

# Monthly Tax Update



May 2026

- Key Legislative Changes
- Compliance Insights
- Practical Guidance



# May 2026 MTU

- › Keeping businesses and individuals up to date on current tax developments while delivering meaningful value.

Every month, we review and explain the latest changes in tax laws, including new legislation, important court decisions, and key updates or guidance from Revenue Authorities to ensure our insights remain practical and relevant in today's business environment.

## Our Key Personnel



**Marvellous Tapera**  
Managing Director  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 772 349 740  
[mtapera@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:mtapera@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Tafadzwa Mhonde**  
Tax Director  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 774 454 016  
[Tafadzwa.Mhonde@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Tafadzwa.Mhonde@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Alfa Madamu**  
Business Development Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 778 363 600  
[vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Arnold Tondhlana**  
Technical Services Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 786 069 732  
[Arnold.Tondhlana@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Arnold.Tondhlana@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Tariro Chimboza**  
Tax Projects Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 77 410 5142  
[Tariro.Chimboza@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Tariro.Chimboza@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Simelinkosi Mangena**  
Assistant Manager | Tax Faculty  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 77 433 7913  
[Simelinkosi.Mangena@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Simelinkosi.Mangena@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Takudzwa Kasekete**  
Assistant Manager | Assurance  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 77 335 1204  
[Takudzwa.Kasekete@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Takudzwa.Kasekete@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Lorean C. Magaramombe**  
Assistant Manager | Transfer Pricing  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 77 265 1417  
[Lorean.Magaramombe@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Lorean.Magaramombe@taxmatrix.co.zw)



**Tatenda Tapera**  
Assistant Manager | Compliance  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 71 783 6033  
[tatenda@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:tatenda@taxmatrix.co.zw)



## 1.1 Mandatory Fiscalisation of Fuel Transactions

Statutory Instrument 88 of 2026 with effect 15 May 2026; introduces mandatory fiscalisation of fuel transactions in Zimbabwe using Fuel Fiscal Devices (FFDs) linked to ZIMRA's Fiscalisation Data Management System (FDMS). The regulations require all fuel operators to acquire approved devices, record and transmit fuel transaction data electronically and issue fiscal receipts with verifiable authentication features.

## The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tax Conference Highlights

 20 - 23 May 2026  Elephant Hills Resort, Victoria Falls

Thank you to our: **200+ Delegates**

Here is a snapshot of the event



Thank you to our sponsors!



Next Chapter >>

## 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Tax Conference

 19 - 22 May 2027  Elephant Hills Resort, Victoria Falls

**Register Today!**

### 2.1 ZIMRA Changed its WhatsApp Contact Number

Public Notice 30 of 2026 advises taxpayers and stakeholders that ZIMRA's official WhatsApp number, +263 782 729 862, is no longer in use. The new official WhatsApp contact number is **+263 717 585 585**. Taxpayers are encouraged to update their records and use the new number for enquiries, support and communication with the tax authority to ensure continued access to ZIMRA services and information.

### 2.2 ZIMRA Introducing Digital System in Tax Collection

ZIMRA is scaling up its digital systems to enhance revenue collection, improve efficiency and curb corruption. In a keynote address delivered at the recently concluded WTS Tax Matrix Academy 10th Annual Tax Conference, the Head of Technical Services, Mr Mathias Chinanayi, highlighted the Authority's ongoing efforts to introduce new technologies and enhance existing digital platforms. ZIMRA is making significant strides in its digital transformation journey and remains committed to leveraging artificial intelligence, data analytics, automated risk management tools and integrated digital systems to strengthen tax administration, simplify compliance, improve transparency and support Zimbabwe's broader economic development agenda.

### 2.3 Ministry of Finance Resource Mobilisation Initiatives

Government is strengthening tax reforms and domestic resource mobilisation efforts as part of its strategy to support economic growth and achieve Vision 2030. Officially opening the WTS Tax Matrix Academy 10th Annual Conference, Mrs. Grace Muzondo, speaking on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, said Government is developing the Zimbabwe Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (2026–2030) to modernise revenue administration, strengthen tax policy and enhance fiscal sustainability. She advised that the reforms will focus on broadening the tax base, improving compliance, integrating the informal sector into the mainstream economy and leveraging digital technologies such as the Tax and Revenue Management System (TaRMS) to improve efficiency and curb revenue leakages. Mrs. Muzondo added that Government remains committed to maintaining a balanced fiscal framework that promotes investment, industrialisation, value addition and job creation while ensuring long-term revenue sustainability through collaboration with business, taxpayers and development partners.

# 8<sup>th</sup> Tax Summer School

*"Technical Knowledge & Practical Application for Proper Tax Management"*



30 SEPTEMBER -  
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### 3.1 Taxpayer won Returning Resident Rebate Case

| Case: Tsitsi Nyoni (Nyoni) v ZIMRA HH319/26 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summary of facts                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nyoni imported a motor vehicle under a return resident rebate and later travelled to South Africa on occasion of alleged sickness for a period exceeding 6 months, leaving the vehicle in Zimbabwe.</li> <li>Upon returning to Zimbabwe Nyoni discovered that ZIMRA had flagged her vehicle following a post-clearance verification on vehicles imported under immigrant rebate schemes.</li> <li>ZIMRA failed to contact Nyoni despite several attempts and later seized the vehicle on the basis that she had stayed outside Zimbabwe for more than 6 months without authority.</li> <li>Nyoni was required to pay duty, penalty, interest and storage charges.</li> <li>Nyoni challenged the seizure and related decisions through a review application before the High Court.</li> <li>ZIMRA raised a preliminary objection arguing that Nyoni failed to give the 60-day notice as per State and Liabilities Act before suing hence the case in hand.</li> </ul> |
| Jurisdiction                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High Court of Zimbabwe, Harare</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Issues                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether an application for review requires a 60-day notice in terms of section 196 of the Customs and Excise Act read together with s6 of the State Liabilities Act.</li> <li>Whether vehicle seizure was lawful.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Decision Date                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 April 2026</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Decision                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The High Court dismissed ZIMRA's preliminary objection.</li> <li>A review application does not require prior notice under section 196 of the Customs and Excise Act.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

#### Facts

Nyoni imported a car into Zimbabwe using a special duty rebate for returning residents. She later travelled to South Africa to care for her sick sister and became sick herself, causing her to stay outside Zimbabwe for more than six months. When she returned, she found that ZIMRA had flagged and seized her car because she had left the country without permission while still benefiting from suspended customs duty. ZIMRA demanded payment of duty, penalties, and other charges. Nyoni approached the High Court to review and cancel ZIMRA's decisions, while ZIMRA argued that she had failed to give the required 60-day notice before taking legal action, hence the current court case.

#### Competing Arguments

| Nyoni's Arguments                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vehicle Seizure                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That ZIMRA unlawfully seized the motor vehicle before hearing her out.</li> <li>That the Nyoni had not intended to stay outside Zimbabwe for more than six months because her prolonged stay resulted from illness.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Does an application for review need a 60-day notice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That an application for review is different from an ordinary civil claim for money or the delivery of goods.</li> <li>That section 6 of the State Liabilities Act only requires a 60-day notice for claims involving money or the delivery or release of goods.</li> <li>That a review application falls outside the notice requirements contemplated by s196 of the Customs and Excise Act read together with s6 of the State Liabilities Act.</li> </ul> |

| ZIMRA's Argument                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vehicle seizure                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That several attempts of calling and visiting Nyoni were exercised but with no avail.</li> <li>• That the vehicle was lawfully seized because Nyoni remained outside Zimbabwe for more than 6 months within the restricted period applicable to vehicles imported under the returning resident rebate scheme.</li> <li>• That Nyoni had left Zimbabwe without obtaining the written authority required by the customs regulations governing the suspension of duty.</li> </ul> |
| Does an application for review need a 60-day notice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That s196 of the Customs and Excise Act clearly provides that no civil proceedings may be instituted against ZIMRA until a 60-day notice has been given.</li> <li>• That a review application constitutes civil proceedings and thus falls within the scope of s196.</li> <li>• That the failure to comply with the statutory requirement rendered the application defective and liable to dismissal.</li> </ul>                                                               |

#### Court Reasoning and decision

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Court Reasoning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the purpose of the notice requirement is to give ZIMRA sufficient time to investigate complaints and decide whether to settle or defend claims.</li> <li>• That; although review applications may be classified as civil proceedings, they possess unique characteristics that distinguish them from ordinary civil claims.</li> <li>• That the court found the reasoning in <i>Quest Manufacturing (Pvt) Ltd v ZIMRA &amp; Ors</i> SC51-24 persuasive and directly applicable to the present matter.</li> <li>• That s196 does not require the giving of a 60-day notice in every proceeding brought in under the Customs and Excise Act.</li> <li>• That review proceedings do not necessarily require prior notice because ZIMRA is already aware of the dispute and the challenged decision.</li> <li>• That ZIMRA already had sufficient opportunity to consider and defend its position before the review application was filed.</li> <li>• That the objection therefore lacked merit and had to be dismissed.</li> </ul> |
| Decision        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review application allowed to proceed.</li> <li>• 60-day notice is not required for reviewing proceedings against ZIMRA.</li> <li>• ZIMRA's preliminary objection dismissed with costs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

#### Decision Impact:

The decision serves as a reminder that taxpayers who are granted concessions or rebates by ZIMRA must strictly comply with the applicable conditions and time limits. Personal circumstances or misunderstandings may not excuse non-compliance where the law imposes clear obligations. It further gives clarity that not every review application against ZIMRA is automatically subject to the 60-day statutory notice, hence encouraging access to judicial review.



# Payroll Tax Seminar



24 June 2026 (8:30am – 1pm)



Rainbow Towers Hotel, Harare

## Speakers



**Marvellous Tapera**  
Managing Partner  
WTS Tax Matrix



**Tafadzwa Mhonde**  
Tax Director  
WTS Tax Matrix



**Mapfumo Matimba**  
Senior Associate - Tax & Corporate Law  
Mashizha, Mutukwa & Sambo Attorneys



**Simelinkosi Mangena**  
Assistant Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy



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**CPD Hours: 6**

## Benefits of Attending

- Employment Tax Handbook

## For Bookings & Enquiries Contact:

Alfa: +263778363600 | vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw

Fadzai: +263782802384 | fadzai@taxmatrix.co.zw

Kudzaishe: +263780217020 | Kudzaishe.Mutungwe@taxmatrix.co.zw



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### 4.1 Interest Deductibility Rules: Why Taxpayers Face Elevated Audit Exposure

Interest expense forms a significant cost component of most businesses and can materially affect taxable income. As taxpayers adopt more complex funding structures, interest deductions have become an important focus area for ZIMRA audits.

**Understanding the Rules:** The key determining factor in the deductibility of borrowing costs is what the funds were used for. Once this purpose test is satisfied, secondary rules such as thin capitalisation and arm's length principles become relevant, particularly in related-party funding arrangements

**Purpose of the Funds Test:** Deductibility of borrowing costs depends on how funds were used in the business. Only borrowing costs on debt incurred in the production of income i.e. incurred on revenue nature activities is deducted. Where funds are applied toward non-income-producing activities, the purchase or construction of fixed assets, purchase of shares or shareholder purposes, deductibility becomes restricted.

**Thin Capitalisation:** This is secondary to the purpose of funds test. It further restricts deductible borrowing costs to that applicable on debt not exceeding 3 times company equity if such debt was secured from a related party or a non-resident person. The excess interest or borrowing costs would then be treated as a deemed dividend subject to a Shareholders' Tax at 15%.

**Arm's Length Principle and Transfer Pricing:** The arm's length principle is secondary to purpose of the funds test but operates in parallel to thin capitalisation rule on intercompany loans and borrowings from non-resident persons. The borrowings or financing arrangements should reflect terms that independent parties would ordinarily agree under similar circumstances. Where a local taxpayer receives funding from a parent company or related entity, tax authorities often review pricing of interest rates; loan terms and repayment conditions; supporting agreements; economic substance; and arm's length justification.

**Documentation Gaps Create Audit Exposure:** The most common audit challenge for taxpayers is not the existence of financing arrangements, but documentation. Interest deductions require taxpayers to demonstrate formal loan agreements; board approvals; repayment schedules; evidence supporting business purpose; transfer pricing documentation; commercial justification etc. Documentation therefore serves as a defence mechanism against possible transaction re-characterization, which could trigger additional tax assessments, penalties and interest.

#### Why Does This Matter

The financial implications of unsuccessful audit outcomes can be substantial. Potential consequences include disallowed deductions; additional tax assessments; penalties and interest; deemed dividend treatment; Shareholders' Tax exposure; and transfer pricing adjustments. These adjustments can significantly change the economics of financing decisions.

### 4.2 National Project Status Rebate Narrowed

National Projects though not defined in the Acts are projects of strategic importance to the country as may be approved by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. They qualify for duty rebate upon importation of critical equipment and raw material. Both private and public entities used to qualify as long they undertook projects of national interests.

**Restricted Qualification:** SI 5 of 2021 has narrowed the rebate to goods temporarily imported by contractors or other persons for completion of projects falling under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) and components or materials imported for incorporation in the construction of Public Sector Investment Programme Projects. SI 143 of 2024 further narrowed the rebate to projects undertaken by companies in which the Government of Zimbabwe is a shareholder.

#### Why this matter

Businesses should carefully assess rebate eligibility before importation and avoid structuring projects on the assumption that national project status relief will automatically be available. The Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) project qualification and execution by a company in which the government of Zimbabwe is a shareholder are critical qualifying requirements.

### 4.3 Write-Offs Which Often Raise ZIMRA Eyebrows

Aligning commercial losses with income tax deduction is not automatic. ZIMRA normally subjects all write offs and losses to strict scrutiny, arguing that they should be incurred in the production of income to be deducted and not to be claimed prematurely.

#### Understanding the Rules:

**Bad debts** – The debts (a) must be due and payable to the taxpayer, (c) have been included in taxpayer's taxable income and (c) be proven to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to be irrecoverable to be deductible. In summary: (a) the taxpayer should own the debt and is disqualified if he had sold the debt by the time they become bad; (b) the debts should emanate from a sale made by the taxpayer and (c) recovery measures should have been exhausted. The onus is on the taxpayer to demonstrate irrecoverability by providing evidence of inability to pay such as the debtor being declared insolvent, liquidated or deceased without sufficient assets from which the debt can be recovered.

**Stock Write-Offs:** Stock Impairments and provisions are prohibited deductions. Actual losses should be demonstrated. Write-downs for obsolescence or other losses should be supported with evidence of physical or actual loss, backed by stock count sheets, police report/loss incident report for stock theft, disposal order or board minutes for obsolescence stock and senior management approvals for other stock losses. Losses of stock recovered under insurance contract are however disallowed.

**Losses from theft/fraud:** These are tax deductible if they are incurred in the production of income. There must be a connection between the loss and production of income or exist an inherent risk of the loss occurring. For losses occasioned by acts of shareholders, proprietors, partners, managers and supervisors the risk is deemed remote and therefore are disallowed. ZIMRA also disallows losses which they allege due care has not been exercised, as well as capital losses. Meanwhile, losses must be ascertained, not estimated, supported by police or incident report and the subsequent job dismissal of the perpetrator.

**Foreign Exchange Losses:** Only exchange losses of a revenue nature that has been realised are tax deductible. These are losses arising from variation in exchange rates between transaction date and settlement date. Technically, ruling out deduction of exchange losses incurred on capital transactions, upon translation of balances i.e. mere conversion of one currency into another and on transactions yet to be settled or concluded.

#### Why does this matter:

The financial implications of unsuccessful audit outcomes are substantial. Disallowed bad debts, stock write-offs, or exchange losses etc. may result in additional tax assessments, penalties, and interest. Weak documentation converts an otherwise legitimate deduction into a disallowed claim.

### 4.4 Tax Risks of Employer Medical Contributions Paid Abroad

Employers and employees qualify for income tax deduction and exemption, respectively on contributions made to an approved medical aid society by the employer for the benefit of an employee, his/her spouse or child. However, these benefits are not without conditions.

**Hidden Tax Exposure:** In the first instance, the medical aid society itself must be approved by the Commissioner-General (CG) for the eligible benefits to accrue. The approval which the CG should annually review is predicated on the fund being a permanent society or scheme bona fide established for the purpose of providing medical benefits for its members and their dependants. These conditions often alienate unregistered schemes and foreign medical aid schemes. For practical expedience, foreign medical aid schemes hardly apply for recognition by the local revenue authority, exposing employers and employees to the denial of the aforesaid benefits.

## Get in touch with us

**Marvellous Tapera**  
Managing Partner  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 772 349 740  
[mtapera@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:mtapera@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Tafadzwa Mhonde**  
Tax Director  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 774 454 016  
[Tafadzwa.Mhonde@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Tafadzwa.Mhonde@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Alfa Madamu**  
Business Development Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 778 363 600  
[vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw)

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Technical Services Manager  
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+263 78 606 9732  
[Arnold.Tondhlana@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Arnold.Tondhlana@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Tariro Chimboza**  
Tax Projects Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 77 410 5142  
[Tariro.Chimboza@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Tariro.Chimboza@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Simelinkosi Mangena**  
Assistant Manager | Tax Faculty  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 77 433 7913  
[Simelinkosi.Mangena@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Simelinkosi.Mangena@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Takudzwa Kasekete**  
Assistant Manager | Assurance  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 77 335 1204  
[Takudzwa.Kasekete@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Takudzwa.Kasekete@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Lorean Magaramombe**  
Assistant Manager | Transfer Pricing  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 77 265 1417  
[Lorean.Magaramombe@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Lorean.Magaramombe@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Tatenda Tapera**  
Assistant Manager | Compliance  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 71 783 6033  
[tatenda@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:tatenda@taxmatrix.co.zw)



The same contributions may also expose the employer to nonresident tax on fees. The law requires every payer of fees, regardless of being the ultimate beneficiary, to deduct non-resident tax on fees on fees paid to a non-resident person. Fees include amounts paid in respect of consultative, managerial, administrative and consultative service of which medical service may fall within any of these four services.

### Why It Matters

As ZIMRA continues to scrutinize offshore payments and employee benefit arrangements, businesses should carefully assess the tax treatment of foreign medical aid contributions to avoid unexpected assessments, interest and penalties.



# DURABILITY

## WAICA Re Zimbabwe Achieves National Scale AAA(ZW) Financial Strength Rating | Stable Outlook

WAICA Reinsurance Zimbabwe (Pvt) Limited has been assigned a National Scale Financial Strength Rating of AAA(ZW) with a Stable Outlook by GCR Ratings. AAA(ZW) represents the highest national scale financial strength rating, reflecting exceptional capacity to meet policyholder obligations in Zimbabwe and beyond.

This milestone demonstrates:

- Robust Capitalisation – Statutory solvency at 136% (above regulatory minimum)
- Strong Liquidity Position – 91% of investments held in cash and foreign currency placements
- Disciplined Underwriting – Combined ratio of 86.9% in 2025
- Sustained Profitability – Double-digit return on revenue
- Pan-African Group Support – Strategic and operational integration within WAICA Reinsurance Corporation Plc

The Stable Outlook reflects expectations of:

- Sustained adequate capitalisation
- Healthy liquidity buffers
- Continued earnings resilience
- Strategic growth across Southern Africa

We remain dedicated to strengthening reinsurance capacity across Southern Africa while delivering security, stability, and long-term value to our cedants and stakeholders

## Get in touch with us

**Marvellous Tapera**  
Managing Partner  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 772 349 740  
[mtapera@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:mtapera@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Tafadzwa Mhonde**  
Tax Director  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 774 454 016  
[Tafadzwa.Mhonde@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Tafadzwa.Mhonde@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Alfa Madamu**  
Business Development Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 778 363 600  
[vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:vmadamu@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Arnold Tondhlana**  
Technical Services Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 78 606 9732  
[Arnold.Tondhlana@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Arnold.Tondhlana@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Tariro Chimboza**  
Tax Projects Manager  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 77 410 5142  
[Tariro.Chimboza@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Tariro.Chimboza@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Simelinkosi Mangena**  
Assistant Manager | Tax Faculty  
WTS Tax Matrix Academy  
+263 77 433 7913  
[Simelinkosi.Mangena@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Simelinkosi.Mangena@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Takudzwa Kasekete**  
Assistant Manager | Assurance  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 77 335 1204  
[Takudzwa.Kasekete@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Takudzwa.Kasekete@taxmatrix.co.zw)

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Assistant Manager | Transfer Pricing  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 77 265 1417  
[Lorean.Magaramombe@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:Lorean.Magaramombe@taxmatrix.co.zw)

**Tatenda Tapera**  
Assistant Manager | Compliance  
WTS Tax Matrix  
+263 71 783 6033  
[tatenda@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:tatenda@taxmatrix.co.zw)



## 5. Accountant's Desk

### 5.1 Annual Improvements to IFRS Accounting Standards

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) issued the Annual Improvements to IFRS Accounting Standards – Volume 11 in July 2024, with the amendments becoming effective from 1 January 2026. The updates introduce a package of narrow-scope amendments across IFRS 1, IFRS 7, IFRS 9, IFRS 10 and IAS 7. The changes are largely intended to improve consistency in the interpretation and application of IFRS Accounting Standards across entities and industries. It forms part of the IASB's annual improvements process, which focuses on correcting minor inconsistencies, clarifying wording, and enhancing alignment between standards without significantly changing existing accounting principles.

**Purpose and Scope:** The amendments cover several technical areas affecting financial reporting and accounting treatment. Key updates include the alignment of IFRS 1 wording with IFRS 9 to improve consistency for first-time adopters accounting for financial instruments. IAS 7 paragraph 37 was also amended by replacing the term "cost method" with "at cost" to ensure terminology aligns with current accounting practice. IFRS 10 paragraph B74 now provides clarification on assessing agent relationships when determining control structures within groups. IFRS 9 was further updated to provide clearer guidance on accounting for gains or losses arising from the derecognition of lease liabilities by lessees. These refinements are intended to reduce diversity in practice and improve the quality and comparability of financial statements.

#### Why It Matters

Businesses should regularly review their accounting policies and tax reconciliations to ensure they remain aligned with the updated standards, helping to improve compliance, reporting accuracy and audit readiness.

### 5.2 ISA 540 (Revised) Post-Implementation Review: Stakeholder Feedback Invited

The Public Accountants and Auditors Board (PAAB) is inviting stakeholders to participate in the Post-Implementation Review (PIR) of International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 540 (Revised), Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures. The review is being conducted by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) to assess the effectiveness of the standard following its implementation.

ISA 540 (Revised) establishes the auditor's responsibilities when auditing accounting estimates and related disclosures in financial statements. The standard was revised to strengthen audit quality in areas involving significant management judgement, estimation uncertainty, and complex valuation techniques. Its objective is to enhance auditors' risk assessment procedures, improve responses to identified risks, and promote greater professional skepticism when evaluating accounting estimates.

**Purpose and Scope:** The PIR aims to determine whether ISA 540 (Revised) has achieved its intended objectives of improving the audit of accounting estimates and enhancing audit quality. Stakeholders are requested to provide feedback on the following, benefits, improvements resulting from the revised standard, practical challenges and implementation issues encountered in practice, whether the standard is being consistently understood and applied and areas where further guidance, support, or standard-setting action may be required by the IAASB.

**Why It Matters:** ISA 540 has significant implications for tax and financial reporting. Many tax-related balances, including deferred taxes, provisions, and uncertain tax positions, rely heavily on accounting estimates and management judgement. The revised standard has increased scrutiny over these estimates, requiring stronger documentation, robust assumptions, and enhanced disclosures. For businesses, auditors, and tax professionals, the review provides an opportunity to contribute practical insights that may influence future auditing requirements and improve the reliability, transparency, and consistency of financial reporting.



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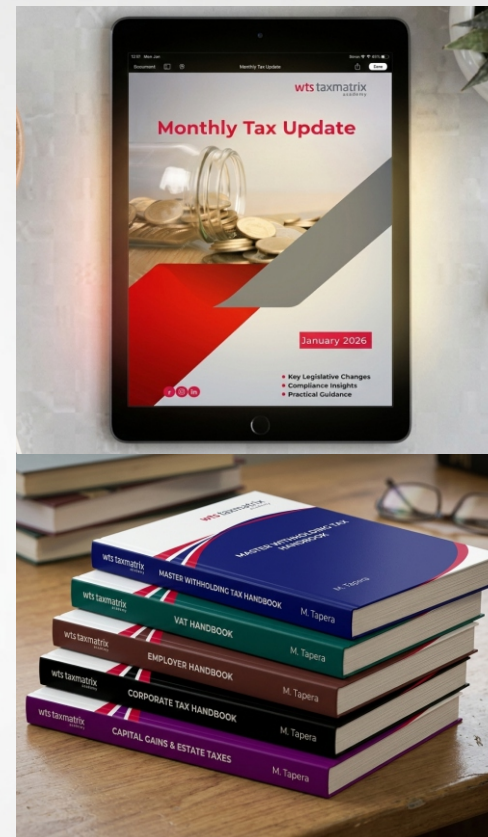
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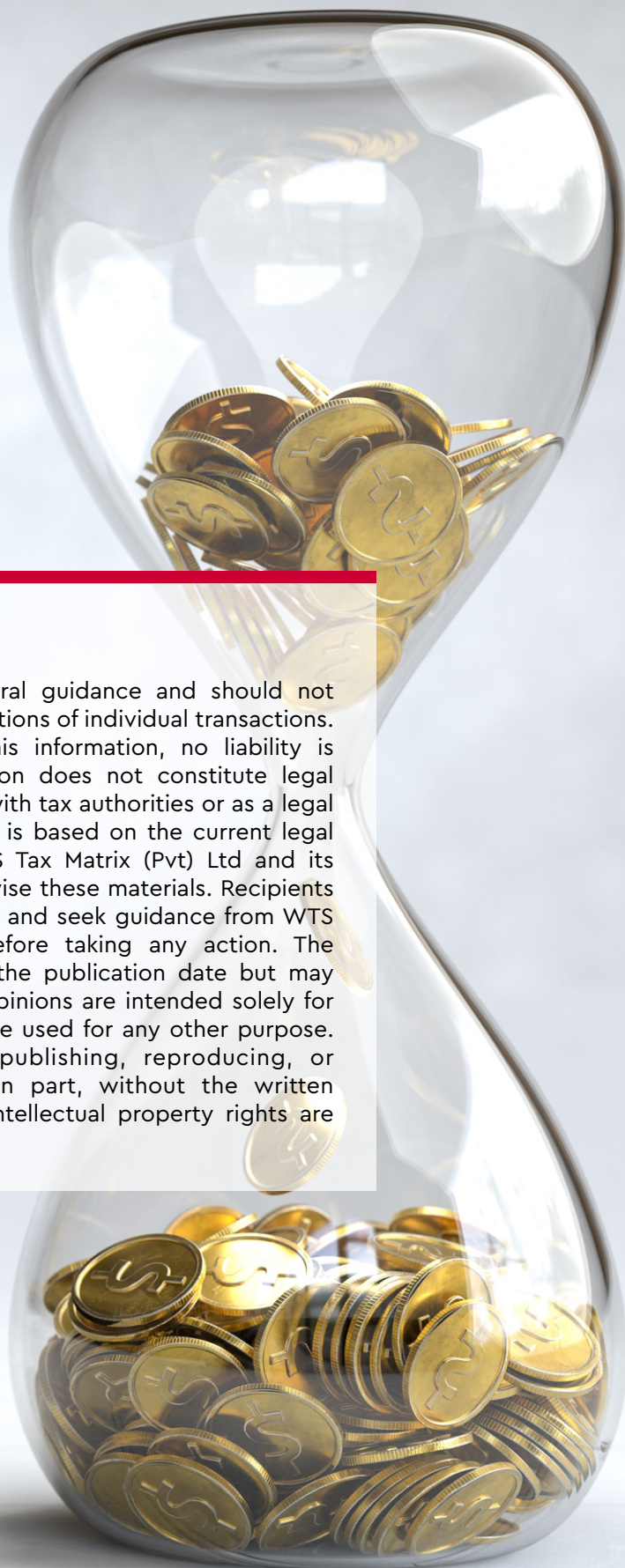


marketing@taxmatrix.co.zw | info@taxmatrix.co.zw



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member of

**wts** global

## WTS Matrix Academy

A: 4 Church Road, Avondale, Harare

C: +263 77 349 8977 | +263 782 802 384

E: [info@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:info@taxmatrix.co.zw) | [marketing@taxmatrix.co.zw](mailto:marketing@taxmatrix.co.zw)



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