Systemic Advocacy FAQ -- Revised 4/16/2003

Q: What is Systemic Advocacy?
A: Systemic Advocacy means identifying and addressing systemic tax problems by analyzing their root causes and recommending corrective action. In all facets of our work, we in the Office of Systemic Advocacy maintain independence and impartiality, and pursue recommendations from an impartial perspective. We may try to resolve problems by recommending administrative changes to IRS policy, procedures, and processes, or by proposing legislative remedies.

Q: Is Systemic Advocacy the same as the Taxpayer Advocate Service?
A: The Office of Systemic Advocacy is part of TAS but is distinct within the organization. Our sole purpose is advocating change that benefits *groups* of taxpayers. We do **not** handle individual taxpayer cases. For more information about obtaining assistance from a case advocate, visit http://www.irs.gov/advocate/index.html.

Q: How do you define "Systemic"?
A: A systemic issue impacts **multiple** taxpayers -- locally, regionally, or nationally. It involves systems, processes, policies, procedures, or legislation; and requires study, analysis, recommendations, and action.

Q: What is SAMS?
SAMS stands for Systemic Advocacy Management System, our new method of receiving and prioritizing systemic issues and problems from other IRS employees. This streamlined process allows our IRS colleagues to bring systemic issues directly to our attention via the IRS intranet, with none of the time-consuming reviews that were previously required.

Q: How do people who are *not* IRS employees submit issues?
A: Individuals, businesses, academic and research institutions, professional organizations, practitioners and others may submit issues via email to Systemic.Advocacy@irs.gov. **Do not send any taxpayer information such as social security numbers or other private data.**

Q: What kind of issues should be submitted to the Office of Systemic Advocacy through this email address?
A: We'd like to hear about any **systemic** issue that might affect *a significant number of taxpayers,* **not** individual problems that apply only to you. For example, a tax problem that causes hardship for your family might be resolved with help from one of our case advocates. On the other hand, if you own a business, and you and several of your friends in the Chamber of Commerce are all experiencing the same tax problem, that may be a **systemic issue** for us to examine.

Q: Can I send attachments with submissions?
A: Yes, attachments are sometimes necessary to explain the problem or issue. **However, all taxpayer information must be removed prior to sending.**

Systemic Advocacy FAQ -- 3/25/2003

Q: What happens to my issue after I send the email?
A: All issues submitted from outside the IRS are entered into the SAMS database along with those sent from within the IRS. After reviewing each submission, we decide whether it merits development as an *advocacy project*, and if so, we assign it to one of our analysts.

Q: What is a Critical Issue?
A: A Critical Issue is a submission that requires quick resolution (i.e., within 7 to 10 days of receipt) and is a highly visible and/or sensitive issue impacting multiple customers, affecting taxpayers' rights or privacy, or imposing economic hardships.

Q: Is there a different process for submitting Critical Issues?
A: No. Our staff will determine whether a given submission qualifies as Critical. All issues should be sent to Systemic.Advocacy@irs.gov. Again, please use this email address **only** for **systemic** tax issues, **not** for personal problems and **not** for sensitive taxpayer information.

Q: Will I eventually be able to access the SAMS database through the Systemic Advocacy page on the www.irs.gov public website?
A: We are working to make SAMS available on the IRS site. For now, however, anyone interested in submitting an advocacy issue should use the above email address.