

Special Initiative “Decent Work for a Just Transition”

Strengthening the pharmaceutical and biotechnological sector in Rwanda

Supporting investments in pharma and biotech

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 – among other activities – supports the Government of Rwanda in **building a conducive ecosystem for the pharmaceutical and biotechnological sector**. By promoting skills development, investment, strategic partnerships, and holistic supply chains, the Special Initiative supports Rwanda’s ambition to become a regional hub for biomanufacturing.

Rwanda’s potential for biomanufacturing

Ensuring access to efficient and affordable medical products has been crucial to address the burden of diseases. 70 to 90 per cent of pharmaceuticals consumed on the African continent are imported and less than one per cent of the vaccines administered are locally produced. Rwanda largely depends on international supply chains, as its pharmaceutical and biotechnological sector is still nascent.

To increase the availability of essential medicines and enhance the health system’s resilience, the **Government of Rwanda aims to transform the country into a regional hub for pharmaceutical production including vaccines**. While the pharmaceutical market on the African continent is rapidly growing and has the potential to generate significant economic value, Rwanda is strategically well positioned to provide a platform for production and distribution into the region. Rwanda is expected to benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) through reduced trade barriers and an integrated larger continental pharmaceutical market. Rwanda is also actively seeking to become a digital champion on the continent and is at the forefront of innovation – a great potential for highly automated processes and scaling up pharmaceutical production. With its National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy, Rwanda is

pursuing the ambitious goal of accelerating private sector-led economic growth and creating more than 200.000 decent jobs per year across various sectors.

Build and sustain a conducive ecosystem

The production of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology is a complex process and requires a strong ecosystem throughout the entire value chain. The pharmaceutical sector encompasses a range of interconnected institutions and companies from both the public and private sector. A strong regulatory body and framework that is capable to perform the respective market release procedures is a key enabler to the competitiveness of the sector. Various other resources and processes are needed to enable the manufacturing of high-quality medical products. Such elements include raw material and active ingredient supply, technology, validation and auditing, service and maintenance and logistics and warehousing, among others. Above all, skilled personnel are essential for smooth operation and quality assurance.

Invest for Jobs supports the Government of Rwanda in their endeavour to develop the pharmaceutical and biotechnological sector and strengthen synergies through cross sectoral collaboration. Together, they strive to promote growth and innovation in the industries to create good jobs in Rwanda.

Promoting businesses in Rwanda

Invest for Jobs supports companies seeking to invest in Rwanda’s pharmaceutical and biotechnological sector. For this, the Special Initiative creates a **network with industry, educational institutions, and development partners that acts as a peer group to identify potentials for Rwanda’s industry and address investment barriers**. Invest for Jobs conducted an assessment on segments of the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industry with the objective to identify market potentials for Rwanda. The report will guide the approach to address issues related to regulation, human resource capacity development, raw material and active ingredient supply, and infrastructure.

Implemented by

The Special Initiative assists entrepreneurs to accelerate their innovative ideas into business solutions. Together with the Rwandan Ministry of Education, the University of Rwanda and UVU Bio, the Special Initiative launched the **Rwanda Bioeconomy Skills Development and Acceleration Centre in Kigali**. The centre will provide a physical platform where talent and entrepreneurship can be nurtured. The acceleration programme is designed to provide entrepreneurs and early-stage companies with the resources and support they need to develop and commercialise new biotech products and services. It will offer a range of services, including mentorship, small scale funding, lab and office space and networking opportunities. In addition, the centre will give companies access to the necessary equipment to get their staff ready for employment in the sector.



Invest for Jobs provides companies with **networking, matchmaking, advisory and financial support to scale up investments** and thus create jobs in the pharmaceutical and biotechnological sector. Together with Rwandan partners, the Special Initiative facilitates strategic partnerships and networking among and with the private sector. This includes structured industry exchanges and the annual East Africa Pharma and Biotech Conference.

Developing skills to meet industry needs

Pharmaceutical companies rely on a highly specialised and fit-for-purpose workforce with the right skill set to develop, produce, and distribute their products. At the same time, the public sector requires the right talent to ensure regulation, licencing, and oversight of these companies. In Rwanda, such specialised skills are still scarce. Invest for Jobs therefore supports Rwanda's Ministry of Education as well as public and

private educational institutions and companies in creating and updating training plans and curricula for vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education. Ultimately, Invest for Jobs jointly seeks to train suitable candidates for current and future investments in the sector. In addition, qualification measures for professionals are being offered to better align their skills with the requirements of the pharmaceutical industry and open new employment perspectives.



Invest for Jobs develops a **certificate study programme together with the Centre for Distance Learning in Higher Education (zfh)**. The objective is to foster advanced biomedical expertise through the introduction of a blended-learning programme focusing on both, biomedical knowledge (e.g. molecular biology, biotechnology) and soft skills such as intercultural competences and management. The certificate study programme is jointly developed and implemented through a **multi-stakeholder approach, which engages learning institutions and companies to expose learners to specific diagnostic and production procedures, techniques and workflows**. This will ensure that the provided training is catering to industry and public-sector needs.

Please get in touch!

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