

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO 3069**

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**Mr MSF de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Economic Development:**

(a) How does (i) his department and (ii) entities reporting to him define red tape and (b) what (i) specific interventions and/or (ii) systems have been implemented to (aa) identify and (bb) reduce red tape in (aaa) his department and (bbb) the entities reporting to him?

**REPLY**

Red tape is typically defined as rules, regulations and/or official procedures and processes which are excessively complex and which impose unnecessary delays, inaction and/or costs which exceed their benefits and/or is no longer effective in achieving the purpose for which they were originally created.

There are three areas of red-tape reduction relevant to the Department:

* Internal red-tape
* Red-tape in the Department that affects members of the public and
* Red-tape outside the Department (entities and other government bodies) that affect the public and indeed the effectiveness of government itself.

To address internal red-tape that back-office functions (eg IT, Finance, Supply-chain or Human Resources sections) impose on front-line parts of EDD, a user-survey has been introduced in the current financial year and it is helping to reorient the back-office sections to becoming outcome-driven. Unnecessary requirements are being eliminated.

Because the Department does not render a range of public services that require adherence to regulations and rules, the scope to decrease red-tape for the public is limited.

To address red-tape outside the Department, EDD has undertaken the following:

1. Training to officials in Tshwane, Nelson Mandela Bay and Ekurhuleni Metros on red-tape reduction and the implementation of the new impact-assessment tool, namely the Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIAS)
2. Ministerial engagement with entities to review their internal processes and make these simpler and more effective. These have assisted to set maximum timeframe targets for consideration of applications and a dashboard against which entities report on their adherence to these targets
3. Support to unblock regulatory approvals by other Departments, for example on expediting water-use licences and environmental impact assessments.

The Industrial Development Corporation has revised its internal processes to address and finalise decisions on non-complex funding applications. This has assisted to bring down the waiting periods considerably.

ITAC has reviewed its tariff investigations regulations and redrafted its questionnaires to make them clearer and reduce the burden of unnecessary information. Turnaround times for tariff applications have been redesigned and these are now much swifter that before.

The Competition Commission has set performance targets to expedite consideration of mergers and cartel investigations.

The Competition Tribunal has simplified its procedures for non-lawyers, including through a ‘frequently asked questions’ section on its website, a consolidation of rules and procedures for easy reference and by making facilities available to unrepresented individuals at hearings (including through advice from Tribunal members on procedure and a pro bono arrangement negotiated with one of the Law Societies).

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