**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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

(a) What has she found was the reason that her department undertook the specified training of tour guides to the SA National Parks (SANParks), (b) how did SANParks benefit from this, (c) how were the benefits measured and (d) what was the total amount that was (i) budgeted for this purpose for each month and (ii) spent in each month? NW1316E

**REPLY:**

1. In 2016, SANParks conducted research titled: “Guided game drive experiences in South African national parks” The research indicated a number of areas where the game drives could be improved but the greatest negative feedback that was received was about the poor levels of guiding. Respondents further indicated that the level of knowledge of guides were insufficient and that there was a lack of enthusiasm and passion in the guiding that was received. In addition, SANParks had been receiving complaints regularly via social media about the behaviour of Open Safari Vehicle (OSV) guides operating in the Kruger National Park (KNP). Complaints also included misinformation communicated by guides. Therefore, the aim of the initiative was to provide an up-skilling opportunity for guides who were operating in the KNP to improve the quality of guiding and to ensure the safety of the visitors whilst guiding in OSVs.
2. SANParks benefitted and continues to benefit by improving the overall visitor experience offered at the KNP. The training increases awareness about acceptable behaviour by guides in the Park and provides guides with the latest and most updated information pertaining to KNP. The above-mentioned research also showed that visitors would be willing to pay more for “exceptional guiding experience” meaning that an increase in quality guiding will have positive financial implications and concurrent employment opportunities for local communities.
3. As this programme is ongoing, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs (SANParks) would be in a better position to respond.
4. (i) The total amount budgeted for this project was R217 000.00.

 Two groups were trained in January and February 2019 respectively and the budget was allocated for tuition (including training materials), training venue, accommodation and meals). The training took place at the Skukuza Camp in the Kruger National Park

 (ii) Not applicable