

Engagement on allegations against the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS)

Presentation to the Portfolio Committee
on Trade, Industry and Competition

28 January 2025



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Presentation outline

1. Purpose of presentation
2. Departmental process followed in relation to allegations received and progress to date in relation to SABS allegations
3. Summary of allegations received against SABS
4. Recommendations

1. Purpose of presentation

- The purpose of the presentation is to provide progress and engage with the Portfolio Committee with regards to allegations received by the Department and Ministry against the SABS. This is also in response to letter dated 8 January 2025 from the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee.
- The presentation includes a reflection on the departmental process followed in relation to allegations received, progress to-date in relation to the SABS allegations as well as a summary of the SABS allegations, when those were received, referred to the SABS and when the responses from the SABS were submitted.

2. Departmental process followed in relation to allegations received and progress to-date in relation to SABS allegations

- To ensure objectivity when dealing with allegations relating to entities, the Department follows a process whereby the allegations received are referred to affected entities to provide them an opportunity to respond to the allegations;
- Once the reports/responses are received, they are referred to Internal Audit to review and make recommendations to the Minister;
- As per the above-mentioned process, the allegations received by the Ministry and Department against the SABS between August and December 2024 were referred to the SABS for responses;
- Given that the allegations were referred to SABS on different dates as and when received, the responses from the latter were submitted to the department on different dates from 16 August and the last one was received on 12 December 2024;
- The allegations, except the ones received on 25 November 2025 together with the response received from SABS on 12 December were reviewed by Internal Audit at **the dtic**;

2. Departmental process followed in relation to allegations received and progress to-date in relation to SABS allegations

- Internal Audit reviewed the responses from SABS against the allegations and in view of shortcomings identified in many respects, a full investigation was recommended;
- Following careful consideration of the allegations, reports and recommendations from Internal Audit and extensive engagements in December 2024, the Minister, granted approval for a full investigation to be conducted;
- Subsequent to the approval granted by the Minister, the Department is finalising the associated logistics to enable the investigation to commence as a matter of urgency preferably no later than early February 2025;
- The scope of the investigation will include all allegations received as reflected in table below including any other related aspect deemed necessary.

3. Summary of allegations received against SABS

| Dates allegations received | Referral to SABS and when responses received from SABS |
|---|--|
| 2 August 2024 Anonymous email titled 'DTIC turns blind a eye to corruption and maladministration at the South African Bureau of Standards'. | Allegations referred to SABS on 6 August 2024. SABS submitted an initial response on 16 August and revised response on 17 Aug 2024. |
| 14 August 2024 Email titled ' Bullying and mismanagement at SABS'. | Allegations referred to SABS on the same day. SABS response submitted on 20 September 2024. |
| 15 August 2024 Anonymous email titled 'further whistleblowing: additional corruption and coverups at the SABS | Allegations referred to SABS on 16 August 2024. SABS response submitted on 20 September 2024. |
| 24 August 2024 Email titled 'irregularities at the SABS- Minister needs to intervene' | Allegations referred to SABS the same day. SABS response submitted on 20 September 2024. |

3. Summary of allegations received against SABS

| Date of allegation and summary | Referral to SABS and whwn responses received from SABS |
|---|--|
| 29 August 2024 Email from sabs whistleblower titled ‘ Whistleblowing-SABS director with financial misconduct charges’ | Allegations referred to SABS on 30 August 2024. SABS response submitted the same day. |
| 25 November 2024 Email from anonymous titled ‘Urgent intervention required - SABS is beyond crisis’ | Allegations referred to SABS on 6 December 2024. SABS response submitted on 12 December 2024. Due to the timing of the referral and submission of response by SABS, the allegations and responses did not form part of the review by Internal Audit. |
| 10 December 2024 Open letter to Minister titled ‘ Open letter: lack of urgency and action regarding the SABS is unacceptable’ | The open letter was not referred to SABS as submission with recommendations from Internal Audit was already under consideration by the Ministry. |

4. Recommendations

- It is recommended that Portfolio Committee:
 - notes the progress provided in relation to allegations received against SABS;
 - notes that whilst there were some delays in the process of attending to the allegations, it is of critical importance that matter is handled with due care and follows a fair process;
 - supports the investigation and notes that in the interest of protecting the integrity of the investigation, not all information can be disclosed at this stage;
 - supports the Ministry and Department in ensuring that the SABS, which is a critical institution of government is supported and its integrity maintained.

THANK YOU