

## ***Sudan's economic potential and investment opportunities it***

### **إمكانات السودان الاقتصادية وفرص الاستثمار فيه**

Prepared by:

Dr. Mutaz Yousif Ahmed Abuagla: University of the People -USA-  
California State.

د. معتمز يوسف أحمد أبوعاقلة؛ جامعة الشعب، ولاية كاليفورنيا، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية

**E-mail: [mtzabuagla72@gmail.com](mailto:mtzabuagla72@gmail.com)**

## Abstract:

This study aims to know the economic capabilities of Sudan and investment opportunities, as Sudan is distinguished from other countries by a distinct geographical location, linking the Arab countries in the north of the African continent, the Arab countries across the Red Sea, and the countries of East, Central and West Africa, as Sudan is bordering several countries. It is thus considered as a commercial traffic center for its geographical surroundings, and Sudan also has a vast area, and enjoys multiple climates, environments and agricultural systems that create conditions for the production of various agricultural crops, where there are many agricultural and animal products in which Sudan has a preferential advantage, as it is The global demand for it is high, such as wheat, cotton, gum Arabic, and meat, so its potential qualifies it to attract investors and businessmen, and the importance of this study emerges from several aspects, from the scientific point of view, despite the existence of studies that dealt with the experiences of some countries in encouraging and attracting investments, but it is still There is a need for more studies in this field, especially in light of the countries 'competition to attract foreign capital for investment. Therefore, this study is expected to constitute an addition in this field. As for the practical aspect: this study and its results are expected to be beneficial for those who have taken it. Economic decision states.

**Key words:** Sudan, investment, economic sectors, gum Arabic, tourism

## الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على الإمكانات الاقتصادية للسودان وفرص الاستثمار ، حيث يتميز السودان عن غيره من الدول بموقع جغرافي متميز يربط بين الدول العربية في شمال القارة الأفريقية والدول العربية عبر البحر الأحمر والدول من شرق ووسط وغرب إفريقيا ، حيث يحد السودان عدة دول. وبالتالي فهي تعتبر مركز مرور تجاري لمحيطها الجغرافي ، كما أن للسودان مساحة شاسعة ، ويتمتع بمناخات وبيئات وأنظمة زراعية متعددة تخلق الظروف اللازمة لإنتاج المحاصيل الزراعية المختلفة ، حيث يوجد العديد من المنتجات الزراعية والحيوانية. ويتمتع السودان بميزة تفضيلية ، حيث إن الطلب العالمي عليه مرتفع كالقمح والقطن والصمغ العربي واللحوم ، لذا فإن إمكاناته تؤهله لجذب المستثمرين ورجال الأعمال ، وتتبع أهمية هذه الدراسة من عدة جوانب من الناحية العلمية ، على الرغم من وجود دراسات تناولت تجارب بعض الدول في تشجيع وجذب الاستثمارات ، إلا أنه لا تزال هناك حاجة لمزيد من الدراسات في هذا المجال ، خاصة في ضوء منافسة الدول لجذب رؤوس الأموال الأجنبية للاستثمار. لذلك ، من المتوقع أن تشكل هذه الدراسة إضافة في هذا المجال. أما الجانب العملي: من المتوقع أن تكون هذه الدراسة ونتائجها مفيدة لمن أخذها. ينص القرار الاقتصادي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السودان ، الاستثمار ، القطاعات الاقتصادية ، الصمغ العربي ، السياحة

## Introduction :

Sudan is distinguished from other countries by a distinct geographical location, linking the Arab countries in the north of the African continent, the Arab countries across the Red Sea, and the countries of East, Central and West Africa, and Sudan borders several countries, and thus it is considered as a commercial center for its geographical surroundings, and Sudan is distinguished. It also has a vast area, and it enjoys multiple climates, environments and agricultural systems that create conditions for the production of various agricultural crops, as there are many plant and animal agricultural products in which Sudan has a preferential advantage, and global demand for them is high, such as wheat, cotton, gum Arabic, and meat, so its potential qualifies it to attract Investors and businessmen, and Sudan witnessed positive economic changes represented in allowing foreign investments to enter it, enacting encouraging laws, and working to remove obstacles that hinder attracting investments, and adopting investment policies that are characterized by flexibility. As a result, many foreign investments entered him in various economic fields.

## Study problem:

For decades Sudan has been endeavoring to attract and encourage national internal and external capital, as well as foreign capital to invest in it, and used in this framework the mechanisms and means that would create an attractive investment climate, and entice national and foreign capitals to enter into investment activities that positively reflect on the national economy. It affects his movement and his flow towards achieving the goals of the macroeconomic policy. What are those mechanisms? How effective is it in attracting national and foreign capitals for investment in Sudan?

## The importance of the study:

The importance of this study is highlighted through the following:

First: From the scientific aspect: Although there are studies that dealt with the subject of Sudan's capabilities, there is still a need for more studies, especially in light of Sudan's need to attract national and foreign capitals to invest in it. Therefore, this study is expected to be an addition in this field.

Second: In practical terms: this study and its results are expected to be useful for the country's economic decision-makers.

## Objectives of the study:

- 1 -Highlighting Sudan's economic potential.
- 2 -Knowing the investment opportunities in Sudan.
- 3- Knowing the contributions of economic sectors to the gross domestic product.

## Hypotheses of study:

- 1 -The economic potential of Sudan can play an appreciated role in attracting foreign domestic capital to Sudan.
- 2 -The weak performance of the economic sectors affected the growth of the economy.
- 3 -The mechanisms used to attract investments did not reach the required effectiveness

## Study Approach:

The study uses the descriptive and analytical historical method.

## Previous studies:

- 1 -Abdul Hamid Bukhari 2012 study - titled The Reality of the Investment Climate in the Arab Countries, the study aims to identify the investment climate and the business environment in Arab countries, and the study found that the efforts made and the ingredients to improve the investment climate in the Arab countries are not sufficient.
- 2 -Al-Fateh Muhammad study, 2000-2010, titled Foreign Direct Investment and its Role in Achieving Economic Development in Sudan. The study aims to identify foreign direct investment, its motives and importance for developing countries, and the most important findings of the study are the presence of many investment obstacles, including the lack of an investment map In Sudan, and thus not highlighting all the economic potential of Sudan to the investor.
- 3 -Yaqoob Ali and Alam Al-Din Abdullah Study - 2005, entitled Evaluating Sudan's Experience in Attracting Foreign Direct Investment and its Reflection on the Economic Situation. The study generally aims to evaluate Sudan's experience in attracting foreign direct investment, and the most

important findings reached by the government have adopted many ways to promote opportunities Available to invest in Sudan

4 -Gabriel Hamed study - 1989-2011 - titled: The problems of economic development in developing countries. The case study of Sudan. The study aims to identify the most important problems that impede economic development in Africa, and the study concluded that security and political instability is one of the obstacles to economic development.

5- Buthaina Muhammad study - 2009 - entitled the effect of foreign direct investment on economic growth in Jordan, aims to identify the status of foreign direct investment in Jordan and its effect on economic growth, and the study concluded that foreign direct investment has a limited role in the Jordanian economy.

**What distinguishes this study from previous studies:** It is an analytical study, and it talks about investment opportunities for all investors, whether they are local or foreign, while most studies spoke about foreign direct investment only, that this study clarified most of the opportunities in the economic sectors while previous studies did not show investment opportunities in her studies

The economic reality in Sudan has been suffering from complex economic problems over a long period of time, and with varying proportions in different periods, as the financial resources gap widened to finance investment, as a result of the low levels of local savings, and the governments that succeeded in Sudan tried through short, medium-term programs, plans and strategies Providing the necessary financing for development investment projects, as it succeeded in some of them and failed in many of them. There was an imbalance in the financial and monetary policies, which led to distortions in the economy, and the macroeconomic balance was disturbed, which caused an internal imbalance, the exchange rate deteriorated, and the rate rose Inflation eroded, incomes eroded, and poverty rates increased, as a result of exchange rate changes. Factors that affect exchange rates are beginning to play an increasing role in influencing monetary and financial policies in light of the current account imbalance, the gap in the balance of payments has widened, and external debt has accumulated, and turmoil and structural imbalances have emerged, and as a result, the banks 'reserves, and all commercial and investment dealers, have been affected, and the impact of that On granting borrowing and financing, as a result of this, the rehabilitation of assets supporting production ceased, so the infrastructure

deteriorated, the production structure weakened, especially in the agricultural sector, and thus weak production and productivity, and poverty rates rose. <sup>(1)</sup> There is no doubt that the treatment of such This situation is accomplished by means of several economic policies that will stimulate economic activity by attracting and encouraging domestic and foreign investments.

Most of the countries of the world today see capital flowing from abroad as a way to bridge the shortfall in domestic savings, especially foreign direct investment, and a factor in the transfer of modern technology, and a tool of resource exploitation, and Sudan is one of these countries, where it works to attract and encourage capital National and foreign funds to fill the shortfall in domestic savings, transfer of modern technology, and exploitation of resources.

The need to increase the volume of investments in the Sudanese economy and diversify its fields is confirmed by the apparent decline in the performance of the Sudanese economy during a decade, after the annual growth rate of the gross domestic product ranged between 5.2% and 10.9% during the years of 2005 - 2010, this rate began to decline, ranging between 2% and 3.6% between the years 2011 and 2014. This was due to the poor performance of the economic sectors that make up the Sudanese economy in that period. Table No. (1) Below shows that:

Table No. (1) The economic sectors contribution to the gross domestic product in Sudan (2005-2015)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP growth rate%	5.6	9.9	10.9	6.4	5.9	5.2	2.3	2.0	3.6	2.6	4.0
Contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP%	33.2	31.8	35.1	35.7	32.5	32.5	34.1	34.3	34.8	31.0	31.4
The contribution of the service sector to the GDP%	44.8	44.3	42.2	39.1	42.9	42.8	46.5	47.5	46.7	46.0	49
Industrial sector contribution	22.0	23.9	22.7	25.2	21.4	24.7	19.4	18.2	19.5	23.0	15.4

<sup>1</sup> - Saad Abdullah, Challenges of the Sudanese Economy after the Secession, Khartoum, Sudanese Journal of Diplomatic Studies, National Center for Diplomatic Studies, No. 10, September 2012, p. 45



n to GDP%											
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Source: Central Bank of Sudan reports (2005-2014).

From the above table, it is noted that the average growth rate during the period 2005 -2010 was 7.3%, as the agricultural sector, the service sector, and the industrial sector contributed, with an average of 34.0%, 42.7%, 23.3%, Respectively during the same period, the large increase in the growth rate is attributed to the increase in the proportion of the industrial sector's contribution resulting from the increase in the contribution of the oil sector. As a result of the economic blockade on Sudan, the repercussions of the financial crisis in 2008, and the secession of the south in 2011, the rate of GDP growth decreased to 2.6% on average during the period 2011-2014, although the service sector contributed by about 47% on average, The stability of the contribution of the agricultural sector for the same period, and the decrease in GDP growth is attributed to the decrease in the contribution of the industrial sector to 19.0% on average, due to the low productivity of the oil sector due to the secession of the South, and the loss of Sudan to a large proportion of its oil resources estimated at 71%. And Table No. (2) below - can clarify the economic indicators for the Sudanese economy during the period from 2005 to 2015.

Table No. (2)  
Economic indicators for the Sudanese economy (2005 - 2015)

Item	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population (million people)	36.2	37.16	38.14	39.15	40.19	41.8	33.9	35.1	36.2	37.3	38.4
GNP per capita (dollars)	970.4	1224.3	1479.7	1561.1	1577.9	1645	1521	1423	1541	1954	2201
Real GDP growth rate	5.6	9.9	10.9	6.4	5.9	5.2	2.3	2.0	3.6	2.6	4.0
Inflation Rate %	8.6	7.2	6.2	14.3	11.2	13	18.1	35.6	21.2	15	8.8
National revenue of gross domestic	21.7	19.4	20.6	21.8	15.4	12.8	12.1	9.1	8.5	8.7	8.5



product %											
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Source: Central Bank of Sudan reports (2005 - 2015).

It is noted through the above table that the inflation rates were relatively stable in the period from 2005 to 2007, and there was also stability in the exchange rate in that period, and notes that the national income of the gross domestic product was high in the period from 2005 to 2010 compared to the period from 2011-2015 And in which the revenues decreased, due to many reasons, including the US sanctions, the suspension of financing from international financial institutions, the secession of the South 2011, the repercussions of the global financial crisis 2008, and the high rate of external debt, and therefore it is necessary to work to encourage investments in both its internal and external aspects and attract Sudan's savings Yin workers abroad to invest in Sudan, in order to advance the Sudanese economy.

There is no doubt that Sudan is one of the promising countries for investment, and there are several factors and considerations that distinguish Sudan and make it a promising country for investment, including: <sup>(2)</sup>

- 1- Sudan is one of the largest countries in Africa and the Arab world, where it ranks third in the Arab world after Algeria and Saudi Arabia, after the secession of the south, and the arable area is 33%, while the area of natural pastures is 10%, before the secession of the south, and the cultivated land is estimated annually by 15 million hectares, which represents 16% of the total arable land.
- 2 - His presence among a group of countries, which was before the secession of the south nine countries and after the secession became seven countries, which makes it an important center for marketing and the availability of services.
- 3 -The availability of natural resources from water and the diversity of the climate, and the existence of a large animal wealth estimated at 135 million heads, about 44 million poultry, and 10 thousand tons of fish per year.
- 4 -The presence of a large mineral wealth that includes gold, silver, chrome and other minerals.
- 5 -The availability of a large number of insurance and reinsurance companies, which amounted to 22 insurance and reinsurance companies.

<sup>2</sup>- Abdullah Al-Tom Abdullah, Basic Concepts on Investment, (Cairo, Arab Knowledge Bureau, 2009), p. 12.

6 -The availability of cheap and trained labor, in addition to the presence of the many universities in the country, about 35 universities, and many of research centers, vocational training centers and technical institutes.

7- Bank services available in all states of Sudan, and according to the Central Bank of Sudan, there are 37 banks in Sudan, which have 800 branches, spread in all states of Sudan.

The economic potential of Sudan and the opportunities for investment in it depend on the geographical location and the area occupied by Sudan and the resources it contains, as Sudan is distinguished from others by a distinct geographical location, linking the Arab countries in the north of the African continent, the Arab countries across the Red Sea, and the countries of East, Central and West Africa And Sudan is adjacent to several countries, and as such is considered a commercial movement center for its geographical surroundings, and Sudan is also distinguished by a vast area, and it has multiple climates, environments and agricultural systems that create conditions for the production of various agricultural crops, where there are many agricultural and vegetable products A country in which Sudan enjoys a preferential advantage, as the global demand for it is high, such as wheat, cotton, gum Arabic, and meat, so the possibility of investing in agricultural activities, both plant and animal in Sudan, is widely available, especially in the field of crop production and meat production, due to owning Sudan is a vast and fertile agricultural land with an area of 33% of the total area, And diversified water sources, as well as possesses great animal wealth in light of the availability of natural pastures and the availability of fresh water resources that extend over a wide area, which gives him high strength and preferential advantage in this field. The agricultural sector is considered one of the most important economic sectors in Sudan in terms of contributing to the gross domestic product at an estimated rate of 35% on average, during the period 1992-2011, as it provides about 95% of the country's food needs, in addition to 90% of the value of exports except for the period of exporting oil<sup>(3)</sup>. The Sudanese economy, before the start of oil production, depended on the agricultural sector products, both vegetable and animal, as Sudan possesses a large and diversified animal wealth in all the different states of Sudan, free of epidemic diseases, and also its meat is free of additives. Chemical and hormonal, and so on Sudan has a great opportunity to export meat to European and Asian markets, because Sudanese cattle graze natural

<sup>1</sup>- Ministry of Finance and National Economy, General Administration of Planning and Studies, Economic Review, 2009, p. 52.

herbage, in exchange for competition from other countries that depend on feeding their livestock on industrial feeding. There are guaranteed investment opportunities that return to investment in the field of animal production, and a high rate can be achieved. It is an added value by focusing on meat production, which is considered one of the finest types of meat in the world, because Sudanese livestock depend on natural pastures for their food, so there are great opportunities available for investment in the field of meat production.

In the fisheries sector, Sudan has more than one hundred and sixty tons of fish annually<sup>(4)</sup>. This opens the door wide for investment in the field of fish production and canning, especially after the establishment of the Merowe Dam and the formation of the lake resulting from the seizure of water. On the other hand, we find that the diversity in the shores of the Red Sea provides great opportunities for investment in fish and aquatic organisms with a view to exporting to various countries of the world.

On the other hand, Sudan has great untapped tourism potential, such as cultural heritage, cultural and climate diversity, wild sheds, warm beaches on the banks of the Nile, and the Red Sea.

Opportunities and areas of investment in tourism include the following<sup>(2)</sup>

Establishing tourist camps and villages-

Establish fishing and diving centers and Nile and marine tourism facilities-

-Tourist road services, including cafeterias and passenger service centers

- Hotels and malls.

There is no doubt that the investment opportunities mentioned above are attractive factors for investment, but the process of exploiting them needs policies and programs that help create the appropriate and appropriate climate for investment operations, and that these opportunities may be available in other countries, therefore there must be preferential features that help investors in making the investment decision in Sudan, and its preference over other countries.

<sup>1</sup>- The previous reference, p.52.

<sup>2</sup>- Yaqoob Ali and Alam Al-Din Abd Allah, Evaluation of Sudan's Experience in Attracting Foreign Direct Investment, Khartoum, Khartoum University Journal for Administrative Sciences, 2005, p. 56

As for the industrial sector, its contribution to GDP in the years 2012-2013 - 2014 reached approximately 20% on average. As the period 2011-2014 witnessed a decrease and fluctuation in the contribution of the industrial sector to the gross domestic product, due to the decrease in oil productivity, the secession of South Sudan, and the loss of Sudan to about 71% of its oil resources, ( ) the industrial sector focused on small and transformative industries, such as the spinning industry And textile, and food industries, before the discovery of oil, and the food industry is considered one of the most important manufacturing industries in Sudan, and after the export of oil in 1999, industries developed. Where many large industries in Sudan such as iron and steel industry have been established, several factories have been established, as well as other industries, such as assembling cars in the industrial city of Giad in the state of the island, which is rich in many industries, and Sudan has six factories that produce sugar, the most famous of which is a sugar factory Kenana, as it is considered the largest sugar producing plant in the Middle East, and in the recent period the global demand for sugar has increased to nearly four times, due to the steady increase in the population and the large increase in the standard of living, which are factors that automatically lead to increasing demand in the foreseeable future. The Arab world imports about five million tons annually of sugar, and the same comes from the COMESA countries and Sudan, with its vast areas of production in the White Nile and Blue Nile factories. It is considered the primary candidate for bridging the gap in sugar production from reeds, which is estimated at 60% of the world's sugar production. In view of the matter on the other hand, the success achieved in developing samples of sugar beet plant as a winter crop provides opportunities to introduce beets into the crop composition of sugar production, waste processing, such as molasses, and bagasse for the production of fertilizers, paper, charcoal, and so on. <sup>(5)</sup>

The Sudanese government has encouraged industry and granted many exemptions and facilities, including in the belief that the industry has a major role in the country's growth and development process. Among the most important exemptions and facilities for industrial exports are the following: <sup>(6)</sup>

- Exempting exports of industries from export fees.

<sup>1</sup>- Republic of Sudan, Central Bank of Sudan reports for the years 2012 -2013 -2014

<sup>2</sup>- Sudan, Ministry of Industry, <http://industry.gov.sd>

-Recovering the value-added tax for any industrial exports.

Recovering production fees for any industrial exports.

-Issued by COMESA is exempt from customs duties and fees received in member countries except for some goods excluded with Egypt.

- Issued through the Arab Trade Agreement, there is a 50% gradual reduction to zero tariffs in the following years.

As for the mining sector, its importance has increased after the secession of South Sudan, and Sudan's loss of many oil revenues, as it plays a growing role in the Sudanese economy, and the increasing discoveries of various minerals have increased that economic importance. The mining sector is one of the sectors of great economic importance, as it is one of the most attractive sectors for foreign direct investment, and there are many opportunities for investment in the mining sector in the various states of Sudan, where the Ministry of Minerals began to provide a set of incentives to foreign and domestic investors with the aim of contributing to the development of the industry Mining. <sup>(7)</sup>

As for the infrastructure sector, the opportunities for investment in it are varied and numerous, including railways, land roads, bridges, tunnels and dams, inland waterways, civil aviation and air transport, ports and navigation, land transport, and service facilities that include communications, as well as educational services, and health services.

Investment opportunities in the infrastructure sector can be activated as follows:<sup>(8)</sup>

- Establishing telecommunications companies in the field of fixed line or mobile phone, as there are areas in Sudan that are not covered by telecommunications services, and the returns on investment in telecommunications are high.

Establishing companies to generate and distribute electricity in its various forms, whether in hydro or thermal energy, or solar energy, as the energy available in Sudan is estimated at about 800 megawatts within the national grid, and Sudan needs more than twice that amount available, with a

<sup>7</sup> - The Republic of Sudan, Sudan, Land of Golden Opportunities, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, Wednesday 5/25/2015, Issue 13329. Electronic version.

<sup>8</sup> - Yaqoob Ali, and Alam al-Din Abdullah, previous reference, p. 55.



possibility to increase demand in the event Establish industries and establish other service projects.

Establishing water purification companies for drinking purposes and for other projects, where water is available for these projects, and there is a high demand for it outside Sudan.

- Establishing road and construction companies, as there are many opportunities available in the field of roads and bridges, and the construction of residential and commercial real estate. Sudan still suffers from a large shortage of highly qualified companies to carry out large real estate projects.

In the field of investment in the banking and financial services sector, there are many investment opportunities that can be explained as follows:

-Establishing commercial banks that provide advanced banking services, as the banking sector suffers from weak capital, advanced banking technology, experience and efficiency that prevents it from carrying out banking operations in the area of financing or credit in a large size, and if banks are established working to provide these services, they will be made available to them Significant opportunities for success in improving the investment climate, and the banking sector provides great returns opportunities, as profitability rates in this sector are high.

- Establishing insurance companies, the possibility of success of insurance companies is available in Sudan because the operating companies do not cover all activities, nor have they been able to reinsurance services except on a very limited scale, therefore opportunities are available for any entity that possesses capital, expertise and competence to provide advanced insurance services.<sup>(9)</sup>

In addition, there are opportunities for investment in economic services, such as establishing export transport companies from agricultural and animal crops, especially specialized transport (animal, fluids, or refrigerated transport). It is also possible to establish maintenance workshops and spare parts, and establish companies to transport passengers between and within cities, especially the national capital, and the possibility of investing in the field of river, maritime and air transport, and investment in the field of freight transport can be done by road transport.

As for the health and education sectors, investment opportunities are available in them. For the health sector, there are investment opportunities

<sup>9</sup> - Yaqoob Ali, and Alam al-Din Abdullah, previous reference, p. 56.

in rare modern specialties such as transplantation and surgery of the kidneys, heart, brain, nerves, and malignant tumors, provided that the number of clinical units is not less than fifty clinical units, and there are opportunities for hospital projects The large integrated comprehensive medical services that include outpatient clinics, laboratories, surgical rooms, blood banks and accident departments in addition to the integrated clinical services, provided that the number of clinical units is not less than one hundred beds, as well as projects of diagnostic centers provided that the G for investment and a half billion Sudanese pounds. With regard to education, Sudan has witnessed, since the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, fundamental developments and changes in public education that included its quality and spread to meet the developmental, economic and social requirements of the country, where investment opportunities are available that include technical and vocational education and vocational education institutes in the engineering, agricultural, veterinary, medical, and various applied fields With equipment, laboratories, workshops, specialized equipment, and qualified human cadres, provided that the invested capital is not less than two billion Sudanese pounds.<sup>(10)</sup>

## **Conclusions and recommendations:**

### **First: the results**

- 1 -The economic potential of Sudan can play an appreciated role in attracting domestic and foreign capital to Sudan.
- 2 -The economic sectors contribution to the gross domestic product did not rise to the required level
- 3 -The presence of many opportunities available to investors, whether local or foreign, in the economic sectors
- 4 -What mechanisms were used to attract investments in Sudan did not reach the required effectiveness

### **Second: Recommendations:**

- 1 -Working to promote Sudan's economic potential.
- 2 -Create a clear investment map for investors

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<sup>10</sup> - Khttp://www.sudaninvest.org/Arabic/Sudan\_Invest -Sudan, Ministry of Investment, Investment Promotion Regulations,



3 -Facilitate and simplify investment procedures and work to motivate investors

4- Working on developing the infrastructure in Sudan.

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