



forestry, fisheries & the environment

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

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2063 {NW2303E}

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Mr N Singh (IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Following the incorporation and streamlining of the Forestry and Fisheries branches within the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, what are the measures to professionalise the Forestry and Fisheries branches;
- (2) whether her department has (a) introduced any interventions to increase accessibility and (b) considered decentralising fisheries management to operating offices in provinces with fisheries activities; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the further relevant details?

2063. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

1. Since the full integration and incorporation of the Forestry and Fisheries Branches with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the DFFE has introduced and workshopped the corporate management policies to the two Branches.

The Fisheries Branch is also undergoing a restructuring process within the broader department. Furthermore, the Branch is in the process of rolling out an e-permitting system which will significantly improve business processes.

The Forestry Masterplan was developed by the DFFE in collaboration with the industry and labour as part of the Public-Private Growth Initiative (PPGI). This plan will be used as a guideline that will enable the DFFE to undertake its mandate of growth and protection of forestry resources. In line with the masterplan, the branch is currently being restructured and capacitated for alignment with regard to implementation.

2. (a) The COVID-19 pandemic has made accessibility for some communities more difficult than for those who are well resourced. Last year, in an attempt to broaden access, but to prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading, the DFFE allowed applications for permits to be submitted electronically, via email, as an interim measure. Furthermore, Fishery Development Workers have also been deployed in some communities to assist with permit applications and enquiries.

In addition to the above, the DFFE is in the process of finalising the scope for Phase 1 of a fully e-permitting system only.

- (b) In some areas, regional offices are equipped to assist communities with permit applications and enquiries. The DFFE is exploring the expansion of this by fully utilising the Fishery Development Workers. However, the DFFE envisages that once the e-permitting system is fully operational, it will greatly assist communities and lessen the need for direct contact or interaction.

Regards



**MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: 10/09/2021