



*Text of the Address by
His Excellency*

Mr. Biodun Oyebanji
Governor, Ekiti State, Nigeria

at the

**FLAG OFF CEREMONY AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF
INNOVATION GRANT FACILITIES (IGF), FOR INNOVATION
DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE ACQUISITION
OF SKILLS PROJECT (IDEAS)**

At

Lady Jibowu Hall, Government House, Ado –Ekiti.

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

PROTOCOL

1. It is my delight to welcome you to this occasion which marks the commencement of the processes to obtain the Innovation Grant Facilities (IGF) fund by World Bank\Federal Government IDEAS project.
2. You will recall that on August 16, we were all gathered at the Adetiloye Hall to witness the distribution of cheques to all secondary and technical schools in Ekiti under the IDEAS-AGILE programme. My predecessor and his wife who had worked very hard for two years for the actualisation of the project were very happy to perform the task of distributing the cheques to all our schools for the renovation of some identified school facilities. I am glad to note that most of the projects are now being completed.
3. Similarly, on September 6, 2022, the State also benefited from another N300m grant to improve and revamp the three technical colleges in Otun, Ijero and Igbara-Odo as part of our efforts to reposition technical education in Ekiti State.



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- 4.** These funds are made available to improve school facilities, enhance girl-child education, improve learning environment, and enable skill acquisition among our youths.
 - 5.** I therefore, like to express my profound appreciation to the World Bank and the Federal Government of Nigeria for their consistent investment in human capital development programmes which have greatly benefited our dear State. I want to also appreciate their officials who have been collaboratively working with ours to ensure the success of the different programmes in our State.
 - 6.** For us in Ekiti, we are aware of the ongoing technological evolution, joblessness, economic downturn, widening global poverty and its implication on our people. We are convinced that there is no better time to prioritize human capital development which is a key pillar in our 6-Point Agenda through the acquisition of appropriate skills that can make our youths to be more competitive in the ever evolving techno-economic environment than now.
 - 7.** It was in the realization of this that we came up with the Ekiti Knowledge Zone. The Knowledge Zone is conceived as a world class knowledge park which leverages on our comparative advantages to create a vibrant ecosystem of innovative businesses and a conducive environment for collaboration, innovation, and technology transfer in line with the sustainable development goals. We have also appointed a Special Adviser on Governance, Reforms and Innovation to coordinate this process.
 - 8.** To ensure the sustainability of the Zone, the project is conceived to be a public-private partnership initiative model. Ekiti State Government is providing the land and required infrastructure for investors' participation. The overall objective is to prepare our youths to have access to an ecosystem that can trigger their creative and innovative ingenuity and create a knowledge-based economy that will position the State to be a major player in all facets of human endeavour.



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- 9.** For us therefore, the IDEAS projects in their various forms, are very a productive complement to our vision of creating an economy that is based on knowledge, innovation and creativity through technical and digital skill acquisition.
 - 10.** The Innovation Grant Facility (IGF), being flagged off today is another opportunity in the IDEAS portfolio which is dedicated to the development of innovative digital skills. It is a special intervention grant to accelerate innovative digital skill development among Nigerian youths. The fund will enable both federal and state level implementation partners to support innovative training initiatives in the field of digital skills and digital entrepreneurship.
 - 11.** In other words, both private individuals and non-governmental service providers with innovative digital skill projects will be able to receive funding from this grant if they are able to scale through the necessary requirements. It must be noted that access to the grant is open, transparent and highly competitive. For the benefiting State like Ekiti and the catchment states in the South West, we will be entitled to a \$0.9million as IGF financial volume, while each successful IGF project will receive at least \$100,000 as grant volume for the execution of the project.
 - 12.** Whereas, the number of projects to be funded through the IGF is dependent on the financial volume of the individual project awarded, the facility is expected to fund as many critical intervention projects in different segments of the skills development ecosystem. Special considerations will be addressed to the vulnerable and young women with fundable projects so as to ensure inclusion.
 - 13.** It is on this note that I want to therefore, appeal to all private sector partners with tested innovative digital skills development capacity both in Ekiti State and Southwest Nigeria to key into this initiative aimed at creating a pool of persons with requisite digital and entrepreneurial skill that can be employed in the industries and be self-employed. The fund is for you to increase your capacity and be able to upscale from your current position.
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14. I am truly grateful to the officials of the World Bank for their consistent support through different life-enhancing programs being implemented not only in Ekiti State, but across Nigeria and Sub-Sahara Africa. I wish to solicit your continuous presence in Ekiti State as I re-affirm our commitment to providing the enabling environment for you and other development partners to thrive.
 15. Finally, I want to commend the efforts of the State's Board for Technical and Vocational Education and other stakeholders in the education sector for their relentless collaboration at ensuring all preliminary activities were diligently carried out to pave way for the commencement of the IDEAS projects in our State. While I am impressed with the great work that the Project Implementation Unit has done so far, I want to charge the Unit to continue to adhere strictly to all procedures and guidelines and to ensure accountability and probity at all times.
 16. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is now my unique honor to flag off the Innovation Grant Facility in Ekiti State to the glory of God and benefit of our people.
 17. Thank you for listening and God bless.

Biodun Oyebanji
Governor

November 30, 2022.