



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 1998 {NW2339E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 18 of 2022

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Inkosi B N Luthuli (IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

Whether, in light of the piling up of plastic which ends up in landfills and oceans and adversely affects the environment, her department plays any role in assisting the informal waste sector, including but not limited to waste-reclaimers and waste-preneurs who are said to contribute up to 70% of recycling in the Republic; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

1988. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

Yes, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) acknowledges the importance of waste pickers in the value chain of waste management. It is projected that there are between 60 000 and 90 000 informal waste pickers working at the heart of South Africa's recycling economy, recovering mostly paper and packaging waste from the service chain, and introducing these secondary resources into the country's value chain.

To improve the working conditions and livelihoods of the informal waste sector and to better integrate pickers into the country's waste economy, the DFFE and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) developed the Waste Picker Integration Guideline in 2020. The guideline is intended to support the implementation of South Africa's National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS) and is recognised as contributing towards a just transition to a low carbon economy, as outlined in the National Development Plan – Vision 2030.

Another programme, which is in line with the objectives of the NWMS, is the Recycling Enterprise Support Programme (RESP). Through this, the DFFE provides developmental funding for projects in the form of start-up grants. These projects are either start-up or pre-existing enterprises and include buy-back centres, material recovery facilities, construction and demolishing solutions, as well as plastic palletisation plants.

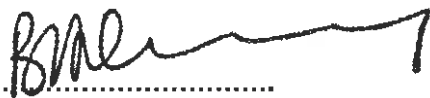
The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations were published on the 5 May 2021 for implementation, of which the implementation date was 5 November 2021 by the DFFE. The Regulations give effect to sections 18 and 69 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008) (NEM:WA) and apply to the electrical and electronic equipment, lighting and paper, packaging and a number of single use product sectors. They outline a new approach to waste management in South Africa and will contribute significantly to the diversion of waste from landfill, which will assist waste pickers as there is a payment requirement for them.

To date, two workshops were held on the 20 April 2022 and 12 May 2022 between the informal sector, the DFFE and the producer responsibility organisations (PROs) who manage the EPR schemes for the different waste streams with the following overall objectives:

- To reaffirm actions that must be taken to ensure that payment is in place by November 2022.
- To generate ideas regarding how each action can be approached and achieved.
- To also generate ideas on how wider waste picker integration should be understood and achieved as part of EPR.
- To agree on the way forward to meet the November 2022 deadline.

The DFFE has also developed the Guidelines on Separation of Waste at Source, which will assist municipalities to integrate waste pickers into the municipal waste management system. This will assist with the diversion of waste from landfill sites and create job opportunities for waste pickers.

Regards



MS B D CREECY, MP

MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 03/06/2022