



NYDA RURAL STRATEGY

2026/2029

Strengthening Access,
Awareness and Impact in Rural
Communities

STRATEGY APPROVAL & SIGN-OFF

Strategy Name:	NYDA Rural Inclusion Strategy
-----------------------	--------------------------------------

Effective Date of Current Version:	01 April 2026
Organisation:	NYDA
Strategy Owner	
Designation	Signature
Senior Manager: Corporate Strategy and Planning Mr. Walter Bango	

APPROVAL BY NYDA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

☒ Approved
 ☐ Not Approved

Comments:

.....

.....

.....



MR NDUMISO KUBHEKA
NYDA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

31 March 2026
DATE

FOREWORD STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA BOARD



The National Youth Development Agency Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029 represents a deliberate and focused response to the persistent structural challenges faced by young people in rural areas. Rural youth continue to experience disproportionate levels of unemployment, limited access to economic opportunities, inadequate infrastructure and constrained access to skills development and enterprise support. This strategy affirms the NYDA’s commitment to addressing these realities in a practical, measurable and inclusive manner.

The strategy recognises that meaningful rural development requires more than isolated interventions. It requires coordinated action, strong partnerships and a clear focus on implementation. Through this strategy, the NYDA commits to expanding access to services in rural communities, strengthening enterprise and cooperative development, supporting youth participation in agriculture and other productive sectors, and enabling access to land, innovation and markets. Emphasis is placed on inclusion, with clear commitments to the participation of women and youth with disabilities across all interventions.

A key strength of this strategy lies in its alignment with the NYDA’s organisational planning and performance systems. By grounding rural delivery targets within the Annual Performance Plan and applying a phased and realistic scaling approach, the strategy ensures that commitments are achievable, fiscally responsible and accountable. This alignment also enables effective monitoring, evaluation and learning, ensuring that implementation is guided by evidence and continuous improvement.

The strategy further recognises the importance of partnerships in unlocking rural opportunities. Collaboration with government departments, municipalities, traditional authorities, TVET colleges, SETAs, the private sector and civil society is central to the successful implementation of the strategy. Through these partnerships, the NYDA seeks to leverage infrastructure, skills, innovation and resources to maximise impact for rural youth.

On behalf of the NYDA Board, I would like to express our appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to the development of this strategy. The Board remains committed to providing oversight and strategic guidance to ensure that the NYDA delivers on its mandate to support and empower young people, particularly those in rural areas who have historically been marginalised.

This Rural Strategy provides a clear pathway for action over the next three years. Its success will be measured not only by targets achieved, but by the tangible improvement in the lives and livelihoods of young people in rural communities. The NYDA looks forward to working with all partners to translate this strategy into meaningful and sustainable outcomes for rural youth.



Dr Sunshine Minenhle Myende
Executive Chairperson
NYDA Board

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA BOARD



The NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029 is a critical instrument in advancing the transformation agenda of the National Youth Development Agency. It responds directly to the structural inequalities that continue to shape the lived realities of young people in rural areas, particularly in relation to access to economic opportunities, land, skills, infrastructure and participation in emerging sectors of the economy.

I view this strategy as an important mechanism for ensuring that transformation is not treated as an abstract principle, but as a practical and measurable outcome. The strategy deliberately prioritises inclusion, with clear commitments to the participation of women and youth with disabilities, and places strong emphasis on supporting youth-owned enterprises, cooperatives and innovation-driven initiatives in rural communities.

The Transformation Committee has placed strong emphasis on ensuring that the strategy is implemented ready. The inclusion of clear targets phases growth, and alignment with the Annual Performance Plan strengthens accountability and enables effective oversight. This approach ensures that transformation commitments are monitored, reported and acted upon throughout the strategy period.

I reaffirm our commitment to providing oversight and guidance to ensure that the implementation of this strategy advances equity, inclusion and sustainable development for rural youth. Transformation is a collective responsibility, and the success of this strategy will depend on continued collaboration, disciplined implementation and a shared commitment to empowering young people in rural areas.

Bonga Makhanya
Executive Deputy Chairperson
National Youth Development Agency

MESSAGE BY THE NYDA BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE TRANSFORMATION MEMBER



Rural youth in South Africa confront multifaceted challenges that are interconnected economically, socially, and infrastructurally. These challenges significantly compromise their education, career prospects, health, and overall wellbeing.

Based on current research and socio-economic analyses, key challenges include:

1. Unemployment and Limited Economic Opportunities

- Youth unemployment rates are alarmingly high, exceeding **60% nationally**, and are
- Often worse in rural areas where industrial and service sectors are sparse.
- Limited access to formal employment forces many young people into **informal work**, seasonal labor, or subsistence activities.
- **Entrepreneurial opportunities** are constrained by a lack of capital, mentorship, and market access.

The strategy also strengthens the role of partnerships as enablers of transformation. Through collaboration with government departments, traditional authorities, municipalities, educational institutions, the private sector and civil society, the NYDA seeks to unlock opportunities that would not be possible through isolated interventions. Of particular importance is the focus on access to land, repurposing underutilised infrastructure and the establishment of innovation hubs that can serve as platforms for rural youth to participate meaningfully in economic activity.

The inclusion commitments reflected in the strategy are equally important. Ensuring meaningful participation of women and youth with disabilities across all programmes is a management priority and will be actively monitored through our performance and reporting systems. These commitments reinforce the NYDA's broader objective of promoting equity and social justice in youth development.

Inclusion is embedded as a cross-cutting principle throughout the strategy. Clear commitments are made to ensure that women constitute at least half of all rural beneficiaries, and that youth with disabilities are meaningfully included across all programme areas. These commitments are integrated into targets, monitoring frameworks and governance arrangements to ensure that inclusion is actively managed and reported.

The strategy is underpinned by a robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework that enables systematic tracking of performance, assessment of outcomes and continuous improvement. Rural delivery targets are monitored as a defined subset of national performance indicators, ensuring coherence with organisational reporting and audit requirements. Governance, risk management and resource frameworks further support effective implementation and oversight.



DR Wisemen Mbatha
NYDA Board Member Sub-Committee Transformation



STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE NYDA

The NYDA Rural Strategy for period 2026-2029 provides a clear and practical framework for translating the Agency's mandate into tangible outcomes for young people in rural areas. As management, we view this strategy as an important tool for strengthening delivery, improving coordination and ensuring that the NYDA's interventions reach those young people who are often the furthest from opportunity.

The strategy is firmly grounded in implementation reality. Its alignment with the NYDA's organisational Strategy and Annual Performance Plans ensures that rural delivery is not treated as an add-on, but as an integral part of the Agency's core business. By setting clear, measurable targets and adopting a phased approach to scaling, the strategy enables disciplined execution while remaining responsive to the diverse contexts within which rural youth live and work.

The central focus of this strategy is improving access to services and opportunities. Through strengthened branch-level delivery, partnerships with TVET colleges and other strategic partners, and collaboration with municipalities, traditional authorities and the private sector, the NYDA is positioned to expand its reach and deepen its impact in rural communities. The strategy also prioritises enterprise development, cooperative support, access to land, innovation, digital participation and skills development as key pathways to sustainable livelihoods.

Implementation of the Rural Strategy will be supported through existing institutional systems for planning, monitoring, evaluation and risk management. Management will place strong emphasis on performance tracking, learning and continuous improvement to ensure that challenges are identified early and addressed effectively.

On behalf of the NYDA management team, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of all stakeholders who have supported the development of this strategy. We are committed to working collaboratively with our partners to ensure that the intentions of this strategy are realised in practice and that rural youth are empowered to participate meaningfully in economic and social development.



Mr Ndumiso Kubheka
Chief Executive Officer
National Youth Development Agency

Contents

Key Concepts	13
Abbreviations	13
CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	15
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Socio-Economic Context of Rural Youth	17
2.3 Economic and Development Dynamics in Rural Areas	17
2.4 International Benchmarking of Rural Youth Development Approaches	17
2.4.1 Rural Youth Enterprise and Agricultural Development.....	18
2.4.2 Skills Development and Employability Pathways.....	18
2.4.3 Digital Participation and Innovation in Rural Economies	18
2.4.4 Partnership-Based Implementation	18
2.4.5 Implications for the NYDA Rural Strategy	19
Table 2.1: Selected International Approaches to Rural Youth Development.....	19
2.5 Policy and Strategic Environment	19
2.6 Rationale for a Dedicated Rural Strategy	20
2.7 Key Challenges Facing Rural Youth.....	21
2.8 Implications for Strategy Design	21
CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES	21
3.1 Introduction.....	21
3.2 Strategic Objective One: Improve Access to NYDA Services and Opportunities in Rural Areas	21
Objective Statement	21
Rationale.....	22
Intended Outcomes	22
3.3 Strategic Objective Two: Expand Rural Economic Participation Through Enterprise, Agriculture and Cooperative Development.....	22
Objective Statement	22
Rationale.....	22
Intended Outcomes	22
3.4 Strategic Objective Three: Strengthen Skills Development, Employability and Innovation for Rural Youth	22
Objective Statement	22
Rationale.....	23
Intended Outcomes	23
3.5 Cross-Cutting Strategic Priority: Inclusion and Equity	23
Priority Statement	23
Rationale.....	23
Intended Outcomes	23
3.6 Strategic Alignment and Integration.....	23

CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND INTERVENTION AREAS	24
4.1 Introduction	24
4.2 Strategic Framework Overview	24
4.3 Intervention Area One: Access, Outreach and Service Delivery	24
Purpose	24
Description	24
4.4 Intervention Area Two: Enterprise Development, Agriculture and Cooperative Support	25
Purpose	25
Description	25
4.5 Intervention Area Three: Skills Development, Employability and Work Readiness	25
Purpose	25
Description	25
4.6 Intervention Area Four: Innovation, Digital Participation and Creative Industries	25
Purpose	26
Description	26
4.7 Cross-Cutting Intervention Area: Partnerships and Institutional Coordination	26
Purpose	26
Description	26
4.8 Cross-Cutting Intervention Area: Inclusion and Equity	26
Purpose	26
Description	26
4.9 Integration of Intervention Areas	27
CHAPTER 5: PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS	27
5.1 Introduction	27
5.2 Rationale for a Partnership-Driven Approach	27
5.4.1 Government Departments and Public Entities	29
CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK (2026–2029)	31
6.1 Purpose of the Implementation Framework	31
6.3 Cross-Cutting Inclusion Commitments	32
6.4 Strategic Objective One: Improve Access and Visibility of NYDA Services in Rural Communities	32
Table 6.1: Rural Access and Participation Targets	32
Table 6.2: Rural Enterprise and Economic Participation Targets	32
6.6 Strategic Objective Three: Strengthen Rural Youth Skills Development, Employability and Innovation	33
Table 6.3: Rural Skills, Innovation and Employability Targets	33
Table 6.4: Branch-Level Partnership Targets	33
Table 6.5: Innovation Hubs and Infrastructure Targets	33

Table 6.6: Cooperative and Grant Support Targets	34
CHAPTER 7: RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	34
7.3.2 Financial and Resource Risks	35
7.3.3 Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement Risks	36
7.3.4 Socioeconomic and Environmental Risks	36
7.3.5 Operational and Supply Chain Risks	36
7.3.6 Governance, Compliance and Reporting Risks	36
7.3.7 Social Inclusion and Safeguarding Risks	37
7.4 Risk Monitoring and Review	37
CHAPTER 8: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)	38
8.1 Purpose of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework	38
8.3 Results Framework	38
8.3.1 Output Level Monitoring	38
8.4 Inclusion and Equity Monitoring	39
8.4.1 Inclusion Indicators	39
8.5 Partnership Performance Monitoring	39
Table 8.3: Partnership Monitoring Indicators	39
8.6.1 Key Outcome Indicators	40
8.8 Data Collection and Reporting Responsibilities	40
8.10 Accountability and Reporting	41
CHAPTER 9: GOVERNANCE, COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	41
9.1 Purpose of the Governance and Coordination Framework	41
9.3 Institutional Roles and Responsibilities	41
9.3.1 National Office Responsibilities	41
9.3.2 Provincial Office Responsibilities	42
9.3.3 Branch-Level Responsibilities	42
9.4.1 Types of Strategic Partnerships	42
9.7 Risk Management and Issue Escalation	43
CHAPTER 10: RESOURCE AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK	44
10.1 Purpose of the Resource and Budget Framework	44
CHAPTER 11: RISK MANAGEMENT	46
11.1 Purpose of Risk Management	46
11.2.1 Partnership and Coordination Risks	47
CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD	48
12.1 Conclusion	48



Key Concepts

Concept	Explanation
Beneficiary	A young person, enterprise, cooperative or group that directly receives support, services, training, funding or opportunities through NYDA programmes.
Branch-Level Partnerships	Formal and operational collaboration arrangements established by NYDA branches with local institutions such as TVET colleges, municipalities, traditional authorities, private sector partners and civil society to support localised implementation of the Rural Strategy.
Cooperative Development	Support provided to youth-owned cooperatives, focusing on collective ownership, governance compliance, capacity building and participation in economic activity.
Cooperative Grant Support	Financial and non-financial assistance provided to youth-owned cooperatives, linked to training completion, governance compliance and productive economic activity.
Digital Economy Participation	Engagement of youth and youth-owned enterprises in economic activities enabled through digital platforms, including e-commerce, digital marketing, online services and technology-driven innovation.
Enterprise Development	Support provided to youth-owned businesses, including training, funding, mentorship, market access and sustainability support.
Implementation Framework	The structured set of actions, targets, responsibilities and timelines that translate strategic objectives into measurable delivery commitments. It includes quantified targets, delivery mechanisms, partnerships and monitoring arrangements aligned with the Annual Performance Plan.
Inclusion Targets	Minimum participation thresholds applied across all programmes to promote equity, including a minimum of 50 percent women and 5 percent youth with disabilities.
Innovation Hub	A physical or shared facility established or supported through partnerships to enable innovation, skills development, enterprise incubation, digital participation and market access for rural youth.
Land Access	The process through which youth gain lawful access to land for productive economic use, including agriculture and other entrepreneurship initiatives, through partnerships with traditional authorities, municipalities or public entities.
Outreach and Mobilisation	Activities aimed at informing rural youth about available opportunities and facilitating access to NYDA services through physical and digital engagement.
Paid Service Opportunities	Structured programmes that provide youth with income-earning opportunities, work exposure and skills development, including the National Youth Service.
Partnership-Driven Delivery	An implementation approach that leverages collaboration with government, educational institutions, traditional authorities, the private sector and civil society to enhance reach, efficiency and sustainability of interventions.
Repurposed Infrastructure	Existing public or community facilities in rural areas that are underutilised and converted, through partnerships, into functional spaces for training, innovation, enterprise development or cooperative support.
Rural Areas	Geographic areas characterised by low population density, limited access to services and infrastructure, and predominantly traditional, agricultural or non-urban settlement patterns, including areas under traditional authority.
Rural Youth	Young people residing in rural areas, including villages, farming communities and settlements governed by traditional leadership structures.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Term
APP	Annual Performance Plan
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
FASSET	Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYS	National Youth Service
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training



CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Youth Development Agency Rural Strategy provides a comprehensive and implementation-focused framework to advance the socio-economic participation of young people in rural areas. The strategy is informed by the recognition that rural youth continue to face persistent and structural barriers to opportunity, including high unemployment, limited access to services, weak local economic ecosystems, inadequate infrastructure, restricted access to land, and limited participation in innovation-driven and digital economic activities.

The strategy responds to these challenges by positioning rural youth development as a deliberate and measurable priority within the NYDA's core mandate. Rather than creating parallel programmes or structures, the strategy embeds rural delivery within the NYDA's organisational Strategy and Annual Performance Plans. All interventions, targets and delivery mechanisms outlined in the strategy are therefore aligned with existing institutional planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting systems, ensuring fiscal discipline, accountability and sustainability.

The central objective of the Rural Strategy is to improve access to NYDA services and opportunities in rural communities. This includes expanding outreach and mobilisation, strengthening branch-level delivery, and increasing participation in paid service opportunities, including the National Youth Service. These interventions are designed to serve as entry points into broader skills development, enterprise support and economic participation pathways for rural youth.

The strategy places strong emphasis on enterprise development, cooperative support and agricultural participation as key drivers of rural economic inclusion. Targeted support is provided to youth-owned enterprises and cooperatives, with a particular focus on facilitating access to land for productive use through partnerships with traditional authorities, municipalities and relevant government departments. These interventions are intended to enable rural youth to participate meaningfully in agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities, strengthen local value chains and contribute to rural economic development.

Skills development, employability and innovation form another critical pillar of the strategy. The Rural Strategy prioritises entrepreneurship training, work-readiness programmes, digital literacy and digital marketing, creative arts and indigenous trades, as well as structured mentorship and masterclass programmes. These interventions are delivered through partnerships with TVET colleges, universities, Sector Education and Training Authorities and innovation ecosystems, and are designed to prepare rural youth for participation in both traditional and emerging sectors of the economy.

Innovation and digital inclusion are integral to the strategy's approach. The establishment of rural innovation hubs and the repurpose of underutilized public infrastructure are prioritised as mechanisms to provide rural youth with access to shared facilities, technology, training and enterprise incubation support. Through these platforms, rural youth are supported to access digital markets, participate in e-commerce and engage with innovation-driven opportunities that can enhance the sustainability and scalability of their enterprises.

Partnerships are a defining feature of Rural Strategy. Effective implementation depends on coordinated collaboration with government departments, municipalities, traditional authorities, TVET colleges, SETAs, the private sector and civil society. The strategy emphasises branch-level partnerships as a critical delivery mechanism, enabling localised implementation while maintaining alignment with national priorities. These partnerships are structured to leverage infrastructure, skills, funding and market access opportunities that extend beyond the NYDA's direct resources.



In conclusion, the NYDA Rural Strategy provides a clear, coherent and actionable roadmap for addressing the developmental needs of rural youth. By aligning strategic intent with measurable targets, leveraging partnerships, prioritising inclusion and embedding rural delivery within institutional systems, the strategy positions the NYDA to make a meaningful and sustainable contribution to improving the livelihoods and opportunities of young people in rural communities.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the contextual foundation for the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029. It outlines the socio-economic conditions affecting rural youth, the institutional environment within which the NYDA operates, and the rationale for a targeted and structured approach to rural youth development. The chapter situates the strategy within broader national development priorities while maintaining a clear focus on implementation realities.

2.2 Socio-Economic Context of Rural Youth

Young people in rural areas continue to experience structural disadvantages that limit their participation in economic and social development. These disadvantages are shaped by geographic isolation, limited access to infrastructure and services, weak local economies and historical patterns of underinvestment. As a result, rural youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment and informal economic participation.

Access to education, skills development and training opportunities in rural areas remain uneven, with many young people facing barriers related to distance, affordability and limited institutional presence. Where opportunities exist, they are often insufficiently linked to local economic activities or emerging sectors, resulting in weak transitions from training to employment or self-employment.

Rural youth also face constraints in accessing productive assets, particularly land. For many young people, especially those seeking to engage in agriculture or cooperative enterprises, limited access to land remains a significant barrier to sustainable livelihoods. This challenge is compounded by limited access to finance, markets and business development support in rural contexts.

2.3 Economic and Development Dynamics in Rural Areas

Rural economies are characterised by a mix of traditional economic activities, including agriculture and informal trade, alongside emerging opportunities linked to agro-processing, tourism, creative industries and the digital economy. However, these opportunities are often underdeveloped due to infrastructure constraints, limited innovation ecosystems and weak integration into broader value chains.

Despite these challenges, rural areas possess significant potential for economic growth and job creation. Agriculture and related value chains remain critical to rural livelihoods, while innovation, digital technologies and creative industries offer new avenues for participation by young people. Unlocking this potential requires targeted interventions that address structural constraints and enable rural youth to participate meaningfully in local and regional economies.

2.4 International Benchmarking of Rural Youth Development Approaches

The development of the NYDA Rural Strategy has been informed by international experience in addressing rural youth unemployment, spatial inequality and limited access to economic opportunities in non-urban areas. Many countries face similar structural challenges affecting rural youth, including limited infrastructure, weak local economic ecosystems, barriers to land access, and reduced participation in innovation-driven sectors of the economy.

Benchmarking international approaches provides useful insights into how rural youth development programmes can be designed to strengthen access to opportunities, promote



enterprise development and enable participation in emerging sectors of the economy. While the socio-economic and institutional contexts of countries differ, several common lessons emerge from global practice that are relevant to the South African context.

2.4.1 Rural Youth Enterprise and Agricultural Development

In several countries, rural youth development strategies prioritise enterprise development and agricultural participation as key pathways to economic inclusion. For example, programmes in countries such as Brazil and Kenya have focused on supporting youth participation in agricultural value chains, agro-processing and rural entrepreneurship. These initiatives typically combine skills development, access to productive assets and market linkages to support sustainable enterprise development.

A key lesson from these approaches is the importance of linking enterprise support to broader local economic ecosystems, including access to markets, infrastructure and value chain opportunities. In rural contexts, enterprise development is most effective when combined with targeted support mechanisms that enable youth to access land, inputs, training and mentorship.

2.4.2 Skills Development and Employability Pathways

Countries addressing rural youth unemployment often emphasise skills development programmes that are closely linked to local economic opportunities. In India, for example, rural skills development initiatives combine vocational training, entrepreneurship education and work-readiness programmes to prepare young people for both employment and self-employment opportunities.

International practice demonstrates that skills development programmes are most effective when delivered in partnership with local training institutions, including vocational training centres, colleges and universities. Such partnerships strengthen the relevance of training programmes and improve pathways from training into employment or enterprise development.

2.4.3 Digital Participation and Innovation in Rural Economies

Digital technologies and innovative ecosystems are increasingly recognised as important enablers of rural economic participation. In several developing economies, initiatives have focused on expanding digital skills, supporting digital entrepreneurship and enabling rural youth to participate in e-commerce and digital service platforms.

The establishment of innovation hubs, shared workspaces and digital training centres has been used in various contexts to expand access to technology, mentorship and market opportunities. These facilities provide platforms through which rural youth can develop new enterprises, access training and connect with wider economic networks.

2.4.4 Partnership-Based Implementation

A consistent feature across international rural youth development programmes is the reliance on partnerships between government institutions, educational institutions, private sector actors and community organisations. Such partnerships enable programmes to leverage complementary resources, infrastructure and expertise, particularly in areas where public institutions alone may have limited capacity.



Branch-level or localised partnerships are often critical in rural contexts, as they support place-based delivery and allow programmes to respond to local economic conditions and opportunities.

2.4.5 Implications for the NYDA Rural Strategy

The lessons emerging from international benchmarking reinforce several design principles reflected in the NYDA Rural Strategy.

Firstly, rural youth development requires integrated interventions that combine access to services, enterprise development, skills development and innovation support. Secondly, partnerships with institutions such as TVET colleges, municipalities, traditional authorities and private sector partners are essential to expand reach and strengthen implementation capacity.

Thirdly, improving access to markets, digital participation and innovation ecosystems is increasingly important for enabling rural youth to participate in modern economic opportunities.

The NYDA Rural Strategy incorporates these lessons by prioritising enterprise and cooperative development, skills development and innovation, strengthened branch-level partnerships, and expanded access to digital and market opportunities. While tailored to the South African institutional and policy context, the strategy reflects international good practice in addressing rural youth unemployment and spatial inequality.

Table 2.1: Selected International Approaches to Rural Youth Development

Country	Key Programme Focus	Key Features	Relevance for the NYDA Rural Strategy
Brazil	Rural youth entrepreneurship and agricultural value chains	Integration of agricultural training, enterprise development and cooperative support	Highlights the importance of linking youth enterprises to agricultural value chains and cooperative models in rural economies
India	Rural skills development and self-employment programmes	Vocational training combined with entrepreneurship development and digital market participation	Demonstrates the importance of linking skills development to enterprise creation and digital participation
Kenya	Digital economy participation and youth innovation programmes	Digital skills training, youth innovation hubs and support for online market access	Reinforces the importance of digital participation and innovation hubs in expanding rural economic opportunities
Rwanda	Youth entrepreneurship and cooperative development	Strong focus on youth cooperatives, rural enterprise development and government-supported incubation programmes	Illustrates the role of cooperative models and structured enterprise incubation in rural economic inclusion

2.5 Policy and Strategic Environment

The NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029 is aligned with the broader national policy architecture guiding youth development, rural economic transformation and spatial inclusion in South Africa. The strategy is designed to complement existing national priorities that seek to address structural inequality, expand economic opportunities and strengthen participation of young people in productive sectors of the economy.

At a national level, the strategy supports the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP), which identifies youth unemployment and spatial inequality as critical development challenges requiring targeted and coordinated policy responses. The NDP emphasises the importance of expanding economic opportunities, strengthening rural economies and enabling young people to participate meaningfully in economic activity.

The strategy is also aligned with the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), which prioritises inclusive economic growth, employment creation and improved access to economic opportunities for historically marginalised communities. By focusing on enterprise development, skills development, agricultural participation and innovation in rural areas, the Rural Strategy contributes to these national development objectives.

In addition, the strategy is aligned with the objectives of the National Youth Policy, which emphasises the need to expand access to economic participation, skills development and entrepreneurship opportunities for young people. The Rural Strategy contributes to these goals by focusing specifically on young people living in rural areas who often experience additional barriers to opportunity due to geographic isolation, limited infrastructure and weaker local economic ecosystems.

The strategy also aligns with the principles of the District Development Model (DDM), which promotes coordinated planning and service delivery across national, provincial and local spheres of government. By strengthening branch-level partnerships with municipalities, traditional authorities and local institutions, the Rural Strategy supports place-based development and integrated implementation of youth development initiatives at district level.

Furthermore, the strategy supports broader national priorities relating to rural development, land access and agricultural participation, particularly through partnerships with institutions responsible for land reform, rural economic development and agricultural support programmes. These partnerships are critical to enabling rural youth to participate in productive sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing and related value chains.

At an organisational level, the Rural Strategy is fully aligned with the NYDA Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plans (APPs). Rural delivery targets outlined in the Implementation Framework are derived directly from existing APP indicators and are implemented through the NYDA's existing programme portfolio, including enterprise development, skills development, cooperative support and the National Youth Service.

This alignment ensures that rural youth development interventions are embedded within approved institutional planning, budgeting and reporting systems. It also strengthens accountability by ensuring that rural delivery outcomes are monitored through established performance management and governance structures.

By situating the Rural Strategy within this broader policy environment, the NYDA is able to contribute to national efforts to address spatial inequality, expand economic opportunities and strengthen participation of young people in rural economies. The strategy therefore functions not as a standalone initiative, but as a focused mechanism for advancing national development priorities in rural communities.

2.6 Rationale for a Dedicated Rural Strategy

While national youth development programmes provide a broad framework for support, they do not always adequately address the specific conditions and constraints faced by rural youth. A dedicated rural strategy enables the NYDA to focus attention on spatial inequality, tailor



interventions to rural contexts, and ensure that rural youth are not marginalised within broader programmes.

The Rural Strategy provides clarity on priorities, delivery mechanisms and partnerships required to address rural challenges. It enables targeted allocation of effort within existing resources and strengthens accountability for rural delivery outcomes.

2.7 Key Challenges Facing Rural Youth

The strategy responds to a set of interrelated challenges affecting rural youth, including:

- Limited access to economic opportunities and markets
- High levels of unemployment and underemployment
- Restricted access to land and productive assets
- Weak local enterprise ecosystems
- Inadequate infrastructure and service delivery
- Limited exposure to innovation and digital opportunities
- Barriers to inclusion for women and youth with disabilities

These challenges require coordinated and sustained interventions that go beyond short-term programmes.

2.8 Implications for Strategy Design

The context outlined in this chapter underscores the need for a strategy that is focused on implementation, measurable outcomes and partnership-driven delivery. It highlights the importance of aligning rural interventions with institutional systems, leveraging partnerships to overcome capacity constraints, and embedding inclusion as a core principle.

These considerations inform the strategic objectives, implementation framework and governance arrangements set out in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the strategic objectives that guide the implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029. The objectives respond directly to the socio-economic challenges facing rural youth and provide a clear framework for prioritising interventions, allocating resources and measuring progress.

The strategic objectives are deliberately limited in number to ensure focus, coherence and effective implementation. Each objective is supported by clearly defined outcomes, with detailed targets and indicators set out in the Implementation Framework.

3.2 Strategic Objective One: Improve Access to NYDA Services and Opportunities in Rural Areas

Objective Statement

To expand and strengthen access to NYDA services, programmes and opportunities for young people in rural communities.

Rationale

Limited access to services remains a key barrier for rural youth. Geographic isolation, inadequate infrastructure and uneven institutional presence often prevent young people from benefiting fully from national youth development programmes. Improving access is therefore a foundational requirement for enabling rural youth to participate in skills development, enterprise support and economic opportunities.

Intended Outcomes

- Increased visibility and reach of NYDA services in rural areas
- Improved participation of rural youth in paid service opportunities, including the National Youth Service
- Strengthened branch-level delivery and outreach capacity
- Improved awareness of available programmes and support mechanisms among rural youth

Access interventions serve as entry points into broader development pathways and support sustained engagement with NYDA services.

3.3 Strategic Objective Two: Expand Rural Economic Participation Through Enterprise, Agriculture and Cooperative Development

Objective Statement

To promote inclusive economic participation of rural youth through enterprise development, agricultural initiatives, cooperative formation and access to productive assets.

Rationale

Economic exclusion remains one of the most significant challenges facing rural youth. Limited access to finance, markets, land and business development support constrains the ability of young people to establish and grow sustainable enterprises. Addressing these barriers requires targeted interventions that respond to rural economic realities and leverage local opportunities.

Intended Outcomes

- Increased number of youth-owned enterprises and cooperatives supported in rural areas
- Improved access to land for productive economic use through partnerships with traditional authorities and municipalities
- Strengthened participation of rural youth in agricultural and related value chains
- Enhanced market access for rural enterprises, including participation in digital and e-commerce platforms

This objective prioritises productive economic activity that contributes to local development and employment creation.

3.4 Strategic Objective Three: Strengthen Skills Development, Employability and Innovation for Rural Youth

Objective Statement

To enhance the skills, employability and innovation capacity of rural youth to enable participation in both traditional and emerging sectors of the economy.

Rationale

Rural youth often face limited access to quality skills development and employability pathways that are aligned with labour market and enterprise opportunities. Strengthening skills development, innovation and work-readiness is essential to improving transitions into employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Intended Outcomes

- Increased participation of rural youth in skills and entrepreneurship training programmes
- Improved work-readiness and employability outcomes
- Enhanced digital literacy and digital marketing capabilities
- Increased participation in creative industries and indigenous trades
- Strengthened innovation and problem-solving capacity among rural youth

These outcomes are supported through partnerships with TVET colleges, universities, Sector Education and Training Authorities and innovation ecosystems.

3.5 Cross-Cutting Strategic Priority: Inclusion and Equity

Priority Statement

To ensure equitable access to opportunities for all rural youth, with particular emphasis on women and youth with disabilities.

Rationale

Structural inequalities within rural contexts disproportionately affect women and youth with disabilities, limiting their participation in economic and social development. Addressing these disparities requires deliberate and measurable inclusion commitments across all interventions.

Intended Outcomes

- Meaningful participation of women across all rural programmes
- Increased access to opportunities for youth with disabilities
- Removal of barriers to participation through targeted support and reasonable accommodation
- Integration of inclusion considerations into planning, implementation and monitoring processes

Inclusion is treated as a cross-cutting priority rather than a standalone objective.

3.6 Strategic Alignment and Integration

The strategic objectives outlined in this chapter are aligned with national development priorities, the Medium-Term Development Plan and the NYDA's organisational Strategy and Annual Performance Plans. They are implemented through existing programmes and institutional systems, ensuring coherence and accountability.

The objectives are mutually reinforcing and are designed to work together to improve access, enable economic participation and strengthen capabilities of rural youth.

CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND INTERVENTION AREAS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the strategic framework that guides the selection and structuring of interventions under the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029. The framework translates the strategic objectives into coherent intervention areas that respond to the realities of rural contexts and support integrated delivery across the NYDA's programmes.

The chapter focuses on the logic of intervention, rather than targets or budgets, which are addressed in later chapters. It provides a clear organising structure for implementation, partnership engagement and performance monitoring.

4.2 Strategic Framework Overview

The Strategy is structured around a set of interconnected intervention areas that collectively address access, economic participation, skills development, innovation and inclusion. These intervention areas are not implemented in isolation. They are designed to reinforce one another and support progression pathways for rural youth from access to opportunity, and from opportunity to sustainable livelihoods.

The framework is underpinned by the following core considerations:

- Rural interventions must be accessible, locally relevant and scalable
- Delivery must be embedded within existing NYDA programmes and systems
- Partnerships are essential to extend reach, infrastructure and expertise
- Inclusion considerations must be integrated across all interventions
- Interventions must support measurable outcomes and accountability

4.3 Intervention Area One: Access, Outreach and Service Delivery

Purpose

To improve awareness of, and access to, NYDA services and opportunities among rural youth.

Description

This intervention area focuses on strengthening the physical and digital presence of the NYDA in rural communities. It includes outreach, mobilisation and client support activities that serve as entry points into the Agency's broader programme offerings. Emphasis is placed on branch-level delivery, community-based engagement and coordination with local institutions.

Key elements include:

- Outreach and mobilisation in rural communities
- Strengthening branch-level service delivery
- Access to paid service opportunities, including the National Youth Service
- Referral and linkage to skills development, enterprise and cooperative support

Improved access is foundational to enabling rural youth to participate in subsequent intervention areas.

4.4 Intervention Area Two: Enterprise Development, Agriculture and Cooperative Support

Purpose

To expand economic participation of rural youth through productive enterprise activity.

Description

This intervention area prioritises support to youth-owned enterprises, agricultural initiatives and cooperatives. It responds to the structural constraints faced by rural youth in accessing finance, land, markets and business development support.

Key elements include:

- Support to youth-owned enterprises in rural areas
- Promotion of agricultural and agro-related initiatives
- Cooperative formation, governance support and capacity building
- Facilitation of access to land for productive use through partnerships with traditional authorities and municipalities
- Market access support, including participation in digital and e-commerce platforms

The focus is on enabling sustainable economic activity that contributes to local development and employment creation.

4.5 Intervention Area Three: Skills Development, Employability and Work Readiness

Purpose

To strengthen the skills base and employability of rural youth.

Description

This intervention area addresses gaps in access to relevant skills development and employability pathways. It focuses on preparing rural youth for employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship through structured learning and practical exposure.

Key elements include:

- Skills and entrepreneurship training programmes
- Work-readiness and employability support
- Partnerships with TVET colleges, universities and Sector Education and Training Authorities
- Alignment of training to local economic opportunities and labour market needs

Skills development interventions are designed to support transitions into both enterprise activity and employment.

4.6 Intervention Area Four: Innovation, Digital Participation and Creative Industries

Purpose

To enable rural youth to participate in innovation-driven and digital economic opportunities.

Description

This intervention area recognises the growing importance of innovation, digital technologies and creative industries as drivers of economic participation. It focuses on creating enabling environments and access points for rural youth to engage with these opportunities.

Key elements include:

- Establishment and support of rural innovation hubs through partnerships
- Repurposing underutilised rural infrastructure for innovation and enterprise use
- Digital literacy and digital marketing training
- Support for participation in creative arts and indigenous trades
- Access to e-commerce platforms and digital markets

These interventions seek to bridge the digital divide and expand the range of viable economic pathways available to rural youth.

4.7 Cross-Cutting Intervention Area: Partnerships and Institutional Coordination

Purpose

To enhance delivery capacity and sustainability through collaboration.

Description

Partnerships are a central enabler across all intervention areas. This intervention area focuses on structuring and coordinating partnerships to support effective implementation.

Key elements include:

- Branch-level partnerships with TVET colleges and strategic partners
- Collaboration with municipalities, COGTA and traditional authorities
- Engagement with the private sector and civil society organisations
- Coordination of roles, resources and infrastructure through formal agreements

Partnerships are structured to support delivery, avoid duplication and leverage complementary resources.

4.8 Cross-Cutting Intervention Area: Inclusion and Equity

Purpose

To ensure equitable participation of all rural youth.

Description

Inclusion is embedded across all intervention areas, with deliberate focus on women and youth with disabilities. This includes targeted outreach, removal of participation barriers and

integration of inclusion considerations into planning, implementation and monitoring processes.

Inclusion is treated as a core design principle rather than a standalone programme.

4.9 Integration of Intervention Areas

The intervention areas outlined in this chapter are implemented in an integrated manner. Access interventions link rural youth to skills development and enterprise support. Skills development supports enterprise readiness and employability. Innovation and digital interventions enhance sustainability and market access. Partnerships and inclusion mechanisms underpin all delivery areas.

This integrated approach supports progression pathways and maximises the impact of interventions.

CHAPTER 5: PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Introduction

Partnerships are central to the successful implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029. Given the scale, diversity and complexity of challenges facing rural youth, no single institution can deliver effective outcomes in isolation. This chapter outlines the partnership and institutional arrangements that enable coordinated, efficient and sustainable delivery of the strategy.

The chapter focuses on the purpose and structure of partnerships, rather than targets or governance processes, which are addressed in later chapters.

5.2 Rationale for a Partnership-Driven Approach

Rural development requires integrated responses that combine policy alignment, service delivery, infrastructure access, skills development, land access and market integration. In rural contexts, these elements are often distributed across multiple institutions, including government departments, municipalities, traditional authorities, educational institutions, the private sector and civil society.

A partnership-driven approach enables the NYDA to:

- Extend the reach of its programmes into rural communities
- Leverage infrastructure, expertise and resources beyond its own capacity
- Improve coordination and reduce duplication of efforts
- Strengthen sustainability and local ownership of interventions

Partnerships are therefore positioned as delivery enablers rather than standalone activities.

5.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Collaboration

The development and implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy recognises that rural youth development is inherently multi-sectoral and requires coordinated action across institutions responsible for rural development, land reform, agriculture, skills development, enterprise support and local economic development. The strategy therefore acknowledges the

importance of structured engagement with key stakeholders operating within the rural development ecosystem.

Rural youth face interconnected challenges that extend beyond the mandate of any single institution. These challenges include limited access to land, constrained local economic opportunities, uneven access to skills development and training institutions, and weak market integration for rural enterprises. Addressing these challenges effectively requires collaboration between government departments, educational institutions, municipalities, traditional authorities, private sector partners and civil society organisations.

The NYDA Rural Strategy is therefore designed to complement and leverage the work of institutions already active in rural development and youth economic participation. In particular, the strategy recognises the roles of national and provincial departments responsible for rural development, land reform, agriculture, cooperative governance and economic development. These institutions play critical roles in enabling access to land, supporting agricultural value chains, facilitating infrastructure development and strengthening local economic ecosystems.

Engagement with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is particularly important in supporting youth access to land for productive economic use. Through collaboration with this department and related institutions, opportunities can be created for youth-owned enterprises and cooperatives to participate in agricultural production, agro-processing and other land-based economic activities.

The strategy also recognises the importance of collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and other sector departments responsible for rural economic development. These partnerships support the integration of youth enterprises into agricultural value chains and facilitate access to technical support, training programmes and market opportunities.

Municipalities and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs play a key role in enabling local implementation of the strategy. Their involvement supports the identification and repurposing of underutilised infrastructure, coordination of local development initiatives and alignment of youth development interventions with district and municipal development priorities. These institutions also facilitate access to local economic opportunities and community-based resources that are essential for rural programme delivery.

Traditional authorities represent an important stakeholder group in rural areas where land administration and community governance structures are closely linked to traditional leadership. Collaboration with traditional authorities is essential for enabling youth access to land, facilitating community mobilisation and ensuring that interventions are aligned with local governance structures and community priorities.

The strategy also emphasises collaboration with education and training institutions, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, universities and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). These partnerships are central to delivering skills development programmes, entrepreneurship training and work-readiness initiatives that are aligned with rural economic opportunities.

Private sector partners and civil society organisations further strengthen the rural youth development ecosystem by providing mentorship, innovation support, market access opportunities and specialised programme delivery. Such partnerships contribute to expanding opportunities for rural youth beyond the resources and capacity of a single institution.

At an operational level, the NYDA branch network plays a central role in coordinating stakeholder engagement. Branch offices serve as local coordination points for partnerships



with municipalities, training institutions, traditional authorities and other strategic partners. Through these localised partnerships, the NYDA is able to adapt implementation approaches to specific rural contexts while maintaining alignment with national strategic objectives.

Stakeholder engagement under the Rural Strategy is therefore structured around collaboration, coordination and shared accountability. By working with institutions responsible for rural development, skills development and economic participation, the NYDA seeks to maximise the impact of its interventions and ensure that rural youth are able to access opportunities that support sustainable livelihoods and inclusive rural development.

5.4 Key Categories of Strategic Partnerships

5.4.1 Government Departments and Public Entities

Partnerships with national and provincial government departments and public entities are essential for policy alignment, infrastructure access and integrated service delivery. Key areas of collaboration include:

- Rural development, agriculture and land access
- Local government and cooperative governance
- Skills development and training
- Infrastructure provision and repurposing

These partnerships support access to land for productive use, utilisation of public infrastructure, and alignment with broader development initiatives.

5.4.2 Municipalities and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

Municipalities and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs are key partners in facilitating local implementation of the strategy. Collaboration focuses on:

- Identification and repurposing of underutilised rural infrastructure
- Support for establishment of innovation hubs and enterprise centres
- Alignment of youth development initiatives with local development priorities
- Facilitation of access to municipal services and support mechanisms

These partnerships strengthen place-based delivery and support sustainable use of public assets.

5.4.3 Traditional Authorities

Traditional authorities play a critical role in rural governance and land administration. Partnerships with traditional leaders and structures are essential to enabling youth access to land for agricultural and other productive economic activities.

Collaboration focuses on:

- Facilitating access to land for youth-owned enterprises and cooperatives
- Supporting community mobilisation and engagement
- Ensuring alignment with local customs and governance arrangements

Engagement with traditional authorities is conducted respectfully and in line with applicable legal and policy frameworks.



5.4.4 Education and Training Institutions

Partnerships with TVET colleges, universities and Sector Education and Training Authorities are central to delivering skills development, entrepreneurship training and employability programmes.

Key areas of collaboration include:

- Delivery of accredited and non-accredited training programmes
- Entrepreneurship and cooperative development training
- Digital skills, innovation and work-readiness programmes
- Use of institutional facilities for training and incubation

Branch-level partnerships with TVET colleges are prioritised to ensure accessibility for rural youth.

5.4.5 Private Sector and Industry Partners

The private sector plays an important role in providing market access, mentorship, innovation, support and exposure to industry practices.

Partnerships with private sector entities focus on:

- Mentorship and masterclass programmes
- Support for innovation and digital participation
- Market access and value chain integration
- Exposure to emerging technologies and business models

Private sector engagement is structured to support sustainable outcomes for rural youth enterprises.

5.4.6 Civil Society and Community-Based Organisations

Civil society organisations and community-based structures contribute local knowledge, outreach capacity and specialised support.

These partnerships support:

- Community mobilisation and outreach
- Targeted support for marginalised groups
- Complementary services aligned to NYDA programmes

Civil society partners enhance inclusivity and responsiveness at community level.

5.5 Branch-Level Partnerships as a Delivery Mechanism

NYDA branches are positioned as the primary coordination point for partnerships at local level. Branch-level partnerships enable responsive, context-specific delivery and ensure that strategy commitments are translated into practical action.

Branches are responsible for identifying relevant partners, formalising collaboration through appropriate agreements, and coordinating joint activities in line with the Rural Strategy and Annual Performance Plans.

5.6 Principles Guiding Partnership Engagement

Partnerships under the Rural Strategy are guided by the following principles:

- Alignment with strategic objectives and implementation priorities
- Clear roles, responsibilities and accountability
- Mutual benefit and value addition
- Transparency and compliance with governance requirements
- Focus on measurable outcomes for rural youth

These principles ensure that partnerships support effective delivery rather than adding complexity.

5.7 Institutional Coordination and Integration

Effective implementation of the Rural Strategy requires coordination across programmes, partners and levels of operation. Institutional coordination mechanisms ensure alignment between national strategy objectives and local implementation.

Coordination is supported through regular engagement between NYDA structures and partners, integration of rural delivery into planning and reporting systems, and alignment with governance and oversight arrangements outlined in later chapters.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK (2026–2029)

6.1 Purpose of the Implementation Framework

This Implementation Framework translates the NYDA Rural Strategy into clear, measurable and time-bound delivery commitments for the period 2026–2029. The framework aligns directly with the approved Annual Performance Plan for 2026/27 and positions rural delivery as a defined and tracked subset of national performance.

All targets in this chapter are expressed in actual beneficiary numbers, are derived from APP baselines, and are scaled progressively to reflect institutional capacity, partnership readiness and fiscal realism. The framework ensures that rural youth participation is intentional, measurable and auditable.

6.2 Targeting and Scaling Principles

The following principles guide implementation:

- Rural delivery targets are derived from national APP indicators
- In the first year of implementation, rural delivery constitutes 10 percent of relevant APP targets



- Rural targets increase by five percent annually in the subsequent financial years
- Targets are expressed as actual beneficiaries, enterprises or facilities
- All indicators are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
- Delivery is enabled through partnerships with public, private and community institutions

6.3 Cross-Cutting Inclusion Commitments

In line with NYDA inclusion priorities, the following minimum participation thresholds apply across all rural programmes:

- Women: minimum 50 percent of all rural beneficiaries
- Youth with disabilities: minimum 5 percent of all rural beneficiaries

These commitments apply across enterprise support, skills development, land access, innovation hubs, cooperatives and paid service opportunities.

6.4 Strategic Objective One: Improve Access and Visibility of NYDA Services in Rural Communities

This objective focuses on expanding physical and digital access to NYDA services through outreach, branch-level partnerships, paid service opportunities and the National Youth Service.

Table 6.1: Rural Access and Participation Targets

Indicator	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Youth engaged in paid service opportunities, including NYS	60 000	80 000	100 000
Youth reached through rural outreach and mobilisation activities	60 000	120 000	200 000
Youth participating in structured NYS in rural districts	3 000	5000	7 000

These access interventions serve as formal entry points into enterprise development, skills training, cooperative formation and digital economy participation.

Strategic Objective Two: Expand Rural Economic Inclusion Through Enterprise, Agriculture and Cooperatives

This objective strengthens rural economic participation through youth-owned enterprises, agricultural initiatives, cooperatives, land access and market integration.

Table 6.2: Rural Enterprise and Economic Participation Targets

Indicator	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Youth-owned enterprises supported with financial support	800	1000	1300
Youth enterprises accessing agricultural support programmes	150	170	200
Youth cooperatives established or strengthened	10	15	20
Youth accessing land for productive use through traditional authority or municipal partnerships	10	15	20
Youth enterprises supported access markets, including e-commerce platforms	130	137	144

Land access interventions are implemented in partnership with traditional authorities, municipalities and sector departments to support agricultural and non-agricultural rural enterprises.

6.6 Strategic Objective Three: Strengthen Rural Youth Skills Development, Employability and Innovation

This objective focuses on building enterprise readiness, employability and innovation capability through structured learning, creative industries, digital skills and mentorship.

Table 6.3: Rural Skills, Innovation and Employability Targets

Indicator	2026	2027	2028
Rural youth enrolled in skills and entrepreneurship learning programmes	3 150	3 308	3 473
Youth completing work-readiness programmes	1 850	1 943	2 040
Youth trained in digital literacy and digital marketing	500	700	900
Youth trained in creative arts and indigenous trades	500	600	700
Youth supported through structured mentorship and masterclass programmes	425	446	468

Entrepreneurship learning is delivered in partnership with TVET colleges, universities, SETAs and innovation hubs, with graduates prioritised for enterprise and cooperative support.

6.7 Institutional and Delivery Partnerships

Effective implementation depends on structured partnerships at branch, district and provincial level.

Table 6.4: Branch-Level Partnership Targets

Indicator	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
NYDA branches with formal partnerships with TVET colleges	5	7	10
NYDA branches with formal partnerships with strategic partners (COGTA, private sector, NGOs)	1	1	1
NYDA delivering joint programmes with other stakeholders within rural areas e.g. Municipalities	Signed MOA's	Signed MOA's	Signed MOA's

These partnerships support training delivery, infrastructure sharing, innovation hubs and cooperative development.

6.8 Innovation Hubs and Infrastructure Repurposing

The strategy promotes innovation-led rural development through partnerships with COGTA, municipalities and the private sector.

Table 6.5: Innovation Hubs and Infrastructure Targets

Indicator	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
-----------	---------	---------	---------

Rural innovation hubs established or supported through partnerships	2	2	3
Underutilised rural public facilities repurposed as enterprise or innovation centres	MOA signed	MOA signed	MOA signed

These hubs will support innovation, digital skills, creative industries, enterprise incubation and cooperative coordination.

6.9 Cooperative Development and Grant Support

Cooperative development is prioritised as a pathway for collective ownership, shared resources and market access.

Table 6.6: Cooperative and Grant Support Targets

Indicator	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Youth cooperatives receiving training and capacity building	60	63	66
Youth cooperatives receiving market Linkages support	7	10	15

Grant support is linked to training completion, governance compliance and market readiness.

6.10 Implementation Assurance and Monitoring

All targets contained in this chapter are:

- Derived from the approved Annual Performance Plan baseline
- Implemented through existing NYDA funding instruments
- Tracked through established monitoring and evaluation systems
- Reviewed annually to assess performance and adjust delivery

Progress against targets will be reported through quarterly and annual performance reports, with rural delivery disaggregated and tracked separately.

CHAPTER 7: RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The successful implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy depends on proactive identification, monitoring, and mitigation of risks that may affect delivery across national, provincial, municipal, and traditional authority contexts. This Risk Management Framework provides a structured approach to anticipate potential challenges, strengthen institutional resilience, and ensure uninterrupted service delivery to rural youth.

The framework is aligned to national public sector risk management standards and integrates organisational, environmental, financial, operational, and governance risks that may influence implementation from 2026 to 2029. It emphasises early detection, coordinated response, and continuous adaptation to changes in the rural development landscape.

7.1 Purpose of the Risk Management Framework

The framework aims to:

1. Strengthening the implementation of the Rural Strategy through structured risk monitoring
2. Promote accountability and transparency in programme delivery
3. Preventing disruptions to planned rural interventions
4. Support evidence-based decision-making at national and provincial levels
5. Enhance collaboration with municipalities, traditional authorities, and sector partners
6. Ensure that vulnerable youth are protected from exclusion arising from external disruptions

7.2 Categories of Strategic Risks

The following thematic categories represent the major risk areas relevant to rural implementation:

1. Institutional Capacity Risks
2. Financial and Resource Risks
3. Partnership and Stakeholder Risks
4. Socioeconomic and Environmental Risks
5. Operational and Supply Chain Risks
6. Governance, Compliance and Reporting Risks
7. Social Inclusion and Safeguarding Risks

Each category includes specific risks, early warning indicators, and mitigation measures.

7.3 Key Strategic Risks and Mitigation Measures

7.3.1 Institutional Capacity Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Limited capacity in provincial and district offices to meet expanded rural targets	Delays in outreach activities, low quarterly performance, staff overload		Strengthen provincial staffing, expand mobile services, provide targeted training, and increase support from national office
High turnover of frontline staff	Gaps in service continuity, inconsistent delivery standards		Implement retention mechanisms, mentorship, and clear career pathways
Limited technical expertise for specialised programmes (agriculture, digital skills, cooperatives)	Inconsistent programme quality or delays		Engage sector experts, establish technical partnerships, and strengthen staff training

7.3.2 Financial and Resource Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Budget constraints affecting rural programme reach	Reduced programme scale, cancellations, or re-prioritisation		Strengthen budget planning, align with MTEF cycles, diversify partnerships, and advocate for dedicated rural allocations

Insufficient equipment for mobile and outreach services	Reduced mobility, inconsistent service in remote areas	Maintain reliable scheduling, ensure fleet readiness, and allocate resources for field operations
Rising costs in remote areas impacting programme affordability	Higher logistics and delivery expenses	Use cluster-based delivery models, collaborate with municipalities, and adopt cost-sharing arrangements

7.3.3 Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Weak coordination with municipalities and traditional authorities	Slow resolution of land access, limited venues, weak mobilisation		Strengthen intergovernmental protocols, expand partnerships with Amakhosi, and formalise engagement structures
Inconsistent participation of sector departments (Agriculture, DRDLR, SETAs)	Reduced uptake in collaborative programmes		Establish joint planning forums and shared reporting mechanisms
Community resistance or misinformation	Low participation in programmes		Strengthen communication strategies, use local influencers, improve visibility through co-located points

7.3.4 Socioeconomic and Environmental Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Economic downturn affecting participation in entrepreneurship	Lower uptake of funding, reduced business survival		Provide resilience training, flexible funding models, and strong after-care support
Climate-related disruptions (drought, floods) impacting agricultural youth programmes	Crop failures, delays in production, low participation		Work with Agriculture on climate-smart training, diversify agricultural activities
Migration of youth to urban centres	Reduced rural programme uptake		Strengthen rural opportunity pathways and value chains

7.3.5 Operational and Supply Chain Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Procurement delays affecting programme implementation	Late delivery of tools, equipment, training materials		Improve procurement planning, use framework agreements, streamline internal processes
Limited availability of training providers in rural areas	Slow programme rollout, quality concerns		Expand provider database, partner with TVETs and local organisations
ICT connectivity challenges	Interrupted delivery of digital literacy programmes		Use offline-capable solutions, identify alternative venues, collaborate with local connectivity partners

7.3.6 Governance, Compliance and Reporting Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Weak record-keeping in provincial offices	Inaccurate reporting, audit findings		Strengthen MIS systems, provide compliance training, conduct regular audits
Inconsistent monitoring of field activities	Gaps between planned and actual delivery		Deploy monitoring tools, ensure regular reporting cycles by provinces
Non-compliance with grant funding criteria	Audit flags and funding delays		Strengthen verification processes and capacity building for beneficiaries

7.3.7 Social Inclusion and Safeguarding Risks

Risk	Early Indicators	Warning	Mitigation Measures
Exclusion of marginalised youth (women, youth with disabilities, rural remote communities)	Low representation in programme reporting		Implement targeted recruitment strategies, strengthen partnerships with disability organisations, improve venue accessibility
Safeguarding risks during field and outreach activities	Complaints, incidents during programmes		Enforce safeguarding protocols, train staff and partners, establish safe reporting mechanisms
Low uptake of programmes due to language and cultural barriers	Reduced participation by isolated communities		Use local languages, engage cultural leaders, adapt communication materials

7.4 Risk Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this framework requires continuous monitoring and periodic review. The following measures guide the monitoring process:

1. Quarterly provincial reports on risk status and mitigation progress
2. Integration of risk monitoring into NYDA's performance review and annual planning cycles
3. Use of real-time data systems for tracking trends in outreach, enterprise support, agricultural programmes, and skills development
4. Annual review of risk exposure at national level to update mitigation plans
5. Escalation protocols for high-impact risks affecting service delivery
6. Regular engagement with municipalities and traditional authorities to identify emerging risks

7.5 Roles and Responsibilities

Level	Responsibility
National Office	Oversight, aggregation of risks, development of mitigation strategies, quarterly reviews
Provincial Managers	Identification of local risks, implementation of mitigation actions, coordination with municipalities and traditional leaders
Programme Units	Monitoring of programme-specific risks and corrective actions
M&E Unit	Risk tracking, data verification, early warning alerts

Partners (Traditional Authorities, Municipalities, Departments)	Joint mitigation of shared risks, support for access and mobilisation
---	---

CHAPTER 8: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

8.1 Purpose of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework provides a structured system for tracking progress, assessing performance and supporting evidence-based decision-making for the implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2028. The framework ensures that delivery against the Implementation Framework is measurable, transparent and aligned with the approved Annual Performance Plan.

The MEL Framework enables the NYDA to monitor whether rural delivery targets are being achieved, whether partnerships are functioning effectively, and whether interventions are producing intended outcomes for rural youth, with specific attention to women and youth with disabilities.

8.2 Alignment with Organisational Performance Management

Monitoring and evaluation for Rural Strategy is fully integrated into the NYDA's organisational performance management system. All rural indicators are derived from national APP indicators and are tracked as a defined rural subset of institutional performance.

Key alignment principles include:

- Rural targets are reported as part of APP reporting cycles
- Rural performance is disaggregated from national totals
- No parallel indicators are created outside the APP framework
- Monitoring data supports quarterly, annual and mid-term reviews

This alignment ensures coherence with planning, audit and reporting requirements.

8.3 Results Framework

Monitoring focuses on three interconnected levels: outputs, outcomes and enabling conditions.

8.3.1 Output Level Monitoring

Output monitoring tracks the direct delivery of services, programmes and interventions as defined in Chapter 6.

Table 8.1: Key Output Indicators

Output Area	Indicator	Unit of Measure
Access and Outreach	Youth reached through rural outreach activities	Number of youth
Paid Opportunities	Youth placed in paid service opportunities including NYS	Number of youth
Enterprise Development	Youth-owned enterprises supported	Number of enterprises

Agriculture and Land Access	Youth accessing land for productive use	Number of youth
Cooperative Development	Youth cooperatives trained or supported	Number of cooperatives
Skills Development	Youth completing skills and entrepreneurship training	Number of youth
Digital Skills	Youth trained in digital literacy and digital marketing	Number of youth
Creative and Indigenous Trades	Youth trained in creative arts and indigenous trades	Number of youth
Mentorship	Youth participating in masterclass mentorship programmes	Number of youth
Innovation Hubs	Rural innovation hubs established or supported	Number of hubs
Infrastructure Repurposing	Underutilised facilities repurposed as hubs	Number of facilities
Partnerships	NYDA branches with formalised delivery partnerships	Number of branches

8.4 Inclusion and Equity Monitoring

The MEL Framework ensures that inclusion commitments are tracked consistently across all programme areas.

8.4.1 Inclusion Indicators

Table 8.2: Inclusion Targets

Inclusion Category	Indicator	Target
Women	Proportion of women beneficiaries	Minimum 50%
Youth with Disabilities	Proportion of youth with disabilities	Minimum 7%
Rural Youth	Share of rural beneficiaries	As per Chapter 6 targets

All data collection tools must capture gender and disability status to enable accurate reporting.

8.5 Partnership Performance Monitoring

Partnerships are critical enablers of rural delivery. Monitoring focuses on both the existence and functionality of partnerships.

Table 8.3: Partnership Monitoring Indicators

Partnership Area	Indicator	Frequency
Branch-Level Partnerships	Number of NYDA branches with signed MOUs	Annual
TVET and Training Institutions	Number of joint training programmes implemented	Quarterly
COGTA and Municipalities	Number of shared or repurposed facilities	Annual
Private Sector	Number of innovation or market access initiatives supported	Annual

Monitoring assesses whether partnerships are active, contributing resources, and supporting delivery outcomes.

8.6 Outcome Level Monitoring

Outcome monitoring assesses changes experienced by beneficiaries as a result of NYDA interventions.

8.6.1 Key Outcome Indicators

Outcome Area	Indicator
Economic Participation	Percentage of supported enterprises remaining operational after 12 months
Employability	Percentage of youth completing work-readiness programmes entering employment or enterprise
Digital Participation	Percentage of supported enterprises trading through digital platforms
Agricultural Productivity	Percentage of land-access beneficiaries engaged in productive activity
Cooperative Sustainability	Percentage of supported cooperatives meeting governance and compliance standards

Outcome data will be collected through follow-up surveys, site visits and partner reporting.

8.7 Learning and Adaptive Management

Learning is embedded throughout implementation to improve programme effectiveness.

Key learning mechanisms include:

- Quarterly performance reviews at provincial level
- Annual reflection sessions on rural delivery
- Documentation of good practices and implementation challenges
- Use of evidence to refine targeting, partnerships and delivery approaches

Learning outputs inform adjustments to programmes, resource allocation and delivery models.

8.8 Data Collection and Reporting Responsibilities

Data collection responsibilities are distributed as follows:

- Provincial offices collect and validate primary beneficiary data
- Branch offices track partnerships, outreach and local delivery
- National office consolidates rural performance and reports through APP structures
- Partners provide supporting data for jointly implemented interventions

Standardised templates and verification processes ensure data quality and consistency.

8.9 Evaluation Schedule

Evaluation activities during the strategy period include:

- Annual internal performance assessments
- A mid-term implementation review in 2027
- An end-of-strategy evaluation in 2029

Evaluations assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and inclusion outcomes.

8.10 Accountability and Reporting

Performance against rural targets is reported through:

- Quarterly internal performance reports
- Annual performance reports
- Management and governance oversight structures

Findings from monitoring and evaluation inform decision-making and accountability processes across the NYDA.

CHAPTER 9: GOVERNANCE, COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 Purpose of the Governance and Coordination Framework

The Governance, Coordination and Implementation Framework sets out the institutional arrangements that enable effective delivery of the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029. The framework clarifies roles and responsibilities across national, provincial and branch levels, strengthens accountability, and ensures that partnerships are coordinated in a structured and measurable manner.

The framework supports consistent implementation across provinces while allowing flexibility to respond to diverse rural contexts.

9.2 Governance Principles

Implementation of the Rural Strategy is guided by the following principles:

- Clear accountability for delivery at all organisational levels
- Integration of rural targets into organisational planning and performance systems
- Partnership-driven delivery that leverages external capabilities and infrastructure
- Transparency in decision-making and reporting
- Responsiveness to local conditions in rural and traditional authority areas

These principles ensure that governance arrangements support delivery rather than create parallel structures.

9.3 Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

9.3.1 National Office Responsibilities

The National Office provides strategic oversight and coordination for the Rural Strategy. Its responsibilities include:

- Overall stewardship of the Rural Strategy and alignment with organisational priorities
- Integration of rural targets into the Annual Performance Plan and reporting systems
- Development of national implementation guidelines and standard operating procedures
- Coordination of strategic partnerships at national level, including with SETAs, COGTA and private sector partners
- Consolidation and analysis of performance data for management and governance structures
- Oversight of evaluation processes and use of evidence to inform strategic adjustments

9.3.2 Provincial Office Responsibilities

Provincial offices are responsible for operational implementation and coordination within their jurisdictions. Key responsibilities include:

- Translating national rural targets into provincial delivery plans
- Coordinating implementation across districts and branches
- Managing partnerships with provincial departments, municipalities and traditional authorities
- Identifying suitable sites for innovation hubs and repurposed infrastructure
- Monitoring performance against targets and addressing implementation challenges
- Ensuring inclusion targets for women and youth with disabilities are met
- Submitting verified performance data to the National Office

Provincial offices act as the primary coordination layer between strategy and frontline delivery.

9.3.3 Branch-Level Responsibilities

NYDA branches play a central role in frontline implementation. Responsibilities include:

- Delivering outreach, mobilisation and client support in rural communities
- Establishing and managing partnerships with TVET colleges and local strategic partners
- Facilitating access to enterprise support, skills programmes and cooperative development
- Supporting youth access to land through coordination with traditional authorities and municipalities
- Identifying underutilised infrastructure for potential repurposing as innovation or enterprise hubs
- Tracking beneficiary participation and inclusion data
- Providing ongoing aftercare and follow-up support to beneficiaries

Each branch is expected to formalise partnerships and actively contribute to rural delivery targets.

9.4 Partnership Governance and Coordination

Partnerships are a core delivery mechanism of the Rural Strategy. Governance arrangements ensure that partnerships are purposeful, measurable and aligned with strategy objectives.

9.4.1 Types of Strategic Partnerships

Key partnership categories include:

- TVET colleges and higher education institutions for skills and entrepreneurship training
- Sector Education and Training Authorities for accredited learning and enterprise readiness
- Municipalities and COGTA for infrastructure access, repurposing and local coordination
- Traditional authorities for land access and community mobilisation
- Private sector partners for innovation, mentorship and market access
- Civil society organisations for outreach and specialised support

9.4.2 Branch-Level Partnership Targets

Partnership performance is monitored through clear targets, including:

- Number of branches with formalised partnerships
- Number of joint programmes delivered with partners
- Number of shared facilities utilised for training or innovation hubs

These targets are tracked annually and reported through the monitoring framework.

9.5 Coordination Mechanisms

Effective coordination is supported through the following mechanisms:

- Quarterly provincial coordination meetings to review performance and address bottlenecks
- Regular engagement between branches and partner institutions
- National coordination forums for strategic partners
- Structured reporting cycles aligned to APP timelines

Coordination mechanisms ensure alignment, reduce duplication and promote shared accountability.

9.6 Accountability and Performance Management

Accountability for the Rural Strategy is embedded within the NYDA's existing performance management system.

Key accountability measures include:

- Inclusion of rural targets in performance agreements of relevant managers
- Quarterly performance reporting at branch, provincial and national levels
- Management review of performance against targets and inclusion commitments
- Corrective actions where underperformance is identified

These measures ensure that delivery of the Rural Strategy is actively managed and overseen.

9.7 Risk Management and Issue Escalation

Risks related to rural implementation are managed through established organisational processes.

Potential risks include:

- Weak partnership coordination
- Delays in land access approvals
- Infrastructure readiness challenges
- Capacity constraints at branch level

Risks are identified, monitored and escalated through provincial and national management structures, with mitigation actions implemented as required.

9.8 Oversight and Reporting Structures

Oversight of the Rural Strategy is provided through:

- NYDA Executive Management structures
- Relevant governance committees
- Annual reporting to oversight bodies

Performance information is used to support decision-making, resource allocation and continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 10: RESOURCE AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

10.1 Purpose of the Resource and Budget Framework

The Resource and Budget Framework sets out how the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029 will be resourced and implemented within the Agency’s approved financial, human and institutional capacity. The framework confirms that implementation of the strategy will be funded through the NYDA’s normal budget allocation as approved through its organisational Strategy and Annual Performance Plans.

This chapter ensures that rural delivery commitments are financially credible, operationally feasible and aligned with existing institutional systems, without creating parallel funding structures.

10.2 Funding Approach

Implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy is funded through existing NYDA budget programmes and instruments. No standalone or ring-fenced budget is created for the Rural Strategy. Instead, rural delivery is prioritised and tracked as a defined subset of national programme expenditure.

Key funding principles include:

- Alignment of rural targets to approved Annual Performance Plan allocations
- Integration of rural delivery within existing programme budgets
- Incremental scaling of rural targets in line with institutional capacity
- Leveraging partnerships to maximise value for money
- Ensuring fiscal discipline and compliance with public finance requirements

This approach ensures sustainability and avoids fragmentation of resources.

10.3 Programme-Level Resource Alignment

Resources for the Rural Strategy are drawn from the following NYDA programme areas:

- Youth enterprise development and entrepreneurship support
- Skills development and employability programmes
- National Youth Service and Paid Service Opportunities
- Cooperative development and grant funding instruments
- Digital skills, digital marketing and innovation support
- Outreach, mobilisation and branch-level service delivery

Each programme incorporates rural delivery targets as part of its annual planning and reporting processes.

10.4 Human Resource Allocation

Delivery of the Rural Strategy is supported through existing NYDA human resource structures at national, provincial and branch levels.

Human resource allocation includes:

- Branch staff responsible for outreach, client support and partnership coordination
- Provincial staff responsible for implementation oversight and performance monitoring
- National staff responsible for strategic coordination, partnership management and reporting

No additional permanent staffing establishment is created. Where necessary, capacity is strengthened through internal reprioritisation, skills development and partnership support.

10.5 Infrastructure and Facility Resources

Infrastructure required for implementation is sourced primarily through partnerships and shared-use arrangements.

Key infrastructure approaches include:

- Utilisation of existing NYDA branch facilities for programme delivery
- Repurposing underutilised public infrastructure in rural areas in partnership with municipalities and COGTA
- Establishment or support of rural innovation hubs through shared facilities
- Use of TVET colleges, community facilities and partner premises for training and incubation

This approach reduces capital expenditure and promotes efficient use of public assets.

10.6 Partnership-Based Resource Leveraging

Partnerships are a core mechanism for extending NYDA's resource base.

Resource leveraging includes:

- Training delivery through TVET colleges, universities and SETAs
- Infrastructure access through municipalities, traditional authorities and public entities
- Innovation and mentorship support through private sector partners
- Market access support through digital platforms and sector partners

Partnership contributions may be financial or in-kind and are governed through formal agreements.

10.7 Grant and Financial Support Instruments

Financial support to rural youth is provided through existing NYDA grant and funding instruments, including:

- Enterprise development grants
- Cooperative support grants
- Business development and aftercare support
- Targeted financial support linked to training completion and compliance

Grant funding prioritises sustainability, compliance and productive use of resources.

10.8 Financial Controls and Accountability

All expenditure related to the Rural Strategy is subject to existing NYDA financial management and control systems.

Controls include:

- Compliance with the Public Finance Management Act
- Alignment with approved budgets and delegations
- Regular financial monitoring and reporting
- Audit oversight through internal and external audit processes

These controls ensure transparency, accountability and value for money.

10.9 Resource Risk Management

Potential resource-related risks include:

- Capacity constraints at branch level
- Delays in accessing shared infrastructure
- Variability in partner contributions

These risks are mitigated through phased implementation, partnership agreements and ongoing performance monitoring.

CHAPTER 11: RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 Purpose of Risk Management

This chapter outlines the key risks that may affect the implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029 and the measures put in place to mitigate these risks. Risk management is integrated into the NYDA's existing organisational risk management framework and supports proactive identification, monitoring and response throughout the strategy period.

The focus is on risks that may impact delivery, partnerships, inclusion outcomes and sustainability of interventions in rural areas.

11.2 Key Implementation Risks

11.2.1 Partnership and Coordination Risks

Effective implementation of the Rural Strategy depends on partnerships with TVET colleges, municipalities, COGTA, traditional authorities, SETAs and private sector partners. Risks may arise where partnerships are delayed, weakly coordinated or insufficiently formalised.

Mitigation measures include formal partnership agreements, clear roles and responsibilities, and regular coordination and performance review meetings at branch and provincial level.

11.2.2 Capacity and Delivery Risks

Capacity constraints at branch or provincial level may affect the pace and quality of implementation, particularly in remote rural areas.

Mitigation measures include phased implementation, prioritisation of high-impact interventions, internal capacity strengthening and leveraging partner capacity for training, mentorship and infrastructure.

11.2.3 Infrastructure and Land Access Risks

Delays in accessing land, repurposing underutilised infrastructure, or securing suitable facilities for innovation hubs may affect delivery timelines.

Mitigation measures include early engagement with municipalities, COGTA and traditional authorities, identification of alternative facilities, and flexible implementation sequencing.

11.2.4 Inclusion and Equity Risks

There is a risk that participation targets for women and youth with disabilities may not be achieved if targeted outreach and support mechanisms are not consistently applied.

Mitigation measures include explicit inclusion targets, disaggregated data collection, targeted outreach, reasonable accommodation measures, and regular monitoring of inclusion indicators.

11.2.5 Financial and Resource Risks

Although the strategy is funded through existing NYDA budget allocations, resource pressures or reprioritisation may affect implementation.

Mitigation measures include alignment with Annual Performance Plans, incremental scaling of targets, strong financial controls, and leveraging partner contributions to supplement resources.

11.3 Risk Monitoring and Escalation

Risks related to the Rural Strategy are monitored through:

- Regular management review meetings
- Quarterly performance and risk reporting
- Provincial and national coordination structures

Where risks materialise or escalate, corrective actions are implemented in line with organisational risk management procedures.

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

12.1 Conclusion

The NYDA Rural Strategy for the period 2026–2029 provides a coherent and implementable framework for expanding opportunities for young people in rural areas. The strategy responds to persistent challenges of access, economic exclusion, limited infrastructure and uneven service delivery by prioritising targeted interventions that are measurable, inclusive and partnership driven.

By aligning rural delivery to the Annual Performance Plan, strengthening branch-level partnerships, and integrating innovation, land access, skills development and cooperative support, the strategy positions the NYDA to play a catalytic role in rural youth development.

12.2 Key Strategic Contributions

The strategy makes the following key contributions:

- Establishes clear and quantifiable rural delivery targets
- Strengthens inclusion of women and youth with disabilities
- Promotes access to land, enterprise development and cooperative formation
- Supports participation in the digital economy and innovation ecosystems
- Leverages partnerships to maximise impact and resource efficiency
- Ensures alignment with national policy priorities and institutional performance systems

These contributions reinforce the NYDA's mandate to support youth development in a manner that is equitable and responsive to diverse rural contexts.

12.3 Implementation Focus for the Strategy Period

During the period 2026–2029, implementation will focus on:

- Strengthening branch-level delivery and partnerships
- Scaling high-impact interventions in enterprise, skills and innovation
- Ensuring effective monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Addressing implementation challenges through adaptive management
- Consolidating lessons to inform future planning cycles

This focus ensures that the strategy moves beyond intention to tangible outcomes for rural youth.

12.4 Way Forward

The successful implementation of the NYDA Rural Strategy depends on sustained commitment across the organisation and its partners. Continuous learning, responsive management and strong accountability will be essential to achieving the intended outcomes.

As implementation progresses, evidence generated through monitoring and evaluation will inform adjustments to programmes and delivery approaches, ensuring that the strategy remains relevant, effective and impactful.

The NYDA will continue to work collaboratively with government, traditional authorities, the private sector and civil society to create enabling environments for rural youth to participate meaningfully in economic and social development.