

OCTOBER 2023



In this issue...

A Revenue House for MRA:
MRA signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Côte D'Or Data Technology Park

Page 3

MRA strengthens its workforce:
68 Trainees appointed as full-fledged Customs Officers

Page 5

TSS Draw 2023:
Designation of the three winners

Page 8

e-Filing Season 2023:
276,936 e-Filers

Page 8

Interview:
'93% of the taxpayers believe that MRA ensures equitable administration of the tax system'

Page 9

Capacity Building:
MRA strengthens its expertise for effective customs and tax administration

Page 11

Workshop on Workplace Investigations

Page 15

DID YOU KNOW?
Financial assistance of Rs. 5 per litre of "Diesel"

Page 19

EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear Readers,

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is embarking on the construction of its dedicated Revenue House in Côte d'Or Technopole. This state-of-the-art project is poised to revolutionise the way MRA operates, bringing together various departments and functions under one roof. This month, an agreement was signed between MRA and the Côte D'Or Data Technology Park.

The Revenue House is an ambitious project that follows the inauguration in 2022 of a modern, eco-friendly state-of-the-art project, the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC), at Le Chaland, Plaine Magnien.

October 2023 also marks the end of the Individual Income Tax Returns e-Filing Season. With an unprecedented number of 276,936 e-Filers by October 16, the deadline, this season has set a new record for MRA, demonstrating an increase of 17.1% compared to the 236,438 returns filed in 2022.

We are pleased to inform our readers that this edition also includes an interview of Mr. Roshan Oree, Assistant Director of Research, Policy and Planning, at MRA. Mr. Oree and his team kick-started the Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey in 2017. In his interview, Mr. Oree reveals some of the major improvements brought by MRA in its service delivery following the feedback received from individual taxpayers through the various surveys.

In its endeavour to provide a prompt, efficient, effective and quality service, MRA is committed to strengthening its workforce. To this end, MRA confirmed 68 Trainee Customs Officers to the post of Customs Officer I. There are 31 males and 37 females. Since its inception in 2006, MRA had only 11% of female staff in Customs. Today, MRA has more than 30% female staff. This gender equality demonstrates not only MRA's fairness, diversity, and inclusivity within the Customs Department but also promotes gender equality as aligned with international standards and commitments, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal.

Thank you for your sustained support, and please enjoy this edition.

Sincerely,

Editorial team

Disclaimer

This e-Newsletter is for information purposes only. The information should not be reproduced or reedited without the prior authorisation of MRA.

A Revenue House for MRA:

MRA SIGNS A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CÔTE D'OR DATA TECHNOLOGY PARK



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Côte D'Or Data Technology Park. This collaboration will facilitate the construction of the Revenue House, to cater for some 1,000 officers. The MoU was officially signed on Monday, 23 October 2023, at the MRA Head Office in Port-Louis in the presence of Mr. Nayen Koomar Ballah, Chairperson, MRA Board, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of MRA, Mrs. Nily Bunwaree, Director, Finance and Administration Department, MRA, Mrs. Naila Hanoomanjee, Chief Executive Officer, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd, among others.

MRA Revenue House will be constructed in two phases; the Phase I is expected to be completed by March 2027 at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.65 B, whereas, the second phase of the project will start in July 2027.



Impact on Revenue Collection and Administration

The Revenue House project is set to revolutionize revenue collection and administration in Mauritius. With state-of-the-art facilities and advanced technology infrastructure, the MRA will be better equipped to streamline processes, improve efficiency, and ensure effective tax compliance. The centralization of revenue-related operations within the Revenue House will allow for better coordination, information sharing, and data analysis, ultimately leading to more accurate and timely revenue collection.

Enhancing Taxpayer Services

The construction of the Revenue House underscores the MRA's commitment to providing enhanced services to taxpayers. The modern and purpose-built facility will offer a more comfortable and efficient environment for taxpayers to interact with MRA officials, seek guidance, and resolve tax-related queries. The Revenue House will incorporate digital technology, allowing taxpayers to access online services, submit documents, and receive real-time updates, thereby improving convenience and reducing processing times.

Boosting Economic Development

The Revenue House project is not only significant for the MRA but also for the overall economic development of Mauritius. The construction of such a landmark facility demonstrates the Government's commitment to creating a business-friendly environment and fostering investment.

No doubt, the Revenue House will contribute to the growth of the Côte D'Or Data Technology Park, attracting more businesses and creating employment opportunities.

Additionally, the project will showcase Mauritius as an innovative and technologically advanced jurisdiction, further boosting its reputation as an attractive destination for foreign investment.

To conclude, the project's successful negotiation and BOT agreement with Côte D'Or Data Technology Park Ltd highlight the collaborative efforts to create a state-of-the-art facility that will propel Mauritius towards a more efficient and digitally advanced future.



MRA reinforces its workforce:

68 TRAINEES APPOINTED AS FULL-FLEDGED CUSTOMS OFFICERS



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) has reinforced its workforce of Customs Officers with the appointment of 68 Trainee Customs Officers as Customs Officers I. A Passing out Ceremony took place on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) in Plaine Magnien. Distinguished guests, including the Honourable Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Mr. Nayen Koomar Ballah, GOSK, Chairperson of the MRA Board, and Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of MRA, graced the event alongside members of the MRA Board, Management Team, and the trainees' parents.

In his keynote address, Prime Minister Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to combat drug trafficking and commended the significant efforts made by MRA in this fight. Since 2015 alone, MRA seized drugs worth MUR 6 Billion.

The Prime Minister emphasized the crucial role of Customs, Police and other authorities in preventing the entry of illicit drugs and narcotics into the Republic of Mauritius and pledged the government's support in terms of tools, equipment, and resources.

The Head of Government highlighted a certain number of projects where the government has invested in view of strengthening the fight against drug trafficking, including the use of drones for



Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister

surveillance, mobile scan vans for cargo and passenger luggage screening, a Port Surveillance Command Centre, and the implementation of a whole-body scanner. *"Investment in sophisticated resources shows our commitment to equip MRA with right enforcement tools to prevent the entry of illicit drugs and narcotics into the country"*, the Prime Minister said.

Speaking during the Passing out Ceremony, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of MRA, stressed the vital role of Customs Officers in various areas, including trade facilitation, drug trafficking prevention, anti-smuggling efforts, intellectual property protection,

enforcement of border security, and safeguarding consumer interests. He acknowledged the challenges posed by technological advancements, increased trade volume, complex supply chains, counterfeit goods, data management and environmental regulations, and emphasized the importance of continuous training to address these challenges effectively.

Mr. Lal highlighted the significance of gender diversity in the workplace, noting that 37 out of the 68 trainees are female. *"When MRA started in 2006, there were only 11% of female staff in Customs. Today we are at 30%. This significant achievement is highly commendable"*. He emphasized the invaluable contributions of women in customs operations and called for upholding core values, including honesty, integrity, fairness, commitment, and loyalty.

Mr. D. Magen Maunikum, Director of the Human Resources and Training Department at MRA, acknowledged the government's support in funding and expertise-sharing. He emphasized MRA's commitment to retaining top talent and highlighted the rigorous selection process and comprehensive one year training program that equipped the trainees with the necessary skills and knowledge, covering customs procedures, laws, physical training, risk management, and enforcement techniques.

Ms. Namratta Devi Sahadew, addressed the audience on behalf of the newly appointed Customs Officers, expressed their gratitude towards MRA's support and guidance throughout their journey, acknowledging the organization's role in nurturing their growth and providing essential training.

During the passing out ceremony, MRA Customs Officers showcased their discipline, professionalism and team spirit through a parade.



Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, MRA



Mr. Magen Maunikum, Director, Human Resources and Training Dept., MRA



Ms. Namratta Devi Sahadew



Snapshots of the event



Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey Draw 2023:

DESIGNATION OF THE THREE WINNERS

The seventh edition of the Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS) Draw 2023 was held on Tuesday, October 31, 2023, at Efram Court, Port-Louis, in the presence of MRA Board Members, namely, Mr. Dinay Reetoo, and Mr. Kritananda Naghee Reddy, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of MRA, and members of the Management Team.

The first prize, a cash prize of Rs. 25,000, went to Shah Muhammad Jaleel Kurreembukus. Jayecoomar Dooky, won the second prize of Rs. 15,000, and Dhinesh Cahoolessur won the third prize of Rs. 10,000. The draws took place under the supervision of representatives of the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA), namely Mr. Ridwan Oomar and Mrs. Vidusha Bhagreeth.

In his keynote address, Mr. Lal stated that the outcome of the surveys conducted till date has allowed MRA to improve the quality of the services it offers to taxpayers year-in year-out. 35,919 taxpayers responded to this year's survey, which represents an increase of more than 80% as compared to last year.

For his part, Mr. Amick Teeluckdharry, Assistant Director, Taxpayer Education and Communication Department (TECD) elucidated that *"in our service chain, some touch points are crucial in shaping the overall taxpayer experience. Understanding and managing those touch points is essential to ensuring customer satisfaction."*



Individual Income Tax Returns e-Filing Season 2023:

276,936 e-FILERS

This month marked the deadline for the e-Filing Season 2023 and MRA seizes the opportunities to thank the 276,936 taxpayers who accomplished their civic duty by filing their returns for the Income Tax Filing Season 2023, and honoured their respective contribution to the financial management of the Republic of Mauritius. This represents an increase of 17.1% over the 236,438 returns received last year.

This year, MRA collected an amount of Rs 2.8 billion representing an additional tax paid by 72,758

taxpayers, over and above, tax paid under Pay As You Earn (PAYE) / Current Payment System (CPS). MRA also received 87,123 claims for refund from taxpayers, 12% more than last year. As at date, 99% of requests for refund have already been entertained.

MRA seizes the opportunities to thank the 276,936 taxpayers who filed their returns within the prescribed delay.

TAXPAYER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2023

“93% of the taxpayers believe that MRA ensures equitable administration of the tax system”

The Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS), led by your diligent team, is a valuable tool that allows taxpayers to evaluate various services offered by the MRA. Can you please provide an overview of the survey?

The Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS) is indeed a very valuable tool which enables the taxpaying public not only to evaluate our various services but also to have a say about the way business is being conducted at MRA.

The idea of conducting such an exercise germinated in 2017 when, at that time, MRA had just celebrated its 11 years of existence. We felt that after more than a decade of operation, it was of paramount importance to provide our taxpayers with a platform where they could have a say on the manner things have been conducted so far by the MRA and in the orientation and formulation of our future strategies and initiatives.

Coincidentally, at the same moment the income tax e-filing season was about to get underway. So, we thought why not tap on that unique opportunity when all the taxpayers shall be visiting our website to file their income tax return and at the same time invite them to evaluate our different services. This is where it all started. I must admit that initially we apprehended whether the taxpayers would dare taking up the survey and what could be the likely outcomes of the survey.

We had to make it clear to the taxpayers that the survey was totally anonymous where no one could be identified. Moreover, to boost participation, we provided three (3) cash prizes for the first 3 winners. We were baffled by the outcome of the TSS 2017 as it exceeded our expectations both in terms of participation and the results. Indeed, we recorded 37,322 respondents out of 171,929 returns filed, that is, 22% participation rate.

Moreover, the vast majority of our taxpayers, that is 84% of them, rated the delivery service of the MRA as being good or very good. We also received some 15,000 comments and suggestions from the taxpayers which were given full consideration.



Mr. Roshan Oree


Asst. Director, Research, Policy and Planning Dept.

2023 saw the 7th Edition of TSS. Could you please elaborate on how MRA has continuously improved its services based on the feedback received since the introduction of the TSS?

Like I have said, TSS provides a perfect platform for our taxpayers to make their voices heard. From the first ever TSS exercise to the most recent one, we have recorded some 98,562 suggestions and comments from our taxpayers. Once these comments have been compiled and analysed, the salient features are submitted to the Director-General and same are taken up in the Management Team to decipher the measures to be implemented.

Then, an implementation plan is devised to carve out the way forward. I can say that we have received many valuable feedbacks from our taxpayers and these have integrated in our strategies over the years. Allow me to dwell on some of them.

During the first online TSS, the participants pointed out that there was a dearth of information regarding their tax obligations which can be used to simplify the return filing process. In response, the MRA came up with its digitization strategy by providing pre-filled income tax returns and demos of how to file the return electronically.



Another major weakness highlighted by taxpayers was to get someone over the telephone line during the peak filing season. In response to that, the MRA implemented the Hotline Service, the e-Appointment System, and most recently, the Chatbot "MyRA". Even the MRA Website was completely overhauled following remarks made by our taxpayers.

Taxpayers, also highlighted the difficulty in remembering or retrieving their passwords and TAN to file their returns; or getting access to their past returns. Hence, MRA came up with the Taxpayer Portal where the NIC can be used in lieu of the TAN; and the retrieval of forgotten password is done within minutes. Besides, the taxpayer can now have access to his past returns and in the coming years we are going a step further with the implementation of the "e-Tax Account".

The list goes on but as you can see, we pay a very attentive ear to the suggestions made by our taxpayers so as to make their life easier when dealing with us.

That's commendable. Can you please inform our readers of the salient outcomes of the TSS 2023?

For this year's TSS, once again we have received a very good response rate where 35,919 taxpayers out of 271,420 who filed their returns have participated. It represents an increase of more than 80% compared to last year. The salient results of this year's TSS are as follows:-

- 93% of the Taxpayers are of the opinion that the MRA administers the tax system fairly;
- 82% of the respondents affirmed that the Measures implemented by Customs to combat drug trafficking are effective;
- 90% of the Taxpayers averred that the MRA is doing lots to detect persons evading taxes;
- 82% asserted that it is easy to report fraud and other illegal activity to the MRA;
- 98% of the Taxpayers said that it has become easier to comply with their tax obligations with the MRA;
- 94% of the Taxpayers admitted that their trust in the MRA improved in the last year.

We have also recorded more than 32,000 valuable comments and suggestions from our Taxpayers.

"93% of the taxpayers are of the opinion that the MRA administers the tax system fairly"

You just revealed that MRA has received more than 32,000 valuable comments and suggestions from taxpayers during this exercise. Are there any specific initiatives or actions that MRA plans to undertake based on the survey results?

On average, for each TSS survey, we receive some 11,000 comments from our participants. However, for this year's TSS, we have received a record number of more than 32,000 comments and suggestions, which is 200% more than what we usually recorded. This means that we have a colossal task on our hand and we shall spare no effort to go meticulously through each and every comment and suggestion submitted by our taxpayer.

Let me tell you that we have already put ourselves to task in identifying all those viable suggestions which we believe can be given due consideration as part of our endeavour to serve our stakeholders better and enhance our internal efficiency. As per established procedures, these feasible suggestions shall be submitted to our Director-General and from there on the roadmap to their implementation shall be charted.

“
**For this year's TSS,
MRA received a
record of more than
32,000 comments and
suggestions**
”

Is there any additional information or message that you would like to convey to our taxpayers?

The sacrosanct precept of providing a prompt, efficient, effective and quality service to taxpayers, stakeholders and the public at large in an effort to exceed their expectations is enshrined in the MRA's vision, mission and core values. I believe that the best way that we can honour that tenet is through the regular conduct of Surveys.

I wish to seize this opportunity to say a big Thank You to all those who have been participating in our TSS surveys. I shall also encourage others to do so every year as your opinion counts. Use this platform to tell us what you expect from us. Help us to help you better!

Capacity Building:

MRA STRENGTHENS ITS EXPERTISE FOR EFFECTIVE CUSTOMS AND TAX ADMINISTRATION



At the core of the Mauritius Revenue Authority's (MRA) capacity building efforts lies the belief that investing in human capital is vital for sustainable development. It is in this perspective that MRA has tailor-made a wide range of training programmes that cover various aspects of tax and customs administration, and other revenue-related functions.

For the month of October, two training courses, namely, Harmonised System and Rules of Origin, were launched by MRA.

Harmonised System

MRA hosted a Regional Training of Trainers seminar on Harmonised System (HS), spanning from 03 to 06 October 2023, at the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) at Le Chaland Road, Plaine Magnien. The Harmonised System (HS) is an internationally recognized classification system used for the uniform classification of goods traded across borders. HS provides a standardized framework for customs authorities to classify and identify products based on a set of codes and descriptions. This programme aimed at training experts from the East and Southern Africa (ESA) countries to become trainers on tariff classification with a focus on HS 2022.

In his keynote address during the opening ceremony, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of MRA and WCO ESA Vice-Chair, stated that Mauritius has at heart the prosperity of the region and it is fully supportive of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which

aims at accelerating intra-African trade and boosting Africa's trading position on the global market.

AfCFTA, he said, will strengthen Africa's common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations and bring prosperity for the people of Africa. So, he said, it is important to work in close collaboration and support each other.



Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, MRA

On another note, Mr. Lal explained that "Mauritius has exported its first consignment under the AfCFTA preferences to Ghana, consisting of printed plastic labels, indicating the readiness of Mauritius to trade under the Agreement. Other potential products of export from Mauritius include sugar, fishmeal, fish oil, fertilizers and tuna."

Mr. Lal firmly believes that *"AfCFTA has the potential to bring broader and deeper economic integration of the African Continent and much has been achieved in terms of negotiation under the Agreement. This is why year 2023 has been declared as the implementation year of the AfCFTA"*.



Mr. Lal commended the AfCFTA Secretariat for the good work being done, especially for publishing the AfCFTA Rules of Origin Manual last year. He elucidated that *"in order to benefit from the tariff preferences under the AfCFTA, goods produced in one of the AfCFTA State parties must meet specific origin rules (RoO) detailed in the Annex 2, the interpretation of which, due to their highly technical nature, can be challenging for both traders and customs administrations."* The RoO Manual actually sets out guidelines on the operationalization of Annex 2 on Rules of Origin of the Protocol on Trade in Goods of the AfCFTA Agreement and explains in a simple language how RoO works for the determination of the origin of goods.



Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, Customs

Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director of the MRA Customs Department, highlighted, in his address, that *"the Harmonized System is considered one of the pillars of customs procedures"*. He underlined that HS facilitates international trade, ensures accurate classification, and provides a standardized framework for classifying goods. This classification system, according to him, enables customs authorities globally to identify and categorize goods consistently, and ensures accurate customs declarations.

For his part, Mr. Badr Mouhcine, Head of Programme, HS & RoO Africa, World Customs Organisation (WCO), highlighted that *"advanced ruling and training on the Harmonized System are two main areas that require attention and focus. By promoting the use of advanced rulings and providing capacity building on HS, we can enhance trade facilitation, improve compliance, and contribute to the economic growth of our African nations"*, he affirmed.



**Mr. Badr Mouhcine, Head of Programme,
HS & RoO Africa, World Customs Organisation (WCO)**

Ms. Macarena Ruiz San Jose, Programme Manager, European Union (EU), stressed the significance of regional economic integration. Regional economic integration brings together countries within a specific region to foster closer economic cooperation, promote trade, and create a more prosperous and stable environment. The European Union stands as a prime example of successful regional integration. By pooling resources and expertise, countries can tackle these challenges more effectively and achieve sustainable development, she concluded.



The Tariff Book is a comprehensive document that outlines customs duties and tariffs applicable to goods traded within AfCFTA. On this score, Ms. Demitta Gyang, Director, AfCFTA Secretariat, explained that *“the Tariff Book plays a crucial role in facilitating trade and promoting economic growth across the African continent. It also aims at simplifying and harmonising customs procedures and requirements across the AfCFTA”*. It provides a standardized classification system for goods, ensuring consistency and clarity in the determination of customs duties and tariffs, Ms. Gyang concluded.



Ms. Demitta Gyang, Director, AfCFTA Secretariat



Snapshots : EU-WCO 5th Steering Committee Meeting _HS Africa Programme



Rules of Origin (RoO)

MRA also hosted a comprehensive training session on Rules of Origin (RoO) at the Regional Training Centre (RTC), Custom House, Mer Rouge on Wednesday 04 October 2023. Twenty-eight participants availed themselves of this training, which aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of Customs Officers in effectively applying RoO regulations in their day-to-day work.

In his keynote address, Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, MRA Customs, stressed the importance of continuous learning and keeping abreast of the latest developments in customs procedures. The comprehensive training session on Rules of Origin, he said, is thus part of MRA's ongoing efforts to equip Customs officers with the knowledge and necessary skills to facilitate trade, ensure compliance, and protect domestic industries. *"Rules of Origin play a pivotal role in customs operations, as they determine the country or region of origin of goods, and establish eligibility for preferential trade agreements. By correctly applying RoO, Customs Officers can ensure accurate tariff classification, facilitate trade, prevent fraud, and protect domestic industries from unfair competition"*, he affirmed.

In a concluding note, Mr. Ramburun expressed his deep gratitude to the World Customs Organization and the European Union for providing various training sessions and other technical assistance to MRA.

For his part, Mr. Badr Mouhcine, Head of Programme, HS & RoO Africa, World Customs Organisation (WCO), lauded Mauritius for organizing the WCO-EU capacity-building programme really well with a good atmosphere. *"Mauritius is an active member of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and as a member; Mauritius participates in the activities and initiatives of the organization to promote international customs cooperation. We look forward to further collaboration to facilitate trade"*, he added.

Ms. Macarena Ruiz San Jose, Programme Manager, European Union (EU) pointed out that the European Union remains committed to working closely with partner countries to strengthen trade. The partnership between EU and MRA has yielded tangible results in terms of enhanced capacity, improved customs procedures, harmonized practices, trade facilitation, and boosted regional integration.



Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, Customs



Mr. Badr Mouhcine, Head of Programme,
HS & RoO Africa, World Customs Organisation (WCO)



The 5th Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-WCO Programme for Harmonized System in Africa was held on 02 October 2023 with a view to sharing and discussing the results of the HS Africa Programme, and planning the next phase as well as its strategic orientation for sustainability. The meeting was combined with the 1st Steering Committee meeting of the Rules of Origin (RoO) for Africa Programme, during which delegates discussed the progress and future implementation of the programme. Twenty-five high-level officials from the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) countries participated in the discussions which ended with fruitful deliberations.

WORKSHOP ON WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

MRA hosted a five-day workshop entitled 'Workplace Investigations' (Enquête Administrative) from Monday 23 to Friday 27 October 2023, at the Auditorium of the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC), Le Chaland, Plaine Magnien. 30 participants were directly involved in the conduct of workplace investigations, both from local and foreign Customs/Investigatory Authorities of French-speaking countries such as Madagascar, Comoros, Djibouti, Burundi, Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Tunisia and Burkina Faso.

The programme was launched by Dr. the Hon Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, with an opening ceremony held on Monday 23 October 2023, in the presence of Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of MRA, Mr. Jean-Christophe Leneutre, Programme Expert at A-CIP, the MRA Management Team, and eminent personalities.

In his keynote address, the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development expressed his sincere gratitude to the World Customs Organization for the valuable support it has provided and continues to provide to the Republic of Mauritius.



Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

He acknowledged that through various initiatives, capacity building programmes and knowledge sharing platforms facilitated by the WCO, Mauritius has been able to strengthen its customs procedures, improve risk management and effectively combat illicit trade. *"And as we collectively strive to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive future, our partnership with the World Customs Organization stands out as a key pillar in achieving these goals",* he stated.

For Mr. Lal, *"this workshop represents a commitment to regional cooperation and collaboration, and that it provides a platform for networking and sharing experiences, which will undoubtedly lead to stronger ties among customs authorities."*



Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, MRA

"Our responsibilities extend far beyond mere revenue collection. We are guardians of fiscal integrity, ensuring that individuals and businesses meet their tax obligations fairly and transparently. We need to promote good governance, uphold the values of accountability, justice, and ethical conduct so as to enable economic growth, and fostering a business environment where honest enterprises can thrive," he stated.

For her part, intervening through video conference, Mrs. Andrea Hampton, Manager of the Anti-Corruption and Integrity Programme at WCO, thanked the Mauritius Revenue Authority for its continued support, not only for this event organized by the WCO Training Centre, but also for its multiple contributions to the activities of the A-CIP Programme and the WCO. She addressed participants, by motivating them to influence, impact and promote organisational change, particularly in matters of internal affairs. She encouraged them to participate actively and constructively in a spirit of sharing points of view, perspectives, knowledge, experiences and solutions, to build collective know-how together. She expressed her pride for the A-CIP Programme to be associated with this initiative.

Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director of the MRA Customs Department stated that public's perception on Customs was very low some 30 years ago, but with the implementation of robust integrity programme, benchmarked with international standards, MRA is today ahead, in terms of good governance and organisational integrity. *"Digitalization and automation of customs services have been key factors that have*

paved the way for enhancing integrity of customs services and fighting corruption, and bold reforms and modernization have been necessary to improve that perception,” he added.



Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, Customs

In a concluding note, Mr. Ramburun underlined that MRA has a pool of WCO Recognized Experts on Integrity, and are ready to share the knowledge and skills with counterparts from other African countries.

Mr. Rajeev Gobin, Officer in Charge, Internal Affairs Division, MRA stated that the mission of the Internal Affairs Division, is to provide assurance to the Board of Directors as well as to society at large, regarding the integrity of MRA employees. This objective is achieved by conducting administrative investigations in an efficient, systematic and ethical manner. It is an essential tool to ensure compliance, prevent illicit activities and protect the economic interests of our nations, he added.



Mr. Rajeev Gobin, Officer in Charge, Internal Affairs Division, MRA

The attendees had the opportunity to participate in hands-on exercises and gain knowledge of best practices that can be adapted to the unique challenges facing their institutions.



MRA EMPOWERS ITS TAXPAYERS

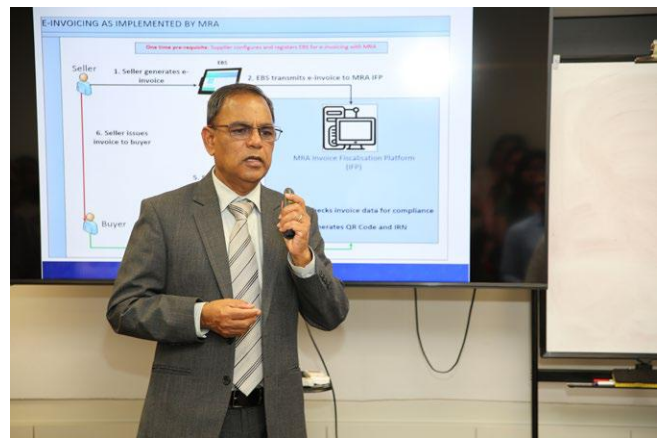
The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) runs a self-assessment system. To help taxpayers in this exercise, they are regularly informed of their rights and obligations, of up-coming deadlines and changes in legislations. To that end, MRA carried out the following educational sessions during the month of October 2023.

Subject: Changes brought in by the Finance Act 2023

- Target Audience: Members of the Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants, MIPA
- Date: Thursday 19 October 2023,
- Medium: through zoom
- MRA Resource Persons:
 - » Mrs P. Puholoo, Section Head, MRA Operational Services Department, OSD,
 - » Mr. A. Lolljee, Section Head, Small and Medium Taxpayer Department, MSTD,
 - » Mr. D. Juggoo, Section Head, Large Taxpayer Department, LTD, and
 - » Mrs T. K. Goburdhone, Section Head, Large Taxpayer Department, LTD.
- Target Audience: Members of the Mauritius Export Association, MEXA
- Date: Friday 20 October 2023
- MRA Resource Persons:
 - » Mr. G.P. Ramkissoon, Director, Objections, Appeals and Dispute Resolutions Department, OADR,
 - » Mr. Dhanee Seetloo, Facilitator
 - » Mr. Boodoo, Section Head, Objections, Appeals and Dispute Resolutions Department, OADR,
 - » Mrs. A. Kurrumbacus (Section Head, Objections, Appeals and Dispute Resolutions Department (OADR)

Subject: e-invoicing

- Target Audience: Members of the Mauritius Export Association, MEXA).
- Date: Tuesday 31 October 2023
- MRA Resource Persons:
 - » Mr. D. Ramdin, Director, Medium and Small Taxpayers Department, MSTD
 - » Mr. S. Moti, Section Head, Information Systems Department, ISD,
 - » Ms. Y. Ramparsad, e-Invoicing Team,
 - » Mrs K. Purmah, e-Invoicing Team.



MRA in the Media:

RADIO/ TV PROGRAMMES



Over the years, MRA has actively been engaging in the use of the various communication platforms to disseminate information relating to tax, customs, and the various activities being carried out by the MRA including the different financial support schemes it implements.

To this end, the following actions were taken on Radio / TV during the month of October 2023.

Mauritius

93 Radio interventions

20 "One minute radio Programmes" broadcast on Kool FM and MBC Radio.

3 TV Interventions

Rodrigues

20 "One minute radio Programmes" on Rodrigues FM

1 52-minute programme entitled "Passing out Ceremony of Trainee Customs Officers" broadcast on TV Rodrigues on 27 Oct 2023

1 13-minute TV programme on "e-Filing Season 2023" broadcast on 13 October 2023

Border Protection:

MRA SEIZES ECSTASY PILLS

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) seized 56 ecstasy pills, worth approximately Rs. 112,000, on Saturday, 21 October 2023 at a Courier Service. The content of the parcel, in transit, was declared as Health Products. When scanned and examined by the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS) of the MRA, a carton box was found to contain fifty-six (56) green pills. Each pill bore the logo of a Kangaroo. A field test for Ecstasy was carried out on the substance and the result was positive.

The exhibits have been secured and the case referred to ADSU for further enquiry.

Members of the public are reminded that they may report suspected drug cases/ illicit activities to the MRA through the **MRA Stop Drug Platform** www.mra.mu or by calling on the **Hotline 8958**.





DID YOU KNOW?

INTERESTING FACT

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF RS. 5 PER LITRE OF "DIESEL"

- Financial Support to Business Operators following increase in price of 'Diesel'



Following the recent increase in the retail price of gas oil (diesel), the Government of the Republic of Mauritius has decided to provide financial assistance of Rs. 5 per litre of "Diesel" for Business Operators.

Once again, MRA has been entrusted with the responsibility of implementing this scheme. Eligible Business Operators are required to register with MRA. The necessary facility is already available on MRA website, www.mra.mu. This financial assistance scheme will take effect from 7 October 2023.

To benefit from this assistance, all Business Operators must:

1. Firstly, register themselves with the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) through the MRA website.

2. Secondly, once they have completed their registration, Business Operators need to submit a Monthly Statement, providing details of the quantity of diesel consumed during that month. After the necessary verification, MRA will credit the payment directly to their bank account.

To benefit from the financial assistance, eligible Business Operators are required to be fully compliant with their tax/social contribution obligations and also keep proper records, documents and invoices. After the payment, MRA may carry out an audit and any excess amount claimed/paid will be claimed back accordingly.

For any additional information regarding this financial assistance scheme, kindly call MRA's Help Desk on 207 6000 during office hours, or email us at fsu@mra.mu



Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius
T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 211 8099 | E: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu

