



13 April 2022

**To: South African Revenue Service (SARS)**

Lehae La SARS  
299 Bronkhorst Street  
PRETORIA  
0181

**Via email:** SARS [Livhuwani Netshiombo <LNetshiombo@sars.gov.za>](mailto:LNetshiombo@sars.gov.za);  
**CC:** SARS [SNtombela3@sars.gov.za](mailto:SNtombela3@sars.gov.za); [basilb@sars.gov.za](mailto:basilb@sars.gov.za)  
SAIT [bgouws@thesait.org.za](mailto:bgouws@thesait.org.za); [escalations@thesait.org.za](mailto:escalations@thesait.org.za)

**RE: SARS contact centre and call-back functionality not available**

Dear Colleagues,

**SARS contact centre**

Over the past month, the South African Institute of Taxation (SAIT) has received frequent queries on the subject of unanswered calls by the SARS contact centre.

Amongst others, the challenges experienced are:

- Extremely high call volumes;
- Long call waiting times; and
- Calls being prematurely cut before getting through to a call centre agent.

As a result of the above, taxpayers and tax practitioners have been unable to make contact with SARS to request status updates on open cases and are unable to escalate long outstanding cases.

Although taxpayers and tax practitioners are continuously encouraged to make use of the online channels (eFiling and SARS online query system), these platforms do not provide feedback on the progress of open cases. In addition, cases that have exceeded the prescribed finalisation turnaround times cannot be escalated through these online channels.

In the interim, SAIT has been escalating the affected cases to the relevant regional contacts.

**Call-back functionality**

SARS previously advised tax practitioners and taxpayers to make use of the SARS contact centre call-back functionality to allow the SARS agents to call them back as soon as they are first in the queue. SAIT has continued to communicate this process to members.

However, for the past two weeks SAIT has been receiving reports that the call-back functionality for the tax practitioner's line is not working:

1. In certain instances, a pre-recorded message would inform the tax practitioner that the call-back functionality is not available.



2. In instances where a call-back was triggered, no call back occurred. SAIT is aware of the possibility that SARS calls are being registered as 'spam calls' on tax practitioners' cellphones and SARS as a result being unable to make contact with the tax practitioners. However, upon investigation it was found that the call-back also did not take place where the tax practitioner used a landline number (no 'spam' calls will be isolated), rather than a cellphone.

Over the last two weeks, SAIT has escalated several cases through the relevant regional representatives.

### **Conclusion**

On a case by case basis, SAIT is escalating the affected cases to the SARS regions for resolution. However, raising the communication challenges with SARS National seems prudent, considering the date from which the challenges have been experienced, and the fact that no improvement has yet been observed.

Yours faithfully,

**SAIT Tax Technical**

### **Disclaimer**

*This document has been prepared within a limited factual and contextual framework, in order to provide technical guidance regarding a specific query relating to tax practice. This document does not purport to be a comprehensive review in respect of the subject matter, nor does it constitute legal advice or legal opinion. No reliance may be placed on this document by any party other than the initial intended recipient, nor may this document be distributed in any manner or form without the prior, written consent of the South African Institute of Taxation NPC having been obtained. The South African Institute of Taxation NPC does not accept any responsibility and/or liability, of whatsoever nature and however arising, in respect of any reliance and/or action taken on, or in respect of, this document. Copyright in respect of this document and its contents remain vested in the South African Institute of Taxation NPC.*