CONCEPT NOTE

How Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) can Engage, Develop and Support the Development of Local Technology Community

Background

Over the last 5 years, URA is employing more information technology services to streamline and improve its tax collection and compliance activities, through its eTAX platform. The current platform is owned and managed by URA, with no support for 3rd party providers to integrate at any point.

The purpose of this concept note is to document opportunities for URA to engage, leverage the Ugandan technology services community to support its mission while supporting the growth of the sector.

Value Proposition to URA

The value proposition to URA is a mixture of both direct and indirect gains:

1. Reduction in the amount of grunt work URA to collect taxes by making existing systems easier to improve quality of tax administration of monitoring and ensuring compliance building on existing steps such as support for mobile money based tax payments, online submission of returns.
2. Increased revenue from taxes on new service industry around tax support related services, ability for URA to increase the tax base by improving last mile to collection, administration and compliance
3. Increased public goodwill for URA from engaging taxpayers in a non-enforcement role
4. Increased innovations in tax collection opportunities and services

Areas for Engagement

The following are high level starting areas for engagement:

1. eTax System Usability Enhancements:
   - Currently steps must be completed in a single sitting which may not be possible with the intermittent Internet connections.
   - All information (even if known by the system when tied to a specific account) has to be re-entered into the downloaded spreadsheets
   - Tax payers cannot track the assessments and payments that have been made for them for analysis and record keeping purposes.
2. Documenting the information needs for tax submission and making this public so that the local tech community can develop and support locally developed solutions. A simple example would be the TIN application form – since Excel has an XML format, if this format would be documented and made public then developers can build applications to generate this format and submit to URA.
3. Opening up the eTax system by providing a way for "certified" 3rd parties to submit required tax information – this is the next phase to #2. This will open space for integrators to add plugins to accounting packages to automatically submit taxes to URA (supporting larger retailors) and opening up additional services for accountants (which translates into revenue growth from increased compliance and service taxes)

How to Engage?

1. Hold consultation meetings with representatives from organizations and networks such as I-Network, Linux User Group Uganda, ICT Association of Uganda (ICTAU), Consumer Protection Association Uganda (CPAU), BPO Association of Uganda
2. Participate in local tech events like Startup weekends, hackathlons or even hold URA focused events to provide opportunities for local developers and businesses identify solutions to improve service delivery.
3. Share product and service development roadmaps to elicit feedback from the tax paying community

Open Issues

1. How the privacy of personal and financial information will be managed.
2. Identifying which organizations to deal with going forward.