

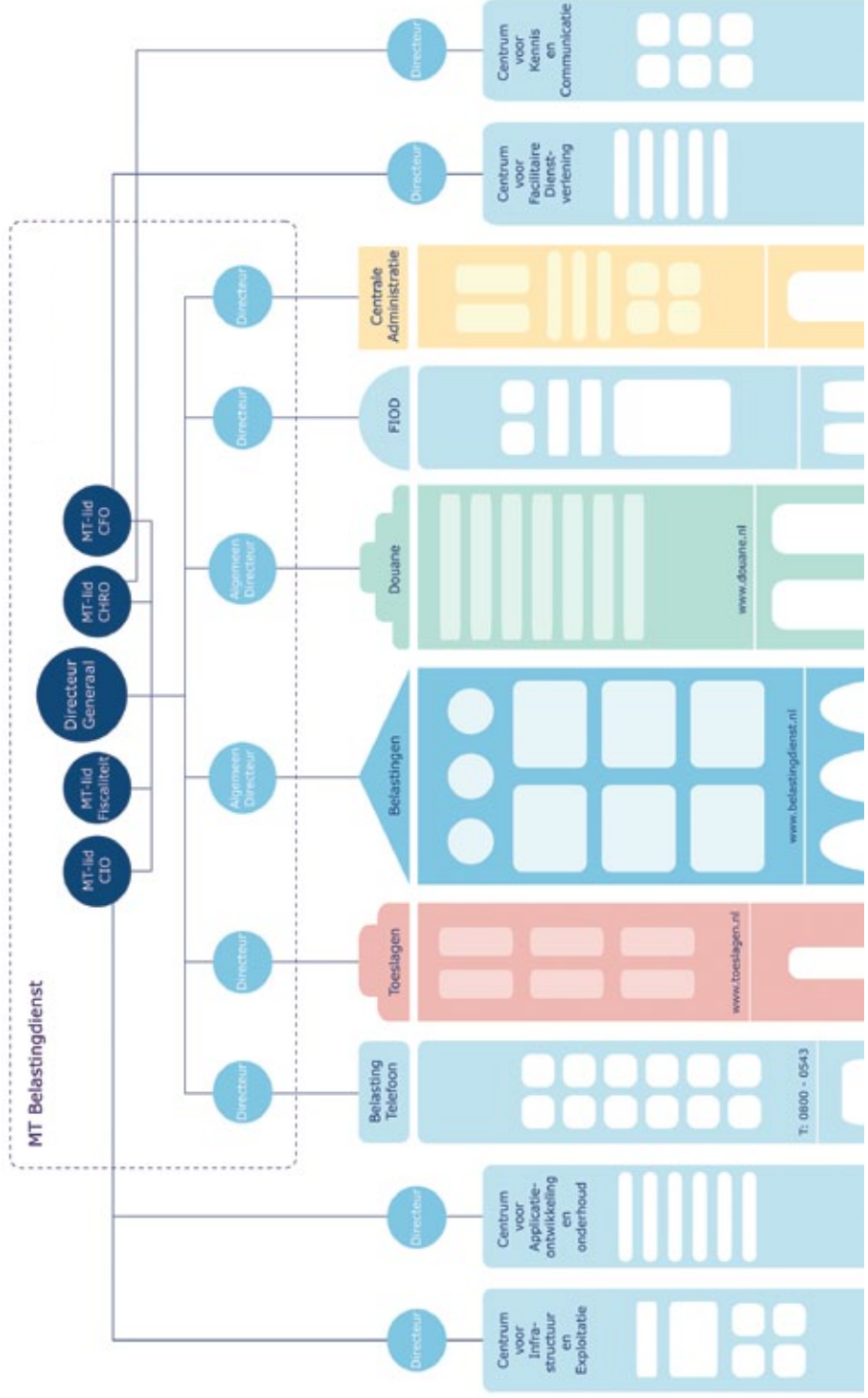


Tax and Customs Administration

# The Dutch Tax and Customs Administration



# Organogram



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*“The FIOD is equipped with the necessary ICT tools for us to quickly run the right forensic analyses”*

Mirjam Mol, Public Prosecutor

# What is the Tax and Customs Administration?

*“One of the places I can find answers to professional questions is on the Tax and Customs Administration website”*

Jaap Doorman, Fiscal Service Provider

# Society & the Tax and Customs Administration

Most Dutch people know who we are. We have different relationships with different people, but we're best-known for collecting tax money on behalf of the government. Money that is used to run society.

So we collect tax money, but we also distribute benefits in the form of financial support for rent, childcare and your health insurance. Companies that import and export goods, have a different kind of relationship with us. Because Customs is also part of the Tax and Customs Administration.

11,2 million

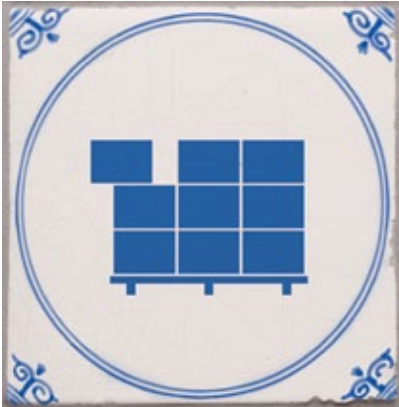
tax returns received annually





9 million

benefits annually



12 million

containers are checked in the port of Rotterdam annually

# How do we work?

As the Tax and Customs Administration, we implement legislation. We do that as efficiently and effectively as possible. If you are obligated to pay taxes, as an individual or as a company, we want you to do so correctly.

We work on behalf of you and all other Dutch taxpayers. You should be able to fill out your tax return quickly and easily, and you should be able to contact us quickly. The provision of benefits should run smoothly too. We want to be able to assist you properly if you have any questions, whether that be online, through the Tax Information Line, or over the counter. Or through other channels. And if you import or export goods, Customs strives to avoid disrupting your logistic procedures by working quickly.

## **Up-to-date**

We want to serve you in a way that fits today's world. A world in which we do more and more of our work digitally, because you do too. But we are precise in making sure that everyone fulfils their obligations, provides us with correct details and pays on time. If the need arises, we call in the FIOD to combat fraud. So the Tax and Customs Administration provides services whenever possible, but is strict whenever necessary.





€ 11 billion

revenue from excise duties annually



15,3 million  
phone calls in 2012



# Developments

As an organization we are an integral part of society. As such, we are constantly looking for ways to further improve the service we provide to individuals and companies. For example, in our approach to individuals and companies we pay increasingly close attention to individual taxpayers: Have they been filing their returns punctually and according to the rules, so far? We are flexible wherever we can be.

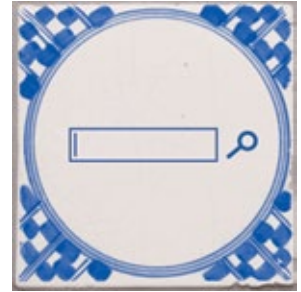
As the Tax and Customs Administration, we follow developments in society very closely. Many Dutch people go online every day. Therefore we offer the option to complete numerous tax transactions securely online. Another reason to do more digitally is that it enables us to work more efficiently.

The internet has drastically changed the way many companies do business. And many Dutch people have got used to ordering products online from abroad. It's our job to carefully monitor the resulting flow of goods.

## **Collaboration**

We are working more closely with other organizations too. Often this enables us to partially fill in tax returns in advance, because we have access to data that other organizations have already compiled. Another advantage of this is that it allows us to monitor more effectively, because we can combine data from authorized benefits agencies, labour inspection departments and banks. So for society, more collaboration means improved monitoring and better services.

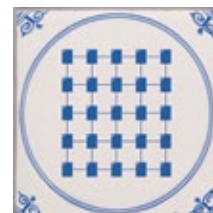
**6,1 million**  
households have round-the-clock  
access to their benefit details



**95%**  
of people prefer filing  
tax returns digitally



**71,6 million**  
internet hits annually



# How does the Tax and Customs Administration work?











*“Filing my tax return will never become a hobby of mine”*

### **Yasmina Alaoui & the Tax and Customs Administration**

“Filing my tax return will never become a hobby of mine. I used to reserve an entire weekend for doing my tax return. I would sit and do all kinds of complicated calculations, using a calculator and using my tax manual. I would fill in the results on the form in pencil, because what if I had made a mistake somewhere? These days it’s all digital. It takes so much less time. Last time I saw that a lot of data had been automatically filled in beforehand. I no longer need an entire weekend to do my tax return. Although I do think the digital system needs to become a bit more user-friendly.”



# The Tax and Customs Administration as service provider

We make it as easy as possible for individuals and companies to fulfil their tax obligations and to apply for benefits. That is our mission. Ideally, we want to remain invisible. That's a sign that we're doing our work properly.

The days when Yasmina Alaoui would lock herself away for an entire weekend to file her tax return, are ancient history now. Digital tools have made the process of filing her tax return far easier. By linking to data from other organizations, we can fill in a large part of Yasmina's return for her and she is really happy with the simplified procedure. "Although I still have to carefully check the data supplied by the Tax and Customs Administration."

## **Filing tax returns properly**

Yasmina considers herself someone who files her tax return properly. "Paying your taxes is just part of life, even though I want to pay as little as possible. Always before 1 April. Except for one time when my husband was in hospital. But I was granted a postponement then anyway, because I reported it on time."

## **No unnecessary inspections**

We mostly limit inspections to people who flout the rules. We make sure we're easily accessible for people who have questions. Answers to many of those questions are found on the website, or they're called in through the Tax Information Line. But taxpayers can also approach us by sending a letter or speaking to us in person at the counter in the Tax Office.



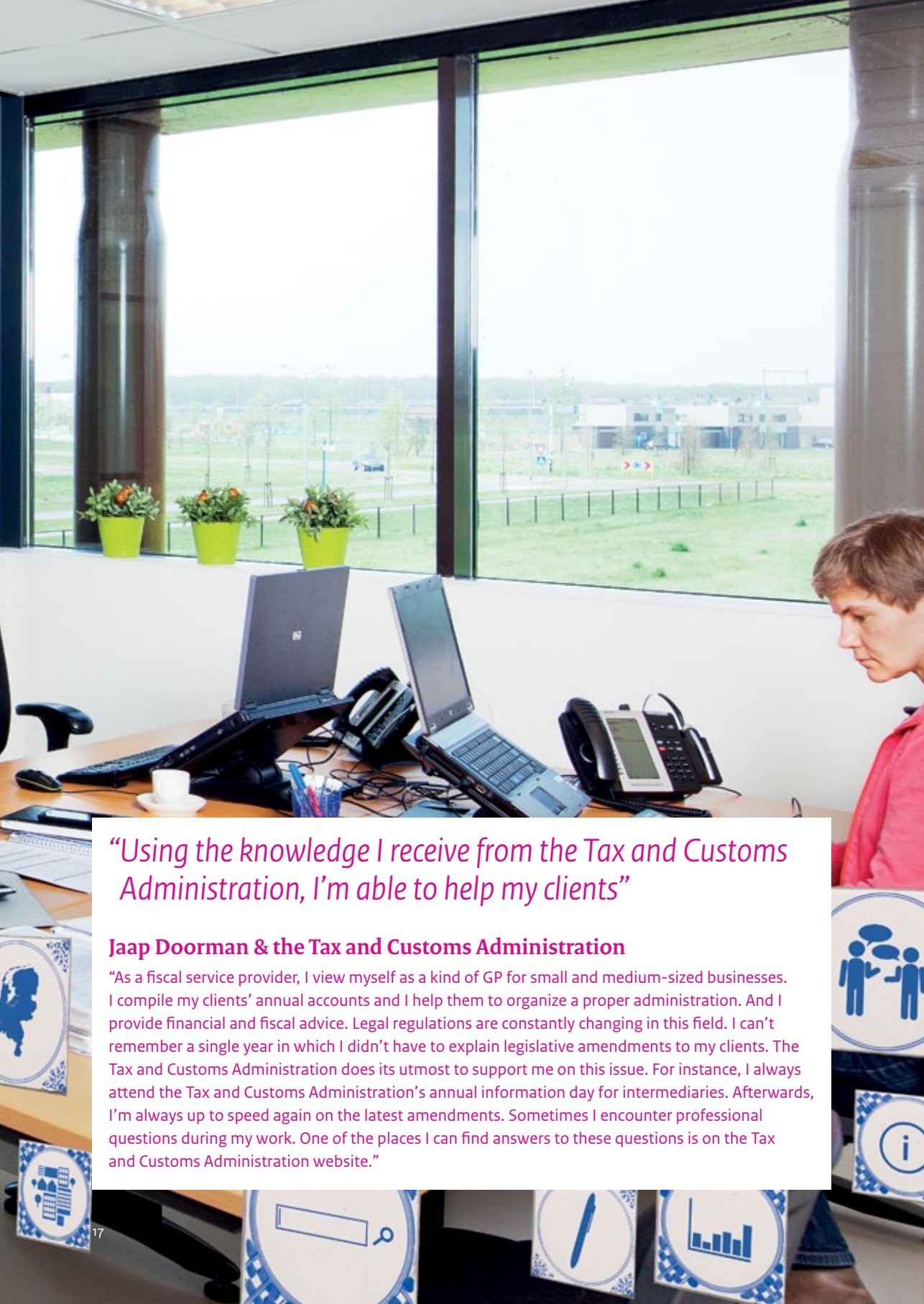
*“Paying your taxes is just part of life, even though I want to pay as little as possible”*

### **Learning from questions**

We learn a great deal from the questions people ask us. For example, Yasmina called the Tax Information Line with a question about specific healthcare expenses for her husband. If it turns out this is something other people are also struggling with – perhaps because the information in the digital tax return form isn’t clear enough – then we will adjust the information. Besides that, almost every year sees changes to fiscal legislation. Changes that affect taxpayers’ returns. We communicate these changes clearly, through TV, radio and internet. But we also try as much as possible to communicate in the right place at the right time, for instance through tax advisers and through social media.







*“Using the knowledge I receive from the Tax and Customs Administration, I’m able to help my clients”*

### **Jaap Doorman & the Tax and Customs Administration**

“As a fiscal service provider, I view myself as a kind of GP for small and medium-sized businesses. I compile my clients’ annual accounts and I help them to organize a proper administration. And I provide financial and fiscal advice. Legal regulations are constantly changing in this field. I can’t remember a single year in which I didn’t have to explain legislative amendments to my clients. The Tax and Customs Administration does its utmost to support me on this issue. For instance, I always attend the Tax and Customs Administration’s annual information day for intermediaries. Afterwards, I’m always up to speed again on the latest amendments. Sometimes I encounter professional questions during my work. One of the places I can find answers to these questions is on the Tax and Customs Administration website.”



# The Tax and Customs Administration as spider in the web of collaboration

As the Tax and Customs Administration we want to work as effectively and efficiently as possible. To achieve this we collaborate more and more with other organizations, both within the Netherlands and abroad.

A good example of the kind of parties we collaborate with, are fiscal service providers. Fiscal service providers form a link between the Tax and Customs Administration and the taxpayer. We agree on criteria with major firms concerning the content and quality of their work. This enables them to give their clients more certainty. Because it's better for everyone if things are done properly in one go. We also help smaller firms to improve their services. Like Jaap Doorman's accountancy firm. "As a fiscal service provider, you sometimes need professional support. When I do, I often call the Intermediaries Help Desk. The specialists who man the phone line at the Tax and Customs Administration are usually able to answer whatever questions I have."

## **Effective collaboration**

Thanks to our collaboration with fiscal service providers like Jaap Doorman, but also with other intermediaries like authorized benefits agencies, labour inspection departments and banks, we are able to make better and better estimates of how much a taxpayer owes. Or we might discover that someone has paid too much. Collaboration is also important when it comes to improving inspections. For instance, Customs joins forces with other organizations in order to perform inspections as thoroughly as possible. This collaboration is increasingly an international undertaking. This also applies to the FIOD, because fraud doesn't stop at the border.



*“As a fiscal service provider, you sometimes need professional support”*

### **Ongoing investment**

In order to be able to keep on doing our work properly, we have to invest in ICT on an ongoing basis. That’s why we’re constantly working with software developers and consulting with fiscal service providers like Jaap, to develop new technologies. And accounting programmes that prevent errors. And fraud-resistant software for cash registers. Preventing risks is better than combating them after the fact.









## *“In the Netherlands we have good arrangements with Customs”*

### **Ronald van Engelshoven & the Tax and Customs Administration**

“I’m manager of Customs Competence & (Trade) Compliance at DHL Global Forwarding. Globally we are the market leaders in air and ocean freight transportation. We are living in an increasingly 24-hour economy. Our customers expect us to deliver shipments extremely rapidly to their destination. At the same time, our transportations are subject to numerous safety regulations all over the world. In the Netherlands we have good arrangements with Customs. Thanks to our solid administration, we can demonstrate that our shipments comply with legal requirements and we have been granted AEO certification (Authorized Economic Operator). This means that Customs formalities are relatively simple for us to process. Certainly in comparison to some other countries. Our interaction with Customs is actually very smooth. I only have to communicate with one person. My contact knows what sort of company we are and what our issues are. That makes for pleasant communication.”

# The Tax and Customs Administration as monitor and law enforcer

Besides service provider, we are also monitor and law enforcer. We check tax returns, punctuality of payments and correctness of the details provided. We also monitor goods that come into and leave the country. Our monitoring and enforcement activities are becoming more and more intelligent. By collaborating with other organizations and linking our data with theirs. By making clever use of ICT. And by creating trust.

Intelligent enforcement means that we want to make ongoing, structural improvements to the tax returns procedure. That's why we invest in relationships with large companies; if they are properly organized, that creates the conditions for trust. Then we no longer have to spend as much time on them. We prefer to spend that time on companies that really require our attention.

## **Specific details**

Customs is a great example of an organization that enforces intelligently, as Ronald van Engelshoven, manager of Customs Competence & (Trade) Compliance at DHL Global Forwarding can testify. "There is absolutely no reason for us to provide incorrect or incomplete data to Customs. That's why we ensure that our administration is completely up to speed. That enables us to provide Customs with specific details at any given moment. This means Customs can confidently trust the way we import and export."



*“There is absolutely no reason for us to provide incorrect or incomplete data to Customs”*

### **Certification**

DHL Global Forwarding is AEO-certified. In a nutshell this means that the company is a demonstrably secure and trustworthy trading partner for the Tax and Customs Administration. As a result, Customs formalities and inspections can be processed more quickly and simply. This is crucial for DHL, because it means customers receive their shipments sooner.





# Rechtsgebouw

*“It often starts with the confiscation of administration and computers”*

### **Mirjam Mol & the Tax and Customs Administration**

“As Public Prosecutor I see the Tax and Customs Administration as a well-oiled machine which is organized in a way that enables me to access the right information whenever I need it. In that respect I have no complaints: our collaboration with the FIOD runs smoothly. When you’re dealing with fraud cases you often have to act quickly to be able to show a criminal offence has been committed. Of course, you need to have sufficient detective forces available. Sometimes that causes discussions, but ultimately we always consult together to decide when it’s the best time to act. It often starts with the confiscation of administration and computers. The FIOD is equipped with the necessary ICT tools for us to quickly run the right forensic analyses. These analyses are essential for supporting a case.”

# The Tax and Customs Administration as fraud fighter

Besides providing services and monitoring, the Tax and Customs Administration also does investigative work. This work is carried out by our colleagues at the FIOD. If it transpires that someone is committing fraud, this could warrant criminal prosecution. The FIOD will then carry out investigations, supervised by the Public Prosecution Service.

In the five years since Mirjam Mol became Public Prosecutor in Rotterdam, she has encountered quite a few instances of fraud. Mirjam is part of the Functioneel Parket division at the Public Prosecution Service, which combats criminality involving the environment, the economy and fraud.

## **Encountering peculiarities**

Criminal fraud investigations often follow reports from the Tax and Customs Administration. Mirjam: “Often tax inspectors will have encountered peculiarities during their checks. For example, I recall the owner of a taxi company who declared an annual income which was completely incongruous with the size of his taxi fleet. Further inspection raised a credible suspicion of fraud. A case like that is then discussed in the regular meetings between the Public Prosecution Service and the Tax and Customs Administration. Ultimately, the Public Prosecution Service decides whether criminal investigations should ensue.”

## **Complex fiscal structures**

“It’s one thing for a taxi company to fail to declare income. But I’m also familiar with the FIOD from large investigations. For instance, into companies that use complex fiscal and financial structures in order to pay little or no taxes. These are also cases which we at the Public Prosecution Service take on together with the FIOD.”





*“The FIOD is equipped with the necessary ICT tools for us to quickly run the right forensic analyses”*

### **Other organizations**

Other reports of fraud sometimes come in through Customs, but also through organizations like the Dutch Central Bank or the Authority for Financial Markets. The FIOD often works together with the national police force and other investigative bodies at home and abroad.





*“You have to get your administration right. Your cash register system has to be in order. The legal form you choose is also important”*

### **Ali Yildrum & the Tax and Customs Administration**

“As a little boy I always used to rush home from school as quickly as I could. My father ran a little neighbourhood supermarket. I was allowed to help him out with all kinds of chores. I wanted to have my own shop when I grew up. Two years ago my dream came true. That’s when I opened my Turkish deli. I knew it would involve lots of financial and tax issues. You have to get your administration right. Your cash register system has to be in order. The legal form you choose is also important. Right now I’m still a one-man business, but I intend to open multiple branches. And then you run more risks. So I want to get the best advice about whether it’s a good idea for me to form a private limited company. In addition, I’m now employing someone, so I have to keep a wage administration too. My father used to do that himself, but I’m considering outsourcing it. So you see, I have quite a few questions. Maybe I should give the Tax Information Line a call. Or perhaps I should ask a question online. Apparently that works pretty well too.”



# The Tax and Customs Administration as a partner for entrepreneurs

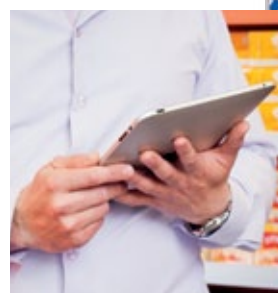
Our aim is to make it as easy as possible for entrepreneurs that fulfil their obligations as taxpayers. One of the ways we do this is by reaching out to trade associations. With them we discuss ways to improve the tax returns of their member entrepreneurs. Together we agree on measures that will encourage compliance with the rules.

We want to be good collaborating partners with entrepreneurs like Ali Yildrum. “I’m aware that a proper administration can lead to fiscal advantages. At the same time, as a small but growing business, I still have lots of questions.” We are eager to support him. Through the arrangements we have with his trade association and which benefit him as a small business. But also by being easily accessible in case he needs information.

## **Collaboration with umbrella organizations**

“I don’t file my tax return myself, I outsource it to a tax advisor.” The firm where Ali’s advisor works is a member of an umbrella organization with which the Tax and Customs Administration has signed an agreement. In the agreement we specify issues such as the fact that tax returns filed by their members must meet the legal requirements. So Ali can be sure that his tax return is in good hands.”





*“I want to get the best advice about whether it’s a good idea for me to form a private limited company”*

We also work well with other umbrella organizations. For example in the car industry and the temp agency branch. Together with these organizations we develop norms by which we can judge whether entrepreneurs are filing realistic tax returns. This enables us to be even better equipped to deal with entrepreneurs that don’t respect the rules. So it’s in the interests of law-abiding entrepreneurs.









*“I also go online to arrange the healthcare and rent benefits to which my wife and I are entitled”*

**Piet Kuiper & the Tax and Customs Administration**

“I don’t really use computers much. I mainly just use my PC to read emails from my bridge club and to see pictures of my grandchildren on Facebook. But for a few years now I’ve been filing my tax return on the internet. I also go online to arrange the healthcare and rent benefits to which my wife and I are entitled. Although, to be honest, I do usually make sure my daughter just happens to come and visit at the same time. So she can look over my shoulder to check whether this digital ignoramus has filled in the application properly.”

# The Tax and Customs Administration as an ICT organization

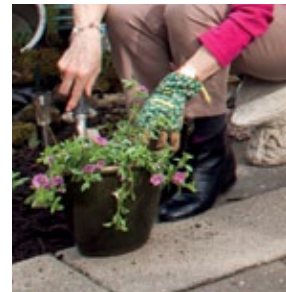
Information Technology plays an increasingly important part in everything the Tax and Customs Administration does. It's not hard to imagine that collecting € 200 billion of tax money annually is only feasible because of a high level of computerization. However massive the processing is, it's our job to keep it as personal as possible for everyone.

The Tax and Customs Administration's 'My Benefits' portal is the result of an extensive process of computerization, which has resulted in a website with a very personal feel to it. For example, once Piet Kuiper logs in to My Benefits, he can see how much rent and healthcare benefit he and his wife are entitled to. "But recently I also used the internet to report a change in our situation. The landlord had raised the rent of our apartment on 1 January. That has consequences for our benefit."

## **Secure and robust**

No one besides Piet and his wife Stinie has anything to do with their personal financial data. It's self-evident that the security of ICT systems has top priority. Just as their robustness. Our site has to be accessible around the clock, even at peak times. Such as the end of March when millions of returns comes in. The Tax Information Line has to be able to cope with millions of calls a year without any problems. In short, our ICT systems have to be shock-resistant, or else the Netherlands would grind to a halt. At the same time they also have to be flexible enough for us to adapt them. When the government amends regulations or society demands new applications such as for mobile devices. And of course the systems have to be secure enough to keep criminals out.





*“Recently I also used the internet to report a change in our situation”*

### **The digital society**

The Tax and Customs Administration is part of an increasingly digitized society. In some areas we keep a very close eye on developments, such as the consequences of the rise in online trade. And in other areas we stay ahead of the game, like in terms of linking data. In the future we want to continue improving our services by making use of digital possibilities. For instance, how do we use social media? How do we accommodate developments on the internet which enable any private individual to become an importer or exporter? And how do we guarantee the privacy of personal data if we're able to use the new ICT options to link data sets more efficiently? These are questions we need to find answers to in the future.



# Contact

## Online

[www.belastingdienst.nl](http://www.belastingdienst.nl)

[www.youtube.com/belastingdienst](http://www.youtube.com/belastingdienst)

## Phone

Tax Information Line (*BelastingTelefoon*)

Phone: 0800 0543 (free of charge)

Tax Information Line Non-Resident Tax Issues (*BelastingTelefoon Buitenland*)

Phone: (055) 5 385 385

Phoning from abroad: +31 555 385 385

Tax Information Line for Cars (*BelastingTelefoon Auto*)

Phone: 0800 0749 (free of charge)

Customs Information Line (*BelastingTelefoon Douane*)

Phone: 0800 0143 (free of charge)

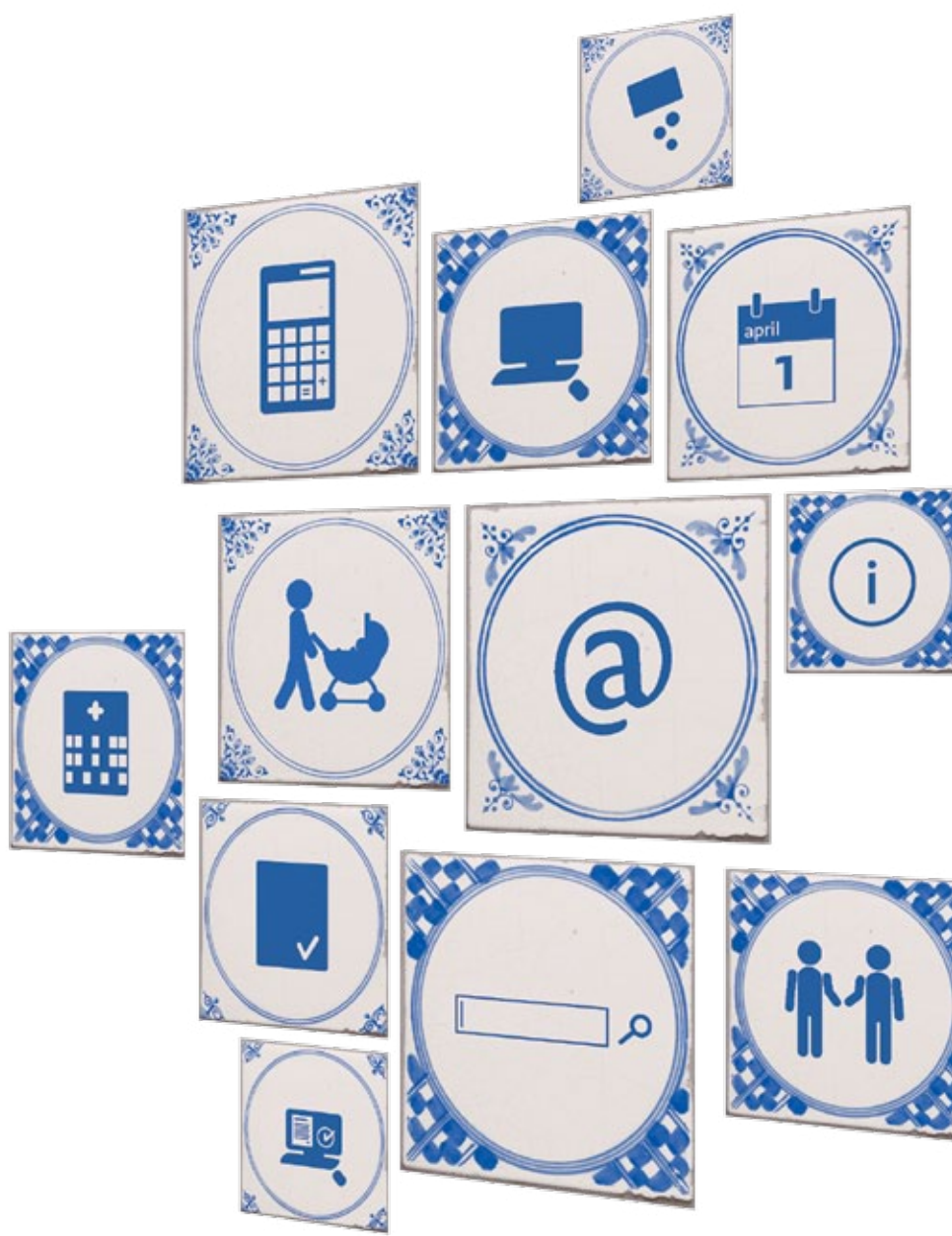
Phoning from abroad: +31 45 574 30 31


Intermediaries Help Desk

You can reach the Intermediaries Help Desk

through the Tax Information Line: 0800 0543

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