

**MINISTRY: PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**DATE: 10 FEBRUARY 2017**

**QUESTION NO.: 70**

**MR A P VAN DER WESTHUIZEN (DA) TO ASK THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION:**

1. What amount has been spent by Government on the Open Government Partnership since its inception to date and (b) in what ways did the public service benefit from the specified partnership?

**NW74E**

**REPLY:**

**A:** South Africa joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in September 2011. Since then, the Ministry of Public Service and Administration has spent R25, 546, 000. 00.

B: The Open Government Partnership- South Africa (OGP-SA) is geared towards supporting the advancement a developmental state that would result in greater efficiency, higher productivity and promote the goal of a better life for all. More importantly this program is centered on advancing the governance agenda that would respond to citizen’s needs.

The OGP-SA programme aims to bring government directly to the people and enhancing the relationship between government and citizen. The programme does this by:

1. Developing systems and enhancing mechanisms for public participation;
2. Providing support for the packaging and dissemination of government departments’ information to citizens;
3. Providing avenues and innovate methods for citizen feedback on government processes;
4. Developing strategies and strengthening government partnerships with civil society
5. Championing and advocating for open government principles across the three spheres of government and organs of state.

Beyond promoting and enhancing government – civil society collaboration on policy formulation through co-creation on commitments in the OGP National Action Plans, the MPSA has played an advocacy role in the promotion of the values of Open Government within and outside government.

Through advocacy, the OGPSA has managed to lobby government to mainstream the openness in its programmes. Results of this lobbying and engagement include the creation of:

1. Municipal Money”, an open local government budget data portal which provides citizens and other stakeholders with access to comparable, verified information on the financial performance of each municipality. Municipal Money aims to promote transparency and citizen engagement through the visualisation and ‘demystification’ of information about municipal spending.
2. Through the Open Government Partnership, the South African government, along with a team from the private sector and civil society, launched a national open data portal project. The objective of the portal is to create a platform to enhance citizen access to government open data as well as showcase software applications that were built using South African government open data.
3. The inclusion of a chapter (Chapter 10) on A Digital Society in the National Integrated ICT Policy White Paper issued on 28 September 2016.

Furthermore, national departments are implementing commitments under the OGP country action plan namely:

1. Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation: Strengthening Citizen- Based Monitoring. In partnership with civil organization, this commitment specifically focuses on enhancing active citizen participation in monitoring the delivery of services at government frontline points.
2. National Treasury: Open Budgeting. This commitment involves citizens in the budget process from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, enabling them to have a firmer grasp on how national resources are generated, distributed and reported upon. This aligns with the OGP values of access to information and public accountability.
3. Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs: Back to Basics Programme. The objectives of this commitment are to ensure that citizens have basic sets of tools by which they can hold their municipalities to account and measure whether they are living up to their commitments. This initiative resonates with the OGP’s emphasis on greater accountability and transparency.
4. Department of Environmental Affairs: Development an integrated and publicly accessible portal for environmental management information. To enable better engagement and informed decision making by citizens on environmental sensitive areas, this commitment seeks to integrate spatial data on biodiversity, ecosystems, water, agriculture, protected areas, conservation areas, air quality priority areas, etc. As part of access to information entrenched in the OGP values, this commitment will allow easy and unrestricted access to spatial environmental data and support the citizens constitutional right to information.

1. Department of Public Service and Administration: Implement South Africa’s action plan on the G20 High Level Principles on Beneficial Ownership Transparency to improve the transparency of legal persons and arrangements in order to protect the integrity and transparency of the global financial system. This commitment aims at preventing misuse of and ensure transparency of legal persons and arrangements. It relates with the OGP’s principles transparency and access to information.

South Africa’s participation in the OGP has benefited the public service through the promotion of constitutional values such as public participation and the emphasis on ethical conduct and responsiveness to citizens. The increased engagement with communities and co-creation of national commitments as well as other citizen’s activities on the OGP has positively enhanced public participation in government programmes.

The OGP is also piloting the implementation of Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 16) through a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Statistics South Africa. Such partnerships ensures that the Open Government agenda is infused into both national and international programmes of government.

**END**