

**MINISTRY**

**PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1328 [NW2540E]**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.: 22 (of 2019)**

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**DATE OF REPLY: 15 NOVEMBER 2019**

**1328. Mrs M B Hicklin (DA) asked the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure:**

(1) With reference to Agrément South Africa’s approval of a number of innovative building methods and materials, how are relatively more affordable and innovative building technologies incorporated into the construction industry when only traditional bricks and mortar structures have been approved by the National Home Building Regulations of the National Home Builders Registration Council and the SA Bureau of Standards;

(2) what steps is her department taking to assist young entrepreneurs, developers and other professionals to get their innovative products and ideas to the build environment market? **NW2540E**

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**REPLY:**

**The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure**

1. The National Building Regulations recognise at least one of three methods of satisfying compliance to the Building Regulations. Those are:

* Rational Design, as designed by a Professional Engineer,
* Compliance to “deem-to-satisfy” rules as set out in the South African National Standards (SANS) 10400 series, or
* Agrément South Africa certification.

The National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC), in its mandate to protect the interests of housing consumers and ensure that builders comply with the prescribed building industry standards, assesses the quality of construction of homes, subsidised and non-subsidised, based on their satisfaction of at least one of the three requirements indicated above.

The NHBRC provides general guidance on the implementation of Innovative Building Technologies (IBTs) and condition of IBTs (by means of a published database). However, it does not provide assurance of the IBTs’ fitness-for-purpose; and Agrément South Africa does so.

In simple terms, the National Building Regulations do not only consider the conventional “brick-and-mortar” method of construction as the only solution, but recognises three methods, including innovative technologies.

The choice of an IBT to use, lies with the owner(s) of the product, or in a case of public infrastructure projects, with the specifiers (at planning and design phase).

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), through its Standards Division, develops, publishes and maintains the South African National Standards (such as SANS 10400), which are referenced in legislation, as one of the three methods of satisfying compliance to National Building Regulations. The SABS also develops standards for the so-called “conventional methods”, and not the innovative solutions.

(2) In terms of the objects of the Agrément South Africa Act, 2015 (Act No 11 of 2015), Section 4 (b) and (c), ASA is empowered to:

- “support and promote the process of integrated socio-economic development in the Republic as it relates to the construction industry”; and also to

* “support and promote the introduction and use of certified non-standardised construction related products or systems in the local or international market.

This speaks to the issue raised by the Honourable Member relating to assisting South Africans to be entrepreneurs and to get their innovative products into the market.

This has been done with some relative success. Many non-standardised products certified by ASA have found their way into the market, but also we realise that we have not made the strides that we would like to. In this vein, we have engaged with ASA to come up with proposals as to how to further assist young entrepreneurs and to expand the footprint of the use of Innovative Building Technologies.

To this effect, ASA has established in the current financial year the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) which will serve to promote to the industry the use of innovative building technologies. We expect ASA to come up with proposals on how best to assist young entrepreneurs by, among other things, forming strategic partnerships with funding agencies, in order to promote socio-economic development by having more innovative products in the markets and also ensure the uptake thereof, which will ensure the viability of businesses.