

Special Initiative “Decent Work for a Just Transition”

Driving decent job creation in Rwanda’s Global Business Services sector

The Global Business Services sector: key to Rwanda’s economic transformation

The Global Business Services (GBS) sector represents a transformative opportunity for Rwanda, offering a path to substantial job creation and export growth. Unlike traditional sectors constrained by geographic and resource limitations, GBS investors can leverage Rwanda’s strong communication and IT infrastructure, talent pool, and favourable business environment to overcome these barriers. The sector has witnessed remarkable growth over the past three years and is now home to over 38 business process outsourcing (BPO) and IT outsourcing (ITO) companies from across the globe, employing more than 3,500 people sector-wide.

The GBS sector offers decent jobs that are well-paid, with social protection benefits and career advancement opportunities, which is particularly significant in a country characterised by a high level of informality.

As one of several organisations, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing the Special Initiative “Decent Work for a Just Transition” of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Under the brand Invest for Jobs, **the Special Initiative leverages the growing potential of the GBS sector by strategically positioning Rwanda as an emerging destination for global service delivery**. The approach focuses on strengthening the ecosystem through financial and advisory support to the private sector, facilitating capacity-building initiatives, and fostering partnerships with investors globally.

A model for collaborative impact

The GBS Growth Initiative (GBS GI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that is private sector-led, signaling credibility within the sector. It acts independently from government institutions.

At the same time, it serves as an autonomous convener of high-level government representatives, private sector and key funding partners. It operates under a three-pillar mandate to fill existing gaps, as follows:

- 1) **Investment promotion:** Proactively market Rwanda as a GBS destination, adjust its value proposition and promote Rwanda to global clients;
- 2) **Advocacy:** Serve as a platform for collaboration, provide regular sector updates and forecasts and advocate as a collective to address and overcome industry challenges;
- 3) **Skills & talent:** Map and coordinate existing skilling initiatives to maintain an up-to-date landscape of providers, identify skill gaps, develop targeted solutions, and monitor the progress and pipeline of talent development.



The GBS GI is supported by Invest for Jobs, with the goal of institutionalising collaboration, coordinating collective efforts, and making the sector's investment support more independent from the government and, in the long run, from donor interventions.

Strengths and talent development challenges

Rwanda meets all fundamentals to become a leading GBS delivery location:

- World-class doing business environment with efficient government services and support;

Implemented by



- Strong communication and IT infrastructure;
- Young population, with more than 60 per cent under 30 years, with the potential to develop strong bilingual talents (English and French);
- Move-in ready real estate;
- Strong African hub potential.

However, availability of suitable talent at scale is the main obstacle to sector growth. With the support of Invest for Jobs, along with private and skilling partners, this skills barrier is addressed through various upskilling initiatives. More systemic approaches are currently being developed in collaboration with the industry to create a sustainable talent pipeline. This covers the entire skills spectrum of BPO (representing 50 per cent of the sector's jobs), technical support, (25 per cent of sector jobs) and ITO (25 per cent of sector jobs).



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The industry is driven by major international companies. The sector has expanded significantly, growing from just two companies in 2019 to 38 operators by December 2024. These companies collectively employ over 3,500 young individuals.

Initially, companies relied on training programmes supported by international collaborators. While Invest for Jobs played a crucial role in helping international operators set up in Rwanda to build the first market case studies, this reliance on external training hindered knowledge transfer and delayed the start of operations. To address this, Invest for Jobs partners with relevant stakeholders to develop the necessary talent pools while promoting the growth of local trainers.

Attracting scalable entry-level employment in business process outsourcing

Invest for Jobs is currently supporting the development of a centralised GBS training programme with a standardised curriculum to prepare beneficiaries for

entry-level roles in BPO, focusing on communication, work behaviours, and foundational and soft-skills specific to the sector.

Moreover, language fluency is a significant gap for young Rwandans. Improving these skills requires time and investment, which many employers are unable or unwilling to provide. To address this, Invest for Jobs partnered with a local training provider to conduct a **national assessment of English and French proficiency**. This supports the creation of a candidate database that quantifies the talent ready for GBS roles and identifies those individuals in need of further upskilling, guiding future skills enhancement efforts.

Attracting high-value jobs by providing quality software development services

Rwanda has strategically invested in digitisation to drive economic growth, positioning ICT as a cornerstone of its National Strategy for Transformation. This vision aligns with the high-value roles within the GBS sector. There is an increasing demand for skilled software developers, creating more opportunities for remote work with international clients.

However, companies face challenges in finding talent with the necessary software development skills, communication abilities, and project management expertise. To address this, Invest for Jobs provided comprehensive advice and financial support to more than 15 ITO companies over the past four years, of which 10 companies are from Germany. Invest for Jobs also supported the positioning of "The Gym", a centralised software training programme implemented by the Rwandan company KB21. This centralised approach is guaranteeing the continuity of knowledge and skills transfer and creating a sustainable pipeline for the next generation of Rwandan developers.

Please get in touch!

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