

UAE-Based IOPn Partners with São Tomé and Príncipe to Launch the World's First Blockchain-Enabled Citizenship Program

Strengthening the UAE's Global Leadership in Digital Governance and Creating New Opportunities for Emirati Innovation

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 13 October 2025 — In a landmark move that reinforces the UAE's position as a global hub for technological innovation and digital diplomacy, the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has entered into a strategic partnership with IOPn, a UAE-based sovereign technology ecosystem, to launch the world's first Citizenship-by-Investment (CBI) program powered by blockchain. The project will be executed through STP Service Advisory (STPSA), the government's exclusive implementing partner.

This pioneering collaboration not only represents a major milestone for São Tomé and Príncipe but also showcases the UAE's growing role as an exporter of sovereign digital infrastructure and a trusted partner in global innovation. By leveraging blockchain, artificial intelligence, and cloud technologies built and managed in the UAE, the initiative will create new channels for Emirati expertise, investment, and technology exchange with developing nations.

The partnership places the UAE at the center of a global transformation in how governments manage citizenship, identity, and investment. Through IOPn's OPN Chain and its advanced ATLAS platform - powered by NVIDIA AI and computing technologies - the program will deliver a transparent, efficient, and fully secure citizenship application and approval system.

The initiative offers direct benefits to the UAE's innovation community, creating new demand for Emirati talent and enterprises in AI, blockchain, cybersecurity, and digital transformation. Through IOPn's growing network, Emirati startups and specialists will have the opportunity to export homegrown technologies, participate in international tenders, and contribute to digital nation-building projects across Africa, Asia, and beyond.

Furthermore, the project exemplifies the UAE's strategic vision of becoming a global center for trusted digital infrastructure, reflecting its leadership in blockchain adoption, sovereign computing, and ethical AI

governance. By anchoring such transformative initiatives in Abu Dhabi, the UAE strengthens its position as a model for smart governance and a driver of global innovation.

The implementation of this digital-first framework from Abu Dhabi reflects the UAE's commitment to exporting innovation that supports inclusive, sustainable, and tech-driven growth. The partnership will also open opportunities for UAE-based developers, blockchain engineers, and AI specialists to contribute to global digital governance solutions, strengthening the country's knowledge economy and supporting the objectives of the UAE Centennial 2071 vision.

"This partnership is truly historic," said **Mojtaba, Chief Executive Officer of IOPn Ltd.** "By introducing the world's first Citizenship-by-Investment program on blockchain, São Tomé and Príncipe is setting a global benchmark for digital sovereignty, and the UAE is proudly at the heart of this transformation. Through this initiative, we are proving that UAE-built technologies can empower nations, create transparent systems, and open new pathways for Emirati innovation and investment."

Disney Ramos, Director of the Citizenship-by-Investment Unit of São Tomé and Príncipe, praised the UAE's role in enabling this achievement, saying: "Our collaboration with STPSA and IOPn marks a turning point not only for our nation but for how small countries can leverage innovation from global technology leaders like the UAE. This partnership ensures transparency, efficiency, and international credibility — while opening new doors for cooperation with the Emirati innovation ecosystem."

Beyond its global significance, the initiative represents a new chapter in international cooperation led from the UAE. As São Tomé and Príncipe digitizes its governance systems, the partnership will facilitate bilateral collaboration, attracting UAE-based investors and innovators to participate in the African nation's emerging digital economy.

The collaboration also aligns with the UAE's growing focus on South-South partnerships, enabling Emirati companies to contribute their expertise in blockchain, FinTech, and AI to developing economies. This exchange strengthens the UAE's reputation as a bridge between technology and diplomacy, demonstrating how innovation can advance transparency, sustainability, and inclusivity across borders.

The partnership establishes a joint governance framework between the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, STPSA, and IOPn to oversee implementation, compliance, and delivery. The agreement runs for an initial period of five years, with renewal options based on mutual consent.

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About the Partners

IOPn, headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, is a sovereign technology ecosystem developing AI and blockchain infrastructure through OPN Chain, an EVM-compatible Layer-1 blockchain that enables governments and enterprises to manage digital identity, tokenize real-world assets, and implement decentralized financial solutions.

STP Service Advisory (STPSA) serves as the exclusive implementing and coordinating body for São Tomé and Príncipe's Citizenship-by-Investment program. It is responsible for managing strategic partnerships and digital transformation initiatives under Decree-Law No. 07/2025.

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