



Ethiopia: Developing a national e-Commerce law

The Ethiopian ICT Development Agency (EICTDA) and ECA have collaborated on engaging a consultant to draft an e-Commerce law for the country. Apart from the prospects for developing e-commerce in Ethiopia, electronic trade (e-trade) is also increasingly becoming a growth area which presents Ethiopia with a number of opportunities. The globalization of the international market is making international trade a key vehicle for economic and industrial development. One of the key obstacles to the development of electronic commerce in Ethiopia relates to the legal and regulatory environment for promoting and developing e-commerce. The communication of legally significant information in the form of paperless messages may be hindered by legal obstacles, or by uncertainty of their legal effect or validity. Therefore, the main objective of the consultancy was to support the Government's initiative to create conducive e-commerce environment with the aim to:

- Enable and facilitate the use of electronic commerce by individuals and businesses, essential for the efficiency in the international trade.
- Build consumer confidence and trust for the fullest economic and social benefits to flow from e-commerce;
- Advance the acceptance of e-commerce across regions and sectors in Ethiopia;
- Improve the e-commerce capabilities of businesses;
- To give individual users of electronic commerce advice in the drafting of contractual solutions that are needed to overcome the legal obstacles associated with increased use of electronic commerce;
- Assist the government in enacting legislations governing the use of alternatives to paper-based methods of communication and storage of legally relevant/binding/significant information.

As a result, the consultant has conducted an assessment of the current situation on e-commerce law in Ethiopia and drafted the national e-commerce law, which was reviewed by a national stakeholders' consultation workshop. Currently, the draft bill is under review and translation by the Ministry of Justice for final submission to the Council of Ministers and the Parliament for approval by the 1st quarter of 2011.

For further information, please contact:

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