Inter-American Center of Tax Administrations - CIAT

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STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE TAX ADMINISTRATION

Topic 1.3

PROMOTION AND TRAINING DIRECTED TO EXTERNAL USERS FOR THE FULL USE OF INTERNET SERVICES

National Integrated Service of the Customs and Tax Administration (SENIAT)

Venezuela

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Case study

TOPIC 1.3 PROMOTION AND TRAINING DIRECTED TO EXTERNAL USERS FOR THE FULL USE OF INTERNET SERVICES

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CONTENTS: 1. The use of Internet by the Tax Administration.- 1.1 Promotion and training directed to external users for the full use of Internet services.- 1.1.1 Promotion and training directed to users for the full use of the Internet.- 1.1.2 SENIAT's Portal.- 2. SENIAT as an Institution.- 3. Information and Services.- 4.On-line System.- 5. Other Functions.- 6. Case Study.- 6.1 Users Registry.- 6.1.1. Taxpayer Registry.- 6.2. Return inquiries and updates, withholdings and taxpayer payments.- 6.3 Other facilities.

1. THE USE OF INTERNET BY THE TAX ADMINISTRATION.

1.1 Promotion and training directed to external users for the full use of Internet services.

The topic we are going to cover is "Promotion and Training directed to external users for the full use of Internet Services", under the framework of the "Strategies and Instruments for Increasing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Tax Administration".

For so time now the Tax Administration has understood that the use of information technologies constitutes the adequate mechanism to make it easier for users and taxpayers to comply with their tax obligations. Upon applying this technological principle standards has been approved and implemented and the same have established the possibility of filing returns and tax withholdings through computers, specifically through the use of the Internet.

Advantages offered to taxpayers:

- File returns and pay taxes from any place.
- File returns and pay taxes 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.
- Reduce costs.
- Have available all security schemes during transmission.
- Immediately receive a response from the Tax Administration, regarding payments.
- Avoid paperwork and/or congestion at the offices.

In accordance with this framework, the National Integrated Service of the Customs and Tax Administration (SENIAT) must be supported on an efficient tax collection system therefore it enjoys technical, functional and financial autonomy, according to the provisions of Article 317 of the Constitution of Venezuela. To this effect, the transformation of the Taxpayer Assistance and Information Technologies areas were established as the main objectives, to strengthen the relation between the State and passive subjects or those being administrated, such as taxpayers, responsible parties, assistants and the general public.

One of the main strategies for such purpose, lies in the development of information technologies used as a support tool to the substantive functions of the Service, through the automation of administrative proceedings and procedures, under an integrated and integral focus, in the understanding that the management of a modern Tax Administration, has to necessarily have information systems supported on vanguard information technologies and their design and development must comprise all aspects of the tax process.

Since 1994, SENIAT has been developing a series of automated systems to support its collection functions, in the internal revenue area as well as in customs, but although these systems have supported the Tax Administration in the exercise of its functions, it is also true that they present limitations in their use, basically due to their distribution and isolation (in terms of integrated taxation and customs processes), this prevents optimum use since interconnection mechanisms and feedback for the flow of the information contained in each system is not in place.

This situation set forth the need to design an automated system with a systemic point of view, which would power to a maximum the existing systems, to be in the capacity of providing institutional responses, required in the framework of the constitutional principle. In this regard, the operation of an integral and interconnected modular system began under the INTERNET environment, through the creation of SENIAT's Portal, which may be access at www.seniat.gov.ve.

This web page is a technological platform that combines the possibility of extensively inquiring tax information, and at the same time allows to file returns and pay taxes, under a step-by-step guiding philosophy.

Furthermore, this new information technology, will multiply the possibilities to promote values inherent to tax awareness, through a system that allows taxpayers to effectively and quickly approach the Administration, without having to go to the offices of the Tax Administration, to maintain them permanently informed and updated on the different topics related to the tax reality, with the purpose of making easier for taxpayers to pay voluntarily their tax obligations.

In this manner, it expands its reach and strengthens the link with society; because from this portal each of the requirements formulated by the passive subjects is process and efforts will be coordinated to provide corporate responses and timely and adequate actions, allowing officers to perform their work professionally directed towards efficiency in the quality of the management.

The following may be mentioned among the most important functions of the portal:

- It constitutes an exclusive internal revenue and customs' system for taxpayers and officers of the Service, with reliable security mechanisms.
- It allows taxpayers to prepare returns, withholdings and tax payments; taxpayers may also inquire their consolidated statement of account by specific tax and begin and perform the follow-up of their procedures.
- Search and inquire tax information in general.
- Internally support activities inherent to the Service.
- Identify evasion and avoidance, as well as taxpayers involved in these situations.
- Validate information on taxpayers.
- Guarantee reliable and timely information.

Furthermore it allows the management of one information system, and actions inherent to:

- Registry of Importers.
- Charge and payment of withholding through the web.
- Charge through the web, the Purchases and Sales book.
- Modifications, via e-mail.
- Returns, through an Excel spreadsheet
- Issue payroll.
- Issue and verify tax certifications.
- Import and Export statistics.
- Exclusive taxpayer database.

1.1.1 Promotion and Training directed to Users for the Full Use of the Internet

The strategy used for prompting users to use the Internet, was based on the following:

SENIAT's 'portal is: www.seniat.gov.ve.

Through the same, services available through the Internet are promoted, as well as information that is of interest to taxpayers, regarding the Institution's Corporate Vision, legal provisions in force, the value of the Tax Unit and other information of public nature.

- Promotion through press notices

In newspapers of national circulation the use of SENIAT's portal is promoted under the theme "File your return with a click".

- Promotion through radio

SENIAT has a national radio program and different regional programs, where in addition to discussing tax issues, it promotes initiatives and new technologies where the use of the Internet is promoted.

Promotion done by top authorities during public interventions or interviews

Top management has done this successfully whenever they have had to make public statements.

- 08000-SENIAT (736428)

Through this pone number, citizens and taxpayers receive orientation on inquiries and doubts, and it also promotes the full use of the service in the INTERNET.

E-mail asiste@seniat.gov.ve.

The possibility of directly sending inquiries to the e-mail address with two response levels is available. Once the messages received have been classified, they are distributed to tax counselors, whom are responsible for immediately answering the inquiry. All questions must be answered in no more than 48 hours, including complex questions. However, some inquires require participation from other dependencies of the Service, therefore they perform the necessary proceedings and reply as soon as possible.

People making inquiries through e-mail are registered in a database which keeps them informed, if they wish, on innovations in tax issues and provides the possibility to receive electronic publications published by the Service.

Even though that the foregoing points are those that have been analyzed as the most convenient for the promotion of the full use of INTERNET, emphasis has been placed on the use of the Portal itself, for promotional effects as well as for training, by using the online assistance furnished by the portal and with assisted help through the toll free number 08000-SENIAT, where taxpayers can as questions or present observations in the operations of the Tax Administration and on the behavior of taxpayers and officers of the institution. Our telephone counselors are responsible for attending and channeling users' concerns.

As illustrative data we can say that Venezuela currently has users from the two main Internet service providers that the country has as shown in the following table:

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER	N° OF USERS
CANTV.NET	215,000
TELCEL.NET	97,000
INFOCENTROS	500

Source: Information supplied by the representatives of each provider.

1.1.2 SENIAT PORTAL: seniat.gov.ve

USER REGISTRY



2. SENIAT AS AN INSTITUTION



The Institution: Provides information regarding the Juridical Nature and the same pertains to SENIAT's function, such as: Mission, Vision, Strategic Objectives, Corporate Values, Functions and Privileges of the Service. It also presents its organizational structure and a protocol list of the standards, operation and intendance level. It also includes, an instructive on the Ethical Standards, which guide officers, and the Law that rules the Institution.

Internal Revenue: It shows the legal provisions in force for each tax. The geographic location of each internal revenue office.. Specification of the Remission and Facilities for the Payment of National Tax Obligations Law decreed by the National Assembly. Tax Terms Glossary.

Customs: Provides information on the Customs' Law, the Customs' Organic Law, the Law that Creates and Rules the Free Zone Regime; Regulations of the Custom's Organic Law on Clearance Regimes; the Suspension and other Special Customs' Regimes; Organic Tax Code; Joint Resolutions and other legal instruments. Relevant aspects of the Customs' Modernization Project: the Installation and Technical Support Manual; The Good User Manual and Technical Specifications for the use of the Control System and Customs Management Administration – SIDUNEA. Standards and Procedures Manuals of the different processes inherent to customs: Cargo Manifest Procedure; Transport Agent User Manual; Procedure for the Clearance of Goods; Procedure for the Receipt of

Goods; Procedure for the Specific Customs' Declaration (DUA); etc. Venezuela's Customs System: What is customs?, Main Customs' Management Functions, Customs' Classification, Customs Policies, etc. Who Assists the Customs' Administration?, Tariff Classification Proceedings, Information technology tools to modernize Customs Procedures and Glossary of Terms.

Exporters: Regulations for the National Exporter Registry; necessary proceedings and administrative measures. Partial regulations for the Recovery of Fiscal Credits and Technical Standards and Procedures, Manual for the Recovery of Fiscal Credits

Withholding Agents: Legal Framework of Administrative Measures whereby National Public Entities are appointed and Special Taxpayers such as Withholding Agents for Value Added Tax (VAT), for the purchase of bona mobilia and the reception of services that are performed by providers that are usual taxpayers of the tax. The technical instruction that explains the standards to follow when filing in exclusive format of the VAT Withholding Information Declaration. Test environment where the validation of the file created under the specifications of the technical instructions may be performed.

3. INFORMATION AND SERVICES



Your Rights and Duties: This covers taxpayer rights and duties comprised in the Constitution of Venezuela; the Organic Law on Administrative Procedures; the

Organic Law of the Office of the Comptroller; Tax Organic Code; Calendar for Tax Obligations and Special Tax Laws.

Rif: Procedures for the Registry of Fiscal Information on Individuals, Bodies Corporate and others such as Condominium Boards and Inheritance Estates.

Tax Unit: Registry of variations in the values of the Tax Unit created for tax purposes as a measure that allows to match and update, pursuant to the current inflation, the tax base amounts, exemptions and sanctions, among others, based on the variation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Publications: The content of the different publications issued by SENIAT, such as: Tax Doctrine; Policy y Tax Administration Magazine; VAT in Venezuela; Tax Essays Series and others.

Collection: Annual registry on collection revenues, for each tax collected.

Innovations: Shows current press releases, inherent to SENIAT's activities, such as: "The New Partial Regulation of the Customs' Organic Law pertaining to the registry, exchange and processing of data, documents and acts inherent to the arrival, warehousing and Import of Goods through electronic processes"; "The ongoing National Registry of Exporters"; "Toll Free Line 08000-SENIAT: The new inquiry, information and compliant filing service", and others.

Collection Banks: Contains a list of collection banks enrolled in the collection agreement, signed between the Banking Association and the National Integrated Customs and Tax Administration Service.

Draft Bills on Tax Laws: Shows laws and measures that specify the services provided by SENIAT and taxpayers as intermediaries of the Institution, such as the Measure whereby the Main Customs Managements and their Deputy Customs are appointed as collection agents for Value Added Tax and the Measure that established the procedure for the granting of extensions, fractioning, and terms for the payment of tax obligations.

Inquiries and Information: Presents the Taxpayer's Listing; Inquiries to the Legal Department Management; the Functions of the Information and Documentation Center; the Functions of the Taxpayer Attention Office; Online Inquiries Assistant through e-mail and the Functions of the Import and Export System – IMPEX.

Complaints: System whereby complaints may be filed, by writing a text or completing a form and sending the same by e-mail.

Links of Interest: Shows national as well as international links of interest, such as: the Ministry of Finances; the Ministry of Production and Commerce; the Central Bank of Venezuela; the Central University of Venezuela; the Inter-American Development Bank, and others.

4. ONLINE SYSTEM



Frequently Asked Questions: Through the registry of the most frequently asked questions made by taxpayers through the toll free number 08000-SENIAT, whereby taxpayers and users in general may access a range of services which includes tax information, inquiries on taxes and customs, filing complaints, orientation on the different procedures performed at SENIAT and online assistance to perform transactions through our Fiscal Portal.

How can I prepare my Return?: Technical instructions on the steps to follow in the Internet Filing of the Return (Income Tax).

How can I complete the Informational Return on Withholdings?: Technical instructions on the steps to follow in the Informational Return on Withholdings.

How can I print the VAT Withholding Payment Listing?: Technical instructions on the steps to follow in printing the Informational Return on Withholdings Payment Listing, in the event that it has not been done when executing the return.

How can I register in Seniat's Fiscal Portal?: Technical instructions on the steps to follow in the Taxpayer Registry process.

How can I print the Electronic Certificate?: Technical instructions on the steps to follow in the printing process of the Electronic Certificate for the Receipt of Filing the Return through the Internet (Income Tax), document guaranteed an recognized by the Tax Administration, identified with a correlative number generated automatically. Furthermore, it contains information on the Tax paid and the Electronic Form Number (Return).

How can I change my current password or any other data?: Technical instructions on the steps to follow in the process to change password, e-mail and secret question and answer.

Certificate Inquiry: Online inquiry of Certificates

Rif Inquiry: Through this inquiry the Tax Administration officer, whose profile is authorized, may inquire identification information of a particular taxpayer.

5. OTHER FUNCTIONS

- Contact Us: E-mail service: asiste@seniat.gov.ve



- <u>Informational Functions</u>: . Press articles and advertising in general are presented, the same are produced as a means for mass dissemination.

As From Monday January 20th Computer applications for Users of the Maritime Customs Office of La Guaira Improve

As from next Monday January 20, users of the Automated Customs System (SIDUNEA) of the Main Maritime Customs of La Guaira we be benefited with the more and better application for their import and export operations, since the computer system (software) will migrate to a higher version (from 1.16 d to 1.17 d), this will facilitate additional functions to this modernization process of Venezuela's customs. In this portal you will find Instructions to update SIDUNEA.

HAS INFORMACION

- <u>Links to interactive assistance documents.</u> In articles published in the press links are established towards instructions (in Adobe Acrobat Reader) pertaining to the topic, i.e. Instructive to update SIDUNEA and the Technical Instruction for the Informational Return on Withholdings.

Las instrucciones para actualizar SIDUNEA

- <u>Advertising.</u> Dissemination of the telephone assistance system **08000-SENIAT** (736428).



INVIERTE EN TU PAIS: PAGA TUS IMPUESTOS Y HAGAMOS REALIDAD EL FUTURO

08000-SENIAT CERO OCHO MIL (736428)

Denuncias Consultas Información Orientación

- Advertising Promotions

The awarding promotion continues your commitment with Venezuela

"THE INVOICE AWARDED"



(foto referencial)

Now we have 9 cars and 1 SUV, 0 kilometers.

From November 22, 2002 you can deposit your invoices and win many prizes.

- 1) Place three invoices in an envelope with your data, name, surname, identity card number, address and phone number.
- 2) Deposit it in one of the boxes for the promotion, located at the offices of SENIAT.

You can be one of the winners!

If you send many envelopes you will have many opportunities to win!

We will soon announce the great draw to be held on Venezuelan Television.

- **Mail:** Establishes a link for direct access to Microsoft Exchange.



Training

One of the many aspects to be considered so that users can fully use Internet services is training, since the understanding of this media generates the necessary trust for its use. It is well known that historically citizens prefer to fill their returns and then go to the bank or one of the offices of the Tax Administration to comply with their duties, prior to using a means that may be deemed as "impersonal", therefore, the importance of having a training program that helps to generate trust in the use of Internet.

In the Venezuelan case, the Tax Administration took advantage of the publication of the measure on the **VAT Informational Return** to program a group of orientation presentations throughout the country on the topic and promote and incentive the use of the Internet to file returns. Furthermore, the Portal is very user friendly and the toll free number 08000-SENIAT has been an important means to generate interaction between citizens and the administration in the use of the Internet.

6. PRACTICAL CASE

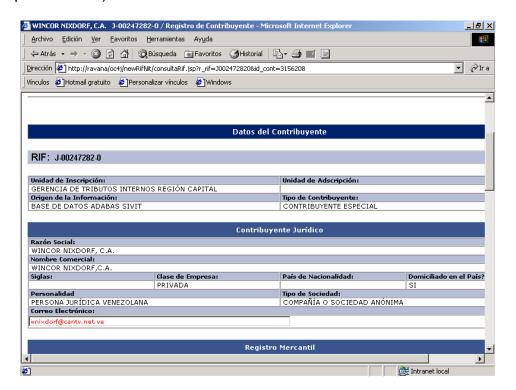
6.1 USER REGISTRY

6.1.1. Taxpayer Registry

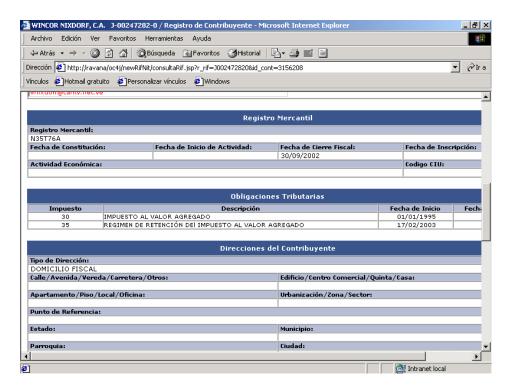
- Taxpayers can inquire at Seniat's Fiscal Portal the instructive called How can I register at the Fiscal Portal?, for bodies corporate.
- Taxpayers must address the Internal Revenue Regional Management Taxpayer Assistance Area, which pertains to their fiscal domicile, with the documents required by the instructive.
- The Receiving Officer, prior review of the documents submitted, consults the data on the RIF (Fiscal Information Registry) System by any of the Taxpayer identification fields (Fiscal Registry Number, Mercantile Registry Number, Incorporation Date of the company and Trade or Commercial Name).



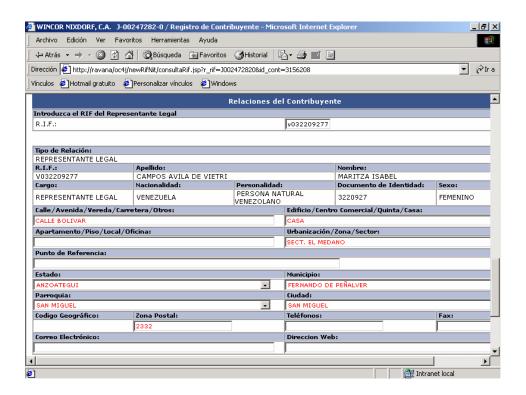
 Upon performing the inquire, the Taxpayer's data appears, such as basic data, registry data, tax obligations and taxpayer relations (Legal Representative).



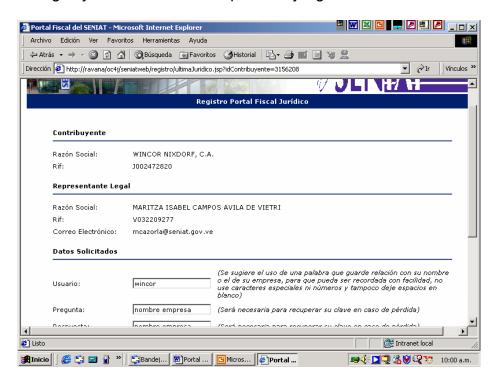
Taxpayer identification data are those contained in our Databases, as they appear in the field "Origin of the Information".

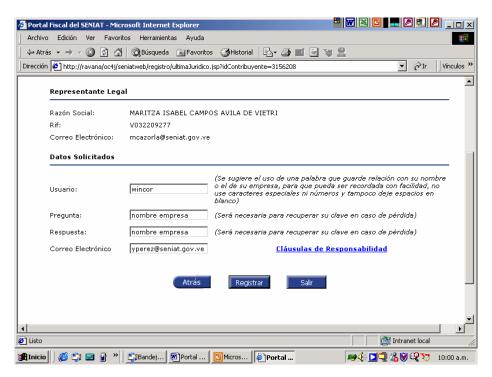


 The officer continues to register the Taxpayer's Relations (Legal Representative) to be able to continue with the Taxpayer's Registry.

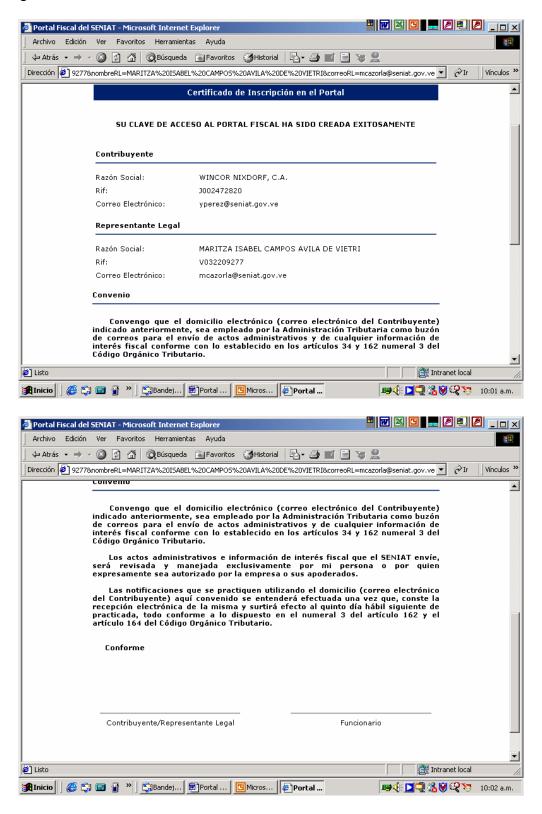


 Once the registry of the legal representative has been completed, the corresponding data for the creation of the user password are inputted. As a final result of this action, the taxpayer is given the username and password, Fiscal Registry Certificate and Responsibility Agreement.

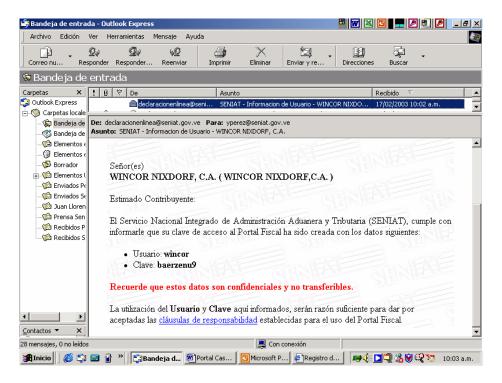




- The system shows a message that confirms that the registry has been successfully processed and shows the agreement for the acceptance of the legal conditions for the use of the Fiscal Portal.



- The system automatically sends an message to the e-mail given by the user, where the Taxpayer's username and password are confirmed.



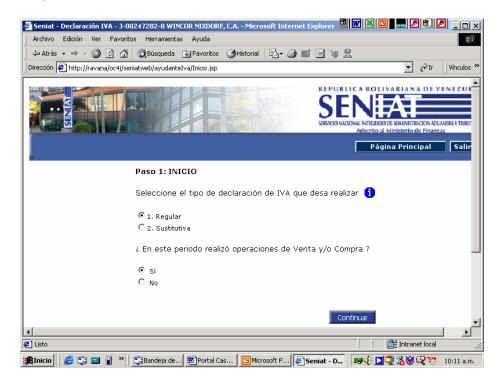
6.2 RETURN INQUIRIES AND UPDATES, WITHHOLDINGS AND TAXPAYER PAYMENTS

 The Taxpayer can enter into the Fiscal Portal with his username and password, where there appear options available to Special Taxpayers.



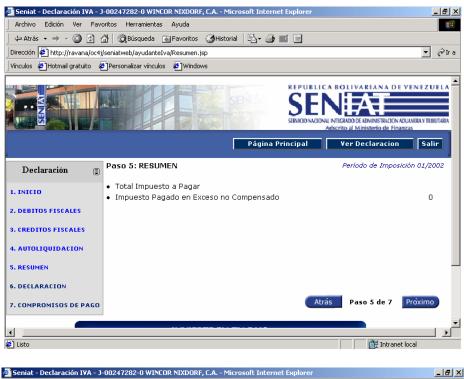
VAT RETURNS

 Here the steps to follow are indicated in order to enable taxpayers to complete the Value Added Tax Return.





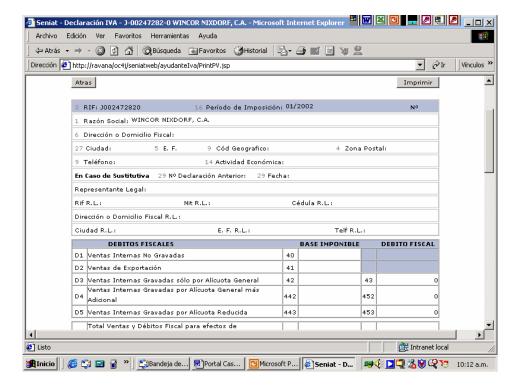






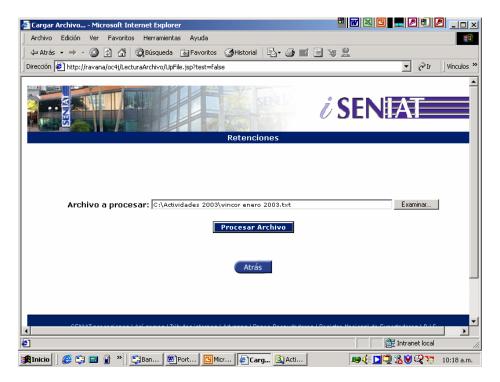


- It generates the printing of the return listing.

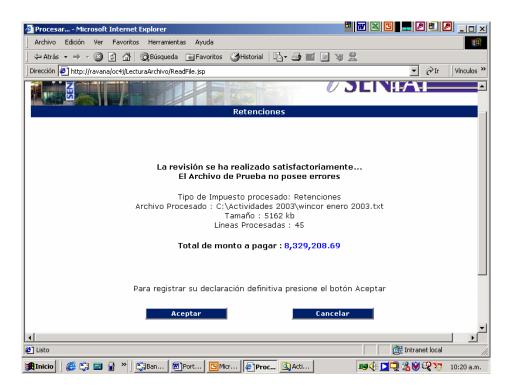


VAT WITHHOLDING AND PAYMENT, SPECIAL TAXPAYERS AS WITHHOLDING AGENTS

- The file name in text type (txt) to be processed is inputted.



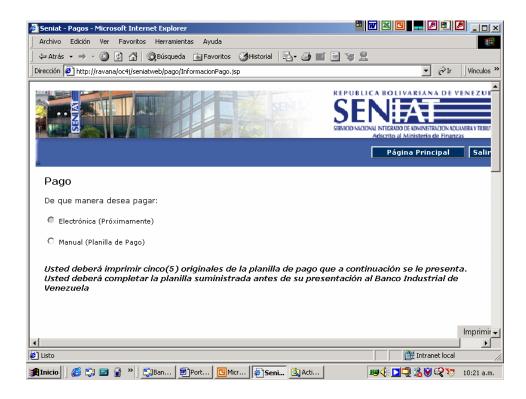
- It shows on the screen the results of the file validation and requests confirmation to perform the definite registry process.



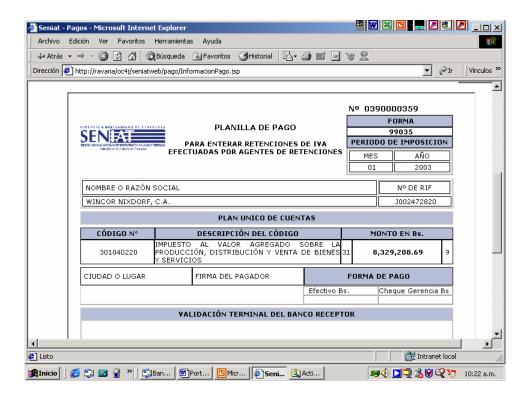
- The taxpayer can select the definite validated and unprocessed returns files.



- Payment form is selected.

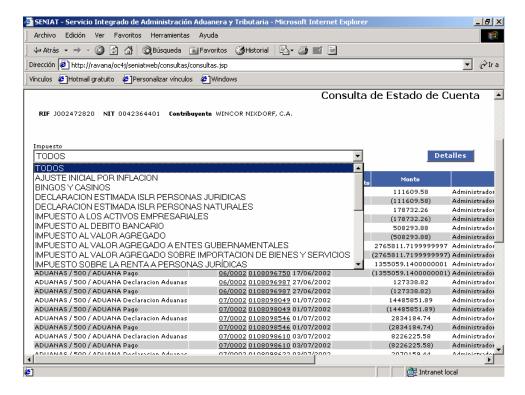


- The payment listing is printed and the same must be presented at the collecting bank, for manual payments.



6.3. OTHER FACILITIES

Inquire the Statement of Account.



- Domicile Payment.



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