and resilient future for all. This will create a partnership between the department and other government funding sources and private funding aimed at increasing access to affordable finance for producers historically disadvantaged farmers and SMMEs
- Partnership was forged between the department and Land Bank. Other potential banks also identified and considered.

5.1.2. Government Nutrition Sourcing Bill (GNS Bill)

- Support and capacitate, at least 1000 small, medium and micro farming enterprises and 1600 SMMEs (4 per ward) to supply and trade in various agriculture commodities to sustain the MIFPM. Bill is at the draft level.

5.2. Agro-Processing Initiatives:

Strategic investments were made in infrastructure, including the establishment of essential agricultural facilities, which significantly boosted agricultural output. Rural development initiatives focused on empowering smallholder farmers and rural communities through improved access to resources, markets, and infrastructure.

5.2.1. Mpumalanga International Food Market and Food Market Squares

In the last Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), the province established the Mpumalanga International Food Market precinct in the City of Mbombela. This precinct will work in tandem with the Food Market Squares, which are yet to be established in various wards across the province.

5.2.1.1. Mpumalanga International Food Market – City of Mbombela Precinct

The establishment of the Mpumalanga International Food Market in the City of Mbombela represents a pivotal development in the province's agricultural and economic landscape. As a region with immense agricultural potential, the province stands to benefit significantly from a centralized market that connects local producers to both national and global markets. This initiative aligns with our strategic vision to enhance food security while driving economic growth through agricultural exports, job creation, and rural development.

The Mpumalanga International Food Market will serve as a key platform for showcasing the province's diverse agricultural products, ranging from fresh produce to processed goods. By providing direct access to international buyers and reducing intermediaries, the market will enable farmers—especially smallholder and emerging producers—to secure better prices for their goods, thereby increasing their profitability. This, in turn, will strengthen local economies, improve livelihoods, and foster inclusive growth.

Moreover, the market will attract investment into the province's agro-processing sector, enhancing value addition and creating new business opportunities across the supply chain. The integration of international standards for food safety and quality will also elevate the reputation of Mpumalanga's agricultural products, positioning the province as a competitive player in the global food trade.

Over the next five years, the department will upscale its support to farmers through capacity building, infrastructure development, and market access initiatives. The International Food Market will be a cornerstone of the province's agricultural development strategy, contributing not only to provincial prosperity but also to the broader national agenda of economic sustainability and global competitiveness.

5.2.1.2. Food Market Squares

The Mpumalanga International Food Market (MIFM) will be directly linked to the Food Market Squares programme, which serves as its extension.

This programme involves establishing Food Market Squares—containerized economic infrastructure—across all 400 municipal wards in the province. These squares will empower 1,600 SMMEs by providing the necessary infrastructure to achieve the following:

- Democratize access to nutritional food.
- Create new business opportunities in the food sector.
- Strengthen local SMME food traders.

- Formalize informal food trading in Mpumalanga, enabling traders to compete effectively with established retailers.
 - Encourage consumers to support local SMME businesses beyond sympathy purchases.
 - Enhance convenience and access to nutritious food commodities for local communities.
- This initiative will optimize public and private spaces through the development of appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of both local SMMEs and the broader community. It will also contribute to creating more dignified trading spaces in townships across the province.

A fixed, reliable place and infrastructure for trade are key priorities for both formal and informal traders. Given that repeat purchases form a significant portion of any trader's business, consistency in trading location and infrastructure is paramount to the success of any enterprise.

5.2.2. Agri-Hubs:

The establishment of Agri-Hubs in Mpumalanga's three district municipalities (Nkangala, Ehlanzeni, and Gert Sibande) is a key step in transforming the province's agricultural sector and promoting rural development. These hubs serve as production, processing, and distribution centres, providing vital support to smallholder farmers and agribusinesses. They enhance market access, improve productivity, and strengthen value chains, thereby unlocking economic potential. Agri-Hubs will create jobs, encourage entrepreneurship, and attract investment, while also supporting food security, poverty alleviation, and rural development. Integrated with the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market, the hubs will boost Mpumalanga's role in South Africa's agricultural sector.

The department has successfully operationalized the Mkhuhlu Agrihub in February 2023, providing market access for smallholder farmers and serving as an aggregation centre for the Government Nutrition Program and to in future supply the Mpumalanga International Food Market. This Agri hub supports vegetable and dry ration supplies to departments like Health (31 hospitals) and Education (6 boarding schools). Plans are underway to roll out the program to all 32 provincial hospitals and integrate the Mkhondo, Nkangala, and Nkomazi Agri hubs into the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market. In 2023/24, about 74 agro-processors and agribusinesses in grain, poultry, livestock, and vegetable production benefited from this initiative.

5.2.3. Agricultural Mills:

The department has embarked on the establishment of community and youth-run grain mills in Mpumalanga as a key strategy for economic empowerment and agricultural growth.

These mills support local development by creating jobs, fostering entrepreneurship, and promoting sustainable livelihoods, particularly for youth in rural areas. They add value to locally grown produce, increase farmers' market competitiveness, and reduce the need to transport raw products outside the province.

Economically, the grain mills stimulate local economies, enhance food security, and align with poverty alleviation goals by empowering communities to retain the benefits of agricultural production.

The department has over the last MTSF supported these mills with milling infrastructure and training and other resources. These are viewed as essential in fighting unemployment and positioning Mpumalanga's agricultural sector as a driver of inclusive economic growth

The department refurbished RAKS milling and Thembisile Hani grain mill, providing equipment and resources such as silos and water infrastructure. These mills have been integrated into the GNP projects and offer local grain producers a platform to increase

agricultural production. Further plans are in place to upgrade mills in Mbuzini, Mbongozi, Daggakraal, and Matibidi.

5.2.4. Agro-Processing Production Schemes - Avocado Packaging and oil processing plant

The department is working towards the establishment of Agro-Processing Production Schemes, with a focus on developing an avocado packaging and oil processing plant in the province.

This initiative is part of the broader strategy to enhance agro-processing capabilities, improve value addition in agricultural products, and create market access for local farmers.

By setting up this processing plant, the department aims to stimulate rural development, generate employment opportunities, and support the province's agricultural sector in contributing to the provincial economy through innovative processing methods. This project will not only boost the avocado value chain but will also promote sustainable agricultural practices and position Mpumalanga as a competitive player in both national and international avocado markets.

5.2.5. Agro processing of Medicinal Crops, (i.e. Hemp and Cannabis)

The department will be focusing on rolling out the establishment of community and youth-run agro-processing ventures for medicinal crops like hemp and cannabis. This will be situated in the Mpumalanga AgriPark in Secunda in the province.

This is a transformative initiative aimed at unlocking the economic potential of these high-value crops. It creates opportunities for rural communities, particularly young entrepreneurs, to engage in cultivation, processing, and marketing, boosting local economies.

These projects will provide an accessible gateway for smallholder farmers to enter the medicinal crop industry, enhancing their competitiveness in both local and international markets. By integrating these enterprises into the province's agricultural value chain, will strengthen Mpumalanga's position as a leader in the medicinal crop industry.

These hubs will generate jobs, promote entrepreneurship, and add value to raw materials, reducing dependency on external markets. By supporting smallholder farmers, these ventures align with rural industrialization, poverty alleviation, and food security goals.

In the medium term the department will focus on increasing production and agro-processing of medicinal crops, i.e. hemp and cannabis, in line with the Agricultural Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP). Site established at the Mpumalanga Agripark in Secunda

5.3. Food Security Initiatives:

5.3.1. Climate Smart Agriculture Programme:

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has allocated resources to encourage the adoption of Conservation Agriculture principles, which include minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover, and crop rotations. These practices are widely applicable across various agricultural landscapes and cropping systems⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - Fact sheet: Conservation Agriculture

Several programs were implemented to improve food security, focusing on increasing access to nutritious food, promoting diversified farming systems, and addressing the needs of vulnerable communities.

One of the key challenges faced by the department over the last five years has been climate change, which negatively impacted food production due to extreme weather, water shortages, and limited access to farming land. To address these issues, the **department introduced Smart Agricultural Boxes**, which have proven effective for individuals facing water and land access challenges, including people with disabilities. This technology has been embraced by communities and has been rolled out to house of traditional leaders, schools, women and youth cooperatives, and disability-focused projects, benefiting women, youth, and people with disabilities.

5.3.2. Phezukomkhono Mhlali

The department remains committed to the Phezukomkhono Mhlali food security program, which will continue to provide mechanization support and inputs to boost farmers' production levels. Over the years, this initiative has helped farmers address the challenges posed by the dominance of big businesses in agricultural inputs.

The program aims to correct imbalances between primary and secondary production while enhancing food security. It focuses on increasing support for emerging and small-scale farmers, positioning them as essential contributors to the agricultural sector. The goal is to integrate subsistence and emerging farmers into mainstream agriculture, strengthening food security in Mpumalanga and aligning with national standards.

Phezukomkhono Mhlali will also play a key role in the "Turning Mpumalanga Green" initiative, driving sustainable growth in the province.

5.3.3. Masibuyele Esibayeni Programme (MESP)

In the planning period, the department will roll out the livestock program aimed at promoting mixed farming, allowing farmers to transition from subsistence farming to commercial operations. The program focuses on the development of both large and small livestock.

While livestock farming is predominantly active in Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande, the department plans to allocate more resources to the Highveld regions—Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts—due to their proximity to the Lowveld red line zone near Kruger National Park.

The program will support eligible farmers by providing both large and small livestock, with a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability and compliance with animal health standards. Environmentalists and veterinarians will be involved in the process of acquiring livestock. These efforts aim to further drive the commercialisation of the livestock sector.

5.4. Greening Mpumalanga initiative

5.4.1. Crop Husbandry

Mpumalanga has significant agricultural potential and a competitive advantage in various agricultural commodities. To maximize this potential and increase agricultural production and enhance food security and job creation, the department has developed the Greening Mpumalanga initiative, a value chain approach that focuses on key agricultural zones'

In the upcoming year, the department will implement initiatives across three key agricultural baskets and a grain corridor to boost production and market access:

a) Vegetable Basket: Greening Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality (CALM) Program

The department will roll out the program to other farms that were identified in the preceding years. The department will continue to provide comprehensive support that includes farm infrastructure, planting and ploughing, market access, and training. The program will focus on some of the top five commodities—potatoes, onions, tomatoes, bananas, and apples—which will be sold at Fresh Produce Markets.

There are established markets for the Potato Scheme, and identified CPAs are well-positioned to capitalize on these opportunities. Potatoes account for approximately 40% of vegetable farmers' gross income, with tomatoes, onions, green mealies, and sweetcorn making up around 38%. About 40% of South Africa's potato production comes from the middle and high-lying regions of Mpumalanga and the Free State. Of the total crop, roughly 50% is sent to fresh produce markets, while an additional 18% is processed. The South African potato processing industry has shown consistent growth over the past decade⁵⁶.

b) Deciduous Fruit Basket: CALM, Msukaligwa, and Dr Pixley ka Isaka Local Municipalities

Ehlanzeni region contributes a third of South Africa's orange exports and produces avocados, mangoes, litchis, and bananas, with Hazyview area alone accounting for 90% of the province's banana output.

The fruit basket initiative will support the cultivation of summer apple varieties like Pink Lady on selected CPA farms, taking advantage of market demand when Cape apple production is lower.

c) Citrus Fruit Basket: City of Mbombela, Nkomazi, and BBR Local Municipalities

Mpumalanga is one of the provinces in South Africa that cultivates soft citrus, lemons, and various types of oranges. The climate in Mpumalanga, along with Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, is more suitable for growing grapefruit and Valencia oranges compared to the cooler climates of the Western and Eastern Cape.

However, farmers face significant challenges, with production input costs being the highest constraint, followed by limited access to irrigation water—100% of households and 98.5% of communal farmers are affected. These constraints impact 82.8% of communal models and 66.7% of household farming models⁵⁷.

Commercial barriers are also a major issue, with 100% of households and 94% of communal farmers experiencing difficulties in competing in the market. Compliance with food safety standards poses a further challenge, affecting all household farmers and 83.6% of those in communal models.

d) Grain Corridor: Nkangala – THLM and Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipalities

Within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, South Africa continues to dominate the grain industry, accounting for 25% to 33% of the region's total agricultural output. Maize is the leading crop, followed by wheat, with sugarcane and sunflowers also

⁵⁶ <https://www.farmingportal.co.za/index.php/farming-news/south-africa/521-south-africa-s-farming-sectors-2018>

⁵⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354600097_The_Constraints_Affecting_Competitiveness_of_Emerging_Household_Citrus_Farmers_in_Mpumalanga_Province_South_Africa

contributing. Maize remains the largest locally produced field crop and is a key carbohydrate source across Southern Africa⁵⁸.

A report from the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service noted that while the Russia-Ukraine conflict had a broad negative impact on various commodities, local corn prices surged nearly 30% in the past four months due to global market uncertainty. The sharp increase in production input costs poses risks for corn farmers, especially those reliant on rain-fed irrigation. Despite the high commodity prices, forecasts suggested that South Africa's corn production would remain stable for the 2022/23 marketing year, with the country expected then to maintain its status as a net exporter under normal weather conditions⁵⁹.

The Southern and Northern Highveld regions of the province are the primary producers of field crops such as maize (20% of the country's production), sorghum, wheat, barley, soybeans (58% of national production), sugar, and groundnuts. In Mpumalanga, maize is primarily consumed during summer, while wheat is favoured in winter.

South Africa ranks as the 10th largest producer of sunflower seeds globally, with major production taking place in Mpumalanga, Free State, North West, and Limpopo. Sorghum is grown in the drier summer rainfall areas, including parts of Mpumalanga (like Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality), as well as in the Free State, Limpopo, North West, and Gauteng.

In the upcoming planning period, the department aims to develop additional hectares for grain production schemes.

5.4.2. Animal Husbandry

South Africa has one of the largest livestock populations in agriculture, with around 13.8 million cattle and 28.8 million sheep. Livestock breeders have focused on improving the quality of breeds that are well-suited to the country's varied climates and environmental conditions⁶⁰.

The country meets 85% of its own meat demand, with the remaining 15% imported from Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Australia, New Zealand, and the EU. While local demand surpasses production, there are significant untapped resources in communal farming areas.

Sheep farming is primarily concentrated in the Northern, Eastern, and Western Cape, Free State, and Mpumalanga, with Ermelo in Mpumalanga recognized as one of the largest wool-producing areas.

In the poultry sector, broiler production accounts for about 80% of total poultry meat, with the remainder coming from mature chicken slaughter (culls), small-scale, and backyard poultry, as well as ducks, geese, turkeys, and other specialized white meat products.

a) Poultry Production

This initiative focuses on developing broiler and egg-laying projects, with strong links to established markets.

⁵⁸ USDA Foreign Agricultural Services, Report No. SF2022-0019 <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/>

⁵⁹ USDA Foreign Agricultural Services, Report No. SF2022-0019 <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/>

⁶⁰ USDA Foreign Agricultural Services, Report No. SF2022-0019 <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/>

b) Livestock Production

This is linked to the Masibuyele Esibayeni Programme (MESP) as mentioned above. The program will provide farmers with large and small livestock, such as cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats, along with necessary infrastructure and market connections.

5.5. Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES – III Co-funding Support)

The Presidential Employment Stimulus is designed to support a spectrum of opportunities, focusing on job creation through public employment, on job retention. This programme is aimed at sustaining and increasing employment in the agricultural sector.

Through this program, the department will support subsistence producers with farming input vouchers, to retain self-employment in the sector, while supporting food value chains. This will be Implemented in the 3 x District based PES – III Co-funding Support: through Forestry; Grain Corridor; Citrus Corridor; Vegetable Corridor; 7 Animal Production

5.6. Sustainability Research and Skills Development:

Sustainable research and environmental conservation are increasingly recognized as critical to agriculture. The department undertook various initiatives to promote sustainable farming, conserve natural resources, and mitigate environmental degradation.

- **Research and Development**

The Department remains committed to advancing research and development efforts, conducting adaptive studies and demonstration trials in crops, pasture management, and animal husbandry. These activities are carried out on the Department's two research farms and on producers' land. In response to climate change challenges, ongoing research will include collaboration with other institutions to identify adaptation strategies and technologies to ensure agricultural productivity, with a focus on supporting smallholder farmers.

Collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) will continue, particularly in adaptive research, including the expansion of demonstration trials for Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) seeds across the four districts. This initiative aims to identify the most suitable seed varieties for the province's diverse climatic zones.

The Department is also conducting grain and sweet potato cultivar trials to determine the best-performing varieties and plans to develop production guidelines tailored to different climatic conditions and soil types within the province. The region's participation in the national program to promote indigenous food crops further supports food security efforts.

The soil laboratory plays a key role in assisting farmers, particularly smallholders, with soil analysis and fertility recommendations. Over the next five years, the lab's services will be expanded to include water, animal feed, and plant analysis.

Animal research efforts focus on improving pig management practices, with the goal of developing guidelines for farmers in redline and peri-urban areas. Research on small ruminants, such as sheep and goats, is also underway to provide farmers with guidelines for effective management and optimal productivity.

The Department is in the planning stages of a cattle and sheep breeding project to enhance support for animal production initiatives targeting farmers. Additionally, refurbishing and

maintaining the Athole and Nooitgedacht Research Farms will be essential to sustain crop and animal research activities, benefiting the entire province..

- **Skills and Capacity Development:**

The report by the Research Gate has indicated that tertiary education and diverse farming models have positively impacted food production across the agricultural value chain, particularly enhancing the ability of farming households to produce high-quality citrus fruits and gain access to markets and agro-processing facilities⁶¹.

The Department is working in partnership with training institutions across government, the private sector, and civil society to strengthen agricultural training and skills development in the province. This collaboration is coordinated through a multi-stakeholder Provincial Agricultural Education and Training Forum.

The agricultural sector is facing a growing skills gap, attributed to factors such as unclear land policy directives, an aging farmer population, and declining interest in farming among youth. For farmers to fully participate in the agricultural value chain, acquiring the necessary skills is essential.

To address these challenges, the Department is prioritizing skills development programs that provide farmers with access to credit-bearing training. The Department will continue offering these accredited short courses, funded through 10% of the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) conditional grant. The training initiatives target:

- Farmers, particularly those involved in current and past CASP-funded projects
- Unemployed graduates seeking agricultural skills development

5.7. Veterinary Services:

The Veterinary Services division has implemented disease control and management programs to protect livestock health, particularly from diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Avian Influenza. These efforts, which include vaccination campaigns, quarantine measures, and disease surveillance, have minimized economic losses and maintained disease-free zones essential for international trade and market access.

5.8. Climate Change and Environmental Degradation:

The department has implemented climate change strategies aligned with the National Development Plan's vision for a carbon-neutral economy by 2050. This includes promoting climate-smart agriculture, green buildings, and data systems to track climate projects, alongside workshops and training for local municipalities. A Just Transition Phase 1 Plan was also developed, with regular greenhouse gas inventories conducted and engagement with affected industries.

The Environmental Services program has advanced efforts through the Climate Change and Just Energy Transition Interventions Design and Exposure Project (D-JET ID), which promotes procedural justice in line with South Africa's Just Transition Framework. The project engaged over 130 local stakeholders in workshops addressing environmental issues such as waste dumping and pollution, as well as socio-economic challenges like unemployment and skills shortages.

⁶¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354600097_The_Constraints_Affecting_Competitiveness_of_Emerging_Household_Citrus_Farmers_in_Mpumalanga_Province_South_Africa

The department is developing climate response tools to mitigate climate change impacts, including education campaigns, demonstrations, and job creation in the environmental sector. The finalized Provincial Environment Outlook Report provides insights into the state of the environment and guides relevant responses.

The Zonda Insila Programme aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while promoting environmental protection and socio-economic development, generating much-needed employment opportunities.

With the Highveld region hosting many coal and fossil-fuel-powered generators, the department will focus on developing a Just Transition Plan to enhance job resilience and target a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through sector-specific projects. Additionally, the department will support local municipalities in integrating climate considerations into planning documents and executing projects, including a Climate Change Vulnerability Response Plan and greenhouse gas reports.

The department will also enhance socio-economic benefits through waste management programs like Zonda Insila, creating direct and indirect jobs during the planning period.

5.9. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

South Africa (SA) aims to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 42% by 2025, based on a business-as-usual trajectory, contingent on sufficient financial, technological, and capacity support. The IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C highlights the urgent need for global action to limit warming in line with the Paris Agreement.

Mpumalanga Province, as South Africa's industrial center, is heavily engaged in mining, power generation, and petrochemical production, contributing over 85% of the country's GHG emissions. This makes South Africa the largest carbon emitter in Africa.

The province faces socio-economic and environmental challenges due to resource-intensive activities, particularly coal mining, which leads to significant pollution and soil degradation.

To address these issues, the province is implementing Climate Change Strategies, a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, and a Green Economy Development Plan, aligning with the National Development Plan Vision 2030 for sustainability, climate resilience, and a low-carbon economy.

Specific targets include:

- Reducing vulnerability to climate impacts by 5% and increasing municipal capacity for climate programs by 30%.
- Achieving a 3% reduction in GHG emissions, with Eskom and Sasol accounting for 74% of emissions, while ensuring 30% of municipalities access climate funding.

The province's Green Economy Development Plan aims for a low-carbon economy, prioritizing:

- Employment and Economic Growth
- Education and Training
- Universal Healthcare
- Social Protection

These priorities focus on enhancing sustainable long-term socio-economic development in Mpumalanga without neglecting the essential functions of government.

5.10. Just Transition

The coalfields of Mpumalanga are rapidly depleting, as highlighted by a resource and reserve coal study conducted by the national geo-scientific repository, the Council for Geo-Sciences, in partnership with Eskom. This study revealed a significant decline in coal reserves in Mpumalanga, from 28.1 billion tons to 12.4 billion tons (DMR Industry Overview, 2014)⁶².

The Just Transition initiative aims to address the costs and risks faced by fossil fuel workers and their communities during this transition, while also tackling the broader developmental challenges in South Africa and the province. The goal is to create an inclusive, diversified, and sustainable development pathway for Mpumalanga.

Mpumalanga is threatened by the decommissioning of power stations, which will negatively impact mine closures and other sectors reliant on power generation and mining, particularly in the Nkangala and Gert Sibande District Local Municipalities. The ongoing energy transition, both in South Africa and globally, poses a risk of diminishing coal demand and creating an undiversified economy.

Just Transition Plan

The Mpumalanga Just Transition Plan aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i) Address current socio-economic challenges.
- ii) Mitigate employment vulnerability.
- iii) Manage job losses in coal mining due to the shift to renewable energy.
- iv) Tackle environmental challenges associated with coal mine closures and power station decommissioning.
- v) Address municipal issues, including high unemployment rates and reduced revenue.

Additionally, the plan emphasizes:

- i) Social dialogue and democratic governance.
- ii) Protecting livelihoods through worker transition and promoting decent work.
- iii) Economic diversification.
- v) Regional development to enhance resilience.

⁶² Mpumalanga Spatial Development Framework – March 2018

5.11. Climate Smart Agriculture

The term "smart agriculture" encompasses the integration of technologies in the agricultural sector, including the Internet of Things, sensors, location systems, robotics, and artificial intelligence, into farming practices.

This approach offers a sustainable method for managing land while enhancing agricultural productivity in the face of climate change. The concept of climate-smart agriculture was first advocated in 2010 at the Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security, and Climate Change held in The Hague. It revolves around three key pillars: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes, adapting to and building resilience against climate change, and reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions.

Smart agricultural practices generate significant amounts of data and information, enabling farmers to make informed, data-driven decisions that enhance production and profitability. These practices facilitate a direct link between the physical and digital worlds.

Implementing these strategies will bolster food security while providing environmental benefits through proven techniques.

The following programs are planned for the remaining Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) period:

i) Smart Agriculture Box Program

To promote household food security for those without access to land, the department will implement the Smart Agriculture Box Program/Square Food Garden Box through its research, farmer support, and IT initiatives.

The key objectives of this program include:

- Providing climate-smart vegetable-growing starter kits to help designated poor households and communities cultivate their own nutritious food.
- Establishing an online education and decision support system to aid vegetable production in Mpumalanga.
- Encouraging vegetable production among individuals and households lacking sufficient access to land and water.

ii) Adaptation Trials to Identify New Cultivars






To enhance resilience against the adverse effects of climate change, the department will collaborate with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Water Efficient Maize Seed for Africa, and production input suppliers to implement adaptation trials aimed at identifying new cultivars suitable for the province's varying climatic zones. This initiative will include the production of specialized cultivar seeds such as short-duration maize, chickpeas, cowpeas, groundnuts, and cassava.

iii) Kutalwa Kwempilo

This program focuses on developing environmentally friendly compost from agricultural waste, contributing to:



Helps carbon sequestration: helps to improve poor soil structure to reduce release of stored carbon into atmosphere

	Reduces soil erosion: restores and stabilises infertile soil when topsoil is blown or washed away
	Reduces landfill waste: reduces the materials going to the landfill, lengthens its capacity and reduces greenhouse gas emissions released into atmosphere
	Reduces need for synthetic fertilisers: naturally supplies soil with necessary nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen
	Retains more water: Compost strengthens soil's ability to retain water, making watering plants less frequent
	Job creation: Composting has job creation potential

5.12. Biodiversity Programme – Provincial Nature Reserves (PNRs):

In the last Revised Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) Priority 5, Outcome: Improved State of Ecological Infrastructure, the department has identified specific ecological infrastructure within various Provincial Nature Reserves (PNRs) that will undergo refurbishment, upgrades, and maintenance.

Restoring these PNRs aims to promote conservation efforts and enhance tourism, which will, in turn, stimulate economic activities for the communities adjacent to these reserves.

In the upcoming planning year, the department will implement the refurbishment of these infrastructures across the province.

PART C: MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

6. INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Seventh Administration has set three key priority areas for the 2024-2030 electoral cycle, aligned with the long-term vision of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. These priorities aim to achieve the following strategic outcomes: (SP 1) Inclusive economic growth and job creation, (SP 2) Reducing poverty and addressing the high cost of living, and (SP 3) Building a capable, ethical, and developmental state. The outcomes outlined below are designed to realize the developmental objectives of the NDP 2030, the priorities of the Seventh Administration, and the targets of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP).

6.1. Measuring the Impact

Impact statement	Integrated communities in a sustainable environment with a transformed agriculture sector and food security for all
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6.2. Measuring Outcomes

MTDP Priority 3	Build a capable, ethical and developmental state		
Outcome	Outcome Indicator(s)	Baseline	Five Year Target
Trust in the public sector	Percentage achievement of departmental planned performance targets	89% achievement of departmental planned performance targets	100% achievement of departmental planned performance targets

MTDP Priority 3	Build a capable, ethical and developmental state			
Outcome	Outcome Indicator(s)	Baseline	Five Year Target	
Digital transformation across the state	Percentage achievement of departmental planned PMDS targets	96% achievement of departmental planned PMDS targets	100% achievement of departmental planned PMDS targets	
	Percentage implementation of audit action plan	100% of audit action plan implemented	100% of audit action plan implemented	
	Number of IT system developed and maintained	New indicator	5 IT systems developed and maintained	

MTDP Priority 1	Drive Inclusive Growth and Job Creation			
Outcome	Outcome Indicator(s)	Baseline	Five Year Target	
Increased Employment and Work Opportunities	Number of jobs created in (EPWP, green Jobs and Environment Empowerment initiatives) ⁶³	5 606 Jobs created (EPWP, green Jobs and Environment Empowerment initiatives)	6 488 Jobs created (EPWP, green Jobs and Environment Empowerment initiatives)	
		<i>[Agricultural Sector: 130 895 (Q4 2024 employment level representing 10,4% share in the province)⁶⁴]</i>	<i>[Agricultural Sector: 13 089,5 (and more than 10% share of employment share)]</i>	

⁶³ Linked to Provincial MTDP

⁶⁴ SERO Feb 2025

MTDP Priority 1				
Drive Inclusive Growth and Job Creation				
Outcome	Outcome Indicator(s)	Baseline	Five Year Target	
Increased Employment and Work Opportunities	Number of subsistence producers supported. [linked to National Outcome: Number of self-employment opportunities created in agriculture (subsistence farmers supported) ⁶⁵]	12 206 of subsistence producers supported.	12 840 subsistence producers supported.	
Economic Transformation	Percentage of Equity Contracts awarded. <i>[Share of Economic Equity in Departmental Procurement Contracts held by businesses owned by Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities and Military Veterans⁶⁶</i>	Women -19.71% Youth -16.21% PWD - 0.17% MV - 0.88% Overall 36.97% ⁶⁷ share	60 % Share of Departmental Procurement Contracts awarded to businesses owned by Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities and Military Veterans	
Increased infrastructure investment, access, efficiency and costs	Number of agricultural infrastructures established ⁶⁸	Agriculture - provincial growth of -4.5% (2023) and employment share of 8.8% (Q3 2024)	10% Share of Agricultural Infrastructure investment the provincial GDP Projects implemented focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIFPM operationalisation • Senteeko Tea Estate • Cannabis Medicinal Enterprise established 	

⁶⁵ Linked to National MTDP under NDA

⁶⁶ Linked to Provincial MTDP

⁶⁷ Linked to Provincial MTDP

⁶⁸ Linked to Provincial MTDP: Increased Agricultural infrastructure investment as a % of provincial GDP

MTDP Priority 1	Drive Inclusive Growth and Job Creation		
Outcome	Outcome Indicator(s)	Baseline	Five Year Target
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mkhondo AgriHubs repaired • 3 x Agro-Processing Production Units⁶⁹ • Establish and implement the MIFPM - Trade Unit Facilities / Food Market Squires in all wards to integrate informal traders of fresh fruit, vegetables, meat products and grains into the formal sector for sustainable growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fresh Produce hubs; ○ Houja Meat; ○ Maze Warehouse; ○ Mini MoFresh;
A dynamic science, technology and innovation ecosystem for growth	Number of new technologies developed for smallholder producers	3 new technologies developed for the smallholder producers	5 new technologies developed for the smallholder producers
Improved Energy security and just transition⁷⁰	Number of ambient air quality monitoring stations managed	6 Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations managed	6 Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations managed

⁶⁹ Projected to start in the 3rd MTEF due to limited funding.

⁷⁰ Linked to National MTDP under DFFE

6.3. Explanation of Planned Performance over the Five-Year Planning Period

The Department seek to respond directly and indirectly to the three National MTDP Priorities as integrated. The following are the two National MTDP Priorities that the department respond directly to.

6.3.1. MTDP Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state

The Priority is designed and “aims to build a capable, ethical, and developmental state”. The priority is integrated with the other two Priorities 1 and 2 ensuring an inclusive growth and job creation, in a capable and supportive government. The priority “plays both direct and indirect roles within the economy”⁷¹.

OUTCOMES:

6.3.1.1. Outcome: Trust in the public sector

This outcome is vital for the department to transform into a capable and efficient entity within the state, equipped with the necessary resources to achieve its objectives and serve the citizens effectively. The focus is on improving human resources, financial management, enhancing integrated monitoring, and strengthening the public administration capabilities of the department to meet the expectations of the communities, as outlined in its mandate.

Some of the key actions recommended include:

- i) Implementing the professionalization framework for public service
- ii) Developing and executing a roadmap for the digital transformation of public services
- iii) Strengthening the public procurement system to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and stimulate demand

One of the department's main targets is to achieve a long-term Clean Audit Outcomes within this period. A key emphasis is on resolving issues that could hinder the department's ability to deliver services effectively.

The department is committed to ensuring that key programs and projects are executed within contract terms, and that its expenditures directly contribute to improving livelihoods and creating decent job opportunities.

Furthermore, the department is focused on meeting the needs of designated groups by promoting the priorities of women, children, and people with disabilities. It aims to increase the share of procurement awarded to these groups, fostering a more inclusive, diversified, and growing economy.

By meeting these targets, the Department will play a key role in driving the transformation of agriculture and ensuring food security for all.

⁷¹ Draft Medium Term Development Plan, DPME March 2025

6.3.1.2. Digital transformation across the state

The outcome is essential as it plays a “digital transformation of the South African state and government is a multifaceted initiative aimed at enhancing public service delivery, improving efficiency and fostering economic growth”⁷². The transformation designed to integrate digital technologies across the programmes with support from Provincial Treasury.

6.3.2. Development Plan (MTDP) Priority 1: Drive Inclusive Growth and Job Creation,

The aim of this priority is to provide South Africa's rural communities with enhanced opportunities to fully participate in the country's economy. Ensuring that people have access to job creation opportunities that would allow them to high-quality basic services, access well-nourished foods, health, and increasingly skilled.

The key focus of this Priority is to drive **rapid, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and job creation**,

The following are key activities aimed at driving this in relation to agriculture and environmental sector:

- Promoting labour-intensive sectors such as **services, agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism**, supported by the implementation of sector master plans.
- Reducing bureaucratic obstacles and enhancing support for **small enterprises, entrepreneurs, and cooperatives**, particularly in townships and rural areas.
- Expanding **employment stimulus programs** that support **small-scale farmers**.
- Implementing a **Just Energy Transition** to ensure South Africa's shift to a low-carbon economy benefits communities, especially in **Mpumalanga**.
- Increasing access to **blended finance** and key markets, especially for **emerging farmers** in export crops.
- Supporting **land reform**, with a focus on **state land transfer** and improved post-settlement support through stronger institutional capacity.

In line with the **National and Provincial MTDP**, the department has geared itself towards achieving the following Outcomes:

6.3.2.1. Outcome: Increased Employment and Work Opportunities.

The **department** is committed to contributing directly to **accelerated land and agrarian reform**, as well as **food security**. The government is committed to increasing the amount of potentially arable land under production, in line with the constitutional right of every citizen to have access to sufficient food and water.

The department's strategy includes increasing agricultural production by providing **technical advice, training, mechanisation services, and infrastructure**. Special focus is placed on projects targeting **youth and women**, such as the **Graduate Programme**, and various women-owned projects.

Key enablers for achieving this outcome include sufficient resources, strong partnerships, **offtake agreements**, and improved access to **markets, land, and water**. One of the core strategies is building **transformed, integrated, and sustainable farming communities** capable of producing for their own sustenance and for export, including **agro-processing**.

⁷² Draft Medium Term Development Plan, DPME March 2025

This outcome will address goals of the **National Development Plan (NDP)** by tackling **poverty, inequality, and unemployment**, ensuring that no one in Mpumalanga or South Africa goes hungry, and that the economy grows faster than the population.

The success of this outcome will contribute to a **transformed agricultural sector**, capable of ensuring **food security** for all and surplus for markets. It will also empower **subsistence and emerging farmers** to participate in the full value chain, reducing the dominance of large industries

6.3.2.2. Outcome: Increased Infrastructure Investment, access, efficiency and costs.

The focus on expanding participation in infrastructure development for activities such as agro-processing aims to contribute to the goals of industrialization, localization, and increased exports. This outcome aligns with the constitutional mandate that “everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water” and directly addresses the government’s priority of Economic Transformation and Job Creation.

Historically, previously marginalized farmers have faced challenges in accessing market and other agro-processing infrastructures. The department has prioritized grain mills and other agro-processing infrastructure to ensure farmers can access both local and international markets. This outcome supports projects such as the development of Agri-Hubs, fruit and nut processing, and the revitalization of community and private grain mills, fostering greater farmer participation in agro-processing. Many of these projects, including grain mills, are owned and managed by youth and, in some cases, women.

To achieve this outcome, the department will focus on several key enablers: fostering partnerships with stakeholders such as commercial farmers and commodity groups, securing reliable offtake agreements (both local and international), promoting mass production through commodity-based initiatives, supporting research and development, and developing skilled farmers and officials.

The success of this outcome will be reflected in the transformation of the agricultural sector, where subsistence and emerging farmers will actively engage in the entire value chain, reducing the dominance of large industries.

The outcome also emphasizes increasing access to the Blended Finance Scheme (BFS) for emerging farmers and SMMEs. This will create opportunities for a fair, inclusive, thriving, and resilient agricultural future. The provincial Draft Blended Finance Scheme has been developed, and priority will be given to establishing the scheme and leveraging private capital. Additionally, efforts will focus on passing the Government Nutrition Sourcing Bill (GNS Bill) and expanding Agro-Processing Production Schemes to five key initiatives.

6.3.2.3. Outcome: Enhanced Environmental Sustainability

This outcome focuses on advancing environmental sustainability in line with the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) Strategic Priority 1: Inclusive Economic Growth and Job Creation. Specifically, it addresses the MTDP’s recommended focus on implementing the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP) to ensure South Africa’s transition to a low-carbon economy, with a particular focus on supporting communities and workers in Mpumalanga and other affected regions.

The outcome aligns with the Department’s mandate to guarantee everyone the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being, while ensuring the protection of the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

In response to this, the Department has a mandatory role in enforcing environmental compliance and, in certain cases, providing support. One such support initiative is the **Zonda Insila Programme**, which aims to promote waste collection for recycling within communities. The program encourages youth and women to engage in recycling efforts, with the potential to help them establish their own recycling enterprises.

The Department will also continue monitoring air quality through the air pollution monitoring stations it has set up, allowing for the identification of priority areas that require intervention.

This outcome will contribute to measuring the Department's progress in mitigating the impacts of climate change and improving overall environmental quality.

Over the next five years, to achieve this outcome, the Department will focus on developing and implementing the following:

- Mpumalanga Climate Change Mitigation Strategy
- Mpumalanga Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
- Environmental policies and legislation
- Adequate resources and partnerships

6.3.2.4. Outcome: Economic Transformation

The department will pay a special focus on ensuring inclusive economic growth and reducing inequality, alongside promoting social transformation. As guided by the MTDP, the priority over the next five years will be to grow existing economic activity and associated employment by removing regulatory and other barriers to investment and creating a supportive enabling environment for the targeted groups.

6.3.2.5. Outcome: Accelerated growth of strategic industrial and labour-intensive sector

The outcome is set to take an existing opportunity in the country to drive growth in job-creating sectors such as services and agriculture while positioning the economy for future growth. The department is focusing on increasing the agro-processing sector by providing support that will enable emerging and subsistence farmer to be part of the key role players. Outcome is noted to be a key goal of economic policy, focusing on sectors such as manufacturing, mining and the beneficiation of mining products, forestry and agro-processing in areas that demonstrate a strong comparative advantage. This outcome will contribute towards the goals as set out in the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP). The focus will be on “expanding agricultural production and increasing market access for black farming enterprises, including small-scale and emerging farmers, women and youth”⁷³

6.3.2.6. Outcome: A dynamic science, technology and innovation ecosystem for growth

The Outcome is intended to address the importance of innovation as referenced intensively in the NDP. Innovation is noted to “broadly contribute to the functioning and productivity of society”.

⁷³ Draft Medium Term Development Plan, DPME March 2025

Innovation activities are noted to amongst others, “also address the institutional innovations that are transforming the nature of work, production and the provision of various services through information technology”.

The broader goal of this outcome is to encourage and “adopt ‘whole-of-society’ strategy towards harnessing science, technology and innovation for rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth” The department will in particular increasing its participation in the integration of sectoral partners and related stakeholders and beneficiaries to develop innovations that will increase production and encourage funding towards the commercialisation of the innovations.

7. KEY RISKS

7.1. The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2024

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2024, Published: 10 January 2024, outlines a negative global outlook for the next decade, driven by four key forces: climate change, demographic shifts, technological advancements, and geopolitical power dynamics⁷⁴.

In the context of **agriculture, environment, and Mpumalanga Province**, key insights include:

1. **Environmental Risks:** The report highlights extreme weather, such as droughts, wildfires, and floods, as critical risks, with extreme weather ranked as the most likely global crisis in 2024. These risks are exacerbated by climate change, with a 3°C global temperature rise predicted to trigger irreversible shifts in Earth's systems. This poses severe risks for Mpumalanga, an agriculturally dependent province, where extreme weather and biodiversity loss could undermine food security and disrupt rural livelihoods.
2. **Agriculture & Climate Change:** The report emphasizes the potential for rapid environmental degradation due to global warming, which could overwhelm agricultural systems. Mpumalanga, reliant on agriculture, could face productivity declines, water shortages, and increased pressure on already vulnerable populations. This mirrors global concerns that many regions remain unprepared for the "non-linear" impacts of climate change, threatening agricultural sectors and food supply chains.
3. **Economic Impacts:** Climate-vulnerable countries, like South Africa, may be increasingly excluded from critical green investments and infrastructure development. The report underscores that rising economic uncertainty, inflation, and cost-of-living crises could further strain the agricultural sector, especially in rural regions like Mpumalanga, where communities rely on both agriculture and natural resources.
4. **Geopolitical & Societal Strains:** Geopolitical instability and technological advances could exacerbate resource stress, including competition for water and arable land. The fragmentation of international cooperation may leave vulnerable regions, such as Mpumalanga, without adequate support to mitigate climate impacts or invest in sustainable agricultural technologies.

The **Global Risks Report 2024**, based on the insights from nearly 1,500 global experts through the Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS), highlights that environmental risks may soon reach a point of no return. Environmental risks continue to dominate the risk landscape across all three-time horizons.

Two-thirds of GRPS respondents identified **extreme weather** as the top risk most likely to cause a global crisis in 2024, with the warming phase of the **El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** expected to intensify and persist through May. Extreme weather is also ranked as the second-most severe risk over a two-year period. Similar to previous years, nearly all environmental risks are among the top 10 global risks over the longer term. (Figure below)⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ The World Economic Forum's, Global Risks Report 2024, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/digest/>

⁷⁵ WEF_The_Global_Risks_Report_2024.pdf

Risk Categories legends	
	Economic
	Environmental
	Geopolitical
	Societal
	Technological

2 years		10 years	
1 st	Misinformation and disinformation	1st	Extreme weather events
2 nd	Extreme weather events	2nd	Critical change to Earth systems
3 rd	Societal polarization	3rd	Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
4 th	Cyber insecurity	4th	Natural resource shortages
5 th	Interstate armed conflict	5th	Misinformation and disinformation
6 th	Lack of economic opportunity	6th	Adverse outcomes of AI technologies
7 th	Inflation	7th	Involuntary migration
8 th	Involuntary migration	8th	Cyber insecurity
9 th	Economic downturn	9th	Societal polarization
10 th	Pollution	10th	Pollution
Source: WEF_The_Global_Risks_Report_2024.pdf, FIGURE E Global risks ranked by severity			

The report also highlights four structural forces that shaped the materialization and management of global risks over the next decade.

- **Climate Change:** Trajectories relating to global warming and related consequences to Earth systems. The ongoing impact of global warming and its effects on Earth's systems.
- **Demographic Shifts / bifurcation:** Changes in the size, growth and structure of populations around the world / Changes in population size, growth, and structure worldwide.
- **Technological Acceleration:** Developmental pathways for frontier technologies. The rapid development of frontier technologies.
- **Geostrategic Shifts:** Material evolution in the concentration and sources of geopolitical power / Evolving concentration and sources of geopolitical power.

7.2.Departmental Key Risks:

The following are the departmental Risks and Risk Mitigation linked to the Outcomes mentioned above in this document

OUTCOMES	KEY RISK	Risk Mitigation
Increased Employment and Work Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change impacts affecting productivity. Slow uptake of agricultural technology. Lack of funding and financial support for emerging farmers. Limited access to markets for agricultural products. Inadequate training and skills development for farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement climate-smart agricultural practices and promote resilience strategies. Increase farmer support and awareness of farmers. Facilitate linkage of farmers to financial support such as Blended Finance and PES. Facilitate market access through Agrihubs, FPSU, and MIFPM. Expand agricultural training programs in collaboration with local institutions.
Economic Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low awareness of available opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Limited participation of historically disadvantaged groups. Corruption and intimidation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct targeted awareness and training programs for underrepresented groups. Encourage mentorship support for new entrants in agribusiness. Strengthen compliance and monitoring of procurement policies.
Increased Agricultural Infrastructure Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget constraints affecting infrastructure rollout. Corruption and intimidation by pressure groups Delays in project implementation due to bureaucratic processes. Poor maintenance of existing agricultural infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs) to leverage additional funding. Make use of the Blended Finance initiatives. Strengthen community awareness and participation Improve project management frameworks to enhance efficiency Establish maintenance funds and clear accountability structures Ensure sustainability of infrastructure projects. Promote climate-resilient infrastructure development
Access to Blended Finance for Emerging Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited awareness and accessibility of finance options. Stringent requirements for financial support. High default rates among emerging farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct financial literacy programs for emerging farmers. Develop risk-sharing mechanisms with financial institutions. Simplify access criteria for financing smallholder farmers.
Climate Change Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unpredictable weather patterns affecting productivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement early warning systems and weather monitoring programs.

OUTCOMES	KEY RISK	Risk Mitigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor adoption of climate-smart agricultural techniques. Limited research and extension services on climate adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote drought-resistant crops and sustainable farming methods. Increase investment in agricultural research and innovation Strengthening community-based adaptation strategies.
Science, Technology, and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate funding for research and development. Slow adoption of new agricultural technologies. Limited collaboration between researchers and farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase investment in research infrastructure. Strengthen partnerships between academic institutions and farmers. Facilitate technology transfer programs and capacity-building initiatives

8. PUBLIC ENTITIES

N/A

PART D: TECHNICAL INDICATOR DESCRIPTION (TID)

1. MTDP Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state

a. Outcome: Trust in the public sector

Indicator Title	% achievement of departmental planned performance targets
Definition	Measures the assessments and moderation of programme performance annually against set five year targets
Source of data	Quarterly Performance Report
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Assumptions	Annual Performance Plans will be developed and implemented
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	All the monitoring systems implemented as planned
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	N/A
Desired performance	Higher Performance
Indicator Responsibility	Quarterly

Indicator Title	% achievement of departmental planned PMDS targets
Definition	Reports on the assessments and moderation of departmental officials on individual performance
Source of data	Performance Management Development System of the Department
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Annual PMDMC report
Assumptions	All the monitoring systems implemented as planned
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annually against the five year target
Desired performance	Higher Performance
Indicator Responsibility	Sub-Programme Manager

Indicator Title	Improved Audit Outcomes
Definition	Measures the extent of improvement on audit outcomes
Source of data	Auditor General audit outcome Report
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Assumptions	All the governance systems implemented as planned
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	N/A

Reporting Cycle	Annually against the five-year target
Desired performance	Higher Performance
Indicator Responsibility	Sub-Programme Manager

Indicator Title	Number of IT systems developed and maintained
Definition	Measures the extent of IT digital transformation
Source of data	DPSA Corporate Governance of IT Assessment Report AGSA Information System Audit Report
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Means of verification	Number of systems developed
Assumptions	Annual Performance Plans will be developed and implemented
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Calculation Type	Non-cumulative
Reporting Cycle	Annually
Desired performance	Higher Performance
Indicator Responsibility	Programme Manager

2. MTDP Priority 1: Drive Inclusive Growth and Job Creation

a. Increased Employment and Work Opportunities

Indicator Title	Number of jobs created through EPWP (from various programmes in department)⁷⁶
Definition	Jobs opportunities created from programmes and or projects following EPWP principles
Source of data	Records of jobs created through EPWP from various projects (i.e. Appointment Letters, Contracts, Timesheets and ID Copies)
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple Count
Means of verification	Appointment Letters, Contracts, Timesheets and ID Copies
Assumptions	There will be favourable environmental, climatic, political and economic conditions
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Women: 50% Target for Youth: 50% Target for People with Disabilities: 2% Target for Older Persons: 20% Target for Military Veterans: 2%
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Provincially
Calculation Type	Cumulative (Year-end)
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly

⁷⁶ The total number of jobs cumulative from various programmes within the department.

Desired performance	Higher Performance
Indicator Responsibility	Programme Manager

Indicator Title	Number of subsistence producers supported
Definition	<p>Subsistence producer refers to Producer that produces primarily for household consumption to meet the daily dietary needs. These producers are not classified as indigents by their municipality. They market limited surplus production with an annual turnover of less than R50 000.</p> <p>Support refers to tangible and non-tangible support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On and off farm infrastructure or • Technical and advisory services or • Production inputs or • Development training or • Marketing and business development or <p>Operating capital</p>
Source of data	Provincial Departments of Agriculture(PDA) and Provincial Shared Services Centres (PSSC).
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Basic count: number of subsistence producers supported
Means of verification	Requirements: Id copy, client contact form, signed delivery note/ completion certificate, business proposal or application form or project profile, signed off letter/ memo of approval, approved project list, acknowledgement form
Assumptions	<p>Favourable climatic conditions</p> <p>No natural disasters</p> <p>Economic and political stability</p>
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	<p>Target for Women: 50%</p> <p>Target for Youth: 50%</p> <p>Target for People with Disabilities: 2%</p> <p>Target for Older Persons: 40%</p> <p>Target for Military Veterans: 2%</p>
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Provincially
Calculation Type	Cumulative (At Year-End)
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly
Desired performance	Higher performance is desirable
Indicator Responsibility	Program Managers

Indicator Title	% equity WYPD and MVs on economic empowerment
Definition	Appointment opportunities targeted to designated groups following a Preferential Procurement Policy
Source of data	Records of Supply Chain Management section
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple Count
Means of verification	Appointment Letters, Contracts.
Assumptions	There will be favourable environmental, climatic, political and economic conditions
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	<p>60% of the Value of contracts awarded to women</p> <p>30% of the Value of contracts awarded to youth</p> <p>7% of the Value of contracts awarded to PWD</p>

	7% of the Value of contracts awarded to MVs
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Provincially
Calculation Type	Cumulative (Year-end)
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly
Desired performance	Higher Performance
Indicator Responsibility	Programme Manager

Indicator Title	Number of agricultural infrastructures established
Definition	Agricultural infrastructure (farm structures, irrigation and drainage technology, efficient energy solutions on-farm mechanization, value adding infrastructure, farm structures and resource conservation management infrastructure) constructed according to approved plans and specifications
Source of data	Engineering Completion certificates provided for completed projects
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Means of verification	Engineering completion certificate (must include GPs coordinates, type of infrastructure and final contract value)
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Contracts are delivered in accordance with the approved Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) form of contracts Project will commence on time as planned, there will be no cuts in budget, no delays with procurement process
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	All provinces
Calculation Type	Cumulative (At Year-End)
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly
Desired performance	Higher performance is desirable
Indicator Responsibility	Programme Manager

Indicator Title	Number of clients supported with production economic services
Definition	<p>Clients refer to all those who consume production economic services for informed decision making.</p> <p>Production economic services refer to enterprise budgets, financial access support, feasibility and viability studies, business plans development, information dissemination, business development and partnerships with private sector.</p>
Source of data	Include province specific information
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Means of verification	<p>Client Contact Form</p> <p>OR, Database of Client Enquiries</p> <p>OR, Attendance register,</p> <p>OR Client response form,</p> <p>OR Enterprise budgets,</p> <p>OR Business plan,</p> <p>OR Feasibility study report</p> <p>OR Viability study report</p>
Assumptions	There will be favourable environmental, climatic, political and economic conditions

Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Women: 50% Target for Youth: 40% Target for People with Disabilities: 2% Target for Military Veterans: 6% Target for Older Persons: 50%
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Provincially
Calculation Type	Cumulative (At year-end)
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly
Desired performance	Higher performance
Indicator Responsibility	Programme Manager

Indicator Title	Number of new technologies developed for smallholder producers
Definition	New technologies (product, technology, processes, methods, techniques and systems) developed through agricultural research activities, inventions or innovations to improve the efficiency of smallholders.
Source of data	<input type="checkbox"/> Report, patent, product registration, protocol, model and any verifiable hardcopy evidence outlining the technology developed.
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Means of verification	Report indicating new technology OR • Patent OR • Product registration OR • Protocol when it's a new product or process developed OR • Feeding Model OR Hard copy evidence
Assumptions	• Availability of budget to procure equipment. • Availability of human capital shortage Minimal occurrence of natural disasters
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Provincially
Calculation Type	Non-cumulative
Reporting Cycle	Annually
Desired performance	Higher performance desirable
Indicator Responsibility	Programme Manager

Indicator title	Number of ambient air quality monitoring stations managed
Definition	It shows the number of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations that forms part of the Mpumalanga monitoring network, which facilitates the collection and reporting of emissions from listed and non-listed activities
Source of data	Records of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations commissioned; operated and maintained
Method of Calculation / Assessment	Simple count
Means of Verification	Monthly and quarterly reports
Assumptions	There will be favourable environmental, climatic, political and economic conditions
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Bohlabela District Ehlanzeni District Gert Sibande District Nkangala District
Calculation type	Cumulative (Year-end)
Reporting cycle	Annually
Desired performance	Higher performance
Indicator responsibility	Programme Manager

ANNEXURE A: CONSOLIDATED INDICATORS

N/A

ANNEXURE B: DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Areas of Intervention	Medium-Term (3 Years – MTEF)				
	Project Description	District Municipality	Location: GPS Coordinates	Project Leader	Social Partner
Mpumalanga Agri-Park	Mpumalanga Agri-Mall	Govan Mbeki	Latitude 26° 51' 03.4 Longitude 29° 17' 57.5"	DARDLE A	SASOL SASOL Strategic Investors DEDET MEGA Goven Mbeki Mun Grain SA, ARC, AFASA
Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce market	Mpumalanga international food market	Ehlanzeni	Latitude 25.420970 Longitude 30.941070	DARDLE A	DEDET MEGA City of Mbombela Grain SA, ARC, AFASA
Agro-processing / Markets	Tea and Coffee Production Plant (Senteeko tea Estate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing Plant refurbishment Tea plantation refurbishment Market linkage	Ehlanzeni	City of Mbombela Latitude 25° 46' 45" S Longitude 30° 47' 39" E	DARDLE A	DEDET MEGA City of Mbombela Grain SA, ARC, AFASA
Agro-processing / Markets	Mkhondo Agri-hub – roof repair and operationalisation of the Mkhondo Agri-hub	Mkhondo	Mkhondo Latitude 27°01'55.1" Longitude 20°48'41.5"	DARDLE A	Mkhondo Municipality

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