

**MINISTRY**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X645, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 421 1309, Fax: (012) 341 8513

Private Bag X9029, Cape Town, 8000. Tel (021) 466 7603, Fax: (021) 466 3610

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR A WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: PQ 2037 (NO. 2250E)**

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**PQ 2037. Mr. B.N. Herron (Good) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements:**

1. With regard to her department’s policy review and proposed new Human Settlements Code, (a) on what date was the first Policy and Legal Expert Team (POLERT) successfully established and (b) what were the terms of office in the specified initiative;
2. what were the POLERT’s terms of reference;
3. what was the outcome of the POLERT’s work;
4. what was the total cost of the POLERT;
5. whether the POLERT has been terminated due to term limits; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) will there be a replacement and (b) what will the goals of that initiative be?

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**Reply:**

1. (a) On the 27th of October 2018, the Department of Human Settlements appointed twenty-seven (27) persons as members of POLERT for a period of two (2), 13 Legal Experts, and 14 Policy Experts.
2. The terms of reference for POLERT were to assist the Department with, *inter alia*, the following:
3. To review the housing and human settlements macro policies such as the White Paper Housing, 1994, the Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements, 2004 (otherwise known as the ‘*Breaking New Ground’ [BNG]*, including with International Treaties and Commitments such as the New Urban Agenda, and to further analyse the implications against other approved policies in the human settlements space, and to make recommendations for consideration by the Minister of Human Settlements;
4. To review the housing and human settlements legislation, and existing court judgments (jurisprudence), with a view to analysing the implications thereof and make appropriate recommendations for consideration by the Minister of Human Settlements, and
5. The outcome of the work carried out by POLERT includes, among others: The process of the incremental review of the Draft Housing and Human Settlements White Paper, 2016; Research and literature review, and the development of macro policy frameworks toward a Policy Foundation for Housing and Human Settlements White Paper, including the development of policy programmes for a new Human Settlements Code in at least four (4) critical themed areas - Integrated Planning and Residential Development, Informal Settlements Upgrading, Social Housing Interventions, and Affordable Housing.

These are underpinned by a macro policy framework on Human Settlements Land Assembly, Land Release (Site and Service) as well as the Individual Voucher Subsidy Programme, the programme for the removal of asbestos in homes, diagnostic investigation, and the empowerment of designated groups.

Over and above the initial assignment, some POLERT members were extensively utilised to formulate a Human Settlements response to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent declaration of the State of Disaster and Lockdown for a sector that was hugely impacted upon, as part of the entire construction industry, by the pandemic.

1. The initial operational budget that was set aside for POLERT was R4 million for a period of two (2) years. An amount of R3 530 416, 40 was paid to POLERT members, with an additional amount of R187 520,00 for traveling costs. In all, a total of R3 717 936,40 was expended on POLERT.
2. Yes, POLERT has been terminated due to term limits. The initial contract period was two (2) years, after which an extension for a period of one (1) year was granted until the end of October 2021. Currently, there are no POLERT members and there are no contractual appointments under POLERT. (a) Yes, there will be a replacement and a procurement process to this effect has commenced (b) the goal will be to conclude the development of a Human Settlements Policy Foundation i.e. the White Paper on Human Settlements as well as the new Human Settlements Code.