**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 3131**

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**DATE OF REPLY:**

**Mrs. M R Shinn (DA) to ask the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services:**

(1) (a) What interactions has his department’s SA Connect project office had with

the private information and communication technology sector about their role as set out in SA Connect, (b) how many times have they met, (c) where did the specified meetings take place, (d) what are the details of the interactions since 1 May 2014 and (e) what interactions are planned for the rest of the (i) 2015-16 financial year and (ii) Medium Term Economic Framework;

(2) (a) which (i) companies, (ii) organisations or (iii) councils have been included in the specified interactions, (b) what has been the nature of the specified interactions and (c) where were they held;

(3) (a) what are the expected outcomes of the specified interactions and (b) when will the outcomes of the specified interactions be available for public comment? NW3672E

**REPLY:**

(1)(a) The Department has had a number of interactions in the form of bilateral meetings with State-Owned Entities and the private sector with the purpose of understanding the current broadband infrastructure gap, understanding the different technology options as well as understanding the different approaches undertaken by the private sector in implementing various broadband initiatives.

(b) Several meetings were held to provide the Department with better insight into the possible solutions to the broadband infrastructure problem and to assist with the costing of the broadband business case.

(c) The specified meetings were mainly held at the offices of the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services.

(d) Meetings were held with the private Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. The purpose of the interaction with the private ICT sector on South Africa Connect was with the view to understand the technology trends, roadmap and infrastructure capabilities to achieve the SA Connect target and the broadband gaps. The purpose was also to understand the economic and social impact of the broadband initiatives to assist with setting up the parameters for monitoring the impact over the long term. Further to understand the different approaches to national Broadband Implementation Strategies implemented in other countries and the challenges and success thereof.

(e)(i)(ii) Meetings will be held with the private sector and are aimed at (i) Establishing key indicators to measure the impact of broadband infrastructure on the economy and (ii) Understanding how to further improve the current coverage.

(2)(a) (i) The Department has had interactions with the following companies to discuss technology options for broadband:

* Isizwe projects;
* Huawei Technologies;
* Alcatel-Lucent;
* Altec;
* Nokia,
* Seacom,
* the Living Labs project
* Viasat
* Avanti Communication Group

The following companies have been consulted to determine the extent of their infrastructure investment:

* + MTN
  + Vodacom
  + Neotel
  + Cell C
  + Altron
  + Telkom
  + Sentech
  + Dark Fibre Africa
  + Eskom
  + SACF
  + SANRAL

(ii) The following organisations were included in the interactions:

* Universal Service and Access and Agency of South Africa (USAASA);
* Council for Scientific Research (CSIR),
* BMI-T; and,
* Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA).

(iii) The National Broadband Advisory Council (NBAC) Working Group is the

Council has facilitated presentation from the Department and industry. The National ICT Forum has now been established to drive some of the industry interactions in a coordinated manner.

(b) The interactions were mainly in a form of bilateral meetings.

(c) The specified meetings were mainly held at the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services offices and CSIR convention centre

(3)(a) The engagement with the private ICT sector assisted the Department to understand the infrastructure gaps and various technology options and approaches to close the gaps.

(b) The outcome of the interactions with the private ICT sector assisted with the development of the broadband business case and implementation plan, and ensured that the duplication of infrastructure is avoided as much as possible during the planning process.