GoodSource

FROM IDEA TO OPERATION: BUILT TO MOVE WITH YOUR BUSINESS

CIPC Company Registration Guide

A plain-language guide to starting, registering,
and keeping your business legally alive in South Africa.

English	isiZulu

+ 9 languages coming soon

Free — Tier 1 Edition | English & isiZulu available now | GoodSource BOS (Pty) Ltd — Reg. 2026/160970/07

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Use this guide from start to finish, or jump to the section that applies to you.

How to use this guide: Read it from start to finish if you are new to business registration. If you are already registered, jump to Section 05 to make sure you are meeting your ongoing obligations.

SECTION 01

What is CIPC and why does it matter?

CIPC stands for the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission — the South African government body that creates and maintains companies. When you register with CIPC, your business becomes a legal entity: something that exists in law, separate from you as a person.

Compliance areas

This separation protects you. The company can own property in its own name, sign contracts, and be sued — without your personal assets being at risk.

- The company can own property, money, and equipment in its own name
- The company can sign contracts and be sued in its own name
- Your personal belongings are protected if the business gets into debt

> Think of it this way: before registration, your business is just you. After registration, your business is its own separate legal person. That is the protection registration gives you.

> CIPC is **not** SARS. CIPC handles your company's legal existence. SARS handles your taxes. They are two completely separate government departments. Being compliant with one does not mean you are compliant with the other.

SECTION 02

Which business structure is right for you?

Before you register anything, decide what type of business you are starting. This is the most important decision you will make — it cannot be easily undone.

1 **Sole Proprietor**
You = Business
✗ No CIPC

2 **Partnership**
2+ People
✗ No CIPC

3 **Pty Ltd**
You | Company
✓ CIPC Required

The three most common structures — only Pty Ltd requires CIPC registration.

Structure	CIPC?	Liability	Best For

Sole Proprietor	No	Full — you are the business	Freelancers, small side income
Partnership	No	Full — all partners liable	Informal shared business
Private Company (Pty) Ltd	Yes	Limited — company separate	Most growing businesses
Non-Profit Company (NPC)	Yes	Limited	Community, charity, NGO
Personal Liability (Inc.)	Yes	Directors personally liable	Attorneys, accountants

Default to a **Private Company (Pty) Ltd** if you are unsure. It is the most flexible, the most recognised by banks and funders, and the most common structure for growing businesses.

Sole Proprietors and Partnerships do **not** register with CIPC. Register directly with SARS within 60 days of earning your first income.

SECTION 03

Choosing a name for your company

When you register a company you have two options — with a reserved name, or without (faster).

Option 1 — Register without a name (fastest)
Your company registers immediately using your registration number as its legal name (e.g. 2025/123456/07). You can trade under a separate trading name right away. The R250 name change fee is waived for your first name change — you only pay R50.

Option 2 — Register with a reserved name
Reserve your name first for R50. Takes 1 to 2 working days. Once approved, your company registers under that name from day one. Better for businesses where branding matters immediately.

Name reservation (Form CoR9.1): Submit up to 4 name options in one application. The R50 fee is per application — not per name — and is non-refundable even if all 4 are rejected. Once approved, you receive Form CoR9.4. Your reserved name is **valid for 6 months**.

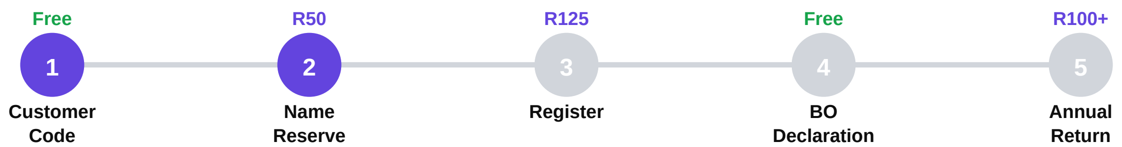
Names CIPC will reject:

- Names identical or too similar to an existing registered company
- Names that imply government affiliation without permission
- Names that are offensive or misleading
- Names that infringe on existing trademarks

SECTION 04

How to register your company — step by step

The recommended way is through BizPortal — the official government registration platform. BizPortal registers your company with CIPC, generates your SARS income tax number, and handles your UIF registration — all in one process.



The registration journey — steps 1 and 2 are purple (done before registration).

1

Get your CIPC customer code

Go to eservices.cipc.co.za and register for a CIPC customer code. Free, done once only. You will receive a customer code and password.

Free 5 minutes

2

Log into BizPortal

Go to bizportal.gov.za. Log in with your South African ID number and CIPC password.

Free 2 minutes

3

Reserve your name (if needed)

Submit Form CoR9.1 with up to 4 name options. Wait for Form CoR9.4 before proceeding.

R50 1–2 working days

4

Complete company registration

You will need: SA ID number, cell and email for each director, residential address for each director, financial year end month.

R125 Same day (SA directors)

5

Download your CoR14.3

Download your Certificate of Incorporation from BizPortal or the email CIPC sends. Free for the first 30 days.

Free Immediate

6

Confirm your SARS income tax number

Check BizPortal or SARS eFiling to confirm your SARS Income Tax reference number. Allow 24 to 72 hours.

Free 24–72 hours

Foreign directors? If any director holds a foreign passport, registration is not same-day. The application goes to CIPC back office for manual review. A South African contact number is required for One-Time Pin delivery.

SECTION 05

What you must do immediately after registration

Registration is not the end — it is the beginning. The moment your company is registered, two legal clocks start running. Miss them and your company loses its good standing automatically.

> **Within 10 days — File your Beneficial Ownership Declaration**
> This tells CIPC who ultimately owns or controls your company. Any person holding 5% or more must be declared. From 1 July 2024, without a current BO Declaration, your Annual Return cannot be filed — the system hard-blocks it. File at bizportal.gov.za or eservices.cipc.co.za.

Your Annual Return obligation

Every company registered with CIPC must file an Annual Return every year — within 30 business days of your registration anniversary date. This is not a tax return. It is a confirmation that your company still exists and is active.

Annual Turnover	Filed on time	Filed late
Less than R1 million	R100	R150
R1 million to R10 million	R450	R600
R10 million to R25 million	R2,000	R2,500
R25 million or more	R3,000	R4,000

> Beneficial Ownership must be renewed **every year** — even if nothing has changed. It is not a once-off filing. Without a current BO on file, you cannot file your Annual Return.

SECTION 06

Keeping your company compliant — ongoing obligations

Once registered, compliance is not annual — it is continuous. The following must be updated at CIPC as they happen, not at year end.

Director changes
Must be updated at CIPC immediately. Log into BizPortal or eServices and update director records. Late updates create personal liability exposure.

Address changes
Your registered address must always be current. CIPC sends all compliance notices to your registered address and contact details.

Name changes
Reserve the new name via CoR9.1 (R50) first. Once you receive CoR9.4, submit the name change on BizPortal. Name change fee is R250. Waived for the first change on a number-registered company.

B-BBEE Certificate
Valid for 12 months and must be renewed annually. If revenue is below R10 million, apply for a free EME certificate via BizPortal. Requires current Annual Returns and BO Declaration.

Beneficial Ownership
Renewed every year — even if nothing has changed. Must be filed before your Annual Return window opens each year.

SECTION 07

What happens if you do not comply

Non-compliance at CIPC is not a slow process. It escalates automatically and the consequences are permanent unless you act in time.

In Business	**Non-Compliant**	**In Deregistration**	**Deregistered**
✓ Compliant	AR/BO Outstanding	2+ Years Missed	Company Gone

The four states of a company — from compliant to permanently deregistered.

Non-Compliant

One or more Annual Returns or Beneficial Ownership Declarations are outstanding. Penalty fees are accumulating.

Action: File everything outstanding immediately. The longer you wait, the more it costs.

In Deregistration Process

Two or more consecutive Annual Returns are missing. CIPC has begun removing your company from the active register.

Action: File all outstanding Annual Returns before the final deregistration date. Once filed, deregistration stops automatically.

Finally Deregistered

Your company no longer legally exists. It cannot trade, invoice, bank, or enter contracts.

Action: Apply for reinstatement using Form CoR40.5 — R200 fee. Then file all outstanding obligations within 30 business days.

Important: When a company is finally deregistered, directors who were active at the time may still be held personally liable for debts the company incurred before deregistration. The limited liability protection does not erase obligations that existed before closure.

SECTION 08

Quick reference — forms, costs, and deadlines

Key forms

Form	Full Name	What it is for
CoR9.1	Application for Reservation of Name	Reserve your company name before registration
CoR9.4	Confirmation of Name Reservation	Issued by CIPC confirming your name is reserved
CoR14.3	Certificate of Incorporation	Proof that your company legally exists
CoR15.2	Notice of Amendment of MOI	Change your Memorandum of Incorporation
CoR40.5	Application for Reinstatement	Reinstate a deregistered company

Key costs

CIPC customer code registration	**Free**
Name reservation — Form CoR9.1	**R50**
Name reservation extension (60 business days)	**R30**
Company registration — Private Company (Pty) Ltd	**R125**
CoR14.3 retrieval after 30 days	**R30**
First name change (number-registered company)	**R50**
Name change (existing named company)	**R250**
Annual Return — under R1M turnover (on time)	**R100**
Annual Return — under R1M turnover (late)	**R150**
Reinstatement — Form CoR40.5	**R200**
Beneficial Ownership Declaration	**Free**
B-BBEE Certificate (EME under R10M revenue)	**Free**

Key deadlines

Obligation	Deadline	Consequence if missed
Beneficial Ownership — new company	Within 10 days of registration	Annual Return blocked

Beneficial Ownership — annual renewal	Before Annual Return filing each year	Annual Return blocked until filed
Annual Return — Pty Ltd	Within 30 business days of anniversary	Late fees. Deregistration after 2 misses
Director change update	Immediately when change occurs	Legal exposure and stale records
SARS VAT registration	Within 21 business days of exceeding R1M	Backdated VAT and SARS penalties

GoodSource BOS

Track all of this automatically

GoodSource BOS monitors all your CIPC and SARS obligations. Tell us where your business is — we watch every deadline, flag every risk, and tell you exactly what to do and when.

✓ Live CIPC and SARS compliance dashboard
✓ Automatic deadline reminders via SMS and email
✓ CIPC gazette monitoring — alerts when your company appears on any notice
✓ Document vault — store your CoR14.3, B-BBEE certificate, and tax clearance
✓ Company registration done for you — R500 all-inclusive
✓ Available in English and isiZulu, with 9 more languages coming

Scan the QR code or visit GoodSource BOS to get started.

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