

**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**650. Mr D W Macpherson (DA) to ask the Minister of Trade and Industry:**

What (a) number of laboratories does the SA Bureau of Standards have, (b) number of the specified laboratories are conducting full testing of products, (c) are the names of the laboratories that are conducting partial testing of products, (d) would it cost to bring each partial testing laboratory up to standard so that full testing can be conducted at every laboratory and (e) equipment is needed at each laboratory?

**Response:**

According to information provided by the management of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS):

- a) The SABS has 30 business units undertaking testing.
- b) The SABS conducts testing as part of conformity assessment in line with the prescripts of ISO 17 000. Testing falls into 3 categories as follows; Third Party Testing where a product complies fully with a standard and the testing activities were conducted by an independent third party (SABS); Second Part Testing where the SABS tests products on behalf of another institution which defines the required specification and First Party Testing where the SABS provides product development support to manufacturing companies.
- c) The management of the SABS has not provided a satisfactory response containing the requisite information. I have written to the SABS management demanding that they do in fact provide an urgent response to the Department of Trade and Industry.
- d) As above.
- e) As above.

The Department of Trade and Industry is the only shareholder of the SABS. In my capacity as the Minister of Trade and Industry, in the light of the above and with respect to ongoing concerns relating to the SABS testing function, I recently gave instructions to the SABS Board to urgently oversee a detailed process to develop a turnaround strategy for SABS. This will, inter alia, fully scope all the existing SABS testing facilities and their respective capabilities, those which are no longer functional or have been degraded; the cost of

maintaining and/or upgrading and reopening those facilities which are critical to SA's industrialisation effort; resolve any legal issues which may stand in the way of undertaking partial testing and conduct a review of the three technical infrastructure Acts. I shall provide a full report to Parliament in this regard in due course.