

**MINISTRY**

**PUBLIC WORKS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 963 [NO.** **NW1130E]**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.: 09**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 19 MARCH 2021**

**DATE OF REPLY: 08 MAY 2021**

**963. Mrs H B Hicklin (DA) asked the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure:**

What (a) steps are being taken by her department to address the extremely high vacancy rate that is currently sitting at over 11% (i) across all sectors of her department and (ii) in the entities reporting to her, including the Property Management Trading Entity, (b) is the reason that the vacancy rate is so high, (c) total number of the vacancies are as a result of the Special Investigations Unit investigations into corruption and (d) is the status of the investigation process into the high-ranking members of her department and/or entities who are under investigation and still on full pay? **NW1130E**

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**REPLY:**

**The Minister of Public works and Infrastructure:**

(a) I have been informed by the Department that DPWI is implementing a recruitment plan to accelerate the filling of all vacancies in the Main Vote and the PMTE. All five (5) vacant executive management positions have been advertised and include: Supply Chain Management, Facilities Management, Policy, Expanded Public Works programme (EPWP) and Inter-Governmental Relations. The position of the Head of ISA is awaiting approval and the concurrence by Cabinet. The vacancy rate target of the Department for the financial year 2020/21 is 12% and has improved to 11% which is more than 1% off the DPSA’s set norm of 10%. The Public Works and Infrastructure Portfolio Committee has also made a recommendation to the Department to conclude the recruitment process within the next three months.

(b) The high vacancy rate is as a result of the delays in the filling of positions due to various factors, both internal and external. External factors include the requirement to seek the permission from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) to advertise and providing motivations before any advert can be considered. This was precipitated by the requirement to provide motivations to advertise only critical positions during the period of lockdown imposed by Government to stem the tide of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the lockdown also meant that the approach to recruitment had to consider the use of virtual platforms to conduct online shortlisting and interviews. Internal factors included the elaborate processes to set up panels and ensure the availability of members at all times, amongst others.

(c) The SIU investigations did not have an impact on the vacancy rate.

(d) As a consequence of three major investigations, the Department has embarked on disciplinary action against a number of senior officials, complimented by court applications to reverse the irregular appointment of a further 12 officials, based on an investigation by the Public Service Commission, as well as action against certain officials with respect to service delivery transgressions.

Status on the disciplinary action of senior officials are as follows:

* On the Beitbridge Border Fence investigation, 11 Senior Management Services members were charged on 24 February 2021 and the hearings were held on 21-22 April 2021, and 5 and 6 May respectively. The hearing for members of the Bid Adjudication Committee was postponed to 14, 15, 17 & 18 June 2021 for further testimony and cross examination of witnesses. The hearing of the three implicated Senior Officials has been postponed *sine die* pending the outcome and finalization of a court application to interdict the process brought by one of the officials.
* On the State Funerals investigation, 2 Senior Management Services members were charged on 23 February 2021. The hearings have not been scheduled yet as the initiators of the disciplinary process are still securing witnesses and finalising outstanding information required by the Senior Council appointed to assist the Department.
* On the Irregular Appointments of 12 SMS officials’ investigation by PSC, 13 officials of which 12 are at Senior Management Level, were served with charge sheets in September 2019 and the hearing is scheduled for 26 May 2021. Reasons for the delay is due to the fact that the Department has been dealing with a point *in limine* and not the actual trial.

The disciplinary action against the Director-General is being managed by the Presidency.

The disciplinary action against the Special Advisor is being managed by the State Attorney on behalf of the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure. An Initiator and Chairperson have been appointed by the State Attorney and draft charges have been prepared.

All Disciplinary matters are ongoing and the time-lines are changing due to the availability of all role players and the employees.

**WITH RESPECT TO THE ENTITIES REPORTING TO THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASCTURE:**

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| **Entity** | **(a) (ii)** **steps being taken to address the extremely high vacancy rate in the entities** | **(b) the reason that the vacancy rate is so high** | **(c) total number of the vacancies that are as a result of the Special Investigations Unit investigations into corruption** | **(d) the status of the investigation process into the high-ranking members of the entities who are under investigation and still on full pay?** |
| **Agrément South Africa** | ASA, does not have a high vacancy rate. The positions that are not filled are due to recent resignations and the posts are currently in the process of being filled. | Vacancy rate is low, as ASA is relatively a small organisation. | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| **Council of the Built Environment** | The current vacancy rate is 10%. The vacancy rate is high following the halting of the recruitment process due to budget costs. | A total of 4 positions are currently vacant. These are:  1. Senior Researcher  2. Legal Compliance Specialist  3. Senior IT Technician4.Strategic Planning Monitoring and Evaluation  4. Strategic Planning Monitoring and Evaluation | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| **Construction Industry Development Board** | (a) (ii)  Cidb is in the process of filling these positions in accordance with the available budget.  As such, we have identified 16 critical positions to be filled in the 2020/21 financial year.  Of these eight (8) appointments, interviews were conducted for two other positions and are at the competency and verification stage. We have also started with the recruitment process of four additional positions, and appointments will be made in the 2021/22 financial year.  CIDB has planned to fill its vacancies over the next three years, prioritizing critical positions while considering its available budget. | (b) Cidb underwent restructuring/ organizational development, and as a result, it has 153 vacant positions. | (c) Not applicable | (d) Not applicable |
| **Independent Development Trust** | The IDT is in the process of reconfiguration as endorsed by Cabinet. | The reason for the high vacancy rate at the IDT is attributed to the moratorium that was placed by the shareholder on filling of vacant positions. | There are no vacancies created by resignations directly linked the Special Investigations Unit investigations into corruption both in the current and previous financial year. | To the official knowledge of the IDT, there is none of its senior managers who are currently ‘under investigation’ and still on full pay. |