



**environment, forestry  
& fisheries**

Department:  
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 266 {NW269E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 2 of 2021**

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**Mr M N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

Whether, given that the use of citizen scientists in the monitoring of air quality had proven popular in many countries and added further spin-offs, such as getting more persons interested in science, her department has considered a similar programme; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**266. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

The use of citizen scientists in the monitoring of air quality is growing in the South Africa, especially for those citizens who are interested in knowing the quality of air "in their backyards". The general public are using instruments called air quality sensors to monitor air quality both indoors and outdoors. These are small electronic sensors that can monitor a range of pollutants including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Citizens are able to buy these sensors on the market for prices that range from a few hundred rands to hundreds of thousands of rands.

The price of the sensors is influenced by the complexity of the sensors to respond to air pollution levels accurately and precisely, and hence the quality of data from the sensors. Information from these sensors can only be used to provide a general overview on the quality of air, and not for compliance

monitoring purposes, as the methods used for measurements are not regarded as reference methods as prescribed in the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act 39 of 2004).

The department has recognised the increased use of these sensors internationally and nationally, as well as how these sensors can better serve the country in augmenting ambient monitoring coverage, and raise awareness in air quality monitoring. In light of this, on 27 February 2020, the department hosted a national workshop in Pretoria to initiate a national conversation with all stakeholders in order to:

- Raise awareness with stakeholders on the use of air quality sensors.
- Identify the need to enhance the national monitoring network through the use of these sensors into the future.
- Engage with sensor suppliers in the country for stakeholders to appreciate the scope of sensors available on the market and their ability and limitations in supporting ambient air quality monitoring. \*9

Following the workshop, the department is now working on a national toolkit to assist the general public with guidance on the abilities, benefits as well as limitations of the sensors.

**Regards**



**MS B D CREECY, MP  
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

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