

Media Releases 2010

Preliminary Outcome of the 2010 Tax Season

Pretoria, 2 December 2010 – The South African Revenue Service (SARS) has recorded consistent growth in the levels of tax compliance in the country and in the numbers of tax returns submitted for the 2010 Tax Season.

By the deadline of 26 November for non-provisional taxpayers (individuals) and trusts, more than 4 million tax returns were submitted to SARS on time!

The following figures were recorded during the 2010 Tax Season:

- 4.09 million tax returns (including trusts) were submitted by the deadline for this year only, which represents an increase of about 1% compared to last year
- The response by taxpayers to the 2010 Tax Season reflects an increase of 4.25% of taxpayers who have filed their tax returns on time
- SARS was able to assess 2.7 million returns within 24 hours – 18% more than in 2009
- SARS paid refunds of R11.9 billion to taxpayers – an increase of 13% in total refunds issued to date – which is a direct contribution into our economy
- Of refunds issued by SARS, 79% were paid within 48 hours which effectively means that the majority of taxpayers who were due for a refund received it within 3 days!
- The SARS call centre handled a record number of more than 3 million calls during the Tax Season
- During the last week of the 2010 Tax Season, the call centre answered 217 784 calls compared to 117 546 the previous year
- On the final day of the tax season the call centre answered a new record total of 49 795 calls which translates to over 4 000 per hour

These recorded figures are preliminary outcomes of the 2010 Tax Season since provisional taxpayers have until 31 January 2011 to submit their returns to SARS. What the preliminary figures do illustrate is that SARS is continuing to improve its efficiency and services to taxpayers, develop its capability to effectively process higher numbers of tax returns and improve its turn-around times.

Through the increased use of technology, 95% of all returns were submitted electronically – either by taxpayers or their intermediaries on eFiling or by SARS on behalf of taxpayers. This significantly improved turn-around times and efficiency.

SARS assisted 1.56 million taxpayers at branch offices and various other service points during the Tax Season where returns were captured electronically on behalf of the taxpayer. eFiling continues to show phenomenal growth as 2.25 million returns (56.4% of total returns) were submitted on-line.

Equally encouraging, is the trend that many more taxpayers have submitted their returns earlier this year. This is evident in the following—

Submissions in first month of Tax Season:

- 2008: 130 000
- 2009: 500 000
- 2010: 750 000

Time to reach 1 million submissions:

- 2008: 16 weeks
- 2009: 8 weeks
- 2010: 7 weeks

The Tax Season has become the biggest annual engagement between SARS and some 4 million taxpayers and it has become an important measure of the levels of tax awareness and tax compliance in the country.

SARS is very encouraged by the preliminary outcome of the 2010 Tax Season and wants to thank the increasing body of compliant taxpayers for their response.

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