TRIPS+

Increase Productivity, Improve Compliance, Take Control of Your Revenue

CASE STUDY

The Ghana Implementation
In May 2009 the Republic of Ghana began the implementation of a far-reaching e-Ghana Project aimed at delivering online services to public facing government agencies. The Ghana Community Network took the lead as main contractor, and implemented Trips™ as the software of choice to fulfill the specific needs of the Ghana Revenue Authority.

The Revenue Authority’s needs were arguably the most important of these government agencies, and it was essential that our software was cost-effective, improved ease and accuracy of revenue collection, and increased efficiency in public service.

Prior to automation of the GRA, taxpayers were subjected to the manual systems of multiple tax agencies and offices, with files often getting lost, tax assessments done subjectively, and a number of businesses able to evade taxes. Information was often duplicated and taxpayers would be required to register individually with multiple agencies as there was no way of uniquely identifying taxpayers and their obligations.

The project supported the new Taxpayer Identification Numbering System (TIN). This provided taxpayers with a unique identification for official transactions with the Domestic Tax Revenue Division, the Customs Division, the Controller and Accountant General's Department, the Registrar General's Department, District Assemblies, plus any Public Institutions prescribed in the future.

As a system, Trips™ is a robustly integrated and comprehensive tax application, bringing tax procedures online and making the system fast and easy to use for both revenue officers and customers.

It is an ideal choice as it offers the capability for taxpayers to correspond with tax offices electronically and in real time with the stated aim of increasing efficiency and time-saving. It also allows for improved two-way communication and engagement, providing an all-round improved public service.

By implementing a case and risk management framework to record and handle cases robustly, Trips™ has enabled officials to identify potential risk, improve transparency, and minimize fraud. An interface also enables officials to check that company directors are registered taxpayers before the registration of a company is completed.

For the revenue authority it offers confidence in a single taxpayer database that identifies individual taxpayers and their obligations, it provides dramatically increased compliance, increased administrative capacity, and crucially, far superior revenue collection.

These benefits are underpinned by demonstrable expertise and successful prior implementations, and recognition as a leading international product for streamlining tax and taxpayer administration.

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The GRA decided to have a phased implementation using two offices with diverse tax populations as pilot sites. This was followed quickly by a roll out to the Large Taxpayer Office.

During the implementation life cycle, workshops were held with key stakeholders across the business to ensure that all business interactions were mapped to the COTS system and to allow for change management activities to be developed in support of the implementation.

The phased approach allowed the GRA to manage the change in work processes and procedures and finalize them before the full roll out, while also allowing taxpayers enough time to participate in the re-registration process.

At all stages, the architecture needed to be entirely compliant with the Government of Ghana’s overall strategy for a service-orientated environment.

As supplied, Trips™ was configured as an integrated system that allowed the Revenue Authority to develop a 360 degree view of all revenue streams and to build a database of uniquely identified taxpayers. From the taxpayer’s perspective, many companies now use Trips™ to automate the processes for assessing, ling and payment of various domestic tax forms such as Income Tax, PAYE, VAT, Withholding Tax, Gift Tax, etc.

For the Ghana Revenue Authority, the implementation of Trips™ has realized all the proposed benefits and beyond. The clearest benefit to the Government was the major increase in revenue collection. Specifically, the revenues collected through Trips™ tripled the total tax receipts between 2010 and 2015. This proportion of revenue has continued to rise.

By using Trips™, the Authority derived a number of additional hard and soft benefits. It has allowed individuals, companies and organizations to register, submit returns, review and remit due taxes with greater ease and simplicity. It has allowed for the administration of both direct and indirect taxes for all taxpayers. Additionally, there has been beneficial growth in ‘in-house’ expertise, as the implementation of Trips™ has allowed the GRA to establish a fully qualified and experienced local team.

• The amount collected in taxes tripled between 2010 and 2015. Highly significant increase in new taxpayers (estimated at 400,000)
• Starting from zero, revenues collected via Trips™ accounted for 61.7% of total tax receipts within 18 months and has continued to rise
• Seamless integration with automated business registration system (87,900)
• Integration with web chat services to speed up assessment queries
• Increased Tax-payers Identification Number (TIN) registrations (425,305).

In line with international best practice, the Government of Ghana legislated for the establishment of a modernized revenue authority focused on functional revenue administration and improved customer service delivery.

Mr. George Blankson
Commissioner General, Ghana Revenue Authority

The introduction of the software has marked a major milestone in the history of the Domestic Tax Revenue Division (DTRD) of GRA.

Mr. Kwasi Gyimah
Commissioner of the Domestic Tax Revenue Division