Meet Behije Fazlija

Acomo Group Tax Manager

The international footprint of Acomo requires a clean understanding of the global tax implications

Tax is one of those functions that's everywhere but rarely visible until something goes wrong. As Group Tax Manager at Acomo, Behije Fazlija has helped build the tax function across the companies. We sat down with her to find out what that actually looked like from the inside.

For people who don't know what a tax manager does, what's the simplest way to explain your job?

My father explains it best. He tells people: she works for a large listed company and advises them on international tax matters, so that they pay their fair share of tax wherever they operate. At Acomo it goes far beyond filing returns. The role spans compliance, strategy, and everything in between, across the Group's operating companies.

Why Acomo? What drew you here?

Acomo found me. I came from the Big 4. When I had a job interview with Allard, our CEO, I discovered something rare: a large listed group that combines the scale and complexity of a multinational with a local, family-oriented way of working where people work hard with genuine collaboration and care. I'm a family person, so that resonated with me.

The Rotterdam mentality, a pragmatic, no-nonsense, and action-oriented work ethic, felt like a natural fit.

But what really drew me was the opportunity and impact I could make. I could build something from the ground up, build it with real ownership. That kind of opportunity doesn't come around often.



You ended up at a company building routes to healthier foods. What does that mean to you?

Growing up, during family visits abroad, I saw firsthand how much work goes into producing food. Seasonal, hands-on, and easy to take for granted when you see it on your table. That gave me a real appreciation for the people behind the products.

For me, building routes to healthier foods means the whole route needs to be healthy, including how we conduct business. Acomo takes a responsible approach to tax, with a commitment to paying its fair share wherever it operates. When you operate in developing countries where infrastructure depends on tax revenue, you understand what that means. That's what integrity in business looks like.

Acomo operates across various different markets, countries & product segments. What makes managing tax within such an international and diverse group interesting?

Every operating company is different. Entrepreneurially driven, highly knowledgeable and proud of what they do. We visit regularly and meet with financial and managing directors across the group.



> *"It's about finding the right balance.*

The approach is straightforward: tell us what you want to achieve from a business perspective, and we will help you get there, within a responsible tax framework. The interesting part is making people see tax as something that adds value early, not a hurdle at the end.

What role does tax play when welcoming a new company into the group, and what can go wrong if it's overlooked?

Tax work begins before an acquisition closes. We engage local experts to review key areas: corporate structure, transfer pricing, compliance history and open items with tax authorities.

We assess the tax position and determine whether there are issues that need to be addressed before we move forward, whether the tax structure is optimal and what restructuring might look like.

Newly acquired companies need space to land first. After some time, once they feel settled, we can have a constructive conversation about the tax matters.

The biggest misstep is not doing the homework upfront. That's when you inherit problems you didn't anticipate. It's about thorough due diligence before, then strategic partnership after.

What development within your field do you think will have the greatest impact on Acomo in the coming years?

Pillar Two, the OECD's global minimum tax, is one of the biggest regulatory shifts we're facing. It introduces a whole new layer of complexity, with detailed calculations for each country in which we operate and significant new data and reporting requirements. It requires close coordination across the entire group, and the complexity continues to grow.

Beyond that, growth itself brings its own challenges. As the Group grows, additional international rules may apply. The interesting question is how the tax function grows alongside the business.

The aim should not be to create unnecessary layers, especially given the entrepreneurial nature of our businesses, but to make sure we have the right structure, data and support in place as the group becomes larger and more complex. It's about finding the right balance.

Which project, achievement or moment from your time at Acomo are you most proud of?

The M&A projects. They're intense, fast-paced, and carry real consequences. In a compressed timeframe, I have to understand a business deeply enough to identify all tax considerations and determine the right structure before acquisition. These decisions shape the company's future. That's what I love about it. The satisfaction afterward.

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Two years in, what has surprised you most since joining Acomo?

How lean the holding is, and yet how much cross-departmental learning happens. Conversations with colleagues in Sustainability, Treasury and Internal Audit constantly broaden my perspective. And the level of expertise at each operating company is impressive. People who know their markets and products inside out and take real pride in what they do. That energy is contagious.

What is something your colleagues might not know about you?

I'm a city girl: the energy, directness and mentality define me. But I also love escaping to the mountains and nature. There's something about the mountains that centers me in a way the city never can. Even though I love shopping and city life, the mountains are where I find inner peace and can really recharge.

Which product from across the Acomo portfolio would always have a place in your kitchen?

The Frost tea from Royal Van Rees. It's a unique tea, harvested at the precise moment when frost collects on the leaves. That's why it's called Frost tea. I love it.

And off course I can't live without a good selection of Mediterranean spices from Catz International. I also have to mention Delinuts' white-chocolate-covered strawberries, they're simply too good.

