



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 2323

Mr R W T Chance (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

- (1) With reference to the Foreign Economic Representatives (FERs) appointed by his department, what is the background of each FER appointee in terms of (a) the country of appointment, (b) employment history, (c) academic qualifications and (d) salary;
- (2) what are the details of the FER positions that remained unfilled, detailed by country;
- (3) (a) what are the reporting lines for FERs and (b) how is their performance measured;
- (4) what (a) were the reasons for the departure of FERs who were previously appointed but not reappointed and (b) are the performance records with respect to their key performance indicators? NW2438E

REPLY:

(1) (a) (b) (c) (d) - The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**) is currently in the process of recruiting and selecting twelve (12) candidates internally to be the first round of FERs in line with the Butterfly Strategy. Dependent on securing additional budget, additional FERs might be appointed in future. As posts are currently vacant with the exception of 2 transferred officials in Geneva, and the next cohort of FERs are still to be appointed, background information is not available at this stage.

(2) - The Foreign Economic Representative (FER) Strategy as approved has identified the following list of countries in line with the Butterfly Strategy to be prioritised and eventually capacitated by FERs should sufficient budget be secured in future.



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- **Tier 1 - Strategic Foreign Economic Offices:**

Comprise of FERs deployed to advance the significant strategic market access undertakings with select major bilateral and regional trading partners, as well as multilateral institutions. The objective would be to negotiate and maintain extensive market access, address substantive trade barriers and facilitate strategic partnerships at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels whilst advancing bilateral trade and investment projects in strategic offices such as the United States of America, Switzerland (including WTO), Belgium (including EU), Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, China and the United Arab Emirates.

- **Tier 2 - Priority Trade and Investment Foreign Economic Offices:**

The FER would be responsible for foreign market development; addressing and reducing non-tariff barriers; and all aspects of trade and investment promotion. These markets include Mozambique, the DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Angola, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, South Korea, the Netherlands and United Kingdom

The intention is for the first batch of FERs in line with the new strategy to be deployed to markets mainly focussed on Tier 1 strategic countries.

(3) (a) (b) - The FERs will report administratively to the Foreign Service Management Unit in the department, while also reporting to respective **dtic** Branches on matters related to trade, export and investment promotion, as well as other projects identified. The deliverables and targets will also captured in their performance agreements with specific indicators and targets reflected.

(4) (a) (b) - FERs who were previously appointed returned after having served the duration of their postings. Once FERs return, they are absorbed into the departmental line function work where they are assigned upon returning. Should they wish to be posted as FERs again, they are currently required to re-apply to adverts with candidates selected through an interview process and assessment following training.



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An evaluation of the dtic Foreign Economic Offices (FEOs) in the 2023/24 financial year, which includes a period where most FERs had returned by 31 December 2024, shows that export orders of R1.1 bn and investments valued at R25.5 bn were secured directly through their activities. Subsequent to the 2023/24 financial year only the Geneva office had FERs posted focussing on WTO negotiations.

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