

Consortium led by Safaricom appoints MD of new Ethiopian unit

A consortium led by Kenyan telecoms operator Safaricom has appointed Anwar Soussa as managing director of its Ethiopian unit, which is scheduled to start operations next year, Safaricom chief executive Peter Ndegwa said on Monday, 5 July.



Ethiopia's communications authority director general Balcha Reba (left), Vodafone Group CEO Shameel Joosub (second left) Kenya's Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa and assistant general manager for media and digital at Sumitomo Corporation Masahiro Myashita (right) hold a signed telecom license during a signing ceremony in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 8, 2021. Reuters/Tiksa Negeri/File Photo

The consortium, which includes South Africa's Vodacom and Britain's Vodafone, won an operating licence with a bid of \$850m in May to set up a telecom firm in Africa's second-most populous nation.

Ethiopia, one of the world's last major closed telecoms markets, is opening up its telecoms sector and hopes it will create millions of online job opportunities. Apart from the licence issuance, it plans to sell a 45% stake in state-run mobile operator Ethio Telecom.

The Safaricom consortium plans to invest up to \$8.5bn in the country's infrastructure and other areas.

Anwar will lead the Ethiopian operating company on behalf of the global partnership for Ethiopia Consortium," Kenya's Safaricom CEO Peter Ndegwa said in a statement.

Soussa, a Greek national, has been the managing director of Vodacom in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chairperson of the mobile unit Vodacash since 2017, Ndegwa said.

Before joining Vodacom, Soussa was the CEO of Airtel in Uganda and Chad and had also worked for South Africa's telecom firm MTN.

In his new position, Soussa will report to the board of the Ethiopia outfit and Safaricom's CEO.

Other partners in the consortium are British development finance agency CDC Group and Japan's Sumitomo Corporation.

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