****

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER 1599**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 12 May 2023**

**1599. Ms P Madokwe (EFF) to ask the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs:**

(a) What steps has her department taken to assess and ensure that the construction of the Nogqala Bridge in Ward 19, Engcobo, in the Eastern Cape is above board before granting the Engcobo Local Municipality an additional amount to complete the specified project and (b) who will be held accountable for fruitless and wasteful expenditure and the recovery of the monies, considering that millions of Rand have already been spent but there is no construction of a bridge? NW1697E

**REPLY:**

1. The construction of the Nogqala Bridge in Ward 19, Engcobo, in the Eastern Cape Province is being funded by the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) that is administered by the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG). There was no additional amount granted for the construction of the Nogqala Bridge project.

The initial amount of R12 977 495.30 inclusive of VAT that was approved on 5 November 2021 is the only amount granted to-date. The total expenditure to-date for both professional services and construction is R 9 697 930.02 inclusive of VAT. The project budget of R12 977 495.30 is therefore not yet fully spent.

The contractor that was appointed for the project was terminated for failing to implement the project in terms of the conditions of the contract and abandoning site. Engcobo Local Municipality is currently in the process of procuring a replacement contractor. The bids are currently going through the Bid Evaluation and Bid Adjudication process.

The Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent professional engineers are providing technical support to Engcobo Local Municipality throughout the project life cycle from planning, design development, preparation of terms of reference for procurement and construction monitoring.

1. Should the Auditor General of South Africa (AG) declare wasteful and fruitless expenditure on this project, or anywhere in the Audit Report, the AG or the Accounting Officer will determine who is liable in accordance with the Municipal Finance Management Act and all applicable pieces of legislation and Treasury prescripts.

**End.**