



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 1699

Mr W M Douglas (MK) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

(a) What are the reasons that his department has (i) failed to fill the commercial and investment desks critical vacancies and (ii) not allocated any funds to urgently employ staff in the commercial desks of the embassies in the 2025 budget allocation and (b) how will he and his department ensure that black-owned South African businesses receive trade support abroad if our missions are under-resourced and/or under-staffed?
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REPLY:

- (a) (i) The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**) recently completed an extensive review of the Department's foreign economic offices, focused on improving the effectiveness of those offices and the role of Foreign Economic Representatives (FERs), to better deliver on the export and investment mandate in a global environment which has been characterised by geo-political shifts, subdued global trade growth and rising protectionism. In-light of the significant investment associated with placing a FER for an extended period, the filling of vacancies awaited the outcome of the review. With the completion of the review, the department is initiating the filling of select foreign office vacancies through a phased approach.
- (a) (ii) While funding has been allocated for filling vacancies in foreign economic offices, the placement of FERs awaited the finalisation of the review and approval of the recommendations.

- (b) With regards to assisting black-owned South African businesses to export and enter global markets, support is not only provided through the foreign economic offices. The Department provides South African businesses, including black-owned companies, with export awareness seminars, training and mentorship through a well-established exporter development programme. Companies are further also funded through the Export Marketing and Investment Assistance (EMIA) scheme to participate in international exhibitions and missions to promote their products and services in international markets.

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