### A. General

| Size of Industry ( in USD) in your country/ region | Approximate number of companies in your country/region | Approximate number of workforce employed by the industry |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Billion USD (Export revenue only) | 50 in export segment | 65,000 |
| 3,6 Billion USD (Domestic) | 1800 in Domestic | 200,000 |

### B. What are the main challenges for the sector in your country due to C-19? Please name top three challenges in brief.

1. *Raising the levels of productive capacity on premise to 100% or as close to that as possible - physical distancing requirements in the office prohibits this*
2. *Supporting staff who are furloughed – to keep them earning, engaged and motivated for their return to work, and supporting businesses that have suffered losses to keep going*
3. *Closing new deals in the current environment of economic uncertainty, to get as many people back to work and to get the sector back on to a growth path*

### C. Employee Safety – WFH – Productivity. Give information, data, quotes wherever possible.

*Measures taken for employees' health, safety, and stable work environment?*

Many measures have been taken to ensure employee health and safety. Most significantly, the Industry developed and implemented a work-place health and safety protocol that all companies undertook to adhere to. This incorporated Department of Health and Department of Labour requirements; and was used by other sectors in the economy as a standard to follow.

These measures have been extremely effective as evidenced by the low number of positive cases and deaths. Based on the latest reported data, only 0,4% of the active work force have tested positive for the virus. There have been a few deaths, tragically, but only amounting to 0,005% of the active workforce.

Health measures include: establishing a Health and Safety Committee; documenting Health and Safety protocol process flow documents, including a risk assessment of the call centre to give effect to minimum measures required and to identify, mitigate and eliminate potential exposure to Covid-19 transmission; appointing at least one designated person to co-ordinate and control the Health and Safety protocol; conduct and document a weekly review of Health and Safety protocol guidelines; where possible provide private transport for employees adhering to the gazetted department of transport rules; disabling biometric entrance scanners or making them COVID-19 proof with sanitisation on both sides of the biometric scanner; removing all non-essential doors to minimise contact points; every effort was
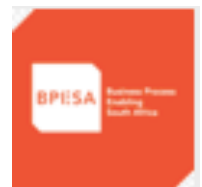
also made to minimise occupancy of common areas through rotation and route planning; daily sanitisation / disinfecting of the call centre was required and where there are multiple shifts, disinfecting the centre before the start of a new shift and at least every four hours during the day / night; cleaning included, but not limited to workstations, common touchpoints (photostat machines, printers etc.), boardrooms, bathrooms, elevators, escalators, stairwells, canteens / lunchroom (immediately after use); ventilation in the work environment had to be increased; and where available high-efficiency air filters were used.

During levels 5 and 4 of lock down, facilities were limited to one third of their normal capacity and social distancing of 1.5 m was strictly enforced (it still is in Level 3); staff had to as far as possible remain within the premises during work hours. All cleaning staff were given maximum protection: at a minimum, disposable surgical gloves and masks, which are changed periodically through the day, provided by the company at no charge. Cleaning staff were also thoroughly and appropriately trained, including on how to wear and maintain PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

A log of all employees' contact details as well as physical home addresses and how many family / residents they reside with was recorded. All staff were issued with two masks (at no charge).

Staff had their temperature taken every day and signed declarations of their wellness and had to disclose any symptoms upon arrival at work.

Where a person's temperature exceeded 37.5, they were isolated, assessed and either sent home to self-isolate or directly to a doctor. Where a person tested positive, various measures were implemented to track and trace those people whom the person had come into contact with, the work place was closed and cleaned, and support was provided for the person for testing and recovery.

Companies ran intensive awareness and education programmes and placed health and safety notices throughout the building. Floors were marked for spacing and signs clearly reminded people of the safety protocols.

Agents were provided with their own headsets; no equipment was shared.

BPESA was also directed by the Government Ministers of the Departments of Health and Trade, Industry and Competition to report weekly on the status of compliance to the H&S protocols and on levels of staff activity on-premises and at home.


*How quickly did industry adapt to WFH?   What % of the employees switched to WFH within the first 2 weeks?*

The industry anticipated the need to work from home well in advance of the lock down being implemented. Within the first two weeks of lock down, almost 50% of productive staff were working from home. This eventually settled at about 46% where it remained for most of Levels 5, 4 and 3 to date.


How has WFH influenced the productivity (increased, decreased, almost the same)

Anecdotal feedback from operators and clients has been very positive about work from home stating that productivity levels remained at least the same as
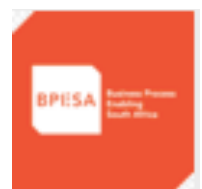
on-premises and in some cases were even better. Evidence of the success of WFH in South Africa is Amazons recent announcement to employ 3,000 new people purely to work from home in supporting the USA and UK clients.

**D.**

*Examples of where technology acceleration has already been seen and executed for example in Healthcare, enabling the government to strengthen its fight against COVID19, Education tech and any other sectors that you wish to highlight.*

There have been numerous technology innovations to support government fight COVID-19. These include many apps developed to enhance the efficiency of screening processes; for track and tracing; and for heat mapping of the country based on the number of reported cases, hospitalization, and deaths. New scanning devices for walkthrough temperature checks, alerts and recording have also been developed.

Technology was used to rapidly role out health and safety procedures and return to work protocols.

New products were developed to enable virtual recruitment; and of course, the on-line training sector went into overdrive to make content available to people working from home to upskill themselves and to develop better awareness of COVID-19.

*Details and examples of contributions made by your industry for CSR, helping local communities*

The industry rallied together with government and other social partners to support society as much as possible during COVID-19. Some of the initiatives included: GBS companies' partnering with government to set up call centre help lines for COVID related queries; to support citizen applications and processing of relief funding support for temporary employment relief; and to provide query support for COVID incidents. Many operators provided essential health services to the country including emergency medical response, transportation for COVID patients, and CVOID counselling.

As the lock down has eased up, companies in the industry have also rallied together to sponsor schools with PPE to enable a smooth and safe return to schooling; as the economy returns to fully to work, the GBS companies will play a big role in supporting their staff and families with counselling, relief support of different types; and most importantly with providing them with access to work.

**E.**

**Open ended question:** Your thoughts on the role of our industry in helping economies bounce back, future road map as the pace and depth of digital transformation accelerates, challenges, vision, any other thought?

The COVID-19 global pandemic has not only disrupted the global economy and imposed great hardships on the global population, but it has also exposed weaknesses in business models and the readiness of countries and societies for the digital economy.
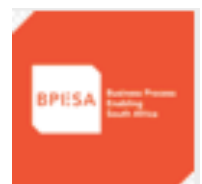
In South Africa, the Industry Association has played a leading role in working with Government to navigate our way through the lock down – rapidly defining and implementing safe working practices and ensuring strict adherence to the government lock down regulations. This relationship and collaboration enabled the call centre industry to be designated an essential service from the outset of the lock down, keeping domestic and international essential services going, and to be profiled by the Minister as an example to other sectors through its thought and practice leadership in CVOID-19 workplace protocols.

Importantly, the Industry has played a key role with other business lobbying groups and government to define new initiatives that will assist the country to rapidly roll out digital infrastructure, build digital skills, provide people from excluded communicates with the opportunity to learn and work from home, and to stimulate demand in the domestic and international markets as part of our economic recovery and return to a new growth path for the industry.

Government needed, and found in BPESA, a strong industry body to support it in getting industry to self-regulate during COVID-19 (to date). This experience and the closer collaboration forged in planning and navigating the return to work and a new growth path are key contributions that the industry body and industry had played and must continue to play in the economy.

Government specifically requested Industry Associations to assist in this task. CVOID-19 will not be the last challenge faced by countries and it would be wise to keep these strong relationships forged between government and business during COVID-19 warm for the future as societies and economies face new and hasher challenges.