

Supporting Sustainable Growth and Employment

In Rwanda's Tourism Value Chain



Why we invest in the tourism value chain

Tourism is already a driver of economic growth and employment in Rwanda. The country's tourism revenues increased by 137% within a decade, from 210 million USD in 2008 to 498 million USD in 2019, according to the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). However, the developmental potential of tourism beyond the main attractions, such as the famous mountain gorilla trekking, has so far been untapped. The improvement of tourism services and the development of promising tourism destinations and products are part of Rwanda's priorities.

The Promotion of Economy and Employment project (Eco-Emploi), in collaboration with the Chief Tourism Office of RDB and the Chamber of Tourism, supports Rwanda in making its tourism attractions more diverse and visible to increase economic growth and create employment opportunities. This includes the improvement of tourism services and the development of promising tourism destinations and products with a focus on the beautiful Kivu Belt region. To this end, Eco-Emploi trains tour operators to develop and market new tourism offers in Rwanda, advises hotels and community-based tourism actors on how to improve their management and services, and strengthens the institutional capacities of the Destination Management Unit (DMU) of the Chamber of Tourism in Rubavu. The focus is placed on promoting outdoor tourism such as hiking, bird watching and cycling.

A few of our interventions

Hiking

Rwanda, known as 'the land of a thousand hills', offers excellent hiking trails with spectacular views. Eco-Emploi supports the establishment of management models around hiking trails, the exploration and digitalisation of new services and the certification of trails, for example, the premium trail certification of the Nyanza

The Promotion of Economy and Employment (Eco-Emploi) project is a joint Rwandan-German Development Cooperation Project implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It aims at creating jobs and strengthening micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperatives in the film, tourism and wood value chains through technical and vocational education and training (TVET), private sector development and improvement of labour market interventions.

Cultural Trails by the German Hiking Institute. In collaboration with the Chamber of Tourism, the project provides skills development through training offered to tour guides and porters to increase their income opportunities around the hiking experience. Eco-Emploi also supports the DMU Kivu Belt in the marketing of Rwanda as a hiking destination to attract more tourists.

Cycling

Eco-Emploi works closely with the Rwanda Cycling Federation FERWACY and RDB in promoting cycling tourism in the country. This collaboration includes GPS mapping and signalisation of additional trails, support in marketing activities and development of cycling events, such as the annual Ride Rwanda, which takes place in parallel to the official Tour du Rwanda. In addition, cycling guides and mechanics receive training to professionalise the sector and improve services for tourists.

One of the most famous biking and hiking trails in Rwanda is the Congo Nile Trail. Together with RDB, Eco-Emploi supports the improvement of infrastructure and services along the trail to make it more attractive to hiking or cycling tourists.



L to R: Hiking through the beautiful Kivu Belt; Annual Ride Rwanda cycling event that takes place in parallel to the professional Tour du Rwanda.



L to R: Bird-watching with excellent views in Gishwati-Mukura National Park; Community-based tourism experience at a tea cooperative in the Kivu Belt.

Birdwatching

The promotion of Rwanda as a birdwatching destination is an additional support area of Eco-Emploi. The country is home to more than 700 bird species, comprising 29 Albertine Rift Endemics, in various habitats, including savannah and montane forest. Hence, the project supports the sector in developing its strategies, such as reviewing the National Avi-tourism Strategy (2014-2018) and preparing a new birding strategy to promote Rwanda as a birding destination. Furthermore, Eco-Emploi works closely with its partners to train birdwatching guides to improve the birding experience for tourists and create more jobs in the sector. The development and improvement of linkages along the birdwatching value chain, including developing a birder-friendly accommodation concept together with the Rwanda Birding Association, is also part of the project's interventions.

Community-based tourism

Eco-Emploi supports the development, improvement and marketing of community-based tourism (CBT) experiences in the Kivu Belt and Nyanza district. CBT activities provide tourists with enormous opportunities to experience local life, is a source of income for the local community and raises prospects for job creation, particularly for youths and women. Supported CBT activities include local agro-tourism activities, night fishing, culture and rural life experiences. The project also offers advisory support for the development and implementation of the National CBT Enterprise Guidelines.

Destination management

The DMU in Rubavu is a coalition of private and public tourism actors with the common goal to develop the Kivu Belt into a sustainable adventure and ecotourism destination. Eco-Emploi strengthens the DMU in its institutional development – thus promoting economic growth and job creation in the region. It focuses on promoting conservation and restoration activities, the inclusion of communities in the tourism economy, and the sustainable use of tourism ecosystems and travel options. Eco-Emploi specifically supports the

COVID-19 response

In partnership with the Chamber of Tourism, more than 100 small and medium hospitality enterprises in the Kivu Belt received individual coaching on business continuity planning, safety and hygiene measures, and facilitated procedures for accessing recovery loans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many more benefited from the establishment of a hotline, webinars and online distribution of information material.

DMU in developing a digital platform to promote CBT activities and products, thereby providing an opportunity to the communities to sell their products and services online. Furthermore, Eco Emploi supports the destination management of the Nyanza district, which includes stakeholder coordination aiming at developing Nyanza as a cultural tourism destination with special offers for inclusive tourism.

What we expect

Overall, the development of new and improved tourism offers and their marketing is expected to attract more tourists to Rwanda. This will create more jobs and increase the turnover of tourism-related companies, such as hotels and tour operators, in the long term. Improved tourism policies, organisational capacity development, and skills development and training of tour guides, tour operators, and hotel staff will all contribute to the professionalisation of the sector.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the tourism and hospitality sector hard. Until international tourism can fully resume, an increase in domestic tourism is expected to partly fill the gap.

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