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Paying Taxes 2020
Global and Regional Findings: SOUTH AMERICA

The *Paying Taxes* report is a joint annual publication by PwC and the World Bank Group. This year marks the 14th year of the publication. The report is based on the World Bank Group's *Paying Taxes* indicator within their *Doing Business* project and includes analysis and commentary by the World Bank and PwC.

The *Paying Taxes* indicator measures tax systems from the point of view of a domestic company complying with the different tax laws and regulations in 190 economies around the world. The case study company is a small to medium-size manufacturer and retailer with specific assumptions, deliberately chosen to ensure that its business can be compared worldwide on a like for like basis.

The *Doing Business* project, a World Bank Group annual publication which measures business regulations in 190 economies, has been collecting data on paying taxes for 15 years. Besides paying taxes, the *Doing Business* project provides measures of regulations in nine other areas: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency. It also looks at labour market regulation.

Paying Taxes compares tax systems using four measures: the Total Tax and Contribution Rate ("TTCR": the cost of all taxes borne, as a % of commercial profit), the time needed to comply with the major taxes (profit taxes, labour taxes and mandatory contributions, and consumption taxes), the number of tax payments and the post-filing index. The four measures are each converted to a score of 0 – 100 and the simple average of these scores determines the overall *Paying Taxes* ranking.

The *Paying Taxes* indicator measures all taxes and contributions mandated by government at any level (federal, state, or local) as they apply to the standardised business. The TTCR sub-indicator measures the cost of taxes and contributions that are borne by the company. The taxes included can be divided into 5 categories: profit or corporate income tax, social contributions and labour taxes paid by the employer (for which all mandatory contributions are included, even if paid to a private entity such as a required pension fund), property taxes, turnover taxes and other taxes (such as municipal fees and vehicle taxes). The two original compliance sub-indicators, on the time to comply and number of payments, measure taxes borne and taxes collected, and so include taxes and contributions withheld or collected, such as sales tax or value added tax (VAT). The post-filing index measures two processes based on four components—time to comply with a VAT refund (hours), time to obtain a VAT refund (weeks), time to comply with a correction of a CIT return (hours) and the time to complete a CIT correction (weeks).

Some important points to note are that:

1. The sub-indicators are calculated by reference to a particular calendar year. The effect of any change that takes place part way through the year is pro-rated. The most recent data in this study, *Paying Taxes 2020*, relates to the calendar year ended 31 December 2018.
2. The ranking order is based on the World Bank's ease of doing business score which is used by the World Bank Group to evaluate each economy's performance relative to the lowest and highest value of each sub-indicator rather than relative to the other economies. This means that economies can see how far they have progressed towards the best regulatory performance, rather than simply looking at

how they compare to other economies. A score is calculated for each of the four sub-indicators. The simple average of these four scores then gives the overall score on *Paying Taxes*. The distribution used to determine the score of the TTCR is non-linear. This means that movements in a TTCR that is already close to the lowest TTCR will have less of an impact on the score of the TTCR. As in previous years, the lowest TTCR for the purposes of the ranking calculation is set at the 15th percentile of the overall distribution for all years included in the analysis up to and including *Doing Business 2016*, which is 26.1%. Economies with a TTCR below this value will therefore not be closer to the best regulatory performance than an economy with a TTCR equal to this value.

3. If in the course of collecting and analysing the data for 2018 it became apparent that data for previous years was incorrect, the necessary adjustments have been made and the sub-indicators recalculated for prior years. Rankings are only revised for the immediate prior year. Any data that refers to 2017 and earlier years is therefore stated after such revisions have been made and so may differ from the data published in previous editions of this study including the global and regional averages.

The key themes and findings are:

- On average, it takes our case study company 234 hours to comply with its taxes, it makes 23.1 payments and has an average Total Tax and Contribution Rate (TTCR) of 40.5%.
- In 2018, the global average results are almost unchanged compared to last year, but there have been some significant changes in the results in certain economies.
- Since 2012, the global average number of payments has fallen by 10% and the global average time to comply has fallen by 16% - both driven by technology.
- Some of the most significant drops in the time to comply in 2018 were in Brazil and Vietnam where the time to comply fell by 23%.
- In 2018, the number of payments indicator dropped substantially in Côte d'Ivoire (by 60%), Kyrgyz Republic (by 59%) and Israel (by 79%).
- The number of economies using electronic tax filing and payment systems as measured by *Paying Taxes* has risen sharply from 43 of 174 economies in 2004 to 106 out of 190 economies in 2018.
- Although the TTCR increased only marginally to 40.5% in 2018 from 40.4% in 2017, there have been some major changes in the taxes levied on the case study company in some economies.
- Value-added tax (VAT) was introduced in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- In Ghana, the standard rate of VAT was reduced, but cascading sales taxes were introduced and increased in the TTCR from 32.4% to 55.4%.
- Lower taxes on profits drove significant rate reductions in The Gambia (from 56.6% in 2017 to 48.4% in 2018), the United States (from 43.8% in 2017 to 36.6% in 2018), China (64.0% in 2017 to 59.2% in 2018) and Morocco (49.8% in 2017 to 45.8% in 2018)
- The global post-filing score is 60.9 out of 100. The higher score the more efficient it is to receive VAT refunds and correct corporate income tax returns.
- On average around the world, our case study needs 18.2 hours to comply with a VAT refund and it takes 27.3 weeks to obtain the refund.
- The time to correct a corporate income tax is 14.6 hours on average. If the correction results in further interaction with the tax authority, it takes 25.5 weeks from the submission of the correction until the completion of any interactions with the tax authority, including audits.

Regional details – South America¹

- In 2018, the case study company has an average Total Tax & Contribution Rate (TTCR) of 53.3% in South America; it takes 519 hours to comply with its tax affairs and makes 24.7 payments.
- Between 2017 and 2018, the average TTCR for the South American region increased slightly by 0.4 percentage points. In this region, the TTCR fell in only one economy and increased in five. South America's has the highest average TTCR across all regions. Six of the 12 economies in the region have a TTCR greater than the global average of 40.5%. Despite a significant reduction of 27 hours in 2018, the region still has the highest time to comply at more than twice the global average of 234 hours.
- The South American region is the least efficient when it comes to post-filing with a score of 41.5 (on a scale of 0 – 100). Whilst all economies in the region have a VAT system, a VAT refund is available to the case study company in just two economies. This gives the region the worst score for both of the VAT components of the post-filing index.
- In 2018, on average 'other' taxes account for 36% of the average TTCR for the region which is the largest proportion of all regions. Profit taxes and labour taxes each account for approximately 32% of the region's average TTCR.
- Two economies recorded changes to their time to comply. The only reduction was in Brazil by 457 hours to 1,501, while the only increase was in Venezuela, RB by 128 hours to 920. These were also the largest reductions and increases globally in 2018. In Brazil, increased stability of the electronic bookkeeping systems, combined with fewer changes, reduced the time to comply. While, in Venezuela, RB moved from monthly to weekly VAT returns. In the absence of online filing and payment systems, this increased the time to comply.
- Four of the twelve economies in the region have a time to comply in excess of 650 hours including Brazil with 1,501 hours and Bolivia with 1,025 hours. Only two economies have a time to comply below the world average of 234 hours. Despite the significant decrease in 2018, Brazil continues to have the highest time to comply globally.
- At 24.7 payments in 2018, the number of payments increased by 2.3 and is now above the world average (23.1 payments). The was almost entirely due to the increase by 28 payments to 99 payments in Venezuela, RB as the VAT system moved from monthly filing to weekly filing. Two payments are required each week — an advance payment based on the VAT for the previous week and a final payment for the week in question.
- With a post-filing index score of 57.0, Chile is the most efficient economy in the region when it comes to post-filing. The corporate income tax correction takes 30.5 hours in Chile, even though as per the case study company, there is a less than 25% chance of an additional review from tax auditors following the correction. Brazil has the least efficient post-filing processes with a post-filing index score of 7.8. In Brazil it takes 39 hours to comply with a CIT correction and 86.6 weeks to complete CIT correction process, including any reviews.
- It would take the case study company in South America 13.5 hours on average to correct an error in the corporate income tax return and deal with any subsequent review. This is below the global average of 14.6 hours.
- In 33% of the economies in South America there is a greater than 25% probability that the company would be selected for additional review after submitting a correction to a corporate income tax return. Such reviews, including any audits, would last 39.8 weeks on average, compared to 25.5 weeks globally.

For more information about *Paying Taxes*, visit www.pwc.com/payingtaxes.

For more information about the *Doing Business* report series, including more details of the methodology, visit www.doingbusiness.org.

¹ The following 12 economies are included in our analysis of South America: Argentina; Bolivia; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Ecuador; Guyana; Paraguay; Peru; Suriname; Uruguay; Venezuela, R.B.

About the *Doing Business* study

The *Doing Business* study provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies and selected cities at the subnational and regional level.

The *Doing Business* study, launched in 2002, looks at domestic small and medium-size companies and measures the regulations applying to them through their life cycle.

By gathering and analyzing comprehensive quantitative data to compare business regulation environments across economies and over time, *Doing Business* encourages economies to compete towards more efficient regulation; offers measurable benchmarks for reform; and serves as a resource for academics, journalists, private sector researchers and others interested in the business climate of each economy.

In addition, *Doing Business* offers detailed subnational studies, which exhaustively cover business regulation and reform in different cities and regions within a nation. These studies provide data on the ease of doing business, rank each location, and recommend reforms to improve performance in each of the indicator areas. Selected cities can compare their business regulations with other cities in the economy or region and with the 190 economies that *Doing Business* has ranked.

The first *Doing Business* study, published in 2003, covered 5 indicator sets and 133 economies. This year's study covers 12 indicator sets and 190 economies. Ten of these areas—starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency—are included in the ease of doing business score and ease of doing business ranking. *Doing Business* also measures regulation on employing workers and contracting with the government, which are not included in the ease of doing business score and ranking. Most indicator sets refer to a case scenario in the largest business city of each economy, except for 11 economies that have a population of more than 100 million as of 2013 (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the United States) where *Doing Business*, also collected data for the second largest business city. The data for these 11 economies are a population-weighted average for the 2 largest business cities. The project has benefited from feedback from governments, academics, practitioners and reviewers. The initial goal remains: to provide an objective basis for understanding and improving the regulatory environment for business around the world.

About the World Bank Group

The World Bank Group is one of the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries. Its five institutions share a commitment to reducing poverty and increasing shared prosperity: [The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#) (IBRD), [The International Development Association](#) (IDA), [The International Finance Corporation](#) (IFC), [The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency](#) (MIGA), and [The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes](#) (ICSID). With 189 member countries and offices in over 130 locations, these institutions work together to provide financing, policy advice, technical assistance, political risk insurance, and settlement of disputes to private enterprises, enabling countries to achieve sustainable development.

About PwC

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 157 countries with over 276,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at www.pwc.com.

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