MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

Data Analytics and Machine Learning:

MRA further arms itself to combat Tax fraud

Data Analytics and Machine Learning are the new tools to which Revenue Authorities, future-oriented, are pondering at this very conjuncture of technology effervescence.

A Workshop on Data Analytics and Machine Learning from 12 to 16 September 2022 at the seat of MRA, Ehram Court, Port Louis, has regrouped some fourteen participants from the MRA in view implementing these modern tools to promote compliance to Value Added Tax (VAT) and curbing down fiscal fraud. This workshop is organised under the aegis of the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), with experts in Data Analytics and Machine Learning.

DATA is the foundation upon which this new digital world is built, and the quality of the outcomes that result will depend on the quality of the data that goes in, and the way it is analysed.

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13 September 2022

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To pursue its endeavour to meet new challenges through breakthrough innovations and to stay one step ahead, the Compliance Departments at the MRA will look at the tax function through the lens of big data and data analytics. It makes no doubt that workshop will further motivate the participants in extracting value through data analytics; the tool that generates actionable insights.

Moreover, dedicated experts have already been assigned to develop a holistic solution to meet MRA's key expectations to train and deploy Artificial intelligence (AI) models for identifying risks in real time, detecting non-compliant cases and applying predictive analytics to forecast high risk cases.
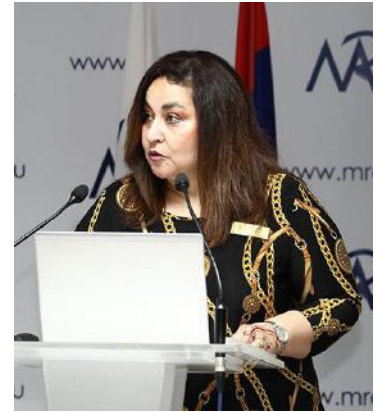

During the opening ceremony, the Acting Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Dhanraj Ramdin, conveyed his deep gratitude to ATAF, for providing technical assistance to the Tax Risk Management Unit of the MRA in the field of machine learning. He underscored the availability of new technologies, new data sources, and increasing international cooperation to provide new opportunities for tax administrations. He explained that analysis techniques can help to improve their performance by getting valuable information on taxpayers. The future of Tax Administrations relies on advanced analytics through the creation of major opportunities by extracting insights and practical value from their data. As a consequence it is important to incorporate data analytics as a core part of the decision-making tool-set.

According to the Acting Director-General, the digital transformation process can further be facilitated through the extensive use of modern technologies and intelligent devices to collect taxes, reduce the administrative burden and help taxpayers to voluntarily meet their tax obligations. Analytics will add value in the application of a Compliance Risk Management approach leading to more rational decisions made by the MRA, he said.

"In our quest for excellence, Mauritius has in the last World Bank Ease of Paying Taxes Report escalated to the fifth position making us ahead of several European countries and first in Africa," he added.

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Mrs Sameera Khan, Manager, Technical Assistance in Tax Programmes Directorate, African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) observed the growing need for assistance on Artificial Intelligence, data modelling and data processing. She underlined that tax authorities have collected a lot of data resulting from automation. In her vote of thanks, she emphasized that the MRA is a reference in terms of tax administration and this is one of the reasons why Mauritius was chosen for this capacity building.

In line with its continuous improvement for a smarter compliance risk management, a further ten-day combined online and face-to-face training on Machine Learning Models will be dispensed in October and November 2022. In addition, another two-day online training on Data Reporting and Visualization will be delivered to MRA officials.

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