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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2998**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 09/09/2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 31 OF 2022**

 **Mr E J Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

Whether he and/or his department submitted a policy review document and/or any other government policy document to structures outside of the Government, either to private and/or external structures or structures of any political affiliation during the past five years; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) will he furnish Mr E J Marais with copies of all such documents and (b) what are the reasons that the Government documents were provided to each structure?

**NW3635E**

**REPLY:**

**DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND INNOVATION**

The Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and its precursor, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have shared policy documents and policy review documents with structures outside of government during the past five years. Examples of such policy and policy review documents are given below:

* The 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)
* The 2020 Ministerial Review of the Higher Education, Science, Technology and Institutional Landscape (HESTIIL Review)
* The Draft 2022 Science, Technology and Innovation Decadal Plan

In addition, policies and reviews are regularly made available on the DSI Website where these can be accessed widely. Finally, when the DSI organises science engagements, conferences (for instance the upcoming World Science Forum to be hosted in South Africa) and exhibitions of South African science and innovation advances and technological progress, copies of policies and other documents relevant to the topic under discussion, are also provided to the attendees.

1. The copies of the documents referred to above are attached to this reply.
2. It is the mandate of the DSI to steer the national system of innovation (NSI) in South Africa. For the NSI to function optimally the flow of information across South African society is critical. Innovation is driven by the private sector, with the role of government being to create and enabling environment for innovation and to set the regulatory parameters for innovation-related activity in the NSI. For instance, the government provides financial support to undertake research linked to the national priorities and global opportunities for economic growth for instance in the Digital and the Circular Economies. The government further supports the necessary education and skills development, and the acquisition and maintenance of knowledge and innovation infrastructure to help South African research organisations and universities compete on the global stage. However, because of fiscal strain, the government cannot fund all of the research and education needs of South Africa. Funding is also derived from investments in the South African NSI by private sector firms, and foreign governments. The private sector is the main driver of innovation performance in the country, and the government needs to ensure that it responds to the needs of industry and society in developing policies and regulations, for instance proposed procurement of locally developed technologies and business incentives to stimulate innovation in South Africa.

Therefore, it is necessary to involve all of the NSI actors (academia, industry, government and civil society, including labour) in the development of science and innovation policies. It is for these purposes that policy reviews and policy documents are regularly shared with stakeholders such as the following:

* Business associations (for instance the Manufacturing Circle and the Minerals Council South Africa);
* Universities (for instance through USAf, Universities South Africa and the Deputy Vice-Chancellors: Research of South African universities);
* Public research organisations (for instance the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Medical Research Council, as well as the Committee of Heads of Research and Technology Organisations, COHORT);
* Foreign governments (for instance through the British Council, aid organisations and multilateral organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD);
* Civil society organisations (for instance through the South African Local Government Association, SALGA, the Engineering Council of South Africa, ECSA; and activist non-governmental organisations such as Section 27 in the health field), and finally
* Labour organisations (for instance through NEDLAC).

**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The Department submits policy documents to stakeholders within and outside of government as part of the consultation process.  The relevant policies are:

1. The Recognition of Prior Learning Coordination Policy (2016);
2. Articulation Policy for the Post-School Education and Training System of South Africa (2017);
3. The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) (2019);
4. The SETA Landscape’ (2019); and
5. Skills Strategy to support Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP)’ (2022*)*.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Coordination Policy provides a strong enabling policy environment for the further development and implementation of RPL across the Post -School Education and Training System (PSET), and across all levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). It guides the implementation of RPL, especially concerning the roles and functions of the Department, the South African Qualifications Framework (SAQA), the Quality Councils, the national coordinating mechanism, and the funding mechanisms for RPL implementation.

The Articulation Policy establishes the overarching conceptual structure, principles, and policy statements to support the implementation of credible approaches to articulation within the South African PSET system.

Prior to the publication of these policies in a gazette, SAQA, the Quality Councils, and other relevant stakeholders were consulted as they have a role to play in the implementation of RPL and Articulation.

The RPL Policy is currently under review and consultations with SAQA, and the Quality Councils were held through meetings including the Chief Executive Committees (CEO) meetings. An online consultative workshop on the Review of the RPL Coordination Policy took place with stakeholders including government; universities; Private Higher Education Institutions; Universities South Africa; SAQA; Quality Councils; Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs); Professional Bodies; DHET Regional Offices; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); and Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges.

The overarching purpose of the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) is to build the capability of South African citizens through the provision of quality education and skills development thereby contributing to economic growth, employment creation and social development in South Africa.

The New SETA landscape was ushered in on 1 April 2020 by the NSDP and the re-establishment of the SETAs by the Department. In this new dispensation, the role of the SETA’s has been streamlined and re-focussed in order to strengthen their ability to successfully contribute towards the achievement of the NSDP outcomes.

The Skills Strategy has been designed to ensure that skills are available to support the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP). The strategy identifies the skills implications of the ERRP and outlines ways in which the PSET system, together with other key role-players, will ensure that the skills required to implement this plan are available.

The Department consulted with National Skills Authority (NSA) and social partners at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) since these stakeholders have an interest in Skills Development Act and related policy documents. Such consultations were conducted to solicit further inputs since the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP), SETA Landscape and ERRP have implications for Organised Labour, Organised Business and Community Constituency.