

# New deputy president to launch national strategic plan for HIV, TB and STIs

The fifth national strategic plan (NSP) for HIV, TB and STIs for the period 2023 to 2028 has received final approval by Cabinet.



Source: Twitter @PaulMashatile

Following this final stage of approval, the plan will be launched to the public by the new deputy president, Paul Mashatile in his capacity as the chairperson of the South African National Aids Council (Sanac), during the official commemoration of World TB Day on 24 March in Rustenburg, North West.

The NSP provides a strategic framework for a multi-sectoral approach that is people-centred to eliminate HIV, TB and STIs as public health threats by 2030.

The drafting of the NSP was co-ordinated by the South African National Aids Council (Sanac) which brings together government, civil society, the private sector, and development partners to build consensus and drive a well-coordinated, unified response to the three epidemics over a five-year period.

It emphasises the need to break down barriers and maximise equitable and equal access to services through resilient and integrated health systems to guarantee the health and social protection of all South Africans.

## Lessons from Covid-19

The new plan was drafted to be pandemic-ready as a result of lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Disruptions caused by Covid-19 severely compromised the current NSP, resulting in a strong need to ensure that the new NSP does not suffer the same fate.



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A game-changer is the inclusion of mental health services and social support based on the strong association between HIV, TB, and STIs with other social challenges such as gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), human-rights violations and inequalities.

The new NSP also features an expanded scope for the management of STIs, including viral hepatitis and human papilloma virus which are deemed as common coinfections in people living with HIV.

Dubbed the people's NSP, the drafting of the plan followed a bottom-up approach through extensive public consultations across the nine provinces of South Africa.

This was supplemented by a strong mass media campaign to solicit public inputs from ordinary South Africans from all walks of life – all inputs were carefully considered and integrated into the final, revised draft that was tabled before Cabinet.

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