FDRE E-Consultation Portal

User Manual

In collaboration with

- European Union
- German International Development Cooperation (GIZ)
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Innovation and Technology

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July 2023

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Introduction

It is well known that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are changing the way we live and work, improving the performance of office work as well as transforming how the government is interacting with citizens. Adopting ICT automation in government offices increases the performance of service provisioning, transparency, public participation in the legal and policy making process as well as improves ease of starting a business in the country. The Ethiopian government is working hard to realize the digital economy and improve the business environment of the country. To realize the objective, it is taking a number of measures from infrastructure and telecom sector development to e-government and e-service development through Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) initiatives.

The EoDB program is a program supported by the European Union and implemented by the German International Development Cooperation (GIZ) and designed to improve the business environment of Ethiopia through adoption of digital technologies.

As part of the program, this project is designed to develop an e-consultation web application to support and facilitate the drafting process of legal documents along with public participation of citizens. It will allow the publishing and public commenting of draft legal documents created by authorized federal and regional government bodies before amended as a final and permanent document.

This project solves the following problems facing in storage, access, management and drafting process of legal documents and improves the capacity of policy makers.

- Improve the accountability and transparency of making process of laws and regulations
- Allows citizens to participate and have their say in the making process of new laws, regulations and proclamations
- Allows the government to get public comment and include into the final law

- Enables the government to ensure accountability, transparency and participatory democracy

2. Main Functions of the Portal

- User Management
- Searching, filtering and navigating a draft document
- Institutions Management
- Regions Management
- Sectors Management
- Creating and managing a draft document
- Comments Management
- Audit and reporting

3. Getting started

Accessing the portal.

The FDRE Public Consultation Portal is available at http://econsultation.gov.et

4. User Management

The application allows users to sign-up as a citizen and login to provide comments and see comment reports as well. The application also manages various user roles to administer the system and its functions. The picture below depicts the various user roles / permissions the system can handle.
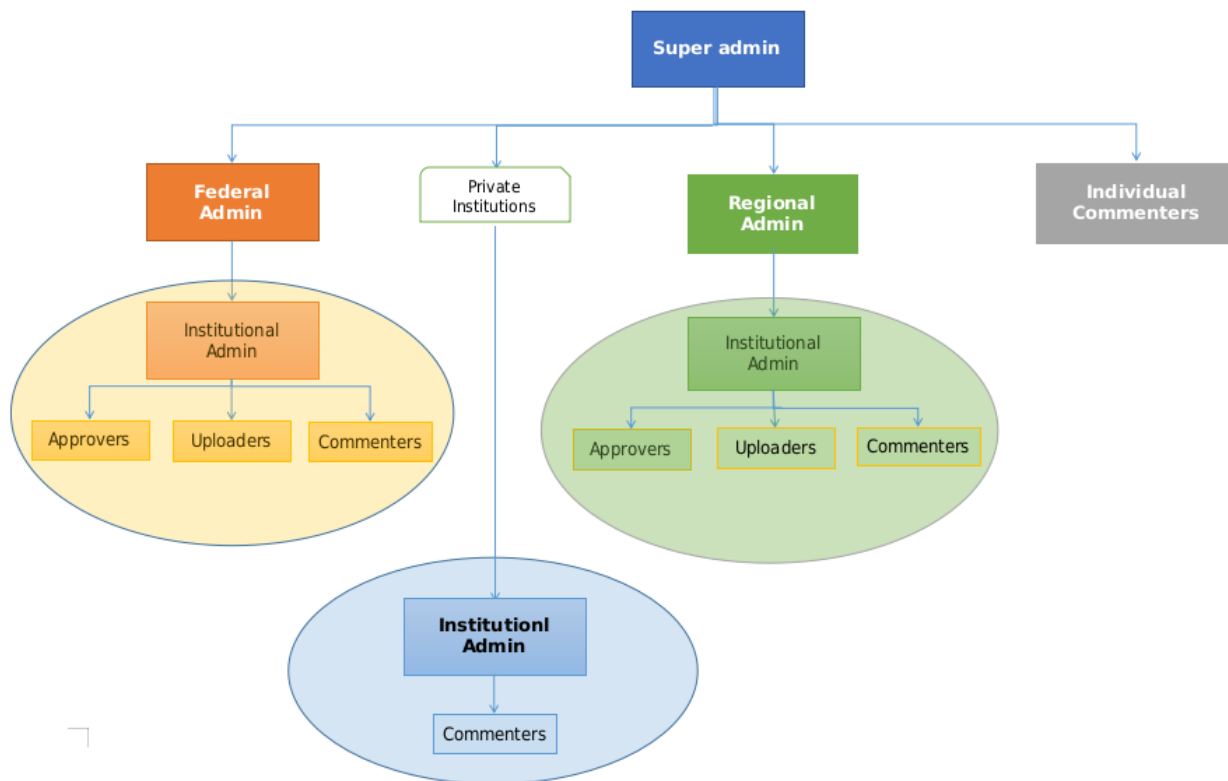
Users Roles and Responsibilities

User role	Responsibility
Super Admin	This user is responsible for managing the overall technical issues of the system and handles the creation and management of other users such as (Federal Admin, Regional Admin) and economic sectors.
Federal Admin	This user is responsible for creating and managing federal institutions and their institutional admin users.
Regional Admin	This user is responsible for creating and managing regional institutions and their institutional admin users.
Institutional Admin	This user is responsible for creating and managing institutional users. Important institutional users include

	Uploader, Approver and Commenter or Institutional Commenter.
Uploader	This is a specific user in an institution. He / she is mainly responsible for creating / uploading a new draft document, managing it and sending opening requests for a draft document into the "**Approver**" account.
Approver	This is a specific user in an institution. He / she is mainly responsible for approving a draft document to **open for comment,** assign repliers, assign individual commenters and send a request to other institutions to comment on a draft document.
Commenters / Institutional Commenters	Responsible for providing expert comments on a draft document that they are assigned to provide a comment, provide a reply to public comments on a specific document that they are assigned to provide a reply.
Commenters / Individual Commenters / Public Commenters	This user represents the general public or citizens who will visit the portal and provide comments on a specific draft document.

4.1. Sign up

The **"Sign up"** function is used to enable the public commenters / anyone / citizens to create their own accounts. Note that any user can explore and access documents to read but only registered users can comment on a document.

Steps to sign up

A. On the home page, click on the **"Sign Up"** button.
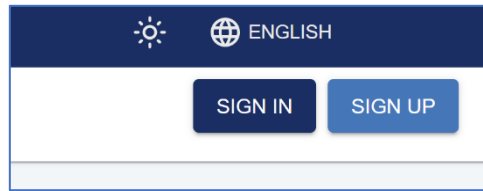
B. A **"Create account"** screen will display as shown below. Fill the form shown on the screen and click the **"CREATE ACCOUNT"** button.
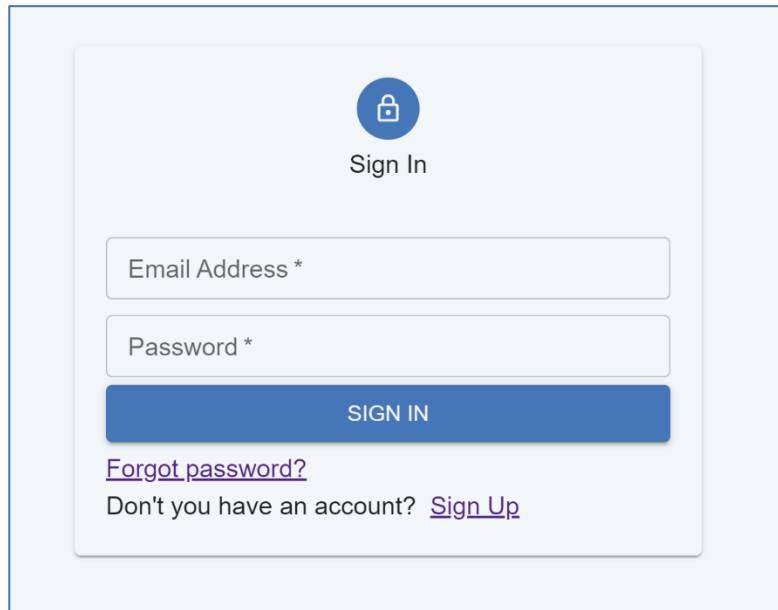
C. An account activation code will be sent to the email you provided on the form. Click on the link sent to your inbox. You will be redirected and automatically signed into the e-consultation portal.
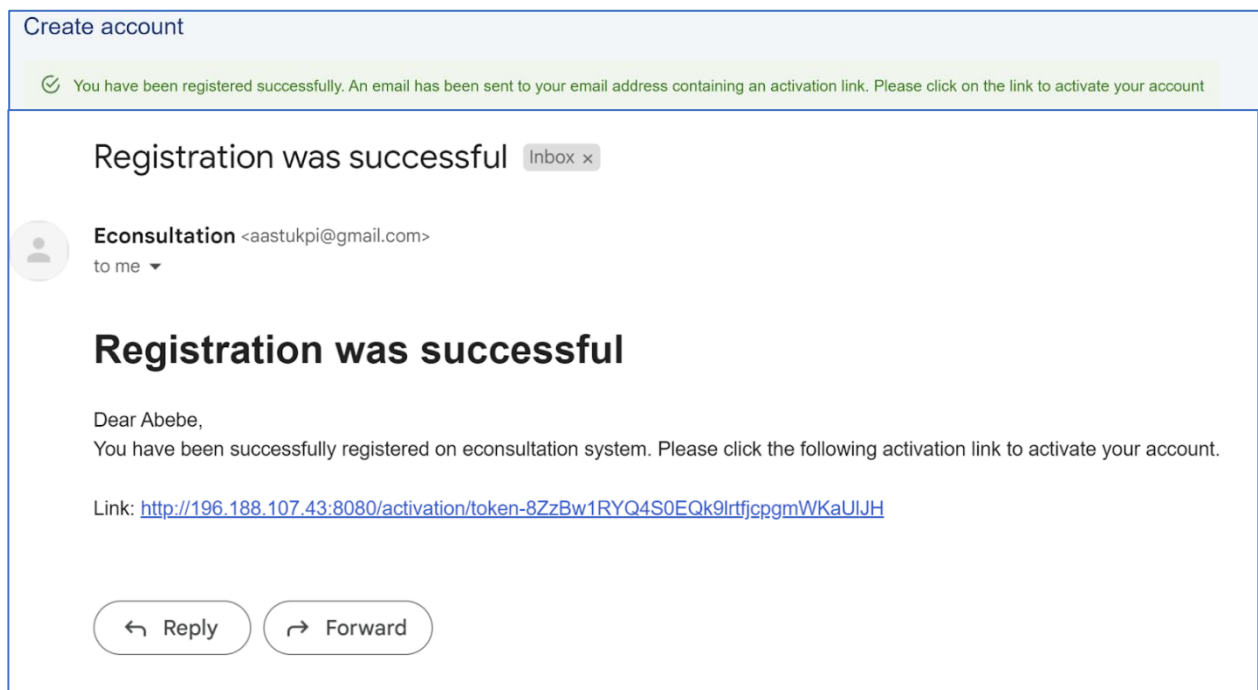
4.2. Sign In

A. On the home page, click on the **"Sign In"** button. A login screen will display as shown below.

B. Enter the **email address** and **password** you have provided while you have signed up. Then click **"Sign In".** If correct, you will be redirected to the authenticated part of the home page.

4.3. Password reset process

If you forget your account password, you can go through the password reset process via **"forgot password"** link.

Steps
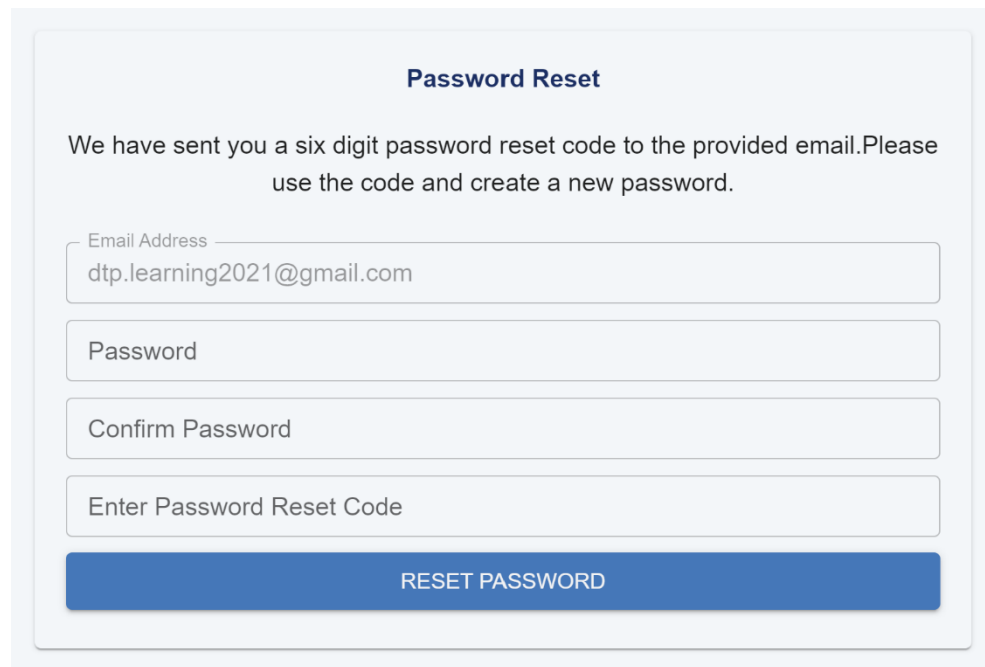
1. Below the sign-in screen, click on **"Forgot password?"** link. You will be redirected to a screen which asks you to enter the email address you are using to access on the e-consultation portal. The email address should be the one you have used at the time of account sign-up.

Reset Password

Please enter you email address. A password reset code will be sent to your inbox.

Email Address

SEND CODE

A password reset code will be sent to your email. Use the code and you can reset your password.

4. Creating New User

User accounts can be created in two ways. The first way is creating a personal account via the sign-up process. In this process, a user can create his own account to be able to provide a comment on a document as well as to see comments provided by others. The second way is to create an account for different roles of the system. This way, we create user accounts of specific roles for specific administrative purposes. For example, a **Super Admin** can create user accounts of **Federal Admin** and **Regional Admin** users. **Federal Admin** and **Regional Admin** users can create **Institutional Admin** users (**Federal Institutional Admin** and **Regional Institutional Admin**). The **Institutional Admins** can create **Uploaders, Approvers and Institutional Commenters**. To create a new user account, we should login as one of these user accounts. As a startup configuration, it is highly recommended to login as **Super Admin** and then create **Regional** or **Federal Admin** and then create **Institutional Admin** and then create **Uploader, Approver and Commenter (Institutional Commenter).**

In this guide, we will see the process to login as Super Admin and create accounts for Federal Admin or Regional Admin.

Step

A. Go to login screen
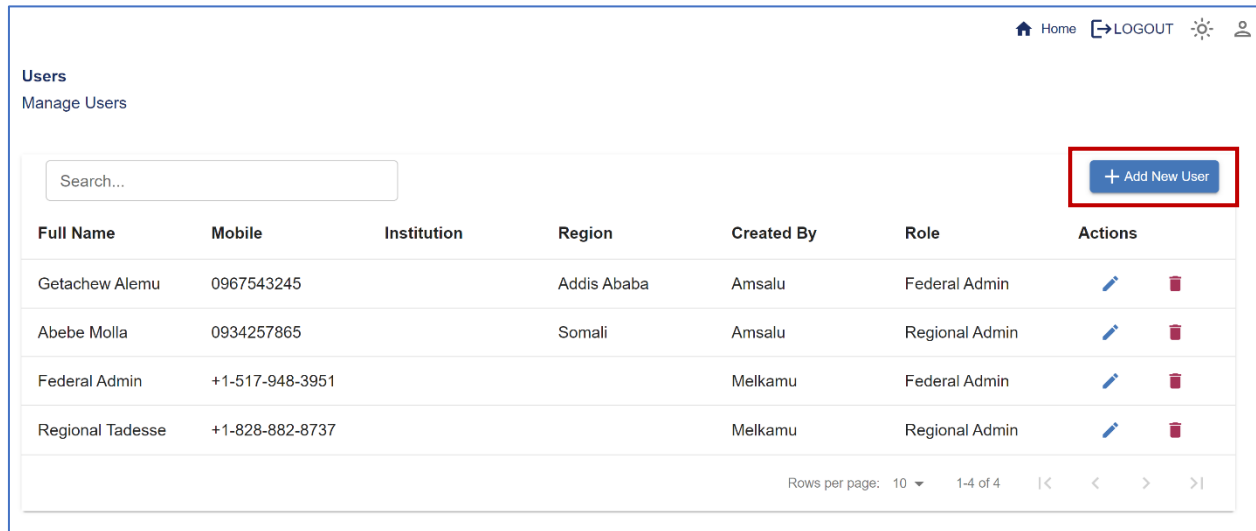
B. Login as **"Super Admin"** account**.** You will be redirected to the system's admin dashboard.
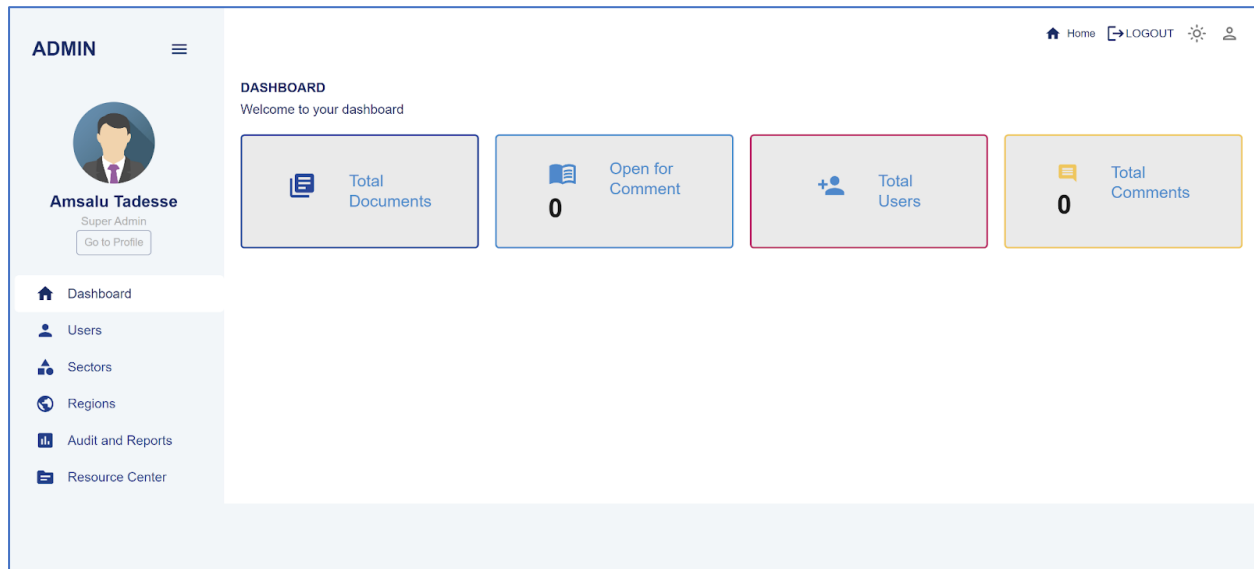
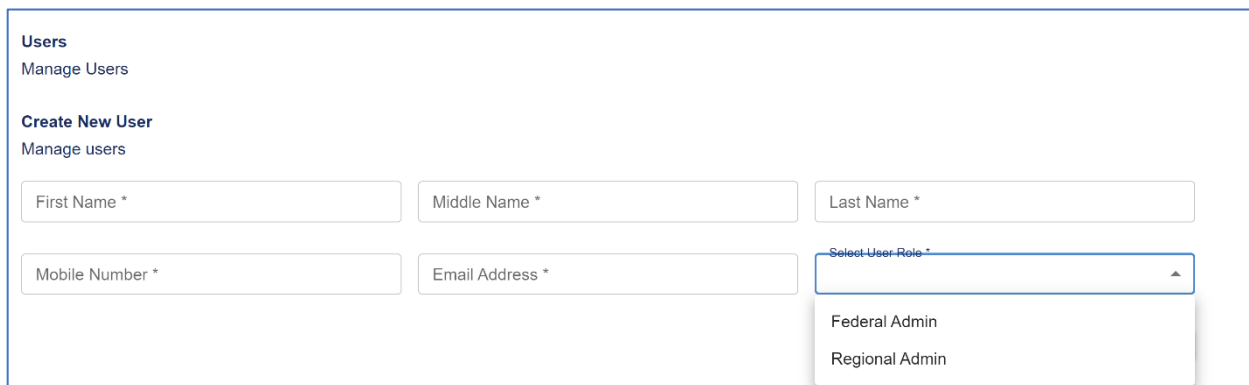**C.** Go to "**Users**" item on the main menu located on the left pane.
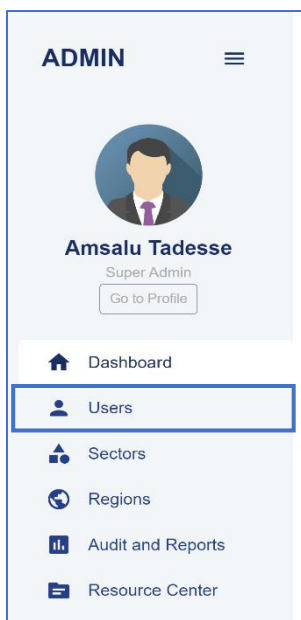
D. The users' management screen will appear. Here you can **create new user, edit the user's profile** and **delete account** if necessary.

E. Click on **"+ Add New User"** to create new user account. A user account creation form will appear above the list of users table.

F. Fill appropriate data on the provided fields and click "Save"

(**Note:** You can hide and show by clicking the **"Hide Form"** button to hide and show the user creation form)
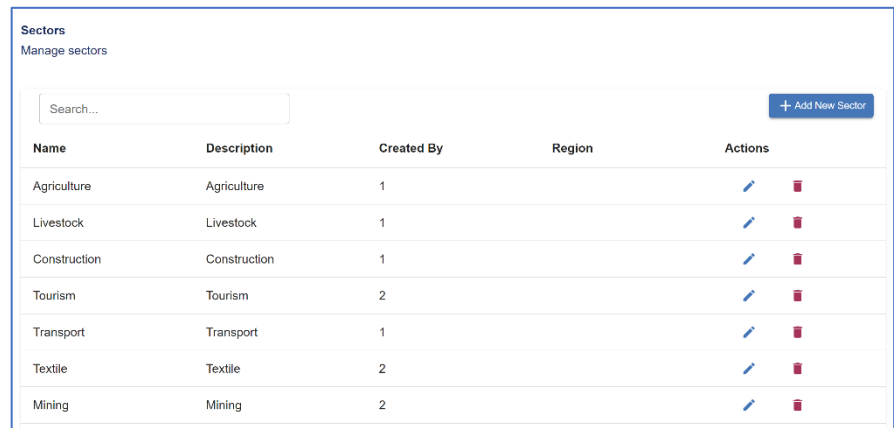
5. Creating New Sector

Sectors are economic categorization of the draft laws about which they are dealing with. This information is mainly used to categorize the documents so that searching and filtering those documents with this criterion become easy.

Steps to create new sector:

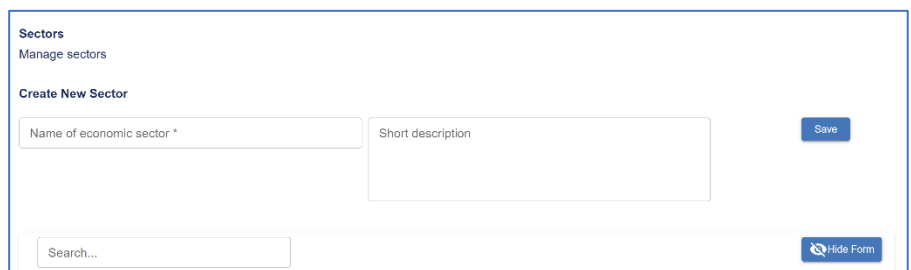**A.** Got to "**Sectors**" item on the main menu located on the left pane.
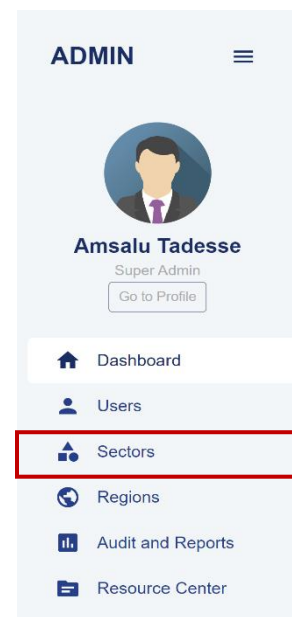
B. The sectors management screen will appear as shown below. Click on **"+ Add New Sector"** to create new sector.

C. The following screen will appear that lets you to create new sector. Fill the form and then click **"Save"** button. Note that the fields that are indicated with "*" symbol are required fields. Done!

(**Note:** You can hide and show by clicking the **"Hide Form"** button to hide and show the user creation form)
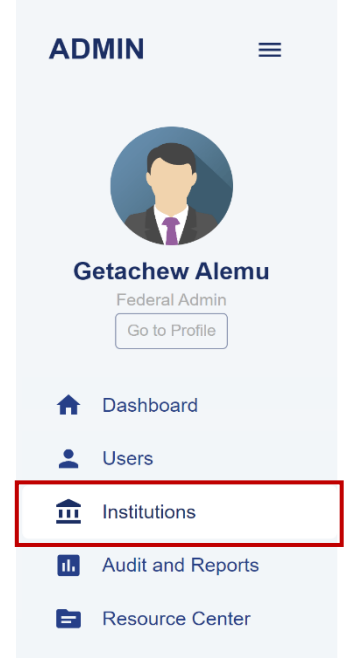
6. Create New Institution

Institutions in this system context are organizations who can administer draft laws as well as organizations who are important to provide commentary on draft laws in their area of responsibility. There are different classifications of organizations. Among these are public, private institutions, Civil Society Organizations, NGO's etc.

To create an institution, we need to have either of **Federal Admin** or **Regional Admin** user roles.

Steps

A. Login as **Federal Admin** or **Regional Admin** (In this example, we will demonstrate using **Federal Admin** account.

B. Go to **"Institutions"** item on the main menu located on the left pane.

C. The **institutions management** screen will appear as shown below.

D. Click on **"+ Add New Sector"** to create new institution. An institution creation form will appear as demonstrated below.

E. Fill appropriate data on the given form fields and then click **"Save".** Note that the fields that are indicated with "*" symbol are required fields.

(**Note:** You can hide and show by clicking the **"Hide Form"** button to hide and show the user creation form)

7. Upload New Draft Document

Now that we have created all the required data necessary to upload a draft law document. It is time to upload a new draft document. Let's get started. To upload a document, we need to have "**Uploader**" user account of a specific organization. Let us create a document owned by **FDRE Ministry of Justice** for this demonstration.

Steps

A. Assume we have **Uploader** account from the Ministry of Justice.
B. Login as an **Uploader**
C. **Uploader** dashboard screen will appear as shown below. The documents management screen is just on the dashboard of the **Uploader** account.

DASHBOARD

Welcome to your dashboard

Draft Documents / Consultations

Manage draft documents / consultations

Title	Owning Institution	Created By	Download File	Download Comments Report	Actions	
Cross Country Transp	Ministry of Justice		Download	Get comments report	✏️	🗑️
E-Consulation Procla	Ministry of Justice		Download	Get comments report	✏️	🗑️
Administrative Procl	Ministry of Justice		Download	Get comments report	✏️	🗑️
National Transport R	Ministry of Justice		Download	Get comments report	✏️	🗑️

+ Add New Draft

D. Click on the **"+ Add New Draft"** button. A new draft law uploader form will appear as shown below.

E. Fill appropriate data on the given form fields and then click **"Save".** Note that the fields that are indicated with **"*"** symbol are required fields. Then the system starts to upload the document. Here we need to understand one important point. The system is not simply uploading the document for download availability. Instead, it extracts its contents article by article and makes it easy to display the content on the web page so that viewers can explore the document article by article and they will be able to provide document level comments (general comments), as well as section / article level comments. The document will also be available for download as MS Word document.

When you click, it starts to extract and upload the document at the same time. A loading progress bar will be displayed to indicate the process.

Important notes about preparing and uploading document

1. We are allowed to upload only MS Word documents (.doc or .docx files - .docx is highly recommended).
2. We have to prepare the draft document in such a way that titles and subtitles should be formatted as **"Heading 1", "Heading 2", "Heading 3"** etc in Microsoft Word.

Now that we have successfully uploaded the draft document. Yet the uploaded document could not be automatically available for commenters. At this time, it will be at **"New / Pending"** state to be approved and opened for comment. It needs to pass some validation process. After the **Uploader** uploads the document, he / she will send a request to the approver so that the approver reviews the document info and approves it to be published and open for comment.

Steps to send document opening request

A. Go to **"Opening Request"** menu item on the main menu of the uploaders account. A screen with list of uploaded documents with their status and an action button labeled **"Send Request"** will appear as shown below. Note that the **"Send Request"** button will be available for documents whose status is "**New**" means "**Pending**" state.

Draft Approval Request			
Title	**Description**	**Draft Status**	**Actions**
National Urban Land Administra	Summa info about Nat...	New	Detail Send Request
Cross Country Transport Regula	Cross Country Transp...	Closed	Detail
E-Consulation Proclamation	Summary...	Closed	Detail
Administrative Proclamation	Administrative Procl...	Closed	Detail
National Transport Regulation	National Transport R...	Closed	Detail

B. Click the **"Send Request"** action button found in front of the document title to send opening request for the approver. The draft status label will be changed to "**Requested**" state and the "Send Request" button will be hidden.

To accept the opening request of the document, we need to login as "**Approver**" account. Now let's login as an **Approver** and accept the request.

Steps

A. Login as **Approver**

B. Go to **"Opening Request"** menu item on the main menu of the Approver account. A screen with list of uploaded documents with their status will appear as shown below.

C. Click the **"Detail"** action button to review the document details and to take action accordingly. The following screen will appear which shows the document details and action buttons to **accept** or **reject** the opening request. On the screen below, since we have clicked the document detail whose status is "**Requested**", available buttons are **"Accept"** and **"Reject".**

The main detailed attributes of the document are displayed. Also, if we want to see the reading content of the document, we can click on the "**Document Review**" button, so that, all contents of the document will be displayed as shown below.

When we are done reviewing the document detail info and its contents, then we can take action **(Accept or Reject).** For this demonstration, let us assume everything is ok and let us accept the request.

    D. Click the "**Accept**" button. An **"acceptance and opening"** dialog box will appear as shown on below.

Accept and Invite Document for Comment.

mm/dd/yyyy --:-- --

mm/dd/yyyy --:-- --

Write a remark (not mandatory)
Draft opening request is accep[...]ent is now open for commenting.

1

Assign Repliers

Enter email addresses

Invite Institutions

Select Institutions

Write a remark (not mandatory)
Dear Sir / Madam, We kind[...]anization to review this draft documnet. You can assign expe[...]g staff and let them review it.

2

Invite People

Enter email addresses

Write a remark (not mandatory)
Dear Sir / Madam, We kind[...]ew this draft documnet. We are so happy if you can go [...]vide your comments as soon as possible.

3

Publish Draft for Comment

Cancel

Let us see each form element of this dialog box one by one. There are 3 main actions we can accomplish on the dialog box shown. On the first element labeled by **#1**, we can set opening and closing date of the document. The draft document will be available for commenting only within the **opening and closing date** of the document. On the second form element labeled by **#2**, we will assign repliers who can provide a reply information on the comments provided by commenters. Repliers are staffs from the institution who initiated the draft legal document. Institutional commenters can be assigned to provide expert level reply to comments. Also in #2, we can invite other institutions to provide their professional consultations on the draft document via their legal expert staffs.

On the third form element labeled by **#3,** we can invite individual commenters via their email so that they can provide professional consultations on the legal document.

Now let's fill the appropriate data on each field and open it for comment by clicking **"Publish Draft for Comment".**

E. Now the document has been **opened / published for comment** successfully. The detail information with the new status of the document is shown below.

Now that the status of the document has changed to "Open" and opening and closing dates for commenting are set. Also, action buttons has changes based on the status of the document. Once we set the status of the document to "Open", action buttons are changed into **"Invite", "Assign Repliers" or "Close commenting"** so that we can again invite, assign repliers or close commenting at anytime later. This is important because at the time accepting and opening the draft document, we may miss to assign repliers or invite people or institutions, so we can do it at anytime later.

Below the documents detail description, we also can find list of peoples and institutions we have assigned or sent an invite. Here is the screenshot.
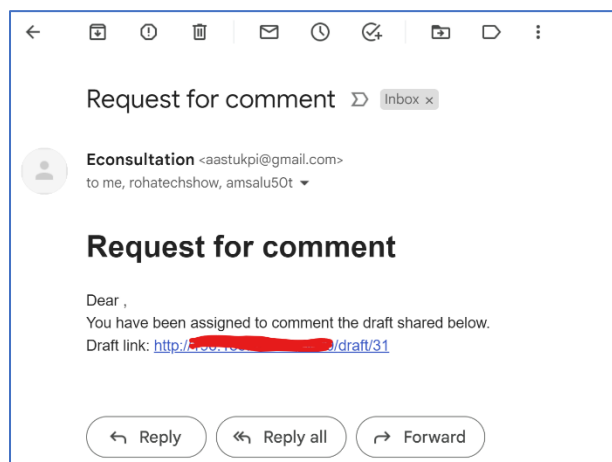

People and institutions will receive their invitation and assignment via their email addresses as shown below.

Once the draft legal document is opened for comment, it will be available for the public on the portal's homepage as shown below and any authenticated user can comment on it.
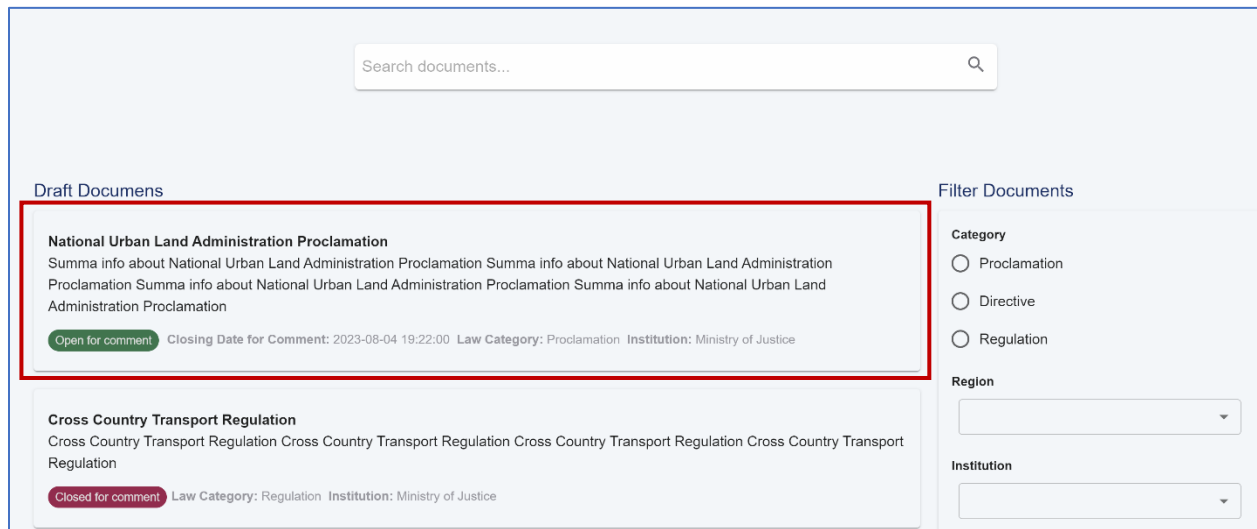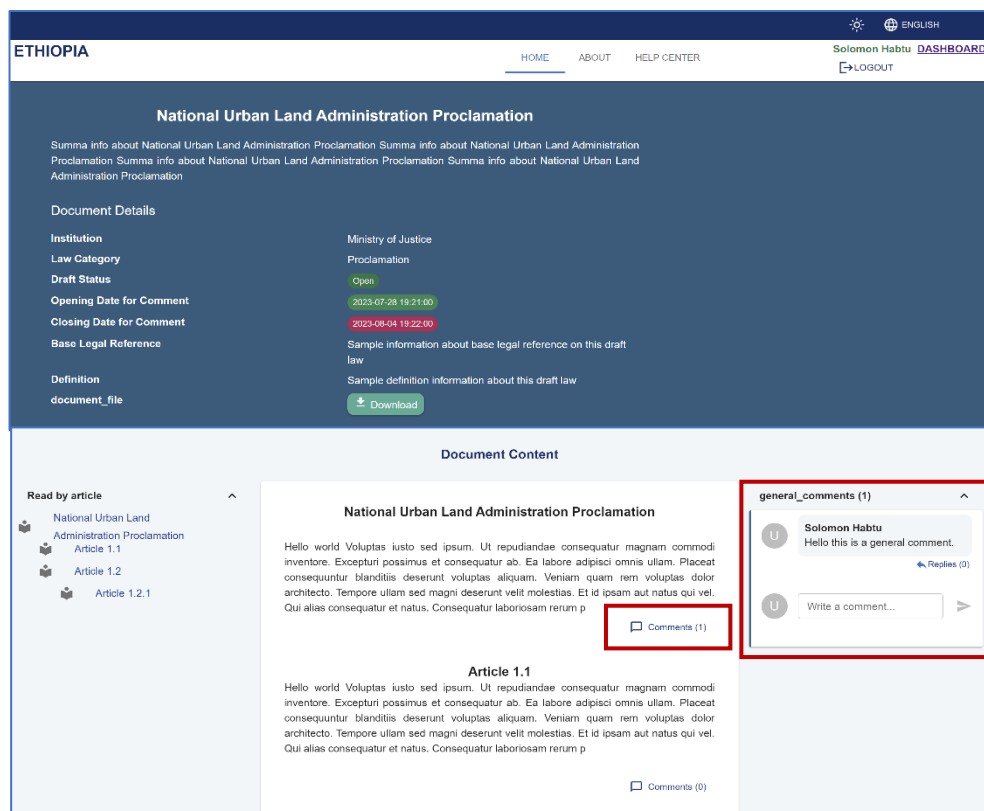

When we click on it, detail information of the document, a download link and the document's detailed content will be displayed. And if we are logged in as a commenter account, we are able to provide a comment on the document.

Now let's login as a commenter account and explore the document and let's provide a comment.

So far, we have seen how to provide comment as an authenticated public user. However, as we might have discussed so far, comments can be provided through invitations to professional experts as well as by requesting other institutions to comment on the document. For example, remember that we have sent individual invitations for two people to provide their comment on this document (wobetushiferaw@gmail.com and rohatechshow@gmail.com). The people with these email addresses will receive an invitation email with the document URL (web link) to provide their expert comment on the document.

Invitations to People

To (Email Addresses)	Requesting User
wobetushiferaw@gmail.com	Selam Temesgen
rohatechshow@gmail.com	Selam Temesgen

In addition to personal invitation, we can also send requests to institutions (that we assume they are potential stakeholder) to assign their professional experts to comment on the document. The assigned experts can then comment on the draft document.

See the below example screenshot:

Invitations to Institutions

To (Institution)	Requesting User	Acceptance Status
Ministry of Finance	Selam Temesgen	Pending
Ethiopian Diaspora Service	Selam Temesgen	Pending

We will explore how the requested institutions can accept and assign their experts later on this document.

Now that let us see how an expert can provide replies to comments. Note that only the experts who are assigned by the **Approver** can provide a reply to comments. Let's see who have been assigned to this document as a replier.

Assigned staff to reply for comments on this document

| To (Name) |
| --- |
| Solomon Habtu |
| Mekides Mekonnen |

When we login as Solomon Habtu or Mekides Mekonnen, we can see list of documents we are assigned to **reply** on our dashboard. Let's login as Solomon Habtu and see what how we can do this.

Steps

A. Click the "DASHBOARD" link on the homepage, commenters dashboard screen will appear
B. Click the "Assignments" menu item on the main menu list. A screen with list of assigned documents will display.
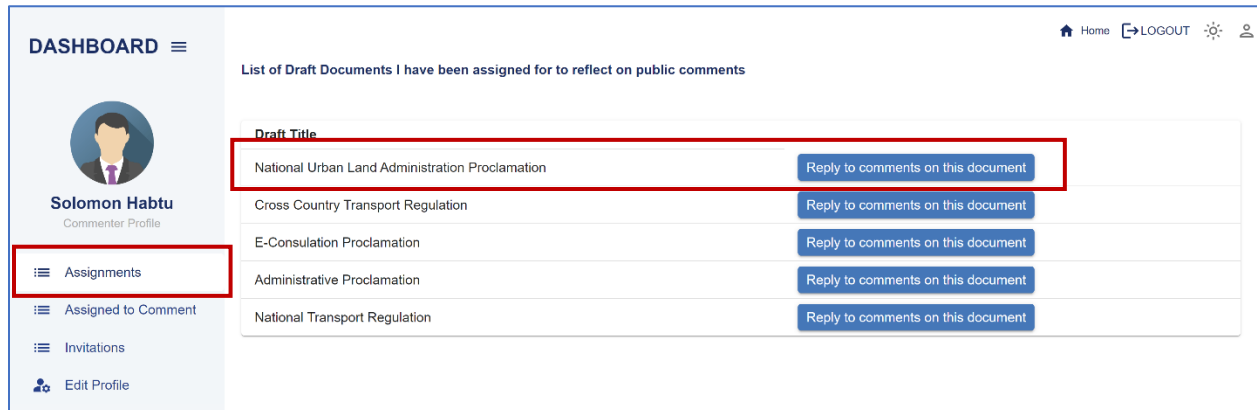
C. Click the "Reply to comments on this document" button found in front of the document you are interested in to comment. Then detail information of the document and its content will display with the ability to see the comments and a box to reply on each comment.
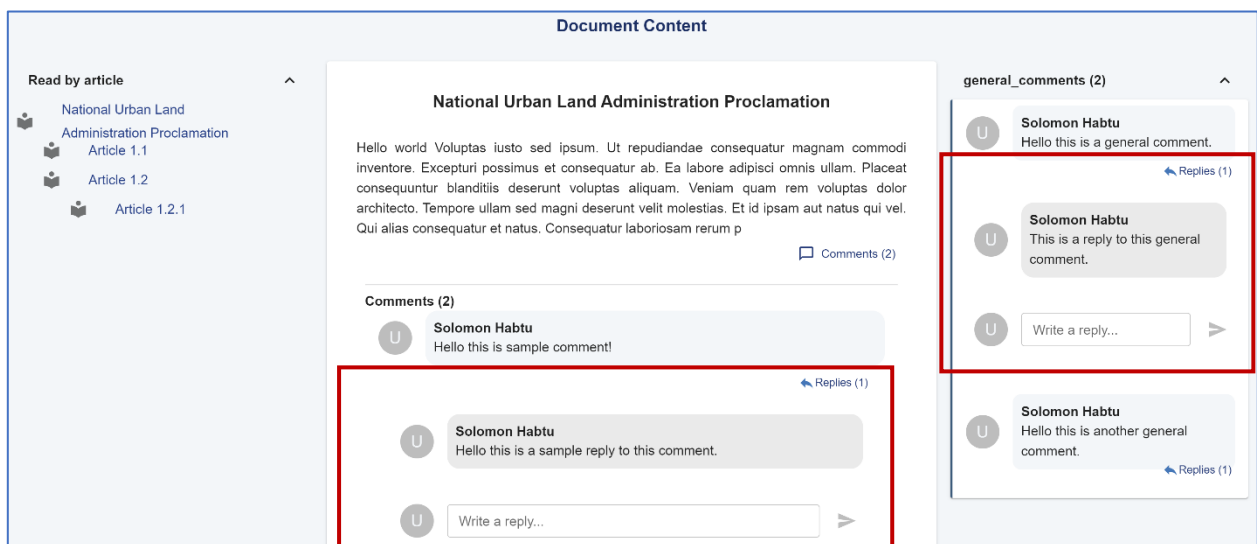
Closing the document for commenting

Once the opening date ends or just the institution wants to close the document for commenting, we can manually close for commenting or the system automatically closes the document.

To close the document manually, login as the institutions Approver account and go to the documents detail of by clicking "Opening Request" menu item as we have seen so far. The following screen will appear. Clicking on the **"Close Commenting"** button will close the document for commenting. Once the document closed, commenting will not be available. Instead a comments insight and report will be available for download.

Once the document is closed, the status will be changed to **"Closed"** as demonstrated on the below screen.

Getting comment insights and reports

Once the document is closed for comment, a comment insight and report will be available for download. This report is available for everyone who want is for taking further action or just to have a general understanding about the document.

To access this report:

A. Go to homepage of the portal
B. Click on the document you want to see the details from the list on the homepage
C. The document's detail screen will appear as shown below. Here, if the document is "closed for comment", a card labeled as Document Insight" will be available.

D. Click the **"Comment reports"** button to download the comment report. A PDF document with the following format will appear.