

01 JULY 2022

BASIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO THE REGULATIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Department of Basic Education has extended the deadline for the submission of comments on the amendments to the regulations relating to the minimum norms and standards for public school infrastructure.

The Minister of Basic Education has, on 10 June 2022, published a Government Gazette with proposed amendments to the Regulations Relating to the Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure Issued in terms of Section 5A (1)(a) of the South African Schools Act, 1996. The purpose of releasing the Gazette is to give the public, including stakeholders, an opportunity to participate in the drafting of the regulations and to make substantive input which will be considered in drafting the final regulations.

In addition to the Government Gazette, the Department uploaded, as per general practice, the document with the proposals on the website www.education.gov.za for public comment.

The Department is committed to a constructive public participation process. It is for this reason that the public should be accorded ample opportunity to engage with the document and submit comments. The deadline for the submission of written comments is 31 July 2022.

The proposed amendments have come about following consultation with the Minister of Finance and the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) earlier this year.

The sector has made great strides in efforts to provide appropriate sanitation facilities for schools in the country.

The ASIDI programme (Accelerated School Infrastructure Initiative) was launched in 2011. Provinces initially identified 701 schools with no toilets. There have been several changes to the initial list due to rationalisation of small and unviable schools, as well as due to updated assessments.

There are currently 1 053 schools on this programme. Sanitation projects at 1 040 of these schools has progressed to practical completion and provided a full set of appropriate toilets at the schools. The sanitation projects at the balance of 13 schools are scheduled to reach practical completion in 2022/23.

Media Enquiries:

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The SAFE programme (Sanitation Appropriate For Education) was launched in 2018. Provinces initially identified 3 898 schools dependent on basic pit toilets. There have been several changes to the initial list due to rationalisation of small and unviable schools, as well as due to updated assessments.

There are currently 3 407 school on this programme. Sanitation projects at 2 006 of these schools has progressed to practical completion and provided a full set of appropriate toilets at the schools.

The sanitation projects at the balance of 13 schools are scheduled to reach practical completion in 2022/23. A further 1 000 sanitation projects are scheduled for completion in 2022/23.

The implementation of major programmes is obviously dependent on the availability of funding. The ASIDI programme is funded through the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant. The SAFE programme is also funded through the School Infrastructure Backlog grant, with co-funding from the Education Infrastructure Grant.

In 2021/22, both these grants were fully utilised. It is important to note that infrastructure requirements due to unforeseen events, such as the recent flooding in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, are also in general funded through the same Education Infrastructure Grant. This may impact on the rollout of the remaining SAFE projects.

The Department has since stepped up the monitoring of the projects to ensure that they are completed on time, to specifications and budget. Minister Angie Motshekga has since October 2021 conducted weekly accountability sessions with the Director-General and the Infrastructure Branch at the DBE where progress reports are presented. In addition, Director-General holds weekly update meetings with the chief executive officers of the implementing agents. The Director General also convenes monthly infrastructure meetings with heads of provincial departments of education to receive progress reports on delivery and expenditure.

Mathanzima Mweli, the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education, has been visiting construction sites since March 2021 to accelerate the delivery of the much-needed infrastructure. The monitoring function has assisted the Department to unblock challenges and resolve issues that delayed the building process.

The Department is confident that the annual performance plan targets will be met and that the budget allocated will be used. The Department has developed detailed tracking tools and monitoring is taking place daily to ensure that implementing agents deliver as expected.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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