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**BUSINESS CLIMATE
REFORM**

SUCCESS STORY

Revenue Service Puts Business Registry Online

Digitized business registry database simplifies common commercial transactions.



Preparing abstracts from the old paper-based business registry archives created inefficiencies for entrepreneurs and the Revenue Service officials.

“We have about 63,000 inquiries for business registry abstracts each month. The new electronic database allows us to issue the necessary documentation upon request,” says Amiran Tavartkiladze, Deputy Head of the Service Department

Thea Shonia, a start-up businesswoman, is helping to save Georgians an estimated 126,000 trips a month to their local tax inspectorates to obtain business registry abstracts.

Each request for an abstract, needed for a variety of common transactions including registering property or opening business bank accounts, required two trips to the tax inspectorate where the business was registered, once to ask, then, several days later, to receive. Preparing the abstract was a nightmare for tax officials, who had to dig through tens of thousands of aged and haphazardly organized files to find the necessary information.

Thea’s group won a USAID procurement to digitize the registration archives, which the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia inherited when it took over responsibility for business

registration from the courts. She established a new company, Caucasus 2006, hired 15 operators and set up a strong network of implementing partners across Georgia.

Now, the job is done. “We have entered 52,138 records into a single database,” Thea said. “Now any businessman will be able to obtain a business registry abstract immediately for any company at any tax inspectorate of Georgia.”

That step eliminated 63,000 visits a month, because now to ask is to receive. The Government of Georgia is working to eliminate the remaining 63,000 visits. The Revenue Service put the new electronic business registry online for direct public access by those like journalists who just need the information the abstract contains, and not the official document. And property registrars at the National Agency of Public Registry plan to use the new online feature in registering business property transactions, eliminating the requirement that their customers submit business registry abstracts.

The new electronic signature law now pending in Parliament will eliminate the need for any visits. Paper documents will no longer be required, and the Revenue Service can issue abstracts electronically.

Thea Shonia, ever the entrepreneur, is making new plans. “This project gave us our first experience subcontracting for the government and an international donor. Now that we have experience and a successful result behind us, we are developing a proposal for a new project and are looking for the next projects we will bid on.”

Digitizing the business registry and putting it online is only one of a number of Revenue Service information technology projects to improve customer service supported by USAID Business Climate Reform. All Georgian taxpayers can now access their account information online and download all necessary tax declarations from the Revenue Service web portal. A current project will introduce electronic filing of tax declarations, first for VAT, and then for other taxes.