

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1301.

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1301. Mr S M Gana (Rise Mzansi) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

- (1) With reference to the commitment she made that pit toilets in schools would be eradicated by 31 March 2025, what total number of schools (a) have had their pit toilets eradicated since the pronouncement was made and (b) still had pit toilets as at 10 March 2025;
- (2) what has been the total cost of the eradication programme since her pronouncement;
- (3) (a) which private sector companies have donated towards the specified project and (b) what is the breakdown of the monetary value of their donations;
- (4) which municipalities have proven difficult to work with in the eradication of pit toilets;
- (5) whether the deadline of 31 March 2025 will be met; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

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Response

(1)

(a) The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has advised that, as of 10 March 2025 in the 2024/25 financial year, out of the total **3 372 schools** identified for intervention through the **Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) Initiative**, a total of **3 203 schools (93%)** had been provided with **safe and age-appropriate sanitation facilities**.

(2)

The total expenditure on the SAFE programme, funded through the School Infrastructure Backlogs Grant (SIBG), since the inception of the SAFE programme in 2018, stands at R5 472 120 669.

(3)

(a) The DBE is working in close collaboration with numerous private sector donor partners, including:

- Tirisano Construction Fund
- Assupol
- AVBOB
- Unilever
- NOCROS
- Vodacom
- Nelson Mandela Foundation
- And others.

(b) These partnerships are primarily in-kind and consist of technical support services, full sanitation facilities and related project inputs. No direct monetary donations are made to the DBE. Instead, private partners fund and implement projects in full or in part.

(4)

The DBE engages local municipalities and communities during both the planning and implementation phases of the SAFE programme through Social Facilitators. These engagements ensure local buy-in and cooperation. To date, no single municipality has posed persistent challenges to implementation. Where isolated administrative or

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service delivery issues have arisen, they are addressed through intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms.

(5)

The DBE remains committed to the eradication of pit toilets as identified through the SAFE initiative. As of 31 March 2025, 96% of the identified pit toilet projects under the SAFE initiative have been completed, with the remaining 82 projects planned for completion within the next three months, in the 2025/26 financial year.

These remaining projects are those that experienced delays due to underperforming service providers, whose contracts were subsequently terminated. The DBE is in the process of appointing replacement contractors to complete the outstanding work.

In addition, 45 projects initially delayed due to the funding constraints of certain donor partners are being reallocated to performing Implementing Agents and are also earmarked for completion in the new financial year.

The DBE remains committed to ensuring that all pit latrines identified through the SAFE initiative are eradicated and replaced. Furthermore, the DBE remains committed to ensuring that all pit latrines not identified under the SAFE initiative are identified and replaced by Provincial Education Departments as soon as possible. For further information regarding the steps to be taken in this regard, please see the speech delivered by the Minister of Basic Education in Limpopo on 4 April 2025 (available on the DBE website).

Our goal is to provide safe, age-appropriate, and dignified sanitation facilities that create an enabling learning environment where every learner can focus on their education.