



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE MEC

PRIVATE BAG X07, CASCADES, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3202
181 HOOSSEN HAFEEJEE STREET, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201
E-MAIL: Nonhlakanipho.Mchunu@kznedtea.gov.za
TEL: +27 (0)33 – 328 8000

SPEAKER: MS N BOYCE

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

241 LANGALIBALELE STREET

PIETERMARITZBURG

3200

WRITTEN REPLY

No. 227/2023

**Mr HU De Boer [DA] to ask the MEC for Economic Development,
Tourism and Environmental Affairs**

Several large budgets have been allocated to fixing fencing and smart fencing at the Hluhluwe-Mfolozi Park (HIP) in recent years. At least one of these has led to criminal prosecution of contractors and/or Ezemvelo staff:

1. PLEASE MAY A LIST OR SCHEDULE OF ALL MAJOR FENCING PROJECTS BE PROVIDED FOR THE PAST FIVE (5) FINANCIAL YEARS?

In the last five (5) years, no new fencing projects were undertaken by Ezemvelo, except for the routine maintenance work carried out at the park's level. Most of the work was funded by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Environment Affairs (EDTEA) from a top-up funding of about R8.4 million in 2020, to fix the fence from areas not covered in the scope work project undertaken in 2017/18. In 2019/20, the park (HIP) procured and received delivery of 4 000 (3.6 m) poles and 4 200 (2.7m) droppers.

Between October and November 2021, an NGO called the WILDLIFE ACT funded the current SMART fence of about 30 km, valued at about R2.5 million. The table below specifies the kilometres covered and the associated cost.

Section	Length (km)	Cost
Makhamisa East	5	R 372 805
Ndleke	4.6	R 422 348
Makhamisa to Ocilwane	3.8	R 285 092
Makhamisa to Mduba	4.5	R 372 647
Nyalazi to Sithole	4.8	R 326 207
Sithole to Gunjaneni	3.6	R 315 336
Gunjaneni to Hlabashana	3.9	R 331 881
Tower at Makhamisa		R 27 000
Total		R 2 453 316

2. WHAT IS THE TOTAL, AND INDIVIDUAL COSTS OF EACH FENCING PROJECT?

The R2.5 million provided by the WILDLIFE ACT funded the Park SMART fence. This was the only project in 2021, besides the routine maintenance funded in 2020 by the EDTEA to the tune of R8.4 million as a top-up from the organisational baseline equitable share grant allocation.

3. HOW MANY KM OF THE HIP PARK FENCE WAS REPAIRED OR REPLACED FOR EACH FENCING CONTRACT?

Maintenance work by the Park has been undertaken from supplies (poles and droppers) procured in 2020. This undertaking covered the park's perimeter fencing of more than 160 km, as and when maintenance work was required.

4. COULD A LIST OR SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION ALSO BE PROVIDED?

The establishment of the SMART Fence project funded by the WILDLIFE ACT was undertaken over two (2) months, commencing in October 2021 and completed in November 2021.

5. HOW MANY CRIMINAL OR INTERNAL CASES HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED FOR INCOMPLETION/FRAUD OR CORRUPTION?

In 2018, Ezemvelo commissioned Morar Incorporated to conduct a forensic investigation on the abovementioned HIP Fencing Project. The report on the above enquiry highlighted some irregularities in the contract management of the fencing project. This report resulted in disciplinary proceedings to be instigated in 2019 against four (4) Ezemvelo officials who were ultimately dismissed from the organisation following the above process.

Following the above proceedings, in the same year (2019), the organisation decided to open a criminal case against all four (4) Ezemvelo officials and the Service Provider involved in the fencing project. This case was then referred to the SAPS Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) – the Hawks, for further investigation. The Hawks have since referred their investigation to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for a decision on whether to prosecute. To date, the organisation (Ezemvelo) awaits the NPA's decision in this regard.


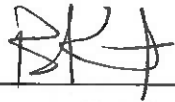

Furthermore, civil proceedings have also been instituted against the abovementioned Service Provider, and the process is still ongoing.

6. HOW MANY KM OF THE HIP PARK IS CURRENTLY UNFENCED?

There are no kilometres of perimeter boundary at HIP that are not fenced. In instances where the fence is stolen or deliberately damaged by humans or animals, the organisation has an internal mechanism to immediately repair it by utilising its fenceliners. This process does not require any tendering processes, as the material used are those procured in 2020.

7. WHEN WILL THE R40 MILLION FENCING PROJECT FUNDED BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMENCE?

The procurement process to fix the HIP perimeter fence, as committed by Honourable Minister: DFFE, Ms Barbara Creecy, in May 2023, is underway. All necessary bid documentation has been concluded. However, the bidding process will be undertaken through the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. It is envisaged that the bidding process for this project will be advertised by 31 July 2023.

<p>SUBMITTED BY:</p>  <p>MR S MKHIZE ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE DATE: 20.07.2023</p>	
<p>SUBMITTED BY:</p>  <p>MR B. N. NKONTWANA HEAD OF DEPARTMENT DATE: 20/7/2023</p>	<p>APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED</p>  <p>MR S. DUMA, MPL MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS DATE: 24 July 2023</p>