

5th DRAFT
5th MAY 2009

SIERRA LEONE
NATIONAL REVENUE AUTHORITY
TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
(TIN)

THE TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN)

Anyone conducting business with the National Revenue Authority for taxation purposes is required to have a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). This leaflet describes the purpose and scope of the TIN and how you can obtain one.

What is a TIN?

The Taxpayer Identification Number, or TIN, is a unique computer-generated number allocated to each taxpayer, whether they are an individual, a commercial business, a Government department, public corporation, or a special body.

As its name implies, the TIN identifies taxpayers for the purpose of **all** their tax and other revenue liabilities, including: -

- Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- Income Tax on personal income
- Corporation Tax
- Capital Gains Tax
- Non-tax revenues
- Customs Duties
- Excise Duties
- Property Tax

The TIN is also required for identification in all other transactions and dealings with the NRA.

What is the purpose of a TIN?

Sierra Leone has modernised the way in which taxes are collected by introducing a fully-integrated system, under which all taxes, duties and fees are administered under a single umbrella organisation - the National Revenue Authority (NRA).

The NRA is computerising its operations to assist this improved system of revenue collection and the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) has an important part to play in this.

Most taxpayers have liabilities for more than one type of tax or revenue payment. The TIN system enables all of these liabilities to be brought together on a single database, instead of being held and dealt with by various revenue collecting agencies.

The TIN system will: -

- Improve customer service and make it easier for you to do business with the NRA.
- Ensure the efficient processing of tax returns.
- Create and maintain accurate files for taxpayers.
- Eliminate duplication of taxpayer information within the NRA.
- Decrease costs for both the NRA and the taxpayer.
- Assist the tracking of tax evaders.
- Assist in broadening the tax base - increasing tax revenues without the need to increase tax rates.
- Facilitate the development of electronic commerce between the Government, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- Assist the efficient and speedy processing of imported goods.

Who must register for a TIN?

The following individuals and organisations are legally required to obtain a TIN: -

- Individual taxpayers (including self-employed persons and executors) liable for Income Tax, GST, Capital Gains Tax, Licence Fees, etc.

- All companies and firms.
- Individuals operating businesses liable to tax (e.g. those operating private taxis, or mini bus services).
- Importers and exporters.
- Individuals in partnership businesses.
- Non-government organisations (NGOs).
- Entities with legal documentation affirming their operation and existence in Sierra Leone.
- Government ministries and institutions, including foreign governments, agencies, or missions, public corporations and semi-autonomous bodies.
- Special bodies exempt from the payment of taxes, including embassies and other diplomatic missions.

Each separate legal entity must have its own TIN.

Completing a TIN application

There are two versions of the TIN application form - one for businesses with separate legal existence from its owners and one for individuals and sole proprietors. These are available from any NRA office.

If you are an individual taxpayer, or sole proprietor, and a Sierra Leonean citizen, you will need to provide your National Identification Number and passport (if you possess one). Non-nationals will have to provide their passports. You should complete the application in accordance with the instructions on the reverse of the form. Individual employees will be required to complete Sections A and C only. Sole proprietors will have to complete Sections A, B and C.

If yours is a business you must provide the registration number of your business as shown on the Administrator and Registrar General's certificate. The application should be completed in accordance with the instructions on the reverse of the form and signed by a director or company secretary, or a partner, in the case of a partnership.

You can obtain a TIN registration form from any NRA office. Completed forms should be submitted to the NRA office from which it was obtained.

What happens after you have registered?

Once you have registered you will receive a certificate recording your TIN. You should keep this safely. You will need to quote your TIN in all future business transactions with the National Revenue Authority and in your tax returns.

If you are an individual your TIN will be yours for life. You will not be able to deregister, although you will be able to notify any changes in your circumstances, in writing, to the NRA.

If yours is a business, or other organisation, you will be able to deregister only if you can demonstrate that your business activities have ceased and will not recommence and that all of your tax liabilities have been cleared. Your TIN will also be cancelled in cases of bankruptcy, or insolvency. It will not be reassigned to another entity. Therefore, if you recommence business at a later date, you will be given the same TIN.

In all circumstances, changes in business or organisation should be notified in writing to the NRA.

Important Note: *If you are registering for GST, you must first obtain a TIN. You will need this to complete your GST registration form. If you are a commercial importer of goods you will require a TIN before your goods can be processed. (See the NRA's public information leaflet "ASYCUDA: A modern system for Customs clearance"). You will also require a TIN before you can obtain an Income Tax clearance certificate.*

How can I find more information?

The NRA's website www.nra.gov.sl is being developed to provide comprehensive information about tax matters and copies of the Goods and Services Tax Act 2009, the GST Regulations 2009 and other tax publications can be downloaded from the website.

The NRA has also established a Taxpayer Services Unit to deal with enquiries about GST and other taxes and levies. You can visit the Unit at the NRA offices at Gladvic House, Wellington Street, Freetown, where specialist NRA officers will be available to help you with all your tax matters. Alternatively, you can telephone for information or advice on the special tax helplines **000 000**.

In addition, the NRA is publishing a series of information leaflets to assist the business community and the general public. These are available from the Taxpayer Services Unit or other NRA offices, or can be downloaded from the NRA's website. In addition to this leaflet, among those that might be of particular interest are:

- A Guide to the GST Legislation
- An Introduction to GST for Businesses
- Should I be registered for GST?
- Why do we need GST in Sierra Leone?
- What will be taxed under GST?
- Books and Records to be kept
- GST Visits by NRA officers
- GST Special Retail Schemes
- The GST Margin Scheme
- A guide to claiming GST refunds
- A guide to completing your GST return
- GST and the Consumer
- ASYCUDA: A modern system for Customs clearance