**NIGERIA’S EASE OF DOING BUSINESS INITIATIVE**

In July 2016, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) inaugurated the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) and issued an Executive Order 001 in May 2017 to implement reform in business environment with a view of instilling transparency, efficiency and removing bureaucratic bottlenecks and constraints to doing business in Nigeria.

This was followed by the approval of the National Action Plans (NAP) to drive the Ease of Doing Business Initiative.

The Ease of Doing Business Initiative is expected to reduce the challenges faced by businesses (when getting started, getting Credit, paying taxes, moving goods, trading within and across borders) by removing critical bottlenecks and bureaucratic constraints.

Some of the Objectives of Ease of Doing Business Initiative among others include:

* To attract investment into the Country.
* To diversify the economy and reduce over reliance on Oil.
* Make it easier for investors and entrepreneurs to do business and contribute to sustainable economic growth and development.
* Facilitate and encourage easy entry and exit of people, movement of goods and services in and out of the country.

**POLICY REFORMS**

To achieve Governments Objective in improving the Ease of Doing Business in Nigeria, a number of policy reforms were introduced such as;

1. Deployment of E-Services by Government Agencies to aid in the registration of businesses and payment of taxes.
2. Issued Executive Orders to remove bottlenecks in obtaining permits.
3. Granted waivers and amnesty to defaulting tax payers to encourage voluntary compliance.
4. Unique Tax Identification Number (TIN) to be issued to all tax payers of both Federal and State Tax Authorities.
5. Continuous public enlightenment / education and registration of tax payers.
6. Deployed automated collection systems for VAT in different sectors such as aviation and government contracts.
7. Consolidate and publicize a compliant system by establishing a Help Desk in all Government agencies.
8. Amendment of fiscal legislation to encourage investment and diversify the economy
9. Every Government agency to have a website stating clearly defined processes and procedure on service delivery.
10. Enforcement on non-compliant tax payers after the closure of the waiver / amnesty programme.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

Since the implementation of the reforms, some of the achievements recorded are;

* Increased tax base from 10 million in 2015 to 20 million in 2018. The tax base is expected to increase to 45 million by the end of 2020.
* Over 100 billion naira was collected from the Waiver / Amnesty programme.
* Improved voluntary compliance as a result of the E-Services deployed by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and strict enforcement action on non-compliant taxpayers.
* Tax collection increased from 3.3 trillion naira in 2016 to 5.3 trillion naira in 2018. FIRS collection in 2018 is the highest since its inception and its expected to be surpassed in 2019.
* Integration between FIRS and the State Revenue Authorities through the harmonised Tax Identification Number (TIN) under the Joint Tax Board (JTB)
* Nigeria’s ranking on the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Initiative has moved up by 39 places since our last ranking, to 131 out of 190 countries in 2019.