

# Key initiatives by National Fire Services to improve fire services in the country

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While the National Fire Services engages in various activities and programmes to support fire services across the country, the following are some initiatives that are relevant to the current discourse:

## Fire Services 2030 strategy

A Fire Services Reference Group, made up of Senior Fire Services officials from National, Provincial and Local Government, have been established to assist the National Fire Services in the development of a National Fire Services 2030 Strategy. The Strategy is currently in draft form, and its purpose is to serve as a blueprint for the implementation of Fire Services legislation and support programmes within Provinces and municipalities towards 2030. The Draft Fire Services 2030

Strategy outlines drastically needed impacts and outcomes that, once implemented will drive the transformation that responds to the needs of the Fire Services in the country.

The Strategic Plan covers the period 2024-2030 and its implementation will be overseen by the NDMC, reporting its performance to the Fire Brigade Services Board and/or The Boards' Technical Structure envisioned in Section (5) (a) of the Fire Brigade Services Act and connected to Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' (CoGTA's) annual departmental planning and reporting processes.

To help drive our continued focus on achieving the objectives of the Strategy, five strategic pillars have been developed that will inform how we strengthen the delivery of Fire Services in the coming years within South Africa.

Some of the goals associated with the pillars are already in progress with funding streams in place, while some areas require renewed attention and improved funding.

## Strategic Pillar 1

Developing a national capability for the delivery of the firefighting function

**Goal:** The provision of coordination and support of Fire Services

## Strategic Pillar 2

Ensuring all hazards preparedness for Fire Services

**Goal:** To be prepared to the highest standard for all extreme weather and flooding emergencies and rescue operations

## Strategic Pillar 3

Fire safety, prevention, and community preparedness

**Goal:** Reduce the likelihood and consequences from fires

## Strategic Pillar 4

Development and implementation of fire services' legislation through engagement and consultation

**Goal:** A well-regulated Fire Service

## Strategic Pillar 5

Capacity building and professionalisation of Fire Services

**Goal:** Fire Services professionalised

The National Fire Services Directorate continues to identify strategic projects and initiatives driven for implementation through the Strategy, noting that some initiatives may already be in progress.



Progress on some of the existing strategic projects are as follows:

### **Re-alignment of the National Fire Services**

The National Fire Services Directorate in the NDMC has been restored as stand-alone Directorate by the Minister of CoGTA, with plans in the making for expanding the existing structure into a different organisational structure. This will further strengthen the oversight function of the Head of the NDMC over the development, implementation and monitoring of fire services legislative frameworks, policies across the three spheres of government.

### **Funding model for Fire Services**

The National Fire Services is in continued discussions with the National Treasury for the finalization of a funding model suitable for the re-capitalization of Fire Services in the Country. The Fire Services Reference Group is instrumental in assisting the National Fire Services in putting together a business case in support of the funding model for Fire Services. The business case will include estimated costs for the recapitalisation of Fire Services in the country.

### **NDMC Bursary Scheme: Fire Services Qualifications**

For the first time in the history of the NDMC Bursary scheme, as

of the 2024/2025 financial year, bursaries will now be awarded for undergraduate and postgraduate studies, towards a qualification in Fire Services Technology (excluding Certificate courses and PhD qualifications). This is in support of the Fire Services Competency Framework gazetted as part of the Local Government Staff Regulations on 21 September 2021. The NDMC will continue to explore new initiatives to provide Fire Services support gaining access to the qualifications required for promotional consideration and to build the necessary fundamental knowledge required by members to effectively function within the Fire Services field. ►



► **Progress on the Draft Bill on Fire Services**

The Draft Bill on Fire Services are currently being handled by the CoGTA Legal Services for preparation of the next phase in the legal process which involves the certification of the Fire Services Bill on Fire Services by the Office of the State Law Advisor, declaring it suitable for the next phase of tabling it before Cabinet’s cluster committees to facilitate more detailed consideration of the specific policy areas and issues.

**Capacity assessments: National Fire Safety and Prevention Strategy**

During the 2016/17 financial year, the NDMC started a multi-year project aimed at supporting the implementation of the National Fire Safety and Prevention Strategy through capacity assessments and support in municipalities. During the assessment process, the National Fire Services identified key skills gaps that were adversely impacting on the ability of most assessed municipalities to deliver on the fire safety and prevention mandate outlined in the National Fire Safety and Prevention Strategy.

To date more than 93 municipalities have been assessed, with more than 500 fire safety practitioners trained in aspects of fire risk assessment and safety strategies, through partnership with the Fire Protection Association of South Africa (FPASA).

During the 24/25 financial year, the NDMC Fire Services, as part of its Annual Performance Plan, will continue to roll-out of its support programme for Fire Services and will assess 15 municipality on the capability to implement the National Fire Safety and Prevention Strategy.

**Capacity Assessments: Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)**

During the same period, we will also continue to perform Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capacity assessments within four Provinces. This follows on the four Province’s assessment during the previous financial year, aimed at providing support for strengthening the USAR function within the country.

In support of ensuring a national capability for the delivery of the firefighting function, the Strategy also includes outcomes and deliverables to drive the

implementation of the following support programmes for Fire Services over the next three years but not limited to:

- Through our strategic approach, to implement the Fire Services Act within the next three years, as its implementation is a strategic imperative that gives further expression to the transformation of Fire Services in the country.
- Finalisation of a Fire Services Framework.
- Resurrection of the Fire Brigade Board and/or the Technical Structure established under S (5) (a) of the Fire Brigade Services Act.
- Implementation of a funding model for Fire Services.
- Implementation of a regulatory framework for the management of designated services.
- Gazetting of the USAR Governance Framework to ensure sustained Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) preparedness and response capability within the country.
- To continue the roll-out of the National Incident Command System (ICS) to improve response to incidents.
- Establishment of mechanisms to protect national key strategic facilities from fires and related risks.
- Development and implementation of a national strategy to professionalise the fire services; which included the feasibility study for the establishment of a National Fire Services Training Academy.
- Develop and implementation of a National Physical Fitness Framework for use in the fire service. ▲