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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 217

Mrs Y N Yako (EFF) to ask the Minister of Trade and Industry

- (1) What number of applications by companies owned by black women has the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) rejected because of incomplete application forms in the period 1 January 2015 up to 31 December 2019;
- (2) whether the NEF assisted with any of these applications; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, how? NW293E

REPLY

I have been advised by the NEF as follows:

- (1) The NEF does not decline applications for funding on the basis of “incomplete application forms”.
- (2) The NEF’s Pre Investment Department, which interfaces with the public as the primary port of entry, exists for the purpose of identifying investment opportunities, receiving and screening applications, providing product information to clients, and actively solicits and collects compliance documents from clients before allocating applications to the various investment Funds, namely:
 - Women Empowerment Fund,
 - iMbewu Fund (SME funding),
 - Rural and Community Development Fund,
 - uMnotho Fund (medium-sized businesses), and the
 - Strategic Projects Fund (supports black industrialists).

The NEF established the Women Empowerment Fund in 2014 to proactively

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maximise support for businesses that are owned and operated by black women. The NEF is committed to increasing the value and volume of women-owned businesses in its funded portfolio.

Below is an outline of the NEF's pre-investment process that is offered as part of non-financial support during the application stage:

- The NEF has walk-in centres where applicants can engage with product advisors who provide guidance on how to package their applications.
- The NEF has an online business-plan toolkit that is geared at helping applicants with good business concepts with practical guidelines on how to prepare a business plan, inclusive of financial projections.
- The NEF application form also provides guidance on the type of information required to draft a business plan.
- Detailed guidance is given when an application is found to be lacking certain key information required to perform a basic assessment of the application during the screening phase. This guidance is provided telephonically, through face-to-face interaction and in writing.
- Applicants are given checklists and other specific industry guidance to work on before re-submitting their applications.
- Once the missing information and/or documents are submitted, the standard application processes continue.
- Applicants that demonstrate potential success are also referred to either incubation or entrepreneurial training through the NEF's Pre-Investment Department, interventions that are provided at the exclusive cost of the NEF.

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