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Following the criticism by the DA of the FF Plus minister, IRASA decided to take a look at the DA's ministers.

Since July 2024, the DA has had six ministers in the Government of National Unity (GNU). Party leader John Steenhuisen and the new leader Geordin Hill-Lewis claim they are "doing excellently" and "running their portfolios beyond expectations." The truth is different. Here is the performance of each DA minister, measured against their own record.

John Steenhuisen (Agriculture)

Steenhuisen is still the agriculture minister today. His position was so precarious that in February 2026, he had to relinquish his chain of office as DA leader to save his cabinet seat. But his performance is anything but glamorous.

The Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) crisis spiraled out of control under his watch. The FF Plus conducted a poll which revealed a complete loss of confidence in his leadership. Steenhuisen himself admitted in an interview with *Rapport* that his own department had "misled" him and Parliament regarding the progress of vaccine production. Meanwhile, farmers are paying the price: more than 50% of calves in the eastern Free State died within two weeks of birth. Steenhuisen's only consolation is that South Africa surpassed Spain as the largest citrus exporter in 2025, an achievement attained by the industry itself, not by the minister.

Farmers' fronts are furious about his monopoly on vaccines. By forbidding farmers from vaccinating themselves, the crisis continued to rage.

Score: Poor – plunged into FMD, trust gone, saved by a citrus record he was not part of.

Solly Malatsi (Communications)

His department's draft AI policy, released on April 10, 2026, contained several fictitious sources clearly generated by ChatGPT. The chairperson of the portfolio committee, Khusela Diko, demanded that he revise the policy "without ChatGPT." Malatsi withdrew the policy, but the damage was already done.

Furthermore, Malatsi is the second-worst offender regarding lapsed parliamentary questions, with 15 unanswered questions. A total of 12 ministers (mostly from the DA) allowed 64 parliamentary questions to lapse, proving that they treat the GNU Parliament with contempt.

Score: Poor – AI blunder, parliamentary contempt, little convincing performance.

Siviwe Gwarube (Basic Education)

Gwarube inherited a massive infrastructure backlog of R120 billion, and the budget increase of R22.7 billion is a drop in the ocean. But the real scandal is the R1.6 billion textbook tender, where the company Lighthouse Publishers (Pty) Ltd was registered just three days after the tender briefing and won R285 million. As minister, Gwarube is held accountable for overseeing this process.

After Hill-Lewis claimed that senior officials were sabotaging Gwarube, the education union Sadtu sharply criticized him: "If the DA has evidence of sabotage, why don't they submit it?" Gwarube herself is one of the ministers who allowed parliamentary questions to lapse.

Score: Poor – tender irregularities, massive backlog, little evidence of profound reform.

Dean Macpherson (Public Works)

Macpherson is the worst offender regarding lapsed parliamentary questions, with 26 unanswered. The department's spending in the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year reached only 18%, compared to the National Treasury's projection, indicating that he is not in control. He promised to root out corruption, but the construction mafia continues to operate. The EPWP digital registration platform is a good idea, but its implementation is coming very late.

On the positive side: he had a few senior officials suspended, but since he is the worst at disregarding parliament, he cannot be praised.

Score: Poor – looks good in public, but in parliament and the department, he appears hopeless.

Leon Schreiber (Home Affairs)

Schreiber is the DA minister who receives the least criticism, and not without reason. He won a massive backlog of asylum appeal cases at the Constitutional Court, accelerated the cleanup of corruption (65 dismissals, 10 convictions), and launched the Smart ID bank partnership. He also increased deportations by 46% to nearly 110,000 over two financial years, and the BMA prevented 945,000 people from entering the country illegally.

However, he is still criticized for the continuous influx of illegal immigrants, which places pressure on services and leads to anti-immigration protests. He cannot solve all the border issues, but he is doing more than any other DA minister.

Score: Average (best of the DA group, but still not exceptional).

Willie Aucamp (Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment)

Aucamp took the place of the "green" Dion George in November 2025 after George allegedly underperformed. The environment portfolio spent only 18% of its budget in the first quarter and 38% in the second, indicating severe underspending that faces a final quarter budget dumping. The leadership change led to a public clash: George accused Steenhuisen of having him illegally fired and exposed the party leader's use of a credit card. Aucamp's main qualification is that he is a longtime ally of the hunting and game farming lobby, not exactly an appointment that will calm environmentalists.

Score: Poor – underspending, leadership struggle, poor policy continuity.

ActionSA's GNU performance tracker revealed that GNU ministers spent nearly R450 million on travel and accommodation in their first 18 months, a figure expected to exceed R500 million. The fifth-largest spender was the DA minister Dion George (later replaced), who spent R24.41 million on travel. Moreover, Macpherson, Malatsi, Gwarube, and Steenhuisen all allowed parliamentary questions to lapse, indicating that the DA's "culture of accountability" does not extend beyond election promises.

The DA likes to shout for the accountability of others, but when they are the ones in power, the same issues—delayed answers, flawed spending, questionable tenders—suddenly become "sabotage" by the "previous government."

Why the DA's GNU ministers disappoint

John Steenhuisen struggled through the FMD crisis in the summer of 2025 and 2026, to the point that he had to step down as leader. Macpherson is the worst offender of parliamentary questions. Malatsi's AI blunder was a national embarrassment. Gwarube's department is plagued by tender irregularities. Aucamp's portfolio is underspent and infiltrated by leadership conflict. Everyone except Schreiber abandoned their parliamentary obligations.

This is the "excellent work" Hill-Lewis speaks of. The DA cannot apply morality to others if they cannot even sweep their own porch. No wonder Hill-Lewis is immediately considering a review of his ministers.