Promotion of Economy and Employment Programme

ICT Sector

Why we invest in ICT

With its Smart Rwanda Master Plan, Rwanda aims to become Africa’s information and communications technology (ICT) hub. ICT is among the fastest growing industries in Rwanda. The average annual growth rates between 2011 and 2016 were 15.8 percent, outnumbering services, manufacturing and agriculture. Rwanda’s ICT sector is dominated by telecommunications (75%), which is mostly associated with hardware, but there is an evolution towards IT-services. While the Rwandan domestic market for hardware is estimated to double until 2020, the market for software and IT-enabled services (ITES) will more than triple respectively. To fuel this growth process, more internationally qualified IT-specialists with a focus on ITES are needed. The ICT sector thus has the potential to create jobs and to contribute to overall economic growth in Rwanda.

Our strategy and partners

The Promotion of Economy and Employment Programme (Eco-Emploi) supports the Smart Rwanda Master Plan by promoting private sector digitalization and business development in the ICT sector. The growth of companies is facilitated through the development of better products and services by means of more competent employees and more capable management. Partners from private and public sector, amongst others the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM), the Private Sector Federation (PSF), the ICT Chamber, ICT companies and TVET schools, formed a core group to identify and coordinate all interventions. Within this group, the ICT Chamber plays a crucial role to mobilise all actors. Meanwhile, Eco-Emploi takes on the role as a facilitator between the various actors from government to private sector and society as a whole.

A few of our interventions

To create a digital business environment, MINICOM developed the ICT4COM strategy paper. With its implementation, MINICOM and its acting institutions as well as private businesses will have the legal framework to achieve the goal of a successful ICT driven Rwandan economy. The Rwandan ICT Chamber has taken on the task to strengthen the digitalization of the private sector – an integral part of ICT4COM. In order to be well prepared for this task, the ICT Chamber joined hands with Sequa, a German consultancy specialized on business membership organisations, to strengthen its own organisational structure, communication as well as membership management. In addition, the ICT Chamber and the Federation of German medium-sized IT businesses (BITMi) entered into a partnership. Amongst others, they will implement an ICT Market Barometer to derive information on the market’s demand.

The ICT Chamber facilitates Digital Transformation Clusters (DTC) to identify current and future demands of ICT solutions of companies in the sectors of tourism, wood and transport. For example, the clusters work on digitalizing the tourism service chain along the Congo-Nile-Trail. Tourists will be able to get detailed information and book services such as hotels, activities and restaurants online. More inter sector exchange and collaborations are encouraged: For instance, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and the Forestry Department have plans to establish a Forest Investors Platform. The platform will contain all information on the top 50 forests open for investments, this way national and international investors can search for suitable investment opportunities online. As a basis for future collaborations, an evaluation study about the digitalization process in the transport sector is in the making. In addition, the DTC provide services to businesses interested in digitalizing their operations through Digital Transformation Agents (DTA). The agents reach out to companies to perform discovery workshops in

L to R: Programming practices; ICT professionals

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order to explore their digital potential, to conduct audits as well as to provide a report with a detailed analysis and recommendations for the digital transformation of the company.

The Workforce Development Authority (WDA), the SOS Technical High School, the ICT Chamber and eleven Rwandan and international companies work together on the country’s first dual training approach in ICT. As a result, an established dual training programme now ensures that students are able to acquire the necessary practical work experience through ‘in-company-training’ in order to meet market requirements.

The German University of Koblenz, Jumelage Rwanda, the Rwandan companies 101 Experiments and Children’s Creativity Lab and the Kenyan company Tunapanda jointly develop tech camps for Rwandan students aged 12 to 16. The camps will bring together underprivileged students from rural schools as well as students studying at private schools. The main objective is to raise awareness of tomorrow’s technologies and to increase the student’s interest in technology-based jobs. The first two-week long camp will take place in December 2018. Over the course of the next two years 1000 students, with a special focus on girls and students with disabilities, will be able to participate.

To promote women in the ICT sector, the Rwandan ICT Chamber founded WeCode, the first programming school and IT-agency for women in East Africa. It offers high class IT-trainings to working-age Rwandan women with and without prior ICT degrees. WeCode has partnered with Moringa School and Muraho Technology to develop a six-month long business driven training programme. As a Rwanda/Canadian tech company based in Kigali for more than ten years, Muraho Technology provides insights on tech services highly demanded by local and international businesses. Based on this information Moringa School, a Kenyan world-class software developer accelerator, tailored a curriculum for WeCode’s programming school. After the programme, WeCode, which is constantly acquiring international contracts, employs its graduates for a period of six months before releasing them on the Rwandan market. Therefore, when entering the job market, WeCode graduates have developed a high level of independence and international work experience.

WeCode already entered into a partnership with Samasource, one of the biggest BPO companies in Africa, and RDB. Samasource will set up a freelance agency in Huye to train and employ women in freelance IT-jobs. RDB supports the agency with the necessary infrastructure and WeCode takes over the selection process of the applicants. Setting up this freelance agency is a key step towards opening up Rwandan for one of the fastest growing IT-job markets in the world – freelancing.

E-waste is a rapidly growing concern of today’s society. Rwanda as one of the first African countries has introduced an e-waste policy and established an e-waste factory. To develop a formal e-waste collection system, MINICOM and Enviroserve, an electronics recycling company based in Dubai, want to train 130 jobseekers across all districts to set up collection and repair centres. To boost a circular economy, Enviroserve plans to set up the first repair centre for electronics in Rwanda, which will acquire international licences to repair all kinds of electronics with international guarantees. In accordance with the newly introduced e-waste policy, Enviroserve will train up to 500 current repair specialists throughout the country to acquire the now needed quality certificate by Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority.

What we expect

The declared objective is to promote girls and women to enter the IT-sector. By the end of 2019, about 2000 women will be qualified and connected to jobs in the sector. WeCode is playing an integral part in achieving this objective, and the received enthusiasm from WeCode’s pilot is promising: More than 500 women have registered for WeCode’s first class. The private sector supports the design of the curriculum and shares WeCodes expectations for the alumnae. In fact, several national companies have already offered jobs to future graduates of WeCode. By the end of 2019, WeCode plans to have trained 900 women to become IT-specialists. In addition, Samasource wants to train 100 women in freelance IT-jobs in their first four-week training in 2018.

Overall, the digitalization efforts will increase the productivity of the economy as a whole. Thus, a strong ICT sector will contribute to substantially more and long-term employment in Rwanda.