

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1262. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) What are the (a) reasons that Project Thusano was extended to other operational matters in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), like the inclusion of the Cuban techniques into basic infantry training and (b) benefits for the SANDF from (i) a South African and (ii) an African security perspective;

(2) whether the specified project was first analysed and compared to the existing SANDF and best international techniques; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) (a) what are the costs related to the extension of the project and (b) how is this justified given the economic pressures and budget cuts in the SANDF? NW1453E

**REPLY**:

(1) (a) Project THUSANO has not been extended to operational matters in the SANDF, only the basic maintenance and utilisation at technical level information was exchanged with SANDF members in order to ensure proper servicing of equipment developed together with the Cubans as part of skills transfer.

(1) (b) (i) and (ii) Project THUSANO activities are beneficial to the SANDF as its internal capability is being built. The SANDF dependency on industry for maintenance and repair will be reduced. The cost of training will be drastically reduced, including improving shooting capability in simulation of different types of combat arenas which may be encountered, thereby, reducing the need for physical travel of trainees and the concomitant costs.

(2) Project THUSANO was analysed and compared with SANDF and best international techniques and proved to be the cheapest and cost-effective way of reducing costs of maintenance and repair, as well as acquiring skills through imparting technical knowledge to SA Army artisans.

(3) (a) According to Contract TI 17-001 South Africa Annexure 6 signed in October 2018, the total cost is US$ 5,975,545.00 (ZAR 86,645,402.50) based on a rand-dollar exchange rate of R14,50:US$1.

(3) (b) Economic pressures and budget reductions require innovative and creative approaches as the funds to outsource maintenance and repair are limited. Building internal capability is one of the initiatives intended to manage the limited budget and/or budgetary constraints. The skills could have been acquired very expensive if these members were sent to private institution for training and skills development.