**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**651. Mr D W Macpherson (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade and Industry:**

With reference to product licences that fall under the authority of the SA Bureau of Standards, (a) what number of product licences has expired, (b) what steps has his department taken to eradicate the backlog, (c) (i) what is the name of each product that has an expired licence and (ii) on what date did each licence expire and (d) what is the cost to the economy with regard to expired licences?

**Response:**

The management of the SABS has provided the Department with the following information.

1. The SABS does not issue product licences. Since the promulgation of new legislation, the SABS Act of 2008, the SABS Mark is a voluntary tool for quality assurance in the domestic and global market.
2. The SABS Mark continues to be issued. Companies that hold an expired SABS Mark can continue to use it even if it has expired. A SABS Division was created in 2017 to deal with the backlog and provides access to laboratories all over the country to test products as well as provide the necessary governance and assurance oversight of these SABS conformity assessment services.
3. The management of the SABS has not provided a satisfactory response containing the requisite information. I have written to the SABS management demanding that they do in fact provide an urgent response to the Department of Trade and Industry.
4. No calculation of this cost has been undertaken.

The Department of Trade and Industry is the only shareholder of the SABS. In my capacity as the Minister of Trade and Industry, in the light of the above and with respect to ongoing concerns relating to the SABS Mark function, I recently gave instructions to the SABS Board to urgently oversee a detailed process to develop a turnaround strategy for SABS. This will, inter alia, include a full scope of all the existing SABS Mark functions and processes involved in developing the Mark; operational challenges and stakeholder engagements in order to strengthen this critical pillar of SA’s industrialisation effort. I shall provide a full report to Parliament in this regard in due course.