

## **Media Update: Business for South Africa (B4SA) Health Workgroup 28 May 2020**

### **Explainer: B4SA provides update on PPE procurement efforts**

In March, Business for South Africa (B4SA) was set up as an independent and broad coalition of volunteer resources, made up of business organisations and large and small companies, to assist the country in its response to the pandemic. Its core executive sponsors are the Black Business Council and Business Unity South Africa.

As part of this coalition, B4SA established an independent, efficient and scalable procurement platform to urgently help secure the personal protective equipment (PPE) needed in South Africa. This is a critical function that is underpinned by a team of skilled and capable volunteers with a robust governance structure, and enables buyers and donors of PPE to timeously access bulk orders of products which meet the necessary specifications, on a cost effective basis.

B4SA's PPE procurement platform is one of many initiatives that are assisting the country to procure critical PPE for frontline health care workers. All parties involved in B4SA operate on the premise that they do so on either a pro bono or not-for-profit basis.

The pandemic has exposed the global risk of an over-reliance on single markets for the supply of PPE. South Africa, as a historic net importer of PPE, is no different. At the onset of the pandemic, PPE represented less than 2% of the overall medical equipment sales in the country, with surgical gloves making up the vast majority of this. To compound this, South Africa, like much of the world, had limited internal manufacturing and supply capacity and capability to deliver the vast quantities of PPE needed in the country.

While B4SA's PPE procurement efforts in the early stages of the response to the pandemic was to secure urgent, bulk quantities of product from a highly constrained global PPE market, its focus over the past four weeks has been to pivot its procurement efforts to identify, capacitate and source from local manufacturers, and Black-owned suppliers.

B4SA has conducted two order phases to date, and is currently entering its third. In the first phase, where it needed to urgently bolster bulk stocks for the country, 28% of orders were from local and, or Black-owned suppliers. In the second phase, it procured 60% of stock from local and, or Black-owned suppliers and as it progresses into the third phase, it is aiming to procure between 80 and 90% of PPE orders from local and, or Black-owned suppliers.

The fundamental criteria that underscores B4SA's procurement strategy are price, quality, availability and empowerment. All suppliers are vetted through the B4SA procurement portal, where they undergo a two-part vetting process: the first stage is the vetting of supplier companies, and the second stage is the vetting of that supplier's products.

The country's projected required spend for PPE until October 2020 is R7.5 billion. While donors are helping to bridge this gap, and B4SA has, to date, facilitated donations in excess of R1.2 billion, much more is needed.

B4SA's order book is currently at R1.1 billion. This includes the procurement of:

- N95 respirators: 12 million
- Surgical masks for patients and health care workers: 38,2 million
- Gowns: 100 000
- Goggles / face visors: 120 000
- Gloves (pairs): 900 000
- Sanitizers: 275 000 litres
- Ventilators: 200

The forward looking procurement pipeline stands at R200 million and B4SA's procurement focus is on securing gloves, gowns, scrubs, sanitiser, face visors, biohazard bags and FFP2 masks.

Stavros Nicolou, chair of B4SA's Health Workgroup said: "The initial lockdown played a critical role in allowing our country to prepare for the inevitable rise in infections. This enabled B4SA and other entities sourcing PPE on behalf of the country to secure the emergency stock needed, however, the task is far from over. We would like, on behalf of B4SA, to thank all our donors, partners, suppliers and volunteers, for their ongoing and profoundly valuable commitment to helping ensure that our frontline doctors, nurses and community health care workers have access to the necessary quality PPE needed for their fight against the virus.

"We also thank the President and Minister of Health for their leadership and commitment over the past few months, and most importantly, every nurse, doctor and community health care worker for their tireless commitment and dedication to keeping citizens safe.

"The pandemic is going to be with us for a long time. As those of us who can return to work, we are all going to have to find ways to live with the virus responsibly. As our President has made clear, it is now the time for all of us to take responsibility for our own behaviour; wash hands with soap and water or sanitiser, practice social distancing, and wear masks in public."

Ends

**Important resources:**

To register as a supplier on B4SA's procurement portal: <https://covid19manager.co.za>

Requests for medical PPE email to: [Covid19requests@businessresponsecovid19.co.za](mailto:Covid19requests@businessresponsecovid19.co.za)

ProudlySA's cloth mask marketplace: [https://www.proudlysa.co.za/covid\\_19/covid\\_19.php#](https://www.proudlysa.co.za/covid_19/covid_19.php#)

Business for South Africa (B4SA) website: <https://www.businessforsa.org>

Tools and guidelines to expedite a safe return to work: <https://www.return2work.co.za>

Government Covid-19 resource portal: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za>



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