

MRA pursues its capacity building in collaboration with the World Bank



In line with its capacity building programme, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), in collaboration with the World Bank, is hosting a workshop on ‘*Behavioural Insights to Improve Domestic Revenue Mobilisation in Mauritius*’ at the seat of MRA, Ehram Court, Port-Louis. Around 30 staff from various departments availed themselves of this Comprehensive Workshop, spanning from Thursday 1st December 2022 to Tuesday 6th December 2022. The resource persons are from World Bank namely: Mr. Mario Negre, Senior Economist and Mr. Jonathan Karver, Economist. The objective of this workshop is to provide more hands-on learning and a tailored toolkit for tax professionals at the MRA.

In his keynote address, during the launching ceremony held on Thursday 01 December 2022, Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development highlighted that “*organisations should use Big Data Analytics and related software to make data-driven decisions*”. Therefore, by harnessing the power of Big Data, MRA will be able to gain insights into the behaviour of taxpayers, by using tailor-made strategies that are effective in capitalising on new revenue opportunities, he emphasized.

The Minister stated that Mauritius, being a small island economy, could not absorb the economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Government has been able to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on the economy by implementing the Wage Assistance Scheme and the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme, to help the entire population in these difficult times. Hon. Renganaden Padayachy also commended MRA for the prompt implementation of these schemes.

In another vein, he explained that *“MRA has been able to pick up on revenue collection and has for the first time crossed the threshold of Rs. 100 billion for the Financial Year 2021/22. MRA is expected to collect around Rs. 129.5 billion for the current Financial Year, i.e., 2022/23”*.

He underlined that the Ministry of Finance is constantly mounting policies to position Mauritius and ensure economic prosperity. However, this can only be achieved with the



collaboration of all the actors in both public and private sectors. Hon. Renganaden Padayachy further added that *“the Ministry of Finance is more than ever determined to provide all the necessary support to the MRA with a view to address the major organisational challenge.”* In the present scenario, helping the MRA understand the behavioural components of taxpayers of Mauritius and thus applying a sustainable approach. Speaking on Behavioural Insights, he stated that this novel concept can be analysed, understood and used to improve domestic revenue mobilisation in any economy, including Mauritius.

Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Acting Director-General of the MRA, observed that *“Behavioural Science or Insight has already been embraced by a number of countries for some years now.”* According to him, Behavioural Insight has gone from novelty to a commonly used tool in public service delivery.

Behavioural insights, which are today the new words in the tax administration dictionary, offer an alternative tool to the MRA. He further added that *“Revenue Authorities are using economic psychology to analyse the behaviour of taxpayers in their endeavour to improve tax compliance”*.

As for Mr. Dhoojanaden Maunikum, Director of Human Resources and Training at the MRA, he stated that *“the MRA is ready to overcome the current and future challenges. Moreover, the organisation is adopting this novel and innovative approach to deal with tax compliance”*.

On her part, Ms. Brinda Devi Dabysing, Acting Country Representative for Seychelles & Mauritius, World Bank Group expounded *“that the World Bank has placed MRA as a global and friendly leader. Hence, the organization has chosen to train the staff of MRA on Behavioural Insights”*.

The MRA looks forward to conducting more training to constantly update its personnel on various topics related to tax.