**DATA POLICY ON GHANA REVENUE AUTHORITY**

Ghana Revenue Authority is the administration charged with the task of assessing, collecting and accounting for tax revenue in Ghana. Since the integration of the four revenue institutions namely Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS), The Internal Revenue Authority (IRS), Value Added Tax Service (VATS), and Revenue Agencies Governing Board (RAGB).

In the context of a Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), a robust data policy is essential for ensuring transparency, efficiency, and accountability in revenue management. GRA is committed to protecting the privacy and security of individuals and companies’ sensitive information.

This data policy and protection notice describes how the Authority collect and use personal and companies’ information in accordance with Ghana's data protection policies and procedures governed by the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843) (DPA). The Data Protection Commission (DPC) is responsible for enforcing the law. The DPA's goals are to ensure that personal data is collected, processed, and retained in a way that adheres to eight key data protection principles. This commentary outlines the key areas of data dissemination, sharing protocols, and visibility, while also suggesting improvements for each area.

1. Structure of Data Dissemination

The structure of data dissemination within Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) should be hierarchical and clearly defined. It is crucial to establish a framework where data flows from the collection point to various stakeholders, including internal teams and external partners. This is when data from GRA is made available to users, stakeholders and the public. Therefore identifying the target audience and understanding who and for what the data would be used for is vital for good Data Dissemination.

Improvements:

The Ghana Revenue Authority has implemented a centralized data management system that integrates data from various Taxpayers Service Centres across the country. An example is the online Taxpayers Portal, where individuals and companies can file the tax returns, access their tax ledger and liabilities, and make payments via the centralised government payment website “Ghana.gov.gh”. This software is good initiative but need to be robust enough to meet the growing demand of the public using them. This will help check the data needed to be processed for tax purposes easily as unrelated data can easily be detected.

2. Format of Data Dissemination

Data should be disseminated in user-friendly formats that cater to various stakeholders’ needs. Common formats include spreadsheets, PDF reports, and interactive dashboards.

Improvements:

Develop interactive and user friendly dashboards that provides real-time insights into revenue streams, enabling stakeholders to visualize trends and make informed decisions.

3. Data Sharing Protocols and Procedures

Establishing clear data sharing protocols is vital for maintaining data integrity and security. Protocols should define who can access what data, under what circumstances, and the methods of sharing.

Improvements:

The Ghana Revenue Authority Create a standardized data sharing agreement that outlines terms of use, confidentiality requirements, and compliance with regulations such as GDPR.

Implement a tiered access system based on roles to ensure sensitive information is only accessible to authorized personnel.

4. Data Visibility

Visibility of data is critical for fostering public trust and accountability. The Ghana Revenue Authority should leverage its website and social media platforms to share relevant data with the public.

Improvements:

Regularly update the department's website with key performance indicators (KPIs), revenue reports, and audit findings to provide transparency. The authority can utilize social media channels to disseminate simplified data summaries, infographics, and key insights that engage the public and encourage feedback.

Conclusion

By focusing on the structure, format, sharing protocols, and visibility of data dissemination, Ghana Revenue Authority can enhance its operational efficiency and foster greater public trust. Implementing these improvements will not only streamline internal processes but also promote transparency and accountability in revenue management. As technology evolves, continuous adaptation of these strategies will be essential for meeting the dynamic needs of stakeholders and the public.