###### National Assembly

Question Number: 1027

**Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

What (a) is the current status of the N3 De Beers Pass development between Keeversfontein and Warden in the Free State, (b) impact assessments have been conducted to date, (c) were the outcomes of each assessment respectively and (d) are the planned (i) timeframes and (ii) time lines for this project? NW1159E

**REPLY:**

1. Environmental studies were undertaken to obtain the environmental authorisation and water use licence (WULA), and reports have been submitted to the relevant authorities for decision-making.
2. Two environmental impact assessments (EIAs) have been undertaken to date; first one in 1998 and the second in 2010.
3. In 1999, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, issued an environmental authorisation for the construction and upgrading of the N3 Toll Road from Heidelberg to Cedara, comprising two sections, (i) Cedara to Heidelberg and (ii) Keveersfontein to Warden (De Beers Pass section). The environmental authorisation was issued subject to certain conditions requiring further environmental investigations on the De Beers pass section.

The purpose of the second EIA was to investigate and address the conditions and related issues flowing from the 1999 authorisation that are specific to the De Beers Pass section. Particular focus of this second EIA is to mitigate the impact of the new road on the wetland resources. The final EIA Report was submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) on 24 March 2016, and the decision is pending. Estimated review period for decision-making by DEA is 120 days.

1. Further details with the N3 will be handled by the Department of Environmental Affairs. (i) and (ii) details will be available once the Department of Transport, SANRAL, Free State Government and PICC SIP2 engagement process is concluded.

Please note that the estimated time frame does not take into account the time that will be required to resolve any objections that may be lodged against the project.