



ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026

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 new south
institute
Democracy and Public Institutions



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1.

Opening Messages

Gordon
Institute
of Business
Science
University
of Pretoria

1.a Chairperson's Message

Dear friends, partners and colleagues,

The period under review (January 2025 to March 2026) has been one of consolidation and quiet arrival for the New South Institute (NSI). When NSI was founded, the ambition was never simply to produce good research. It was to help build the institutional foundations of a capable democratic state in South Africa, and to do so from within a broader conversation about governance, sovereignty and reform across the Global South. The past twelve months, more than any before, have shown what that aspiration looks like in practice.

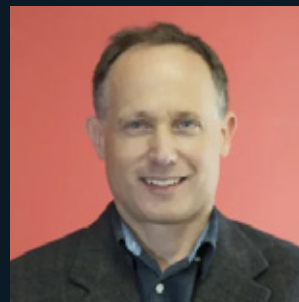
Two developments stand out. The first is the passage of the Public Service Amendment Bill (PSAB). After sustained engagement through Parliament, provincial public hearings, workshops with Members of Parliament, and public dialogue with labour, civil society and policymakers, the Bill was adopted by Parliament and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) in February 2024 and November 2025 respectively. It was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 26 March 2026. For the Institute, this is more than a legislative event. It marks the moment at which an argument NSI has patiently advanced – that politics and administration are not the same thing, and that the distinction between them must be protected in law – became part of South Africa's legal architecture.

The second is a widening of international recognition. In 2025, NSI was named among On Think Tanks' (OTT) "100 Think Tanks to Watch," alongside institutions such as Chatham House, the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In June 2025, the Institute co-hosted the 9th Global OTT Conference in Johannesburg – the first time the conference was held on African soil – bringing together

more than 140 think tank leaders from over 40 countries. These are not simply honours. They signal that perspectives from the New South, confident, plural and rooted in practical reform experience, are being heard.

Internally, NSI has continued to grow in capacity and clarity of purpose. We were formally recognised as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) by the South African Revenue Service; and we strengthened our team across all five programmes. We also broadened our public reach, most visibly through the Governing Tomorrow podcast series and the first intake of our Journalist in Residence programme.

Looking ahead, the focus of our work will increasingly turn to implementation. The Public Service Amendment Act must be brought into operation and defended in practice. Migration governance across the continent must move from commitment to coordinated action. Our anti-capture and South–South research must continue to be rigorous, comparative and connected to the questions that matter for citizens. The past year has demonstrated both how urgent this work is, and how productively it can be done when rigorous research is allowed to meet pragmatic implementation.



Stephan Malherbe
Director and Chair

"Our anti-capture and South–South research must continue to be rigorous, comparative and connected to the questions that matter for citizens."

1.b Meet the Board

The Board of the New South Institute combines practical reform experience with deep academic range. Its composition captures something important about NSI's identity: anchored in South Africa, but not provincial, and connected to the wider African and Global South conversation.

Board of Directors



Stephan Malherbe
Director & Chair



Ivor Chipkin
Co-Founder & Director



Pam Yako
Director



Martha Ngoye
Director

Advisory Members



Pratap Bhanu Mehta



Adebayo Olukoshi



Taibat Lawanson



Jelena Vidojević

1.c

Executive Director's Report

Dear friends, partners and colleagues,

Some reporting years close with a summary. This one closes with a historic moment.

On 26 March 2026, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Public Service Amendment Act (PSAA) into law. For the New South Institute, and for the many people who have worked patiently to professionalise the South African state, this is not simply another legislative milestone. It is the moment at which a hard argument – made in research papers, committee rooms, public hearings, union conversations, classrooms and newsrooms – became part of South Africa's legal architecture.

The idea at the centre of the reform is deceptively simple: politics and administration are not the same thing. Elected leaders should decide what government must do, and hold the state to account for results. Senior public servants should be entrusted to decide how those tasks are carried out and by whom, drawing on law, evidence and professional skill. South Africa blurred that line at democratic transition for historically understandable reasons. Over time, the costs became painfully clear: instability in senior management, weak accountability, patronage, and at its worst, the institutional conditions that made state capture possible.

The new Act begins to correct that design flaw. It devolves key administrative powers from ministers and provincial executives to heads of department, clarifies accountability, and restricts senior administrators from holding political office in party structures. It does not solve everything. Merit still has to be protected in practice. Institutions still have to be rebuilt. The Act still has to be brought into

operation, and then defended in implementation. But something vital has changed: South Africa now has a firmer legal basis for a professional public service than at any time since 1994.

No institution can honestly claim sole ownership of a reform of this scale. Parliament did the difficult work of scrutiny and deliberation. The Department of Public Service and Administration and the Public Service Commission contributed institutional memory and resolve. Organised labour, especially the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), academics, particularly those represented by the South African Association of Public Administration and Management, civil society organisations, and public servants themselves widened the argument and strengthened its legitimacy. Our partners at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) created spaces where difficult questions could be tested in public.

NSI's contribution was to keep returning to the institutional heart of the matter. Over several years, we argued in reports, workshops, hearings and public commentary that the distinction between political office and administrative office is not a technical nicety; it is one of the foundations of democratic statebuilding. To see that principle now written into law is deeply meaningful.

This report tells the story of a year in which our work deepened and widened. We convened across sectors, published across programmes, built new collaborations, and carried South African reform debates into continental and global conversations. From migration governance to anti-capture research, from South–South dialogues to Histories of Government, from broadcast media to our Journalist in Residence programme, a

"We convened across sectors, published across programmes, built new collaborations, and carried South African reform debates into continental and global conversations."

consistent thread ran through everything we did: capable institutions matter, and they can be built through patient, rigorous and pragmatic work.

The shape of NSI's influence has shifted. Former President Thabo Mbeki cited our research at the Inaugural Professor Stan Sangweni Memorial Lecture.

Our researchers were invited to brief Parliament, contribute thought-leadership at important international gatherings and conferences, and participate in a range of public engagements. We were appointed to write the post-apartheid history of the National Treasury (the Treasury). We were recognised internationally among the world's "100 Think Tanks to Watch". These are not marketing achievements. They are signs that the Institute has become a serious intellectual home for those working, from Africa and the wider Global South, on the practical reform of public institutions.

We enter the next period with gratitude, a sharpened sense of responsibility, and a clear awareness that legal change is only the beginning. The real work now is implementation, institutional culture change and sustained public accountability. That is where NSI intends to stay.



Ivor Chipkin
Executive Director

2.

Organisational Overview

2.a Purpose

The New South Institute is an independent, non-partisan research organisation dedicated to strengthening public institutions in South Africa and across the Global South. We believe that capable, accountable and professional institutions are the foundation of democratic life, and that rebuilding them requires a particular combination: rigorous comparative research, patient policy engagement, and a willingness to work at the intersection of ideas and implementation.

Our work sits at the crossroads of academic analysis and practical reform. NSI is close enough to Parliament, government and civil society to be useful to reformers, and close enough to universities, think tanks and policy networks across the Global South to remain intellectually honest. That dual positioning – what we think of as the New South perspective – is what allows the Institute to translate rigorous analysis into institutional change, while helping African and Global South voices shape the wider international debate on governance, sovereignty and development.

The “New South” in our name is a deliberate choice. It describes a generation of countries and thinkers navigating the limits of the old international order while refusing to accept its terms uncritically. It invites comparative conversation – across Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe – about how the relationship between states, markets and societies can be organised differently. NSI exists to make that conversation richer, more practical, and more rooted in evidence.

2.b

Programmes - a brief overview

NSI works through five integrated research programmes. Each is led by an experienced scholar-practitioner and is designed to combine empirical research, public engagement and policy impact. Detailed accounts of programme activity during 2025/2026 follow in Section 3.

Public Service Reform

This programme examines how authority, accountability and expertise are structured within government institutions. It has focused on professionalising South Africa's public administration, restoring the distinction between political and administrative office, and supporting the legislative and implementation journey of the Public Service Amendment Act.

Migration Governance Reform in Africa (MIGRA)

Led by Alan Hirsch, MIGRA produces comparative research on how African states and regional institutions manage mobility, borders and migration data. It challenges the language of crisis that dominates migration debate and advances evidence-based, development-oriented migration governance across the continent.

South–South Dialogues

Led by Jelena Vidojević, this programme creates intellectual bridges across the “New South,” engaging scholars, policymakers and public intellectuals on the shifting foundations of global governance, international law and the emerging multipolar order. Its signature Missing Voices series brings strategically important but often underheard perspectives into African public view.

Reforming Governance, Resisting Capture

Led by Ivor Chipkin in partnership with the Anti-Corruption Coalition (ACC) at GIBS, this programme produces practical, evidence-based research on the political and institutional dynamics of state capture. It is building the research infrastructure – including a comprehensive corruption database – required to move the anti-capture agenda from denunciation to method.

Histories of Government

This programme, which is led by Andries du Toit documents the institutional histories of key organs of the South African state. Its flagship project, announced in late 2025, is the official history of the Treasury – focusing on institution-building, financial governance, and the response to state capture. The programme treats institutional memory as a foundation of reform.

2.c Impact

The Institute's relevance and influence grew substantially during the year.

In public policy, NSI's research and sustained advocacy contributed directly to the adoption of the PSAB. After a years' long journey through both Houses of Parliament, it was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 26 March 2026. The Act gives legal effect to the principle at the heart of NSI's work on the South African state: that political and administrative authority must be distinguished from each other and protected in law.

In scholarly and policy circles, NSI's reach widened. Our research was cited by former President Thabo Mbeki in his Inaugural Professor Stan Sangweni Memorial Lecture in September 2025, drawn on by members of the Presidency's Economic Advisory Council, and engaged by parliamentary committees, provincial governments and regional bodies. Our researchers contributed to (amongst others) the African Union's "Pan-African Forum on Migration", the British Academy, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Munich Security Conference, Princeton University's "Reimagining World Order" project and the "Pathways to Peace Africa Forum" in Salzburg.

In international recognition, NSI was named among OTT's "100 Think Tanks to Watch" in 2025, alongside institutions such as Chatham House, the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment. In June, the

Institute co-hosted the 9th Global OTT Conference in Johannesburg, bringing together more than 140 think tank leaders from over 40 countries – the first time the conference was held on African soil.

Institutionally, NSI was recognised as a Public Benefit Organisation by the South African Revenue Service, strengthening the Institute's sustainability and enabling tax-deductible donations. We deepened our partnership with GIBS through our new campus home in Illovo and the appointment of Jelena Vidojević as a GIBS Research Associate. We also established a formal partnership with the Treasury to write the institutional history of the Treasury since 1994, which will allow us access to its physical and digitised archives.

In public communication, NSI expanded its reach through broadcast media, op-eds and podcasting. The Governing Tomorrow podcast, hosted by Yoliswa Makhasi, carried technical reform debates into wider public conversation; the pilot Journalist in Residence programme drew strong interest across Africa and beyond; and our work appeared across print, radio, television and digital platforms throughout the year.

Taken together, these developments confirm that NSI is not only producing research of high quality, but is also translating it effectively into institutional reform, public debate and continental conversation.



NSI Co-Founder and Director Ivor Chipkin delivers remarks at the OTT Conference 2025, co-hosted with the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

2.a Meet the Team



Ivor Chipkin
Co-Founder and
Director



Jelena Vidojević
Co-Founder and Head
of South-South
Dialogues



Alan Hirsch
Head of Migration
Governance Reform
Programme



Yoliswa Makhasi
Research Fellow,
Public Service Reform
Programme



Andries du Toit
Head of Histories of
Government
Programme



Revati Baboolal
Operations Manager



**Alfred
Makhanthisa**
Head of Finance



Kanyisa Tolashe
Project Officer



Delani Majola
Communications
Officer



Sarah Delius
Histories of
Government
Programme



Rafael Leite
Public Service Reform
Programme



Nicole Fritz
Reforming
Governance,
Resisting Capture



**Rommy
Morales-Olivares**
South-South
Dialogues Programme



Elizabeth Soer
South-South
Dialogues Programme



**Mandira
Bagwandeem**
South-South
Dialogues Programme



Miloš Hrnjaz
South-South
Dialogues Programme



Radmila Nakarada
South-South
Dialogues Programme



**Michael Mulei
Mutava**
Migration Governance
Reform Programme



Victor Amadi
Migration Governance
Reform Programme



Jeeva Rajgopaul
Archivist, Histories of
Government
Programme



Fidelis Zvomuya
Journalist in
Residence

3.

Detailed Programme Activities and Achievements



3.a

Public Service Reform

In 2025/2026, NSI's Public Service Reform programme brought a multi-year institutional argument to legislative fruition. Working at the centre of one of the most consequential governance reforms in post-apartheid South Africa, the programme combined detailed evidence with sustained engagement across Parliament, government, labour, academia and civil society.

Engagement on the Public Service Amendment Bill

Between February and May 2025, the programme participated in the NCOP's public hearings on the PSAB, with submissions presented across provinces by Yoliswa Makhasi, Research Fellow in the Public Service Reform Programme. The submissions argued for the mandatory delegation of administrative powers to heads of departments and for a clearer separation between political and administrative roles. In June 2025, NSI presented its formal submission to the NCOP. In July, the Institute presented to the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Public Administration in Parliament, calling for stronger safeguards for administrative neutrality.

In September 2025, NSI joined parliamentary deliberations as the Bill advanced, and on 2 September 2025 Makhasi and Fidelis Zvomuya represented the Institute at the Department of Public Service and Administration's parliamentary briefing. These efforts contributed to the Bill's adoption by the NCOP by the end of 2025 and its signing into law on 26 March 2026.

Convening reformers

In July 2025, NSI and the SAAPAM co-hosted a virtual dialogue on the PSAB and the Public Administration Management Bill, with Deputy Minister in the Presidency Pinky Kekana, Matthew Parks (COSATU) and Prof. Kedibone Phago (North-West University). In September 2025, the Institute convened its first residential workshop on public service reform at GIBS, bringing together Members of Parliament from the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration for focused engagement with Ivor Chipkin and Yoliswa Makhasi. In October 2025, NSI hosted "South Africa at a Turning Point: Building a Capable and Accountable State" at GIBS, convening leaders from government, labour, academia and civil society – including Matthew Parks, Prof. Onkgopotse Madumo, Nicole Fritz, Prof. Mashupye Masilo and Advocate Shukrat Makinde.



The NSI at the launch of the first Government in Numbers paper, a research series grounded in anonymised PERSAL data on trends in the South African public service.

Data-driven research on the public service

In June 2025, the programme launched ‘Government in Numbers – Issue #01 | Retiring the 1994 Generation of Public Servants’, the first in a series of essays, funded by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, drawing on government data to examine the composition and trajectory of the public service. A partnership with the Department of Public Service and Administration has allowed NSI researchers unique access to the Government’s human resources information system (called PERSAL) to produce this series, enabling enhanced data-driven insights into the structure and performance of the public sector.

Speakers at the launch included Lt Gen Lineo Nkhua (South African Police Services), Advocate Dinkie Dube (then Director-General of the Public Service Commission), and Dr Mirriam Matandela (Department of Health). The report highlighted the ageing senior public service employee cohort and its implications for institutional continuity.

National dialogue and public engagement

On 29 July 2025, Yoliswa Makhasi launched #GoverningTomorrow, a podcast series built around practical conversations on the future of public service reform. Guests included Malaika Mahlatsi on youth and an ageing public service, Pam Yako on leadership and gender equity, Ivor Chipkin on public service reform, Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka during Public Service Awareness Month, and Nicole Fritz on safeguarding public administration from political interference. The series has helped translate dense institutional debates into accessible public conversation.

A marker of impact

At the Inaugural Professor Stan Sangweni Memorial Lecture on 13 September 2025, former President Thabo Mbeki cited NSI’s report ‘Towards a Merit-Based Senior Civil Service: Strategies for Reform in South Africa’ in his address on a professional and ethical public sector as a catalyst for a developmental state. The reference was a clear sign that NSI’s work had become a recognised reference point in national debate on the capable state.

3.b

Migration Governance Reform in Africa (MIGRA)

In 2025/2026, the Migration Governance Reform in Africa (MIGRA) programme continued to establish NSI as one of the few institutions on the continent approaching migration in an empirical, comparative and reform-minded way. Led by Alan Hirsch, the programme works from a practical premise: the questions that matter most are institutional – namely how states regulate mobility, how regional bodies enable or obstruct movement, and how migration policy can be made more coherent, humane and economically intelligent.

Continental and regional studies

In February 2025, Victor Amadi authored 'An Analysis of Migration Governance Frameworks in West Africa', examining one of the continent's most ambitious regional mobility regimes and the gap between the commitments made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and their uneven implementation. In July, NSI released 'Opening Borders for Migration in the East African Community: Progressive Yet Uneven Reform' by Alan Hirsch, which assessed the implementation of the 2010 Common Market Protocol and noted progress on one-stop border posts and e-passports, alongside continuing restrictions on labour mobility and weak regional enforcement. In August 2025, we published a continental study by Amadi and Hirsch – 'African Continental Initiatives for Mobility' – examining the African Union's Free Movement of Persons Protocol and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). The study argued that Africa's trade ambitions are advancing faster than its mobility ambitions, and that this mismatch will continue to constrain regional integration unless political leaders treat the movement of people as central rather than peripheral. In November 2025, Michael Mutava's 'An Analysis of Trends and Patterns of Migration in Africa' further sharpened the evidence base on how Africans actually move across the continent.

Research engagement with government

In his role as a member of the South African President's Economic Advisory Council, Alan Hirsch submitted memos to the President on governance and information systems in the Department of Home Affairs, the regulatory framework for the State Information Technology Agency, and the imperative to remove South Africa from the Financial Action Task Force grey list through stronger action on financial crimes.¹ A research paper was prepared for the South African Presidency of the G20 on Artificial Intelligence, demographic trends and migration. In July 2025, Hirsch spoke at a Southern African Liaison Office policy dialogue on South Africa's draft migration policy, highlighting policy gaps and the political context shaping reform.

Continental and international engagement

Alan Hirsch was invited to the African Union's "Pan-African Forum on Migration", where he presented a paper on 'Legal Identity, Secure Border Management and Free Movement'. He contributed to roundtables hosted by the British Academy, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Munich Security Conference, among other international convenings. In May 2025, Michael Mutava represented NSI at the "International Conference on Migration and Refuge" (ICoMiR) in Brazil, contributing to discussions on public policy for mobile populations alongside delegates from the Philippines, Mexico and Brazil. His intervention focused on African migration governance and the need to humanise migration policy.

Public impact

NSI's November 2025 report, 'An Analysis of Trends and Patterns of Migration in Africa' by Michael Mutava, received wide coverage across African media, including Moneyweb@Midday, Kenya's KU-TV and Nigeria's News Central TV. Across these engagements, Mutava highlighted the predominance of intra-African migration and its implications for regional development. In October 2025, Alan Hirsch and Victor Amadi published 'Do Africa's regional institutions help regularise the mobility of people in Africa?' in *The Conversation*, arguing for incremental reforms to support regional integration in the

absence of wide ratification of the African Union Free Movement Protocol. In December 2025, the programme convened a webinar on the persistent barriers to regional mobility with Brian Chigawa and Otilia Anna Maunganidze.

Through this combination of comparative research, engagement with governments and regional institutions, and targeted media work, MIGRA continued to advance a more honest, evidence-based public conversation on how Africans actually move – and on how institutions can better support mobility, integration and development.

3.c

South-South Dialogues

In 2025/2026, NSI's South-South Dialogues programme continued to strengthen intellectual bridges across the "New South," creating space for critical reflection on the shifting foundations of global governance and on the political and legal transformations shaping the contemporary world order. Led by NSI co-founder and Head of Programme Jelena Vidojević, the programme combines scholarly publications, a signature interview series, research collaborations and international engagement.

The Missing Voices series

In May 2025, the programme launched 'Missing Voices: Critical Thinking in Times of Polycrisis', a written interview series curated by Jelena Vidojević. The series brings leading scholars, policymakers and public intellectuals, whose voices may not often be foregrounded, into conversations on shifts in global power and the future of international order. In 2025/2026, Vidojević conducted in-depth conversations with Sergey Karaganov, a leading Russian geopolitical strategist and former presidential adviser; Ayşe Zarakol, Professor of International Relations at the University of Cambridge; Miloš Hrnjaz, Associate Professor of International Law at the University of Belgrade; Shivshankar Menon, former Foreign Secretary of India; Amy Niang, Associate Professor of Political Science; Yang Yao, a leading Chinese economist and public intellectual; and Kaiser Kuo, host and co-founder of the Sinica podcast and professor at NYU Shanghai. The impact of these conversations extended well beyond NSI's own platforms: several were republished by international outlets including *Brave New Europe* (June 2025) and *Russia in Global Affairs* (July 2025), reaching wider policy and academic audiences.

Working papers and scholarly publications

In July 2025, NSI Research Affiliate Miloš Hrnjaz published 'Conceptualising the New Global South: Perspectives from International Law'. The paper examines how international law has been used both to entrench and to challenge global inequalities, and how it may evolve in a changing global order. In the same

month, NSI released 'The Making of a Settler Colony: Israel, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Politics of Third World Solidarity', a working paper by Jelena Vidojević and Ivor Chipkin revisiting how post-colonial states used international legal argumentation to challenge entrenched colonial hierarchies and advocate for a more equitable international order.

Public essays and op-eds

In September 2025, Jelena Vidojević and Miloš Hrnjaz published 'Worldmaking in Transition: Africa and the Post-Western Global Order' in *Brave New Europe*, arguing that Africa must articulate clear strategic interests if new centres of global power are not simply to reproduce existing inequalities. In October, Vidojević and Ivor Chipkin published an op-ed in *Brave New Europe* on the politics of state capture as a political project. In November, Chipkin published 'From revolution to anti-imperialism: Does South Africa's ICJ case against Israel help resolve the organic crisis within the ANC?' in the *South African Journal of International Affairs*. In December, Vidojević and Mandira Bagwandeen published an op-ed on the AU-EU Summit in *Brave New Europe*, which was later republished by News24.

International engagement

In April 2025, Ivor Chipkin participated in the "Pathways to Peace Africa Forum" in Salzburg, placing NSI within international conversations on conflict and global order. In September 2025, Paul Stubbs, Jelena Vidojević and Miloš Hrnjaz contributed to the "Socialism on the Bench" conference in Croatia, examining the role of socialist and non-aligned movements in shaping global political thought. In October 2025, Hrnjaz presented at the Serbian Political Science Association's "International Law and the Global South" conference.

Through its publications, convenings and translations, the programme has helped establish NSI as a rare South African institution engaging the emerging world order at the level of ideas, strategy and statecraft – and insisting that a more plural international conversation matters in its own right.

3.d

Reforming Governance, Resisting Capture

In 2025/2026, NSI's Reforming Governance, Resisting Capture programme matured into a more integrated research and dialogue agenda. Its central argument is that state capture is not simply corruption on a grand scale, nor only the story of a few rogue actors. It is a political project that works through institutions – bending rules, hollowing out administrative safeguards, and blurring the boundary between public office and partisan power. Led by Ivor Chipkin in partnership with the ACC at GIBS, the programme combines conceptual work, public dialogue and practical reform.

A new anti-corruption research infrastructure

In 2025, NSI entered into a partnership with the ACC, an initiative to develop a comprehensive database on corruption and state capture in South Africa. The initiative is designed to map patterns of corruption, trace relationships among actors involved in capture processes, and generate insights to inform anti-corruption strategies and governance reforms. The

work builds on NSI's growing focus on innovative methods for measuring and understanding state capture, and is intended to support both government and civil society efforts to confront corruption and rebuild institutional integrity.

Global lessons on state capture

Following the Global OTT Conference in June 2025, NSI co-hosted a seminar with the Governance Action Hub on international responses to state capture. The discussion featured Daniel Kaufmann (architect of the state capture concept), investigative journalist Ferial Haffajee, Paul Pretorius (evidence leader of the Zondo Commission) and Zodwa Xesibe (Special Investigating Unit). The seminar explored how capture works across contexts, and how democracies can interrupt it early. In partnership with Stellenbosch University, NSI hosted Kaufmann for a public lecture on emerging global trends in state capture, emphasising the importance of early intervention and the role of civil society, media and international pressure in resisting it.



Speakers at NSI's discussion on *Shadow State: The Politics of State Capture* by Ivor Chipkin and *The Shadow State: Why Babita Deokaran Had to Die* by Jeff Wicks.

State capture as an ongoing threat

In November 2025, NSI convened a discussion on “Unpacking the Shadow State” at GIBS, featuring Ivor Chipkin and Jeff Wicks, alongside Advocate Andy Mothibi (then Head of the Special Investigating Unit) and whistleblower Martha Ngoye. The conversation highlighted how corruption continues to evolve in less visible forms, and the risks faced by those who expose it. In the same month, News24 published Ngoye’s remarks made at the seminar, reflecting on the need for stronger whistleblower protections.

Elite contestation and institutional design

A central focus of the programme is understanding how elite contestation within political and economic networks shapes governance outcomes. Rather than viewing corruption solely as the product of individual wrongdoing, this work highlights the structural dynamics through which competing elite coalitions seek to capture or defend state institutions, and the institutional safeguards required to strengthen transparency and resilience against capture.

One of the highlights of this programme’s activities during the period was the publication of an academic article by Ivor Chipkin and Jelena Vidojević in *The Journal of Southern African Studies* in February 2026. The article,

entitled ‘Elite contestation in South Africa 2006 – 2018: The making and unmaking of a power elite’, received extensive coverage.

Through research, policy analysis and public engagement, the programme is helping to move the anti capture agenda from outrage to method – and contributing to the strengthening of South Africa’s anti corruption ecosystem.

Strengthening the National Prosecuting Authority

In February 2026, the programme hosted a webinar featuring Nicole Fritz (Executive Director of the Campaign for Free Expression), Dr Jean Redpath (Dullah Omar Institute), Lawson Naidoo (Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution) and Karyn Maughan (Investigative journalist and author). The webinar marked the launch of an NSI policy brief, ‘Appointing South Africa’s next National Director of Public Prosecutions: Vital but insufficient for an NPA turnaround’, written by Nicole Fritz, on the challenges facing the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the reforms required to address them, arguing that the institution’s problems are systemic and cannot be resolved through leadership changes alone. An article by Fritz, summarising the key points of the policy brief, was published by *Business Day*.

3.e

Histories of Government

Institutional memory is a foundation of reform. NSI's Histories of Government programme documents the evolution of key organs of the South African state, with the aim of contributing a serious account of how the democratic state has been constructed and contested over time.

Documenting the National Treasury

In February 2025, the programme hosted a workshop as part of its project to document the history of South Africa's National Treasury. Drawing on newly accessed archival material, the initiative traces the evolution of the institution from apartheid to the present. The workshop foreshadowed a major institutional development later in the year: in December 2025, following an extended engagement, NSI was formally appointed to write the history of the Treasury. The partnership allows NSI to access to the Treasury's physical and digitised archives, offering an unusual opportunity to document South Africa's post-apartheid trajectory from the perspective

of a critical institution within government itself. Its focus on institution-building, financial governance and the response to state capture aims to contribute a distinctive account of the making of the democratic state.

Archival and research capacity

The appointment of Andries du Toit as Head of and Jeeva Rajgopaul as Archivist for the programme, alongside the deepening involvement of Affiliate Researcher Sarah Delius, has given the programme the archival, scholarly and editorial capacity to undertake institutional history of this scale. The work positions NSI as a serious home for the disciplined, long-form institutional analysis that reform debates often miss.



Panellists at the launch of an NSI working paper on changing urban dynamics in South Africa and the limits of formal planning system

4.

Outreach and Public Engagements²

²For a full list of publication see Annexure 1.

NSI's public communications in 2025/2026 expanded across print, radio, television, digital platforms and social media. The Institute's research and policy perspectives appeared in leading South African outlets and selected international media, and its voice was carried further still through op-eds, podcasts, webinars and the pilot Journalist in Residence programme. Taken together, these channels widened the Institute's reach and made it easier for research to enter public debate.

Broadcast and print media on public service reform

Yoliswa Makhasi engaged across television and print platforms throughout 2025 to advance NSI's work on public service reform. Engagements included interviews on eNCA, Newzroom Afrika and SABC TV, the 'Checkpoint' documentary in June 2025, coverage on Moneyweb at Midday in March 2025, and news coverage in News24 following the release of NSI's PERSAL analysis on the ageing public service. In March 2025, NSI contributed to a discussion on Chai FM on public service reform and the performance of government institutions. In May 2025, Makhasi published an op-ed in *City Press* calling for the implementation of the Public Service Amendment Bill, and an op-ed in the *Sunday Times* on the ageing public service and lessons from other African countries. In July 2025, she argued in *Business Day* that public service reform should be central to South Africa's National Dialogue, and extended that argument in a media discussion on CapeTalk.

In July 2025, Ivor Chipkin published an op-ed in *News24* on the Public Service Amendment Bill, and in October 2025 NSI contributed to eNCA coverage on the strengthening of Directors-General. Following the passage of the Bill through the NCOP in November 2025, NSI engaged across SABC TV and Newzroom Afrika on the implications for administrative authority and accountability.

Migration in the media

In January 2025, Alan Hirsch published an article in *The Conversation* on the anti-immigration policies introduced by US President Donald Trump, arguing that such policies are unlikely to endure; the article appeared in both English and French. In July 2025, he discussed NSI's East Africa migration report in interviews with Channel Africa and Kenya's KU-TV, alongside a companion article in *The Conversation Africa*. In October 2025, Hirsch and Victor Amadi published 'Do Africa's regional institutions help

regularise the mobility of people in Africa?' in *The Conversation*.

Policing, accountability and the NPA

In July 2025, Ivor Chipkin published 'South Africa's police serve the ANC insiders, not the people: here's how it happened' in *The Conversation Africa*. The article was widely republished and quoted, including by *Moneyweb*, *Policing Insight*, *Eyewitness News* and *Independent Online*, and it was cited by *Business Day* editor-at-large Natasha Marrian in her column 'Welcome to the gangster state'. Chipkin also discussed the issue on the BBC. In November 2025, *News24* published Martha Ngoye's reflections from the NSI Shadow State seminar. In December 2025, subsequent to the launch of her policy brief on the appointment of a new National Director of Public Prosecutions, NSI affiliate researcher Nicole Fritz published an article in *Business Day* on the appointment process for a new National Director of Public Prosecutions.

Global essays and interviews

In September 2025, Alan Hirsch was featured in *Forbes Africa* on the growth of artificial intelligence on the continent and the importance of data ownership and infrastructure. The 'Missing Voices' interview series by Jelena Vidojević reached wider policy and academic audiences through republications by *Brave New Europe* and *Russia in Global Affairs*.

The Governing Tomorrow podcast

Launched in July 2025 and hosted by Yoliswa Makhasi, #GoverningTomorrow has become an important vehicle for bringing reform-minded conversations into public circulation, with guests including Malaika Mahlatsi, Pam Yako, Ivor Chipkin, Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka and Nicole Fritz.

Journalist in Residence

In 2025, NSI piloted its first Journalist in Residence programme, designed to give an experienced journalist the space to engage closely with urgent questions of public policy. The programme drew applications from across South Africa and beyond, including Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, Nigeria, Botswana and Pakistan. Fidelis Zvomuya, an award-winning journalist with more than two decades of experience, was appointed to the inaugural residency.

Through the programme, Fidelis contributed a steady stream of articles on public service reform across platforms including *Polity*, *Cape Times* and *Pan African Visions* – including ‘South Africa’s Audacious Bid to Fortify Its Democracy through the Public Service Amendment Bill’, reflections on Public Protector Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka’s views on the Bill, and an analysis of the National Council of Provinces hearings. These pieces helped bring detailed policy debate into the public domain in a way that was accessible, timely and grounded in NSI’s reform agenda.

International convenings

NSI researchers participated in international convenings including the “Pathways to Peace Africa Forum” in Salzburg, the “International Conference on Migration and

Refuge “in Brazil, Africa Public Service Day in Addis Ababa, the African Union’s “Pan-African Forum on Migration”, roundtables at the British Academy, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Munich Security Conference, and conferences in Croatia and Serbia on international law and the Global South.

Owned platforms

NSI continued to strengthen its own platforms, maintaining an active presence on LinkedIn, X, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube, where it shared research, commentary and event material. The NSI website remained the central public repository for research and institutional outputs, supporting growing audience engagement across South Africa, the continent and beyond.

5.

Conclusion



The year 2025/2026 has been a defining one for the New South Institute. The passage of the Public Service Amendment Act, the expansion of our programmes and the deepening of our international networks confirm that NSI has moved from being a promising new institution to being one of the more influential voices on governance reform from the Global South.

The Institute's core conviction has been vindicated in practice: rigorous research, engaged patiently and over time with reformers, legislators, officials, labour, civil society and the public, can translate into real institutional change. Our work on the Public Service Amendment Act shows that the gap between academic research and pragmatic implementation can be bridged. The Act is now law – not because of NSI's contribution alone, but with our sustained and public contribution at its heart. The task ahead – implementing the Act, protecting merit, rebuilding institutions – is one we intend to stay close to.

That same model of work, evidence meeting practice, is extending across our other programmes. Through MIGRA, NSI is now one of the continent's reference points on migration governance, with research feeding into the African Union, regional economic communities, the Presidency, and international policy conversations from the Munich Security Conference to the Carnegie Endowment for Peace. Through South-South Dialogues, the Institute has become a rare African home for serious engagement with the emerging multipolar world – bringing strategic voices from India, Turkey, China, Russia and elsewhere into African debate, while carrying African perspectives into global discussion. Through Reforming Governance, Resisting Capture, NSI is building the data, networks and institutional memory required to move anti-capture work from denunciation to durable method. Through Histories of Government, the Institute

is laying down an unusually serious account of how the democratic state has been built and contested.

The year has also confirmed NSI's expanding stature. Our inclusion among On Think Tanks' "100 Think Tanks to Watch" and our co-hosting of the 9th Global OTT Conference in Johannesburg – the first time the conference was held on African soil – signalled that the Institute is being heard within the top tier of global think tanks. Our researchers were invited to institutions ranging from the African Union and the AfCFTA dialogue to Princeton and the Salzburg Forum. Former President Thabo Mbeki drew on our research in his address on the capable state. Our appointment to write the institutional history of the NT gives us a unique place in the record of the post-apartheid state itself. Our work was read, heard and cited from Cape Town to Nairobi, Lagos to Belgrade, Addis Ababa to Washington.

If the New South Institute once operated quietly at the edge of policy debates, it now stands at the centre of several of the most consequential conversations on governance in Africa and the wider Global South. Our reach spans the African continent and extends beyond it, and our influence – measured in legislation, citations, partnerships and the texture of public debate – is becoming steadily harder to miss.

The year ahead will test what that influence means in practice. Legal change is only a beginning. The harder work of implementation, institutional culture change and public accountability is the work NSI exists to do. We enter it with gratitude to our partners and funders, with a clearer sense of our responsibilities, and with the confidence that comes from a year in which rigorous research met pragmatic implementation – and both sides were, and will be, better for it.



NSI Affiliate Researcher Miloš Hrnjaz speaking at the 19th Serbian Political Science Association International Conference, University of Belgrade.

Annexure 1: Publications

A consolidated record of NSI's published output, op-eds, journal articles, working papers, and policy briefs for January 2025 to March 2026.

Working papers, policy briefs and reports

- Amadi, V. (2025) *An analysis of migration governance frameworks in West Africa*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/NSI-ECOWAS-report-Updated-FINAL-Logo-Update-Single.pdf>
- Amadi, V. and Hirsch, A. (2025) *African continental initiatives for mobility: How the African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement facilitate the mobility of people in Africa*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/AU-Paper.pdf>
- Chipkin, I., Coetsee, S. and Makhasi, Y. (2025) *Government in numbers: Retiring the 1994 generation of public servants*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/VF-NSI-Report_Retiring-the-1994-generation-of-public-servants-Series-1-FA.pdf
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- Du Toit, A. and Charman, A. (2026) *Urban settlements on traditional authority land: Four case studies*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Urban-Settlements-NSI-Working-Paper.pdf>
- Fritz, N. (2026) *Appointing South Africa's next National Director of Public Prosecutions: Vital but insufficient for an NPA turnaround*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/NSI-Policy-Brief-Appointing-South-Africas-Next-National-Director-of-Public-Prosecutions.pdf>
- Hirsch, A. (2025) *Opening borders for Migration in the East African community: Progressive yet uneven reform*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Migration-paper.pdf>
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- Hirsch, A. (2026) *Demographic change, technology change and migration: Implications for relationships between the Global North and the Global South*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Demographic-Change-1.pdf>
- Hrnjaz, M. (2025) *Conceptualising the new (global) South: Perspectives from international law*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-New-Global-South-2.pdf>
- Hrnjaz, M. (2025) *The law, the Non-Aligned Movement and the future of the Global South*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Milos-NAM-article.pdf>
- Vidojević, J. and Chipkin, I. (2025) *The making of a settler colony: Israel, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the politics of Third World solidarity*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-Making-of-a-Settler-Colony.pdf>

Journal articles

- Chipkin, I. (2025) 'From revolution to anti-imperialism: Does South Africa's ICJ case against Israel help resolve the organic crisis within the ANC?' *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 32(4), pp. 531 – 551. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10220461.2025.2587021>
- Chipkin, I. and Vidojević, J. (2026) 'Elite contestation in South Africa, 2006–2018: The making and unmaking of a power elite', *Journal of Southern African Case Studies*, 51(5), pp.643 – 660. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2026.2626233>
- Hrnjaz, M. (2026) 'The art of avoiding Serbia's defeat in the case of Kosovo: The promises and limitations of international law', *Review of Central and Eastern European Law*, 50 (3-4), pp. 167 - 209. Available at: https://brill.com/view/journals/rela/50/3-4/article-p167_002.xml

Chapters

- Nakarada, R. (2025) 'Increasing global transformative capacities vs inertia of the irrational', in B. Vankovska, R. Sakwa, W. Zhang and T. Mileski (eds) *Cooperative multipolar system: In quest of a new world order*. Pp. 80-92

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- Bagwandeem, M. and Vidojević, J. (2025) *The AU-EU Relationship at a Crossroads: Nudging Africa Closer to the East?* Brave New Europe. Available at: <https://braveneweuropa.com/mandira-bagwandeem-jelena-vidojevic-the-au-eu-relationship-at-a-crossroads-nudging-africa-closer-to-the-east> (Republished by News24).
- Chipkin, I. (2025) 'South Africa's police serve the ANC insiders, not the people: here's how it happened', *The Conversation Africa*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/south-africas-police-serve-the-anc-insiders-not-the-people-heres-how-it-happened-261301>
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- Fritz, N. (2025) 'NDPP shortlist exposes a much deeper crisis', *BusinessDay*, 1 December. Available at: <https://www.businessday.co.za/opinion/2025-12-01-nicole-fritz-ndpp-shortlist-exposes-a-much-deeper-crisis/>
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- Hirsch, A. (2025) 'Pourquoi les politiques anti-immigration pourraient être abandonnées.' *The Conversation France*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/pourquoi-les-politiques-anti-immigration-pourraient-etre-abandonnees-249572>
- Hirsch, A. and Amadi, V. (2025) 'Travel between African countries is still hard: Fresh ideas to get movement flowing', *The Conversation Africa*, 13 October. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/travel-between-african-countries-is-still-hard-fresh-ideas-to-get-movement-flowing-266837>

- Makhasi, M. (2025) 'Public service reform must be central to SA's national dialogue', *Business Day*, 22 July. Available at: <https://www.businessday.co.za/bd/opinion/2025-07-22-yoliswa-makhasi-public-service-reform-must-be-central-to-sas-national-dialogue/>
- Makhasi, Y. (2025) 'GNU must prioritise implementing Public Service Act amendments', *City Press*, 18 May. Available at: https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/yoliswa-makhasi-gnu-must-prioritise-implementing-public-service-act-amendments-20250517-0944#google_vignette
- Vidojević, J. and Hrnjaz, M. (2025) *Worldmaking in transition: Africa and the post-Western global order*. Brave New Europe. Available at: <https://braveneweuropa.com/jelena-vidojevic-milos-hrnjaz-worldmaking-in-transition-africa-and-the-post-western-global-order>

The Missing Voices series

- Vidojević, J. (2025) *Jelena Vidojević in conversation with Sergey Karaganov*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: https://nsi.org.za/project_activity/sergey-karaganov-western-decline-multipolar-world/ (Republished in Brave New Europe and Russia in Global Affairs).
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- Vidojević, J. (2025) *Jelena Vidojević in conversation with Shivshankar Menon*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: https://nsi.org.za/project_activity/shivshankar-menon-world-adrift-multilateralism-brics/
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- Vidojević, J. (2025) *Jelena Vidojević in conversation with Yang Yao*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: https://nsi.org.za/project_activity/yang-yao-china-global-role-development-missing-voices/
- Vidojević, J. (2026) *Jelena Vidojević in conversation with Kaiser Kuo*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: https://nsi.org.za/project_activity/kaiser-kuo-china-multipolarity-liberal-order-crisis/

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- Zvomuya, F (2025) *South Africa's audacious bid to fortify its democracy*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/news/public-service-amendment-bill-democracy-reform/>
- Zvomuya, F (2025) *Entrenched political habits may weaken Public Service Bill*. Johannesburg: New South Institute. Available at: <https://nsi.org.za/news/public-service-amendment-bill-south-africa-2/>
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Annexure 2: Financial Statements

New South Institute NPC

Formerly GAPP Thinktank NPC
(Registration number: 2019/140561/08)
Trading as New South Institute
Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2025

Statement of Financial Position as at 28 February 2025

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025	2024
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	2	82,362	77,288
Intangible Assets	3	194,372	249,288
		<u>276,734</u>	<u>326,576</u>
Current Assets			
Trade and other receivables	4	36,803	-
Cash and cash equivalents	5	2,447,756	126,433
		<u>2,484,559</u>	<u>126,433</u>
Total Assets		<u>2,761,293</u>	<u>453,009</u>
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Retained income		<u>2,532,472</u>	<u>(220,883)</u>
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	6	228,821	471,225
Other financial liabilities	7	-	202,667
		<u>228,821</u>	<u>673,892</u>
Total Equity and Liabilities		<u>2,761,293</u>	<u>453,009</u>

New South Institute NPC

Formerly GAPP Thinktank NPC

(Registration number: 2019/140561/08)

Trading as New South Institute

Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2025

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025	2024
Revenue	8	14,068,714	7,250,433
Cost of Sales	9	(2,818,192)	(4,006,861)
Gross profit		11,250,522	3,243,572
Other income		35,496	-
Operating expenses	10	(8,543,718)	(5,422,981)
Operating profit (loss)		2,742,300	(2,179,409)
Investment revenue	12	11,055	-
Profit (loss) before taxation		2,753,355	(2,179,409)
Taxation	13	-	39,892
Profit (loss) for the year		2,753,355	(2,139,517)

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