



GAUTENG
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Member of the Executive Council (MEC)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT

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RESPONSES TO QUESTION POSED BY GAUTENG LEGISLATURE

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS
EMANATING FROM THE
DEPARTMENT'S FIRST QUARTER
REPORT FOR 2023/24 FINANCIAL
YEAR**

Awarding of contracts: Whilst the reasons provided for by the Department are noted, it is of concern that their processes are continuously delayed and or never achieved within the specified financial period in some instances impacting on service delivery and changing livelihoods.

Response

The Department notes the input and concern, the delays that was caused in the past were mainly due to adherence and compliance to regulatory requirements of the PPR 2017, This cause instances of non-responsiveness to bids. The new PPR of 2022 does not have the same stringent and complex legislative requirements as the PPR 17 and would assist in finalizing the tenders in a shorter timeframe. These are at advanced stages particularly the food packs and school uniforms with dignity packs being under consideration as well.

For instance, it is importantly known that the ART pack is meant for HIV and AIDS severely affected individuals, however, it is unclear if there are intervention plans in place to assist such individuals.

Response

The ART pack is distributed only to identified HIV/AIDS and TB patients accessed through the clinics across the province. The distribution takes place at the respective clinics with possible intervention to other household members through other services rendered i.e., household food parcels and skills development. Department is currently busy with the procurement processes to distribute food parcels to this category of individuals.

The Department is also requested to provide plans implemented to encourage participation of the relevant service providers, in case of non-responsiveness, amongst other reasons.

Response

The Department introduced briefing sessions as part of the tender process to ensure that service providers properly understand the tender requirements to improve on responsiveness and compliance of bids.

The Department further conducts regular training on SCM processes to ensure improved compliance and participation of service providers.

Whilst the Committee acknowledges the internal processes and systems that govern NPO funding, there seems to be no indication from the Department on how the beneficiaries that were reached through the NPOs that were supposedly to benefit from the R258million, are catered for. Also, the Department should demonstrate to the Committee how these beneficiaries are reached.

Response

Beneficiaries may be catered for should Department realize savings as a result of unspent funds due to SLA violation, lower spending than initially anticipated which often occur when less beneficiaries are reached than anticipated etc. The unspent remaining funds will be reprioritized to other spending pressures. The Department is beneficiary centered in all its processes. Beneficiaries are serviced through the Department or other compliant NPOs rendering similar or same services.

In case where NPOs had to take more beneficiaries due to non-compliance of others, are these additions accompanied by additional financial and human resources?

Response

Both the Department and NPOs rendered services to beneficiaries with current capacity with no additional resources.

A comprehensive report on the state of school uniform project, the participation of cooperatives and the commencement date of the project is requested from the Department.

Response

The Department went with the procurement strategy of the establishment of a panel of service providers to manufacture school uniforms. This was done to ensure maximum participation of Cooperatives. The panel approach further allows for the Department to include new cooperatives and suppliers on a yearly basis through an open application process. This allows for cooperatives that was not successful with the initial application to be capacitated for inclusion in next application. Several cooperatives participated in the tender process that is currently being finalized.

The Bid evaluation committee is currently completing the final stage of evaluation through on-site visits, 87% of the visits has been completed and the remaining will be concluded by the end of August 2023

The below table illustrate high level School Uniform Project milestones

ACTIVITIES	OFFICIAL/ OFFICE RESPONSIBLE	DATE
1. Bid evaluation	SCM	14/03/2023 to date
2. Meeting with unsuccessful cooperative	SCM/Special Projects	First week of September 2023
3. Appointment of main bidders	SCM	Mid-September
4. Sub-Contracting of cooperatives	SCM	Second week of September
5. Issuing of award letters to cooperatives	SCM	Mid-September

6. Beneficiary identification	Sustainable Livelihoods	29/08/2023 to 15/09/2023
7. Briefing of sewing coops/suppliers	SCM and Special projects	20/09/2023
8. Measurement taking of beneficiaries	Cooperatives/suppliers	01/10/2023
9. Monitoring of school uniform production	Quality Assurance, Regional and provincial officials	01/10/2023
10. Weekly Reports	Quality Assurance, Regional and provincial officials	From first week of October
11. Weekly Regional Meetings	Quality Assurance, Regional and provincial officials	From first week of October
12. Monthly Project Meetings	Quality Assurance, Regional and provincial officials	Monthly
13. Distribution	Cooperatives, regions, and provincial officials	4 th Quarter

According to the Department, the expenditure within Programme 3 was mainly linked to slow spending on various items as the creation of most purchase orders commence in May 2023. The Department's reason for deviation from target is noted, however, there is vagueness on the explanation as it does not give much information on the "various items" referred to.

Response

Various items include items within goods and services which spent less than the expected 25% by end of quarter one such as:

- Stationery (21%)
- Consumable supplies (13%)
- Operating leases (photocopy machine contract) (14%)
- Inventory Medical Supplies (0%)
- Architectural Services (0%)

A setback is observed on the provision of dignity packs, which reported a negative deviation of 421 946 from target. According to the Department, the performance is due to delays in SCM processes which impacted on the implementation of dignity packs programme and the tender has been cancelled due to technicalities on sub-contracting. The Department will have to provide the Committee with a comprehensive report and interim strategies aimed at ensuring that learners continue to benefit from the program..

Response

In the interim, the department is fast-tracking the advertisement of the tender and awarding thereof to ensure resumption of benefit from the programme. The Department has prioritized the finalization of the specifications in line with the new PPR 2022 and is awaiting final Probity auditor report to advertise the new tender. It is anticipated that the tender will be finalized in October 2023.

The skills development output is said to have been affected by internal processes on reprioritisation, which seems to be unclear and requires more clarity.

Response

Target on skills development was massified with the understanding that funds will be reprioritized internally. However, the Department is experiencing budget constraints due to other spending pressures. The envisaged reprioritization is outlined on mitigating plans which indicates that Department is exploring a review from current skills development plans, exploring partnership, labour intensive plans in manufacturing and related sector. This reprioritization is so that more beneficiaries are reached considering limited budget.

According to the Department the reported 15% financial expenditure reported was affected by the cancellation of the dignity packs tender due to the non-responsiveness of the bidders on the subcontracting condition and food parcels tender processes which are anticipated to be finalized in August 2023. It is unclear how the food parcel tender contributed to the significant underspending since the food relief output shows a significant positive deviation from target

Response

Even though a positive deviation was reported on the target for food parcels there were still under expenditure against the budget allocation of the quarter. This contributed to the overall under expenditure. The evaluation for the new tender has been finalized for food parcels and the tender will be awarded.

The foster care placements continue to be highlighted as one of the output indicators reflecting a negative deviation, with reasons pointing to court dates, police clearance, and taking over of cases from dysfunctional Child Protection Organizations. (Further clarity should be provided by the Department)

Response

The Department of Social Development has in place a monthly foster care micromanagement meeting which track cases per Region. This tracking ensures children that should be placed in foster care, is done so swiftly and without undue delays. In responding to the noted reasons for deviations, the Department have institutionalised governance mechanisms to address such challenges. For instance,

the Department attends Provincial Family Court Meetings on a quarterly basis with the Department of Justice to address challenges experienced with Children's Courts across the Province. In addition to the Family Court Meetings, Presiding Officers meet with the Department's Regional Foster Care Teams for Case Flow Management Meetings to ensure court dates and Court Orders are timeously issued.

In terms of SAPS Police Clearance, the Regions meet with Station Commanders to fast track issuing of Police Clearance applications. These follow ups are done on individual cases brought to the attention of the social worker. With regards to the take over of Cases from Dysfunctional CPOs, the Department has taken over cases from two Child Protection Organisations due to lapsed order and poor management of cases. The takeover of cases requires the Departmental Social Worker to make contact with the family, reassess each case (school, medical, advertisements, police clearance) and then make a determination on whether the child is still in need of care and protection as well as foster care placement is best alternative care option for the child. This process can further delay the finalisation of foster care placements.

In addition to the above reasons that contribute to the negative deviation of foster care placements, it's important to note that the Department in the 2024/2025 financial year will be reviewing its targets on the indicator ' Number of children with valid foster care orders'. The Department is currently embarking on an exercise of cleaning of the SASSA Database (SOCPEN) against the GDSD cases. This exercise will very likely lead to the reduction in the number of Foster Care Cases. The reduction of cases can be attributed to Children turning 18 yrs., death of a child, Child no longer in need of care and protection, ID not corresponding with names, duplicate cases, Caregiver relocating to another province and Caregivers choosing to receive the Child Support Top Up Grant instead of the Foster Care Grant(despite Child Support Top Up Grant is much less).

Concerns over the delays on the construction of the Bantubonke Early Childhood Centre and the Bekkersdal Social Integrated Facility. The Department to provide more comprehensive information, moreover to what is stated in the report.

Response

Bantubonke Early Childhood Development Centre

Item	Status
Project	Bantubonke Early Childhood Development Centre
Implementing Agent	Department of Infrastructure Development
Stage	Stage 5 (Construction)
Timeline	Termination notice served on contractor. Termination programme in progress. Appointment of new contractor: End of September 2023. It is envisaged that completion will be achieved before June 2024.
Challenges	The dept has served the contractor with a termination notice. Termination programme in progress. Final Account meeting scheduled for 31 Aug 2023.
Mitigation	Planning has commenced to mitigate all challenges relating to conclusion of termination and resumption of work on site. Getting the right contractor to complete the works without cash flow challenges.

Bekkersdal Social Integrated Facility

Item	Status
Project	Bekkersdal Social Integrated Facility
Implementing Agent	Department of Infrastructure Development
Stage	Stage 5 (Construction)
Timeline	Submission of termination was reversed, and the contractor to resume site after contractual agreement has been finalised. It is anticipated that contractor will resume work before end of October and envisaged completion target is August 2024
Challenges	Termination of contractor due to non-performance of the contractor, however this process was reverse after engagement with the main contractor.
Mitigation	Resumption of work by contractor. Discussions taking place on resumption of site operations and addressing contractual issues.

An observation is made under the Department's reports on infrastructure/ capital projects, which have been on planning phase since 2016. The Department should give some light on whether these projects will to some extent get a commencement date. Also, outlining the glitches experienced with each of the projects as outlined in the report.

Response

Land ownership and land use rights has affected Department of Infrastructure Development from commencing with implementation of projects. It was agreed that projects should only be implemented after all the issues of land ownership are resolved.

In some instances, the land identified or earmarked for construction is under the custodianship of National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. Implementation can only commence upon finalisation of land transfer from National to Provincial Assets register.

Department of Public Works to grant DID with Ministerial Approval so the land acquisition process can be finalised. Other sites require council resolution from the municipality, and thereafter tender process will unfold.

Project Name	Status
Pretoria Townland Inpatient Rehabilitation Centre	Initial site was invaded by the informal dwellers. Request to relocate the project from Soshanguve to Pretoria West was submitted and approved
Tembisa Inpatient Rehabilitation Centre	Awaiting land to be transferred to GPG Asset Register, the matter was referred to council seating for council resolution.
Ratanda Shelter for Vulnerable Women and Children	Ownership of identified land vests with RSA. GDID awaiting transfer to GPG Asset Register. Transfer process is underway; however, the project implementation is being delayed by transfer of land.
Khutsong Social Integrated Facility	DID property management has commenced with land donation agreements to GPG.

On page ten (10) of the report the Department's summarized Performance is based on the quarter four, yet the focus is on the first quarterly report.

Response

The reporting period and the reconciled summarised Department Performance is actually for Quarte 1, it was a typo during translation subject to amendment in subsequent quarters.

Yours sincerely


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MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (MEC)

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DATE: