

Tax Services Continuity during COVID-19

Hello everyone, nice to meet you all again. I'm WANG Hairuo from Taxpayer Services Department, State Taxation Administration of China (STA). The COVID-19 poses a new challenge to STA, especially under the circumstance of maintaining social distance. It requires us to find new ways for tax services when we have to reduce the face-to-face communication, and information technology gives strong support during this special time.

In China, taxpayers can enjoy tax services without leaving home. To conveniently handle tax matters, they can use the unified national E-tax bureau, and if they want more digital services, a national tax service platform is also in place to help. Tax service platform integrates the functions of tax consultation, inquiry, taxpayer school, taxpayer rights protection and the service for third-party tax agencies.

To contact us, taxpayers can call the 12366 tax service number throughout the country. In the hotline, they can ask about tax policies, make complaints, report illegal acts or violations and put forward suggestions. The hotline provides manual service during working hours and all day long interactive voice response service.

Meanwhile, they can also use online chat. Tax experts from service department answer questions online during working hours. Apart from that, virtual assistant xiaohui provides 7 days 24hs chat without waiting.

To discuss the new possibilities for digital tax services during COVID-19. I would like to share China's practice. First, digitalization expands tax consultation channels. In recent years, with the development of technologies like mobile network, cloud computing and deep learning, virtual assistant or Chatbot has been gradually put into use in more and more fields.

STA has launched Xiaohui, the virtual assistant, on PC end at the end of 2018. In April 2019, Xiaohui was expanded to cover mobile end by Apps and mini apps, and later in September, we start the pilot on hotline. These give taxpayers new consulting channel and experience. Especially during the epidemic this year, virtual assistant has shown its all-day and self-service advantage.

China's virtual assistant is based on intelligent knowledge base, and uses technologies such as voice recognition, natural language understanding, speech synthesis, and machine learning, to provide service on hotline, web pages and wireless terminals.

At present, virtual assistant Xiaohui can accurately answer 1/4 of all questions asked in every channel, and effectively relieve the pressure of manual service.

Second, digitalization increases the scope of policy publicity and promotion. Since the outbreak of the virus, we have issued a series of tax reliefs to prevent and control the epidemic as well as to maintain economic and social development. To help taxpayers understand the new policies in a timely manner and make sure they can get quick and accurate answers when needed, digitalization gives a hand for policy publicity and promotion.

We set up a epidemic special column on the official tax website to display information such as relevant policies, regulations and FAQs, so that taxpayers can find the information they want to know on a one-stop platform. We regularly collect and sort out hot issues from taxpayers' feedback, and then release authoritative information to the public to respond their concerns. We produce different types of campaign and guidance products to make the tax relief policies more intuitive, including animation, e-books, e-brochure, interactive mini apps and so on. We carry out online interviews, which invites tax officials to explain the policy and interact with audience. We record tax lectures led by the STA experts to interpret the key points of policies, and release them through various online channels. We ask local tax authorities to publicize and promote the digital campaign products made by the STA through their official websites, social media official accounts so as to form a scale effect across the country.

That's all from my side and my colleague will talk more about E-tax Bureau. Thank you!