

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ETA, MEETS & STAGES

Updated July 2025

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Are these changes happening immediately?

A: No. The ETA has a target launch of end-September 2025, but only for tourist visas at OR Tambo and Cape Town airports initially. MEETS and STAGES have no confirmed launch dates yet. Current visa processes remain unchanged until official implementation.

Q: Will all my clients need to apply for an ETA?

A: This has not been confirmed. Despite some media reports, DHA has not yet announced whether ETA will be required for all travellers. More details are expected prior to the September 2025 launch date.

Q: How will I know when these systems go live?

A: SATSA will provide immediate updates to members as soon as official announcements are made. Monitor our communications closely.

ETA-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q: Which clients will definitely need an ETA from September?

A: Initially, only tourists arriving by air at OR Tambo and Cape Town International airports. The scope may expand later, but current visa exemptions remain in place until further notice.

Q: Will visa-exempt nationalities need to apply for ETA?

A: This is one of the key questions still to be answered by DHA in September. We will provide updates as they become available.

Q: What happens if the ETA system crashes or has technical problems?

A: DHA has not yet published contingency procedures. We'll seek clarification on backup processes during system outages.

Q: How much will the ETA cost?

A: Fees have not been announced yet.

MEETS-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q: My company organises conferences. When can I start using MEETS?

A: No launch date has been confirmed. Continue using current visa application processes until MEETS goes live.

Q: What qualifies as a "major event" under MEETS?

A: Official criteria haven't been published. Examples given include SA20 cricket and World Rugby Sevens, but the full scope remains unclear.

Q: Can I register my event in advance for MEETS processing?

A: Registration procedures haven't been announced yet. We'll update members once operational details are available.

STAGES-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q: Our company works with international film crews. How do I access STAGES?

A: The online portal isn't live yet. Continue with current visa processes until STAGES launches.

Q: What counts as "entertainment industry" under STAGES?

A: While film productions are clearly included, the full scope (e.g., TV, commercials, music videos) hasn't been defined officially.

Q: Will STAGES cover crew visas for South African productions shooting abroad then returning?

A: This scenario hasn't been addressed in official communications yet.

OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS

Q: Should I advise clients to wait for these new systems before applying for visas?

A: No. Continue with current processes. These digital systems are additional options, not replacements for existing visa pathways (yet).

Q: How will these changes affect processing times for current visa applications?

A: No impact expected on existing processes during the transition period.

Q: What if my client's travel dates are in September/October. Should they wait for ETA?

A: Apply through current channels now. If ETA becomes available and beneficial for their specific situation, they can potentially use it for future trips.

Q: Will these systems integrate with existing booking platforms or DMC software?

A: Integration capabilities haven't been announced.

BUSINESS PLANNING QUESTIONS

Q: How should I prepare my business for these changes?

A:

- Stay informed through SATSA updates
- Ensure your team understands current vs. upcoming processes
- Consider how digital-first visa processing might affect your client service workflows
- Prepare contingency plans for potential transition period disruptions

Q: Should I be marketing these new visa options to clients?

A: Not yet. Wait for confirmed launch dates and full operational details before promoting these services.

Q: Will there be training available on the new systems?

A: DHA hasn't announced training programmes yet, but SATSA will arrange briefings for members once systems are operational.

This FAQ will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated: 16 July 2025