

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY
QUESTION NUMBER 177

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Mr N J J van R Koornhof (Cope) to ask the Minister of Finance:

Whether the SA Revenue Service has been able to successfully implement measures to shorten queues at their various offices; if not, why not; if so, (a) what measures were implemented and (b) what results were achieved?

NW193E

REPLY:

The South African Revenue Service has successfully introduced an electronic queue management system in our branches which has had a substantial impact on reducing queuing times especially during peak periods. As indicated in the table below, despite a 58% increase in the number of taxpayers visiting branches during the 2010 Tax Season compared to 2009, this was accompanied by a 57% improvement in average queuing times.

Details	Average Performance Comparison October and November	
	2009-2010	2010-2011
Total taxpayers visited branches	210,392	332,293
Taxpayers attended to within 30 minutes	23,899	216,471
%Taxpayers attended to within 30 minutes	11%	53%
Average Queuing Time	01:10:27	34:18

Among additional measures to reduce queuing times especially around the deadlines for submission have been extensive communication campaigns to encourage taxpayers to submit their returns early to avoid the last minute rush.

In this regard, the 2010 Tax Season saw an increase in the number of taxpayers submitting returns earlier during the five month submission period (July to November). It took just seven weeks in Tax Season 2010 to reach 1 million submissions compared to 16 weeks in 2008.

Another indicator of early filing is that we received approximately 750,000 returns within the first month of Tax Season in 2010 compared to approximately 500,000 in 2009 and only 130,000 in 2008.

Further measures to reduce queues at branches include the establishment of additional branches, the deployment of mobile service vehicles, and the deployment of service staff to outreach points including in various shopping malls at which assistance is given by SARS in the completion of tax returns.