



## forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **Briefing Note on South Africa's Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2031-2035**

#### **Stakeholder Consultations**

##### **For political principals**

### **1. Introduction and Background**

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), establishes a global framework to combat climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. A central feature of the Agreement is the requirement for countries to develop and communicate Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) national climate action plans outlining greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and climate resilience strategies.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries must submit updated NDCs every five years, with increased ambition over time. South Africa submitted its first NDC in 2016, which covered the period 2021–2025 and 2026–2030, committing to keep GHG emissions within a range of 398–614 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-eq by 2025, and 398–510 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-eq by 2030.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is currently leading the development of South Africa's second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), in line with the requirements of the Paris Agreement. The NDC, which covers the period 2031–2035, must be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by October ahead of COP30, which is scheduled to take place in November 2025.

### **2. Importance of the NDC and Stakeholder Consultations**

The NDC is South Africa's core national climate policy instrument. It guides national and sectoral climate action, informs long-term policy planning, and enables the mobilisation of international climate finance. A well-designed NDC also enhances the country's credibility on the global stage and demonstrates our commitment to fair, ambitious, and science-aligned climate action.

Recognising the importance of transparency, inclusivity and legitimacy, DFFE is coordinating a series of stakeholder consultations across all nine provinces. These consultations aim to:

- Gather views and inputs from a broad range of stakeholders including government, civil society, business, labour, youth and vulnerable communities.
- Ensure that local and provincial perspectives are reflected in the national NDC.
- Foster shared ownership of the country's climate vision and goals.
- Strengthen public accountability and alignment with just transition principles.

The participation of provinces is essential for the effective mainstreaming of climate action at all levels of governance.

#### **4. South Africa's approach to developing NDC**

The approach to developing the NDC is grounded on national circumstances, including sustainable development whilst contributing to the global efforts in dealing with climate change. The key considerations are:

- Fundamentals: Multilateralism, science and equity inform ambition.
- National circumstances: South Africa is a vulnerable developing country, climate action in context of addressing poverty and unemployment.
- Responsible global citizen: fulfil all the legal requirements of Paris Agreement.
- Fair and ambitious contributions: mitigation, adaptation, loss & damage. Will include concrete support needs for implementation, as a developing country, including finance/investment needs.
- National interest to submit fair and ambitious second NDC: If we do not act, others less likely to, global emissions rise, and we pay for adaptation and suffer loss & damage (esp. poorer communities).

#### **5. Conclusion**

South Africa's second NDC represents a vital opportunity to advance a low-carbon, climate-resilient and inclusive development pathway. Your continued leadership and collaboration will help ensure that provincial perspectives and priorities are fully incorporated, thereby enhancing the robustness, legitimacy and ambition of the final NDC submission.