

Tax administration responses to Covid-19: support for taxpayers

16 March 2020

The Covid-19 emergency will affect the lives of many people around the globe. There are a number of ways that governments and tax administrations can ease burdens on taxpayers and support businesses and individuals with cash-flow problems or with difficulties in meeting tax reporting or payment obligations. The suggestions below are not recommendations but are intended to assist administrations globally in their consideration of appropriate measures in their own national contexts to help taxpayers during this difficult period. Not all of these possibilities will be currently available to all tax administrations and may need legislative changes.

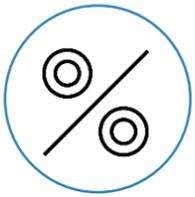


EXTENSION OF DEADLINES

Taxpayers impacted by Covid-19 could be given additional time to file tax returns as well as to make tax payments.

DEFERRAL OF PAYMENTS

Tax payments, which are due in instalments, could be deferred in order to ease cash flow.



REMITTING PENALTIES AND INTEREST

Penalties and interest for late filing or payment could be suspended or possibly refunded depending on circumstances.

DEBT PAYMENT PLANS

Taxpayers could be given easier access to payment plans and extensions of plan duration. Consideration may also be given to having an interest-free period.



SUSPENDING DEBT RECOVERY

Administrations may want to consider suspension of debt recovery, including suspending the garnishing of wages or bank accounts and asset seizures and sales.

QUICKER REFUNDS

Where taxpayers are owed money, processes for refunds might be prioritised to ensure money is paid out quickly.



PROVIDE TAX CERTAINTY

Consideration of possible options for providing early tax certainty where appropriate.

AUDIT POLICIES

Consideration of not auditing taxpayers during the crisis (other than where fraud is involved).



ENHANCED SERVICES

Consideration of adjustments to taxpayer services, including increased use of digital channels, dedicated hotlines and, where practicable, longer opening hours of telephone centres.

COMMUNICATION

Clear communication strategies, including dedicated webpages, multifaceted media communications, and consideration of how to identify and reach vulnerable taxpayers.

