

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 08**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 10 FEBRUARY 2022**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 24 FEBRAURY 2022**

**Dr C P Mulder (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

- (1) Whether there are existing service provider contracts in place to maintain and support Court Recording Technology (CRT) networks in each province; if not, (a) on what dates did the previous contracts lapse, (b) what are the reasons that the specified contracts were not timeously renewed and (c) what steps are being taken to rectify the matter; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) what are the backlogs in maintenance and repairs to such equipment in each province;
- (3) what impact does the lack of fully functioning Court Recording Technology (CRT) equipment have on court proceedings in both criminal and civil courts in both high and low courts in each province;
- (4) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

**NW11E**

## **REPLY:**

(1) Yes, the Department has appointed a service provider on a 12 months contract while awaiting the finalisation of the long term solution. As such, the appointed service provider is responsible for supporting both Court Recording Technology (CRT) and Sexual Offences System across the country. At the same time, the Department has embarked on a process for procuring an overarching contract for a period of three (3) years. This process is at an advanced stage, and is expected to be published by the end of February 2022.

### **if not, (a) on what dates did the previous contracts lapse?**

The contract expired on 21 April 2021, and interim measures were put in place to ensure continuity. These interim measures relate to providing support and maintenance as part of an existing contract that is providing regional support service. In terms of this arrangement, the service provider was appointed to perform the maintenance and support services for Court Recording Technology (CRT) and SOS between June 2021 and August 2021, on a project basis. Thereafter internal officials were assisting in trouble-shooting and reporting on a case by case basis.

### **(b) what are the reasons that the specified contracts were not timeously renewed?**

Capacity constraints in both Information Systems Management (ISM) and Supply Chain Management (SCM) as well as Contract Management Units were part of the reasons. The Department operated without the Head of ISM, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Director: SCM and Director: SCM for a while. However, such capacity constraints are now being addressed. The following posts have been finalised to capacitate the finance section:

1. CFO
2. Chief Director: Financial Accounting
3. Director: IT Strategic Sourcing
4. Chief Director: SCM (awaiting interviews)

Director: SCM (awaiting short listing)

**(c) and what steps are being taken to rectify the matter; if so, what are the relevant details;**

In order to rectify the matter, the Department has concluded the following to ensure operational continuity, whilst concluding an overarching contract for a period of three years:

- The Department has appointed a company on a 12 months contract for maintenance of Court Recording Technology (CRT) and Sexual Offences System.
- Concurrent to this, the Department has already started the procurement process to appoint a service provider to deliver the support and maintenance for Court Recording Technology (CRT) over a period of three years. At the date of writing, this process has progressed quite significantly with the Bid Specification having been finalised and is being Quality Assured, with the view of publication by the end of February 2022. Implementation of this process is being monitored on a weekly basis by the relevant senior manager, supported by a Task Team monitoring High Priority procurements.

(2) As at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022, there were 700 backlog calls of which the appointed service provider has already started to deal with the backlog, so far the provider has managed to resolve 90 calls and the process is ongoing.

(3) South African courts are courts of record, which depend on court recording technology to conduct efficient and effective court proceedings. The Court Recording Technology (CRT) solution allow for electronically recorded cases that are stored in a data repository and made available whenever requested, either for transcription or other purposes. In most instances, when the recording is non-functional, this means that the court session cannot take place and must be postponed.