**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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**Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:**

1. With reference to COVID-19 relief funding via the Tourism Relief Fund, what (a) processes, procedures and controls are in place to ensure that funds are properly paid to the correct beneficiaries and (b) are the timelines, timeframes and deadlines in this regard;
2. what (a) processes, procedures and controls are in place to recoup funds paid incorrectly to beneficiaries and (b) are the timelines, time frames and deadlines in this regard;
3. what (a) processes, procedures and controls are in place to criminally charge non-qualifying beneficiaries who applied for the fund and (b) are the timelines, timeframes and deadlines in this regard? NW2954E

**REPLY:**

1. (a) The Tourism Relief Fund (TRF) processes were put in place based on segregation of responsibilities as a control measure. These enabled the separation of application processing, verification, evaluation, validation and approval through different functionaries. Furthermore, payments were completely separated and processed through South African Tourism.

(b) The TRF was a once off capped grant assistance to Small Micro and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMMEs) in the tourism sector relief funding measure implemented during 2020/21 financial year.

1. (a) The Department instituted a recovery process for part of the double payment to one beneficiary business through the State Attorney’s office. Furthermore, the Department is liaising with the Accounting Officers of those Directors/Owners identified as state employees to establish if they had permission to do business. The Department will be guided by the outcome of this process in terms of the way forward.

(b) The process with the Accounting Officers is scheduled to conclude by March 2022.

1. The independent investigation into the double payment (R50 000) is scheduled to conclude by end of April 2022.