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BREAKING NEWS!!!

The Minister of Home Affairs announced the introduction of E-VISAS at the end of the first quarter of 2018

The Minister of Home Affairs has just announced that the much awaited electronic or E-VISA system will be introduced at the end of the first quarter of the financial year end, being the 31st March 2019.

This ties in with the coming-to-an-end and expiry of the Visa Facilitation Services “VFS” contract shortly before that. What is envisaged is that by end of March 2019 all Visa applications, irrespective of where lodged, will have to be done electronically. This will initially be done on a “pilot” basis at one Departmental office within South Africa and one overseas Embassy, initially.

Ostensibly this has been done in order to facilitate and speed up the Visa processing service.

By way of background, currently the process is partially electronic but the physical lodgement of applications takes place at VFS offices, where there are various offices present in the country, alternatively in South Africa, from where it is dispatched to Head Office of the Department of Home Affairs in most instances where the Central Adjudication Team at Head Office of the Department of Home Affairs in Pretoria then process and adjudicate the applications, and inform VFS or Embassy concerned when the application has been finalised, with the applicant or representative being informed when it has been dispatched to the relevant VFS office.

It is a brave step forward but perhaps the time frame within which it is going to be implemented is going to be the biggest problem relating to the system outside of the actual Adjudication process.

E-VISAS as a process was mooted some years back by one of the previous Ministers of Home Affairs and accordingly is not a new concept at all.

The problem in the system is not only the implementation thereof but the fact that Adjudication of the applications, whether on hard copy or electronically submitted still has to be followed and given the current sometimes dismal record in the Adjudication process, it is a thought that perhaps this should rather have been brought in line first before bringing in a sophisticated E-VISA on-line lodgement process.

The above is all the information that we have at this time, but as and when information does become available we certainly will send out further updates.

**AS ALWAYS, WE ENDEAVOR TO KEEP YOU UP TO DATE ON
ALL IMMIGRATION RELATED ISSUES**

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