



NEWS RELEASE

Somaliland Officially Launches Online Business Registration and Licensing Services

Hargeisa, Somaliland, June 29, 2022 — Somaliland, with support from IFC, today officially launched an online one-stop-shop business registration and licensing system (BRLS) to speed, simplify, and reduce costs for businesses and entrepreneurs.

The new system, found at www.brls.govsomaliland.org, is part of Somaliland's wider strategy to strengthen its private sector and encourage economic growth and job creation. Reducing lengthy registration and licensing procedures will save businesses time and operational costs, especially smaller and informal businesses seeking to formalize their operations.

The Ministry of Trade and Tourism ran a seven-month pilot of the system (from December-2021 to June -2022) allowing it to be further enhanced and optimized ahead of a formal launch in June 29, 2022. The BRLS is being delivered by the Ministry of Trade in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Office of the Attorney General.

"We will now offer a world-class registration and licensing system to our business community in Somaliland," Minister of Trade and Tourism, Hon. Muhamoud Hassan Sa'ad, said. *"This reform is a result of a successful collaboration involving counterpart Government institutions, the private sector, and IFC. My Ministry is determined to offer fast and easy registration and licensing services to the private sector. I therefore urge our businesses, especially informal businesses, to take advantage of this resource to register and to comply with government licensing requirements."*

The web-based system is a one-stop-shop resource that allows entrepreneurs to register and apply for business licenses from their homes or offices, removing the need to visit the Ministry of Trade offices. BRLS will offer a range of services, including reserving a business name, registering a new business, and changing the particulars of an existing business.

Gokhan Akinci, Acting Practice Manager for IFC Creating Markets Advisory, said "The new online registration and licensing system is business-friendly and expected to lower costs for businesses and support entrepreneurs, especially local businesses, to establish their operations formally."

Users can also access the system to obtain a tax identification number through its integration with the Ministry of Finance, close or wind up a business, acquire or renew business licenses, and search the registry's business information database. Additionally, BRLS provides a variety of resources including relevant laws and regulations, online user guides, and information on registration and licensing fees and tariffs, among other resources.

Following the recent passage of company law regulation (Law number 80/2018), the online portal is the latest initiative by Somaliland designed to strengthen the business environment by enabling improved access to government services by businesses. The system marks a major step towards enhancing digital financial services through online and mobile payment options and fulfilling "Know Your Customer" requirements for financial institutions in Somaliland.

BRLS will also improve inter-ministerial coordination, as businesses can obtain integrated registration, licensing and tax services from a single platform.

" We are happy that the Government will be making business registration and licensing easier, transparent and affordable for the business community. We welcome this effort by government to modernize the services it offers to the business community and encourage our entrepreneurs to take full advantage of the online services," said Mr. Jamal Aided, Chairman of the Somaliland Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

IFC provided technical and financial support from initial design of the system to implementation, and also provided capacity building to officials.

The business registration and licensing reform was supported by the Somali Investment Climate Reform Project II (SICRP2), managed by IFC and funded by the government of Denmark, the European Union, and the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth Development Office.

Media Inquiries

Hamza Guled

Director General, Ministry of Trade and Tourism

Phone: +44 7950229169

Email: dg.mott@sldgov.org