

Agreement

between

the Federal Republic of Germany

and

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

on Assistance in Civil and Criminal Tax Matters through Exchange of Information

the Federal Republic of Germany  
and  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Whereas the Contracting States wish to enhance and facilitate the terms and conditions governing the exchange of information relating to all tax matters;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1  
Scope of the Agreement

The competent authorities of the Contracting States shall provide assistance through exchange of information that is foreseeably relevant to the administration and enforcement of the respective laws of the Contracting States concerning taxes covered by this Agreement, including information that is foreseeably relevant to the determination, assessment and collection of such taxes, the recovery and enforcement of tax claims, or the investigation or prosecution of criminal tax matters. The rights and safeguards secured to persons by the laws or administrative practice of the requested Contracting State remain applicable.

Article 2  
Jurisdiction

A requested Contracting State is not obligated to provide information which is neither held by its authorities nor in the possession of or obtainable by persons who are within its territorial jurisdiction.

Article 3  
Taxes Covered

(1) This Agreement shall apply to the following taxes:

a) in respect of the Federal Republic of Germany:

- the income tax (Einkommensteuer),
- the corporation tax (Körperschaftsteuer),
- the trade tax (Gewerbsteuer),
- the capital tax (Vermögensteuer)
- the inheritance tax (Erbschaftsteuer),
- the value added tax (Umsatzsteuer),
- the tax on insurance premiums (Versicherungsteuer), and
- all other taxes except customs and excise duties,

including the supplements levied thereon;

b) in respect of St. Vincent and the Grenadines:

- all taxes except customs and excise duties.

(2) This Agreement shall apply also to any identical or substantially similar taxes that are imposed after the date of signature of the Agreement in addition to or in place of the existing taxes if the Contracting States so agree. The competent authorities of the Contracting States shall notify each other of any substantial changes to the taxation and related information gathering measures covered by the Agreement.

Article 4  
Definitions

(1) For the purposes of this Agreement, unless otherwise defined:

- a) “Federal Republic of Germany”, when used in a geographical sense, means the area in which the tax law of the Federal Republic of Germany is in force;
- b) “St. Vincent and the Grenadines”, when used in a geographical sense, means mainland St. Vincent and thirty- two islands and cays which comprise the Grenadines;
- c) “competent authority” means
  - (i) in respect of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Federal Ministry of Finance or the agency to which it has delegated its power; which in respect of criminal tax matters will be the Federal Ministry of Justice or the agency to which it has delegated its power,
  - (ii) in respect of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Minister of Finance or his duly authorized representative,
- d) “person” includes an individual, a company and any other body of persons,
- e) “company” means any body corporate or any entity that is treated as a body corporate for tax purposes,
- f) “publicly traded company” means any company whose principal class of shares is listed on a recognised stock exchange provided its listed shares can be readily purchased or sold by the public. Shares can be purchased or sold “by the public” if the purchase or sale of shares is not implicitly or explicitly restricted to a limited group of investors,
- g) “principal class of shares” means the class or classes of shares representing a majority of the voting power and value of the company,
- h) “recognised stock exchange” means any stock exchange agreed upon by the competent authorities of the Contracting States,

- i) “collective investment fund or scheme” means any pooled investment vehicle, irrespective of legal form. The term “public collective investment fund or scheme” means any collective investment fund or scheme provided the units, shares or other interests in the fund or scheme can be readily purchased, sold or redeemed by the public. Units, shares or other interests in the fund or scheme can be readily purchased, sold or redeemed “by the public” if the purchase, sale or redemption is not implicitly or explicitly restricted to a limited group of investors,
- j) “tax” means any tax to which the Agreement applies,
- k) “requesting Contracting State” means the Contracting State requesting information,
- l) “requested Contracting State” means the Contracting State requested to provide information,
- m) “information gathering measures” means laws and administrative or judicial procedures that enable a Contracting State to obtain and provide the requested information,
- n) “information” means any fact, statement, document or record in any form whatever,
- o) “tax matters” means all tax matters including criminal tax matters,
- p) “criminal tax matters” means tax matters involving intentional conduct whether before or after the entry into force of this Agreement which is liable to prosecution under the criminal laws of the requesting Contracting State,
- q) “criminal laws” means all criminal laws designated as such under the respective law of the Contracting States irrespective of whether such are contained in the tax laws, the criminal code or other statutes.

(2) Any term not defined in this Agreement shall, unless the context otherwise requires, have the meaning that it has at the time the request was made under the law of that

Contracting State, any meaning under the applicable tax laws of that Contracting State prevailing over a meaning given to the term under other laws of that Contracting State.

## Article 5

### Exchange of Information

(1) The competent authority of a Contracting State shall provide upon request by the competent authority of the other Contracting State information for the purposes referred to in Article 1. Such information shall be provided without regard to whether the requested Contracting State needs such information for its own tax purposes or the conduct being investigated would constitute a crime under the laws of the requested Contracting State if it had occurred in the territory of the requested Contracting State.

(2) If the information in the possession of the competent authority of the requested Contracting State is not sufficient to enable it to comply with the request for information, that Contracting State shall use at its own discretion all applicable information gathering measures necessary to provide the requesting Contracting State with the information requested, notwithstanding that the requested Contracting State may not, at that time, need such information for its own tax purposes.

(3) If specifically requested by the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State, the competent authority of the requested Contracting State shall provide information under this Article, to the extent allowable under its laws, in the form of depositions of witnesses and authenticated copies of original records.

(4) Each Contracting State shall ensure that its competent authorities, in accordance with the terms of this Agreement have the authority to obtain and provide upon request:

- a) information held by banks, other financial institutions, and any person, including nominees and trustees, acting in an agency or fiduciary capacity,

- b) (i) information regarding the beneficial ownership of companies, partnerships and other persons, including in the case of collective investment funds and schemes, information on shares, units and other interests;
- (ii) in the case of trusts, information on settlors, trustees, protectors and beneficiaries; and in the case of foundations, information on founders, members of the foundation council and beneficiaries,

provided that this Agreement does not create an obligation on the Contracting States to obtain or provide ownership information with respect to publicly traded companies or public collective investment funds or schemes unless such information can be obtained without giving rise to disproportionate difficulties.

(5) Any request for information shall be formulated with the greatest detail possible and shall specify in writing:

- a) the identity of the person under examination or investigation,
- b) the period for which the information is requested,
- c) the nature of the information sought and the form in which the requesting Contracting State would prefer to receive it,
- d) the tax purpose for which the information is sought,
- e) the reasons for believing that the information requested is foreseeably relevant to the administration and enforcement of the tax law of the requesting Contracting State, with respect to the person identified in subparagraph a) of this paragraph,
- f) grounds for believing that the information requested is held in the requested Contracting State or is in the possession of or obtainable by a person within the jurisdiction of the requested Contracting State,

- g) to the extent known, the name and address of any person believed to be in possession of the requested information,
- h) a statement that the request is in conformity with the laws and administrative practices of the requesting Contracting State, that if the requested information was within the jurisdiction of the requesting Contracting State then the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State would be able to obtain the information under the laws of the requesting Contracting State and that it is in conformity with this Agreement,
- i) a statement that the requesting Contracting State has pursued all means available in its own territory to obtain the information, except those that would give rise to disproportionate difficulties.

(6) The competent authority of the requested Contracting State shall acknowledge receipt of the request to the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State and shall use its best endeavours to forward the requested information to the requesting Contracting State with the least reasonable delay.

## Article 6

### Tax Examinations Abroad

(1) By reasonable notice given in advance, the requesting Contracting State may request that the requested Contracting State allow representatives of the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State to enter the territory of the requested Contracting State, to the extent permitted under its laws, to interview individuals and examine records with the prior written consent of the individuals or other persons concerned. The competent authority of the requesting Contracting State shall notify the competent authority of the requested Contracting State of the time and place of the intended meeting with the individuals concerned.

(2) At the request of the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State, the competent authority of the requested Contracting State may allow representatives of the



competent authority of the requesting Contracting State to be present at the appropriate part of a tax examination in the requested Contracting State.

(3) If the request referred to in paragraph 2 is acceded to, the competent authority of the requested Contracting State conducting the examination shall, as soon as possible, notify the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State about the time and place of the examination, the authority or official designated to carry out the examination and the procedures and conditions required by the requested Contracting State for the conduct of the examination. All decisions with respect to the conduct of the tax examination shall be made by the requested Contracting State conducting the examination.

#### Article 7

##### Possibility of Declining a Request

(1) The competent authority of the requested Contracting State may decline to assist:

- a) where the request is not made in conformity with this Agreement;
- b) where the requesting Contracting State has not pursued all means available in its own territory to obtain the information, except where recourse to such means would give rise to disproportionate difficulty; or
- c) where the disclosure of the information requested would be contrary to the public policy of the requested Contracting State.

(2) This Agreement shall not impose upon a requested Contracting State any obligation:

- a) to provide items subject to legal privilege, or any trade, business, industrial, commercial or professional secret or trade process, provided that information described in paragraph 4 of Article 5 shall not by reason of that fact alone be treated as such a secret or trade process; or

b) to carry out administrative measures at variance with its laws and administrative practices, provided that nothing in this subparagraph shall affect the obligations of a Contracting State under paragraph 4 of Article 5;

(3) A request for information shall not be refused on the ground that the tax claim giving rise to the request is disputed.

(4) The requested Contracting State shall not be required to obtain and provide information which if the requested information was within the jurisdiction of the requesting Contracting State the competent authority of the requesting Contracting State would not be able to obtain under its laws.

(5) The requested Contracting State may decline a request for information if the information is requested by the requesting Contracting State to administer or enforce a provision of the tax law of the requesting Contracting State, or any requirement connected therewith, which discriminates against a citizen of the requested Contracting State as compared with a citizen of the requesting Contracting State in the same circumstances.

## Article 8 Confidentiality

(1) All information provided and received by the competent authorities of the Contracting States shall be kept confidential and shall be treated as secret in the same manner as information obtained under the domestic laws of the Contracting States.

(2) Such information shall be disclosed only to persons or authorities (including courts and administrative bodies) concerned with the purposes specified in Article 1, and used by such persons or authorities only for such purposes, including the determination of any appeal. For these purposes information may be disclosed in administrative or criminal investigations, in public court proceedings or in judicial decisions, if this is provided for in the respective laws of the Contracting States.

(3) Such information may not be used for any purpose other than for the purposes stated in Article 1 without the expressed written consent of the competent authority of the requested Contracting State.

(4) The information provided to a requesting Contracting State under this Agreement may not be disclosed to any other jurisdiction.

(5) Personal data may be transmitted to the extent necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Agreement and subject to the provisions of the law of the supplying Contracting State.

#### Article 9

##### Costs

The Incidents of costs incurred in providing assistance (including reasonable costs of third parties and external advisors in connection with litigation or otherwise) shall be agreed by the competent authorities of the Contracting States.

#### Article 10

##### Mutual Agreement Procedure

(1) Where difficulties or doubts arise between the Contracting States regarding the implementation or interpretation of the Agreement, the competent authorities shall endeavour to resolve the matter by mutual agreement.

(2) In addition to the agreements referred to in paragraph 1, the competent authorities of the Contracting States may mutually agree on the procedures to be used under Articles 5, 6 and 9.

(3) The competent authorities of the Contracting States may communicate with each other directly for purposes of reaching agreement under this Article.

(4) The Contracting States shall agree on procedures for dispute resolution should this become necessary.

#### Article 11

##### Protocol

The attached Protocol shall be an integral part of this Agreement.

#### Article 12

##### Entry into Force

(1) This Agreement shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged as soon as possible.

(2) This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification and its provisions shall have effect in both Contracting States:

a) for criminal tax matters on that date; and

b) for all other matters covered in Article 1 on that date, but only in respect of taxable periods beginning on or after that date or, where there is no taxable period, all charges to tax arising on or after that date.

#### Article 13

##### Termination

(1) Either Contracting State may terminate the Agreement by serving a notice of termination by letter to the other Contracting State.

(2) Such termination shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of notice of termination by the other Contracting State.

(3) If the Agreement is terminated, the Contracting States shall remain bound by the provisions of Article 8 with respect to any information obtained under the Agreement.

Done at London, this 29 of March, 2010, in duplicate in the German and English languages, each text being equally authentic.

For the Government of  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Georg Boomgaarden

For the Government  
of St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
Cenio Lewis

Protocol  
to the Agreement  
between  
the Federal Republic of Germany  
and  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
on Assistance in Civil and Criminal Tax Matters through Exchange of Information

The Federal Republic of Germany and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (the “Contracting States”) have agreed at the signing of the Agreement between the two States on Assistance in Civil and Criminal Tax Matters through Exchange of Information on the following provisions which shall form an integral part of the said Agreement:

1. With respect to subparagraph a of paragraph 5 of Article 5 it is understood that the identity of the person under examination or investigation may be determined by identifying information other than the name.
2. With respect to paragraph 5 of Article 8 the Contracting States shall ensure the protection of personal data at a level that is equivalent to that of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. In addition the following shall apply:
  - a) The receiving agency may use such data in compliance with paragraph 3 of Article 8 only for the purpose stated by the supplying agency and shall be subject to the conditions prescribed by the supplying agency and that conform with Article 8.
  - b) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 3 of Article 8, the information may be used for other purposes, if under the law of both Contracting States it may be used for these other purposes and the competent authority of the supplying

Contracting State has agreed to this use. Use for other purposes without the prior approval of the supplying Contracting State is permissible only if it is needed to avert in the individual case at hand an imminent threat to a person of loss of life, bodily harm or loss of liberty, or to protect significant assets and there is danger inherent in any delay. In such a case the competent authority of the supplying Contracting State must be asked without delay for retroactive authorisation of the change in purpose. If authorisation is refused, the information may no longer be used for the other purpose and the receiving agency shall erase the data supplied without delay. Any damage which has been caused by use of the information for the other purpose must be compensated.

- c) The supplying agency shall be obliged to exercise vigilance as to the accuracy of the data to be supplied and their foreseeable relevance within the meaning of Article 1 and their proportionality to the purpose for which they are supplied. Data are foreseeably relevant if in the concrete case at hand there is the serious possibility that the other Contracting State has a right to tax and there is nothing to indicate that the data are already known to the competent authority of the other Contracting State or that the competent authority of the other Contracting State would learn of the taxable object without the information. If it emerges that inaccurate data or data which should not have been supplied have been supplied, the receiving agency shall be informed of this without delay. That agency shall be obliged to correct or erase such data without delay.
- d) The receiving agency shall on request inform the supplying agency on a case-by-case basis for the purpose of informing the person concerned about the use of the supplied data and the results achieved thereby.
- e) The receiving agency shall inform the person concerned of the data collection by the supplying agency. The person concerned need not be informed if and as long as on balance it is considered that the public interest in not informing him outweighs his right to be informed.

- f) Upon application the person concerned shall be informed of the supplied data relating to him and of the use to which such data are to be put. The second sentence of paragraph e) shall apply accordingly.
  - g) The receiving agency shall bear liability under its domestic laws in relation to any person suffering unlawful damage in connection with the supply of data under the exchange of data pursuant to this Agreement. In relation to the damaged person, the receiving agency may not plead to its discharge that the damage had been caused by the supplying agency.
  - h) The supplying and the receiving agencies shall be obliged to keep official records of the supply and receipt of personal data.
  - i) Where the domestic law of the supplying agency contains special provisions for the deletion of the personal data supplied, that agency shall inform the receiving agency accordingly. In any case, supplied personal data shall be erased once they are no longer required for the purpose for which they were supplied.
  - j) The supplying and the receiving agencies shall be obliged to take effective measures to protect the personal data supplied against unauthorised access, unauthorised alteration and unauthorised disclosure.
3. Pursuant to Article 9 of the Agreement it is mutually decided that ordinary costs that are incurred for the purpose of responding to a request for information will be borne by the requested Contracting State. Such ordinary costs will normally cover internal administration costs of the competent authority and any minor external costs such as the cost of couriers. All reasonable costs incurred by third parties in complying with the request for exchange of information are considered extraordinary costs and will be borne by the applicant Contracting State. Examples of extraordinary costs include, but are not limited to, the following:



- a) reasonable fees charged for staff employed by third parties in assisting with the request;
- b) reasonable fees charged by third parties for carrying out research;
- c) reasonable fees charged by third parties for copying documents;
- d) reasonable costs of engaging experts, interpreters, or translators;
- e) reasonable costs of conveying documents to the applicant Contracting State;
- f) reasonable litigation costs of the requested Contracting State in relation to a specific request for information;
- g) reasonable costs for obtaining depositions or testimony; and
- h) reasonable fees and expenses, determined in accordance with amounts allowed under applicable law, on the person who voluntarily appears for an interview, deposition or testimony relating to a particular information request.

The competent authorities will consult each other in any particular case where extraordinary costs are likely to exceed \$US 500 to determine whether the applicant Contracting State will continue to pursue the request and bear the cost.

4. Formal communications, including requests for information, made in connection with or pursuant to the provisions of the Agreement entered into will be in writing directly to the competent authority of the other Contracting State at the addresses given below, or such other address as may be notified by one Contracting State to the other from time to time. Any subsequent communications regarding requests for information will be either in writing or verbally, whichever is most practical, between the earlier mentioned competent authorities or their authorised entities.

- a) Competent authority for the Federal Republic of Germany:

Bundeszentralamt für Steuern  
53221 Bonn

In respect of criminal tax matters:

Bundesamt für Jutiz  
53094 Bonn

- b) Competent authority for St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Minister of Finance  
Ministry of Finance  
Administrative Centre  
Kingstown  
St. Vincent  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
West Indies