



**forestry, fisheries  
& the environment**

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

---

Ref: O2/1/5/2

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 4106 {NW5118E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 44 of 2022**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 4 November 2022**

**Mr M N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

What contingency plans have been put in place to keep the mouth of St Lucia open?

**4106. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**


The mouth of the St Lucia estuary breached naturally on 14 April 2022 and has remained open to date. The Panel of Experts Report was launched on 28 April 2022 and, among others, recommended the development of an Estuary Management Plan, as well as the cleaning and clearing of canals upstream to ensure that the mouth remains open. In order to clean the canals, a survey and spatial analysis of the entire area needs to be conducted to determine the scope of work and regulatory requirements.

Owing to the nature of the recommendations, which requires intersectoral collaboration with immediate and future recommended work, an Intergovernmental Task Team (IGTT) was established to develop an implementation plan, which was finalised in October 2022. The IGTT includes the Branch: Oceans and Coasts providing guidance on disposal; Environmental Programmes identifying funding for the clearing of canals; the KwaZulu-Natal provincial department of Agriculture; the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRDD); and the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). The

IGTT have also carried out joint site inspections on 12 October 2022 and 1 November 2022 to investigate and better analyse the situation on the ground.

The survey needs have been provided and iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority is also looking for alternative funding sources to conduct necessary surveys to quantify the magnitude of silt needing clearance within the park section of the Msunduze, estuary mouth and the Mfolozi. ISimangaliso Wetland Park Authority is also in the process of recruiting a marine ecologist and technician to intensify monitoring. This process will be concluded by January 2023.

The issue of the natural functioning (keeping the mouth open) of the St Lucia Estuary Mouth, inclusive of key parameters of when to breach or not to breach, is part of the recommendations included in the Panel of Experts Report as work that needs to be undertaken and completed. We are, therefore, working within the ambit of the action plan and further guidance on artificial breaching conditions and/or parameters will be dealt with through the task team and the action plan. In addition, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority is reviewing its Estuary Management Plan for the St Lucia Estuary (as well as the Kosi Estuary and the Mgobozeleni Estuary), part of which will be attending to the issue of artificial breaching guidance.



.....

**PJ GORDHAN, MP**  
**ACTING MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**DATE:** ..... 18 - 11 - 2022 .....