

## **Ethiopia's Hottest Jobs**



The Ethiopian economy has been steadily growing in past several years. Due to this growth, the country experienced an increasing demand for talent in many areas. The economy improved across the board in almost all sectors, including construction, manufacturing, hospitality and service sector, to name a few. Between 2003 and 2008, Ethiopia registered an overall economic growth rate of 5 to 12% per year.

The construction sector, in particular, has been booming for several years in a row. Addis Ababa appears to be a city under construction. Everywhere are new hotels, villas, apartments, condominiums, etc. Ethiopia also experienced rather sustained technology penetration during this time. Although the country still lags way behind much of the world, it seems to be adopting computers, cell phones and other technologies at a faster rate than ever before.

Due to the robust economic development, workers in some key sectors have been getting more employment opportunities, and salaries have been going up. Ezega.com has been monitoring job ads in its database and found that some sectors did much better than others. In the last six months, based on our database, the sectors that registered the most new jobs were in the following broad categories.

1. Engineering – This category attracted the most vacancy ads during this time. Roughly 20% of all jobs posted at Ezega.com were engineering jobs. In this category, Civil Engineering took the lion's share of new jobs, distantly followed by Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.
2. Accounting and Finance – The next largest number of jobs were in Accounting & Finance. This area accounted for about 14% of all jobs posted at Ezega.com. Accounting jobs were the single largest group in this category, followed by Finance, Auditing and the like.
3. Information Technology – IT jobs made up the third largest jobs group in our database. It accounted for about 10% of all jobs posted at Ezega.com. Software Engineers and Networking professionals seem to be in equal demand in this category, followed by the rest of Computer Engineering jobs.

As one might expect, salaries vary widely from company to company, job to job, and region to region. Most companies do not advertise what they will pay ahead of time. Typically, salaries are posted as negotiable and/or dependent on experience. However, based on interviews we conducted with some job hunters, in the private sector, graduates in IT and Engineering with 2-3 years of experience may expect, on average, 3000-4000 ETB per month. Workers with longer experience and/or higher degrees may command a lot more money.

Although Ethiopia's economy has been doing well of late and the job market improving, some employers we contacted do not appear to be happy with the pool of talent they are getting. The most common complaint appears to be shortage experienced and disciplined workforce. And even if they get such employees, they seem to be frustrated by the fact that these workers change jobs so frequently and, in some cases, with little or no advance notice at all.

"I had an employee who quit on me on the spot the other day", said one contractor. "To add insult to injury, this fellow came back a few days later to ask for a letter of recommendation, totally oblivious to the disruption he created." This problem was also voiced by other investors who, in a survey conducted for World Economic Forum, ranked "poor work ethic in national labor force" among the top five largest problems in doing business in Ethiopia.

Due to global economic slowdown, the job market appears to be cooling of late. However, the long-term prospect looks good. The trend in outsourcing and the move towards low cost sources should favor countries like Ethiopia. But this will also depend on whether the country can provide the necessary infrastructure and good business climate to support growth. So far, there is a lot more to be desired.

Internet service remains very poor and expensive in Ethiopia. One line dialup internet service that works intermittently can cost a company as much as 1,500 ETB per month. And if you can withstand ETC bureaucracy, 128Kbs broadband internet service will cost you 7,500 ETB for installation and 3,140 ETB per month thereafter. 2Mbps broadband costs 103,400 ETB to install and 41,500 ETB per month for service, roughly 200 times what it would cost in the USA. Sadly, the government has been unable to provide a decent service and unwilling to cede control in this area, depriving the country the incredible power of this medium.

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