

Central African Republic to launch Bitcoin investment platform

Central African Republic will launch the continent's first legal cryptocurrency investment hub, the presidency said, extending the impoverished country's embrace of digital finance.



Source: REUTERS. Central African Republic's President Faustin-Archange Touadera speaks during the annual gathering in New York City for the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, United States, September 21, 2021.

This despite words of caution from the International Monetary Fund.

Marred by decades of conflict, Central African Republic last month became the first country in Africa and only the second in the world to adopt bitcoin as an official currency.

The government has so far provided little detail on the logistics of its bitcoin vision. The soon-to-be-launched "Sango" crypto initiative has a website on which interested investors can sign up to a waiting list.

"The formal economy is no longer an option," President Faustin-Archange Touadera said in a statement on Monday. "An impenetrable bureaucracy is keeping us stuck in systems that do not give a chance to be competitive."

Launch date kept under wraps

There was no indication when the investment hub would be open or how it would operate. The move to adopt bitcoin in a country where internet use is low and electricity unreliable raised eyebrows among crypto experts, puzzled lawmakers and residents of the gold and diamond-producing country, and drew words of caution from the International Monetary Fund.

Central Africa's regional banking regulator for the six-nation Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa also sent out a reminder about its ban on cryptocurrencies, stating the prohibition was meant to ensure financial stability.

Many crypto assets have plunged in value in recent months, with bitcoin down 39% in eight weeks and losing more than half of its value since a November 10 peak of \$69,000.

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