



PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE OF THE FREE STATE

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
RURAL, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SMALL BUSINESS, SPORT,
ARTS AND CULTURE TO THE FREE STATE LEGISLATURE WITH
REGARD TO STRATEGIC PLANS FOR 2025-2030 FINANCIAL
YEARS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT, SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION,
AND ECONOMIC, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND ITS ENTITIES.**

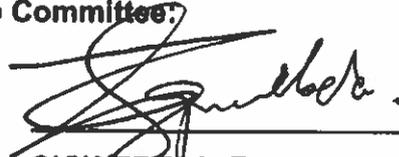
11 December 2025

REPORT PROFILE

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Rural, Economic Development, Small Business, Sport, Arts, and Culture herewith tables its report regarding the Strategic Plans for 2025-2030 Financial Years..

The Portfolio Committee would like to extend its appreciation to MECs, Heads of Departments and officials of the Departments of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and the Free State Development Corporation, the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority and Maluti -A- Phofung Special Economic Zone for their contribution and assistance during the meeting's.

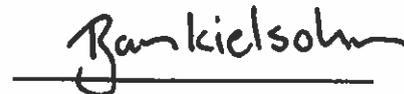
Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee:



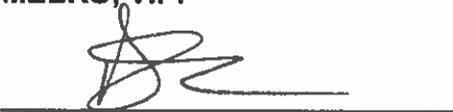
**SIGWEBELA, Z
CHAIRPERSON**



MEEKO, T.P.



JANKIELSOHN, R.



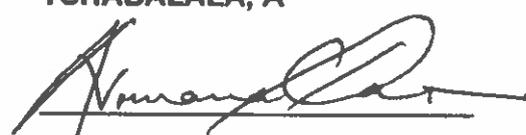
KHOABANE, M.



TSHABALALA, A



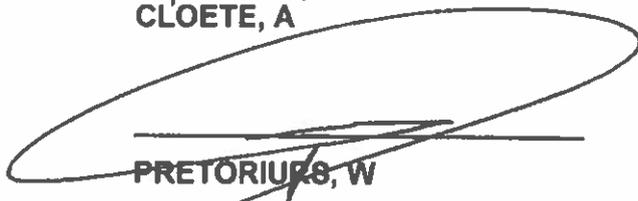
FOKO, M



CLOETE, A



GAREKOE, N



PRETORIUS, W



MKHABELA, S.L



NDUNGANE, N

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Report for tabling in the House on:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. MEMBERS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE
3. PROCEDURE OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE
4. CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIC PLANS FOR 2025-2030 FINANCIAL YEARS
 - 4.1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
 - 4.2. DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION
 - 4.3. DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
 - 4.4. FREE STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
 - 4.5. FREE STATE GAMBLING, LIQOUR AND TOURISM AUTHORITY
 - 4.6. MALUTI - A- PHOFUNG SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE
5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economic Development, Small Business, Sports, Arts and Culture met with the Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the Free State Development Corporation, the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority and Maluti -A- Phofung Special Economic Zone to consider their Strategic Plans for 2025-2030 Financial Years..

2. MEMBERS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

The Portfolio Committee comprises of the following Members:

Sigwebela, Z.	(Chairperson)
Cloete, A	(Member)
Foko, M	(Member)
Garekoe, D	(Member)
Jankielsohn, R.	(Member)
Khoabane, M	(Member)
Meeko, T.P.	(Member)
Mkhabela, S.L	(Member)
Ndungane, N	(Member)
Pretorius, W	(Member)
Tshabalala, A.	(Member)

3. PROCEDURE OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Rural, Economic Development, Small Business, Sport, Arts and Culture met with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on 29 July 2025, and with the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs together with its entities (the Free State Tourism Development Corporation, the Free State Gambling and Liquor Authority and Maluti -A- Phofung Special Economic Zone), as well as the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation on 9 September 2025, to consider their Strategic Plans for 2025-2030 Financial Years.

4. CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIC PLANS

4.1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Director General of the Department presented the Strategic Plan and outlined the approved Strategic Priorities of the Department as follows: -

- 1: Drive inclusive growth and job creation
- 2: Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living
- 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state

4.1.1 Findings and Observations by the Portfolio Committee:

After briefing and analyses of presentation of the Strategic Plan, the Portfolio Committee made the following observations:

1. The committee noted the report and contents thereof.

4.2 DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

The Head of the Department presented the Strategic Plan and outlined the Department's programmes which are: -

- a) Administration
- b) Cultural Affairs

- c) Library and Archive Services
- d) Sport and Recreation.

4.2.1. Findings and Observations by the Portfolio Committee:

After briefing and analysis of the presentation of the Strategic Plan, the Portfolio Committee made the following observations:

- I. The Committee observed the goal to transform museums but sought clarity on what constitutes "transformation," especially given the poor state of many museums across the province.
- II. The Committee noted the Department's intention to digitise archival records, but observed limited progress on appointing the Provincial Archives Board, which is a statutory requirement.
- III. Members expressed concern over the lack of explicit targets for collaboration with municipalities to upgrade and maintain arts, culture, and sports facilities. The Committee noted that most facilities belong to municipalities, yet there is little integration in planning and budgeting.
- IV. The Committee observed that the strategic plan's targets for heritage, archives, and social cohesion may not be achievable due to resource and budget constraints.
- V. The Committee raised concern that only one museum infrastructure upgrade is prioritised (Naledi Museum), while many facilities across the province remain in dire condition.
- VI. That there should be an inclusion of a target that covers the improvement of Museums.
- VII. Most of the removed targets fall under the Library Services, which is concerning.
- VIII. The committee noted the report and contents thereof.

4.3. DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Head of the Department presented the Strategic Plan and outlined the Department's programmes as follows: -

- a) Administration
- b) Environmental Affairs
- c) Economic Development
- d) Tourism

4.3.1 Findings and Observations by the Portfolio Committee:

After briefing and analysis on the Strategic Plan, the Portfolio Committee made the following observations:

- I. The Strategic Plan prioritises inclusive economic growth, private sector investment, and transition to a green economy.
- II. The Committee noted limited clarity on how the Department will mitigate systemic risks such as collapsing municipalities, global economic shifts, and climate change.
- III. Workforce transformation is included as a priority, but high staff turnover due to retirements and shortages of critical skills poses a threat to sustainability.
- IV. The committee noted the report and contents thereof.

4.4 FREE STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The CEO of the entity briefed the Portfolio Committee on the Strategic Plan for the 2025/2026 financial year as follows:

- a) the promotion and development of small, medium and micro enterprises,
- b) to assist Free State-based small, medium and micro enterprises with funding by advancing loans;

- c) to assist Free State-based small, medium and micro enterprises in financial distress;
- d) to initiate economic empowerment projects that would benefit the Free State
- e) to promote investment in and trade with the Province and to identify, analyze, publicize, and market investment and trade opportunities in the provincial economy, in such manner and by such means as the board of directors may from time to time deem appropriate.

4.4.1. Findings and Observations by the Portfolio Committee:

After briefing and analysis on the Strategic Plan, the Portfolio Committee made the following observations:

- I. The Strategic Plan focuses on financial sustainability, improved governance, and professionalisation of the workforce.
- II. The Committee observed positive commitments to achieving unqualified audit outcomes but expressed concern about long-standing debt to the Provincial Treasury and slow institutional reform
- III. The committee noted the report with its contents thereof.

4.5 FREE STATE GAMBLING, LIQUOR AND TOURISM AUTHORITY

The CEO of the entity briefed the Portfolio Committee on the Strategic Plan and outlined entities mandate as follows:

- a) The Authority's purpose is to promote legally compliant, responsible, sustainable, and transformed gaming and liquor industries through effective licensing, regulating and reporting on the position the Free State Province as a tourist destination of choice.

4.5.1. Findings and Observations by the Portfolio Committee:

After briefing and analysis on the Strategic Plan, the following observations were made:

- I. The Strategic Plan includes expanding gambling revenue streams, conducting a feasibility study for an additional casino, and revising liquor regulation.
- II. The Committee observed that while these initiatives could increase provincial revenue, they also present regulatory and social risks that require careful management.
- III. The committee noted the report with its contents thereof.

4.6. MALUTI -A- PHOFUNG SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

The CEO of Maluti - A – Phofung Special Economic Zone briefed the Committee on their Strategic Plan and outlined the entities objectives as follows:

- a) To unlock and accelerate the generation of new and innovative economic activities
- b) To develop world-class infrastructure in support of targeted economic activities.
- c) To stimulate social economic benefits for regional development
Infrastructure Development
- d) To attract foreign and domestic direct investment, to accelerate exports and imports for economic growth and job creation as well as Social Economic Benefits
- e) To encourage beneficiation activities that promote value added benefits thus creating a prosperous trade city and functional trade ecosystem
Attract Investments
- f) To establish manufacturing opportunities and creating regional and international trade environment
Beneficiation Opportunities

4.6.1. Findings and Observations by the Portfolio Committee:

After briefing and analysis on the Strategic Plan, the following observations were made:

- I. The Strategic Plan focuses on achieving financial stability, expanding infrastructure, and building capacity to attract sustainable investment.
- II. The Committee noted ambitious targets such as establishing a solar park and attracting three investors per year, but warned that delays in intergovernmental coordination could derail these plans.
- III. The committee noted the report with its contents thereof.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The report be adopted by the House with the following Recommendations:

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

- I. The Department should finalise and present a feasibility study for the proposed film studio, with clear timelines and budget implications.
- II. The Department must clearly define and standardise what "museum transformation" entails and provide a provincial plan for museum functionality and accessibility.
- III. The Department should prioritise the appointment of the Provincial Archives Board in line with legislative prescripts.
- IV. The Department should develop a provincial framework for collaboration with municipalities on the upgrading, maintenance, and accreditation of sports and cultural facilities.
- V. The Committee recommends that future strategic plans broaden the focus on heritage and archival development, including digitisation and public access.
- VI. The Department should prioritise equitable geographic spread of investments in museums, heritage sites, and sports infrastructure rather than focusing narrowly on one institution.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- i. The Department must strengthen its Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan by reviewing targets mid-term to adapt to changing global and domestic conditions.
- ii. Municipalities should be supported through capacity-building programmes and shared services models for business registration, zoning, and enforcement of by-laws.
- iii. Stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be implemented, with quarterly performance reports submitted to the Legislature.

FREE STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- i. The Free State Development Corporation must urgently resolve its debt with Provincial and National Treasury and develop a clear roadmap towards achieving unqualified audits.
- ii. The entity should intensify efforts to increase occupancy rates in its industrial, residential, and commercial properties.
- iii. The Free State Development Corporation should strengthen partnerships with private sector investors to diversify revenue streams and reduce reliance on provincial transfers.

FREE STATE GAMBLING, LIQUOR AND TOURISM AUTHORITY

- i. The Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority should conduct comprehensive social and economic impact assessments before expanding gambling operations.
- ii. Legislative amendments must be prioritised to strengthen compliance and reduce illegal liquor and gambling operations.
- iii. Stronger collaboration with the South African Police Service and municipalities should be established to improve enforcement of liquor and gambling regulations.

MALUTI -A- PHOFUNG SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

- I. **The Maluti-A-Phofung Special Economic Zone should strengthen partnerships with private sector investors to co-fund critical infrastructure, particularly the solar park.**
- II. **The entity must prioritise securing long-term energy and water security to attract and retain investors.**
- III. **Capacity-building within the Special Economic Zone should be accelerated to improve institutional stability and governance.**

