



**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. 2423 {NW2799E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 25 of 2021**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 12 November 2021**

**Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

- (1) In light of the increase in prospecting and mining applications for heavy mineral sand mining, diamond mining and oil and gas exploration along the West Coast of the Republic in recent years, where some of the operations have not taken due consideration of the overall impact on the surrounding natural and social environment, what total number of licences for mining and exploration in the West Coast have been granted over the past five years;
- (2) whether she has found that (a) comprehensive environmental impact assessments have been carried out for all current mining operations along the West Coast and (b) relevant enforcement measures are in place to ensure compliance; if not, what is the position in each case; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;
- (3) whether there is an overarching strategic environmental plan or are applications handled on an ad hoc basis; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the envisaged impacts of large-scale sand mining on the natural biospheres of the West Coast?

**2423. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

- (1) With the implementation of the "One Environmental System" in 2014, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is responsible for preparing all the environmental legislation, pertaining to mining and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) is identified as the competent authority to review all environmental impact assessment applications for prospecting and mining applications. As such, the DMRE implements the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended, published under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA).


Prior to 2014 the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002) (MPRDA) required any applicant for a prospecting or mining application to undertake an environmental impact assessment and submit an environmental management plan. In addition, the proponent would have been required to submit an environmental impact assessment under NEMA for the ancillary activities related to mining.

As DMRE is the competent authority for prospecting and mining applications for the past 7 years, the request for information regarding the total number of licences for mining and exploration on the West Coast which have been granted should be directed to DMRE.

- (2) a) The DFFE does not review environmental authorisations for mining operations, and as such would not be able to comment on the comprehensiveness of the environmental impact assessment. However, as discussed above, the environmental impact assessments undertaken within the past seven years have been undertaken in line with the environmental impact assessment regulations promulgated under the NEMA which are applied to the assessment of environmental impact of all other activities which could have a detrimental impact on the environment.
- b) With respect to compliance monitoring, various measures for monitoring and auditing of the environmental management plan and the conditions of the environmental authorisation are in place through the environmental impact assessment regulations which must be enforced by the DMRE. The conditions of the authorisation and the environmental management plan are enforced on a site-specific basis. The DMRE must be contacted for more detail on the compliance monitoring undertaken on mining operations in the West Coast.

(3) It is a requirement of the environmental impact assessment to consider cumulative impacts on the environment. This was also a requirement of the regulations for impact assessment under the MRPDA. Therefore, although applications are prepared on a site-specific basis, each application is required to include an assessment of cumulative impacts. The requirement to determine cumulative impacts would be in place for all mining types, including sand mining. The impact of sand mining on the natural biosphere of the West Coast would therefore be considered through the environmental impact assessment process.

**Regards**



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

**DATE: 25/11/2021**