

## Media Releases 2010

### Launch of Tax Season 2010

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**Pretoria, 1 July 2010** – Today marks the start of the 2010 Tax Season for millions of South Africa's taxpayers.

From today taxpayers can request and submit their income tax returns to the South African Revenue Service (SARS). As in previous years, taxpayers will again have the option to file their returns electronically via eFiling or at SARS branches, or manually via the post and drop boxes at their local SARS branch.

SARS has already posted Income Tax Return Request (ITRR) forms which allow taxpayers who wish to file manually to order a customised tax return from SARS. The tax return will contain only those income and deduction sections relevant to the taxpayer.

The more than 90% of taxpayers who submitted electronically via eFiling or by visiting a SARS branch last year do not need to request a return. They can simply obtain their customised return on their eFiling profile or visit a branch with all their relevant supporting documents and SARS staff will assist them with requesting and filing their returns.

Taxpayers who earn taxable income of below R120 000 a year from a single employer and who have no further income or deductions to declare besides those identified on their IRP5, are not required to submit an income tax return.

This year, SARS has introduced a range of service and enforcement enhancements as part of its continuous improvements to make it as easy as possible for taxpayers to meet their obligations and as hard as possible for anyone who tries to avoid their responsibilities.

#### **Among the improvements are:**

**A. E-case tracking:** Improvements to our case tracking system will significantly enhance the ability of our contact centre and branch staff to not only track a case but to see a full history of interaction over a case to better inform taxpayers and to better help with resolving their queries first time. And taxpayers themselves will also have a better view of progress of their returns via eFiling where they can get the same information in real time that our call centre agents have access to.

**B. Electronic signatures:** In the past when taxpayers visited a branch to have their returns captured electronically, we printed two copies of the final return – one for the taxpayer's record and one to be signed by the taxpayer for our records. These were then scanned by SARS for safekeeping. This year we have introduced electronic signature pads which allow the taxpayer to sign their electronic returns. This both enhances the security of the system and saves SARS and the environment from having to print over 1 million copies of income tax returns of at least two pages. That's a lot of trees saved!

**C. Electronic filing enhancements:** We have further enhanced the speed by which income tax returns are generated on eFiling and our branch systems by converting to Adobe Flash Player which massively reduces the time taken to request a return or to retrieve a saved return. eFilers simply need to download the latest version of Adobe Flash Player free from the eFiling website and then select this as the preferred option for downloading their return. The returns in Adobe Reader still remain available for those who do not want to use the latest Flash software.

**D. A new simplified IRP6 provisional return:** We have made significant changes to the provisional tax system this year including simplifying the IRP6 provisional returns. These are now dynamic returns which come pre-populated with taxpayer information and key tax information including the basic amount from the prior year and relevant rebates. Provisional taxpayers only need to complete 5 fields and the return calculates automatically the provisional amount to be paid.

**E. Reducing the number of IRP6 provisional returns to be submitted:** Twice a year SARS issues over 1 million IRP6 provisional returns which are either not submitted at all or are sent back with a zero provisional liability. From this year SARS will no longer be issuing IRP6 provisional returns. Instead, those who are liable to submit an IRP6 provisional return must request one either via eFiling, the contact centre or their nearest SARS branch. And you don't need to submit a return if you have no provisional income to declare – even if you are registered for provisional tax. There is a proviso, however, and that is that the responsibility and obligation for submitting provisional returns rests with the taxpayer. At the end of the year when you submit your ITR12 return SARS will see on the basis of what you declared whether you were liable to submit provisional returns and if you were liable and failed to do so you will find yourself facing penalties and interest charges.

**F. Statement of Account for Provisional Taxpayers:** Following the big success of the introduction of a Statement of Account for non-provisional taxpayers last year, this year we are extending this facility to provisional taxpayers to give them a view of all their recent transactions with SARS and a balance of payment.

#### **Deadlines for submission**

The following deadlines will apply to Tax Season 2010:

- The deadline for postal submissions (paper tax returns) for provisional and non-provisional taxpayers is the last working day of September – 30 September 2010
- The deadline for electronic submissions through SARS branches and eFiling for non-provisional taxpayers and trusts is 26 November 2010.
- The deadline for electronic submissions through SARS branches and eFiling for provisional taxpayers and trusts is the last working day of January – 31 January 2011

#### **Taxpayer Assistance**

As always, SARS staff in our Contact Centre and our branches around the country will be on hand to assist taxpayers with their obligations. Last year we helped over 1 million taxpayers submit their returns.

Taxpayers visiting branches (open between 8am and 4pm weekdays) must ensure that they have all their relevant supporting documents with them so that we can complete their income tax returns on their behalf. These include proof of ID, their employee tax certificates [IRP5/IT3(a)], medical aid, retirement annuity and pension certificates, details of business travel expenses, lump sum certificates and banking particulars.

**For more information, see our [Tax Season 2010 page](#).**

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