

FTSE
Down at
'546.08

CAC
Down at
502.07

DAX
Down at
160.30

IONES
Up at
73.23

Austrian firms eye energy sector

By Wilson Manishimwe

Eight Austrian firms want to invest in Uganda's energy, information and communication technology, transport and health sectors.

The companies include Frequentis AG, Sun E-Solution, Vaned Engineering and Bit Media E-Solutions.

Other areas in which the companies want to invest in include air traffic management and public safety.

The 11-man business delegation met different government agencies and private companies to discuss investment opportunities in the country. The meetings started on Monday and are expected to end today.

According to Kurt Mullauer, the commercial counsellor at the Austrian embassy in Kenya, many companies are interested in investing in Uganda, but they need local partners and market information before doing so.

"We would like to find local partners to work with the companies because without local partners, it is difficult to understand the market and population mentality. Then, of course, each of these companies wants to find projects. Two of the eight companies have already been registered here with help of the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA)," he stated.

During the meeting that took place at the UIA offices in Kampala yesterday, Mullauer, who headed the delegation, revealed that the priority investment areas are renewable energy, hydro power, bio-waste management and agricultural sector.

What UIA says

Jolly Kaguhangire, the executive director of UIA, told journalists that she is optimistic that the investors will bolster development.



Kaguhangire and Mullauer during the business delegation meeting at the Uganda Investment Authority offices in Kampala yesterday. Photo by Shamim Saad

BETWEEN THE LINES: Firms to work with local partners

According to Kurt Mullauer, the commercial counsellor at the Austrian embassy in Kenya, the companies which are interested in investing in Uganda need local partners and market information before doing so. Uganda Investment Authority's executive director, Jolly Kaguhangire, said the investment is expected to make great strides towards the growth of Uganda's economy and that by the end of this year, many of the companies will have started operating.

"Most of them are interested in our strategic priority areas, such as the digital sector and we believe they will give us good results. It is encouraging and we believe that it will awaken Ugandans to work with the investors," she stated.

Kaguhangire said the

investment is expected to make a great contribution towards the growth of Uganda's economy. She said by the end of this year, many of the companies will have started operating.

"They are also to invest in surveillance cameras, water and the food processing sector.

When you see such delegation coming to Uganda, it is a sign that the country is growing," Kaguhangire said.

However, she pointed out that high power costs are a disincentive to investment, especially in the manufacturing sector, in addition to the high cost of transportation of logistics.

"The standard gauge railway is expected to lower the costs of the transport in the country," she stated.

On the issue of corruption, Kaguhangire said the authority has established a hotline, to report cases of manipulation. She says it has helped the institution grow in efficiency to attract more investors in the country.