

The OUTA credo

South Africa's sovereignty and constitutional democracy have been hard-earned. Its beauty and abundance of natural resources and diverse cultural heritage are precious to us.

Our potential for higher prosperity is immense and limited only by those in authority who consciously choose to abuse their power, joined by those who stand by and choose not to take action.

Corruption and cronyism are the products of leadership distracted by greed and matters of self-interest.

Silently and steadily, they carve away at our nation's soul. They disempower the poor of their rights and receipt of decent education, employment, health, water, housing and security.

We, the people, society and business, have two choices:

We can look away and do nothing.

Or we can take action and halt the decay.

At OUTA, we choose to take action.

We do so – without fear – through a focused strategy and motivated team that holds accountable those in authority who ignore their responsibilities and run roughshod over our constitutional values.

OUTA

ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE

Holding government accountable

Vision, mission and values

Our core statements

PURPOSE STATEMENT

We exist to halt the abuse of power and mismanagement of public resources that weaken the government's ability to serve the people. We are driven by a deep sense of justice, accountability and citizen empowerment to stop the decay, restore trust and drive meaningful and positive change in South Africa.

VISION STATEMENT

A South Africa where the government is well-run, public resources are used efficiently and corruption is addressed. A nation where democracy is strong, power is focused on the needs of the people, where governance prioritises accountability, transparency, fairness and human dignity.

MISSION STATEMENT

We investigate and expose the abuse of power, engage with authorities to drive accountability, and mobilise society through strategic communication, thought leadership and advocacy. We challenge wrongdoing through legal and civil action, compelling changes in governance and influencing policy to build a more just, transparent and effective democracy.

Our core values



Integrity

Why: To ensure that we maintain credibility and moral authority in our mission.

How: Operate transparently, adhere to ethical principles and hold ourselves accountable to the same standards we expect from others.



Courage

Why: Advocacy against maladministration and corruption often involves taking bold stands against powerful entities.

How: Be fearless in exposing wrongdoing, standing firm in the face of opposition and pursuing justice even under pressure.



Justice

Why: The ultimate goal is to restore fairness and equity in governance and public administration.

How: Focus on outcomes that promote accountability, fairness and equitable use of resources for all citizens.



Resilience

Why: Advocacy against maladministration often involves prolonged challenges and resistance from entrenched powers.

How: Stay persistent in the face of setbacks, adapt strategies to changing circumstances and remain steadfast in pursuing long-term goals.

What we do and why support matters

OUTA is a civil society organisation that exposes corruption, maladministration and the abuse of public resources.

What we do

South Africa does not lack laws to protect public funds and ensure accountable government. What it lacks is consistent enforcement. Public power is too often abused. Public money is wasted. Oversight falls short. Accountability is delayed or avoided.

OUTA exists to challenge this.

When government fails to hold itself accountable, civil society must step in. That is the role OUTA plays.

Our methodology

A core part of our work is addressing maladministration, waste of public revenue, corruption and wasteful expenditure. To do this effectively, we follow a structured five-step methodology.

This approach allows us to move from investigation to accountability in a deliberate and strategic manner.

Step 1: Research and investigate

Every project begins with careful research, where we investigate thoroughly to determine whether an issue is authentic, significant and relevant. This may involve analysing procurement processes, reviewing legislation and financial records, and assessing information provided by whistleblowers or other sources. Only after the facts have been established do we proceed.

Step 2: Engaging the powers

Where concerns are identified, we engage directly with those responsible. This provides an opportunity for the relevant authorities or individuals to respond, explain, rationalise or rectify the matter. Engagement can often resolve issues before further escalation is required.

Step 3: Exposing the powers

If engagement fails to resolve the issue, we expose the matter publicly. This may involve informing the media, the public and relevant authorities about the conduct or decision in question. Public exposure helps create pressure for corrective action and accountability.

Step 4: Mobilisation

Where necessary, we mobilise public support to highlight the issue further. Mobilisation may include public campaigns, communication initiatives, protests, marches or other forms of civic action. These activities help bring greater attention to the matter and increase pressure on those responsible to change course.

Step 5: Litigation

Litigation is used as a last resort. When necessary, we rely on the law and the protections provided by the Constitution to challenge unlawful decisions or conduct. This may involve litigation, mediation or arbitration. Strategic legal action can reverse unlawful decisions, compel transparency and establish important legal precedents.

A flexible approach

While these steps provide a clear framework for our work, the methodology remains flexible. Each project is different, and steps may be adapted, repeated or rearranged depending on the circumstances.

What remains constant is the objective: To protect public resources, expose abuse of power and strengthen accountability in South Africa's public institutions.

Our focus

We prioritise areas where governance failures have the greatest impact on the country and its citizens.

These include:

- public procurement and major infrastructure contracts;
- state-owned entities and public institutions;
- corruption in local government;
- transport and road administration;
- energy governance and regulatory oversight;
- higher education funding systems; and
- parliamentary accountability.

These sectors involve billions of rand in public expenditure and directly affect the daily lives of millions of people. Ensuring accountability in these areas protects both taxpayers and vulnerable communities who rely on functioning public services.

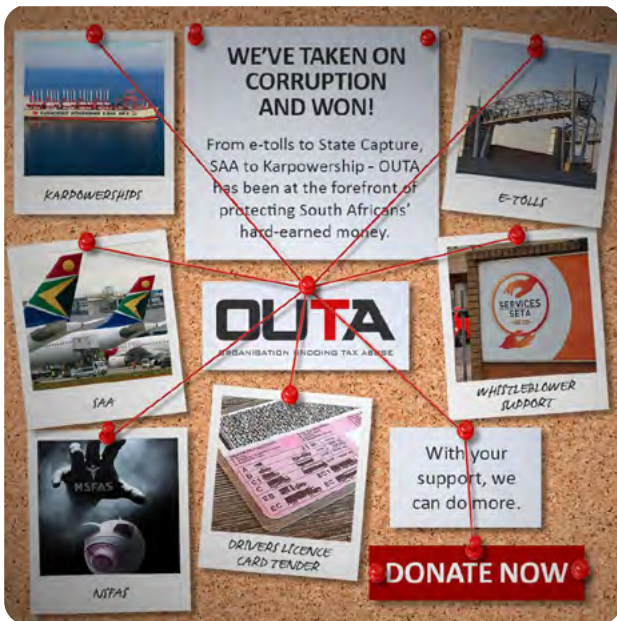
Turning accountability into action

Our work often requires persistence over many years. Challenging powerful interests and entrenched systems of poor governance rarely produces quick results. However, sustained pressure can lead to meaningful change.

Over the years, our work has contributed to significant outcomes, including:

- the ending of Gauteng's **e-toll scheme**;
- halting the **Karpowership** electricity procurement deal;
- challenging and helping end the **national state of disaster** on electricity;
- exposing corruption within the **National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)**;
- blocking the irregular **driving licence card machine contract**; and
- establishing legal precedent for consequence management through the delinquent director ruling against former SAA chairperson **Dudu Myeni**.

Beyond these high-profile matters, we continuously provide information and evidence to oversight institutions to assist investigations and strengthen accountability.



Strengthening oversight systems

Accountability cannot rely only on exposing individual cases of wrongdoing. It also requires stronger institutions and better oversight mechanisms. For this reason, we invest significant effort in systemic reforms.

This includes initiatives such as:

- **ParliMeter**, a public dashboard measuring parliamentary oversight;
- annual **Parliamentary Oversight Reports** assessing the performance of Parliament;

- legal action aimed at closing gaps in accountability legislation; and
- advocacy for stronger whistleblower protection and transparency.

These efforts are designed to strengthen the institutions responsible for protecting South Africa's democracy.

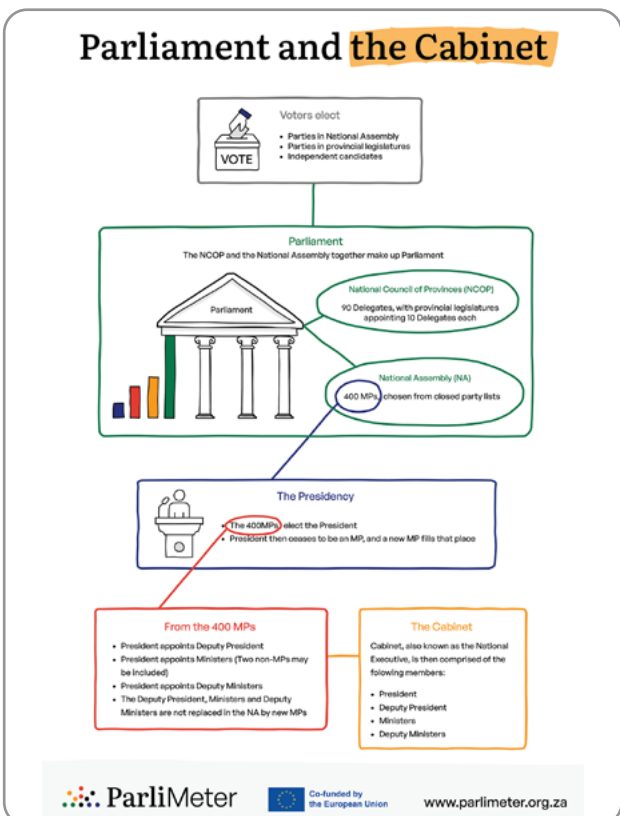
Why this work matters

Corruption and maladministration are not abstract problems. They divert resources away from essential services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure and public safety, weaken the capacity of the state and undermine economic growth and also erode public trust in government and democratic institutions. Civil society organisations play a critical role in confronting these risks.

Our work helps ensure that public power is exercised responsibly and that public resources serve the public interest.

Powered by public support

We are funded primarily by individuals and businesses who believe that accountability matters. Their support enables our team to investigate complex cases, pursue strategic litigation and advocate for stronger governance. Without public support, independent accountability work would not be possible. With it, citizens have a voice in the fight against corruption and abuse of power.





“OUTA and civil society players must remain vigilant and continue the good fight of ensuring responsible use of tax revenue at all levels of government.”

Simile Ndlovu
Chairperson



Enhanced OUTA's resilience

Our Board of Directors, supported by the Executive Committee, took a courageous and necessary decision to review our operations and mandate. This was based on the culmination of strategic assessments that had been undertaken to ensure that we remain fit for purpose. This was important work to be done because the demands for our services are increasing. The Board resolved to responsibly cease activities that were not core to us. We provided financial and operational support to the three entities that were moved out of our stable to help smooth the transition. The decision has enhanced our resilience and has laid a solid foundation for securing the future of the organisation. This was done to ensure that we remained faithful to our vision of *“A prosperous country with an organised, engaged and empowered civil society that ensures responsible use of tax revenues throughout all levels of government.”*

The work to de-risk us has yielded impressive results. The focus on our mandate has led to the closure of 45 non-core projects, and on the financial side, we registered a 4% decline in operating expenses. We remain grateful and indebted to our individual and corporate donors for their continued support. During the period under review, we worked successfully on projects and initiatives relating to delinquent directors, whistleblower protection, Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the energy and transport sectors and others. Well done to all our employees and partners for this great work.

The headwinds ahead

South Africa started 2026 with great optimism. That has changed because of the war in the Middle East. Our fortunes have moved from a fiscal turning point to surviving a geopolitical crisis. Most recently, the price of petrol and diesel increased drastically, even after factoring in the temporary reduction of the fuel levy. The predicted 1.6% GDP growth pre-war will certainly be revised down. The South African Reserve Bank inflation target of 3% is likely to be negatively impacted. The year started with expectations of repo-rate cuts. Due to the war, this is no longer the case. The repo rate has increased and is expected to rise further. The sooner the war ends, the better for South Africa and the rest of the world.

These changes come at a point when South Africans had not fully recovered from the previous economic hardships. Ordinary South Africans, who fund us, and keep South Africa moving are likely to be hardest hit. Our supporters and donors will be under pressure; this poses a risk of reduced income for us. All of us must do more with less, and government in particular. The good news is that SARS has collected just over R2 trillion for the first time. We and civil society must remain vigilant and continue the good fight of ensuring responsible use of those tax revenues throughout all levels of government.

Protection of our hard-earned democracy

We are confronted frequently with cuts in water supply, electricity shutdown, waste collection and rampant crime in our communities. Most of these boil down to dysfunctional local government. According to the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA), there are no clear aggregate improvements in the finances of municipalities. Only 15% to 20% of municipalities achieve a clean audit. The perennial challenges of municipalities remain non-compliance to laws, fraud and corruption, lower rates collection, non-spending of infrastructure grants, ageing infrastructure and so forth. We have an opportunity to change that with the upcoming local government elections. These elections are as important as national and provincial elections because that is where the actual service delivery takes place.

We encourage every South African to register to vote and turn up in great numbers on the day of election. This is our number one civic duty that we cannot afford to abdicate. We plead with all voting age South Africans in our homes, streets, wards, social spaces, and in communities in general to vote for the party of their choice. Voting is the first part; the second part is to continue holding those that were elected to a higher standard. We will continue doing our part, but we need everyone to do their fair share of work to make a difference. Let us fight the culture of impunity. The revelations at the Madlanga Commission justify why we must give prominence to local government. We have heard of disgraceful conduct of City of Ekurhuleni and City of Tshwane employees in relation to procurement and payment of goods and services. Sadly, such shocking behaviour is also prevalent in other metros and municipalities across the country. We are encouraged by the Zondo and Madlanga Commissions linked arrests that have taken place to date, but this is not enough. More must still be done.

We will continue keeping track of the implementation of the Zondo Commission recommendations. Some Zondo Commission recommendations have been implemented, but the pace thereof is frustrating. We welcome the appointment of the new NDPP, Advocate Andy Mothibi, and we hope that he will accelerate the prosecution of the Zondo Commission cases, and those that emanate from the Madlanga Commission report. We need more senior people and politicians to be arrested, prosecuted and convicted. There should not be a space for people who live outside the values of the constitution. Consequences must be meted out without unjust delays. This is the surest way of crushing the culture of impunity and sending a message that nobody is above the law.

Protection of whistleblowers and accountability professionals

The Protected Disclosures Act Bill was released for comments. Once it is law, the bill will help enhance the protection of whistleblowers. Whistleblowers are a lifeblood of many of our investigations. Without them, the criminals literally get away with murder. Many of the successes achieved by us were as a result of reporting by whistleblowers. They must be protected at all costs without fail. South Africa must also develop laws and mechanisms to protect accountability professionals in the public and private sector like forensic investigators, forensic auditors, liquidators, lawyers, prosecutors, who remain vulnerable to being victimised and harmed by those implicated in acts of criminality.

Lastly, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Board, the Executive Committee, every employee and our partners for the sterling work in the 2025/26 financial year.





“We restructured our accountability and communications teams for improved focus and productivity.”

Wayne Duvenage
Chief executive officer



South Africa is not short of laws designed to protect public resources and ensure accountable government, but it is short of consistent enforcement.

Too often, those entrusted with public power do not face consequences for not only unlawful actions, but also gross maladministration and substantial waste of state funds. Processes are bypassed, oversight is weakened and in many cases the public only becomes aware of these failures once the damage has already been done and the money is lost.

We have seen this pattern play out over many years, across different administrations and institutions. Only the detail changes. What remains is the absence of accountability.

This is the terrain we operate in, because we choose to defend our hard-won democracy from the ravages of maladministration and corruption.

Why this work continues to matter

Over the past year, we have repeatedly seen how deeply embedded governance failures permeate across multiple areas of the state.

Across different sectors and institutions, the same underlying problems keep surfacing.

- Manipulated procurement and supply chains
- Cadre deployment and nepotism which negate professional appointments
- Absent accountability and a lack of consequences
- Disregard for the rules meant to protect public funds

This directly flows into failing infrastructure, declining service delivery and growing frustration among South Africans who carry the cost or deal with lack of consistent water supply, degradation of roads and rail transport options, waste management and more. Large infrastructure projects and reforms like the failed Road Accident Fund are delayed for years. Corrective action remains slow, even when problems have been clearly identified.

In each case, the costs mount and society bear them.

While the extent of corruption and maladministration remains widespread, we know that every effort in this space counts and makes a difference with varying positive outcomes.

Collectively, billions of rand are saved and accountability is enforced where errant leadership would have been allowed to remain ensconced in their positions.

The most important people in the anti-corruption ecosystem are whistleblowers, who provide valuable information in our investigations. They are the heroes who risk their lives and livelihoods, exercising their moral courage to seek accountability and place barriers in the way of corruption and maladministration. During the process, we also engage with those in authority who are willing to listen, and those who choose to work with us to introduce corrective measures. Where our efforts and concerns are disregarded, we escalate the issues, to the attention of those higher up the chain of command, other oversight bodies and society at large.

This work requires time and persistence, careful analysis, focus and in many cases, the willingness to engage on matters through the courts. Our experiences have shown that when focused pressure is applied, change can and does happen.