



eProcurement User Guide

Table of Contents

What is eProcurement?.....	3
Benefits.....	4
What is Votaquotes?.....	4
How does this affect suppliers?	5
How do suppliers register?	6
Approval process for suppliers.....	6
How to use the supplier home page?	8
How does a supplier maintain their on-line registration?	8
What is a reverse auction system?	9
How does a supplier bid on an auction?.....	10
How do suppliers participate in an eTender?	12
What is preventing a supplier from placing a bid?	12
How are bid points calculated?	13
Who qualifies to claim B-BBEE points?	14
How are auctions awarded?	15
Other functions	15
How to de-register from the eProcurement system	16
Who can suppliers contact?	16

What is eProcurement?

eProcurement applies supplier-friendly eCommerce technology to simplify and streamline the purchasing process and to integrate suppliers' and Electoral Commission (IEC) business processes. This means that suppliers can now interface with the Electoral Commission with little effort once registered, and they can quickly and reliably submit bids.

The Electoral Commission's eProcurement system is commonly referred to as Votaquotes.

The eProcurement system includes features such as:

- **Integration with CSD:** The eProcurement system will only register suppliers that are a pre-registered on the Central Supplier Database System (CSD) at National Treasury (<https://secure.csd.gov.za/>). Should supplier information change, the supplier will be required to go to the CSD system to update their details accordingly.
- **Supplier Registration:** For suppliers to do business with the Electoral Commission, they must register online and complete the registration process by sending the required documents to the Electoral Commission. The suppliers' registered commodities will be retrieved from the CSD and will be displayed on the registration page. The supplier will receive automated notices (sms or email) of running auctions and eTenders for their registered commodities. The eProcurement system will use the email address provided on the CSD in order to validate ownership of the supplier profile.
- **Supplier Approval process:** The supplier's status on eProcurement will depend on progress made with the registration process and documents received by the Electoral Commission. The supplier may not bid if their status is not 'Approved'. It is important for the supplier to keep their registration (including applicable documentation) with the Electoral Commission updated as their approval status may regress e.g. expired B-BBEE status or non-compliant tax status via the CSD which is updated from the SARS Tax Compliance System (TCS).
- **Reverse Auctions:** Suppliers/bidders place bids online. The bidder with the most bid points and who complies with the auction conditions, requirements and bid specifications may be the winning bid. Bidders can reduce their prices but may not increase or withdraw their bids once placed. An automated proxy bid may be activated on behalf of a bidder guided by a minimum (unit) price. Auctions may run as 'Open' or 'Restricted'.
 - *Open Auction:* In an open auction, any supplier who is registered and has a status of

“Approved” may bid on an auction; and

- *Restricted Auction: With a restricted auction, pre-selected suppliers on an Electoral Commission panel are given the opportunity to bid on the auction. Such panels are usually appointed through an open competitive bidding process (e.g. tender).*
- **eTenders:** Used to encourage wider participation by suppliers. Tenders and RFQs may be advertised as eTenders on the eProcurement system.
- **Award of Auction:** After an auction has closed online, the bids received are evaluated according to the applicable criteria provided for in the bid specifications. Bidders can view the outcome of an auction awarded online.

Benefits

The eProcurement system offers the following benefits to the supplier:

- An open and transparent system – All bids placed online can be viewed by all suppliers at any stage of the bidding process. Bidders can compete openly for business.
- An efficient and objective process – The system aims to eliminate any possibility of irregularities and subjectivity in the Electoral Commission’s procurement process.
- Reduced costs for the bidders – Bidders save on time and travel costs because they no longer need to travel to an office of the Electoral Commission to submit, update or follow up on bids, or to enquire about the outcome of bids – all can be accessed online.
- Broadest possible competition by automated notification – All registered suppliers will receive email or SMS messages notifying them of relevant auctions. The eProcurement system is designed to ensure that registered suppliers are informed of running auctions through their chosen method of communication.
- Unregistered eProcurement suppliers may also be invited to register and participate in auctions.

What is eProcurement (Votaquotes)?

The eProcurement (Votaquotes) solution is an online quote gathering system based on the principles of a [reverse auction](#). Auctions on which approved suppliers can bid will be created on the eProcurement system.

Most purchasing processes at the Electoral Commission, such as requisition creation,

workflow approval, purchase order creation and goods receiving, are automated through the Electoral Commission's enterprise resource system (i.e. SAP system).

The diagram below shows the purchasing process and where the eProcurement system fits in:

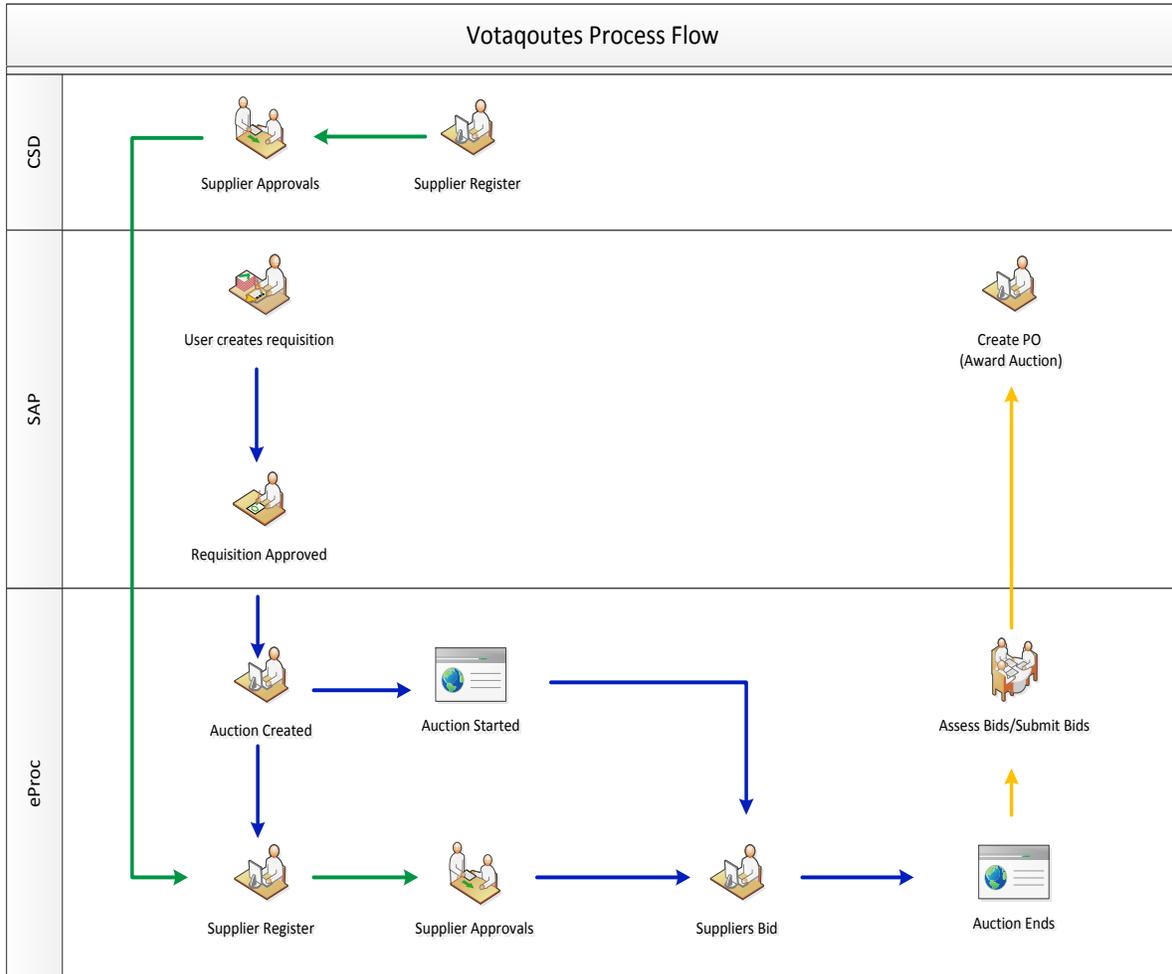


Figure 1: eProcurement process

How does this affect suppliers?

In order to continue doing business with the Electoral Commission, suppliers are required to register on the National Treasury Central Supplier Database (CSD). Suppliers will require their CSD supplier number to be able to register on the eProcurement system. Suppliers who do not register on the CSD will not be able to register on the eProcurement system and may miss out on business opportunities.

Once registered, suppliers will be notified of running auctions related to business commodities selected by the supplier on the CSD. A supplier can bid for these commodities based on their

supplier status on the eProcurement system.

How do suppliers register?

A supplier must register on the eProcurement system to participate in auctions appearing on the eProcurement system. Completing the on-line registration form is a simple and short process. Registration on the CSD is a prerequisite as most of the information will be retrieved from the CSD.

The supplier may quit the online registration process at any point and will be able to log back in with their username and password and continue from where they would have left off. If a supplier does this, they need to enter their username and password on the 'login' tab, not the 'register' tab.

- The supplier opens the internet browser (Microsoft Internet Explorer versions 6 to 11 are supported). Other browsers supported are Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari and Opera.
- The supplier types <https://votaquotes.elections.org.za> in the address field.
- The eProcurement home page will be displayed.
- The supplier clicks on the orange 'register' tab at the top of the screen.
- The supplier will be guided through a six-step process to complete their online registration.
- It is important that the supplier reads the terms and conditions. The supplier must accept the terms and conditions each time they log into the system.
- Important! The supplier must take note of and remember their username and password since they will need these in future to log into the system and bid on auctions. Usernames and passwords are case sensitive. A confirmation email will be sent to the supplier's registered email address.
- In order to complete the registration process the required hard copies of documents need to be sent to the Electoral Commission.

It is important that the supplier completes the registration process until their registration has an approved status online before they will be able to participate in an auction.

Approval process for suppliers

It is important for the supplier to understand their registration status at any given time. This has

bearing on what a supplier can do in the eProcurement system.

- Once the supplier has completed their online registration, they will have a supplier status of “In Process” and will NOT be able to bid on auctions yet.
- After registration the supplier will have one of the following statuses:
 - **“In Process”**: Suppliers are given this status when there are outstanding matters that the supplier needs to rectify and/or documents that remain outstanding. Please refer to the ‘general comments’ box and deal with outstanding issues. This status will NOT allow the supplier to bid on an auction.
 - **“Awaiting Approval”**: Suppliers are given this status when they have made an online change to their registration detail which requires processing by the Electoral Commission. This status will NOT allow the supplier to bid on an auction.
 - **“Approved”**: This status is set by the Electoral Commission once all of the supplier details have been processed and approved. This status will allow the supplier to bid on an auction. However there may be issues that do not affect the approval status, in the general comments box to deal with.
 - **“Limited (Non-Compliant Tax Status)”**: Previously approved suppliers are given this status when their tax affairs become non-compliant on the CSD. This status will NOT allow the supplier to bid on any auction.
 - **“De-Registered”**: This status indicates that the supplier is no longer interested in using the eProcurement system and that the supplier has deregistered on the site. This status will NOT allow the supplier to bid on an auction.

If the supplier opts to de-register at any point, their registration details are not deleted from the eProcurement system but the supplier status is set to “De-registered”. The supplier may not edit their profile with that status. The supplier must not re-register if it wishes to activate the registration at a later stage. The Electoral Commission may re-activate such an account if provided with the supplier’s CSD registration number. The supplier should contact the eProcurement helpdesk for assistance.

- **“Dormant”**: This status indicates that the supplier has not been active on their account and that they have failed to respond to any efforts of the Electoral Commission to contact them in order to resolve outstanding matters. This status will NOT allow the supplier to bid on an auction. The supplier must access their account and update their details on-line. The supplier will be deregistered after a grace period.
- Suppliers must note that their registration status may change at any time, e.g. from “Approved” to “Limited (Non-Compliant Tax Status)” if their tax compliance status on

the CSD becomes non-compliant. The supplier must ensure that any issues concerning their tax affairs are resolved with SARS. That will result in the CSD being updated to tax compliant.

How to use the supplier home page?

Once a supplier is registered, maintenance of supplier detail can be access through the eProcurement Supplier Home Page. A supplier can also access and participate in auctions, monitor bidding history on auctions, view eTenders, *et cetera*.

The Supplier Home Page allows the supplier to:

- View the supplier's current registration status.
- View outstanding issues by checking the 'General Comments' box.
- View a list of auctions and eTenders the supplier has placed on their 'Hotlist' (click on **My Hotlist**). This will provide the supplier with a quick link to any auctions the supplier may be interested in.
- View a list of auctions on which the suppliers has placed bids (click on **My Auctions**).
- View a list of eTenders that a supplier is interested in (click on **My Tenders**).
- View and make changes to the supplier registration details (click on **Maintain My Details**).
- View all auctions (click on **View Auctions**).
- View and complete the supplier survey (click on **Complete Surveys**).
- De-register from the site by clicking on the De-Register button.

How does a supplier maintain their on-line registration?

After completing the on-line registration form, the 'General Comments' box must be visited each time the supplier visits the eProcurement website to ensure that they do not have any outstanding issues. Suppliers will not be able to update information on the eProcurement system that originates from the CSD. In order to keep their information up to date, suppliers will have to make sure that their information is correct on the CSD. The eProcurement system will retrieve the supplier information from the CSD.

The supplier can edit some of the information they have entered into the on-line registration form that is not retrieved from the CSD. Suppliers can maintain their on-line registration by selecting 'Maintain my Details' from 'My Home' after logging in. The supplier will have to click on 'Maintain my Details'. A second line of menu items will open up. Thereafter the supplier will have to click on the appropriate item. Information is grouped under:

- Organisational Profile;
- Tax Registration Details;
- Ownership breakdown/ Executive Management; and
- Other information.

Click on the 'Save' button after making changes. Unsaved changes made will be lost.

What is a reverse auction system?

It is imperative to understand how a reverse auction system works before using the eProcurement system. It is important to read through the terms and conditions to understand fully the legal implications of participating on the eProcurement system as bids placed are binding.

- A regular auction, i.e. as run by an auctioneer, is when someone sells off goods/products to the public under the direction of the auctioneer. The auctioneer calls the price and bidders accept it until the highest bid is reached. Such an auction then closes and the highest bid is the winner.
- In a reverse auction, the goods are held by various suppliers who offer the same (or similar) product to the Electoral Commission. The supplier offers a price and may, if they so wish, reduce their pricing if another bidder offers a lower price. This process continues until the auction closes. The eProcurement system provides for a process called proxy bidding that can automate the process of lowering prices taking into consideration a supplier's overall bid points achieved, i.e. price as well as B-BBEE status level and ranks bids accordingly.
- Other considerations besides price and B-BBEE status levels of the bidder is the location of the bidder (if applicable to a particular auction) and whether more than 25% of the contract will be sub-contracted if awarded the contract. Should a supplier subcontract to another entity for more than 25% and the subcontractor's B-BBEE status level is lower no points for B-BBEE will be achieved.
- Provided all auction conditions are met, the bidder with the highest bid points will achieve

the leading bid. The subsequent bid evaluation and bid adjudication processes will determine the eventual successful bid.

How does a supplier bid on an auction?

A supplier who is registered and approved may bid on an auction. If a supplier is not registered yet, they must please complete the online registration process and submit the necessary documentation. Only registered suppliers with an 'Approved' status will be able to participate in auctions. Anyone may, however, view auctions and eTenders online whether registered or not.

Please note that the eProcurement system includes a Dummy Auction that allows suppliers to place and update bids in order to familiarise themselves with the auction process by virtue of the step by step guide provided below. The Dummy Auction can be accessed through a link on the Home Page.

1. Go to <https://votaquotes.elections.org.za>
2. The eProcurement Home Page will be displayed.
3. The login section is to the top left on the Home Page. The supplier will have to type their username and password in the Login frame and tick the checkbox to accept the Terms and Conditions. Click "Login".
4. The Supplier Home Page will be displayed.
5. Check the supplier status and the "General Comments" box for outstanding issues.
6. Click on the "View Auctions" link displayed on the left of the screen. A list of all running auctions will be displayed. The supplier can also use the Browse Auctions screen to find and view closed and awarded auctions.
7. Suppliers Click on the auction they are interested in.
8. The "Auction Details" page will be displayed. Blue underlined writing forms a link to the specification document. A page indicator is provided below which forms a link to the next page in the event that a number of documents are available on the auction.
9. Click on "Add to Hotlist" to add this auction to the supplier personal Hotlist. This will allow the supplier in future to access this auction quickly from the Hotlist on the Supplier Home Page.
10. Click on "Remove from Hotlist" to remove this auction from the supplier Hotlist.
11. Click on "Bid on Auction" to start placing the bid.
12. The Auction Compliance page will be displayed. The supplier must answer all auction

condition questions at this point so that they can confirm compliance with the auction conditions. Suppliers are also required to indicate whether more than 25% of the work will be done by sub-contractors. A comment is required in each comment field. As per the auction specification document, the supplier may be required to submit additional documents in support of the bid placed. Provision is made on this page to upload auction specific documents (if applicable). After the compliance page is completed, the Price, Compare and Bid page will be displayed on click of the "Next" button.

13. Enter bid in the Unit Price field for each of the items in the auction. Care must be taken to FIRST determine exactly what unit pricing, including VAT, is required as stipulated in the bid specifications and auction requirements. It will not be possible to amend incorrect unit prices that are too low or where VAT has been omitted.
14. Suppliers may opt for the system to apply proxy bidding by ticking the proxy check box. In this case, for each line item, a supplier must enter an absolute minimum unit price including VAT. The eProcurement system will automatically reduce their quoted price in conjunction with their B-BBEE bid points to keep their bid one bid point higher than the leading bid in the event of another supplier placing a bid that has a higher point value than their current bid. The reduction in price will stop once the supplier minimum unit price has been reached.
15. Click on the Compare Bid button to compare the supplier bid with the bid of the leading suppliers. The supplier will see their bid highlighted and how it compares with others already placed. This will **NOT** place the bid.
16. Clicking on the Refresh button will check the bidding activity on the system and give updated positions of bids. This will **NOT** place the bid.
17. Click on the Place Bid button to place the bid. If the prices for all line items are captured, and all minimum prices are captured in the case of a proxy bid, the bid will be placed and this message will display: "*Your bid has been successfully placed*".

NB: If a bid has been placed without taking the supplier B-BBEE status into account and the B-BBEE status level changes before the auction closes, a new bid must be placed (before bid closes) to accommodate the change in B-BBEE status level. It will not be automatically included if updated.

IMPORTANT – This will only recalculate bid points taking into consideration the B-BBEE bid points and will NOT increase any prices placed in a bid. A bid may, however, achieve a higher bid point overall which could affect ranking.

How do suppliers participate in an eTender?

eTenders are generally created to advertise the Electoral Commission's regular tenders and/or to facilitate requests for quotation (RFQ) processes as may be required.

1. A list of all running eTenders is displayed.
2. The supplier can also use the Browse eTenders screen to find and view closed and awarded eTenders.
3. Suppliers Click on the "eTender" they are interested in.
4. The eTender Details page will be displayed.
5. Click on "Add to Hotlist" to add this eTender to the supplier Hotlist. This will allow the supplier in future to access this eTender quickly from their Hotlist on their Supplier Home Page (i.e. My Home).
6. Click on "Remove from Hotlist" to remove an eTender from the supplier's personal Hotlist.
7. ONLY WHERE APPLICABLE – A supplier may attach files and schedules that are related to the supplier's eTender response. Supplier must, however, ensure that they comply with the instructions in the bid document. Please note that this process is not applicable to tenders that require bids to be placed in any one or more of the Electoral Commission's tender boxes as stated in the tender document.

What is preventing a supplier from placing a bid?

A number of factors may prevent suppliers from placing bids:

1. A supplier may see a message "**Your status does not allow you to place a bid**":
 - Go to the 'General Comments' box in 'My Home' and deal with remaining outstanding issues.
2. A supplier with a registration status as "**Limited (Tax Non-Compliant)**":
 - Suppliers will not be able to place bids if their tax status on the National Treasury Supplier Database (CSD) is non-compliant. Suppliers must liaise with SARS in order for the CSD to reflect a compliant tax status. The CSD will in turn update a supplier's registration status on eProcurement. Please note that there may be a time lapse for this process to take place. The Electoral Commission is not liable for the inability of a

supplier to place bids during this period.

3. After placing a bid, the supplier's company name does not appear in the list of bidders that have placed a bid:
 - The supplier has compared their bid and then refreshed but did not click on the "place bid" button again in order to submit their bid. The supplier must see the "your bid has been successfully placed" message which confirms that their bid was placed successfully.

How are bid points calculated?

The *Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, (Act 5 of 2000)* as read with the *Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2017* provides for organs of state to use criteria other than price in the evaluation and adjudication of bids.

The following preference point systems are applicable:

1. The 80/20 system for requirements with a Rand value of up to R50,000,000 (all applicable taxes included); and
2. The 90/10 system for requirements with a Rand value above R50,000,000 (all applicable taxes included).
3. The value of auctions are generally estimated to not exceed R50,000,000 (all applicable taxes included) and therefore the 80/20 scoring system shall be applicable.
4. If it is unclear which preference point system will be applicable, then either the 80/20 or the 90/10 preference point system will apply and the lowest acceptable tender will be used to determine the applicable preference point system. This may imply a manual bid scoring process where necessary to replace the automated scoring allocated during an auction.
5. A bidder may not be awarded points for B-BBEE status level of contributor if the bidder intends subcontracting more than 25% of the value of the contract to any other person not qualifying for at least the points that the bidder qualifies for.

Preference points for auctions shall be awarded for:

1. Price (80 or 90 as applicable); and
2. B-BBEE Status Level of Contribution (20 or 10 as applicable).
3. A maximum of 80 or 90 points is allocated for price on the following basis:

80/20 or 90/10 formula

$$P_s = 80 \left(1 - \frac{P_t - P_{\min}}{P_{\min}} \right) \quad \text{or} \quad P_s = 90 \left(1 - \frac{P_t - P_{\min}}{P_{\min}} \right)$$

Where:

- P_s = Points scored for comparative price of bid under consideration
- P_t = Comparative price of bid under consideration
- P_{\min} = Comparative price of lowest acceptable bid

4. In terms of Regulation 5 (2) and 6 (2) of the Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2017 preference points must be awarded to a bidder for attaining the B-BBEE status level of contribution in accordance with the table below:

B-BBEE Status Level of Contributor	Number of points (90/10 system)	Number of points (80/20 system)
1	10	20
2	9	18
3	6	14
4	5	12
5	4	8
6	3	6
7	2	4
8	1	2
Non-compliant contributor	0	0

Who qualifies to claim B-BBEE points?

A supplier's B-BBEE status level details must be captured on-line on the eProcurement system. Failure to submit the required B-BBEE status level certificates or affidavits in support of B-BBEE points claimed will lead to a zero (0) status level for non-compliant suppliers/contributors and no preference points will be given. Only bidders with a verified B-BBEE status level certificate or affidavit qualify for B-BBEE points.

To update the B-BBEE status level on-line:

- Update the required B-BBEE information on the Central Supplier Database (CSD).
- The eProcurement system is integrated with the CSD and at timed intervals (e.g. every 24 hours) will update the B-BBEE status. This, however, remains subject to verification and validation by the Electoral Commission.

How are auctions awarded?

The eProcurement system indicates leading bids at the close of an auction. The eProcurement system automatically scores bids received based on the provisions of the Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2017 and ranks the bids accordingly.

A leading bid may, however, not necessarily be the winning bid.

The final bid adjudication is dependent on the overall bid evaluation process which encompasses:

- Total bid points.
- Compliance with auction conditions and requirements.
- Adherence to bid-specifications.
- Due diligence audit requirements.

The winning bid is determined by the highest scoring bid that qualifies in the bid evaluation process.

Awarded auctions can be viewed on the eProcurement system and winning bids will be displayed.

Other functions

The eProcurement system allows suppliers to:

- Select related links by clicking on the **Links** button.
- Obtain additional information about eProcurement by clicking on **About Us**.
- View contact details for the Electoral Commission by clicking on **Contact Us**.
- View and complete the Supplier Survey by clicking on **Supplier Survey**.
- Access the **User Guide** or **Help** function.
- Search for auctions by entering text in the **Auction Search** field.
- View media releases (if available) by clicking on **Media Release**.
- View any **Site News** on the eProcurement Home Page.

How to de-register from the eProcurement system

A supplier may de-register from the eProcurement system at any time under **My Home**.

Please state reasons for de-registering.

De-registration from the eProcurement system can be reversed. Please contact the eProcurement helpdesk for assistance.

Who can suppliers contact?

Who can I contact with questions/problems/suggestions/comments?

Physical address:

Election House, Riverside Office Park
1303 Heuwel Avenue, Centurion, 0157
South Africa

GPS Co-ordinates:

25° 51' 38 S 28° 11' 26 E

Telephone:

+27 (0)12 622-5550

Fax:

+27 (0)12 622-5713

eMail:

votaquotes@elections.org.za

Postal address:

Private Bag X112, Centurion, 0046,
South Africa

Websites:

<https://votaquotes.elections.org.za>
www.elections.org.za