**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 4098**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 50/2015**

**4098. Mr G R Davis (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) What was the total budget for the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) for the (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15 and (d) 2015-16 financial years;

(2) how much of the total budget for the NEEDU was spent on staff salaries (a) in the (i) 2012-13, (ii) 2013-14 and (iii) 2014-15 financial years and (b) since 1 April 2015;

(3) (a) when will the NEEDU become the Office of Standards and Compliance for Basic Education and (b) what is the reason for the delay in this regard;

(4) when will a new Chief Executive Officer of the NEEDU be appointed;

(5) (a) when will the NEEDU report for the evaluation year of 2014 be released and (b) what is the reason for the delay in releasing the report? NW4970E

**RESPONSE**

**Question 1**

The total budget for the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) for the (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14, (c) 2014-15 and (d) 2015-16 financial years is indicated in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **TOTAL BUDGET** |
| 2012-13 | 17 082 858 |
| 2013-14 | 21 100 197 |
| 2014-15 | 26 280 460 |
| 2015-16 | 15 205 357 |

**Question 2(a)**

The total budget for the NEEDU that was spent on staff salaries in the (i) 2012-13, (ii) 2013-14 and (iii) 2014-15 financial years is indicated in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **TOTAL BUDGET SPENT ON STAFF SALARIES** |
| 2012-13 | 11 673 619 |
| 2013-14 | 14 159 257 |
| 2014-15 | 20 801 075 |

**Question 2(b)**

The total budget for the NEEDU that was spent on staff salaries since 1 April 2015 is indicated in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FINANCIAL YEAR** | **TOTAL BUDGET SPENT ON STAFF SALARIES** |
| 2015-16 | 10 763 014 |

**Question 3**

The establishment of an independent government component, such as the Office of Standards and Compliance for Basic Education (OSCBE), is a lengthy process and it involves the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the National Treasury and the Presidency. This has been the main cause for the delay in completing this process. The NEEDU will become the OSCBE when all the processes, as indicated below, have been completed:

Following the Minister’s correspondence with the Ministers of Finance and the Public Service and Administration, certain developments have transpired. These are as follows:

* + Consultations with the National Treasury and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) to establish NEEDU as an independent government component, under the title of Office of Standards and Compliance for Basic Education (OSCBE);
	+ The formulation of the relevant documents with the support of DPSA and the preparation of business case with the support of the National Treasury;
	+ Preparation of the Regulations for the establishment of OSCBE for consideration and approval by the Minister;
	+ The approval of the Regulations for the establishment of OSCBE after close examination and scrutiny by the Chief State Law Advisor, who finally declared that “the draft Regulations are consistent with section 11 of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996)” in May 2015; and
	+ The approval of the Regulations for the establishment of OSCBE by the Minister in May 2015 after they were endorsed by the Chief State Law Advisor.

What remains to be done includes the following activities:

* + Approving the Regulations for the establishment of the OSCBE by the Council of Education Ministers.
	+ Declaring the establishment of OSCBE through the promulgation of the Regulations (via the Government Notice) by the Minister.
	+ Submitting the updated business case and promulgated Regulations and Government Notice to the DPSA [by NEEDU].
	+ Arranging a meeting of the Interdepartmental Assessment Committee to make recommendations on the organisational form for the OSCBE—with DBE (NEEDU) participating as a member in the Committee and making a presentation to the members [by DPSA];
	+ Preparing a submission to inform the Minister for Public Service and Administration and the Minister of Finance of the Committee's recommendation and obtain the concurrence of the said Ministers for the establishment of the OSBE as a government component [by DPSA];
	+ Preparing (following concurrence from said Ministers) a Presidential Proclamation to list the OSCBE in schedule 3 of the Public Service Act, so as to establish the OSCBE as a government component [by DPSA].

**Question 4**

The Minister is currently considering the most suitable candidates to lead the NEEDU and will appoint the best candidate in due course.

**Question 5**

NEEDU will submit the draft report to the Department for comments by 30 November 2015. In 2014, NEEDU evaluated 183 schools (93 schools offering Grades 7-9 and 90 offering Grades 10-14), 25 districts and nine provinces. A total of 217 reports, one for every site visited, were prepared. These reports had to be collated into the national report. This entails extensive analysis of large volumes of both qualitative and quantitative data. The analysis of data took longer because, unlike in the previous evaluations, the 2014 systemic evaluations involved two phases (senior and Further Education and Training). Because NEEDU did not have the capacity to do complex statistical analysis of the quantitative data that was collected from schools, districts and provinces, a service provider was appointed to analyse the data. The procurement process in appointing the service provider also added to the delays in finalising the 2014 Report. In addition, two staff members, including the Chief Executive Officer, left and this meant that the remaining staff had to carry more workload.

A draft report has been prepared. The NEEDU is doing the final editing before it is submitted to the Department for comments. In terms of the NEEDU protocol, each site visited (including schools, districts, provinces and the national office) is given four to six weeks to comment on the NEEDU draft report before a report is finalised. This practice, which was followed before when the 2012 and 2013 NEEDU Reports were finalised, will also be followed with regard to the 2015 Report. It is only after NEEDU has carefully considered all comments made by the Department that the report is finalised and submitted to the Ministry.

Upon receipt of the NEEDU Report, in line with the provision of section 7(1)(g) of the *Regulations for the Establishment of the Office of Standards and Compliance for Basic Education (OSCBE),* currently known as NEEDU, “the Minister *may* publish the report.” This provision empowers the Minister to publish NEEDU reports at the Minister’s discretion.