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 **Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2368**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 17/08/2018**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 23 OF 2018)**

**Ms C C September (ANC) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

In view of the Centres of Specialisation Artisan Programme which was launched at the beginning of 2018 as an initiative that involves the provision of apprenticeships for young people by employers, the provision of training by colleges and the provision of funding by her department to support the initiatives through funding, how will the specified partnerships strengthen the link between education and the workplace which include areas of work such as artisan trades and the apprenticeship system?

**NW2546E**

**REPLY:**

The Centres of Specialisation (CoS) Programme has two key objectives; firstly, to accelerate the rate at which 13 priority trades are produced; and secondly, to build the capacity of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges to play their part in delivering these priority trades. The 13 priority trades were identified after a period of intensive research into the skills required for the large government infrastructure projects as well as for the Phakisas and War on Leaks. The trades are auto mechanic, boilermaker, bricklayer, carpenter and joiner, diesel mechanic, electrician, fitter and turner, mechanical fitter, millwright, pipefitter, plumber, rigger and welder.

Each of these trades is to be delivered using the newly registered Occupational Qualifications on the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) sub-framework. These qualifications have three interwoven components, i.e. theory, practical in a simulated sense and real workplace experience. The role of the TVET colleges is to provide the theory and practical components in partnership with workplaces.

The partnership between the education and workplace is effected through an apprenticeship contract. For CoS, all apprentices must have such apprenticeship contracts with employers before they enrol at a TVET college. This cements the partnership between the TVET college and industry.

Two colleges were selected to deliver each one of the 13 priority trades. In practice, 19 colleges are participating in the CoS programme, as 7 colleges have two trades each (albeit at different campuses). Every province has at least one college participating in the CoS.

What makes CoS different from many other initiatives is that learners must have apprenticeship contracts before they enrol at the college. This has required a considerable amount of work amongst employers, work that commenced at the beginning of this year. CoS has a target of 30 learners/apprentices per college, meaning that 780 apprenticeship contracts have to be signed. On 10 August 2018, the Department received reports indicating that there were 1 053 expressions of interest from employers wishing to take up apprentices for particular trades in the vicinity of selected colleges. The Sector Education and Training Authorities are being asked to consider these expressions of interest and where employers qualify, to allocate apprenticeship grants to them.

With apprenticeship grants, learners have a far greater chance not only of completing their trade test but also of securing employment either with the company with which they have been contracted or with another company in the network. Furthermore, companies have a better chance of finding the skills they need and ensuring that the skills trained are in line with their needs.