



INVESTMENT SCAM ALERT

Investors: Beware of New Investment Scam

Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission (“TTSEC”) is the regulator for the securities industry in Trinidad and Tobago. This Public Alert is issued pursuant to our mandate to educate the public on the securities industry. It is intended to provide investors with essential information to avoid falling victim to investment scams.

The TTSEC wishes to alert the general public regarding the tactics of a new investment scam that has recently come to its attention. The scam operates as follows:

- **Fake Profile:** The scammer may create a fake web page with stolen or generic profile pictures. The profile information may be very limited and vague.
- **False Promises:** On their platforms, the scammers may advertise an attractive investment opportunity to entice potential investors to invest. The advertisement may make promises of unrealistically high returns within a short period of time. For example: “Earn \$10,000 on a \$1,000 investment within 24 hours”.
- **Engagement via Messaging:** Should you send a message to the advertised page, you may receive messages from individuals claiming to be a “representative” of the business, who may give assurances of guaranteed profits or returns and provide a link to join an investor group on Telegram.
- **Bank Details for Deposits:** Upon joining the Telegram group, the representative may provide details of a bank account with instructions for you to make a deposit and may send messages urging you to “deposit” the funds as soon as possible.
- **False Claims of No Fees:** The representative may assure you that there are no fees involved and that the funds can be withdrawn within 24 hours.
- **Illusion of Legitimacy:** After depositing the funds and providing proof of deposit to the representative, he/she may provide you with a link to the entity’s investment platform (usually a website which shows various cryptocurrency investments), along with login credentials for an account made in the investor’s name. Once logged in, you may see a

huge balance compared to the funds initially invested, which may signify that you have earned a significant return, either in Trinidad and Tobago Dollars or United States Dollars.

- **Impersonating Legitimate Businesses:** Artificial intelligence (“AI”) technology has made it easier for scammers to produce official type looking documents. The scammer may produce documents that purportedly appear to come from legitimate financial institutions, official TT government organisations, including the TTSEC. Always verify with the named entity prior to transacting.
- **Withdrawal Delays:** When you make a request to withdraw funds, you may be informed that a withdrawal fee must be paid before any funds can be withdrawn from the account. This fee often exceeds \$1,000.
- **Continuing Fees:** After paying the withdrawal fee, the representative may continuously demand that you pay additional fees, or costs which must be paid before the investment returns can be released.
- **Disappearing Act:** This process continues until you become suspicious of the operation and try to contact the representative to request a refund. The representative may attempt to placate you but gradually reduces communication until eventually ceasing all contact.

Members of the public are strongly advised to be vigilant and to always conduct their due diligence on any unsolicited communications or advertisements in relation to any investment products or opportunities being offered to ensure they are registered with the TTSEC and to report any tips, scams or suspicious investment offerings to marketcomplaints@ttsec.org.tt. If the entity or person is not registered under the Act, you run the risk of not getting back your initial investment.

November 27, 2024