

ACTING APPOINTMENT

National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa — office of the Acting Director-General

STAT	START	TRACK
CREDIBILITY	6	
CAPITAL	6	
FISCAL SPACE	5	

ALLIES — CHOOSE TWO. STRIKE OUT WHEN SPENT.

- **THE GOVERNOR** — South African Reserve Bank
- **THE GENERAL SECRETARY** — public-sector union federation
- **THE PRESIDENT'S EAR** — economic advisor, the Presidency
- **THE BUSINESS COUNCIL** — organised business
- **THE ENGINEER** — Umlilo Power, generation

THE DIE — NOTE WHAT YOU ROLLED

There is a fourth number. You do not get to see it.

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WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

This is a gamebook about South African fiscal policy, built as a teaching tool. It is also a model, and every model is an argument. I want the argument — not the compliment.

One thing in this you think is wrong, or would change

If you teach: would you run it? What would stop you?

Anything you'd want in it that isn't

Name / email — only if you want a reply

Leave the card with me, or email it.

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OBJECTION 1 OF 6

Credible to whom?

In this game, CREDIBILITY is tested at bond auctions, ratings reviews and currency sell-offs. It rises when creditors are reassured. It is, precisely and only, credibility with the people who price the country's debt.

When a nurse decides the state is worth working for, that touches nothing on the sheet you were shown.

Argue it: is that a fair model of the job, or does it smuggle in an answer about whose belief counts? What would a second stat — social legitimacy — have to do to earn its place?

OBJECTION 2 OF 6

There is no tax in this game

You just played a session about fiscal policy in which nobody set a rate, broadened a base, or worried about whether the revenue service could collect. Revenue appeared only as a forecast that came true or didn't.

That is half the subject missing — and the half where distributional choices are most explicit.

Argue it: design the tax decision this should have had. Three options, and what each one costs. Then say what it would have taught that the wage round didn't.

OBJECTION 3 OF 6

One person decides nothing

No official chooses any of this. The wage settlement is a statutory bargaining council. The bailout is a cabinet with its own shareholder minister. Monetary policy is an independent central bank — which appeared here as a favour you could spend once.

The game compresses all of it into four people at the front of a room, because that is what makes a game work.

Argue it: everything this teaches about constraint is taught inside a form that structurally overstates agency. Is that fatal, or is it the price of the thing working at all?

OBJECTION 4 OF 6

The weights are assertions

The hidden number moved on decisions whose real effects would take five to fifteen years to show up in any data series. The game awarded those points instantly and never had to show its work.

Ring-fenced infrastructure got +2. That assumes both a multiplier *and* an execution rate — and South African capital budgets are voted and then not spent with some regularity.

Argue it: pick the weight you find least defensible and say what evidence would settle it. Convenient lags are how models smuggle in conclusions.

OBJECTION 5 OF 6

Sequencing is a technocrat's answer

Nothing here was labelled left or right. The restructured wage deal was redistributive *and* fiscally conservative; conditional bailout support was interventionist *and* market-disciplining. The implied claim is that sequencing and composition matter more than direction.

Notice who that claim flatters. It is the one framing in which the technocrat's own skill set — timing, design, implementation — is the decisive variable.

Argue it: make the case that the state-versus-market question really is prior, and that this game is built so you can't ask it.

OBJECTION 6 OF 6

Is crisis really worse than stagnation?

The game ranks its endings: crisis worst, stagnation middling, growth best. But a programme has a date, conditions, a review schedule and an end. Stagnation has none of those — it simply continues, and every year the analysis is right and 60% implemented.

Perhaps the only reason crisis feels worse is that it is humiliating.

Argue it: defend the proposition that the crisis ending is better for the country than the stagnation ending. Then attack it. The ranking is a design choice, and design choices are arguments.