



iGuide: A new platform to assist investment flow to Ethiopia

BY HIZKEL HAILU

Recently Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) has launched an electronic investment Guide, iGuide, to speed up the flow of investment especially from abroad to the country.

The commission has launched the iGuide platform to reduce unfavorable conditions that were seen at investing in Ethiopia, according to Mekonnen Hailu, Public Relations Director with Ethiopian Investment Commission.

Local and foreign investors are provided with relevant information, investment opportunities, laws, specifications, tax status, land, competitive labor, and general business conditions in Ethiopia. It is also easy to access all manufacturing, pharmaceutical, agricultural, service and other investment alternatives with their incentives and favorable conditions, Mekonen said.

This platform has numerous advantages other than investment promotion. So that it helps the investor to get more reliable and up to date information about political, economic and social status of the country. Apart from this they can access the platform where ever they are with any of electronic device that can hasten the investors' decision on their investment.

By the same token investors

iGuide

especially the foreign ones can get necessary information about Ethiopia starting from its geographical map, taxation system, investors right, production factors, market access, land related data and any of other information.

This will make the investor to finish all preliminary tasks before they reached to the country Mekonen added.

Mekonen also noted that the EIC staff has get relevant capacity building training and technical assistance as they are the ones who own, manage and update the platform as it goes functional in the process of developing the iGuide for Ethiopia, from UNECA and UNCTAD.

Hanma Ahmed import exporter in Ethiopia, said that though the implementation is less on the ground, this online platform, has many advantages for investors. Investors can easily search and get the investment situation of the country

everywhere they are. Beside this they will also gather the political, economic and social situation of the country.

Hanma has stressed more on the implementation of the new launched platform. According to him, EIC should fill the gap between drafts and their application on the ground by applying what they have drafted. Thereupon, all the stakeholders must apply conscientious activity in order to carry out this important investment tool.

Zemedeneh Nigatu, Global chairman of Fairfax Africa Fund for his part said that the "iGuide Ethiopia" which was launched a couple of weeks ago by EIC makes situations very easy and very simple to investors to access information and make decision on investing in Ethiopia besides facilitating the investment especially FDI.

According to him, investors have to come here and spend a lot of time

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and effort in order to obtain important information about how to invest in Ethiopia before this platform was launched officially. Subsequently, it was very difficult for investors to invest in Ethiopia.

On the contrary, as to Zemedeneh the government especially the EIC should update the incentives mode, new policies, rules, regulations and all necessary investment information continuously on the platform for investors in order to avoid the confusion and for a better implementation.

Zemedeneh also commented on the experience shared from other African countries who are using similar internet guide platform despite each one of them has different implementation mechanism. For him, the rules and regulation and investment incentives of Ethiopia is differ from other country by the reason there are convenient geographical situations in Ethiopia.

On the other hand Doctor Seid Hassan, professor of economics at Murray State University (USA), argues that, clearing the corruption in the country must be the prior task in facilitating the Ethiopian investment rather than every activity including the launching of the iGuide platform.

So far it will be very easy to attract investors to Ethiopia when the corruption is eradicated and the democracy took place across the country. And the government should also share other countries experience in order to reduce corruption and attract investment like South Korea and other experienced

Therefore as to him if the above prior situation is cleared, then the platform will be very crucial and easy to be implemented and brought investment opportunity with designing good human capacity. However, he has appreciated the investment situation in Ethiopia.