



MEDIA RELEASE

Collaboration is key to fixing potholes on South Africa's national, provincial and municipal roads

Gauteng, 17 February 2023 - The South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) has noted the public interest and commentary on potholes and the Vala Zonke campaign.

The National Department of Transport (NDOT) launched the national campaign to fix potholes, dubbed Operation Vala Zonke, on 8 August 2022, with a call for a joint effort by the nine (9) provinces and all 278 municipalities, comprising eight (8) metropolitan, 44 district and 226 local municipalities.

The NDOT also called on the private sector and the public to assist in eradicating potholes on South Africa's roads.

SANRAL was appointed as the coordinating agency to drive the campaign, which included the harmonisation of all data and information on potholes and providing the technology and technical knowledge to ensure quality delivery on the campaign.

SANRAL launched the SANRAL Pothole App for the public to be able to report potholes easily. Some 51,271 citizens have downloaded the free App – available on IOS and Android phones – and reported some 26,699 potholes. The Pothole App allows for the user to take a picture of the pothole, while the system automatically records the GPS location, eventually sending the information to the relevant authority, depending on the location.

In line with its Roads Repair and Maintenance policy, SANRAL has swiftly responded to and repaired all potholes which have been reported on the national road network.

"A total of 618 potholes have been reported on SANRAL roads to date; 475 of these were in the Northern Region; 72 in the Eastern Region; 60 in the Southern Region; and 11 in the Western Region. All these were fixed and those that haven't are still within the 48-hour widow that we have set ourselves at SANRAL," said Louw Kannemeyer, SANRAL's Engineering Executive.

SANRAL spokesman Vusi Mona said the first six months of the Vala Zonke campaign had shown some success in providing the public with a single pothole reporting app that can be used on all roads in South Africa, providing centralised consolidated view of all reported potholes enabling focused engagements between DOT and relevant

authority and fixing potholes but that a massive inter-governmental effort would be required to overcome the scourge on a much wider scale.

“As the coordinating agency for the Vala Zonke campaign, SANRAL has done an assessment of the limited progress made in fixing potholes across the country. It is important to understand the legal mandates of the various spheres of government, to understand who is responsible for which roads, and to be clear about how the campaign to fix potholes is coordinated,” said Mr Mona.

South Africa's total road network is estimated at 750,000 kilometres, the longest of any African country and the 11th longest in the world. Responsibility for building and maintaining the network is divided between SANRAL, provincial and local government authorities. SANRAL manages national roads and has a network of 23 512 kilometres of paved roads. Provinces are responsible for just over 270,000 kilometres (46,500 km paved) while the municipal network is estimated at just over 320 000 kilometres (nearly 88,000km paved) of the proclaimed network. The rest are unproclaimed gravel roads (mainly serving rural communities) and are therefore not owned or maintained by any road authority.

Mona explains: “For our part, SANRAL has a mandate which covers more than 23,000km of national roads and we can give updates about potholes that have been fixed the national road network. While we are aware of work that has and is being done by provincial and municipal roads authorities in fixing potholes on the roads they are responsible for, SANRAL is not in a position to authoritatively give account on these.”

Mona acknowledges that Operation Vala Zonke has not come without its challenges. For example, getting data from the other roads authorities is still a challenge though progress is being made in this regard.

Mona added that the challenges are not insurmountable. “We will not grow tired until we have delivered on the mission, and we want to assure South Africans that government remains committed to addressing the problem. The solution is here, but it can only be fully effective when we all play our part,” said Mr Mona.

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