



2nd Voluntary National Review



Republic
of Rwanda

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Currency Equivalent as of May 2023: USD = 1,126 Rwandan Franc (Rwf)

ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	African Union
BRD	Development Bank of Rwanda
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings
CoK	City of Kigali
Covid-19	Coronavirus
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHS	Demographics and Health Survey
EAC	East African Community
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EICV	Integrated Households and Living Conditions Survey
ERF	Economic Recovery Fund
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FDW	Fonds Duurzaam Water/Sustainable Water Fund
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GPRS	General Packet Radio Services
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communication
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
KFH	King Faisal Hospital
KLP	Kigali Logistics Platform
LAIS	Land Administration Information System
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MIS	Management Information System
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTN	Mobile Telephone Network
MTRS	Medium-Term Revenue Strategy
MW	Megawatt
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NCST	National Council for Science and Technology
NEP	National Employment Program
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NRIF	National Research and Innovation Fund
NSDEPS	National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NST	National Strategy for Transformation
NTB	Non-Tariff Barrier
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PPPA	Public Private Partnership Agreement
PV	Present Value

R&D	Research and Development
RRA	Rwanda Revenue Authority
RURA	Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperatives
SAP	Service Access Points
SCT	Single Customs Territory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPRRP	Social Protection Response and Recovery Plan
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Commission for Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollar
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme
WASAC	Water and Sanitation Corporation
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WUC	Water Users Committee

Foreword

The 2023 Rwanda *Voluntary National Review* (VNR) is the second VNR report following the one submitted in 2019. The report highlights the country's progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report was produced in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic that caused disruption to the economy and livelihoods both domestically and globally. The review process was thoroughly consultative and offered an opportunity to reflect on the required efforts to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs implemented through the national development planning framework.

The SDGs are integrated in the national *Vision 2050* and are tracked and measured through the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1, 2017-2024) as well as related strategies and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework at central and decentralized levels.

Sustained economic growth over the past two decades has translated into improved wellbeing of citizens including increase of life expectancy to 69.6 years in 2022 from 51.2 in 2002, reduction in poverty, improved health, education, infrastructure and quality of services delivered across sectors among others. Specifically, the GDP per capita increased from US\$ 235 in 2002 to US\$ 1,004 in 2022 over the same period.

Rwanda has learned lessons throughout the implementation of its past development vision – the Vision 2020 that also encompassed the Millennium Development Goals and is determined to leverage the SDGs to achieve its aspirations for transforming its economy and improve the livelihoods of Rwandans.

Rwanda recognizes that achieving these aspirations will require decisive actions bringing together different actors, including government, private sector, citizens, diaspora, civil society, faith-based organizations, development partners, academia and research institutions as well as political parties.

Although good progress has been made, the Covid-19 pandemic adversely impacted the economy which experienced a reduction of 3.4 percent in 2020 and affected the livelihoods of citizens. The economy is now recovering and rebounded with double digit growth of 10.9 percent in 2021 and 8.2 percent in 2022 through a combination of recovery measures and policies implemented in

collaboration with all stakeholders. However, this recovery does not mask the need for more intensive mobilization of resources and efforts to achieve the SDGs.

We appreciate the efforts of all stakeholders in contributing towards the finalization of this report including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Rwanda. The Government of Rwanda reiterates its commitment to ensuring the achievement of the SDGs in collaboration with Rwandans and all stakeholders.

Dr. Claudine UWERA

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Rwanda

Highlights

Strategic and bold choices implemented through a citizen centered approach have contributed to remarkable socioeconomic transformation of Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Registered progress has been enabled through the implementation of policies, strategies, programs and projects under the *Vision 2020*, which laid the foundation for sustained growth, facilitated by; investments in human capital, development of basic infrastructure, expanding access to services and rolling out of home-grown initiatives to provide unique solutions to development challenges encountered.

Consequently, between 1990 and 2021, Rwanda's Human Development Index (HDI) value more than doubled, from 0.250 to 0.524, reflecting positive developments in all human development dimensions, mostly in the health sector as presented by the third National Human Development Report (NHDR, 2021). In addition, life expectancy of Rwandans increased from 49 in 2000 to 69.6 years in 2022 (5th Population and Housing census).

The *Vision 2050* aims to further transform the economy into a middle income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050 through ensuring a high quality of life for all Rwandans. The country's national development framework integrates global and regional development agendas, such as the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Africa Agenda 2063*. The implementation of these frameworks is part and parcel of the regular planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting at national level. Building on the national domestication efforts, Rwanda has undertaken its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) report following the one presented in 2019 at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which showcases the progress, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

The VNR report preparation process brought together various stakeholders including: government, private sector, civil society and development partners. Discussions centered on progress, challenges, lessons learned and mechanisms for recovery from the Covid19 effects on the SDGs. The process was enhanced by data from the 5th Population and Housing Census (2022). The report is aligned to the global theme '*Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels*' with deeper emphasis on SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 in line with the guidelines on the elaboration of VNRs.

In this regard, major highlights include:

- **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6):** Access to water from improved sources at national level is at 82 percent. Progress was made countrywide more especially in rural areas from 22.6 percent (2005) to 76.7 percent compared to urban areas from 55.4 percent to 95.7 percent. Access to sanitation is at 72.2 percent with rural access higher at 78.5 percent compared to urban at 56.4 percent. This reflects investments made in the sector over the last decade to improve on hygiene, health and nutrition.

- **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7):** The proportion of households with access to electricity increased from 21.5 percent in 2014 to 61 percent (47 percent on-grid and 14 percent off-grid). The gains in access to electricity are attributed to: off-grid subsidy to poor households, rapid expansion of the grid and private sector engagement. The use of firewood for cooking remains high at 76 percent hampered by relatively high cost of cleaner alternatives.
- **Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9):** Industrial development is promoted with a strong focus on 'Made in Rwanda' policy that has enabled robust participation of the private sector in unlocking new industries during the Covid-19 outbreak (e.g. hygiene, health & pharmaceutical products, among others). Furthermore, a first ever vaccine manufacturing plant is being constructed in Rwanda. A number of initiatives are being undertaken to enhance innovation start-ups including setting up of: innovation hubs across the country, innovation fund and Kigali Innovation City designed to create an ecosystem that supports a thriving tech and innovation industry.

A network of trade infrastructure has been developed across the country including: scaling up of airline (RwandAir) capacity and destinations, setting up of modern logistics platforms, cross border markets, one stop border points, development of regional, national and feeder roads, among others.

- **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11):** The Population living in urban areas increased from 18.4 percent in 2016/17 to 27.90 percent making Rwanda one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in the world. This emphasizes the need to provide climate resilient urban services such as: transport and housing. The National Land Use Master Plan revised in 2020 provides a long term roadmap aligned to the Vision 2050 for the integrated development of a hierarchy of sustainable cities, towns and urban areas with dynamic linkages to rural areas to enhance socioeconomic transformation.
- **Partnerships to achieve the Goal (SDG 17):** Rwanda actively participates in South-South Cooperation through the Rwanda Cooperation Initiative (RCI) an agency set up to coordinate the sharing of experiences between Rwanda and other countries. Other initiatives include; the Rwanda Green Fund, enhancing PPPs and resource mobilization to ensure continued progress towards realization of the SDGs.

In line with '**Leaving no one behind**', the Constitution of 2003 amended in 2015 provides for the participation of all groups (e.g.: children, women, youth, elderly, people with disabilities) in the socioeconomic and governance structures of the country. The social protection policy revised in 2020 also emphasizes principles of: social security, social assistance, livelihood and employment support aimed at protection, promotion, prevention and transformation of citizens. In this regard, government set up an emergency response framework for providing rapid assistance to vulnerable households affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and natural disasters (floods, landslides and droughts). Alongside this, policy measures and intervention measures have been implemented to support socioeconomic recovery.

‘Building Back Better’: Covid-19 affected SDGs implementation by: reprioritization of resources, slowing implementation, increasing vulnerability and reducing mobilization of resources. To speed up recovery, a Recovery Plan and Economic Recovery Fund were established. Vaccination of the population was also accelerated. Though the economy contracted by 3.4 percent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic containment measures implemented globally and domestically, there are signs of rebounding following growth of 10.9 percent and 8.2 percent in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

The country will continue to build on lessons learned and past successes such as; home grown solutions, good governance, gender equity and equality, while taking into account emerging issues of climate change, disasters, and other external shocks. Specific key lessons learned especially in the context of the pandemic and its effects include:

- a) Although the pandemic brought setbacks to SDG implementation, recovery is underway due to swift and concrete policy measures implemented through a citizen centered approach to governance.
- b) The pandemic highlighted the need for a stronger and more resilient local economy to minimize the impact of external shocks (e.g. Logistics and supply chain disruptions, climate change and disasters, etc.).
- c) More efforts are needed to mobilize resources to support the sustainable development agenda especially in providing necessary investments and support to the private sector. This requires strengthened measures for domestic resource mobilization, innovative financing mechanisms and renewed efforts of all actors at global level to mobilize the required resources.
- d) The use of technology has played a significant role in service delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic. Examples include; use of electronic payments, online platforms for delivering government services (*Irembo*), localized e-commerce services, remote learning platforms, among others.

Rwanda reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of the SDGs in partnership with all stakeholders at global, regional and national level.

1. Introduction

This is Rwanda's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation since the first VNR undertaken in 2019. It is in line with the country's commitment to undertake regular, voluntary, and inclusive reviews of progress on the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and national priorities. The VNR 2023 is being conducted under the theme: **“Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”**. Rwanda shared the findings from this review at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development.

1.1. Country Profile

Rwanda is situated in Central and Eastern Africa, in the Great Lakes Region. It is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and covers 26,338 Km² of a very diverse landscape. Rwanda is also known as the 'Land of a thousand hills' due to its stunning and hilly scenery.

The 2022 population and housing census showed that the current population is 13.2 million people with an annual population growth rate of 2.3 percent and population density of 503 per square kilometer. The population is dominated by youth with the proportion below 30 years being 65.3 percent in 2022.

Rwanda recently concluded implementation of its first ever long term development blueprint, the Vision 2020 (2000-2020) following the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. This was implemented through a series of medium-term development strategies: The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP I, 2002-2006) and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS I and II, 2007-2012 and 2013-2018) and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1, 2017-2024).

The Vision 2020 led to significant progress in all areas supported by investing in human capital, developing basic infrastructure and expanding access to various services that have contributed to life expectancy of Rwandans increasing from 49 in 2000 to 69.6 years in 2022. Similarly, GDP per capita increased from US\$ 225 in 2000 to US\$ 1,004 in 2022.

Despite the significant efforts made to alleviate vulnerability, poverty levels (38.2 percent pre-pandemic) remain a challenge and were likely negatively impacted by the effects of Covid-19. The World Bank estimated in the Rwanda Economic update report of January 2021 that the poverty headcount rate could have increased by 5.1 percent pulling down about 500,000 people into poverty due to Covid-19. However, the impact of Covid-19 on poverty and extreme poverty will be fully assessed through the forthcoming household survey. In response to this challenge, the government provided immediate relief and support measures to vulnerable households during the Covid-19 outbreak and implemented an economic recovery plan to stimulate quick rebound of the economy and livelihoods. Efforts to mobilize resources continue to increase coverage of social protection programs country-wide and further support economic recovery.

Rwanda through its **Vision 2050** aims to transform the economy into a middle income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050 through ensuring a high quality of life for all Rwandans.

The country's current medium term development strategy (National Strategy for transformation, NST1) comes to an end in 2024. The imminent preparation of the NST1 successor strategy, together with related implementing strategies at central and local level will ensure continued domestication and localization of the SDGs.

Selected facts and figures on Rwanda:

- Largest economic sectors: Services (47%), agriculture (25%) and industry (21%),
- 2nd Doing Business in Africa (WB, 2022),
- 2nd Safest country in Africa (Gallup, 2018) & sixth safest country in the world for Solo travelers (Gallup, 2022),
- 93% financial inclusion (FinScope, 2020),
- Sovereign rating: Fitch B+ (Negative), S&P: B+(Negative), Moody's B2 (Negative),
- The 4th least corrupt country in Africa (Transparency International, 2022),
- Among the top 10 countries to have narrowed the gender Gap (Global Gender Gap, 2020).

1.2. Structure of the report

The report is aligned to the recommended VNR 2023 proposed structure. The first and second chapters present the country's profile, the objectives, scope, and process of the preparation for the review, data collection and validation. The third chapter elaborates on the adoption of new policies, various adjustments brought into existing policies and strategies including mainstreaming of the principle of leaving no one behind and the overall enabling environment to fast track the delivery of the SDGs. This chapter further describes how various actors are being coordinated and mobilized to respond to the needs and challenges created by global and emerging issues.

The fourth chapter examines the achievement registered so far on the selected 5 SDGs to be reported on for this year. It highlights the progress made, interventions implemented and current status. This chapter also captures transformative initiatives, best practices and Home-Grown Solutions that are being undertaken by various sectors to boost the implementation of SDGs. Challenges faced, opportunities and plans for future implementation under each goal are also covered in the same section. The fifth chapter provides a brief overview on progress and actions rolled out on the 1st VNR goals. This section also contains the previous challenges in implementation and concrete and tangible steps taken to overcome them. The last 3 chapters cover the new and emerging issues including plans and concrete measures taken for building back better. These final chapters look further into how the means of implementations are being mobilized and the additional resources required as well as outlines on the next steps to be undertaken in order to accelerate recovery and full implementations of the development Agenda.

2. Methodology and Process

2.1. Objective of the review

This VNR report emphasizes on the following key elements:

- a) Mechanisms for ownership, integration of SDGs and the economic, social and environmental dimensions in national planning frameworks, including Leaving no one behind and institutional mechanisms for implementation.
- b) SDGs implementation progress, best practices and lessons learned,
- c) Systemic issues and transformative actions,
- d) New and emerging challenges (including impact of Covid-19 pandemic), and measures put in place to address them,
- e) Means of implementation.

2.2. Scope of the Review

In line with the global VNR reporting guidelines, the report provides an in-depth analysis of five SDGs mentioned below;

- SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation,
- SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy,
- SDG 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure,
- SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and
- SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

This report highlights the impact of Covid-19 on the implementation of SDGs and strategies in place to support their achievement. It builds on the 1st VNR report including progress and actions rolled out on the previously selected VNR goals in 2019 in response to previously observed challenges.

2.3. VNR Review Process

The process for elaborating this report was highly participatory engaging multiple stakeholders including: ministries, development partners, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, youth, women, researchers, and academicians among others. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) coordinated the entire process in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Rwanda. A broader technical team composed of MINECOFIN, National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR), UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) and UNDP experts supported the VNR review process. A One UN approach was adopted to consult the UN country team including: ILO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNECA, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, UNV, WFP and WHO. All members collaborated under the distinct roles and responsibilities as detailed in table 1 below.

A stakeholder engagement plan guided and framed the consultations through focus group discussions and consultative meetings conducted both physically and remotely. The consultations were complemented by analytical review and assessment of implementation progress which involved: data from the recently published census, various survey data and past progress implementation reports among others. The final stage included quality assurance, review and validation of the report at different levels till the final approval by the Cabinet of Ministers.

COLLABORATOR (S)	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
MINECOFIN: National Development Planning and Research Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate all relevant line government ministries, departments, and agencies, as well as CSOs, private sector and development partners, especially the UNDP, UNRCO and the UN Country Team • Lead the process and provide technical backstopping role, • Avail data sources, official reports and publications, datasets and all resources deemed important for desk review • Provide overall guidance in identifying good practices, initiatives, stories, and home grown initiatives to be considered in the report, • Support in the data collection, analysis, and Quality assurance, • Organize, co-facilitate validation workshops and focus group discussion both physical and online, • Oversee and approve the quality of deliverables.
TECHNICAL TEAM: MINECOFIN, NISR, UNRCO and UNDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide global updates and guideline on VNR • Support the organization of meetings of stakeholders with consultants • Liaise with the UNRCO and development partners and co- facilitate meeting & workshop • Avail range of data sources official reports and publications, available datasets and all resources • Conduct quality Assurance of data set (including computation of aggregated indicators if necessary) and review draft report.

Table 1. Major Roles and Responsibilities of Each Team

The elaboration process is summarized in the figure below



Figure 1. Report Elaboration Process

2.4. Data Collection and Validation

The strategy for data collection involved extensive review of a range of available data sources, including Regional and National Visions, National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), Policy

documents, budget and legal frameworks, Sectoral strategies, plans and programmes, District Development Strategies and more. Sector specific data collection was carried out through the numerous consultations and interviews with the SDGs focal points in the planning departments across institutions. The Integrated Households Living Conditions Surveys (EICVs) Labour Force Survey (LFS), Demographic and Health Survey and the most recent Population and Housing Census (PHC, 2022) are among the main secondary data sources utilized to report against specific 2023 VNR Goals as well as all SDG indicators.

An online survey was deployed to gather detailed information on initiatives, good practices, home grown solutions, challenges and opportunities, actions taken to overcome them, lessons learned and set of key priorities for the next 7 years.

Multiple rounds of quality assurance of all data were conducted on the list of SDG indicators to ensure that the most up to date, including disaggregated and accurate data was provided. The data quality assurance process was led by MINECOFIN with the support of the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR).

3. Policy and Enabling Environment

3.1 Ensuring ownership of the SDGs and the VNRs

Successive implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) left critical lessons, such as the need to ensure ownership and adequate alignment and integration of National Plans with regional and global development agendas for enhanced realization of the development results. This is in line with the United Nations Agenda 2030's call upon member states to own the SDGs through nationally led strategies and regular monitoring and reporting through Voluntary National Reviews.

Rwanda continues to promote national and regional implementation of sustainable development, as echoed by the hosting and chairmanship of the eighth Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in March 2022, in Kigali, which produced actionable recommendations to enhance implementation of SDGs in Africa.

This is in addition to being host to the SDG center for Africa, an institution established to support the continent to monitor and deliver on SDGs through adequate monitoring, benchmarking and experience sharing among countries, and the Rwanda Cooperation initiative championing south-south cooperation.

On annual basis, implementation of the SDGs forms a key component of the Sector working Group Joint Sector Reviews (JSR). The JSR is a high level monitoring forum that brings on board, government, development partners, civil society and private sector to track progress within each development sector and undertake remedial actions to address any identified challenges as reflected in the guiding terms of reference issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

3.2. Integration of the SDGs, climate change and environment dimensions in national frameworks

The process for domestication and localization of the development agendas was championed by high level political organs of the country and closely followed up by the Ministerial Steering Committee for the formulation of Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation, and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. This followed clear customized guidelines and a roadmap approved by Cabinet.

SDGs are an integral part of the national development agenda and are intentionally reflected in the vision of the country –Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), related implementation Sector Strategic Plans and District Development Plans as depicted in figure 2 below.

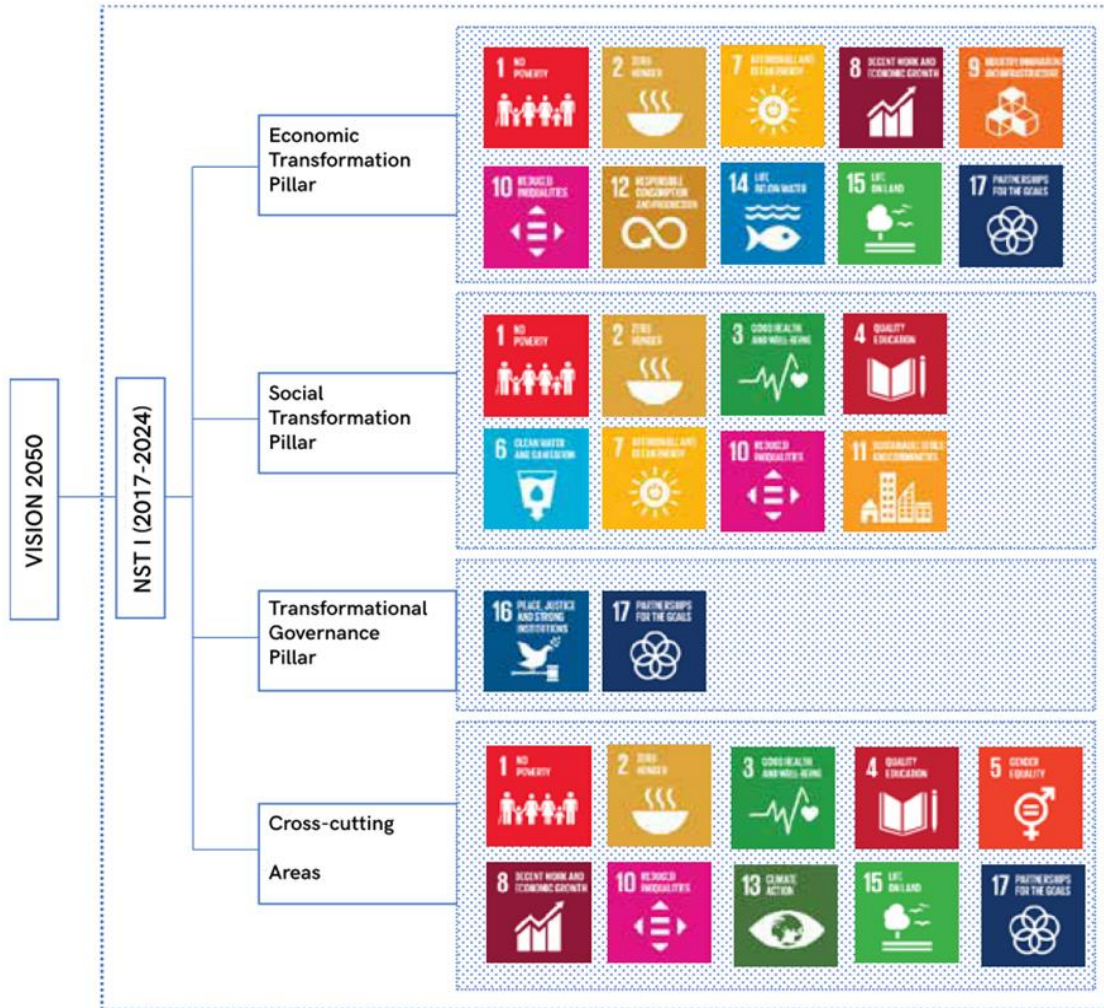


Figure 2. Links between NST1 Priority areas and SDGs

The Table below further provides a high-level overview of how the priority areas for the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) aligns with the SDGs including the interlinked nature of the goals.

SDGs	NST1 Priority Areas
Goal 1. End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Resilience and Enhance Graduation from Poverty and Extreme Poverty
Goal 2. End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernize and increased productivity of agriculture and livestock Eradicating Malnutrition
Goal 3. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at all Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing the Demographic Dividend through Ensuring Access to Quality Health for All
Goal 4. Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing the demographic dividend through improved access to quality education Establish Rwanda as a globally competitive knowledge based economy
Goal 5. Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality and family promotion as a cross cutting area of NST1
Goal 6. Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sustainable management of the environment and natural resources to transition Rwanda towards a green economy
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving towards a modern Rwandan household
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 1,500,000 decent and productive jobs for economic development Promote industrialization and attain a structural shift in the export base to high-value goods and services
Goal 9. Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Foster Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote industrialization and attain a structural shift in the export base to high-value goods and services with the aim of growing exports by 17 percent annually
Goal 10. Reduce Inequality Within and among Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rwanda continues the integration pathway to regional integration and international positioning through promoting intra Africa and global trade by advocating for elimination of Non-Tariff Barrier; and further mobilization of resources to implement joint infrastructure flagship projects to facilitate trade.
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving towards a modern Rwandan household Accelerate sustainable urbanization 35 percent by 2024 from 18.4 percent in 2016/2017
Goal 12. Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sustainable management of the environment and natural resources to transition Rwanda towards a green economy
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	

SDGs	NST1 Priority Areas
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce Rwandan culture and values as a foundation for peace and unity ● Enhanced peace and security ● Strengthen justice, law and order
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of Implementation and Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase domestic savings and position Rwanda as a hub for financial services to promote investments ● Strengthen diplomatic and international cooperation to accelerate Rwanda and Africa's development ● Strengthen capacity, service delivery and accountability of public institutions ● Increase citizens' participation, engagement and partnerships in development

Table 2. Alignment of NST1 Priority Areas against SDGs

The strategic thrust of the *United Nations 2030 Agenda* promotes a holistic development approach which is also reflected in the three dimensions of sustainable development that focus on Economic, Social and Environmental aspects. These are strongly aligned and reflected in the three pillars of NST1 namely; Economic Transformation, Social Transformation and Transformational Governance as well as the cross-cutting areas (capacity development, HIV/AIDS & non communicable diseases, disability and social inclusion, gender and family promotion, regional integration and international positioning, environment and climate change, disaster management).

3.2.1 Integration of SDGs into national plans

The UN Agenda 2030 - Sustainable Development Goals, African Union Agenda 2063 as well as the East African Community Vision 2050, were domesticated and localized in the Vision 2050, National Strategy for Transformation 1 (NST1), and related Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs) and District Development Strategies (DDSs) at local level.

The domestication and alignment process followed key principles and considerations such as the relevance of aspirations, goals, priority areas, and indicators to Rwanda and the statistical capability to monitor specific indicators.

During the elaboration of NST1 and related SSPs and DDSs, sectors and districts were issued with guidelines on domesticating the AU Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, among others. At the indicator level, the availability of accurate or proxy indicators and the ability to track them was key in selecting indicators for measurement. The indicators relevant to the country but not tracked at that time were integrated in the third National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Rwanda (2019-2024) to gather and produce the relevant data in subsequent surveys and publications.

The figure below illustrates the development framework and link between long, medium- and short-term annual plans and budgets in Rwanda;

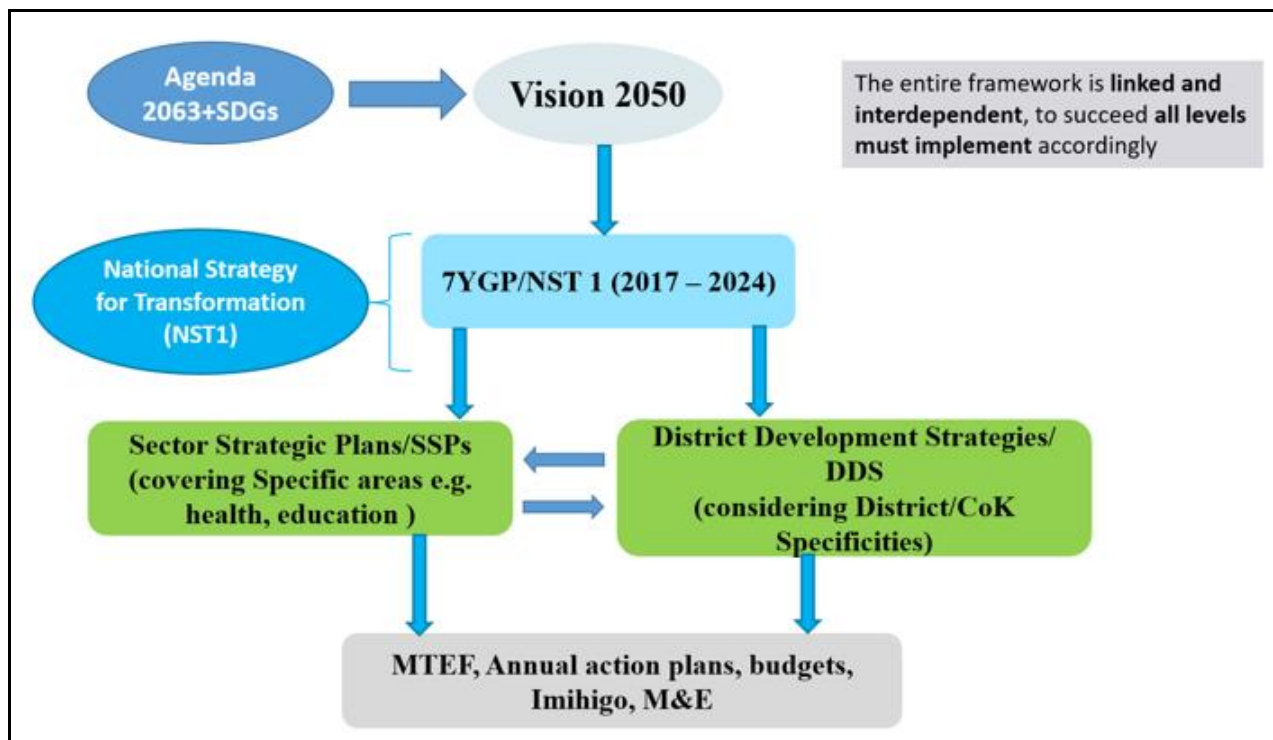


Figure 3. National Development Planning Framework

Implementation of the National Development Plans, the UN Agenda 2030 - Sustainable Development Goals among others, is facilitated by a robust Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) coordinates the planning functions at the National level and tracks its progress.

3.2.2 Institutional mechanisms

National Priorities and the SDGs are implemented and monitored through a well-coordinated institutional framework from the top-level accountability organs to implementers at the decentralized level including the role of citizens in delivery and governance. Commendable progress has been made in building and empowering institutions for development.

At the National level, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) coordinates the planning and M&E functions. The parliament reviews and approves the budget related to activities /projects/programmes and monitors their implementation through its oversight function to ensure that allocated resources reach intended beneficiaries and results.

At the sector level, Monitoring is performed through sector working groups and joint sector reviews (JSRs). Sector Working Groups (SWGs) are technical working forums through which Government of Rwanda and stakeholders meet to discuss and cross-sector planning, prioritization, resource mobilization/allocation as per Sector strategic plans, development programmes etc. this platform helps in monitoring the progress and evaluation for mutual accountability to ensure proper coordination and oversight on activities in their sector. SWGs are co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the relevant lead line ministry and a representative from the lead development partner agency. The (SWGs) hold bi-annual meetings, one that is forward-looking in which priorities and targets for the coming fiscal year are agreed upon, and the other that is backward-looking in which

performance reviews are undertaken to assess progress against targets agreed for the previous year. Progress is discussed, validated and shared with the Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning for consideration.

At District (local) level, stakeholders and decentralized entities planning and monitoring is performed through the Joint Action Development forum (JADF). Local Councils (District, sector, and cell) are composed of representatives of youth, women, the private sector, civil society and others. The local councils are policy-making and legislative bodies at district level and the authority through which the people exercise their decision-making and planning powers to orient the development of the district and monitor performance.

The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) coordinates, supports, and validates evaluation methodologies/protocols and officially validates any statistics produced by Ministries, Districts Agencies, independent researchers and others. It publishes census, surveys and other important studies such as the quarterly employment publications. Where appropriate, survey data is complemented by administrative data from Ministries and Agencies such as Rwanda Utilities and Regulatory Agency (RURA) to help the country to review its progress in different sectors and at district level. The information collected through the various reports is subjected to a thorough review and validation at both technical and high-level sessions ahead of official submission to respective Agencies such as AU for taking stock on implementation, lesson learning and decision making.

The table below summarizes the main goals and functions of each of the key organs of Rwanda's Development Institutional set up.

Organ	Main Role in Implementing National Priorities and SDGs	Specific Function(s)
Parliament (Chamber of Deputies and Senate)	Oversight and accountability	Endorse plans and budgets
Cabinet	Strategic orientation	Approve financing and implementation plans
National Leadership Retreat and National Umushyikirano (Dialogue) Council	Strategic monitoring	Conduct annual monitoring and accountability
Development Partners Coordination Group (DPCG) and SDGs taskforce	Technical advice and Resource Mobilization	Provide technical advice and support to implementation
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	National technical Coordination, Resource Mobilization and Prioritization	Integrate SDGs in plans and budgets Monitor and evaluate progress
Ministerial clusters	Sector coordination	Address cross-sectoral issues
Sector Working Groups	Technical consultations	Provide a forum to engage all Stakeholders Monitor SDG implementation at sector levels
District Councils and Districts Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs)	District coordination	Provide forum to engage all stakeholders Monitoring SDGs implementation at district level
Community outreach through UMUGANDA and districts' administrative entities, e.g. sectors, cells and villages		Support citizen participation and engagement forums

Table 3. Institutional mechanisms

3.2.3 Homegrown solution for delivery

In addition, home-grown solutions have been designed to track and measure effectiveness of service delivery and accountability across the board. These include **the Rwanda Governance Scorecard, the Citizen Report card among others**. The set of key performance measures tracked and evaluated through these studies inform policy, delivery measures, monitoring and evaluation functions. The results of citizen satisfaction from the scorecards are included in specific institutions or sector's score of performance contracts 'Imihigo' to further link monitoring, evaluation, service delivery and accountability functions. For instance, citizen satisfaction of service delivery increased from 70.54 percent in 2019 to 77.69 percent in 2022¹.

Imihigo (Performance Contracts):
A home-grown solution

Imihigo is the plural of *Umuhigo*, a Kinyarwanda word that means "to vow to deliver." This is an approach implemented in 2006 to planning, monitoring and evaluation ensuring that both the central and local government are delivering on their commitments.

The key principles guiding the institutional development framework are; ensuring efficient and effective leadership and resource prioritization, promoting accountability, enhancing coordination, collaboration and communication across different levels for accelerated results.

3.3. Leaving no one behind

Rwanda's development Agenda promotes the fundamental principle of Leaving No one behind irrespective of gender, age, disability, race, among others. This is embedded in the country's constitution of 2003 as amended in 2015. Specifically, its article 16 asserts that all Rwandans are born and remain equal in rights and freedoms", discrimination based on ethnic origin, skin color or race, sex, economic categories, economic status, physical or mental disability are prohibited and punishable by law.

Article 75 of the Constitution on the composition of the Chamber of Deputies and election of its members further guarantees representation in the parliament for special categories of Rwandans including youth, women and people with disabilities.

In addition, the Constitution commits to women occupying at least 30 percent of positions in decision-making organs. Currently the number of female parliamentarians in Rwanda is 61.3 percent. Inclusion has been and continues to be a key cross cutting area of Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 and is enforced through various pragmatic policies.

3.3.1 The quality, equity and inclusion in education

The Special Needs and Inclusive Education policy were put in place in 2018 and also the National Policy on Disability and Inclusion. In the implementation of a special needs and inclusive education policy and its strategic plan for 2018/19 to 2023/24. The number of Learners with Disabilities (LwDs) accessing education has increased from 23,492 in 2019 to 30,803 in 2020/21.

¹ 2019 and 2022 Rwanda Governance Score Cards

The number of trained teachers on special needs and inclusive education increased from 3,398 in 2017 to 12,501 in 2020/21 “Adapted curriculum for learners with intellectual challenges” was developed. A sum of 1,084 latrines for Learners with Disabilities were constructed and all schools are adapted to cater for Learners with Disabilities. These aim to ensure that all Persons with Disabilities enjoy full inclusion, participation and live dignified, active, productive, healthy and secure lives.

The remaining challenge the low enrolment rate in the pre-primary which the Government is strengthening by constructing Early Childhood Center at each village (formal and home based) as well as increasing well trained teachers every year.

In order also to address drop out in the education sector, the government has rolled out across the country, from pre-primary to secondary schools, the School Feeding Program as a strategy to address children’s hunger during the school day and expand access to educational opportunities to disadvantaged children, particularly orphans and vulnerable school learners. The school feeding program has addressed child nutrition issues, increasing educational enrolment, retention and performance. The program also provides an income-generation, employment creation and economic integration benefits to communities surrounding schools.

3.3.2 Social Protection of vulnerable people and sustainable poverty graduation

In June 2020, Rwanda adopted a revised Social Protection Policy and sustainable poverty graduation strategy to better respond to emerging challenges including malnutrition, livelihood shocks, existence of extreme poverty and poverty in its dimensional nature and Covid-19 impact. The revision was also necessary to accommodate the new commitments from the Human Capital Development drive, the National Strategy for Transformation and the Vision 2050, whilst responding to the positive demographic dividend, which calls for focused attention on the emerging issues and concerns of the elderly persons and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) which resulted in introduction of new *Ubudehe* categorization (poverty categories) coupled with the adoption of a new strategy for sustainable graduation out of poverty – establishing mechanisms for integrated multi-sectoral approach for graduation and a robust information system for monitoring and the coordination.

3.3.3 Strong Rwandan commitment on child development, rights and protection

The Government of Rwanda is committed to the realization of children’s rights, including protection from all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse. This is well-reflected in Rwanda’s national policy and legislative framework. Among the policies put in place to promote protection of children are the following:

3.3.3.1 National legislation for promoting children rights

The Government of Rwanda has put in place national legislation and platforms for promoting children’s rights and prohibiting child labor. These include:

- Rwanda Constitution of 2003 as amended to date puts a particular emphasis on children’s protection;

- Law n° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labor in Rwanda reconfirmed the law which prohibits of employment for children under the age of 16;
- A number of legislative and programmatic responses were put in place, including passing the law N°71/2018 Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child, Law N° 68/2018 Determining Offences and Penalties in General and Law N°001/2020 of 02/02/2020 amending Law N° 32/2016 Governing Persons and Family.
- A detailed implementation Plan for the integrated child rights policy was developed in 2018 and the first deployment of child protection social workers to all districts was completed in 2019.
- A National Child protection Case Management framework was developed in 2022 to strengthen provision of protection to all children including child victims of violence, abuse and exploitation. Capacity development was provided to over 700 justice and protection workforce country-wide on provision of child friendly services to all children in contact with the law.
- Ministerial order N° 06 of 13/07/2010 determining the list of worst forms of child labor, their nature, categories of institutions that are not allowed to employ children and preventive mechanisms.
- Alongside the rich policies, the Government of Rwanda has put in place key national programmes to strengthen child protection and development. The *Tubarerere Mu Muryango* (TMM) which means let's raise children in Families was developed in 2013 to drive implementation of the national strategy for child care reform, leading to 91 percent of the 3,872 children that were in residential care institutions being placed in families based care by end of 2022.
- Every year Rwanda joins other African Union (AU) member states in celebrating the Day of the African child (DAC). For the year 2022, the Government of Rwanda celebrated this important day under the theme: "Protect the child, build a better future/ *Turengere Umwana* (Protect a child), *Twubake Ejo Heza* (build a better future)", in order to remind community members their roles and responsibilities in child development and protection, child participation and empowerment.
- Rwanda has prioritized child participation and empowerment by creating platforms for children to express their views and opinions including but not limited to child clubs, youth forums and child-led advocacy initiatives. The Government also implemented programs to build the capacity of children to participate in decision making processes that affect their lives.
- A Steering committees to fight child labour were set up from village, cell, and sector levels. The committee is in charge of Advocacy and sensitization about child labour and children's rights as well as reporting & follow-up on cases of child labor observed in their area. This committee also is following up on cases of school dropouts and those working as domestic workers. E.g. under *Isibo* (village) system, parents whose children have left school or found doing child labour are visited sensitized to take back their children to school.

- Private sector federation has set up a mechanism to make sure that no child under the age is working in the private sector. E.g. the sanctions for any company or cooperative that uses children has been established. Sensitization of employers to ask for IDs before employing any young person helped in prevention of child labor. Regular operations are conducted by the labor inspectors at District level with security organs to ensure no child is working, especially in mining and construction sites.
- In the same framework of strengthening child protection, 27,102 *Inshuti z'Umuryango* (IZU) translated as 'Friends of the Family' were established and capacitated. IZU are community-based child and family protection volunteers who regularly conduct family visits to identify and handle child protection concerns that may come up. IZU is composed of one male and one female selected and nominated by residents in every village based on their good reputation in the community.

3.3.3.2 Ratification of regional, international conventions and treaties for child rights

Rwanda has also ratified several regional and international conventions and treaties related to the rights of the child, including those related to the elimination of child labor. Among them include:

- Forced Labor Convention, n° 29, 1930 (ratified on 23/05/2001); The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (ratified on 19/09/1990);
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000 (ratified on 26/02/2000); Optional Protocol on the Convention on Rights of the Child, on the involvement of Children in armed conflicts, 2000 (ratified on 26/02/2002);
- The Convention on Trafficking in Persons, 1950 (ratified 31/12/2003); Optional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking of Persons, especially Women and Children (ratified through the Presidential Decree n° 161/01 Of 31/12/2002); The Convention n° 138 and Recommendation n° 146 on the minimum age for admission to employment, 1973 (ratified through the Presidential Decree n° 416/06 of 07/11/1980) defining the minimum age for employment;
- The Convention No° 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child labor, 1999, ratified on 21/05/2000); The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child adopted in June 1990 ratified on 30/05/2000;
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (adhered to through the decree-law n° 8/75 of 12/02/1975); The Convention n° 123 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment in Mining, 1965 (adopted on 28/10/1968); The Convention n° 90 on night work of young persons (Industry), 1948 (adopted on 18/9/1962);
- The Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflicts, which proclaimed commitment to ending children's recruitment in armed conflicts, February 2007; The 1997 Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces, and on Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa.

3.3.3.3 Interventions to prevent child labour

Key interventions conducted to withdraw children involved in child labor and in its worst forms include;

- Child helpline and case management: Rwanda through Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) established a toll -free child Helpline that provides a platform for reporting child abuse and exploitation and a case management that ensures timely and appropriate responses to cases of child abuse and exploitation.
- A child protection hotline used by the general public to report all issues related to child protection concerns including child labor;
- A staff dedicated to child protection and welfare deployed in every District. Their primary duties include preventing and responding to all forms of child protection issues including child labor and promoting their rights. This staff works with RIB, Rwanda National Police (RNP), Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST) Staff based at District level (MAJ), local leaders and other partners.

The achievements due to different initiatives are as follows:

- The percentage of children engaged in child labor reduced from 5.5 percent in 2013 to 3.6 percent in 2016/17,
- The reduction in the percentage of children engaged in child marriage (women aged 15-18 Years) from 0.4 percent in 2013 to 0.1 percent in 2015.
- The increase in birth registration coverage for children under 5 years of age from only 56 percent in 2015, to 67 percent by 2017, 86 percent by December 2020, and 94 percent by August 2022;
- The Development of a national child protection case management framework in 2022 to provide a structured and standardized approach to improve service coordination, child centeredness, accountability and efficiency in addressing child protection needs;
- The establishment of a professional child protection workforce in every district in the country made up of social workers and psychologists to provide child welfare, care and protection services and coordination of all service referrals;
- Interventions of the IZU community volunteers.

In line with raising awareness, regular grassroots and community-based awareness campaigns are organized at district level for child rights protection and prevention of gender based violence through the *Umugoroba w'Imiryango* (Families Evening Forum), *Inteko z'abaturage* (Community meetings at village level), and *Umuganda* (communal work). Other existing channels include local radios, TV, and social media.

3.3.4 Youth Empowerment

Promoting employment (especially among youth) remains one of the Government of Rwanda's key development priorities. The aim is to create a total of 1,500,000 decent jobs throughout the implementation of NST1 (2017-2024).

Covid-19 pandemic affected job creation initiatives mainly explained by slowing economic activities and closure of business activities such as services, construction, tourism and hospitality etc. The creation of decent work in Rwanda is the result of several factors, programs and interventions including:

- The revamping of job creation strategies and programmes to enhance their effectiveness where multiple and disconnected programmes were merged into an integrated National Employment Programme (NEP) and later upgraded into the National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSDEPS) tailored to youth employment in infrastructure, ICT and environment conservation such as Youth Eco-brigade, Digital ambassadors, among others.
- Developing and promoting priority sub-sectors with high potential for growth as well as mainstreaming employment into the planning of key sectors of the economy. In addition, guidelines to all public institutions on how to mainstream and report on number of jobs created from public projects were provided by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) in partnership with MINECOFIN.
- Supporting and empowering youth and women to create businesses through entrepreneurship and access to finance. E.g. as per the NST1 Midterm review:
 - Micro lease product facilitated access to finance for 2,917 entrepreneurs, including 1,500 women,
 - Support to women: 29,676 SMEs of women and youth were facilitated to access finance,
 - Support to SMEs: 5,612 youth-led SMEs were given start-up toolkits.
 - The Business Guarantee Fund (BDF) provides a guarantee of up to 75 percent for women. In this regard, 800 SMEs were supported with Bank guarantees to access finance.
- The coordination, implementation and monitoring of employment promotion programmes were strengthened from technical committees up to ministerial level steering committee that convenes each quarter to monitor and evaluate progress and handle any bottleneck identified.
- Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) were promoted to offer skills that are relevant to the Labour market. The aim is to have 60 percent of students enrolled in TVET programmes by 2024. TVETs graduates are supported with startup toolkits to start their own businesses after graduation.
- Undertaking rapid response training and industrial attachment programs where more than 20,316 youth benefited from the program between 2017 and 2020.

3.3.8 Gender equality and women economic empowerment

Rwanda has been advancing gender equality and women empowerment through mainstreaming gender in different policies, laws, sector strategies and programs which emerged Rwanda as one of the global and regional leaders in advancing women participation in decision making. Two thirds of parliamentarians and 55 percent of cabinet members are women. The Global Gender Gap Index 2022 ranked Rwanda number 6th globally in narrowing the gender gap with an index of 0.811 up from 0.791 in 2020 as an indication of progress in that area.

Rwanda has the highest share of women in parliament as expressed by the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, regional and local bodies increased from 41.9 percent in 2013 to 45.5 percent in 2021. Concretely, in Rwanda there is 61.3 percent of female representation in Parliament, 38.4 percent of female in Senate, 45.4 percent of female Cabinet members, and 51 percent of female judges.

In terms of agricultural land ownership, the proportion of women in total agricultural population with ownership or secured rights over agricultural land has increased from 42.7 percent in 2013 to 87 percent in 2021 as result of the Law governing land in Rwanda which guarantees equal right to land and prohibits all forms of discrimination.

The education sector is pursuing gender parity at all levels of education and satisfactory progress in terms of enrolment gender parity has been registered in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. More efforts are being deployed to increase female enrolment in TVET, STEM and Higher education.

The key Drivers that contributed to achieve the gender equality are the followings:

❖ **Conducive and Gender friendly laws and Policies:**

- Article 10 of Rwanda's constitution emphasizes the fundamental principles upheld by the Country that includes equality of all Rwandans and between men and women which is affirmed by women occupying at least thirty percent (30 percent) of positions in decision-making organs.
- The land law of 2013 and the revised Land policy all prohibit all forms of discrimination such as that based on gender in relation to access to land.
- Anti-Gender Based Violence (GBV) laws and *Isange* One Stop Centers that support victims of GBV.
- Organic Budget Law no. 12/2013, instituting Gender-responsive Budgeting enforcing accountability for gender sensitive resource allocation across sectors programmes and projects through Gender Budget Statements. A mandatory annex of the Budget Framework Paper submitted annually to both chambers of Parliament and Senate.
- The National Gender Policy highlights principal guidelines on which sectoral policies and programmes will be based on to integrate gender issues in their respective social, cultural, economic and political planning and programming.
- Professionalization of the judicial system through the creation of a specialized Anti-GBV and Drug Unit to tackle these issues more effectively.

❖ ***Affirmative gender empowerment programmes and initiatives:***

- Mainstreaming gender in projects design and implementation- Guidelines are issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning through planning and budget call circulars every fiscal year.
- 12 economic sectors have developed specific gender mainstreaming strategies
- Gender Equality Seal programs were operationalized in the Private Sector where institutions were mobilized to join efforts in the journey towards institutionalizing gender accountability in the private sector.
- Access to finance was promoted through initiatives such as the Guarantee scheme offered by the Business Guarantee Fund of up to 75 percent to women, youth and 50 percent to men.
- Women grant facility program (14,021 women were supported with Micro Financial Institutions between 2017 and 2020 through BDF).
- Officials from Public and Private sectors, CSO and FBOs have been trained on different gender concepts including Gender Responsive Economic Policy Management.
- Youth Council members at the sector level have been trained on Gender equality principles.
- Establishment of SDG5 forum coordinated by Rwanda Women’s Network (RWN), a collective of 30 CSOs working on diverse human rights and development issues in Rwanda under the cross-cutting theme of gender and women’s empowerment. The forum provides a platform to enhance their engagement with government, various development partners and grassroots communities in order to successfully deliver on the ambitious targets for leaving no one behind.
- Dialogues on Gender equality were conducted in secondary schools and higher learning institutions. Alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings (CHOGM) held in June 2022 in Kigali, the CHOGM Women’s Forum was one of the 4 pre-forums organized that convened more than 500 participants from around the World under the theme; “***Delivering a Common Future: Transforming for Gender Equality***”. The forum provided an opportunity, to Commonwealth member countries, to renew their commitments in removing barriers to women’s effective participation in decision-making roles and ensuring the full autonomy of women and girls, addressing violence against women and girls.

4. Progress on 2023 VNR selected Goals



4.1. SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

4.1.1 Clean Water

Access to water and sanitation remain important priorities for the GoR as stated in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1). Indeed, through the NST1, Rwanda intends to ensure that all Rwandans have access to water by 2024 by investing in construction, extension, rehabilitation of water supply systems in the City of Kigali, other towns, and in rural areas².

According to the 5th Population and Housing Census (PHC-2022), access to water from improved sources at national level is at 82 percent. Progress was made countrywide more especially in rural areas from 22.6 percent (2005) to 76.7 percent compared to urban areas from 55.4 percent to 95.7 percent respectively. Access to sanitation is at 72.2 percent with rural access higher at 78.5 percent compared to urban at 56.4 percent.

With about 82 percent of households accessing water from an improved water source, Rwanda is in good track to achieving the targeted universal access.

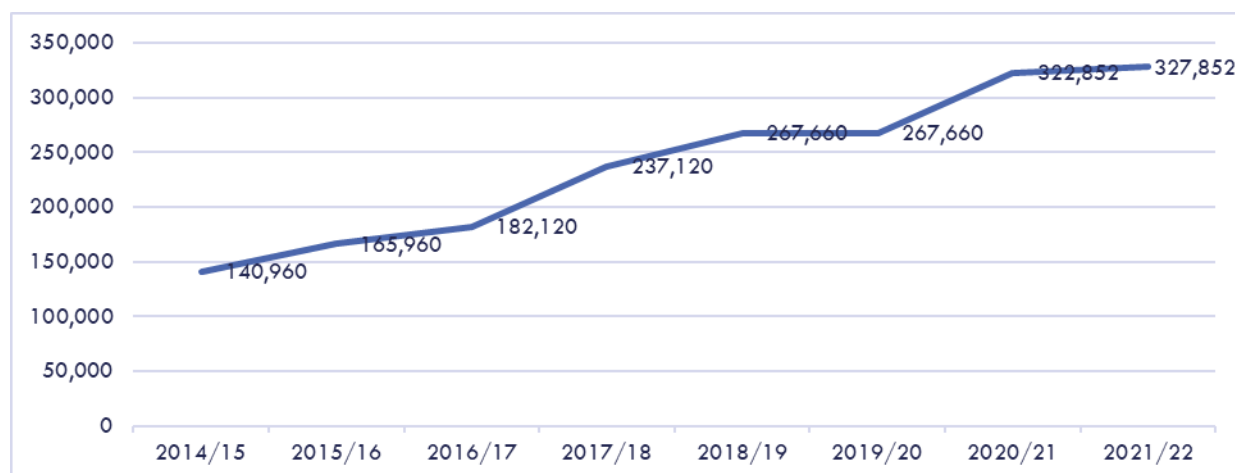
The commendable improvements in access to drinking water are results of implementation of a set of actions, reflected in the 'Water and Sanitation Policy':

- The construction of 2,824km of water supply networks in urban, peri-urban and rural and extended/rehabilitated 774 km in urban and peri-urban areas in 2021/22. At the same time, non-government partners have extended and rehabilitated 2,050km. All these interventions contributed to ensuring access to safe drinking water of 185,418 people³.
- Rwanda's daily water production capacity has increased by 132.6 percent between 2014/15 and 2021/22 as shown on the figure 4.

² Republic of Rwanda (2017). 7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017–2024

³ MININFRA, (2022). Water and sanitation 2021/22 back-ward looking joint sector review report

Figure 4. Cubic Meters of water produced/day



Source: MININFRA, WAS, BLJSR, 2022

The increased country’s water production capacity has resulted into an increase in the number of households supplied with water from 2,045,916 in 2018/19 to 4,535,744 in 2021/22⁴.

As part of the recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue, Rwanda committed to “Accelerate the scaling up of access to safe drinking water in schools, particularly at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels (Recommendation: 134.94, adopted in Bahamas)”. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated programme to scale up access for hygienic measures, schools have increased access to water. Furthermore, achievements were also registered in the implementation of other water related indicators under SDG6 such as water bodies with ambient water quality and water resource management as summarized in the table below.

Table 4. Achievements on other SDG6 key indicators

Indicators	2018	2020
Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality (indicator 6.3.2)	15 percent	79 percent
Change in water-use efficiency over time (indicator 6.4.1)		12.87 percent
Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources (Indicator 6.4.2)	9 percent	11.17 percent
Degree of integrated water resources management (indicator 6.5.1)	50 percent	66 percent
Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation (indicator 6.5.2)	86 percent	

Source: Rwanda Water Board (RWB), Administrative data 2023

It is also worth mentioning that the percentage of surface area of transboundary basins of rivers and lakes covered by an operational arrangement is estimated at 100 percent while that of surface area of transboundary basins covered by an operational arrangement is 48 percent⁵.

⁴ MININFRA, (2022). Water and sanitation 2021/22 back-ward looking joint sector review report

⁵ MININFRA, (2023). Transboundary water cooperation

Rwanda is a signatory of the following transboundary water protocols and agreements, among others:

- The protocol for sustainable development of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC),
- The new transitional institutional arrangement for Nile Basin Initiative (1999),
- The Nile Basin Initiative Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA, 2010),
- The International Convention on the Integrated Management of the Water Resources of the Lake Kivu and Ruzizi/Rusizi River Basin,
- The MoU between Rwanda and DRC on management of Lake Kivu Resources signed in November 2015 (created Bilateral ad hoc committee and operational) and many others.

4.1.2 Access to sanitation

The overarching objective is to scale up access to sanitation and hygiene from 84 percent in 2016 to 100 percent in 2024 and develop a waste management system in cities, towns and rural areas⁶.

In this regard, the proportion of households using basic sanitation services increased from 64 percent in 2013⁷ to 72 percent in 2022⁸ (indicator 6.2.1). More male headed households used improved toilet facilities (73.6 percent) than female headed households (68.3 percent)⁹. In fact, 72 percent of households in Rwanda use unshared improved sanitation facilities (toilets)¹⁰. In 2021/22, in collaboration with WASH partners, 28,148 improved latrines were constructed and rehabilitated across districts as part of addressing human security issues¹¹.

Public Private Partnership has played an important role in promoting access to sanitation in Rwanda

The Ministry of Education developed health standards for schools indicating that each school is required to have a Girls' Room including sanitary pads, water, and soap¹². The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) has taken this beyond schools calling for the implementation with strict measures to ensure clean sanitation facilities in all public spaces¹³ in the revised national gender policy.

From June 2020 to July 2021, youth volunteers have been engaged in various activities aimed at improving access to water and sanitation. Through this initiative, 5,647 latrines of a total value of FRW 225,880,000 and 10,660 hand washing stations valued at FRW 53,300,000 were constructed. In addition, youth conducted 27,312 campaigns to educate local communities on proper hygiene practices.

⁶ Republic of Rwanda (2017). 7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017–2024

⁷ EICV4

⁸ NISR, (2022). 5th Population and Housing Census, Rwanda 2022.

⁹ *Idem*

¹⁰ *Idem*

¹¹ MININFRA, (2022). Water and sanitation 2021/22 back-ward looking joint sector review report

¹² Ministry of Education 'The 2021/22 Forward-looking Joint Review of the Education Sector' Narrative Report (2021).

¹³ Ministry of Gender and Health Promotion 'Revised National Gender Policy (2021).

In 2020/21, the government initiated various Public-Private Partnership (PPP) that played an important role in attracting private sector expertise and experiences in sanitation. These initiatives include:

- Licensing of ENVIROSERVE Rwanda Ltd to handle E-waste Management;
- Licensing of 33 new operators to support the provision of sanitation services;
- Grating of 5 new and renewal of 2 licenses in areas of solid waste management services;
- Constructed Landfills and fecal sludge treatment plants in Nyanza, Nyagatare and Kayonza. Currently new landfills and fecal sludge treatment plant are under construction in 4 secondary cities (Musanze, Rubavu, Rusizi and Karongi).
- Licensing of an operator in hazardous waste management as well as approval of 2 licenses for waste recycling.

4.1.3 Drivers of Goal 6 Achievements

The GoR has adapted and implemented a range of interventions that have significantly contributed in promoting access to clean water and sanitation in Rwanda and these include:

- Prioritization of WASH in the national development agenda such as Vision 2050 as well as NST1 and related sector and district strategies.
- Increased investments in water supply and maintenance of existing supply systems.
- Partnership between GoR and Development Partners such as UNICEF, JICA, African Development Bank and USAID, World Vision, Water for People, Water for Growth, and Living Water International among others in promoting access to water especially in rural areas.
- Promotion of Public Private Partnership Agreement (PPPA) arrangement for the construction of a bulk water treatment facility of 40,000 m³/day,
- Increased water production capacity (from 182,120 m³ in 2016/17 to 327,852 m³ in 2023).
- Strong government leadership and ownership of WASH interventions by citizens, partners and stakeholders,
- Availability of the National Data Systems (such as EICVs, DHS and WASH-MIS etc.) that are used to track sector progress. In addition, the Joint Sector Reviews are used as a mechanism for monitoring progress and identify actions to track the progress.
- The Government has updated all the sector policies and plans and are aligned corresponding SDGs. A sector financing strategy to estimate the cost of achieving the national targets as per NST1 as well as SDG targets has also been developed.
- Strengthening of sector enabling environment through the development of harmonized water and sanitation policy (which integrates water resource, water supply, sanitation and hygiene),
- Development of the Integrated Water and Sanitation Master Plan and development of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy;

- Operationalization of WASH sector Management Information System; development of the WASH Sector Financing Strategy,
- Undertaking of WASH sector climate risk assessment, and further strengthening of sector coordination and improving access to WASH services in communities, schools and health centers in urban and rural areas through implementation of several major service delivery initiatives.

4.1.4 Innovative approaches used in WASH

Rwanda introduced innovative approaches in promoting WASH especially in rural areas, including:

- Putting in place integrated water resource management framework:*** Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) was established in 2020 with a mandate to advise the Government on matters related to water resources; establish strategies aimed at knowledge based on research on water resources knowledge, forecasting on water availability, quality and demand; examine the preparation of roads, bridges, dams and settlements designs in order to ensure flood mitigation and water storage standards as well as manage water permitting. On top of this, RWB has put in place an IT system for supporting decision-making on landscape restoration through priority-setting of catchment restoration opportunities known as Catchment Restoration Opportunities Mapping Decision Support System (CROM DSS) for prevention and mitigation of soil erosion and landslides.
- Public Private Partnership Management Framework:*** In the Rural Water Supply System in Rwanda, the PPP framework was introduced at district level to ensure delivery of quality WASH services to rural communities, building on managerial skills and technical expertise from private operators. In fact, PPP offers flexibility to drive performance, adaptability to the needs of beneficiaries while ensuring quality WASH service delivery, which in turn increases user's satisfaction and willingness to pay for the services. Under the PPP management framework, the government transfers responsibility to manage all water supply facilities (while these facilities remain a government property). In addition, private operators commit to produce and distribute portable water, collect fees, operate and manage the delegated infrastructure as well as reporting and advising districts for service development and sustainability. The role of the government through the districts, is monitoring compliance with contractual obligations, defining water tariffs, monitoring private operators' service delivery, and mediation between operators and users in case of conflicts. The PPP management framework has significantly contributed to establishing reliable water supply services that are adapted to the needs of beneficiaries in communities.
- Water Users Committee (WUC):*** These are formed by communities to empower water users to run their own water facility with full cost recovery and therefore ensure sustainability. The establishment of WUC promotes community ownership of the water point, control over finances and other resources, and ensures equitable distribution of water supply and sanitation services to meet economic and social needs of the water users. Furthermore, the establishment of WUC has helped improve the management of water and

sanitation facilities, monitor water quality on a regular basis, promote safe water handling practices and encourage the adoption of healthy WASH related behaviors and practices.

- d. **Rural Water Tariffs:** Rural Water Tariffs were introduced by the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA) and are guided by the decision N°06/BD/ER-LER/RURA/2016 of 13/12/2016 on maximum rural water tariffs, aimed to ensuring accessibility and affordability of water services for rural communities. The tariffs established by RURA are based on systems used in producing water such as gravity, electricity pumping, diesel pumping, and turbo and complex systems. These tariffs were set to ensure access to water services to all categories of Rwandans living in rural areas, including women and persons with disabilities while taking into account the poverty categories in rural communities.
- e. **Prepaid Water Metering Systems on Public Taps/ Kiosks:** this is a new technology being tested by Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC) supported by the government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through the Fonds Duurzaam Water/Sustainable Water Fund (FDW). The facility has an electronic flow meter and valve, and a button on each tap to start and end the transaction. The final water user has a token that communicates to the hub, providing the user with access to water 24/7 without the need for a kiosk or public tap operator. The meters use GSM/GPRS to communicate and incorporate mobile payment channels, like MTN Mobile Money and Airtel Money, to purchase water credits. The technology offers a range of benefits including: fetching water 24/7 without need for a kiosk operator, ensuring continuity of service provision, the customers can monitor their expenses by checking token balances, the system can be integrated with automatic SMS and email alert to the customer, if required, thus improving customer service provision.

4.1.5 Challenges

Despite the considerable investment made in WASH sector, there is a still a need of additional resources to achieve universal access. The Covid-19 and geopolitical challenges (Ukraine-Russia) hampered the implementation of SDGs where prices of materials and equipment for connection have risen and logistics affected negatively. It has been estimated that Rwanda needs an annual investment of at least FRW 249 billion per year to achieve the national WASH targets of 100 percent basic coverage by 2024 and FRW 400 billion per year to achieve the WASH SDG (safely managed) targets by 2030¹⁴.

4.1.6 Lessons Learned

Throughout the seven years of implementation of SDG 6 as part of the national development agenda, lessons learned are as the follows:

- Though gaps still exist in coverage of WASH services in Rwanda, prioritization of WASH in the key national strategies and plans coupled with a strong political commitment and leadership at all levels has played a key role in accelerating access to WASH services in the country.

¹⁴ MININFRA, (2023). Administrative data

- It is crucial to strengthen the integration of climate change in WASH sector plans and programs as a mechanism for addressing climate change related issues affecting WASH such as landslides and subsequent damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, and droughts. This also entails empowering communities in a more people centered approach to climate change.
- Promotion of Public Private Partnership Agreement (PPPA) arrangement is an essential enabler to increased production of clean water.

4.1.7 Plans for future implementation

The GoR remains targeted to increase access to water from 85 percent (Estimates 2017) to 100 percent by 2024 through investments in: construction, extension, rehabilitation of 1,937 Km of water supply systems in City of Kigali and other towns as well as 1,851 Km of water supply systems in rural areas in addition to increasing daily water production capacity from 182,120 to 303,120 cubic meters per day¹⁵. Going forward, the GoR will ensure that universal access to water and other basic services are provided through the resettlement of population into planned urban and rural settlements¹⁶.

Furthermore, according to the Rwanda's Vision 2050, efforts shall be directed towards increasing household onsite access to sanitation services to 80 percent by 2035 and 100 percent by 2050¹⁷. This requires establishing modernized sanitation sewerage and management services in urban areas to handle solid and liquid waste.

In urban areas, all households will have access to standardized on-site improved sanitary systems that respect the level of sanitation organization chains. It is also anticipated that a smart solid waste management framework shall be established to support in waste collection, transport, treatment and safely disposed.

The GoR also commits to mobilize additional resources for the WASH sector through enhancing Government budgetary allocation and strong engagement with development partners to support programs targeting areas with low-access of WASH services.

¹⁵ MINECOFIN, 2017, National Strategy for Transformation I (2014-2024)

¹⁶ Rwanda National Land Use Development Master Plan, 2020

¹⁷ Idem

4.2 SDG7. Affordable and Clean Energy



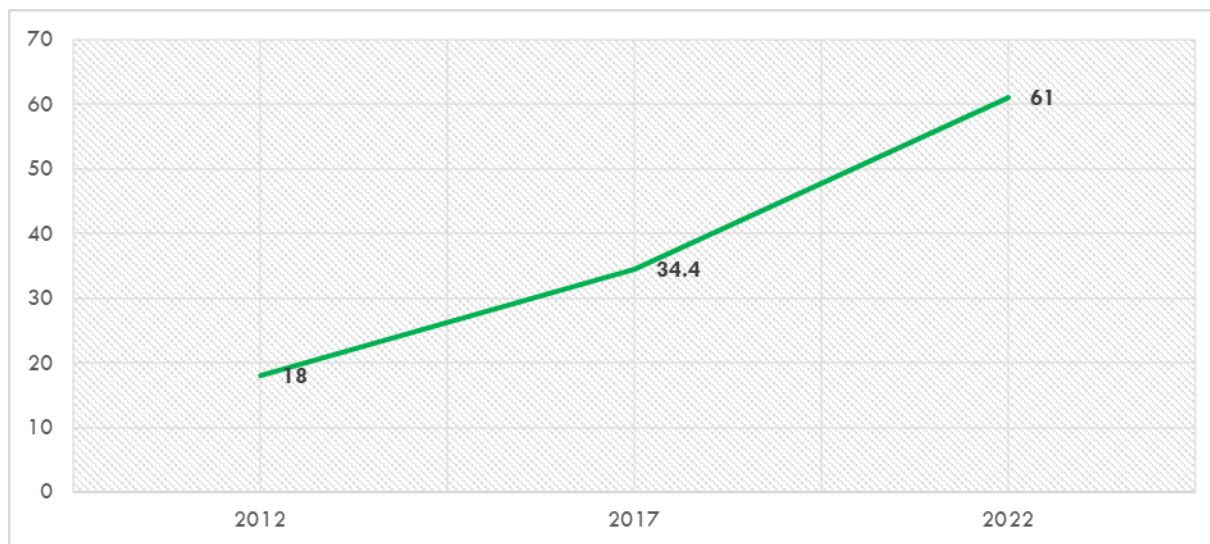
4.2.1. Current Status

Rwanda has made commendable progress in ensuring access to electricity to all Rwandans. Two important priorities were retained in NST1, namely: (i) increased access to electricity and (ii) reduced biomass usage for cooking. The overall target is to provide universal access to electricity and reduce biomass used for cooking from 83 percent (in 2017) to 42 percent by 2024¹⁸.

Available data show that the proportion of households with access to electricity (indicator 7.1.1) has almost tripled over the past ten years – increasing from 18.6 percent in 2012 to 61 percent in 2022 (47 percent on-grid and 14 percent solar panels)¹⁹, but with noticeable geographical differences: 90 percent access in the City of Kigali, 84.6 percent in other urban areas against 51.3 percent in rural areas, while only 54 percent of female headed households have access to electricity compared to 63.9 percent of male headed households²⁰.

Access to electricity has almost tripled over the past ten years, thanks to increased investments in electricity generation for both on and off-grid and the partnership between the GoR and the private sector.

Figure 5. Proportion of private households with access to electricity (percent)



Source: NISR, 2014-2023

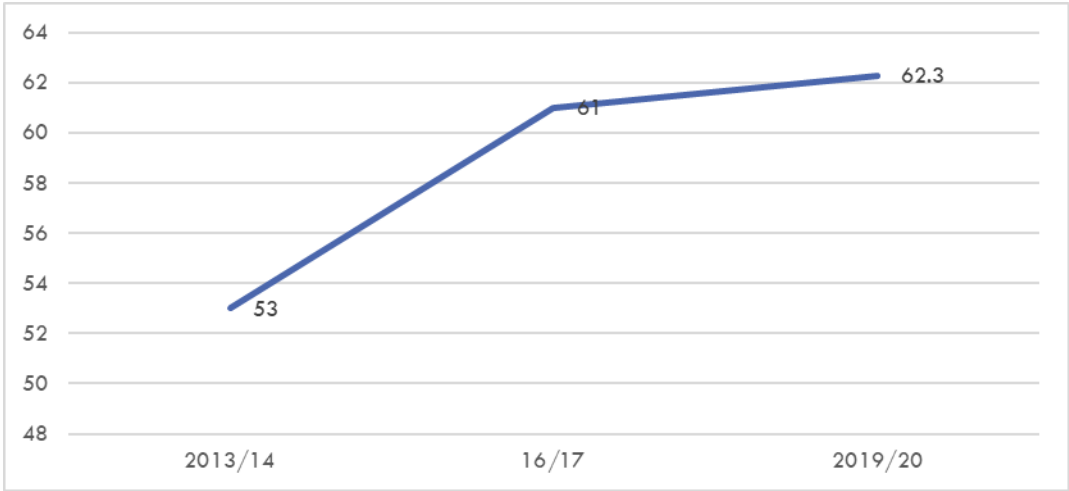
¹⁸ Republic of Rwanda (2017). 7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017–2024

¹⁹ NISR (2022). Firth population and housing census, Rwanda, 2023

²⁰ NISR (2022). Firth population and housing census, Rwanda, 2023

Current data also show that the overall share of the renewable energy in the total electricity generation (indicator 7.2.1) has slightly increased – representing 61 percent in 2016 and 62.3 percent in 2020²¹.

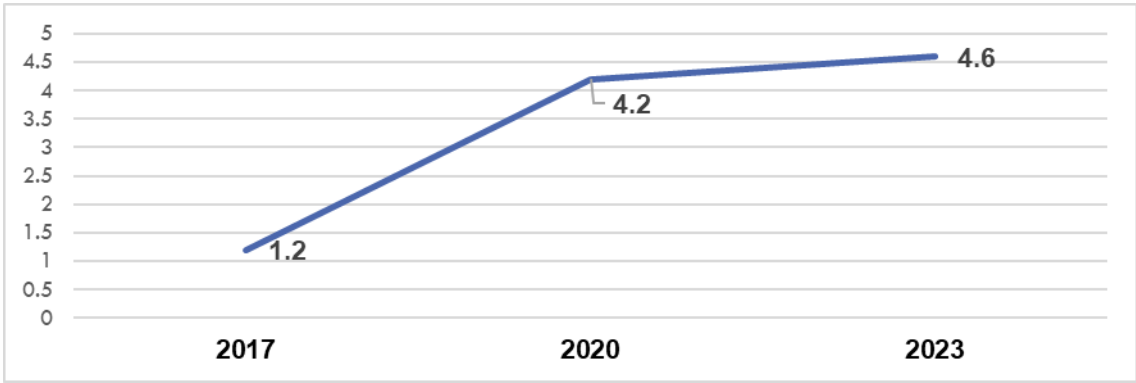
Figure 6. Renewable energy as a share in the total electricity generation



Source: MININFRA, Administrative data, 2023

On the other hand, the proportion of households with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (indicator 7.1.2) remains relatively low at 4.6 percent. This results from the fact that 76 percent of households in Rwanda use firewood as their main source of energy for cooking. This is even more pronounced in rural areas where 93 percent of households use firewood for cooking, whereas in urban areas, the main sources of energy for cooking include charcoal (50 percent), firewood (34 percent) and gas (13 percent)²².

Figure 7. Proportion of households with primary reliance on clean cooking fuel (percent)



Source: NISR, 2014-2023

²¹ NISR (2023). MININFRA administrative data, 2023

²² NISR (2022). Firth population and housing census, Rwanda, 2023

4.2.2. Drivers of Goal 7 achievements

Rwanda is implementing several projects aimed at increasing electricity generation including: Regional Rusumo Hydro power plant (80MW), Ruzizi III hydropower plant with (204 MW), Shema Methane Gas (56MW), Hakan (70MW), among others. So far, some of the completed projects have contributed up to 16 percent increase in the installed capacities in 2022²³.

Other key projects focus on scaling-up electricity generation and improving its quality, affordability, and reliability: electricity generation has increased from 110 MW in 2013 to 311 MW in March 2023. The main programs that are helping the energy sector in Rwanda are Electricity Roll-Out Program (EARP), Energy Access and Quality Improvement Project (EAQIP), Rwanda Universal Energy Access Program (RUEAP) contributing to the targets of NST1 to connect 100 percent of households and productive users by 2024. These programs are targeted to increase electricity access on grid, improve the reliability of the grid and operational efficiency (power generation and transmission) and support private investment on off-grid (solar) access and in the promotion of sustainable cooking methods.

In 2018/2019, the government developed the national electrification plan, a geospatial system that helps in demarcation of different types of connections, namely, grid, standalone solar systems and mini grids in a least cost manner that helped aligning electrification plans and available resources.

In order to address the issue of access to electricity for rural people, especially those living in dispersed/isolated locations and mountainous terrains that are hard to reach through the on-grid supply system, Rwanda established the “*Renewable Energy Fund (REF)*”. Managed by the Rwanda Development Bank (BRD), this Fund provides concessional lines of credit facilities to Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), commercial banks, micro-finance institutions, mini-grid developers, and Off-grid Solar Companies that provide lending to beneficiary households and micro-enterprises for off-grid connections. One of the windows of the facility covers subsidies designed to addressing the issue of affordability of solar home systems faced by households in the off-grid area through the reduction of prices for the systems at varying amounts allocated to Ubudehe 1, 2, and 3 categories with the aim of reaching the lowest income groups in Rwanda (table 4). This program is targeting to connect at least 500,000 households by 2025.

Table 5. Renewable Energy Fund subsidy by Ubudehe category

Ubudehe Category	percent Coverage	Maximum subsidy
Ubudehe 1	90 percent	FRW 100,000
Ubudehe 2	70 percent	FRW 80,000
Ubudehe 3	45 percent	FRW 50,000

Similarly, “**#CanaChallenge**” a community-based initiative campaign launched by BRD in December 2021 through different social media platforms to encourage all individuals and organizations to make voluntary contributions to “Light up a Rwandan household” that cannot access affordable electricity. For every contribution of Rwf 15,000 (US \$15), BRD tops up the remaining Rwf 100,000 (US \$ 100 equivalent) necessary to purchase and install a home solar

²³ MININFRA (2022). Energy sector 2021/22 back-ward looking joint sector review report

system for a family. Cana Challenge's purpose is to provide solar home systems to 10,000 families in the first Ubudehe category (most vulnerable households). So far, 26,238 households were supported to access solar systems from “**#CanaChallenge**”. Under the Renewable Energy Fund, 322,271 households accessed electricity.

Other initiatives introduced by the GoR to promote access to electricity, especially for low-income households, include free connection of households within 37 meters of the connection point and charged in installments upon consumption. Similarly, a lifeline tariff for low-income households was established. In addition, the GoR released a ministerial guideline on Minimum Required Standards for Solar Home Systems for poor and vulnerable households to ensure value for money.

In line with reducing usage of biomass for cooking, Rwanda has put in place initiatives targeting the promotion of sustainable use of biomass, including the distribution of improved cooking stoves to 184,330 households through various initiatives (in 2022)²⁴. Furthermore, in partnership with development partners such as the World Bank, Rwanda is currently implementing a result-based clean cooking financing program targeting the distribution of clean cooking stoves to 500,000 households (by 2022, 6000 clean cooking stoves had already been distributed). A market assessment for the clean cooking value chain was conducted as a first stage towards the development of a clean cooking market in the country. The GoR also initiated a number of clean cooking programs in partnership with the private sector to not only increase LPG strategic reserves but also explore methane gas to be used for cooking and in industries.

4.2.3. Challenges

Despite great achievements registered over the past years in promoting to access to clean energy, Rwanda still faces the following challenges:

- a) **Energy Generation Challenges:** the demand in electricity is increasing at a rate of 8 percent per annum²⁵, therefore, meeting this demand surplus will require additional resources for financing the sector. In addition, investment in generation not only implies focusing on adding generation capacity, but also on optimizing the overall technology mix of the country.
- b) **Access related challenges:** Expanding the network to reach more remote scattered households in difficult terrain.
- c) **Biomass Challenges:** the reliance on biomass puts pressure on existing forest resources.
- d) **Price escalation of energy inputs to the international market:** prices have increased globally due to Covid-19 and geopolitical issues which makes it difficult for developing countries that import connection materials.

²⁴ MININFRA (2022). Energy sector 2021/22 back-ward looking joint sector review report

²⁵ MININFRA (2018). Energy Strategic Plan 2018/19-2023/24

Despite the above challenges, there are also good opportunities for strengthening access to affordable and clean energy in Rwanda. Firstly, access to affordable and affordable energy remains a priority in both Central and Local Government and connection targets are reflected in annual plans and performance contracts (Imihigo) at central and local levels. Secondly, the increased use of off-grid methods in promoting access to affordable and clean energy constitute an important opportunity for reaching the underserved population, especially in rural areas at reasonably low costs.

The initiatives, named “**#Canachallenge**”, hydro power plant and mini grid development through PPP has revealed that Rwanda’s private sector can play an important role in promoting the use of affordable clean energy. Thirdly, the availability of development partners supporting the energy sector is an important opportunity for mobilizing funding for energy related programs.

4.2.4. Plans for future implementation

Going forward, the GoR has prioritized a set of interventions aimed to continue promoting access to affordable and clean energy, including tackling issues of sustainable energy generation and utilization.

In addition, on-grid and off-grid connections shall be combined to ensure that every consumer receives an appropriate level of access, while minimizing the costs of the utility. The delivery of off-grid electricity access will continue to be led by private companies, with the support provided by the government to low-income households. The use of off-grid connections will be reduced over time as the grid is further expanded and urbanization rates increased. By 2050 all consumers will be connected to the central grid while the per capita consumption of energy is expected to increase up to 1,026 Kwh in 2035 and 3,080 Kwh in 2050.

In the short to mid-term, the GoR plans to increase the electricity generation capacity from the current 311MW with the aim to meet demand and maintain at least 15 percent reserve margin at any given time. This is expected to be made possible through the ongoing construction of key power plants as mentioned earlier. The GoR will also explore the use of new modern and clean energies such as hydrogen and exploration of geothermal resources in collaboration with partners.

Tariffs will be kept affordable, resulting from developing long-term least cost power generation plans. Emphasis will continue to be on clean and renewable energy as a source of generation with at least 60 percent of installed capacity in this category.

4.3.SDG 9. On Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure



4.3.1. Industry

Rwanda is home to a growing number of manufacturing companies, ranging from textiles and garments to construction materials and electronic equipment. The share of industry to GDP increased from 15 percent in 2013 to 21 percent 2022²⁶ (Indicator 9.2.1).

Industrial parks/special economic zones have been established in different Districts of the country to enable infrastructure and commercial land availability, limited transport linkages, market access and availability of skills.

Industrial development is being promoted with a strong focus on **'Made in Rwanda'** policy that has enabled participation of the private sector in unlocking new industries during the Covid-19 outbreak (e.g., hygiene products, health & pharmaceutical products, etc.), furthermore, over 100 companies are manufacturing Made in Rwanda products. This involved certification and accreditation to support export and enhancement of product quality where; 700 new products were certified in 2019; 1,037 new products were certified in 2021, 231 products were re-certified from 2019 to 2021 and 223 products with Made in Rwanda Logo by June 2021.

BioNTech

Rwanda will house the manufacturing plant that uses BioNTech's messenger RNA technology on African soil.

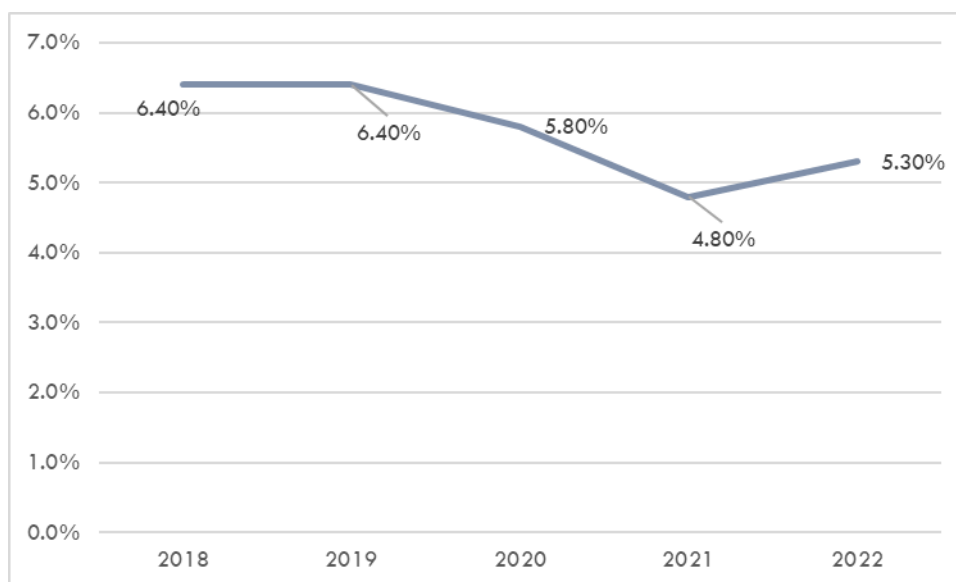
The Government continues to implement attractive measures to encourage industrial manufacturing to overcome obstacles such as limited access to finance and skilled labor, infrastructure gaps, and high production costs. In February 2021, a new Investment Code that integrates climate change and new sources of financing and a shift to more sustainable investments was introduced to address previous investor challenges and included new incentives to attract investments in strategic growth sectors.

In addition, Rwanda has invested in vocational training and fostered public-private partnerships to further support the growth of the sector. The country also set a target to create job opportunities with special focus on decent and productive jobs (1.5 million jobs between 2017 and 2024). However, agriculture still provides employment to the bulk of working Rwandans with the manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment registered a slight decline from 6.40 percent in 2018 to 4.8 percent and 5.30 percent²⁷ in 2021 and 2022 respectively (Indicator 9.2.2) mainly attributed to the prolonged impact of Covid-19.

²⁶ NISR, GDP National Accounts, 2022

²⁷ NISR, Labour force Survey, 2022

Figure 8. Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment (percent)



Source: NISR, Labor force Survey, 2018-2022

Special programmes were designed to support industries during Covid-19 pandemic, including:

- Manufacture and Build to recover plan- this is an initiative launched by the Government in December 2020 projecting incentives to areas falling under general construction, factory construction, general manufacturing, and performance-based in order to recover better.
- Manufacturing Acceleration Committee - composed of senior officials from multiple institutions that review and resolve issues faced by key companies in order to fast-track manufacturing & enhance recovery.

The GoR is committed to funding research and development (R&D) for industrialization and building innovation excellence through the recently launched National Research and Innovation Fund (NRIF) by the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST). The overall Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) increased to Rwf 70,601,673,966 in 2018/2019 from Rwf 44,457,113,816 in 2015/2016. Consequently, R&D intensity, which is the GERD as a percentage of GDP increased slightly, from 0.66 percent of GDP in 2015/2016 to 0.69 percent of GDP in 2018/2019²⁸. This shows good progress but more efforts are still required to meet the national target of 1 percent of GDP recommended by the African Union. The R&D personnel is 3,411 with females accounting for 35.7 percent, and the number of researchers at 152.3 per 1 million inhabitants.

The country established a life science laboratory for pharmaceuticals, food science, microbiology and biotechnology as well as a pilot STEM laboratory. Through the research projects undertaken,

²⁸ Rwanda National Research and Experimental Development (R&D) Survey Report, October 2021
<https://www.ncst.gov.rw/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=31919&token=f087400316857cf32ab4d8040b2d05c491cf3c0a>

the following were achieved: 23 industries have been supported with products development services with products quality testing services; 17 intellectual property rights have been created; 62 STEM and Life science innovators supported with incubation services and 19 prototypes have been developed (proxy indicator 9.5.1). Further support was provided to modernize the value chains industries through acquiring cutting-edge technologies for competitiveness: 10 value chains (Banana wine, Garment, Wood, Fruits and Vegetables, Cow in the Car, Poultry, Piggery, Animal feeds, Clay and Stone) have been supported for competitiveness; 38 value chain industries were supported to acquire modern technologies and 358 supported with capacity development for firm level growth.

4.3.2 Innovation and ICT

The goal of establishing Rwanda as a Globally Competitive Knowledge-based Economy requires to prioritize innovation, infrastructure and ICT as a cross cutting sector. In light of this, several policies have been implemented including the National Digital Talent Policy, the National Data Revolution Policy, the National Science & Innovation Policy, the National Cyber Security Policy, Digital inclusion policy mainly onboarding less advantaged individuals on ICT (women, disabled, youth) and the Broadband Policy. Broadband policy aiming to accelerate Rwanda into a competitive and innovative global digital economy, through accessible and quality broadband services.

In addition, the Rwandan government introduced ***the Child Online Protection Policy*** (“the COP Policy”). This online protection policy is designed to mitigate those risks and harms and to deliver a framework that meets children’s needs and fulfills their rights while enabling them to navigate the digital environment safely and confidently. The COP Policy includes the establishment of a governance framework which will act as a central point for the direction and coordination of all policy areas. ***These efforts will build on Rwanda’s existing strides towards protecting children online and establish the country as a regional leader in COP research and innovation.***¹⁷

The Government of Rwanda is championing a flagship project ‘**Smart cities**’ on the African continent.

To achieve this, Rwanda developed a Smart City Master Plan hinged on the alliance’s ‘Smart Cities Blueprint’ as a guiding framework. The Master Plan is built on 3 key pillars, namely;

1. Smart Governance and Planning
2. Smart and Efficient Services & Utilities
3. Localized Innovation for Social and Economic Development

Currently 99.92 percent of population are covered by 2G network and 93.37 percent for 3G mobile network respectively and 4G LTE technology is at 98.2 percent (Indicator 9.C.1)²⁹. Despite the high mobile penetration rate of more than 80 percent³⁰, only 14 percent³¹ of the population aged 10 years and above reported having used the internet (from any location) in the 12 months preceding the Census³², with more males using internet (17 percent) than females (11 percent). This highlights the challenges of smart device affordability and the relative cost of internet in proportion to income of households.

In the aspiration to become one of the major Africa’s innovation hotspots, the country has recently launched Rwanda Innovation Fund, a Pan-African venture capital fund providing equity to

²⁹ MCIT, Backword looking Joint ICT Sector review 2021/22

³⁰ NISR, (2012). Fourth Population and housing census, Rwanda, 2012, Main indicators report

³¹ NISR, (2023). Fifth Population and housing census, Rwanda 2022, Main indicators report

³² NISR, (2023). Fifth Population and housing census, Rwanda 2022, Main indicators report

innovative startups and companies that offer solutions to the country and regional challenges. RWANDA Innovation Fund aims at providing Venture Capital to promising ideas in different sectors. Presently, US\$30 million has been mobilized from the Government and US\$15 million from private partners. Rwanda has managed to nurture local innovators and attract foreign innovators looking to test, launch and scale up. Rwanda ranks eighth among startups across Middle East and Africa, and fourth in Africa with Kigali ranking fourteenth among cities in the region³³. In March 2022, Rwanda became home for the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*.

The Kigali Innovation City (KIC), a mixed-used innovation city situated on 60 hectares of land in Kigali is a major undertaking by the government to increase the availability of world-class STEM African talent. Over 2,600 students are expected to graduate annually from its universities over 30 years adding to Rwanda's and Africa's pool of tech-savvy entrepreneurs. This Pan-African hub already hosts various educational institutions such as the Carnegie Mellon University, AIMS, Africa Leadership University, and Andela to train the workforce of the future. The Kigali innovation city aims to create over 50,000 jobs during the project lifetime, generating US\$ 150 million in ICT exports, Attracting over US\$ 300 million in foreign direct investment with a timeline from 2021-2025.

Furthermore, Rwanda continues to deliver on its promise to create a cashless economy and promote digitalization of public services. Currently around 144 services for citizens and businesses are fully accessed online through Irembo 2.0. As of now, 58 percent of government services are digitized. This will be further enhanced through the forthcoming Government Enterprise Service Bus. Irembo 3.0 is working on mass digitization with the aim of fully digitizing 660 services.

Following the pandemic-related closures for most of the services, both private and public **implemented several digital solutions to support citizens and control the pandemic**. Rwanda Education Board (REB) launched a YouTube channel called REB eLearning with content for students. REB also strengthened its online learning websites and uploaded teaching materials including electronic books to support remote learning and teaching processes. The platform also provides professional development for teachers and school leaders on digital skills.

During COVID lock down, the Government also introduced an online clearance pass for people seeking essential services to facilitate mobility and tracking of cases. The Government has been able to leverage the existing technological infrastructure for cashless payments and e-commerce to facilitate businesses and provision of public services during and after the pandemic. The Mobile Money payment system that allows money transactions using a mobile money account, saw a rapid uptake across the country amidst COVID-19.

4.3.3 Inclusive Infrastructure

The GoR recognizes the transport sector as one of its key drivers of growth, in partnership with development partners, Rwanda has invested over the years in developing transport infrastructure and services. The efficiency of the transport sector is critical to achieving the NST1, regional and global agenda. Investment in physical infrastructure to ease passenger movements as well as movement of goods and services was made whereby paved road network increased from 1,305km in 2017 to 1,654km in 2022. Urban paved road network expanded from 557.27km in 2017 to 736.64km in December 2022 registering an increase of 179.37km.

³³ 2022 Global Startup Ecosystem Index

The length of feeder roads to rural transportation increased from 2,060 in 2016/17 to 3,703.36km in 2021/2022 to ease the movement of agriculture produce and people. As of 2019, 63 percent³⁴ of rural population live within 2km of all-season roads (Indicator 9.1.1). The City of Kigali is running a number of the projects including construction of roads in different parts of the city under Kigali Infrastructure Project.

Disability and social inclusion have been mainstreamed in transport during the construction of new bus shelters in the City of Kigali with facilities reserved for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and weaning mothers.

Several initiatives on transportation systems were put in place to promote the movement of passengers and goods between Rwanda and the Region. These include: (i) the implementation of the Trans-African Highway missing link that is at 100 percent, (ii) the protocols on African open skies with 39 new Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASAs) were signed and ratified while 8 have been initialized, (iii) the implementation of the African High Speed Rail Network: Two Rail Network links connecting regional capitals and trade cities with Rwanda: Dar es Salaam-Isaka-Kigali and Mombasa-Nairobi- Kampala-Kigali SGR Railway have been identified and demarcation works were completed on the side of Rwanda.

In the aviation sector, the construction of Bugesera International airport is ongoing, national carrier (RwandAir) currently has a fleet operating in 24 destinations. The number of air passengers has reached 1,151,300 in 2018/2019 dropping to 277,942 passengers in 2020/2021 due to the pandemic (proxy Indicator 9.1.2). The 2021/22 has shown optimistic signs of recovery in the industry. In addition, the Kamembe Airport (Rusizi) has been rehabilitated and equipped with appropriate infrastructure whereas Rubavu and Musanze are planned to be expanded.

The improvement obtained in the overall transportation sector in Rwanda and the increased regional connectivity is the result of a number of interventions, including:

- 5 One Stop Border Posts were constructed at Kagitumba, and Gatuna border (with Uganda), Rubavu and Rusizi (with DRC), Rusumo (with Tanzania).
- Construction of 4 inland water ports is ongoing in Karongi, Rusizi, Rutsiro and Rubavu to improve inland water transport for both cargo and people as well as for tourism promotion. In addition, a feeder boat was purchased to provide alternative transport means while the bigger Nkombo boat is being assembled to further facilitate trade and mobility.

Efforts of volunteers have also supported infrastructure development. Through community activities known as *Umuganda*, which take place at the end of each month, roads at the village and sector levels have been repaired. Notably, Rwandan youth volunteers involved in community policing under the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC, 2021) have constructed and repaired roads. A total of 17,251 km of new roads were constructed, with an estimated value of Rwf 953,800,000. Additionally, 32,386 km of roads have been repaired, amounting to a value of Rwf 323,860,000.

³⁴ Backward looking Joint Infrastructure Sector Review 2021/22- Baseline Survey on Road and public transport accessibility

4.3.4 Drivers of Goal 9 achievements

The improved communication and infrastructure connectivity in Rwanda is driven by:

- Continuously rising citizens' awareness to use digital payment means (currently at 54 percent from below 10 percent in 2012).
- Strong push to increase digital literacy in all spheres of the population
- 351 MSMEs trained in e-commerce
- Sustained efforts by the Government and Private sector towards a cashless economy and digitized services.
- Government Service delivered online increased from 40 percent to 51 percent
- Leveraging ICT in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and innovative ways of delivering such as smart administration, E-working, e-learning.
- Engaging youth to increase digital literacy while also providing them with employment (Digital Ambassadors Project):
 - *89 Digital Ambassadors currently operate across the country providing digital literacy services to the citizens.*
 - *195,323 citizens were trained in digital literacy through the Digital Ambassadors Program.*
- 411 Digital related Service Access Points (SAPs) have been established around the country to provide digital literacy support to citizens
- Roll out of 4G LTE internet to all public institutions including decentralized entities

4.3.5 Challenges

- Digital literacy is low at 35.1 percent of the citizens aged 15 years and above
- Affordability of smartphones to bridge the digital divide.
- Inadequate pipeline of quality startups in the ICT sector that are ready to scale across African markets.
- Limited financing for priority projects especially infrastructure projects

4.3.6 Lesson learned

The pandemic brought to fore the need to accelerate the development of the manufacturing sub-sector under the *Made in Rwanda* Programme. In this regard, a Manufacture and Build to Recover Programme (MBRP) with incentives for businesses to frontload their investment and support economic recovery.

4.3.7 Plan for future implementation

The below list outlines some of the key priorities under each sector for the coming 2 to 3 years;

❖ *Industry*

- Support selected value chains for competitiveness (packaging materials, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, Clays, Stones, wood, meat and leather).

- Promote exploration and value-addition strategic/partnership investments for existing (cassiterite, gold, coltan, wolfram) and new minerals (lithium, beryl and rare earth elements (REEs).
- Promote applied research innovations for industrial development (young innovations Incubation, Product development, joint STEM Laboratory establishment),
- Support access finance capital for both existing SMEs and start-ups (micro-leasing, start-up capital, guarantee, agribusiness investment facility and leasing,
- Implement entrepreneurship end employment promotion initiative for persons with disability,
- Employment mainstreaming (eco-brigade, Road maintenance, Agriculture modernization and skills development) through developmental project.

❖ **ICT and Innovation**

- Increasing the use of ICT in teaching and learning through scaling up SMART classrooms and ICT devices as well as the implementation of the new competency- based curriculum:
- Continuously invest in skills and world-class STEM African talent.
- Promote national innovation ecosystem by supporting startups to address many of the challenges and therefore expand on new programs such as Fintech program, *Hanga Pitchfest, Hanga health*.
- Scale up free internet zones in public places.
- Capitalize on emerging digital solutions such as the Internet of Things, Virtual /Augmented Reality, Artificial intelligence, Robotics and etc.

❖ **Inclusive infrastructure**

- The construction of the New Kigali International Airport will be prioritized. Upon completion of phase one, the airport will have the capacity of accommodating seven million passengers per year and phase two will accommodate fourteen million passengers.
- Maritime infrastructure development is being prioritized with fund mobilization work are underway to bridge the existing budget gap for the construction of Karongi and Nkora ports.

4.4.SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities



4.4.1. Current Status

In line with making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Rwanda has over the past years endeavored to develop and facilitate decent settlement to its citizens, including relocation of people living in high-risk zone, the development of affordable and sustainable housing models for urban and rural areas – drawing from the experience acquired through the implementation of Integrated Development Plan (IDP) model villages as specified in NST1³⁵.

Rwanda has also innovatively introduced the “*Green City in Kigali*” with the aim to develop a model community that would be replicated in other cities (see box 2).

Box 2. Kigali Green City

The Green City is a project initiated by the GoR with the aim to develop a model community on a 600-ha Kinyinya Hill area in Rwanda's capital city – Kigali. The model will provide affordable housing in sustainable and culturally compatible, climate-resilient urban communities. The project is an opportunity for addressing multi-sectoral challenges such as housing affordability and supply, vulnerability to climate change, and increasing urban sprawl. It is obvious that the project contributes to the achievement of SDG 11 on sustainable, inclusive, safe, and resilient urban communities, especially target 11.1 on adequate housing: inter alia, secure land, basic services, and dwellings contributing to the primary Human Right to an Adequate Standard of Living.

According to NST1, the GoR intends to accelerate sustainable urbanization from 18.4 percent in 2016/17 to 35 percent by 2024³⁶. In addition, Rwanda has developed strategic interventions focusing on implementation of flagship projects for promoting secondary cities and other key urban areas such as updating master plans for secondary cities and other key towns, improving rural and urban transportation services, as well as promoting and developing local construction materials in line with the “*Made in Rwanda*” policy.

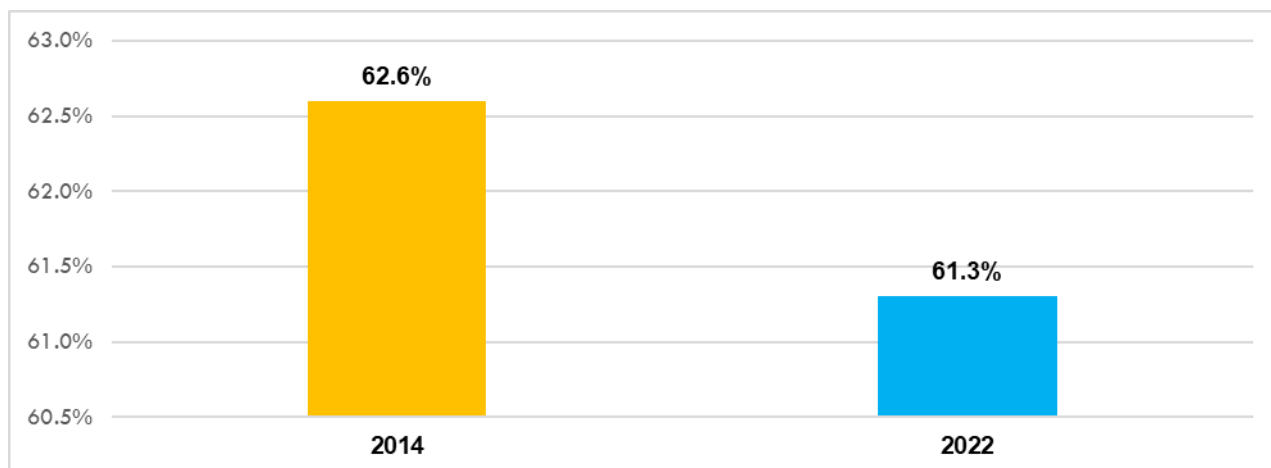
In the national context, the indicator on the “*Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (indicator 11.1.1)*” with a proxy of the “*proportion of urban population living in unplanned settlements*” that is currently estimated at 61.3 percent (in 2022), showed a slight decrease of only 1.3 percentage point from the baseline figure of 62.6 percent registered in 2014³⁷.

³⁵ Government of Rwanda (2017). 7 Years Government Program: National Strategy for Transformation (NST1): 2017-2024.

³⁶ *idem*

³⁷ MININFRA (2022). Urbanization sector 2021/22 back-ward looking joint sector review report

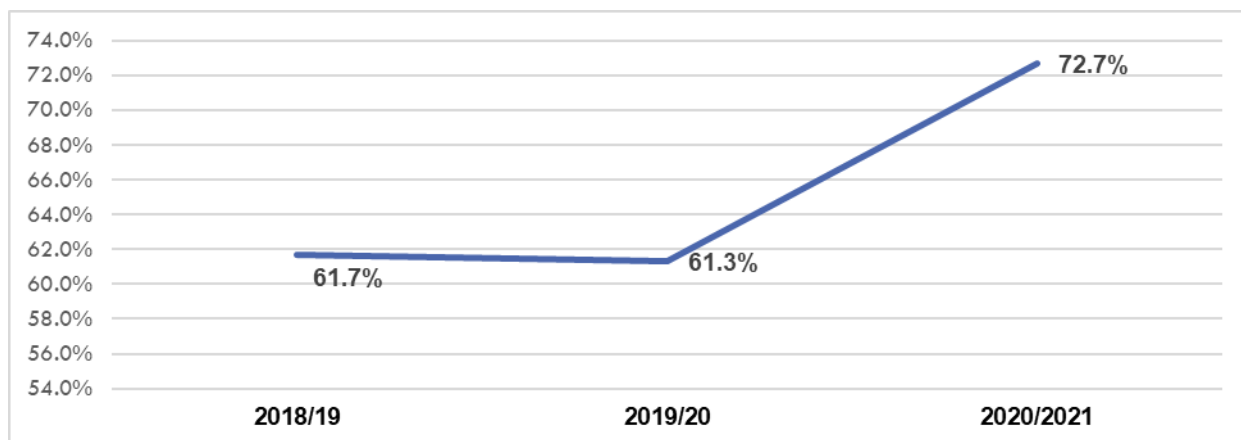
Figure 9. Percentage of urban population living in unplanned settlements



Source: JSR report, 2022

In the City of Kigali, informal settlements have been upgraded especially in Nyarugenge District while interventions to upgrade more informal settlements are ongoing across the City. Furthermore, the proportion of rural households living in planned settlements known as “Umudugudu” increased from 61.7 percent in 2018/19 to 72.7 percent in 2020/21.

Figure 10. Percent of rural population living in planned settlements



Source: JSR report, 2022

4.4.2. Drivers of Goal 11 achievements

The government has over the years prioritized the relocation of the families living in high-risk zones to designated safer places and integrated planned sites. In this context, high-risk zones include areas located within wetlands or within a 20m wetland buffer and dangerous steep slopes (above 30 percent) that could be prone to disasters. In total 8,994 households were relocated from high-

risk zones across the country while 45,131 households have been relocated from the scattered settlements³⁸.

With regard to the proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, Rwanda has implemented interventions aimed at improving public transport whereby the number of km of scheduled bus routes increased from 13,932.5km in 2017 to 14,442.14 in 2022. Investments were made in putting in place physical infrastructures to ease public transport, which increased the paved road network from 1,305km in 2017 to 1,654km in 2022. Similarly, the unpaved road network progressed from 557.27km in 2017 to 736.64 km in December 2022. In addition, the length of feeder roads to ease rural transportation increased from 2,060 in 2016/17 to 3,703.36km in 2021/2022. In road construction, pedestrian walkways have been given attention to promote non-motorized transport and facilitate transportation for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Interventions were also devised to ensure that cities have structure allowing direct participation of civil society organizations in urban planning and management effectively and democratically.

These include the establishment of Joint Action Development forums (JADFs) as part of the GoR's plans to include Urban Planning and Management. Currently, almost all districts in urban and rural areas have JADFs that actively participate in planning and monitoring of urban planning activities. More specifically, the development of the National Land Use and Development Masterplan, the City of Kigali and Secondary Cities Master Plans was extensively informed by recommendations from CSOs.

The proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated by cities is currently estimated at 87 percent. Indeed, the GoR developed the national integrated solid waste management strategy with clear targets to improve waste management in both urban and rural areas. Modern waste collection facilities are being constructed through Rwanda Sustainable Water and Sanitation Program. The study to construct the Modern Solid waste Management facility (Nduba Modern Landfill in the City of Kigali) was completed and the preliminary construction phase has started.

4.4.3. Challenges

There are still challenges linked to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable in Rwanda as detailed below:

- **Limited budget and involvement from the private sector:** achieving the intended objectives for promoting urbanization in Rwanda requires substantial resources and therefore needs active involvement of different development partners, and most importantly, the private sector. Despite its current limited role, it is believed that active involvement of the private sector can play a strategic role in housing and urban infrastructure development.

³⁸ Mininfra, (2022). Backward looking Joint Sector Review 2021/22, Urbanization and rural settlement sector

- **Gaps in data generation:** there are still challenges in generating spatial data, disaggregated on components such as productivity and employment, population mobility and land use that are crucial for matching interventions with specific locations.
- **Capacity development gaps in local government entities:** there is still a need for building the capacity of decentralized entities and developing their capacities to carry out long term urban planning as well as inspection and monitoring of physical urban growth.
- **Impact of Covid-19:** the pandemic hindered the implementation of some projects in the urbanization sector, mainly due to limited budget and shift of priorities.

4.4.4. Lessons Learned

- Strong collaboration among stakeholders (through a participatory M&E mechanism involving multi-level stakeholders) is key to successful implementation of urbanization projects.
- Improved communication among stakeholders, especially in the planning and resources mobilization process, has contributed to improved performance of the projects in the urbanization sector.

4.4.5. Plans for future implementation

Urbanization will continue to be integrated in the national development policies and strategies, focusing on the development of growth poles besides the already planned six secondary cities and the City of Kigali. Rwanda intends to achieve 80 percent of rural households settled in integrated planned settlements in 2024 and 100 percent in 2035.

Rwanda will also prioritize the establishment of a national spatial human settlement framework for allowing 70 percent of Rwandans to live in urban areas as projected. This implies prioritizing housing finance that will support the development of long-term investment, with increased participation of the private sector.

In the long-term, urbanization will follow an integrated approach considering spatial, economic, social and environmental considerations. Being a member of the SMART Africa Initiative with a vision to “*Transform Africa into a Single Digital Market*”, Rwanda will implement flagship projects, focusing on SMART Cities and Communities projects. This entails developing cities and communities that integrated shared ICT infrastructure and services and provision of critical public utilities and services in rural and urban setting such as Smart energy, Smart transport, Smart water and sanitation, Smart social services, Smart environment, and Smart agglomeration³⁹.

With regard to transport, priority will be given to ease mobility through the establishment of reliable, affordable and efficient mass transit systems through the development of a modern and efficient transport system.

³⁹ Republic of Rwanda (2020). Vision 2050

4.5.SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals

4.5.1. Domestic Resources Mobilization



Vision 2050 sets a target for domestic revenue mobilization of 21.5 percent of GDP by 2035. Total Tax revenue as a proportion of GDP is currently at 15.7 percent (2022) and stayed in the same range of 15 percent since 2016 (Indicator 17.1.1). To meet the increment of tax revenues by 5.7 percent of GDP in the next fourteen years, the country's tax system has undergone major policy and administrative reforms including a comprehensive strategy that aims at; reducing the tax burden, broadening the tax base, improving tax compliance, and curbing tax evasion. The new pro-poor tax reform also aims at reducing the cost of living while promoting private sector investments. These reforms have been introduced in order to attract investment and generate the domestic revenue needed to deliver on Rwanda's social and economic objectives.

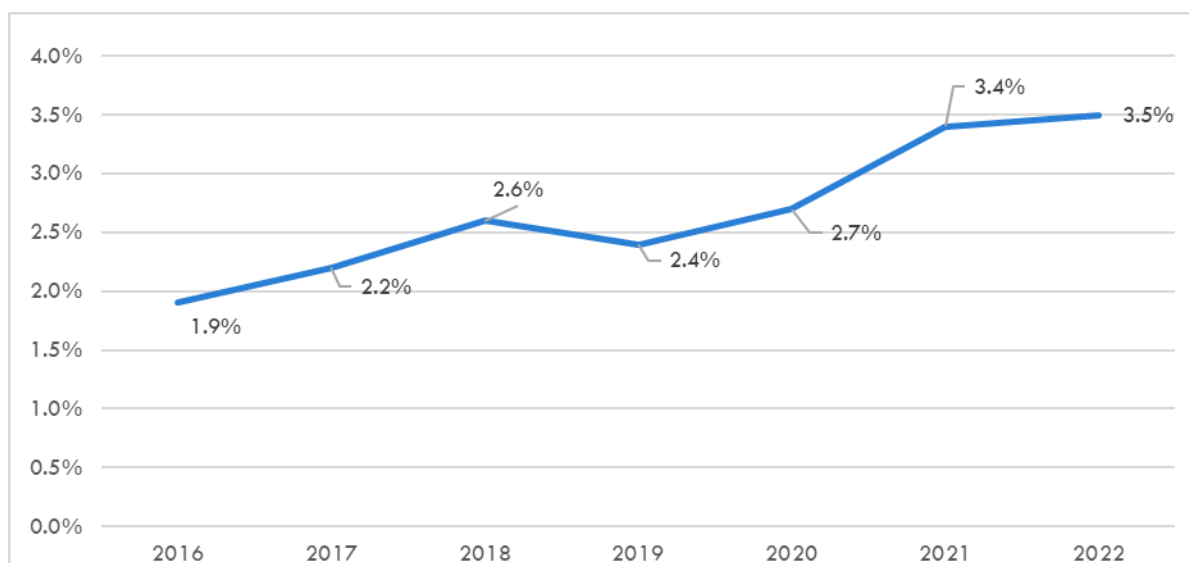
Furthermore, Rwanda continues to implement its policy of self-reliance by financing a large share of its budget from domestic. The proportion of the domestic budget funded by domestic taxes registered a slow increase from 62.4 percent in 2016 to 67 percent in 2022⁴⁰ mainly due to especially the impact of Covid-19 crisis and the Russia-Ukraine war (Indicator 17.1.2). The total domestic resources and external loans combined account for 80.5 percent of the entire budget of 2022/2023 fiscal year.

Rwanda recognizes the need to accelerate domestic resource mobilization and launched the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) for SDGs in September 2020 and facilitated the undertaking of diagnostic works on the funding landscape namely (i) INFF Diagnostic Assessment to identify and provide a roadmap for the Financing Strategy for possible financing solutions.

Realizing the potential of the Rwandan diaspora in the development of the country, the country continues to encourage its citizens living abroad to contribute to the national development process. As a result, the volume of remittances as a proportion of total GDP increased from 1.9 percent in 2016 to 3.5 percent (Indicator 17.3.2).

⁴⁰ MINECOFIN, Macroeconomic report 2016- 2022

Figure 11. Volume of remittances (in US dollars) as a proportion of total GDP



Source: MINECOFIN, Macroeconomic report 2016- 2022

4.5.2 Trade

National Trade Facilitation Roadmap 2019-2024 and National Strategy for elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) 2020-2025 were developed to help the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) to achieve long-term results through effective and sustainable implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and elimination of NTBs affecting Rwanda's private sector.

The 2022 debt sustainability analysis reveals that Rwanda's public debt levels will remain sustainable despite the shift from low to moderate risk of external and overall debt distress. This is mainly attributed to the negative effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on growth, exports, and revenues, which have sharply raised external and domestic financing needs in 2020. The external Present Value (PV) of debt level to GDP is at 34.6 percent, with PV of debt service to exports is at 22 percent and PV of debt service to revenues is also at 22⁴¹ percent (indicator 17.11.1) based on the March 2022 preliminary Debt Sustainability Analysis.

4.5.3 Multi-stakeholder partnerships

Rwanda has under its good governance created inclusive partnerships that have delivered highly visible changes on the ground and has also proactively taken a leadership role in promoting such partnerships across the region and beyond.

⁴¹ MINECOFIN, June 2022

At a national level, partnerships among governments, the private sector, civil society and development of partners are created carefully to foster the county's development based on its medium-term plan and long-term vision.

4.5.4 Data, monitoring and accountability

Through the Rwandan National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS), the production of statistical data was aligned with the National and international development agenda, and data produced are disaggregated by sex, Education, Disability, Age, Location and residence. Throughout the implementation of NSDS1 and NSDS2, the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda established strong patterns of data production and dissemination, improving alignment between data supply and data policy-driven demand. Proportion of the national budget for the implementation of a functional statistical system increased from 0.58 percent in 2013 to 4 percent in 2021.

In 2022, Rwanda successfully conducted the fifth Population and Housing Census (RPHC5) using mobile technology that reduced the time of data collection and dissemination. RPHC5 provides updated and disaggregated data at the lowest geographical levels, when possible, on core demographic, social, and economic indicators to inform the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national, regional and international development plans and programs that the country has committed on, particularly the National Strategy for Transformation 1 (NST1), Vision 2050, SDGS. This was demonstrated by the level of reliable information that was sourced from the 2022 census data for the current VNR report. Similarly, various national surveys are being produced since 2019 which informed the SDGs among them the Labor force survey continues to provide quarterly statistics on employment.

Furthermore, Rwanda released in 2017 a Data Revolution policy aiming to build an innovation and data-enabled industry to harness rapid social and economic development. The current NSDS3 (2019/2020-2023/2024) is leveraging on this initiative to strengthen NISR's leadership within the National Statistical System (NSS), mobilize new partnerships, and strengthen systems and frameworks that underpin the data value chain. To this effect, initiative such as the collaborative work between the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) the Rwanda Biomedical Center, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda and other can be mentioned in the development of a health metadata handbook which to integrate each selected health-SDG indicator into health information systems. This translated into an increase in the production of health-related SDG indicators through administrative data systems; and increased capacity of Rwanda's health information system (HIS) to provide timely, reliable, and disaggregated data. NISR has set up a regional data training center to support the region/continent in building capacities for generating data for evidence-based planning and monitoring.

Since the online Rwanda SDG indicators portal launched in 2019 (<https://sustainabledevelopment-rwanda.github.io/>), NISR has been continuously working with all stakeholders and partners to address the data needs for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

4.5.5 Drivers of Goal 17 achievements

❖ Trade and export

- EAC Integration and partnership: Single Customs Territory (SCT).
- Joint implementation of UNCTAD Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) initiative for Rwanda between UNCTAD and Rwanda National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) meant to enhance regulatory transparency for improved trade facilitation by minimizing the occurrence of NTBs in the implementation of the AfCFTA
- Well-developed national road networks (roads in good condition at 90 percent) has facilitated the smooth transportation of goods in and out of the country. The National carrier (RwandAir) has increased its fleet to 12 and 24 destinations (19 in Africa, 2 in Europe and 3 in Asia) and the recent launch of the Kigali Cargo Hub.
- Establishment of the Export Growth Facility and Operationalization Kigali Logistic Platform (KLP) to support funding and address logistics challenges in the country.
- Regional, continental and worldwide trading agreements signed between Rwanda and other countries on promoting exports from Rwanda.
- Support to potential SMEs to grow into exporters in different areas including capacity building, getting certification, access to market linkages, webpages development, among others through RDB.
- Embracing ICT to enhance trade and commerce- For instance; through the partnership with Alibaba, 8 Companies are trading on online platforms such as Tmall Global and Hema Fresh (FresHippo), 14 Rwanda entrepreneurs were trained under the e-founders fellowship, 14 companies struck deals with buyers at the virtual trade fairs and through direct linkages worth \$26,710,733 and 13 Rwandan companies are trading on international online platforms (e-WTP).
- Economic Recovery Plan and Fund: Prepared and implemented a Covid-19 National Socio-economic recovery plan and fund that supported the hard-hit sectors and those producing goods and services greatly needed in the period of the pandemic.

❖ Data and Monitoring

- Decentralization of registration of vital events- Vital events are registered at the sector level through a CRVS web-based application, and the National Institute of Statistics is immediately served with data from all local registration offices in the country.
- Digitalization of registration services (online platform-Irembo)
- Data revolution policy was approved in 2017 and under implementation.
- Strong collaboration and coordination between NISR and data generating/consuming institutions such as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, National Bank of Rwanda, line ministries, UNDOS among others.
- Rwanda is embarking on the use of big data for M&E.

4.5.6 Challenges

- The prolonged repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic heavily impacted economic activity in Rwanda throughout 2020 and beyond.
- The economic impact of the lockdown on March 21st is reflected in April-June 2020. With a GDP growth of –12.4 percent, Rwanda had its first economic contraction since the beginning of comparable data collection in 2007.
- Tax revenue collections in FY 2019/20 were affected by measures to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. The total tax and fees collected by RRA amounted to Rwf 1,524 billion during FY 2019/20, 7.4 percent increase from the previous period, compared to an annual average increase of 14 percent over the previous six years.
- Conducting the integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV) 2019/20 was not possible which was expected to provide information on poverty and household living conditions due to Covid-19 and its restriction.
- Covid-19 pandemic affected cross-border trade, and the business communities in across countries.

4.5.7 Plans for future implementation

❖ **Unlocking Private Sector Investments**

- UNECA’s 2020 economic report titled innovative finance for private sector development in Africa, emphasizes that private sector has great potential to contribute directly to Agenda 2030 of the SDGs, but calls for innovations by banks and non-bank financial institutions, including financial technology (FinTech) firms and impact investments to respond to the underlying private sector financing challenges.
- Development partners and all relevant institutions should support African member states to develop innovative financing products, tools and mechanisms in order to trigger private sector investment on the continent over the next decade.

❖ **Enhancing Data Generation and consumption capabilities on the continent**

- Reporting on Agenda 2030 implementation has indicated the massive data challenges in many African countries. Going forward, addressing data constraints through systems enhancement, capacity building and collaborations among member states should be promoted across the continent.
- Measures should include twinning countries through South- South Cooperation – where those advanced in data generation and use support their peers. For instance, Rwanda has set up a data center that targets to support the region and continent and aims to invest in data revolution.

5. Overview of progress since the first Rwanda's VNR in 2019



5.1 Human Capital Development

5.1.1 SDG 2: Zero Hunger

Since 2019, Stunting prevalence among children under 5 slightly reduced from 38 percent in 2014/15 to 33 percent in 2019/20 (DHS 2019-20). This is a result of multiple interventions including;

- Promoting food security through increased production, distribution of food and vitamin supplements using Fortified Blended Food (FBF) and continuing to support and scaling up the one Cup of milk per Child and the *Girinka* programme (one cow per poor household).
- Promoting 1,000 days of good nutrition and antenatal care and establishing and promoting ECD centers, health centers, and family-based campaigns on hygiene and good feeding practices.
- Iron Folic Acid supplementation for pregnant women in preventing and treating anemia.
- Evidence-based, human centered social behavioral communication for Improved Infant and young child nutrition practices.
- Improving coordination mechanisms of key players from central to local Government up to the villages including the setting up of District Plan to Eliminate Malnutrition (DPEM).

The stunting levels are however still a challenge and will continue to be a top priority for human capital development. Rwanda will build on lessons learned and scale up efforts to address this critical challenge.



5.1.2 SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being

Rwanda has registered considerable progress towards ensuring good health and nutrition to the Rwanda population. In fact, maternal mortality ratio decreased from 476 per 100,000 lives birth in 2010 to 203 in 2019/20 while the neonatal mortality rate decreased from 27 in 2010 to 19 per 1000 lives birth in 2019/20⁴². At the same time, the under-five mortality rate decreased from 76 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010 to 45 in 2020. Similarly, the proportion of eligible population with HIV having access to Antiretroviral Treatment: reached at 83.1 percent in 2019 against a baseline of 78.2 percent in 2013.

⁴² NISR, Demographic and Health Survey

The proportion of women aged 15-49 who have access to sexual and reproductive health service in the last 12 months has increased from 45 percent in 2013 to 58 percent in 2021. The main drivers for the registered achievements in the health sector are summarized below:

❖ ***Promoting maternal health, and accelerating action on family planning***

- The coordination mechanisms of key players from Central to Local Government were strengthened as well as partnerships with different stakeholders working in Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH).
- Reliable sources of funding through increased domestic funding, health insurance coverage and RMNCAH services considered as part of CBHI health benefits. This contributed to the reduction of Out-of-Pocket (OOP) spending from 5 percent in 2023/14 to 4,5 percent of the Total Health Expenditures in 2019/2043.
- Created an enabling environment through informed policies, strategic plans, guidelines (Health sector Strategic plan, RMNCH policy, Maternal, Newborn Health and ASRH/FP strategic plan, among others).
- The country invested in Family Planning, among other preventive services. Improved demand, uptake and the expansion of quality RMNCAH services to all health facilities through organized campaigns and outreach resulted in a reduced average time to reach the nearby service delivery point from 56 min to 50 min.
- The RapidSMS/ rapid pro system has facilitated the transfer of pregnant women in labour to the appropriate health care facility improved skilled birth attendance from 69 percent in 2010 to 94 percent in 2020 which had a positive impact on outcomes.
- The focus to improve emergency obstetric and neonatal care services, improved referral systems through increased numbers of ambulances country-wide and Functional Maternal Prenatal child death surveillance and response, have also contributed to the well-being of the Rwandan population.
- Strengthened Supply Chain Management through Coordinated Procurement and Distribution System (CPDS) and use of eLMIS system improved the management of drugs and other supplies as well as their availability up to the last mile in the community.
- Strengthened the capacity of health care providers for the provision of quality and equitable RMNCAH health services at all levels through mentorships and e-learning systems.

❖ ***Constructing/upgrading and equipping Health facilities***

- Continuous construction/upgrade and equipping of health facilities
- Constructing at least one Health Post in every administrative cell, by the end of 2021; 1,202 Health Posts were constructed across the country.

❖ ***Improving the coordination of health workforce production and establishing retention strategies for the skilled workforce***

- The Human Resource for Health (HRH) Secretariat was established and is operational. The National Strategy for Health Professional Development was completed to enhance health professional training.
 - The Dual Clinical Practice Policy and Ministerial Instructions were approved and disseminated with following impact on retention strategies of skilled health workforce,
 - o Serve to supplement low public salaries and help governments to recruit and retain health professionals in public facilities even in rural and remote areas without extra-budgetary burden, which could escalate access to services in these locations.
 - o Enhance technical knowledge and skills of government health care providers thus boost public services quality.
 - o Dual practitioners do their best to provide quality services in their public job to get a good reputation.
 - o Reduce the public waiting lists and increase access to health care services.
 - Currently 7 schools across 7 Districts have started to deliver the nursing studies at high school levels.
 - Further developing the capacity of health professionals in different fields through domestic institutions including; University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) offering courses in medicine, surgery, health leadership, and global health delivery, School of Medicine in the Adventist University of East and Central Africa, the University of Rwanda and IRCAD for digestive cancer treatment and minimally invasive surgery training (about to start).
- ❖ ***Establishing model health centers of excellence through partnership with private investors for treatment of Non- Communicable Diseases (NCDs)***
- Radiotherapy centers have started in Butaro Hospital and Rwanda Military Hospital.
 - Organ transplant services have started operating at King Faisal Hospital (KFH).
 - An Open-heart surgery center is yet to start at KFH- So far, the center is operating on mission basis in partnership with Team Heart whereas the establishment of the center is ongoing under the supervision of American Council of Surgeons
 - There is an ongoing Partnership with Faith Based Organizations (FBO) to implement specialized orthopedic centers.
- ❖ ***Promoting industries in pharmaceuticals and manufacturing of vaccines and medical equipment as well as supporting medical research***
- 4 pharmaceutical production units (Pharma lab, Apex Biotech Ltd. Agropy Ltd and LTC YAMEI Rwanda Ltd) have been established, producing a different range of pharmaceutical products such as medicines, medical consumables, pesticides, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
 - BioNTech is building its first manufacturing facility in Kigali, Rwanda, to support the production of mRNA vaccines in Africa.
- ❖ ***Strengthening disease prevention awareness and reducing Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)***

- Mass sports promoted in all districts including the car free days for mass sports events every month coupled with medical outreaches conducted by the Rwanda Biomedical center to screen people in communities.
 - Increased percentage of eligible population with annual medical community checkup for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) from 10 percent in 2013 to 85 percent in 2021⁴⁴
 - Deployment of community health workers in all villages
- ❖ ***Preventing and fighting drug abuse and trafficking among all sections of the population especially youth***
- Regular awareness campaigns in media targeting the youth are always conducted. This include reinforcement of anti-drugs campaigns in schools and out of school for the youth and producing and disseminating sensitization materials
 - Inter-ministerial coordination on fighting drugs was initiated to harmonize the activities.
 - District task forces were put in place to implement the decentralization of the National strategy to fight against drug abuse
 - Positive parenting skills were transmitted through radio shows.
 - Use of digital messages to fight drug abuse, designed and disseminated protocols and guidelines for handling patients of drug abuse in all health facilities, including health centers.

5.1.3 SDG 4: Quality Education



In the previous VNR, the challenge of enormous resources required to finance the rapid expansion of class rooms and education infrastructure was highlighted. As a result of mobilization efforts from domestic resources and development partners, the following progress⁴⁵ has been made;

Class rooms in use have increased as follows;

- Nursery, 7414 in 2020/21 from 5,879 in 2019,
- Primary, 746,604 in 2020/21 from 34,468 in 2019,
- General Secondary, 18,663 in 2020/21 from 15,596 in 2019.

As a result, the pupil/student class room ratios have improved as follows;

- Nursery, 40 in 2020/21 from 48 in 2019,
- Primary, 59 in 2020/21 from 73 in 2019,
- Secondary, 35 in 2020/21 from 39 in 2019.

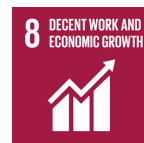
The percentage of schools with smart classrooms is 44.5 percent in general secondary and 35.8 percent in TVET. This is an increase from 17.8 percent in secondary schools and 22.9 percent in TVET reported in 2019. GoR will continue to focus on improving education sector by:

⁴⁴ MoH (2022). BLJSR 2021/22

⁴⁵ Education Statistical Year Books for 2019 and 2020-21

- Implementing the 'non-exclusionary Education' policy
- Continuing to invest in school infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities.
- Developing a comprehensive and accessible curriculum for students with different disabilities.
- Training teachers in special needs education

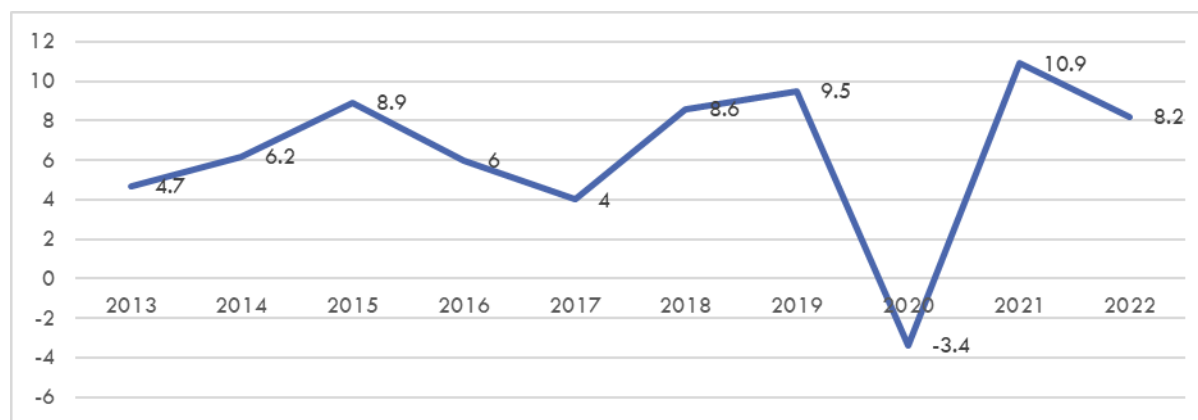
5.2 Inclusive Economic Growth



5.2.1 SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Rwanda registered a sustained economic growth between 2000 and 2018 with an average annual GDP growth of 7.9 percent. Between 2019 and 2022, GDP grew at an average rate of 6.3 percent resulting mainly from the negative effect of Covid-19 (figure 12). In addition, the country's GDP per capita has significantly increased, moving from US\$ 797 in 2018 to \$1,004 in 2022.

Figure 12. GDP growth rate (percent)

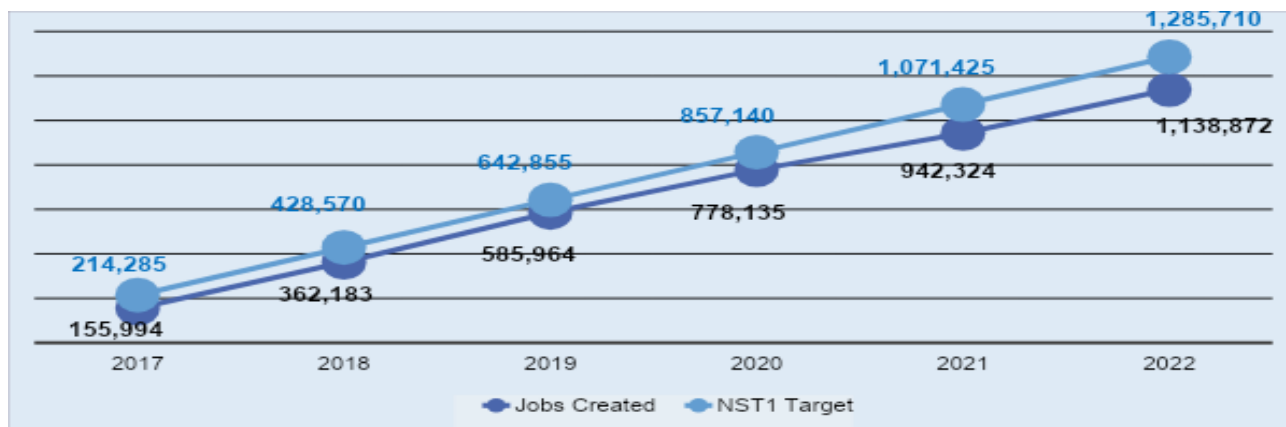


Source: NISR, National Account, 2013-2022

The creation of decent jobs, especially for youth is an important priority for the GoR, with a target to create 1,500,000 decent jobs between 2017 by 2024. In this regard, an annual average of 189,812 descent jobs were created between 2017 and 2022⁴⁶ – a number that is still low compared to the NST1 annual target of 214,000.

Figure 13. Number of new jobs created annually against NST1 targets

⁴⁶ NIST (2021). Labour Force survey, Annual Report 2017-2022



Source: NISR, Labour force 2017-2022

According to the 2021 labour force survey, there has been a decrease in net off-farm jobs of 16 percent equivalent to a loss of 323,382 jobs⁴⁷ between 2019 and 2021, mainly due to Covid-19 pandemic. The rate of unemployment remains relatively high (20.5 percent) – resulting from the decelerated economic activities in the country due to Covid-19 pandemic and related lockdowns that negatively affected businesses and led to jobs losses. The unemployment rate is higher for females (23.7 percent) than males (17.9 percent) and higher for youth (25.6 percent) than adults (17.1 percent)⁴⁸.

Several initiatives, programs and interventions aimed at promoting the creation decent jobs were implemented by the GoR, including:

- The revamping of job creation strategies and programs to enhance effectiveness. In fact, multiple and disconnected programs were merged into an integrated National Employment Program (NEP), which was later upgraded into the National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy.
- Developing and promoting priority sub-sectors with high potential for growth as well as mainstreaming employment into the planning of key sectors of the economy. In addition, guidelines were provided (by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour in partnership with MINECOFIN) to all public institutions on how to mainstream and report on the number of jobs created from public projects.
- Supporting and empowering youth and women to create businesses through entrepreneurship and access to finance. For instance, the 2021 NST1 midterm review revealed that:
 - Micro lease product facilitated access to finance for 2,917 entrepreneurs, including 1,500 women.
 - 29,676 SMEs of women and youth were facilitated to access finance and 5,612 youth-led SMEs were given start-up toolkits. In addition, the Business Guarantee Fund (BDF) provides guarantees of up to 75 percent for women. In this regard, 800 SMEs were supported with Bank guarantees to access finance.

⁴⁷ NIST (2021). Labour Force survey, Annual Report 2021

⁴⁸ NISR, (2023). Labour Force Survey 2022, March 2023.

- Strengthening the coordination, implementation and monitoring of employment promotion Programs.
- Promoting Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) schools to offer skills that are relevant to the labor market. The aim of the GoR through NST1 is to have 60 percent of students enrolled in TVET programs from 31.1 percent in 2017. TVET graduates are supported with toolkits to start their own entrepreneurial activities.
- Strengthening rapid response trainings and industrial attachment programs where more than 20,316 youth benefited from the program between 2017 and 2020.
- The establishment of the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF) aimed to support businesses highly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic so they can survive, restart work/production and safeguard employment. The initiative is in its second phase of implementation.
- Strengthening collaboration with Private Sector Federation and trade unions including in the framework of the National Labour Council to promote social dialogue, social protection and occupational safety and health.



5.2.2 SDG 10-Reduce inequality within and among countries

Covid-19 has hindered NISR efforts to produce new data on poverty and inequalities through the 6th Integrated Households Living Conditions Survey (EICV6) that was planned in 2020. The Survey was put on hold and is planned to resume before the end of this year (2023). This implies that, officially poverty and extreme poverty rates are estimated at 38.2 percent and 16 percent in 2017⁴⁹. There were more female headed households under poverty line (39.5 percent) than male headed households (37.6 percent)⁵⁰. Similarly, the level of inequalities measured by the GINI coefficient remains relatively high at 0.429 as of 2017⁵¹.

Despite the lack of updated data, it is assumed that Covid-19 has hindered national efforts geared to alleviating poverty which might exacerbate the vulnerability of the already poor households. According to the World Bank Rwanda's Economic update report of January 2021, poverty headcount rate due to Covid-19, was estimated to have increased by 5.1 percent which is likely to pull down 500,000 people in poverty⁵².

Social protection continued to be a priority even during Covid-19 pandemic and as part of the "Economic Recovery Plan". Rwanda has developed a Covid-19 the Social Protection Response and Recovery Plan (SPRRP) that was implemented collectively by the Government, the private sector, development partners and civil society. In addition, a social registry is being developed to go hand in hand with the newly adopted strategy for sustainable graduation out of poverty,

⁴⁹ NISR (2017). EICV5

⁵⁰ Idem

⁵¹ Idem

⁵² MINALOC (2022). Social Protection Back-ward Looking Joint Sector Review 2021/22 Financial Year

establishing mechanisms for integrated multi-sectoral approach for graduation and a robust information system to monitor progress.

Rwanda has scaled-up social protection interventions by putting in place a multi-sectoral plan for eradication of poverty. In addition, priority was also given to use of Home-Grown Solutions in delivery of social protection including:

- One Cow per Poor family (Girinka) Program,
- Community-Based Health Insurance (Covering around 93.1 percent⁵³ of the population),
- Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) that includes cash transfers (direct support, public works and financial services). As of now, Rwanda has already supported 112,423 (30,131 male headed households and 82,292 female headed households) eligible vulnerable elders countrywide through direct support in all the 416 sectors, 115,391 (53,229 female headed households, 62,162 male headed households) vulnerable households in 350 sectors supported through classic public works. In addition, 94,369 households (66,150 female headed households, 28,219 male headed households) in 307 sectors were supported through expanded public works, whereas 229,878 beneficiaries (181,035 children and 48,843 pregnant women) were supported through Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support while 51,595 beneficiaries received financial services support (low-cost loans)⁵⁴.

⁵³ NISR, (2023) 5th Population and Housing Census, 2022

⁵⁴ LODA (2023). Q3 Social protection administrative data

6. New and emerging challenges

Rwanda, like many other countries in the world faces a number of emerging challenges that require strengthening mechanisms to ensure that the intended development outcomes are achieved. These include: recovering from COVID-19, climate change related challenges, disrupted global logistics and supply chains leading to rising cost of living, resources mobilization for financing development interventions and cyber security among others.

- a. COVID-19 Pandemic:** Rwanda has showed resilience in managing the COVID-19 pandemic and safeguarding public health. However, the pandemic has raised a need to further strengthen the national health system by equipping health facilities and continuously investing in human resources for health.
- b. Climate Change:** Rwanda remains vulnerable to the impact of climate change due to its geographical features (mountains and hills) and dependent on rain-fed agriculture with limited adaptive capacity. Specifically, climate change has brought changes in rainfall patterns which affect food security and livelihoods. Furthermore, Rwanda's hilly terrain is prone to flooding, landslides and soil erosion in periods of intense rainfall. In this regard, the GoR is committed to taking urgent actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change as reflected in the *Revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)*.
- c. Financing of SDGs:** Mobilizing resources remains crucial for delivering on SDGs in Rwanda. This requires strong engagement of a range of actors including central and local government entities through domestic resources mobilization, effective engagement of the private sector to invest in SDGs related projects, development assistance through the fulfillment of their commitments to support the sustainable development agenda. In addition to that, fostering collaboration among governments (e.g. regional blocks), CSOs, philanthropic foundations, and international financial institutions will be paramount to pool resources, share knowledge, and align efforts for SDGs implementation.
- d. Global supply chains and high commodity prices:** The disrupted global supply chain due to Covid-19 pandemic coupled with high prices of key commodities such as oil, gas, metals, and agricultural products, have increased inflation in many countries including in Rwanda. This implies that the GoR is implementing expansive fiscal policies and provide significant stimulus to the economy through Economic Recovery Fund.

7. Means of implementation

The Country's medium term development strategy, the national strategy for transformation (NST1) which domesticated the SDGs estimated a financing requirement of Rwf 39,246 billion for the seven years 2017-2024 of which 41 percent was projected to be financed by private sector while 59 percent, through the public sector.

The IMF estimated that additional spending is approximately 20 percent of GDP to achieve the SDGs by 2030⁵⁵. The sectors exhibiting this investment gap are transport, electricity, telecom, and water sectors, albeit significant gains have already been registered in these sectors, it is apparent that more needs to be done. Increased investment equivalent to 8.4 percent of GDP from 2019–24 and 6.9 percent of GDP from 2024–40 is required to meet the government's goal of 6.5 percent annual real GDP growth and to achieve the SDGs⁵⁶.

In 2020, the GoR revised its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to a more ambitious climate action agenda with a target of 38 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to business as usual by 2030, equivalent to an estimated mitigation of up to 4.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e). To achieve this, the estimated funding requirement needed is around 11 billion US\$ (5.7 bn US\$ for mitigation measures and 5.3 bn US\$ for adaptation measures)⁵⁷.

A number of reforms and initiatives have been undertaken to increase the government revenues and resource mobilization capacity as a means to implement national priorities and SDGs. As a result, the country's overall budget has increased from Rwf 1.8 trillion in FY 2015/16 to Rwf 4.7 trillion in FY 2022/23. The percentage of domestic resources increased from 65 percent in FY 2015/16 to 86 percent in FY 2019/20. Total tax revenue as a percentage of GDP increased from 13.7 percent in 2013 to 17 percent in 2020/21.

Rwanda is also among the countries that have adopted the Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF). The aim is to ensure strong alignment of sustainability to resource mobilization and allocation. The INFF is a planning and delivery tool that strengthens the link between planning and financing related processes to overcome obstacles to financing sustainable development at the national level. It is the key output of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as the blueprint for strategies to finance the UN Agenda 2030. The country has so far finalized the assessment and diagnostic study as well as the financing strategy, which has set out four strategic objectives namely, increased domestic resource mobilization (DRM); accelerated private finance initiative (APFI) to increase private investment for infrastructure development and achieving the SDGs; enhanced official development assistance (ODA) and promotion of innovative financing including blended finance facilities, exploring Carbon Credit Markets among others.

In addition, the country aims to position itself as a hub for financial services to promote investments across the continent. As such, the Kigali International Financial Center has been established and is operational. The Center has to date established key strategic partnerships (including Jersey Finance, British International Investment, Qatar Finance Center, Belgian Finance Center,

⁵⁵ Spending needs for reaching the SDGs (IMF, 2018)

⁵⁶ Rwanda Economic Update, 'The role of Private Sector in closing infrastructure gap' (WB, 2021).

⁵⁷ Nationally Determined Contributions-NDCs (GoR, 2021).

International Compliance FC4S, bPi France, CASABLANCA Finance Center, Monetary Authority of Singapore among others). The center has also adopted and is implementing an ambitious holistic Sustainable Finance Roadmap with three strategic objectives of establishing necessary financial instruments and availing financial infrastructure and first-class human capital.

In May 2022, Rwanda adopted the medium-term revenue strategy (MTRS, 2021/22-2023/24) that aims to implement several reforms to contribute towards the sustainable development of the country by mobilizing adequate domestic resources (taxes) while creating a modern, equitable and efficient tax system.

Consequently, in April 2023, Cabinet approved comprehensive tax reforms aimed at reducing tax burden, broadening the tax base, improving tax compliance and curbing tax evasion while ensuring that tax revenues continue an upward trend.

Rwanda has over the years promoted partnerships for development including South-South Cooperation. This will continue to be her priority through various platforms and institutions currently championed through Rwanda Cooperation Initiative.

8. Conclusion and next steps

The Sustainable Development Goals were ambitious enough even at the time of their adoption. COVID-19 pandemic further increased the magnitude of required resources by significantly hampering Rwanda's pace for achieving the SDGs. The slowdown of economic activities has challenged national efforts to promote employment and increased the need for social protection to handle vulnerabilities caused by the pandemic.

Rwanda will continue to build on progress made to date, lessons learned, leverage Home Grown Initiatives and mobilize different means of implementation as it pushes for the delivery of National priorities and the SDGs.

Rwanda further reiterates her commitment to building mutually beneficial development partnerships, strengthening coordination with all partners to effectively mobilize and allocate resources for SDGs implementation. Going forward, the following are some of the key steps that will be pursued in the advancement of SDGs implementation;

- a) **Domestication and Localization of SDGs in the next medium term development strategy.** The country's current medium term development strategy comes to an end in 2024. Preparation of the successor of NST1, together with related implementing sector strategies and District Development Strategies will ensure domestication and localization of the SDGs.
- b) **Mobilizing resources for sustainable development,** Rwanda will finalize and implement the strategies and recommendations set out in the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) as a blueprint for mobilizing financing for sustainable development. Domestic resource mobilization will continue to be stepped up with a view to broadening the tax base and easing the burden of compliance. Innovative financing mechanisms will be pursued and debt will be prudently managed. Rwanda will continue to engage with partners to mobilize the required resources to fully implement the SDGs.
- c) **Addressing climate change and disasters:** climate change and disasters continue to pose risks to the economy and going forward more emphasis will go towards integrating climate resilience into all sectors of the economy including infrastructure (energy, transport, housing, settlements), agriculture and industries. More collective efforts are needed at global, continental and regional level for both mitigation and adaptation.
- d) **Building Data Capabilities-** The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda through the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics will continue to build capacities to monitor and provide timely data related to all SDG indicators, and thereby inform decision making. This is aimed at supporting a robust monitoring and evaluation system with adequate data disaggregation.

8.1 Key Lessons Learned

- a) Although the pandemic brought setbacks to the SDG implementation, swift recovery is underway due to concrete policy measures coupled with efficient leadership.
- b) The response to the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the need for a stronger and resilient local economy to minimize exposure to external shocks.
- c) The role that digitalization has played during the Covid-19 pandemic was significant. Digital technologies have been critical in addressing the health and economic crisis and enabling resilience. In Rwanda digitalization was at the forefront of recovery, for inclusive and sustainable development and development of resilience against potential future shocks.
- d) Covid-19 pandemic further exposed the integrated nature between the goals or sectors e.g. how a health pandemic has potential to greatly affect the economy as well as other sectors such as education. As such, GoR will continue to promote integrated planning and collaboration between different players from Government, development partners, civil society, private sector, and academia among others in order to pull resources and efforts towards coherent and integrated planning and delivery of national priorities and the SDGs.
- e) The GoR has been fully committed to the SDGs, and continues to mobilize resources and support the private sector to achieve the overall targets. Despite this, more efforts are required at a local and global level. Global commitments, including those related to climate funding should be honored.

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