

MRA Essay Competition 2017



In line with one of its core strategic goals, that is to 'promote taxpayer education, communication and facilitation', the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) launched an Essay Competition for Lower and Upper Six students in March.

The theme of the essay contest is **"Why is it important to be a compliant taxpayer?"** and it is reserved for Lower and Upper Six students of Mauritius and Rodrigues. The essay contest is being run following approval from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and the **deadline to submit the essays to the MRA is Thursday 1st June 2017.**

The essay contest is part of the MRA's educational strategy which aims at instilling a tax culture in the younger generation. This will help our young population to understand that paying taxes is more of a civic duty than a legal obligation. Through this initiative, the MRA expects the youth to be its ambassadors and to be exemplary taxpayers in the future.

The entrants must ensure that the word count of their essays is between 1,800 and 2000 and same can be submitted to the MRA either by email (essaycompetition@mra.mu) or by post at the following address:

Officer in Charge, Taxpayer Education and Communication Department (TECD),
Level 9, Eham Court, Cnr. Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis.

The terms and conditions of the MRA Essay Competition are available on MRA's Website, www.mra.mu

The winners of the essay competition will be announced during MRA's 11th Anniversary celebrations in July and the following prizes will be awarded:



12.9" iPad Pro



iPad Air 2



iPad 4

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

The notion 'Right from the Start' is the trend within tax administrations globally and it aims, in the first instance, at supporting an environment which encourages compliant behaviour and curbs opportunities for non-compliant demeanours. However the scope of such a concept within a tax administration cannot be limited to Small and Medium Enterprises only, for example.

The MRA Essay Competition launched in March potentially shows that the 'Right from the Start' notion can even be unrolled to students; to the extent that it triggers the necessary compliance behaviours in the taxpayers-to-be at an early stage of their development.

The MRA thanks taxpayers for their usual support.

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Record Drug Seizures made by the MRA

Customs Department

Since the beginning of 2017, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) Customs Department has made 23 drug seizures which are worth **Rs. 2,506,167,710,12** and this included ecstasy tablets, cannabis, synthetic drug and heroin.



Seizure of 524.61 grams of heroin at DHL on 01.03.2017 concealed in incense sticks boxes, shipped from South Africa.



10 ecstasy tablets seized on 07.03.2017 at Parcel Post Office.



Seizure of 6.55Kg of Heroin at DHL Courier Warehouse, Airport on 08.03.2017 concealed in double bottom of two carton boxes containing home cinema sets.



Of the 23 drug seizures, 12 were detected in March whereby a total of 157 kg of heroin and 20kg of cannabis were seized. Officers of the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS) detected the cases through intelligence, risk profiles and non-intrusive equipment for inspections. The countries of origin of the drug seized were Holland, South Africa and China.

The MRA has also invested considerably in equipment which would help to detect drugs at the Airport and Port, be it in terms of scanners, non-intrusive devices and sniffer dogs. The above measures, including the Stop Drug Platform, have helped the MRA detect drug cases at the borders and prevent same from entering the country.

Furthermore, the MRA Customs Department has also enhanced its collaboration with the Anti- Drug and Smuggling Department (ADSU) in terms of intelligence and operations to combat the illicit entry of goods and drugs into the country.

The MRA reiterates its appeal to the public to report suspected drug cases anonymously to the MRA through the MRA Stop Drug Platform on www.mra.mu or by calling on the Hotline 8958.

Regional Cooperation: MRA receives MIRA delegates

The Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), Mr. Sudhamo Lal, welcomed six high-ranking officials from the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) on Tuesday 14th March 2017 at the MRA Head Office, in presence of members of the MRA Management Team. The delegation comprised of the following MIRA Board Members: Mr. Yazeed Mohamed - Commissioner General of Taxation and Chairman of the Board, Mr. Hassan Zareer - Deputy Commissioner General of Taxation and Deputy Chairman of the Board, Ms. Leena Mohamed Zahir Hussain - Board Director, Uz. Faseeh Zahir - Board Director, Ms. Aishath Asha Ali - Board Director.



The MIRA officials also paid courtesy calls to the Financial Secretary, Mr. D. Manraj and the Chairman of the MRA Board, Mr. N. Ballah.



The aim of the study tour was to learn from the Mauritian model of revenue administration and a work programme was elaborated to that end, for the 3-day visit (Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th March 2017). The officials also had interactions with the Directors/ Representatives of the MRA Compliance and Support Departments.

During the de-briefing session on Thursday 16th March 2017, the MIRA Board Members thanked the MRA for the positive exchanges and said they were confident that this will pave the way for further cooperation.



Visit of the General Administration of China Customs at the MRA

A six-person delegation headed by Mr. Liu Xiaohui, Director-General of Anti-Smuggling Bureau, General Administration of China Customs (GACC), was welcomed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), Mr. Sudhamo Lal, on Monday 20th March 2017 at the MRA Head office. During the courtesy visit, the Director-General of the MRA emphasized that the visit of the GACC is an opportunity for both parties to improve their working relations in the fight against drug smuggling and protection of endangered wildlife.



The visit of the GACC included a three-day working programme which comprised of working sessions with the MRA Customs Department and the delegation was apprised on the enforcement strategy in place at the MRA. The Chinese delegates also toured the MRA Customs Warehouse, the Examination Bay and the Scanning Unit in the Port Area. During the debriefing session at the end of the visit, Mr. Liu thanked the MRA for the fruitful working sessions and said he is confident that, with this visit, the collaboration between the two institutions will definitely improve.



Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement with Mali

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) hosted a delegation of three officials from the Revenue Administration and the Ministry of Finance of Mali from Thursday 9th to Monday 13th March 2017 at the MRA Head Office. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between the two countries.

The discussions were held in the presence of Mr. M. Hannelas, Director Large Taxpayer Department (LTD) and a representative of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED). At the close of the negotiations, reservations were made on five articles of the draft Agreement and both parties pledged to pursue the negotiations as soon as possible by exchange of correspondence.



Signature of DTAA between Mauritius and Zambia

A Zambian delegation comprising of seven officials was at the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) Head Office from Monday 20th March to 23rd March 2017 to renegotiate the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between Mauritius and Zambia. The Mauritius delegation was represented by Mr. M. Hannelas, Director Large Taxpayer Department (LTD) and Mr. D. Ramdin, Director Operational Services Department (OSD). The negotiations also involved representatives of the State Law office (SLO) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED).

At the close of the negotiations, both delegations agreed on the negotiations and committed to complete their internal formalities for the entry into force of the Agreement at the earliest.



Training Programme launched for Newly Appointed Officers

Nineteen Officers were appointed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) on a temporary basis of one year for employment in the MRA Compliance Departments. During their temporary appointment, the Officers will undergo a training programme and upon successful completion of same, they will be appointed in a substantive capacity.



During the official launching of the training on Thursday 09th March 2017 at the MRA Head Office, the Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, underlined that, in addition to the core values of the MRA, the trainees are expected to be respectful of taxpayers. Mr. Sudhamo Lal also added that a Mentoring Programme will be tested on a pilot-basis with the trainees to ensure that the latter receive the necessary coaching in their careers at the MRA. The training is spread over nine months and it includes classes, on-the-job training, self-study and continuous evaluations.

Columbia University Students visit the MRA

In the context of a study programme organized by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) for students of the Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and the Law School, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) made a presentation on Friday 17th March 2017 at the MRA Head Office. The students are currently undertaking a project on the 'Challenges to reshape Mauritius reputation as an international hub' and they are analysing the risks and benefits of Mauritius' success and recommend ways in which Mauritius can better leverage its comparative advantages to become an international financial centre.

To that end, Mr. R. Oree made a presentation to the University students, in the presence of the Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, and members of the MRA Management Team. The presentation was concluded by a question and answer session between the students and the Management Team.



Training on Audit and Examination of Accounts and Returns

The Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), Mr. Sudhamo Lal, launched the training on 'Audit and Examination of Accounts and Returns' for Technical Officers and Officers posted in the Compliance Departments on Friday 24th March 2017 in the presence of the MRA Management Team. In his Opening Remarks, the Director-General praised the initiative taken by Compliance Departments Directors, especially Mrs. C. Gunnoo, Director Medium and Small Taxpayer Department (MSTD) as the training will help MRA Officers gather necessary skills in the accomplishment of their duties.



The in-house training comprises of 38 sessions and each session, of a duration of 1 ½ hours, will be held on Wednesdays. The overall objective of the training is to impart VAT and tax knowledge, skills and competencies to the officers, for them to perform their duties more efficiently and professionally. The sessions will be conducted by MRA Resource Persons and the participants are expected to interact with the latter to make the most of the training.

Benchmarking the role of Cash Management: Malawi studies the Mauritian Model

On Thursday 30th March 2017, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) welcomed a delegation from Malawi for a two-hour presentation by Mrs. N. Bunwaree, Director Finance and Administration Department (FAD), in presence of the Acting Director-General Mrs. C. Gunnoo and Members of the MRA Management Team.

The aim of the mission of the delegation at the MRA is to allow the delegates to share experiences on the technical issues relating to financial and cash management, that is 'Benchmarking the Role of Cash Management'. The Malawi delegation was comprised of Miss Tithokoze Carolyn Samuel, Head of Cash Management Unit (CMU), Mr Precious Chimbamba, Principal Economist and Mr Steve Chimanya, Principal Accountant.



MRA Counsels Local University Students

One of the objectives of the MRA is to enhance its corporate image in the society and, in this context, the MRA organised a presentation for tertiary students to introduce them to interviewing techniques and working environment practices.

Mr. M. Maunikum, Assistant Director, Human Resources and Training Department (HRTD) made the presentation to around 50 students on Friday 24th March 2017 at the MRA Head Office. The final-year students were from tertiary institutions which included University of Mauritius, Amity Global Business School, Université des Mascareignes, Charles Telfair Institute, Open University of Mauritius and University Technology of Mauritius.

Mr. Maunikum elaborated on the core responsibilities of the MRA, interview techniques and expected demeanour of staff at the work place. The presentation was fruitful, based on feedback received from the participants.



Farewell to Mr. Patrick Yip



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) organized a lunch in honour of Mr. Patrick Yip, MRA Board Member and Deputy Financial Secretary at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) on Wednesday 22nd March 2017 at the MRA Head Office. The Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, welcomed Mr. Yip in the presence of MRA Board Members, namely Mr. Reddy, Mr. Nilamber and Mr. Suhootoorah, and members of the MRA Management Team. Mr. Sudhamo Lal thanked Mr. Yip for his continual support and emphasized that Mr. Yip is one of the architects of the MRA.



In his address, Mr. Yip recalled the days that led to the setting up of the MRA and his different interactions with MRA Management Team at different point in time. After lunch, the Director-General of the MRA presented a token to Mr. Yip and Ms. Colette, Secretary of MRA Board presented a bouquet to Mr. Yip.

VAT Lucky Draw Scheme Campaign

at Phoenix Mall



On Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th March 2017, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) organized a sensitization campaign on VAT at Jumbo Phoenix Shopping Mall. Officers of the Taxpayer Education and Communication Department (TECD) and Tax Risk Management Unit (TRMU) explained to members of the public about the necessity to ask for a receipt for every purchase and that the receipt can be used to participate in the VLDS. Following the approval to pursue the VLDS, the MRA plans to hold similar sensitization campaigns in shopping malls around the island.

The MRA personnel sensitized around 1000 persons and distributed more than 500 leaflets to members of the public. During the same weekend, 550 VLDS entries were recorded. The MRA Officers also sensitized shop owners on their obligations to issue proper VAT invoices as per the VAT Act.

For the first quarter of 2017, 10 622 VLDS entries were registered at the MRA. Members of the public are reminded that they can send the details of their invoices for the first quarter to the MRA up to Saturday 15th April 2017.

FMSC Table Tennis Competition:

MRA wins 5 medals



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is now a regular actor in the different sport competitions organised by the Federation Mauricienne des Sports Corporatifs (FMSC) during the year. Eleven MRA staff participated in the FMSC Table Tennis Championship held on Sunday 26th March 2017 at the National Centre of Table Tennis of Beau Bassin and they won 5 medals, as per table below:

Category	Name of Participants	Ranking	Reward
Single Women	Mrs P. Mootien	1 st	Gold Medal
	Miss I. Larche	3 rd	Bronze Medal
Double Women	Mrs P. Mootien	3 rd	Bronze Medal
	Miss A. Dookee		
Double Mix	Mr H. Ramoo	3 rd	Bronze Medal
	Mrs P. Mootien		
Single Men	Mr H. Ramoo	3 rd	Bronze Medal