

Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation

# Highly skilled workforce for Rwanda's ICT sector

## Rwanda opens up the digital image processing market

Invest for Jobs supports the German company Schnell Media in **training qualified professionals** for its Rwandan branch and **the local ICT sector**. To this end, a vocational training programme in digital image processing is being developed. By the beginning of 2023, 200 people will be trained in Rwanda and at least 100 new jobs will be created.

## A digital pioneer in its infancy

**Rwanda has been positioning itself as a pioneer in digital technologies for years.** Hundreds of public services can be used fully online and almost 95 percent of the country's territory is covered by 4G LTE network. Over 7,000 km of fibre optic cables have been laid to show potential investors that Rwanda is an attractive and excellently connected location for their digital business.

Nevertheless, the digital economy of the East African country is still in an early growth phase. In 2020, the information and communication technology (ICT) sector contributed only 2 percent to Rwanda's gross domestic product. With close to 9,000 people, only 0.26 percent of the employed population worked in this sector in the same year. For the coming years, however, comparatively rapid growth is predicted for the ICT sector, which is becoming increasingly important for the small country. By 2025, 7 percent of all exports are expected to come from the ICT sector - a significant jump compared to 0 percent in 2018.

Within the ICT sector, the digital image processing sector in Rwanda is particularly small. While countries like the Philippines or India have already gained international recognition in the image processing market, Rwanda is finding it difficult to attract investors for this niche market or to promote local companies. So far, the country lacks technical know-how and qualified personnel, although there is demand from media houses and for international service exports. In order to fully exploit the employment and innovation potential of this sub-sector of the Rwandan digital economy, young talents and companies need the right support.



## IT talent as the cornerstone of the image processing sector

The company Schnell Media provides digital imaging services to online retailers, publishers, photo studios and many other clients in the fashion, food, automotive and other industries. In addition to the German headquarters, Schnell Media has decided to establish a subsidiary in Rwanda in 2021 to provide imaging services for the international market.

Invest for Jobs supports Schnell Media in training qualified personnel for its Rwandan branch and for the ICT sector in general. To systematically address skills gaps in the long term and support Schnell Media's market entry in Rwanda, Invest for Jobs has also facilitated a strategic partnership with the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) as part of the project.

Together with RDB, which runs an ICT innovation centre in Kigali to train job seekers and promote IT start-ups, Schnell Media developed a curriculum to train image editors. Initially,

Implemented by

200 young people will be trained in Kigali. Depending on the previous knowledge of the trainees, the training lasts 3-4 months.

Afterwards, the tested course programme will be integrated into the ICT Innovation Centre's teaching offer so that it can be replicated to promote more young talent for future employment in the field of digital image editing.

In addition to industry-specific skills such as retouching, masking, cropping, vectorising and the use of relevant software, the trainees are taught further practical IT and language skills that are essential for their employability in the labour market.

Schnell Media plans to employ about 100 of the first 200 graduates. Invest for Jobs and RDB also support the placement of the remaining graduates in suitable jobs at other companies. For Rwanda's young ICT sector, the programme offers the chance to tap into a promising niche market.

The goal is for more interested investors from the image processing sector to set their sights on Rwanda to make use of the newly available talent in the country.



## One graduation class of many

Since the start of the project and the simultaneous opening of the Rwandan branch in May 2021, Schnell Media has created a curriculum that will be integrated into the teaching programmes of the Rwandan partner institutions in the future. Moreover, 47 people have already been trained, 31 of whom are now employed by Schnell Media. As of now, a total of 40 people is working for Schnell Media in Rwanda. By the beginning of 2023, 153 more people will be trained and over 60 more jobs will be created at Schnell Media in Rwanda.

Thereafter, the training programme will be continued by the ICT Innovation Centre of the Rwandan Development Board to open up new opportunities for future trainees and provide much-needed skilled workers for investors and customers in the sector.

This project to strengthen the ICT sector in Rwanda is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH – one of the implementing organisations of Invest for Jobs.

**Under the Invest for Jobs brand**, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has put together a package of measures to support German, European and African companies engaging in Africa. **The Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation** – the official title – offers comprehensive advice, contacts and financial support through its implementing organisations to overcome investment barriers.

The development objective is to team up with companies to create up to 100,000 jobs, generate training opportunities and improve working conditions in the African partner countries. Programmes are currently in place in the Special Initiative's eight partner countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia.

### Please get in touch!

[invest-for-jobs.com](https://invest-for-jobs.com)

#### For general and multi-country requests:

[info@invest-for-jobs.com](mailto:info@invest-for-jobs.com)

#### For project and country specific requests:

[rwanda@invest-for-jobs.com](mailto:rwanda@invest-for-jobs.com)

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GIZ Office Rwanda  
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Kigali  
Rwanda

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**Contact:**  
For general and multicountry  
requests:  
[info@invest-for-jobs.com](mailto:info@invest-for-jobs.com)  
[invest-for-jobs.com](https://invest-for-jobs.com)

For project and country  
specific requests:  
[rwanda@invest-for-jobs.com](mailto:rwanda@invest-for-jobs.com)

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