

For years, Rwanda's tax collectors struggled with an all-too-familiar problem: shoppers who walked away without receipts, and businesses that under-reported sales. Now, the government is turning an everyday act — asking for a receipt — into a national culture shift.

The Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) says more than 40,000 consumers received payouts totaling 464 million francs (about \$360,000) between April and June this year simply for demanding invoices that record value-added tax.

The program, called *Tangamara Na TVA* — roughly “Wake up with VAT” — was introduced in early 2024 to close tax leaks and boost accountability. Since then, more than 130,000 Rwandans have collectively pocketed over 1.5 billion francs in rewards. Nearly 200,000 people are now registered, submitting more than 4 million receipts that generated 33 billion francs in VAT revenue.

## **How it works**

The concept is deceptively simple: when a shopper requests an Electronic Billing Machine (EBM) receipt, they make sure their registered phone number appears on the slip. That automatically entitles them to 10 percent of the VAT amount listed.

But the catch is that businesses must properly declare and pay the tax. To reinforce compliance, RRA also encourages consumers to report traders who refuse to issue receipts. Customers who file such complaints — by providing the shop's name, TIN, location, purchase date, payment proof, and details of the items bought — are rewarded with half of whatever penalty the business is fined. Reports can be sent straight to RRA's WhatsApp hotline.

## **Turning receipts into prizes**

Beyond refunds, RRA has partnered with local tech firms to roll out *TengaPromo*, a gamified twist on tax compliance. Each VAT-eligible receipt earns shoppers points that can be redeemed for prizes, from 5,000 francs to as much as 1 million francs.

By dialing \*562#, consumers can play for rewards. Every month, more than 1,200 people win, with as much as 50 million francs given away.

## **Why it matters**

RRA officials insist the campaign is less about quick cash than about reshaping

habits. “When consumers ask for receipts, they hold businesses accountable and make sure taxes are declared,” one official said. “Those taxes pay for schools, hospitals, and roads.”

A Ministerial Order guarantees every individual consumer — provided they are purchasing for personal use and not for resale — a reward worth 10 percent of the VAT on their receipts. Registration is straightforward: by dialing \*800# or logging onto the “MyRRA” online platform, shoppers can enroll using their national ID, phone number, and either a Mobile Money or bank account. Non-Rwandans can use valid foreign IDs.

For ordinary shoppers, that means what used to be a tedious transaction now feels like a win-win. A quick request for a receipt can put money back in their pockets — while strengthening Rwanda’s tax system at the same time.