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Company Registration in South Africa

The Complete Checklist & Cost Guide for Foreign Investors (2026)

Foreign ownership	Up to 100% (no residency)	**Authority**	CIPC (BizPortal)
Timeline	~2-4 weeks end-to-end	**Registration**	3-7 business days
Corporate tax	27% (15% in an SEZ)	**VAT**	15% (above R1m turnover)

1. Before you start

- ☐ Choose your structure: Private Company (Pty) Ltd suits most foreign investors
- ☐ Foreign firms: decide between a local subsidiary, a branch (external company), or a representative presence
- ☐ Confirm directors (min. 1) and shareholders (min. 1) - all can be foreign
- ☐ Note: 100% foreign ownership is allowed with NO residency required to own
- ☐ Line up a South-African-resident public officer for SARS (Afrisetup can provide one)
- ☐ Secure a registered business address in South Africa (lease, utility bill or virtual office)

2. Reserve your company name (CIPC / BizPortal) - optional

- ☐ Create a user profile on the CIPC BizPortal platform
- ☐ Enter 1-4 proposed names with the (Pty) Ltd suffix, in order of preference
- ☐ Pay the R50 name-reservation fee; availability is checked in real time
- ☐ An approved name (CoR 9.1 / 9.4) is valid for 6 months
- ☐ Profit companies may also register without reserving a name

3. Documents to prepare

- ☐ Form CoR 14.1 (Notice of Incorporation) + Annexure A (director / shareholder particulars)
- ☐ Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI) - standard (CoR 15.1A) or custom
- ☐ Certified passport / ID copies for all directors and shareholders (certified within 3 months)
- ☐ Proof of registered business address (recent utility bill or lease) and financial year-end
- ☐ Power of Attorney if an agent files on your behalf
- ☐ Branch (extra): register as an external company (CoR 20.1) within 20 business days of establishing a presence

4. Register with CIPC (BizPortal)

- ☐ Upload the signed CoR 15.1A, certified IDs and any Power of Attorney
- ☐ Pay the registration fee (R125-R475, depending on type & name reservation)
- ☐ Receive a tracking number; CIPC confirms the outcome in 3-7 business days
- ☐ Receive your registration certificate (CoR 14.3), MOI and company registration number by email

5. After registration

- ☐ Company is automatically registered for income tax with SARS - appoint your public officer
- ☐ Register for VAT if turnover exceeds R1,000,000/yr (voluntary below)
- ☐ Register for PAYE, UIF and SDL (1% of payroll) once you employ staff; register for COIDA
- ☐ Open a business bank account with your CoR 14.3, MOI and SARS number
- ☐ Obtain any sector licences (e.g. liquor, health) and a B-BBEE certificate if bidding for tenders
- ☐ File annual returns with the CIPC each financial year

6. Foreign investors - don't forget

- ☐ 100% foreign ownership is allowed with NO residency required to own the company
- ☐ You must appoint a South-African-resident public officer for SARS
- ☐ A foreign director who will LIVE and run the business needs a Business Visa
- ☐ Business Visa: ~R5,000,000 (~USD 266,000) FDI + 60% SA employment + a DTIC recommendation (waiver possible)
- ☐ SEZ companies pay just 15% corporate tax (vs. 27% standard); R&D, ETI & capital grants via DTIC / InvestSA
- ☐ Exchange control (SARB): with correct structuring, dividends and capital can be repatriated
- ☐ South Africa is the AfCFTA gateway and a member of SACU, SADC and BRICS

Let Afrisetup register your South African company - remotely, from anywhere.
We handle name reservation, MOI drafting, CIPC/BizPortal filing, SARS & VAT, resident public officer, business-visa & DTIC support and compliance. Get your fixed all-in quote at afrisetup.com/southafrica/contact-us