D-90

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
24 NOVEMBER 2026

D-88 · 88 DAYS TO 20 FEBRUARY 2027

South African AI builders launch D-90 to turn the Silicon Valley visit into working projects within 90 days

A volunteer coalition of startups, business, researchers and public institutions answers the President's call for results, with four working groups aligned to the four national AI priorities and first pilots due by January.

SOUTH AFRICA, 24 November 2026. D-90, a coalition of leaders from South Africa's startups, businesses, universities and public institutions, today held its founding call and opened four working groups with a single goal: to turn the commitments made during the Presidential AI Working Visit to Silicon Valley into working projects inside the 90 days President Cyril Ramaphosa set for a National AI Action Plan.

Closing the visit in San Jose on 20 November, the President called for a concrete national AI action plan within 90 days, with key elements to be announced in the State of the Nation Address in February 2027, and said the visit would be judged by results at home.

> **"We want to be builders of the future, not merely recipients of it."**
>
> President Cyril Ramaphosa, closing the Presidential AI Working Visit to Silicon Valley, San Jose, November 2026

D-90 was initiated by Barend Lutz of Frontier Analytics during the visit itself, and has grown quickly into an open, self-organised group. It works in days rather than months and measures itself by what is running at the end of the 90 days, not by what was discussed. The name is the countdown: every day is marked from D-90 down to delivery on 20 February 2027.

> **"People online are saying the money available is not enough to make a difference. We'll show you how a bunch of South African startup founders can move the world with even less. That's what we do."**
>
> Fred Lutz, Chief Operating Officer, Frontier Analytics

Four priorities, four working groups

The coalition is structured around the four immediate priorities the President named, so every project it takes on serves one of them.

01
AI-enabled government and public services
Faster, better service delivery, with AI applied in education, healthcare, agriculture and public administration.

02
Investment in AI infrastructure
Positioning South Africa as a competitive destination for data centres and compute, and an exporter of computing services for Africa.

03
Domestic AI capabilities and venture capital
Access to models, compute and data for universities, researchers and startups, and a stronger venture ecosystem.

04
AI risk management and societal readiness
Cybersecurity, sensible safeguards, reskilling and inclusive economic participation.

Results, not reports

D-90 has committed to a public timeline:

Day 2 · 24 Nov	Founding call held and working groups opened.
Day 30 · 22 Dec	Every working group has a lead, a charter and owned initiatives.
Day 60 · 21 Jan	First pilots running with real users.
Day 90 · 20 Feb	Results and a structured plan handed to the Presidency, ahead of SONA.

By Day 90 the group aims to deliver working pilots in the hands of real users; a project plan and results report with owners, milestones and costs that can feed the National AI Action Plan; a practical pathway for pledged capital, including the proposed R100 million AI venture capital fund, to reach South African AI startups quickly and with open tracking; corporate and government first customers matched with local AI companies for paid pilots; a published charter for each working group; and an open map of who is building what in South African AI.

> **"If we want South Africa to become a producer and exporter of AI innovation rather than merely a consumer, we need to strengthen our domestic venture capital industry. Well-capitalised local VC firms can leverage our powerful diaspora networks, attract international co-investment and back South African AI entrepreneurs to build globally competitive businesses. The opportunity is not simply to fund more startups, but to build a sustainable ecosystem that repeatedly produces global success stories."**
>
> Keet van Zyl, Founding Partner, Knife Capital

Projects already in motion

- **AI Buddies** (Buddy Learning and Centaur Africa): AI literacy for South African learners, delivered on the channel they already use, WhatsApp. Proposed as one of the first pilots.
- **One GovEX** (NUBIA AI): the One Government Experience, a single place to find, understand and complete government services.

> **"AI literacy can't be a privilege for learners who already have laptops and fast internet. With AI Buddies, we are meeting young South Africans where they already are, on WhatsApp, in the languages they think in. If every learner can use AI confidently, the next generation of builders will come from every township and village, not just a few schools."**
>
> Tshaamano Mabuba, Founder and CEO, Buddy Learning

People from organisations including Centaur Africa, NAVU, Octoco, Stellenbosch University, the Industrial Development Corporation, Frontier Analytics, Knife Capital, Buddy Learning, CareerWIL, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Sheer Versatility Group and NUBIA AI are contributing to D-90. Participation is voluntary, and a listing is not an endorsement by any organisation.

> **“We may not have the resources or technological scale of the world’s largest economies, but we have something equally important: the ingenuity, talent and entrepreneurial spirit to build something extraordinary together. AI presents South Africa with an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate our development, unlock new economic possibilities and create capabilities that will shape our future. D-90 is about demonstrating what becomes possible when we put our collective strengths behind a shared national ambition. Ultimately, this is about building something bigger than any one company or individual: something that contributes meaningfully to the future of our country.”**
>
> Oswald “OzzY” Mphuthi, Founder and CEO, NUBIA AI

An open invitation

D-90 is inviting anyone who can help to bring what they have:

- Share a problem statement that local AI companies can solve.
- Offer a pilot or become a first customer.
- Bring infrastructure: compute, data, connectivity or sites.
- Co-invest alongside the public funds being set up.
- Mentor founders or join a working group.

Contributions can be submitted through the form at www.d-90.co.za, and D-90 will connect each contributor with the right working group.

# # #

About D-90

D-90 brings together leaders from startups, business, research and government to turn the Presidential AI Working Visit to Silicon Valley (15 to 21 November 2026) into results inside the President's 90 days. Formed during the visit and initiated by Barend Lutz of Frontier Analytics, the group works in open, self-organised working groups aligned to the four priorities of South Africa's National AI Action Plan. D-90 is an independent, voluntary initiative and does not speak for The Presidency or any government department.

Notes to editors

- The 90-day deadline, the February 2027 State of the Nation Address and the four national AI priorities were set out in the President's closing address in San Jose on 20 November 2026, published by The Presidency.
- The proposed R100 million AI venture capital fund and credit guarantee fund were reported by SAnews on 22 November 2026.

Media enquiries
Email: assistant@centaur.africa
Web: www.d-90.co.za