



# In Your Interest

## Tax Booklet

### 2024 / 2025

Smart decisions. Lasting value.



**Audit / Tax / Advisory / Human Capital**

## **Knowing the rules makes one a better player**

Understanding tax issues is core to any financial services business, which is why we at Crowe in Southern Africa have a highly respected tax consulting service that is also capable of ensuring that all your tax compliance needs are met.

The Tax Consulting Services of Crowe in Southern Africa include:

- Tax and Estate planning
- Corporate and Individual tax planning
- Corporate restructuring
- Capital Gains Tax
- Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Payroll taxes (PAYE)
- Analysis of tax consequences of agreements and contracts
- South African and International tax consulting
- Transfer Pricing and Country-by-Country Reporting
- Dispute resolution and tax audit assistance
- Preparation and review of personal, corporate and indirect tax returns

### **Tax Booklet 2024**

Crowe in Southern Africa is proud to present the 2024 tax booklet. This booklet will concentrate on the practical aspects of the Budget and also provide a summary of existing tax and related issues.

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## **CORPORATE TAX RATES**

Company tax rates apply to years of assessment commencing after 31 March of each year.

**2024 & 2025**

### **Normal tax**

Companies and close corporations	27%
Personal service companies	27%
South African income of foreign companies	27%

Small business corporations – per table on page 13

Micro businesses – on turnover per table on page 13

### **Dividends tax**

20%

## **INDIVIDUALS**

### **TAX TABLES**

**For the years ended 29 February 2024 and 28 February 2025**

R	R	R
0 – 237 100	18% of each R1	
237 101 – 370 500	42 678 + 26% of income above	237 100
370 501 – 512 800	77 362 + 31% of income above	370 500
512 801 – 673 000	121 475 + 36% of income above	512 800
673 001 – 857 900	179 147 + 39% of income above	673 000
857 901 – 1 817 000	251 258 + 41% of income above	857 900
1 817 001 and above	644 489 + 45% of income above	1 817 000

### **REBATES**

**2024 & 2025**

Primary	R17 235
Secondary (Persons 65 and older)	R9 444
Tertiary (Persons 75 and older)	R3 145

### **TAX THRESHOLDS**

Below age 65	R95 750
Age 65 and over	R148 217
Age 75 and over	R165 689

### **Married in community of property**

Taxpayers married in community of property are taxed on half of their own interest, dividends, rental income and capital gains and half of their spouse's income earned from these sources, regardless of the spouse in whose name the assets are registered (other than assets excluded from the joint estate).

All other taxable income is taxed only in the hands of the spouse who received it or to whom it accrues.

### **Temporary Rooftop Solar Tax Incentive**

For years ended 29 February 2024 individuals may qualify for a tax rebate in respect of new and unused solar photovoltaic (PV) panels acquired. The rebate amount is 25% of the cost of the panels, limited to R15 000. Each panel must have a generation capacity of at least 275 watts, must be installed or affixed to the individual's residence mainly used for domestic purposes and must be connected to the distribution board of the residence. The panels must have been brought into use between 1 March 2023 and 29 February 2024 and a certificate of compliance must be issued by the installer. Inverters or batteries are not covered by this incentive.

## **EXEMPT INCOME**

### **Investment income**

Local interest earned is exempt up to the following limits:

	<b>2024 &amp; 2025</b>
Below 65	R23 800
65 and over	R34 500

Certain local dividends are exempt from normal income tax.

### **Tax free savings and investment accounts (TFSAs)**

Income earned from certain investment accounts specified as TFSAs are tax free. The earnings (interest and dividends) and growth (capital gains) on these products will not attract income, dividends or capital gains tax. TFSAs may only be issued by regulated institutions such as registered banks, long-term insurers, collective investment scheme managers, the government, mutual and co-operative banks. The investment amount is limited to R36 000 per year and R500 000 in aggregate. Contributions in excess of these limits will be subject to a 40% penalty, payable to SARS on assessment.

### **Pensions and other employment related benefits**

Awards for bravery and long service are exempt up to R5 000.

War and certain disability pensions.

Pensions and lump sums received by South African residents originating from foreign retirement funds and relating to past employment outside South Africa.

Certain insurance payouts where an employer paid the insurance premiums and the premiums were taxed as a fringe benefit to the employee.

Policy payouts from income protection policies are exempt if paid as a result of death, disablement, illness or unemployment.

Amounts paid by a Bargaining Council to a member, to the extent that the amount is not paid from a pension or provident fund.

### **Workmen's compensation and death benefits**

Unemployment (UIF) and Workmen's Compensation benefits.

Compensation paid by employer on death as a result of employment up to R300 000.

Compensation received from the Road Accident Fund.

### **Bursaries and scholarships**

Bursaries are exempt from tax where:

- It is a *bona fide* bursary granted to an employee who agrees to reimburse the employer for the bursary if the employee fails to complete his studies, or
- The bursary is granted to a relative of an employee who earns less than R600 000 per annum, in which case it will be exempt up to the following limits:

**Bursaries for higher education  
(NQF levels 5 – 10)**

Learner not disabled, or R60 000  
Learner a disabled person R90 000

**Bursaries for basic education**

**(NQF levels 1 – 4, i.e. grades R – 12)**

Learner not disabled, or R20 000  
Learner a disabled person R30 000

No portion of a bursary will be exempt if the employee forfeits or reduces any form remuneration he / she is entitled to, or potentially will be entitled to in future, in exchange for the granting of such bursary (referred to as a salary sacrifice).

**Alimony & maintenance**

Payments received are exempt if granted under a judicial order of divorce or separation.

**DEDUCTIONS**

**Retirement fund deductions**

All employer contributions to funds are taxable fringe benefits, and both employer and employee contributions to funds qualify for a deduction in the employee's hands. The annual deduction is limited to the lesser of:

- R350 000; or
- 27.5% of the higher of remuneration or taxable income\*; or
- Taxable income excluding any capital gains.

(\*Taxable income for purpose of calculating the 27.5% limit excludes lump sums and severance benefits but includes the taxable portion of capital gains. It also excludes this retirement fund contributions deduction and the qualifying donations deduction.)

The allowable deduction as calculated above is deducted from taxable income before the inclusion of taxable capital gains. Excess contributions are carried forward and deemed to be contributed in the following year.

**Loss of income insurance**

No deduction is allowed for premiums paid on income protection policies, and payouts from such policies are exempt from tax.

**Medical, dental and physical disability expenses**

No deduction is allowed for medical expenses incurred or contributions paid to a medical aid. Instead, all persons who contribute to a medical aid are entitled to the following monthly tax credit:

**2024 & 2025**

Taxpayer	R364
First dependent	R364
Each additional dependent	R364

A person who carries the expense of a dependent's contributions to a medical aid where the person himself is not a member, is entitled to the above tax credits in proportion to the amount paid by that person over the total medical aid contributions for that dependent.

Contributions made by a person's employer are taxed as a fringe benefit and deemed to have been contributed by the employee

An additional annual tax credit will be available as follows:

- Persons under 65: Total qualifying contributions less four times the above tax credit (annualised), plus other qualifying medical expenses, less 7.5% of taxable income, multiplied by 25%.  
This tax credit is only available on assessment.

- Persons above 65 and persons where the taxpayer, spouse or child is disabled: Total qualifying contributions less three times the above tax credit (annualised), plus qualifying medical expenses incurred, multiplied by 33.3%. The portion of the additional tax credit which relates to excess contributions may be deducted from the person's monthly employee's tax where applicable. The remainder is available on assessment.

For purposes of the additional tax credit a dependent includes a dependent recognised under the medical aid rules.

Medical expenses include all expenditure incurred not refunded by the medical aid, including non-South African expenses.

Physical disability expenditure includes necessary expenditure incurred as a result of the disability. The definition of disability covers a moderate to severe limitation of a person's ability to function normally as a result of physical, sensory, communication, intellectual or mental impairment if it has lasted or has a prognosis to last more than a year as diagnosed by a duly registered medical practitioner.

### **Donations to public benefit organisations**

The deduction for donations made is limited to 10% of taxable income before deducting medical expenses and donations, and excluding retirement lump sums or severance benefits, provided they are made to organisations which issue receipts in terms of S18A. Donations made in excess of the 10% may be carried forward and treated as a donation made in the following year, and subject to the 10% limitation in that year.

### **Home office expenses**

Employees who mainly work from home or individuals carrying on a trade may deduct expenses incurred in respect of a home study, provided the study is regularly and exclusively used for and specifically equipped for such purpose. The expenses that may be deducted include the proportionate amount of rent, repairs, water and electricity etc., calculated using the ratio of the floor area of the study to the floor area of the entire premises. Interest incurred on a mortgage bond will not qualify for deduction.

## **EMPLOYEES' TAX**

All employees have to be registered for income tax. Taxpayers who earn less than R500 000 per year from a single employer, do not receive any travel allowance and do not earn taxable interest income above R23 800 (R34 500 for persons older than 75) do not need to submit a tax return.

Employers are required to deduct PAYE on all remuneration paid to employees, including directors and members of close corporations, unless a tax deduction directive is issued by SARS. Fringe benefits are included in remuneration.

The medical aid credit must be deducted from the employee's tax payable where the employer pays the medical aid contributions or, at the employer's option, if provided with proof of payment of the medical aid contributions by the employee.

### **Employer's responsibility**

SARS can raise an assessment on the employer if the value of a fringe benefit has not been taken into account or undervalued for PAYE purposes.

Shareholders, company directors or members of a close corporation who are involved in the management of the company's financial affairs are personally liable for employees tax, additional taxes, penalties and interest not paid by the company.

### **Bonuses and other variable remuneration**

The tax treatment of bonuses, leave pay, overtime, commissions, reimbursive travel or expenses allowances and other variable remuneration is as follows:

- The employer may only deduct the expense in the year in which the amount is paid to the employee.
- The employee is taxed on the amount in the year that it is received and employees' tax is deducted in the month received.

Directors' normal salary is not seen as variable remuneration, even though it may change from year to year.

## **FRINGE BENEFITS**

### **Medical aid**

Contributions made by an employer to a medical aid scheme constitute a taxable fringe benefit.

### **Retirement funds**

Employer contributions to pension funds, provident funds and retirement annuity funds constitute a taxable fringe benefit. The value of the fringe benefit depends on whether the fund has defined benefit or defined contribution components, and will be determined in terms of a formula.

### **Bargaining Councils**

Employer contributions to Bargaining Councils, other than pension and provident funds, is a taxable fringe benefit. If the employer makes a lump sum contribution for several employees, each employee is taxed on his share of the contribution.

### **Low interest loans**

A taxable benefit arises on the difference in the official rate of interest (page 40) and that charged to the employee on loans greater than R3 000. Study loans and loans to fund qualifying low-cost housing are excluded. Loans to directors and members arising from their shareholding or membership and not from employment are also excluded.

### **Long term insurance policies**

An insurance premium paid by the employer in respect of an insurance policy that is directly or indirectly for the benefit of an employee, or his beneficiary is a taxable fringe benefit.

The value of the fringe benefit is the amount paid by the employer. If the amount relating to a specific employee cannot be determined the value of the fringe benefit is the total contribution divided by the number of employees for whom the contribution is made.

Employer contributions that are taxed as fringe benefits may be claimed as a deduction by the employee.

### **Right of use of motor vehicle**

The monthly fringe benefit on all motor vehicles is 3.5% of the determined value.

The determined value is the cash cost paid by the employer including VAT, or the market value if the employer acquired the vehicle at no cost. Employers who are motor vehicle manufacturers, importers, dealers or rental companies must use the determined value as published by the Minister.

If the cost of the motor vehicle includes a maintenance plan the monthly fringe benefit is reduced to 3.25%.

Where the motor vehicle is acquired by the employer under an operating lease from a non-connected person the monthly fringe benefit is the actual cost of rental plus any fuel costs paid by the employer.

80% of the fringe benefit is subject to PAYE. This can be reduced to 20% if the employer is satisfied that at least 80% of the use of the motor vehicle will be for business travel. Travel between an employee's home and place of work is private travel.

The fringe benefit can be reduced on assessment if the employee can prove actual business use and/or private expenses incurred on licensing, insurance, maintenance or fuel. The employee would need to keep a logbook for this purpose. If the employee pays for fuel the cost per kilometre is determined according to the table below.

Should the employee have the right to use more than one vehicle at a time, the taxable benefit is based on the highest determined value, provided it is used primarily for business purposes.

### **Fringe benefits – VAT**

Certain fringe benefits may be deemed a supply of goods or services for VAT purposes. A specific inclusion is the right of use of a motor vehicle. The monthly VAT is calculated as  $15/115 \times 0.3\%$  of the determined value of the vehicle where the VAT on the vehicle may not be claimed as an input. Where VAT may be claimed as an input the percentage is increased to 0.6%. The determined value is the cost price including VAT less 15% depreciation (on reducing balance method) for each year that the employer owned the vehicle before it was given to the employee to use.

### **Travelling allowance**

The allowance may be paid at a fixed monthly rate or per kilometre.

80% of the allowance is subject to PAYE where the allowance is not based on actual business travel costs. This can be reduced to 20% if the employer is satisfied that at least 80% of the use of the motor vehicle will be for business travel.

A reimbursive travel allowance is exempt from tax up to R4.84 (2024 R4.64) per km. Any excess above R4.84 (2024 R4.64) per km is taxable and subject to employees' tax. Both the exempt and taxable portion must be disclosed on the employee's IRP5.

The fringe benefit can be reduced on assessment for actual business travel expenditure. To claim any deductions for business travel a logbook must be kept detailing the business and total kilometres travelled. The deduction is calculated by using the ratio of business kilometres to total kilometres travelled and actual costs incurred, or deemed costs as per the following table.

No fuel or maintenance costs may be claimed if the employee has not borne these costs.

**Scale for determining the costs of travelling for years of assessment ending 28 February 2025**

Value of the vehicle (including VAT)	Fixed Cost (R p.a.)	Fuel Cost (c/km)	Maintenance Cost (c/km)
0 – R100 000	34 480	151.7	46.0
R100 001 – R200 000	61 770	169.4	57.6
R200 001 – R300 000	89 119	184.0	63.5
R300 001 – R400 000	113 436	197.9	69.3
R400 001 – R500 000	137 752	211.8	81.5
R500 001 – R600 000	163 178	243.0	95.6
R600 001 – R700 000	188 653	241.1	107.3
R700 001 – R800 000	215 447	251.2	118.9
exceeding R800 000	215 447	251.2	118.9

Where actual costs are used the employee may include wear and tear in the costs. The wear and tear is calculated over 7 years and for this purpose the value of the vehicle is limited to R800 000.

**Subsistence allowance**

The allowance relates to expenditure on meals and incidental costs incurred whilst being absent from home for at least one night. It is taxable to the extent that the employee has not spent the required nights away from home by the last day of the following month. No proof is required where allowance is R548 (2024: R522) per day for meals and incidental costs or R169 (2024: R161) per day for incidental costs in South Africa.

SARS has issued a table listing the daily allowance for meals and incidental costs outside South Africa denominated in the appropriate currency, such as:

2025		
Australia	230	AU\$
Botswana	883	PULA
Lesotho	750	ZAR
Namibia	950	ZAR
United Kingdom	114	GBP
USA	168	US\$

For a full list of all countries and the rates applicable to 2025 visit the SARS website under <https://www.sars.gov.za/tax-rates/employers/subsistence-allowances-and-advances/>

**Equity instruments issued to directors and employees**

Regulations are applicable to equity instruments acquired by virtue of employment or office of director.

Gains or losses are taxed on the vesting of the equity instrument. The gain or loss is calculated as the market value of the instrument on date of vesting less any consideration paid by the employee. Vesting occurs on the acquisition of an unrestricted equity instrument, or in the case of a restricted equity instrument, the earliest of:

- when all restrictions cease to exist
- immediately before the disposal of the instrument
- immediately after an option terminates or a convertible instrument is converted

Gains made on the vesting of equity instruments are taxed as normal income (not capital gains) and must be taken into account when calculating employee's tax (PAYE). A tax directive must be obtained from SARS to determine the amount of tax to be withheld.

### **Cellphones and computers**

No fringe benefit accrues through the private use of cellphones and computers provided by the employer used mainly for business purposes.

### **Payment of professional fees on behalf of employees**

If membership of a body is a condition of employment such payment is not a taxable fringe benefit. Other fees paid by the employer will also be tax free if such payments largely benefit the employer.

### **Transfer or relocation costs**

Where an employee is appointed or transferred at the insistence and expense of the employer, certain relocation costs incurred are exempt from tax in the employee's hands. These costs include transportation costs, settling in costs and the hire of temporary residence for less than 183 days, new school uniforms, bond registration and cancellation fees, transfer duties and estate agents commission on the sale of the employee's previous residence. The actual costs incurred by the employer must be reflected under code 3714 on the IRP5. Any cash allowance paid by the employer to cover such relocation costs will be taxed in full.

### **Residential accommodation**

Housing provided to employees is generally a taxable fringe benefit, the value of which is based on the rental value of the property. No fringe benefit arises on low cost immovable property given to an employee or sold at less than market value, if the property has a market value of less than R450 000, and the employee earns less than R250 000 per annum.

### **Uniforms**

Uniforms or allowances for uniforms are taxable unless the employee must wear a special uniform while on duty, which is clearly distinguishable from ordinary clothing.

### **Other fringe benefits**

Fringe benefits will arise from any asset or service provided to the employee at less than its market value. Assets provided as awards for long service are only taxable to the extent the value thereof exceeds R5 000.

## **RING FENCING OF ASSESSED LOSSES**

Ring fencing can only be applied to natural persons subject to the maximum marginal tax rate. A trade loss is ring fenced if that trade has incurred a loss in 3 out of the past 5 years, or if it relates to a suspect trade, as listed in the Income Tax Act.

The suspect trades relate to sport practices, dealing in collectibles, animal showing, performing or creative arts, betting or gambling carried on by the taxpayer or a relative; or the rental of residential accommodation, vehicles or aircraft unless 80% used by persons not related to the taxpayer for at least 6 months; farming or animal breeding unless on a fulltime basis, and trading in cryptocurrency.

The ring fencing can be prevented where the trade constitutes a business and "facts and circumstances" are presented for consideration, unless the losses were incurred in 6 out of 10 years.

## LUMP SUM BENEFITS

Lump sum benefits from pension and retirement annuity funds are limited to one third of the value of the fund, unless the remaining two thirds is equal to or less than R165 000. In effect, retirement fund values of R247 500 or less can be withdrawn as lump sum, with the balance available as an annuity.

From 1 March 2021, lump sum withdrawals from provident funds are limited to one third of the value of the fund. Members under 55 may withdraw savings accumulated up to this date as a lump sum, plus one third of the balance accumulated after 1 March 2021. Members older than 55 on 1 March 2021 can continue to withdraw the full value of the fund as a lump sum.

### On retirement or death

A benefit received on retirement or death is taxed in terms of the following table, which applies cumulatively to all such benefits received over a person's lifetime:

#### For years ended 29 February 2024 and 28 February 2025

R	R	R
0 – 550 000	0%	
550 001 – 770 000	18% of the amount above	550 000
770 001 – 1 155 000	39 600 + 27% of the amount above	770 000
1 155 001 – and above	143 550 + 36% of the amount above	1 155 000

Severance benefits are also taxed in terms of the above table.

A severance benefit is a lump sum received from an employer in respect of the termination of employment, and

- the person is 55 years or older, or
- incapable of continuing employment due to sickness, accident injury or incapacity, or
- being retrenched due to the employer ceasing to carry on trade or due to a general reduction in personnel.

### On withdrawal, resignation or divorce

A benefit received on withdrawal, resignation or divorce is taxed in terms of the following table, which applies cumulatively to all such benefits received over a person's lifetime:

#### For years ended 29 February 2024 and 28 February 2025

R	R	R
0 – 27 500	0%	
27 501 – 726 000	18% of the amount above	27 500
726 001 – 1 089 000	125 730 + 27% of the amount above	726 000
1 089 001 – and above	223 740 + 36% of the amount above	1 089 000

The full value of a person's retirement fund could be withdrawn as a lump sum upon emigration if the person formally emigrated prior to 28 February 2021. Thereafter such lump sum may only be withdrawn once the person is not tax resident in South Africa for an uninterrupted period of at least 3 years commencing on or after 1 March 2021.

Post-retirement annuity payments converted into a lump sum will be treated in the same way as retirement lump sum benefits.

Any contributions which were not previously allowed as a deduction plus amounts transferred to another qualifying fund are deducted from the lump sum received. The net lump sum after these deductions is taxed according to the tables above.

The taxable lump sum cannot be offset against any assessed loss of the taxpayer. Lump sums are independently taxed and the tax cannot be reduced by rebates. An employer must apply for a directive from SARS before paying a retirement lump sum to any employee.

## **ESTATE DUTY**

Estate duty is levied on the dutiable amount of the estate as follows on estates arising after 1 March 2018:

R0 – R30 million	20%
R30 million and above	25%

An abatement of R3.5 million per person is allowed.

Where the person was at date of death the spouse of a previously deceased spouse, the estate duty abatement is R7 million less the amount of the abatement utilised by the pre-deceased spouse.

The deemed property of the estate includes all assets and liabilities of the deceased, insurance policies on the life of the deceased as well as any accrued claim against a surviving spouse. Death benefits arising from pension funds, pension preservation funds, provident funds, provident preservation funds and retirement annuity funds are excluded from the estate. For estates created after 30 October 2019, excess contributions made to retirement funds after 1 March 2016 that were deductible from the taxable portions of lumpsums received are also included in the estate.

Where assets comprise non-listed shares, a valuation of the shares on date of death must be approved by SARS unless the shares are bequeathed to the surviving spouse.

Certain deductions are allowed, which include funeral, tombstone and deathbed expenses, costs of administering and liquidating the estate, CGT, bequests to approved PBO and all assets bequeathed to the surviving spouse.

## **DONATIONS TAX**

Donations tax is levied as follows on the cumulative donations made on or after 1 March 2018:

R0 – R30 million	20%
R30 million and above	25%

Donations tax is payable by the donor at the end of the month following the month in which the donation takes effect. If a donor fails to pay the tax, the donor and donee becomes jointly and severally liable.

Exemptions include donations:

- by natural persons not exceeding R100 000 per year
- to a spouse
- to an approved PBO
- casual donations up to R10 000 by donors other than natural persons
- by a public company

## **TRUSTS**

### **SPECIAL TRUSTS**

Defined as a trust created solely for the benefit of a person suffering from a severe mental illness or physical disability, or a testamentary trust established solely for the benefit of minor children related to the deceased.

Normal tax rate: Same rate as individuals (page 2).

No primary rebate or interest exemption.

### **OTHER TRUSTS**

Any trust that is not a special trust as defined.

Normal tax rate: 45%

No primary rebate or interest exemption.

Trust income and capital gains are taxed in the trust if it does not vest in a beneficiary and is retained in the trust. Income or capital gains that vest in a SA resident beneficiary is taxed in the hands of the beneficiary. Any distribution to a beneficiary that has previously been subject to tax in the trust is not taxed again in the hands of the beneficiary. Losses incurred in a trust cannot be distributed to beneficiaries; it is retained in the trust to be utilised against future trust income.

#### **Loans to trusts or companies owned by trusts**

Any loan from a connected person in relation to the trust that does not carry interest, or interest is based on a rate lower than the official interest rate (page 40), is seen as a deemed donation made by the person who granted the loan. This also applies to loans made by a person to a company which is owned by a trust that is connected to the person granting the loan.

If a natural person (or a company connected to that person) subscribes for preference shares in a company which is owned more than 20% by a trust, the subscription price of the preference shares will be deemed to be a loan to the company, for purposes of determining the deemed donation.

The deemed donation is calculated as the difference between the annual interest calculated using the official interest rate, less interest paid by the trust. Dividends paid in respect of preference shares are deemed to be interest for purposes of calculating the deemed donation.

The donation is deemed to be made on the last day of the year of assessment and is subject to donations tax. The person granting the loan is liable for the donations tax, and the trust will not be allowed to claim an income tax deduction in respect of the interest differential giving rise to the deemed donation.

Loans to trusts that are waived may be seen as a donation by the lender, or it may have income tax or capital gains tax implications for the trust. The lender will also not be allowed to claim any deduction or loss in respect of such a loan write-off.

#### **Exclusions:**

- Loans to PBO trusts or small business funding trusts;
- Loans to certain type of vesting trusts where no beneficiary has any discretionary interest in the trust;
- Loans to special trusts created solely for the benefit of a person suffering from a severe mental illness or physical disability;
- Loans to employee share trusts used to fund the acquisition of shares in an employee incentive scheme

- Loan that was used to fund a primary residence, or improvements thereto, that is used by the lender throughout the year of assessment;
- Loans provided in terms of Sharia compliant financing arrangements;
- Loan by a company that is subject to dividends tax.
- Loan to a foreign trust that is subject to transfer pricing principles, which deem such loan to carry interest at an arm's length rate.

## **TURNOVER TAX ON MICRO BUSINESSES**

Turnover tax is an alternative, optional basis, for computing tax payable where the annual turnover is R1 million or less.

In addition to the turnover tax, micro businesses may submit VAT and Employees Tax returns twice yearly.

Natural persons, companies and close corporations, but not trusts, can qualify as micro businesses.

Turnover tax is calculated using the following table:

### **Years of assessment ending after 1 March 2021**

R	R	R
0 – 335 000	0%	
335 001 – 500 000	1% of turnover above	335 000
500 001 – 750 000	1 650 + 2% of turnover above	500 000
750 001 and above	6 650 + 3% of turnover above	750 000

If elected, the turnover tax will apply for at least 3 years unless the conditions for registration no longer apply.

Micro businesses are exempted from CGT, but 50% of the amounts recovered from disposal of the business assets are included in taxable turnover.

Dividends paid by a micro business are exempt from dividends tax to the extent that dividends do not exceed R200 000. Any excess is subject to dividends tax at a rate of 20%.

## **SMALL BUSINESS CORPORATIONS**

These entities are entitled to certain allowances and reduced tax rates. They are defined as corporations where all the shareholders or members were natural persons for the entire year, the gross income for the year of assessment does not exceed R20 million, no shareholder holds any interest in any other trading company during the year (apart from listed investments) and less than 20% of the income is investment income or personal service income.

A shareholder's or member's interest in any of the following would not disqualify the entity as a small business corporation:

- Listed company, shareblock company or body corporate
- Company or close corporation that has never traded or owned assets of more than R5 000 in value (dormant entities)

### **Years of assessment ending between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2025**

R	R	R
0 – 95 750	0% of taxable income	
95 751 – 365 000	7% of taxable income above	95 750
365 001 – 550 000	18 848 + 21% of taxable income above	365 000
550 001 and above	57 698 + 27% of taxable income above	550 000

## **LABOUR BROKERS AND PERSONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Labour brokers and personal service providers (companies and trusts) are classified as employees and the persons paying them are required to deduct employee tax.

The employee tax deduction is 45% where the personal service provider is a trust and 27% if a company. The employee tax deduction for a labour broker is determined according to the tax tables for individuals.

A labour broker is a natural person who provides a client with other persons to render a service or perform a service and who remunerates such persons.

A labour broker can apply for an exemption certificate.

A personal service provider is a company or trust which renders any service personally by a person who is a connected person to such company or trust and:

- such person would be regarded as an employee of the client if the services were rendered directly; or
- the duties are performed mainly at the premises of the client or are subject to the control and supervision of the client as to the manner in which the duties are performed; or
- more than 80% of the income of such company consists of amounts paid directly or indirectly by one client; except where such company or trust employs 3 or more full-time employees throughout the year of assessment who are not connected persons.

Personal service companies cannot qualify as micro businesses.

A labour broker without an exemption certificate cannot deduct any expenses other than salaries/wages paid to employees.

A personal service provider cannot deduct any expenses other than salaries and wages, legal expenses, bad debts, employer contributions to funds and expenses in respect of premises, finance charges, insurance, repairs and maintenance and fuel relating to assets used exclusively for the purposes of trade.

## **PUBLIC BENEFIT ORGANISATIONS (PBO)**

These bodies as well as new entities wishing to conduct public benefit activities have to be approved as PBOs after complying with the qualifying provisions, the most important of which are that the main object of the entity must be to carry on substantially in the Republic in a non-profit manner one or more defined or approved public benefit activities.

Trading income is exempt up to the greater of 5% of total receipts of accruals, or R200 000.

Donations to public benefit organisations are deductible as follows if the organisation provides the donor with a section 18A certificate:

- Company donations limited to 10% of taxable income.
- Individual donations limited to 10% of taxable income before the deduction of medical expenses, excluding any retirement and severance benefit lump sums. Any excess above the 10% limit may be carried forward and treated as a donation made in the following year.

## **DIVIDENDS AND DIVIDENDS TAX**

A dividend is an amount transferred or applied by a company for the benefit of or on behalf of any person in respect of any share in that company. It includes amounts transferred as consideration for a share buy-back and excludes the following:

- A reduction of the company's share capital or share premium
- Issue of capitalisation shares
- Buy back of shares by a listed company

A dividend could be cash or an asset. Assets distributed as dividends are referred to as dividends in specie.

Dividends received from SA companies (local dividends) are generally exempt from normal income tax. The following local dividends are not exempt:

- Dividends from headquarter companies as these are treated as foreign dividends
- Dividends from property unit trusts (REITs)
- Dividends received by share dealers on a buy-back of shares
- Dividends from share incentive schemes if the dividend relates to an instrument which is not a true equity share
- Dividends from share incentive schemes if the dividend relates to a restricted equity instrument and arose on a share buy-back or redemption or is paid in anticipation of the winding up of the company, or constitute unrestricted equity instruments that are distributed as dividends in specie
- Dividends received in consequence of a cession
- Dividends on borrowed shares, hybrid equity instruments, or third-party backed shares.

### **Dividends tax**

Dividends tax is levied at 20% of the amount of dividends paid and is payable by the beneficial owner of the dividend, i.e., the shareholder. The tax is treated as a withholding tax, therefore the company paying the dividend must pay the tax over to SARS, and the shareholder will receive the net amount after dividends tax.

Dividends tax is applicable to:

- A dividend paid by a South African company, or
- A dividend paid by a non-resident company if listed on the JSE.

The dividends tax arises on payment of the dividend.

A dividends tax return must be submitted to SARS, and payment of the relevant dividends tax must be made by the end of the month following the month in which the dividend was paid. Late payment will result in interest being charged at the prescribed interest rate (page 40).

The dividends tax that arises on dividends paid to foreign shareholders can be reduced if permitted by the relevant double tax agreement.

### **Exemptions**

The dividend is exempt from dividends tax if the beneficial owner is:

- South African resident company or close corporation
- Public benefit organisation which is tax exempt
- Pension, provident, retirement annuity or benefit fund
- Shareholder in a registered micro business, if the dividend is from the micro-business. (This exemption applies to the first R200 000 of dividends paid by the micro-business in a year of assessment).

### **Deemed dividend**

A loan or advance to a person that is a SA resident shareholder and not a company, or connected person to such shareholder, can be deemed to be a dividend. The deeming provision therefore does not apply to loans between group companies.

The amount regarded as a dividend and subject to dividends tax is the interest benefit on the loan, calculated as interest at the official interest rate (page 40) less the amount of interest payable to the company. If the interest payable is higher than the official interest rate the deemed dividend is nil.

The company, and not the shareholder, is liable for dividends tax arising from a deemed dividend. The deemed dividend is treated as having been paid on the last day of the year of assessment.

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## **RESIDENCE BASED TAXATION**

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South African residents pay local tax on their world-wide income, subject to relevant exclusions and double tax agreements in place.

A resident is:

- a natural person ordinarily resident in South Africa,
- a natural person who complies with the physical presence test, or
- any entity incorporated, established or formed in South Africa or which has its place of effective management in South Africa, but excludes any person deemed to be resident of country with which a double taxation agreement is in force.

The physical presence test is applied when a person is not ordinarily resident in South Africa and must be performed each year. In terms of this test a person is deemed to be a resident for tax purposes if he or she was present in South Africa for:

- 91 days in aggregate during the current year of assessment, and
- 91 days in aggregate during each of the previous five years of assessment, and
- 915 days in aggregate during the previous five years.

A person who is deemed to be a resident due to the physical presence test ceases to be a resident if physically absent from South Africa for 330 continuous days.

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## **FOREIGN INCOME**

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South African residents must disclose all foreign income earned on their annual tax return.

SARS can impose a deemed amount as foreign income on assets, considering any information it may have relative to assets held, transferred or disposed of during the period. The income is attributed at the official interest rate (page 40).

### **Investments**

Interest, net rental income and income from unit trusts must be included in income.

Losses incurred on foreign rental property may not be set off against South African income but may be carried forward to be offset against future foreign income.

## **Employment**

Income from foreign employment is taxable in South Africa, unless the income relates to services rendered outside South Africa for an aggregate of 183 days or more during any 12 month period, and for a continuous period exceeding 60 days during that 183 day period.

The above exemption only applies to the first R1.25 million of remuneration earned from foreign employment. Income above this threshold will be taxed in South Africa and may be subject to double taxation. Employers may, upon obtaining a tax directive from SARS, reduce PAYE withheld to account for foreign taxes paid by the employee.

## **Pensions**

Pensions are taxable except where they are received in terms of the social security system of another country or relate to past employment in another country.

## **Trading activities**

Income earned from a business owned as a sole proprietor outside South Africa is taxed in the normal course, except where restrictions are imposed by the foreign country on the remittance of income. In this instance the income is taxed when remitted. Foreign trading losses may not be set off against income earned in South Africa. Such losses may be carried forward and offset against future foreign income.

## **Foreign dividends**

A foreign dividend is any amount received from a foreign company if the amount is treated as a dividend under the laws of that country. Foreign dividends are taxable in South Africa, except where:

- taxpayer holds more than 10% of the equity in the foreign entity
- the taxpayer is a foreign company and is situated in the same country as the company declaring the dividend;
- the dividend is on a foreign share listed on the South African stock exchange, unless the dividend arises from an amount that was deducted for South African income tax purposes by the payer and not taxed in the hands of the recipient, or
- the taxpayer is a CFC, and the dividends do not exceed the resident shareholder's income under the CFC rules.

Foreign dividends are taxable if received indirectly from a foreign company where more than 50% of that company's voting rights are controlled by a resident through the use of a foreign trust.

Foreign dividends not included in the exceptions above are taxed at an effective rate of 20%, determined by exempting part of a foreign dividend in terms of the following formula:

A = B x C where:

A = the exempt amount

B = 25/45 if the taxpayer is a natural person, estate or trust, or

B = 8/28 for all other taxpayers

C = total foreign dividends received that are not otherwise exempt

No tax deduction is allowed for expenses incurred in the production of foreign dividend income.

Withholding tax paid on foreign dividends received is allowed as a credit against tax payable in South Africa.

## **Controlled foreign companies (CFC)**

A CFC is a non-resident entity that is not listed in which South African residents (excluding South African headquarter companies) hold more than 50% of the participation rights or voting control.

A non-resident entity indirectly held through a foreign trust or foundation is a CFC if its results are included in the consolidated financial statements of the South African parent company.

The net income of the CFC is imputed as income of the taxpayer in the ratio of the participation share if the taxpayer holds more than 10% of the participation rights. Any loss must be carried forward for set off against future income.

The net income of a CFC is determined in the functional currency of the CFC and translated to Rands using the average exchange rate for the SA resident's year of assessment.

The proportionate share of foreign tax payable by the CFC will be allowed as a tax rebate against tax payable by the South African resident shareholder.

The net income of a CFC attributable to a foreign business establishment is excluded.

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## **NON-RESIDENTS AND WITHHOLDING TAXES**

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Non-residents are taxed on all income from a South African source, subject to relevant double tax agreements in force. Income earned by non-residents is mainly collected through withholding taxes. The person paying the non-resident must withhold the appropriate tax and pay it over to SARS by the last day of the month following the month in which the relevant payment was made to the non-resident. Income that is subject to withholding tax is generally exempt from normal income tax.

### **Interest**

Interest paid to non-residents is exempt from normal income tax if the person is physically absent from South Africa for 183 days per annum and did not carry on a business in, or is not deemed to be ordinarily resident in South Africa. The exemption does not apply if the debt resulting in the interest is effectively connected to a fixed place of business in South Africa. Non-residents who receive interest that is not exempt must submit a tax return to SARS.

A 15% withholding tax is levied on interest paid to non-residents, subject to the double tax agreement in force. The following interest payments are exempt from the withholding tax:

- Interest paid by a South African bank, the SARB, the IDC, the Development Bank of South Africa or the South African Government.
- Interest paid to the African Development Bank, World Bank, IMF, African Import & Export Bank, European Investment Bank or New Development Bank.
- Interest paid in respect of listed debt.
- Interest paid to a non-resident individual who was physically present in South Africa for more than 183 days during a year, as the interest will be subject to normal income tax.
- Interest paid in respect of debt that is effectively connected with a permanent establishment of the non-resident in South Africa, as the interest will be subject to normal income tax.

## **Dividends**

Dividends paid to non-residents are subject to 20% dividends withholding tax, subject to the double tax agreement in force.

## **Royalties**

A withholding tax of 15% is levied on royalty payments made to non-residents, subject to the double tax agreement in force.

## **Foreign entertainers and sportspersons**

A 15% withholding tax is levied on gross amounts paid to such persons for activities exercised by them in South Africa.

## **Sale of immovable property**

Non-residents are subject to CGT on the disposal of immovable property or the assets of a permanent establishment, branch or agency through which a trade is carried on situated in South Africa.

For property where the selling price exceeds R2 million, the purchaser of the property is required to withhold the following amounts from the price paid on the sale of immovable property unless a directive is provided by the seller:

- 7.5% where the seller is a natural person
- 10% where the seller is a company
- 15% where the seller is a trust.

The amount withheld must be paid to SARS within 14 days if the purchaser is a resident, and within 28 days if the purchaser is also a non-resident.

## **Estate duty**

Assets located in South Africa will be subject to estate duty, subject to international agreements.

## **CAPITAL GAINS TAX (CGT)**

Residents are taxed on capital profits on world-wide assets, whilst non-residents are taxed on capital profits arising on the disposal of fixed property, an interest or right in fixed property or the assets of South African permanent establishment. A capital gain or loss is calculated as the difference between the proceeds received on disposal and the base cost of the asset disposed.

### **Exclusions for natural persons and special trusts**

An annual exclusion of R40 000 (pro-rated if emigrated during a year of assessment) applies to both gains and losses during the person's lifetime whilst R300 000 applies in the year the person dies.

### **Effective rate of tax**

Taxpayer	Capital gain included	Tax rate	Effective rate
Natural person	40%	0 – 45%	0 – 18%
Special trust	40%	0 – 45%	0 – 18%
Other trusts	80%	45%	36%
Companies	80%	27%	21.6%
Small business corporations	80%	0 – 27%	0 – 21.6%

### **Capital losses**

Capital losses may not be set off against taxable income but must be carried forward for set-off against future capital gains.

## **Deemed disposals or acquisitions**

### **Change of residence**

When a person leaves South Africa permanently he is deemed to have sold all assets at market value, except immovable property, assets of a permanent establishment. Also excluded are certain equity instruments granted by virtue of employment, including shares less than 5 years old, share options and equity instruments which have not yet vested.

When a person becomes a resident in South Africa he is deemed to have disposed of his assets one day prior to becoming a resident and reacquired them at market value on the day he becomes a resident, excluding immovable property and assets of a permanent establishment.

### **Death**

A person is deemed to have disposed of his or her assets at date of death at their market values. Certain assets are excluded from such deemed disposal, e.g. assets left to a surviving spouse, long term policies and interests in retirement funds

### **Trading stock**

The conversion of an asset from a capital asset to trading stock (or vice versa) can trigger income tax or capital gains tax.

### **Personal use assets**

The disposal of personal use assets is not subject to CGT. A deemed acquisition is triggered when an asset ceases to be a non-personal use asset.

### **Proceeds**

These comprise the amounts received by or accrued to the taxpayer or deemed to have been received or accrued on disposal of an asset. Proceeds specifically include:

- amount by which a debt is reduced or discharged,
- amount received by or accrued to a lessee for improvements to property,
- market value of assets donated.

Excluded from proceeds are:

- Amounts taxed as income
- Amounts repayable or a reduction in the sales price in the year of disposal

### **Dividend Stripping**

Anti-avoidance rules exist which can deem certain exempt dividends received to be proceeds on the sale of shares, if such dividend is seen as an extraordinary dividend and is received within 18 months prior to the sale of the shares. An extraordinary dividend is any dividend that exceeds 15% of the higher of market value of the shares disposed 18 months prior to their disposal or at the date of their disposal.

### **Base cost**

The base cost of assets acquired after 1 October 2001 is the cost of the asset plus any other cost incurred directly in the acquisition, improvement or selling. One third of finance costs incurred to acquire listed shares or unit trusts may be included in the base cost.

Excluded from base cost are:

- borrowing costs, raising fees, rates and taxes and insurance
- any expenses that were deductible for income tax purposes, including wear and tear or capital allowances claimed.

Where the asset is acquired by donation the base cost is equal to the deemed proceeds taken into account by the donor at date of donation plus a portion of the donations tax, depending on who pays the tax (donor or donee).

The base cost of assets acquired before 1 October 2001 is calculated by determining a value as at 1 October 2001 and adding qualifying costs incurred after that date. The 1 October 2001 value may be determined at the option of the taxpayer on one of the following bases:

- market value on 1 October 2001, or
- time-apportioned base cost method, or
- 20% of the proceeds on disposal (after taking into account expenditure after 1 October 2001).

The time-apportioned base cost method requires that the date of acquisition and cost are known and is calculated according to the following formula:

$$Y = B + \frac{[(P - B) \times N]}{T + N}$$

Where:

Y = value as at 1 October 2001

B = expenditure before 1 October 2001

P = proceeds on disposal (or per adjustment formula)

N = number of years held before 1 October 2001

T = number of years held after 1 October 2001

The adjustment formula applies where allowable expenditure is incurred after 1 October 2001 and is used to compute P in the previous formula as follows:

$$R \times \frac{B}{A + B}$$

Where:

R = actual proceeds

A = expenditure incurred after 1 October 2001

B = expenditure incurred before 1 October 2001

The 20% of proceeds rule is generally used where none of the other information is available. This method should not be disregarded where there has been a dramatic increase in the value of the assets.

The base cost of foreign assets in respect of which amnesty was granted cannot exceed the value of that asset on 28 February 2003 and expenditure incurred after that date.

## **Excluded assets**

Assets which are not taken into account in computing CGT include:

- Primary residence (applicable to natural persons and special trusts only):
  - If the proceeds on the sale of a person's primary residence is less than R2 million any capital gain or loss is disregarded.
  - If the proceeds exceed R2 million the first R2 million of the capital gain or loss calculated is disregarded.
- most personal use assets excluding gold or platinum coins, immovable property, aircraft exceeding 450kg, boats exceeding 10 metres in length, financial instruments, usufructuary or fiduciary interests which decrease over time
- lump sum benefits from pension, provident or retirement annuity funds
- long term assurance paid to original beneficiary, spouse, dependent or deceased estate

- the first R1.8 million of a gain realised on the sale of an interest in a small business if sold by an individual who is at least 55 or as a result of ill health or death. The exclusion only applies if the market value of the small business assets does not exceed R10 million and is applied cumulatively over a person's lifetime
- micro business assets to the extent that the proceeds from such disposals do not exceed R1.5 million over a period of 3 years
- compensation for personal injury, illness or defamation
- gains from gambling, competitions or games by natural persons
- gains or losses made by PBO
- gains and losses made by unit trust funds
- donations or bequests to PBO
- assets used to produce exempt income.

### **Trusts**

Capital gains retained in a trust are taxed in the trust's hands whilst those distributed to or vested in SA resident beneficiaries in the same year are taxed in the beneficiary's hands. Gains distributed to non-resident beneficiaries are taxed in the trust's hands.

Capital gains arising in a trust as a result of donations to trusts not vesting in beneficiaries are taxed in the hands of the donor.

If a trustee vests an asset in a beneficiary it is deemed to be a disposal and subject to CGT in the beneficiary's hands, unless the beneficiary is a spouse or minor child of the donor. The subsequent transfer of the asset to the beneficiary is not treated as a disposal.

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## **PROVISIONAL TAX**

The following taxpayers are required to register as provisional taxpayers:

- Companies and close corporations
- Natural persons who earn income that is not remuneration as defined, unless such income is derived from interest, dividends or rentals and does not exceed R30 000, or if the total taxable income of the person will be below the tax threshold.
- A person who receives remuneration from an employer that is not registered for PAYE. This includes local employees of foreign employers who do not deduct PAYE.

### **First provisional payment**

The first payment is due six months before the end of the tax year. The payment must be based on the greater of an estimate of taxable income for the year, or the basic amount. If the estimate of taxable income is lower than the basic amount the lower estimate may be used.

### **Basic amount**

The basic amount is computed as:

- the taxable income according to the last assessment issued,
- less any capital gain included in the income,
- less (in the case of individuals) the taxable portion of any lump sum payments on termination of service or retirement fund benefit.

Should the last year of assessment be more than one year prior to the current tax period, an increase of 8% per annum must be included in the basic amount. If the latest assessment was issued less than 14 days before the provisional payment is due, the previous assessment may be used, increased by 8%.

## **Second provisional payment**

The second payment is due on the last day of the tax year. The payment must be based on an estimate of the taxable income for the year. A two tier model is in force:

- income less than R1 million: the estimate must be equal to the lesser of the basic amount or 90% of the actual taxable income; or
- income greater than R1 million: the estimate must be equal to 80% of the actual taxable income.

Note that capital gains, retrenchment or severance payments and employer owned insurance policy pay-outs must be included in the estimates used for the first and second provisional payments. These amounts are only excluded from the basic amount.

## **Additional provisional payment**

Where the taxable income of an individual exceeds R50 000 and of a company exceeds R20 000, additional payments of tax are required six months after the year end (February year end by end of September) to obviate interest being levied on the amounts due.

## **Penalties and interest**

Penalties will be imposed as follows:

- 10% of amount not paid by due date for the late payment of provisional tax;
- 20% of the under-payment on under-estimation of income if SARS is not satisfied that the second provisional estimate was seriously calculated or was not deliberately or negligently understated. If no second provisional tax return is submitted the person is deemed to have submitted a nil return, which will be subject to the under-estimation penalty.

Under-estimation penalties may be remitted if the taxpayer can prove that the second provisional tax estimate was based on a serious calculation and not deliberately or negligently understated.

Interest on late payment of provisional tax will be charged from the end of the period within which payment is required at the prescribed rate.

Penalties and interest paid to SARS are not tax deductible.

## **DIRECTORS' FEES**

Directors of private companies who receive remuneration are regarded as employees and must be subject to PAYE on such remuneration, regardless of whether the director is registered for provisional tax.

Non-executive directors are regarded as independent contractors, therefore no PAYE need to be withheld from directors' fees, unless voluntarily agreed to. Where the fees exceed R1 million in a 12 month period, the non-executive director is required to register for VAT and issue a tax invoice to the company for the directors fees.

## **DEBT REDUCTION**

The tax treatment of a debt that has been reduced, cancelled, or the terms of which changed resulting in a benefit to the debtor or converted to equity is determined in terms of a set of ordering rules. For purposes of these rules the term "debt" excludes interest debt.

If the debt benefit:

1. Qualifies as a taxable donation it will be subject to donations tax;
2. Constitutes property of an estate and the debt is reduced or cancelled in favour of an heir or legatee by virtue of a bequest it will be subject to estate duty;
3. Stems from an employer/employee relationship it will be regarded as a taxable fringe benefit and will be subject to PAYE;
4. Falls outside the above three areas and the debt was used to fund expenditure which qualified for a tax deduction or allowance, it will be treated as a recoupment subject to normal tax unless the debt was used to fund trading stock still on hand, in which case the cost of the stock that will be allowed as a deduction must be reduced;
5. Falls outside all of the above it will have capital gains tax (CGT) consequences:
  - If the debt funded a capital asset still on hand the debt benefit amount must be used to reduce the base cost of that asset and any remaining balance is a recoupment of capital allowances claimed.
  - If the asset funded by the debt is no longer on hand the capital gain/loss realised in the year of disposal must be compared to what would have been the gain/loss had the debt benefit occurred in that year, and the difference is treated as a capital gain in the year that the debt benefit actually occurs.
  - If the debt relates to a capital loan due between connected persons and is reduced in the course or in anticipation of liquidation, winding up or deregistration of the debtor company, there will be no CGT consequences.

None of the above rules will apply where the debt is between South African resident companies in the same group and the debtor is a dormant company, or the debt is settled out of the proceeds of a share issue by the debtor, providing the debt did not exist prior to the companies becoming part of the same group.

Interest debt that is waived or reduced will only result in a recoupment of interest previously deducted by the debtor if the creditor was not subject to tax in South Africa on the interest earned.

## **LEARNERSHIP ALLOWANCES**

A learnership allowance will be granted to employers who enter into a registered Learnership agreement prior to 31 March 2027. The learnership must be linked to the employer's trade. An annual allowance is granted for each year that the learner is registered for a learnership. The allowance is apportioned for a part of the year if the learnership was not in place for the full 12 months. A further completion allowance is granted in the year that the learnership is successfully completed.

Learnerships entered into after 1 October 2016:

- Annual allowance for learners with a qualification on NQF level 1 – 6 is R40 000 (or R60 000 for learners with disabilities);
- Annual allowance for learners with a qualification on NQF level 7 - 10 is R20 000 (or R50 000 for learners with disabilities);

- Completion allowance for learners with a qualification on NQF level 1 – 6:  
R40 000 (or R60 000 for learners with disabilities) for each completed year of the learnership if the learnership is for a period of more than 24 months, or R40 000 (or R60 000 for learners with disabilities) if the learnership is for a period of less than 24 months.
- Completion allowance for learners with a qualification on NQF level 7 – 10:  
R20 000 (or R50 000 for learners with disabilities) for each completed year of the learnership if the learnership is for a period of more than 24 months, or R20 000 (or R50 000 for learners with disabilities) if the learnership is for a period of less than 24 months.

## ***EMPLOYMENT TAX INCENTIVE (ETI)***

An employment tax incentive is currently effective until 28 February 2029. Employers registered for PAYE are eligible to claim the ETI, provided all due tax debts have been paid and no tax returns are in arrears. The ETI amount is calculated on a monthly basis for each qualifying employee and deducted from total amount of PAYE that is payable to SARS.

ETI credits are exempt from normal income tax in the hands of the employer.

A qualifying employee is a person between the ages of 18 and 29 with a valid South African ID, not a domestic worker and earning less than R6 500 per month but more than the minimum wage in terms of regulation, or more than R2 000 per month if no minimum wage is prescribed. The employee must not be related to the employer, be newly employed after 1 October 2013, and work must be performed in terms of a legitimate employment contract.

The employee must assist in the business activities of the employer and may not be mainly involved in studying, unless the employer entered into a registered learnership agreement with the employee.

The ETI can be claimed for up to 24 months for each qualifying employee and is calculated as follows from 1 March 2022:

Monthly Remuneration	Employment Tax Incentive per month during the first 12 months of employment of the qualifying employee	Employment Tax Incentive per month during the next 12 months of employment of the qualifying employee
R0 – R2 000	75% of Monthly Remuneration	37.5% of Monthly Remuneration
R2 001 – R4 500	R1 500	R750
R4 501 – R6 500	Formula: R1 500 – (75% x (Monthly Remuneration – R4 500))	Formula: R750 – (37.5% x (Monthly Remuneration – R4 500))

The incentive is proportionally reduced for employees who work less than 160 hours per month.

Penalties of 100% will apply where an employer claims the ETI for non-qualifying employees and a penalty of R30 000 per employee when a current employee is displaced in order to employ a qualifying employee.

## **GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

Certain grants, subsidies or contributions by the government are exempt from income tax if listed as an exempt grant in the Eleventh Schedule of the Income Tax Act or identified as such by the Minister of Finance in a notice in the Government Gazette.

The list of exempt grants includes, amongst others, grants received from the DTI and DST in terms of:

- The Automotive Investment Scheme and Automotive Production and Development Programme
- The Manufacturing Competitiveness Enhancement Programme
- The Clothing and Textiles Competitiveness Programme
- Export Marketing and Investment Assistance.

Where an exempt government grant is secured for the acquisition or creation of an asset, the cost of the asset must be reduced by the amount of the grant as follows:

- If the asset relates to trading stock the cost price deduction claimed when the stock is sold, is reduced
- If the asset relates to an allowance asset the base cost of the asset must be reduced and any tax allowances must be calculated on the reduced cost.
- If the asset relates to a capital asset which does not qualify for any tax allowances the base cost of the asset must be reduced.

Where a government grant is received or accrued and not used to acquire trading stock or an asset, any other deductible operating expenses must be reduced by the portion of the grant not used to acquire trading stock or assets. This rule applies to all deductible expenses incurred, and not only those expenses linked to the government grant. If the grant received in any one year is more than the expenses incurred the excess is carried forward and reduces expenses in the next year of assessment.

## **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

A taxpayer may qualify for a 150% tax deduction in respect of local expenditure incurred on scientific or technological research and development(R&D). Qualifying R&D activities must be systematic investigative or experimental, aimed at resolving scientific or technological uncertainty, for the purpose of:

- Discovering new scientific or technological knowledge;
- Creating or developing new or significantly improved products, processes or services;
- Creating or developing a pharmaceutical product; or
- Conducting a clinical trial.

An application for approval must be submitted to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation within 6 months before or after the expenditure is incurred.

Financing, administrative, compliance or similar costs incurred do not qualify for the incentive.

Plant and machinery acquired and brought into use for purposes of research and development qualify for a capital allowance on a 50:30:20 basis, and buildings used wholly or mainly for research and development qualify for a 5% annual allowance. The incentive is set to expire on 31 December 2033.

## **WEAR AND TEAR ALLOWANCES**

Wear and tear can be calculated on a straight-line basis provided the taxpayer complies with certain requirements:

- adequate records must be maintained
- the method must be applied to all assets in the same class
- the taxpayer must be able to provide a detailed schedule of assets on which wear and tear is claimed, including date of acquisition, cost of acquisition (excluding finance charges), tax value in the previous tax year, and where applicable, the date of disposal and the price realised on disposal or scrapping.

Fully written off assets not yet disposed of must be reflected at R1. The records must be maintained so that each asset's value can be established at any point in time

- the asset must be used in the taxpayer's trade.

Interpretation Note 47, together with a Binding General Ruling No 7, sets out write-off periods that are acceptable to SARS. The most common of which are:

<b>Item</b>	<b>No of years</b>
Air-conditioners	
• Window type	6
• Mobile	5
• Room unit	10
Aircraft (light passenger, commercial and helicopters)	4
Bulldozers, concrete mixers	3
Cellular telephones	2
Compressors	4
Computers (mainframe or servers)	5
Computers (personal computers)	3
Computer software (mainframes)	
• purchased	3
• self-developed	1
Computer software (personal computers)	2
Containers (stainless steel – transport of freight)	5
Delivery vehicles	4
Demountable partitions	6
Dental and doctors' equipment	5
Drilling equipment (water)	5
Drills, electric saws	6
Electrostatic copiers	6
Excavators	4
Fitted carpets	6
Fork-lift trucks, front-end loaders	4
Furniture & fittings	6
Gantry cranes	6
Graders	4
Grinding machines	6
Heating equipment	6
Laboratory research equipment	5
Lathes	6
Lift installations (goods and passengers)	12
Mobile cranes	4
Motorcycles	4
Musical instruments	5
Office equipment – mechanical	5
Office equipment – electronic	3
Ovens and heating devices	6
Paintings (valuable)	25

Item	No of years
Pallets	4
Passenger cars	5
Photocopying equipment	5
Racehorses	4
Refrigeration equipment	6
Security systems	5
Shop fittings	6
Telephone equipment	5
Television and advertising films	4
Textbooks	3
Tractors	4
Trailers	5
Trucks (heavy-duty)	3
Trucks (other)	4
Workshop equipment	5

“Small” assets costing R7 000 or less can be written off in full in the year of acquisition.

The allowance must be apportioned where the asset is used for only a part of the year.

## **CAPITAL ALLOWANCES**

### **Plant and machinery**

Certain assets used for trade qualify for this allowance and include:

- Plant and machinery used directly in a process of manufacture
- Machinery, implements and utensils used by a hotelkeeper
- Agricultural co-operative plant and machinery used for storing or packing products of its members
- Aircraft and ships brought into use after 1 April 1995.

These assets all qualify to be written off over 5 years, except for new and unused assets which may be written off 40% in the first year and 20% for the subsequent 3 years.

Plant and machinery acquired and brought into use for purposes of research and development may be written off 50% in the first year, 30% in the second year and 20% thereafter.

New and unused plant & machinery brought into use for qualifying research and development approved by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation may be deducted as follows: 50% in year 1, 30% in year 2 and 20% in year 3.

### **Farming and renewable energy assets**

Businesses that invest in renewable energy assets may claim a temporary enhanced deduction of 125% of the cost of such assets if brought into use for the first time between 1 March 2023 and 28 February 2025. If the assets are subsequently disposed of before 1 March 2026, the full 125% deducted will be taxed as a recoupment.

Assets generating solar PV energy not exceeding 1 megawatt qualify for a 100% allowance in the year it is brought into use. It is proposed the 1 megawatt limitation be increased with effect from 1 March 2025.

Farming plant and equipment, assets used for the production of bio-diesel or bio-ethanol or assets used for the production of electricity from wind, sunlight, gravitational water forces or biomass may be written off 50% in year 1, 30% in year 2 and 20% in year 3. The foundations and supporting structures for energy projects are included.

## **Small business corporations**

New and unused manufacturing plant and machinery acquired by a small business corporation may be written off in full in the year it is brought into use. Other assets qualify for write-off of 50% in year 1, 30% in year 2 and 20% in year 3.

## **Proposed allowance for manufacture of electric vehicles**

From 1 March 2026, producers of electric vehicles will be able to claim 150% of qualifying investment spending on production capacity for electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles in the first year of investment.

## **Building Allowances**

### **Industrial buildings**

Buildings erected after 30 September 1999 used mainly for manufacture qualify for a 5% annual allowance. The allowance can be claimed by a purchaser of a qualifying building. Buildings used wholly or mainly for research and development purposes also qualify for a 5% annual allowance.

### **Hotel buildings**

New buildings erected after 4 June 1988 qualify for a 5% annual allowance, whilst improvements which do not extend the exterior framework of the building qualify for a 20% annual allowance.

### **Commercial buildings**

New and unused buildings erected for the purposes of trade which do not include residential accommodation qualify for a 5% annual allowance.

### **Research and development buildings**

Buildings used wholly or mainly for research and development approved by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation qualify for a 5% annual allowance.

### **Urban development zone allowance**

This allowance will apply to buildings in an urban development zone brought into use before 31 March 2023.

The refurbishment of existing buildings entitles the taxpayer to an allowance of 20% straight-line over 5 years, whilst the construction of a new building entitles the taxpayer to an allowance of 20% in the first year and 8% thereafter provided that the building commenced after 21 October 2008. Where the building commenced prior to that date the annual allowance is 5%.

Low-cost residential units in an urban development zone qualify for higher allowances. A low- cost residential unit is a building whose cost to build does not exceed R300 000 or an apartment whose cost to build does not exceed R350 000. The refurbishment of such units may be written off over 4 years, whilst new units may be written off: 25% in year 1, 13% in years 2 – 6, and 10% in year 7.

### **Residential units**

Residential units acquired or erected after 21 October 2008 qualify for an allowance provided the unit is new and unused, used solely for the purposes of trade, situated in the Republic and the taxpayer owned at least 5 residential units for the purposes of trade. The cost of improvements made to residential units after 21 October 2008 also qualify for the allowance. The annual allowance until the cost is written off is 5% on normal units and 10% on low-cost units.

## **ASSET REINVESTMENT RELIEF**

The taxpayer can elect to postpone the recoupment on disposal of an asset where:

- the disposal of the asset was involuntary, or
- the asset disposed of was subject to a capital deduction or wear and tear provided that the replacement assets are brought into use within 18 months.

The recoupment can be set off over the same period as the wear and tear.

## **DOUBTFUL DEBT ALLOWANCE**

An allowance for doubtful debts may be claimed in respect of debts that would have been allowed as a deduction had they become bad during the year. The allowance is determined as set out below.

For taxpayers who did not apply IFRS 9:

- 40% of all debts that are 120 days or more in arrears; plus
- 25% of all debts that are between 60 and 120 days in arrears, after deducting the value of any security given in respect of above debts

For taxpayers who applied IFRS 9:

- 40% of the loss allowance lifetime expected credit loss calculated in terms of IFRS 9; plus
- 40% of bad debts written off for financial reporting purposes but not allowed as a bad debt deduction, if the debt was included in taxable income in the current or any previous year; plus
- 25% of the loss allowance calculated in terms of IFRS 9 in respect of other debts

A ruling can be obtained from SARS for a higher percentage not exceeding 85% based on specific criteria.

The allowance claimed must be added to taxable income in the following year.

## **PREPAID EXPENSES**

Expenditure paid where the benefits will only be enjoyed in a subsequent year may only be deducted as and when the benefits are received.

Prepaid expenses are deductible in the year it is paid if:

- the goods, services or benefits are supplied or rendered within six months after the end of the year of assessment; or
- the total pre-paid expenditure does not exceed R100 000.

A deduction claimed for prepaid expenses must be added to taxable income in the subsequent year.

## **RESTRAINT OF TRADE**

Restraint of trade payments are taxable in the hands of individuals, labour brokers (without exemption certificate) and personal service providers in the year received. Such payments are deductible by the payer over 3 years if the period of the restraint is less than 3 years, or over the period of the restraint if longer.

## **LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvements made to leasehold property in terms of a lease agreement by the lessee must be included in the income of the lessor. Either the stipulated amount or a fair and reasonable value

will be included. The lessor may be entitled to discount the value of the improvements over the period of the lease or 25 years whichever is the shorter.

The lessee may deduct leasehold improvement expenditure over the period of the lease only if it was effected in terms of an obligation imposed by the lease agreement and if the lessor is taxed thereon. No deduction is permitted for voluntary improvements effected by the lessee.

Lessees in Public Private Partnerships, or lessees leasing land or buildings from government qualify for tax deductions on voluntary improvements made.

## **PRE-TRADE EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure which would normally be deductible from income, actually incurred prior to the commencement and in connection with a specific trade can be deducted in the year that trading commences from the income of that trade. The deduction is limited to income from that trade and any shortfall can be carried forward to the subsequent years of assessment.

## **INTEREST DEDUCTION LIMITATIONS**

### **Non-trade interest**

Interest incurred to produce passive interest income is deductible but limited to the amount of interest earned included in the person's taxable income.

### **Debt arising as a result of a corporate restructure**

Interest deductions in respect of certain corporate restructures may be limited and calculated in accordance with a formula.

Any excess interest cannot be carried forward to the next tax year. As a result, the excess interest is permanently non-deductible.

The interest deduction limitation must be applied in the tax year in which the restructure transaction is entered into and the five subsequent tax years.

### **Recipient of interest is not subject to tax in South Africa**

Interest paid to an exempt or foreign person or foreign entity who is not subject to tax in South Africa may be limited and calculated in accordance with a formula. Any excess interest is carried forward to the next tax year and is subject to the formula in that year.

This will generally apply in the case of interest paid to a foreign person or foreign entity where the withholding tax on interest is reduced to nil in terms of a double taxation agreement.

This limitation is only applicable when the parties involved are in a controlling relationship, whereby the recipient directly or indirectly holds more than 50% of the equity shares or voting rights in that company.

## **CORPORATE ASSESSED LOSSES**

For years of assessment ending on or after 31 March 2023, companies may set off losses to the higher of R1 million, or 80% of its current year taxable income before taking the assessed loss into account.

SARS has the discretion to entirely disallow the set-off of an assessed loss against the income of a company, close corporation or trust. It may do so if any agreement was entered into which

affected the entity or its shareholding, membership or trustees, resulting directly or indirectly in income or a capital gain accruing to the entity, solely or mainly for the purpose of utilising any assessed loss or capital loss in order to avoid or reduce the liability for any tax on the part of that entity or any other person.

## **VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)**

VAT is levied on the supply of most goods and services at 15%. When VAT is levied by a vendor it is termed output VAT, and VAT paid to suppliers is referred to as input VAT. The net VAT amount (output less allowable input) must be paid over to SARS at the end of each VAT period.

Certain supplies are exempt from VAT and others are zero-rated, meaning VAT must be charged at 0%. Input VAT incurred that relates to the making of exempt supplies may not be claimed as a deduction from output VAT. Input VAT incurred on the purchase of a motor vehicle, entertainment expenses and employees' membership fees to professional bodies may not be claimed.

Where a vendor makes mixed supplies of standard or zero-rated supplies together with exempt supplies the input credits are apportioned. Input credits on expenses relating to exempt supplies cannot be claimed.

Notional input VAT may be claimed on certain second-hand goods purchased. It is calculated as 15/115 of the cost of second-hand goods acquired from a resident person that is not registered as a VAT vendor.

Where input VAT was claimed on supplies received and the creditor is not paid within 12 months, an output VAT adjustment for the amount previously claimed is required.

Where input VAT was claimed on supplies received and the use of those supplies subsequently change to a non-vatable purpose, and output VAT adjustment is required. Some of the more common exempt and zero-rated supplies are listed below.

### **Exempt supplies**

Financial services, but excluding fees charged for arranging these services, e.g. bank charges.

Letting of residential accommodation (note that the sale of residential property by a VAT vendor is not exempt).

Certain education services.

Transport of passengers by road or railway.

Crèche or after-school care for children.

Services to members in the course of managing a sectional title body corporate, share block company, housing development scheme for aged persons.

Supplies by Home Owners Associations to members.

### **Zero-rated supplies**

Exported goods.

Supply of a business as a going concern.

Fuel and fuel levy goods.

Certain items used for farming e.g., animal feed and remedy, fertilizer, pesticide, plants and seeds.

Certain basic foodstuffs e.g., brown bread, white bread flour, maize meal, cake flour, rice, unprocessed fruit and vegetables, eggs.

Sanitary towels (pads).

Certain cross-border transport of passengers and goods and related services.

Services supplied to non-residents not present in South Africa. Services physically rendered outside of South Africa.

### **Property developers**

From 1 April 2022, property developers who temporarily rent out residential property for less than 12 months are required to account for an output VAT adjustment based on the cost of the property in the month during the which the rental agreement comes into effect.

A subsequent sale of the property will be subject to output VAT, however the developer may then claim the output VAT previously paid at the start of the lease as an input VAT credit.

### **Registration and returns**

An enterprise whose turnover (excluding exempt supplies) has exceeded R1 million in any twelve-month period or if there are reasonable grounds to believe that turnover will exceed R1 million, is required to register as a VAT vendor. Voluntary registration is permitted where taxable supplies exceed R50 000 in any twelve-month period or can reasonably be expected to reach that limit.

VAT periods are monthly, bi-monthly, 6 monthly or annually depending on the type and size of the vendor. Vendors with a turnover of more than R30 million per annum must submit VAT returns on a monthly basis. Vendors who are registered on a bi-monthly basis and subsequently reach the R30 million threshold must inform SARS in writing.

Foreign suppliers of electronic services to South African residents are also required to register for VAT if such supplies exceed R1 million per any twelve-month period.

### **Accounting basis**

Legal entities must account for VAT on an invoice basis, by accounting for VAT on the earlier of when an invoice is issued, or when payment is received.

Natural persons or unincorporated bodies of natural persons may apply to account for VAT on the payments basis if taxable supplies will not exceed R2.5 million per annum. Vendors registered on the payments basis must account for VAT when payment is received for a supply.

### **Penalties and interest**

VAT returns must be submitted and payment made by the last business day on or before the 25th day of the month unless the returns are e-Filed, in which case the due date is the last business day of the month. The late submission of a VAT return results in a penalty of 10% of the VAT payable and interest at the prescribed rate for the month or part thereof.

## **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT LEVY (SDL)**

The levy is utilised to develop the skills of the workforce, improve productivity and the quality of life of the workers.

Employers are encouraged to create an active learning environment by being eligible for grants if their training programs meet the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) requirements.

Employers with an annual payroll in excess of R500 000 are required to register and pay the 1% levy on the total remuneration used to compute employees' tax.

## **TAX ADMINISTRATION ACT**

The Tax Administration Act (TAA) regulates the administrative provisions applicable to all taxes except customs and excise. The TAA deals with the powers of SARS and the rights of taxpayers as well as dispute resolution procedures, interest, and penalties.

The TAA gives SARS the power to conduct search-and-seizure operations without a warrant. SARS may also raise estimated assessments where a taxpayer fails to submit a tax return, submits a return or material that is incorrect or inadequate, or fails to respond to a request for relevant material after more than one notice of such request has been delivered.

### **Tax Ombud**

The office of the Tax Ombud is an independent channel for addressing SARS service complaints. A taxpayer may approach the Tax Ombud only once all existing and prescribed complaint resolution mechanisms within SARS have been exhausted.

### **Taxpayers' rights**

SARS must advise a taxpayer of the status of an audit being conducted and keep the taxpayer up to date with the progress of the audit at regular intervals.

### **Dispute resolution**

If a taxpayer disagrees with any tax assessment, an objection may be lodged within 80 business days from the date of the assessment. Should the objection be unsuccessful, the taxpayer can appeal to the Tax Board or the Tax Court. A matter can also be dealt with through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process. A notice of appeal or ADR must be submitted within 30 business days from the date the objection is disallowed. If an objection or appeal is submitted late, adequate grounds must be provided to condone the late objection or appeal.

In the case of an automated assessment received where the taxpayer did not submit a return, the taxpayer can request a revised assessment within 40 business days from the date of the assessment, or within a such longer period as prescribed by SARS in a public notice

### **Penalties**

Penalties are divided between non-compliance and understatement penalties. A fixed amount non-compliance penalty will apply when a taxpayer fails to comply with administrative provisions, e.g., not submitting a return on time. The penalty is calculated as follows and will be applied for each month that the non-compliance exists:

<b>Assessed loss or taxable income for preceding year</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
Assessed loss	R250
R0 – R250 000	R250
R250 001 – R500 000	R500
R500 001 – R1 000 000	R1 000
R1 000 001 – R5 000 000	R2 000
R5 000 001 – R10 000 000	R4 000
R10 000 001 – R50 000 000	R8 000
R50 000 001 – and over	R16 000

A percentage-based penalty will apply when a taxpayer has not paid tax as and when required. These penalties vary between 10% and 20% depending on the type of tax involved.

An understatement penalty will apply where the incorrect amount of tax was paid due to a default, omission or incorrect statement in a return, failure to pay the correct amount of tax where no return is required or as result of an impermissible avoidance arrangement. The understatement penalty will be a percentage of the shortfall of the tax paid, according to the following table:

Behaviour	Standard case	Obstructive or repeat case	Voluntary disclosure after notification of audit	Voluntary disclosure before notification of audit
Substantial understatement	10%	20%	5%	0%
Reasonable care not taken in completing return	25%	50%	15%	0%
No reasonable grounds for position taken	50%	75%	25%	0%
Impermissible avoidance arrangement	75%	100%	35%	0%
Gross negligence	100%	125%	50%	5%
Intentional tax evasion	150%	200%	75%	10%

No understatement penalty will be imposed if the taxpayer can show that the understatement resulted from a bona fide inadvertent error.

### **Voluntary disclosure**

A taxpayer who approaches SARS to rectify any previous defaults will qualify for relief against penalties as per the table above. An application for VDP relief may not be made for a similar default within 5 years.

## **GENERAL ANTI-AVOIDANCE PROVISIONS**

The anti-avoidance provisions apply to schemes or arrangements entered into.

- Impermissible avoidance arrangements are those whose sole or main object is to obtain a tax benefit and are entered into in a manner not normally employed for bona fide business purposes or lack commercial substance or create rights and obligations not normally created between persons dealing at arm's length.
- Consequences of such arrangements may result in the Commissioner disregarding, combining or recharacterising any steps of the arrangement, disregarding any accommodating or tax indifferent party, deeming connected persons to be a single person, or treatment of the arrangement as if it had not been entered into.
- Lack of commercial substance exists if the arrangement does not have a substantial effect on the business risks, utilises round trip financing or an accommodating or tax indifferent party and has elements that have the effect of offsetting or cancelling each other.
- Presumption of purpose of the arrangement as being one solely or mainly created to obtain a tax benefit by the Commissioner must be disproved by the taxpayer.

## **TRANSFER DUTIES**

### **Transfer duty on immovable property**

Transfer duty is payable on the acquisition of fixed property situated in South Africa and is payable by the purchaser. In cases where the transaction will be subject to VAT no transfer duty will be payable.

The rate of transfer duty for natural persons and all legal persons (including companies, close corporations and trusts):

#### **For property transfers after 1 March 2023**

0 – R1 100 000	0%	
R1 100 001 – R1 512 500	3% of value over R1 100 000	R1 100 000
R1 512 501 – R2 117 500	R12 375 + 6% of value over R1 512 500	R1 512 500
R2 117 501 – R2 722 500	R48 675 + 8% of value over R2 117 500	R2 117 500
R2 722 501 – R12 100 000	R97 075 + 11% of value over R2 722 500	R2 722 500
R12 100 001 and above	R1 128 600 + 13% of value over R12 100 000	R12 100 000

The transfer of shares in a residential property company is subject to transfer duty as above. A residential property company is one that owns a dwelling house, holiday home, land zoned for residential use, other than apartment complexes, and where the fair value of the property is more than 50% of the total fair value of all other assets (other than financial instruments).

## **SECURITIES TRANSFER TAX (STT)**

This tax is imposed at a rate of 0.25% on the transfer of listed or unlisted securities. The STT is calculated on the higher of the consideration paid or the market value of the security and is payable by the purchaser. Securities consist of shares in companies or member's interests in close corporations.

## **FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROL**

Regulations and restrictions in force as at date of publication.

### **Single discretionary allowance**

#### *Natural persons older than 18 years*

Residents may transfer up to R1 million per calendar year without requiring a Tax Clearance Certificate.

#### *Natural persons younger than 18*

Such persons are entitled to a R200 000 allowance per calendar year.

### **Travel allowance**

Individuals may use the single discretionary allowance to avail of a travel allowance, through an Authorised Dealer, subject to the following conditions:

- may not be used more than 60 days prior to departure;
- the traveller must present a valid passenger ticket when travelling by air, bus, rail or ship;
- foreign currency may be availed of in foreign currency notes or traveller's cheques;
- the allowance may be transferred abroad to the traveller's own bank account and/or a spouse bank accounts, but not into a 3rd party's bank account;
- minors travelling with parents, may have their travel allowances transferred to their parents' bank account abroad;
- any unused foreign currency must be resold to an Authorised Dealer within 30 days of returning to South Africa;

- business travellers travelling on recurring trips within 90 days may retain unused allowances for use during subsequent business trips;
- no more than R25 000 Rand denominated notes, per person, may be taken in addition to the travel allowance for immediate needs.

### **Study allowance**

Individuals may use the single discretionary allowance for study purposes. Spouses accompanying students also qualify for the allowance.

Students may export household and personal effects, (excluding motor vehicles), up to a value of R200 000 per student under cover of the prescribed SARS Customs Declaration.

Authorised Dealers may transfer directly to the institution concerned the relative tuition and academic fees for the academic year.

To avail of this dispensation, residents must produce to an Authorised Dealer documentary evidence from the institutions concerned confirming that the student has been enrolled for a course for the period claimed and evidence of the tuition fees in the form of a letter or prospectus from the institution to be attended.

### **Foreign capital allowance**

#### *Natural persons*

Taxpayers in good standing over the age of 18 may make foreign investments of R10 million per calendar year if a Tax Clearance Certificate in respect of foreign investments is submitted. Income on such foreign investments does not need to be repatriated but will be subject to tax in South Africa. Applications in excess of R10 million are considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Companies*

Foreign direct investments of up to R5 billion (prior to 23 February 2022: R1 billion) per calendar year may be processed by Authorised Dealers.

Authorised Dealers must ensure that the investments are bona fide and report them to FinSurv. The investments are not required to be in the same line of business as the applicant, though passive real estate investments are excluded from this dispensation.

Companies are required to state how the investment will be funded.

Foreign investments in excess of R5 billion per investment require FinSurv approval and have stringent reporting requirements. FinSurv also reserves the right to stagger the capital outflows to manage the potential impact on the foreign exchange market.

Dividends declared by the offshore subsidiary may be retained abroad. Net proceeds on the sale of a foreign investment must be repatriated.

### **Borrowings**

Authorised Dealers of FinSurv must approve inbound foreign loans prior to the loans being made.

Maximum interest rates:

- Foreign denominated loans may not exceed the base rate + 2% or, in the case of shareholders, the base rate as set by the commercial banks in the foreign country;
- South African Rand denominated loans may not exceed prime overdraft rate + 3% or, in the case of shareholders, prime overdraft rate.

Companies, close corporations, foundations, trusts and partnerships having a non-resident interest of 75% or more are regarded as affected companies. These companies may not accept or repay loans from their non-resident shareholders without approval from FinSurv. These companies are required to ensure that their local borrowings fall within the restrictions imposed by the local borrowings' formula.

## **Emigration**

Outflows of capital must be supported with a SARS issued tax clearance certificate. Applicants are required to disclose all assets and liabilities (local and foreign) and may as a result be subjected to scrutiny regarding the origin of the funds being exported.

Certain retirement funds are subjected to a three-year rule, which effectively blocks funds from being exited from South Africa until such time as proof of foreign residency can be provided to SARS.

## **Immigrants**

On arrival in South Africa, immigrants are required to make a declaration to SARB via an Authorised Dealer, disclosing their foreign assets undertaking that their foreign assets will not be placed at the disposal of a third party South African resident.

Immigrants may freely deal with their foreign assets and income.

Assets introduced into South Africa may be retransferred together with normal growth during first 5 years.

After 5 years the immigrant will be classified as a South African resident and qualify for foreign capital investment and emigration allowances.

## **Inheritances**

Foreign assets inherited from a resident may, on application to FinSurv, be retained abroad provided that the assets were held abroad by the deceased in compliance with the provisions of the South African Exchange Control Regulations. Where it is disclosed that the foreign assets inherited were held by the deceased in a manner contrary to the provisions of the Regulations, an application for regularisation of such assets must be submitted via an Authorised Dealer to FinSurv.

The approval of the FinSurv to retain foreign inherited assets abroad will be subject to the condition that the foreign assets may not be placed at the disposal of other South African residents.

## **Loop structures**

Loop structures, subject to certain restrictions, have been legalised. Corporates with authorised foreign assets may invest in South Africa through an offshore structure, subject to reporting of the transactions through an Authorised Dealer to FinSurv. The establishment of loop structures by the contribution of assets to an offshore entity are subject to FinSurv approval.

Existing unauthorised loop structures created prior to 1 January 2021 will not be automatically regularised as a result of the changes to the exchange control rules. These structures must still be regularised with the FinSurv.

## **Residents temporarily abroad**

A resident temporarily abroad may on departure and annually thereafter utilise the R1 million single discretionary allowance and the R10 million foreign capital allowance without returning to South Africa. Applications must be made to Authorised Dealers, a South African identity document, and in the case of the R10 million foreign capital allowance a tax clearance certificate, will need to be provided every 12 months.

## **Income earned abroad**

Income earned abroad whilst a resident is working offshore may be retained abroad. Income earned abroad whilst a resident is present in South Africa must be repatriated to South Africa.

## **Crypto Currencies**

The SARB does not currently oversee, supervise or regulate crypto assets. Crypto assets are not legal tender in South Africa, so they may be legally refused as a means of payment. Crypto currencies are not guaranteed or backed by the SARB.

FinSurv will not approve any transactions in crypto currency. Individuals may purchase crypto assets from abroad using their single discretionary allowance and/or their individual foreign capital allowance of up to R10 million per calendar year, provided a tax clearance certificate is obtained. Certain inflows and outflows arising from the use of crypto currencies are restricted. The sale of crypto currency can have income tax and CGT implications.

## **GLOBAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION**

The Common Reporting Standard (CRS) is a global standard governing how tax authorities in participating tax jurisdictions share information about the financial assets and income of taxpayers.

The financial institutions that are required to report under the CRS include banks, custodians and other financial institutions such as brokers, certain collective investment vehicles and certain insurance companies.

Reportable accounts include those held by individuals and entities (including trusts and foundations), and the standard includes a requirement to look through passive entities to report on the individuals that ultimately control these entities.

All information relevant to the financial assets is required to be disclosed.

## **RETENTION OF RECORDS**

Documents must be retained for a certain number of years, depending on the legislation. Below are the prescribed retention periods which commence from the date of the last entry in the record.

### **Close Corporations**

Founding statement, (CK1 or CK2 and CK2A), minute books and resolutions passed at meetings	Indefinite
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Accounting records, annual financial statements and report of the accounting officer	15 years
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### **Companies**

Registration certificate, Memorandum of Incorporation and alterations or amendments, rules, securities registers, register of company secretary and auditors	Indefinite
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Notice and minutes of shareholders meetings, resolutions adopted, records of directors, minutes and resolutions of directors meetings, reports presented at the AGM, annual financial statements, accounting records.	7 years
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Any other company records (if longer period is not specified in terms of another act)	7 years
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### **Tax**

Returns submitted	5 years
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### **Capital gains tax**

All records to date of sale including base costs and valuations, thereafter from date return lodged	5 years
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## VAT

Returns submitted and records supporting information disclosed therein, including invoices, debit notes, credit notes, bank statements, stock lists, paid cheques	5 years
Documents supporting zero rating of supplies	5 years

## Employee records

Including records of remuneration paid, PAYE withheld, employee's income tax reference number, EMP501	5 years
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## Micro businesses

Records of income, dividends declared, assets owned and liabilities exceeding R10 000	5 years
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Records may be retained electronically provided they can be reprinted.

## **INTEREST RATES**

### **OFFICIAL INTEREST RATES**

This is the minimum interest rate to be charged on loans to employees, shareholders or trusts to avoid triggering taxable fringe benefits, deemed dividends or deemed donations.

The official interest rate is linked to the repo rate: 100 basis points above the repo rate.

	Official interest rate
1 February 2023 to 31 March 2023	8.25%
1 April 2023 to 31 May 2023	8.75%
1 June 2023 to date	9.25%

### **PREScribed INTEREST RATES**

These are the rates applicable to provisional tax overpaid, outstanding taxes and refunds of tax on successful appeals or certain delayed refunds.

Interest received is taxable, while interest paid to SARS is not deductible unless it represents a repayment of interest which was previously taxed.

Period	On provisional tax overpaid (Prescribed rate – 4%)	Overdue taxes and refunds (Prescribed rate)
1 March 2023 to 30 April 2023	6.50%	10.50%
1 May 2023 to 30 June 2023	6.75%	10.75%
1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023	7.25%	11.25%
1 September 2023 to date	7.75%	11.75%

### **PRIME OVERDRAFT RATES**

Date of change	Rate
25 November 2022	10.50%
27 January 2023	10.75%
31 March 2023	11.25%
25 May 2023	11.75%

## **Crowe in Southern Africa**

Crowe in Southern Africa provides the personal attention of a small firm, the service efficiency of a medium size and the resource and knowledge base of a multinational.

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- IFRS Consulting
- Transaction Services
- Human Capital
- Internal Control Solutions

## **Important**

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*This book is based on legislation currently in force in the Republic of South Africa and proposed legislation arising out of the Budget speech as presented on 21 February 2024. It attempts to summarise legislation and regulations, some of which are extremely complicated and should not therefore be used in isolation as a basis for investment or taxation decision, for which we ask you to please consult us. Whilst every care has been exercised in compilation, no responsibility is accepted for any inaccuracies or errors.*



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