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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2013**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 19 OF 2023**

**Mr T Mogale (EFF) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

Given the dynamic nature of technology and the risk of automation, what (a) is the National Skills Fund (NSF) doing to help build the critical skills that will be needed, (b) number of students are being funded by the NSF, (c) institutions are they enrolled in and (d) programmes are they enrolled in?

**NW2276E**

**REPLY:**

(a)In response to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and its disruptions, the government developed a policy framework for Science and Technology contained in the White Paper on Science and Technology and Innovation (WPSTI), adopted by cabinet in March 2019. It is which was aligned to the National Development Plan information and communication technology priorities.

The advent of the 4IR demands that young people be equipped with the necessary skills to assimilate easily into the changing world of work and opportunities. It is against this background that, the NSF continues to display its commitment to staying on course in the implementation of the national government’s broader skills development priorities, while maintaining a considered funding approach, reconfiguration and transformation of the NSF to ensure the creation of a solid base for a maximum impact in driving back the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

For the 2023/24 financial year an ICT and digital skills RFP will be issues for Skills Development providers to provide accredited and non-accredited ICT and 4IR offerings. The targeted date for the RFP to go public is 30 June 2023. A budget of R1 000 000 000.00 (1 billion) has been allocated on this RFP targeting 10000 beneficiaries.

(b)During 2022/23 financial year by the third quarter, the NSF funded a total of 128 learners for skills development related to ICT and digital skills and technologies training.

(c)The Skills Development Providers who met the minimum requirements to deliver the ICT and digital programmes are learners the following:

- Ditsela Workers Institute- 29 learners

- Dinamic Youth Development Services- 64 learners

- Northlink TVET College- 30 learners

- University of Johannesburg -1 learner

- University of KwaZulu-Natal -2 learners

- Walter Sisulu University-2 learners

There is a clear need to urgently massify these numbers at Artisan, Technician and Engineering levels and further promote studies related to ICT and Digital technologies at Masters and Doctoral levels, including Post doctoral research sponsorships.

(d)These learners funded by the NSF were enrolled in the following programmes:

- Further Education and Training Certificate: Information Technology: Technical Support,

- National Certificate: Information Technology: Systems Support.

- National Diploma: Information Technology

- BSc: Information System and Technology