



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. 2357 {NW2692E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 23 of 2023

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Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

(a) What is the detailed financial analysis that informed the proposed cancellation of the long-standing free-entry arrangement for members of the SA Botanical Society (BotSoc) and (b) how will the projects that are currently implemented by BotSoc be replicated by the SA National Biodiversity Institute in the absence of BotSoc membership funding?

2357. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

a)

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), a Section 3A public entity for the purpose of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999) and established in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004), contributes to South Africa's sustainable development by facilitating access to biodiversity data, generating information and knowledge, building capacity, providing policy advice, and showcasing and conserving biodiversity in its national botanical and zoological gardens.

SANBI and the Botanical Society of South Africa (BotSoc) have been collaborating as strategic partners since July 1913. A Collaboration Agreement was signed between SANBI and BotSoc in December 2019 which guides the current relationship and expectations from both Parties. The

Collaboration Agreement states that the Agreement should be reviewed every two years. A process of negotiation was initiated in 2021 and new arrangements have been concluded through mutual negotiation between SANBI and the BotSoc Council.

One of the major benefits to BotSoc has been the free entry arrangement for its members to SANBI's national botanical gardens (NBGs). While this benefit to BotSoc has been compensated by some degree by 10% of membership subscriptions to SANBI, *ad hoc* donations, infrastructural developments in the NBGs and support for the Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW) programme, it is acknowledged that the main benefit to the majority of BotSoc members is the financial benefit from having free entry to NBGs, particularly the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden.

As part of the two-year review of the existing Collaboration Agreement between SANBI and BotSoc, the following changes were negotiated and agreed by both Parties:

1. 90% of SANBI's NBGs' admission fees will be payable by BotSoc members upon gate entry as from 1 April 2023. This arrangement will be honoured until 31 March 2025. A review of the Collaboration Agreement, as amended, will be conducted between October and December 2023, including all related changes that may come into effect by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.
2. SANBI will honour existing BotSoc life memberships and the associated free access to NBGs to card-holding primary life members beyond 31 March 2023. The guest cards attached to primary life members will be honoured until 31 March 2024 to allow the negotiation process between BotSoc and SANBI to reach its conclusion. SANBI will provide BotSoc with formal feedback on life members' guest entry benefit beyond 31 March 2024, by 31 May 2023.
3. BotSoc will continue its volunteer support for SANBI through collaboration between BotSoc branches and NBG curators/garden managers.
4. SANBI acknowledges BotSoc's wishes to emphasise its focus on plant conservation and support of the CREW programme, where possible, and where funding is available in the Partnership Fund.
5. Joint fundraising projects related to NBGs and other SANBI programmes will be identified for the duration of the Collaboration Agreement term, which ends on 31 March 2025, in collaboration with branches and NBG curators/garden managers.
6. The Collaboration Agreement term will be extended until the 2024/25 financial year, with a review of the Collaboration Agreement between October and December 2023. The Collaboration Agreement may be extended by mutual agreement.

b) SANBI has granted BotSoc life members, as well as their guests, continued free entry as from 1 April 2023. BotSoc members who took out a membership before 31 March 2023 will continue to be granted free entry for the one-year validity of the BotSoc membership. The access arrangement of BotSoc members, which has since been revised in line with the Collaboration Agreement, was that members of BotSoc would pay an annual membership amount to BotSoc in lieu of unlimited access to the National Botanical Gardens (NBGs).



MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 20/6/2023