

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER 903**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 21 AUGUST 2009**

**Mr M Swart (DA) to ask the Minister of Finance:**

Whether, in light of the efficient operation of container scanner units in customs control, the purchase of further scanning units are being considered; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

NW1059E

**REPLY:**

The SARS' container scanner that is deployed in Durban's main container terminal has shown benefits in the detection of import and export transgressions. The presence of the scanner and associated Customs staff has also provided an important deterrent to non-compliance at the port.

In addition, the scanner unit has materially facilitated trade owing to scanner inspections being much faster and far less costly than traditional methods. This has also allowed SARS to perform many more inspections than previously were possible, which had significantly improved the level of assurance SARS can provide.

Accordingly, SARS does anticipate the deployment of additional container scanners at South Africa's land border posts and sea ports. The deployment of scanners forms part of SARS comprehensive Customs Modernisation programme, which programme encompasses improvements to Customs technology and processes together with the associated skilling of personnel. The deployment programme for Customs Modernisation is presently under development.

Within the Customs Modernisation Programme, SARS is considering, in order of prioritisation and as the next phase of scanner implementation, the installation of further container scanners at Durban' Pier One and Cape Town; coverage of other sea ports is likely to occur at a later

stage. Also, in the context of this programme, SARS anticipates the deployment of up to two mobile, re-deployable container scanners to provide coverage of land border posts. These scanners would be moved from one land border post to the next based on risk assessments conducted.