

MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2787

DATE OF PUBLICATION 15 MAY 2026



REPLY RECOMMENDED BY: SECRETARY OF DEFENCE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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2787. Mr M L Shelembe (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:

With reference to the recommendation of the 2015 Defence Review that technology development and research and development (R&D) should be funded and ring-fenced at 5% of the total defence allocation, and considering the submission of her department to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence in March 2023, (a) what is the current percentage of the total defence budget that has been allocated to R&D in the (a) 2023-24, (b) 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years (b) by what amount in (i) Rand and (ii) percentage terms does the projected allocation of approximately R1,7 billion in the three-year cycle fall short of the 5% target set out in the 2015 Defence Review and (c) given that the total projected requirements are underfunded by nearly R200 million annually, including a R192 million shortfall in 2025-26, what specific steps has her department taken to ring-fence R&D funding to prevent further erosion of technological capability? NW2871E

RESPONSE

Reply to Question (a): The percentages of the total defence budget allocated to R&D were **1.11%** in Financial Year (FY) 2023/24, **1.16%** in FY 2024/25, and **1.04%** in FY 2025/26. The average allocation towards R&D represents **1.11%** of the total defence budget over this three-year period.

Reply to Question (b):

(i) In Rand terms:

The amounts by which the R&D allocation falls short of the 5% target set out in the 2015 Defence Review are **R1,986,269,807.00** in FY 2023/24, **R1,990,410,693.00** in FY 2024/25, and **R2,262,082,901.00** in FY 2025/26. The average annual shortfall over the MTEF cycle is **R2,079,587,800.33**.

(ii) In percentage terms:

The percentage points by which the R&D allocation falls short of the 5% target set out in the Defence Review 2015 are **3.89%** in FY 2023/24, **3.84%** in FY 2024/25, and **3.96%** in FY 2025/26. The average annual shortfall over the period is **3.89%**.

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Data Summary Table

Financial Year	Actual R&D Allocation (%)	Shortfall from 5% Target (%)	Rand Value Shortfall (ZAR)
FY 2023/24	1.11%	3.89%	R1,986,269,807.00
FY 2024/25	1.16%	3.84%	R1,990,410,693.00
FY 2025/26	1.04%	3.96%	R2,262,082,901.00
Three-Year Average	1.11%		

Reply to Question (c):

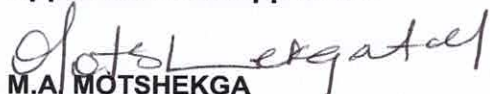
The Department of Defence acknowledges the funding shortfall of nearly R200 million annually, including R192 million in 2025/26.

To protect R&D funding and prevent further erosion of technological capability, the following steps have been taken:

- (i) A dedicated **ring-fenced allocation** has been approved under the **Strategic Capital Acquisition Master Plan (SCAMP)**, managed by the Chief Defence Materiel who is the Chairperson of the Defence Research Development Board (DRDB). These funds are exclusively reserved for DRDB technology programmes and cannot be redirected to other defence priorities.
- (ii) Cabinet has approved a protected allocation averaging **1.11%** of the defence budget per annum for R&D (against the 5% recommended in the 2015 Defence Review).
- (iii) Strict prioritisation of critical projects and leveraging of partnerships with Armscor, CSIR, Denel Overberg Test Range and industry to maximise the impact of available funds.

While these measures provide a protected baseline, the persistent shortfall continues to constrain technology development.

~~Approved / Not Approved~~



M.A. MOTSHEKGA
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS

DATE: 09 June 2026