

 **Our World, Our Work**

# A Labor Market Analysis of NEET Opportunities in Rwanda

Harnessing the green economy to provide  
decent jobs for Rwandan youth not in  
employment, education, or training (NEET)

Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Tourism and Hospitality



**EDC** Education  
Development  
Center

Conducted by Education Development Center and the Rwanda Development Board





A Labor Market Analysis of NEET Opportunities in Rwanda

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## List of Acronyms

EDC	Education Development Center
DFID/FCDO	Department for International Development/ Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
FONERWA	Rwanda Green Fund
GDP	gross domestic product
GOR	Government of Rwanda
NEET	Not in employment, education, or training
RDB	Rwanda Development Board

# Highlights of This Report

## Market Sector Opportunities for NEET Youth

This report discovered that while the green and blue economy is emerging and not yet really embraced, Rwanda has the potential to generate thousands of employment opportunities for youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in the following two market sectors:

1. sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and
2. sustainable tourism and hospitality.



## Soil Erosion Control and Buffer Zones Leads to Jobs

In sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, an investment in soil erosion control measures (e.g., terracing and bamboo planting) and then cultivation of 30 out of the 50 meters buffer zone farthest from waterways with youth-friendly, climate-smart agriculture can lead to at least 35,000 jobs. Additional opportunities for youth abound in the following:

- + Solar technology, including lighting, irrigation, and cooling
- + Cultivation of crops, such as avocado and mango
- + Horticulture, and agro-forestry such as mushroom farming and beekeeping
- + Farmed and wild-caught fish
- + Bamboo harvesting and bamboo furniture production
- + Waste management, organic compost, and fertilizers
- + Animal and fish feed production



## Green Technologies Transform Tourism and Hospitality

In sustainable tourism and hospitality, the emergence of green technologies, such as solar technology, electric vehicles, and biodegradable materials, as well as approaches such as solid waste management and composting have the potential to transform this sector—and youth can be at the forefront. By combining knowledge and understanding of new green technologies and approaches with traditional jobs, the potential exists to create new businesses and employment opportunities for thousands of youth.

# Methodology

**This labor market assessment** was born out of a series of consultations with district officials in local government as well as with a range of national stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the following:

- + Ministry of Youth
- + Ministry of Education, including Rwanda Polytechnic and the Rwanda TVET Board
- + Ministry of Trade and Industry
- + Ministry of Labor
- + Rwanda Tourism Board
- + National Green Fund (FONERWA)
- + Ministry of Environment
- + Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA)
- + National Industrial Research and Development Agency
- + Imbutu Foundation
- + Donor partners engaged in private sector development for youth employment

**The assessment built upon** these consultations with key informant interviews and focus group discussions (detailed below).

- + Through these consultations and with the active participation of a subset of these stakeholders, EDC and the RDB selected the two sectors of focus in this report: (1) sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and forestry and (2) sustainable tourism and hospitality. These sectors were selected due to their potential to employ youth from a broad range of educational backgrounds and to drive economic growth in adjacent sectors and subsectors.
- + The purpose of this assessment was to identify tangible short- and longer-term opportunities for growing youth employment in Rwanda's green and blue economy and to also understand the major actions needed to tap into those opportunities. At the outset of this process, EDC and RDB identified six green and blue sectors with the potential for youth employment in Rwanda: (1) sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; (2) transportation; (3) circular economy;

(4) sustainable tourism and hospitality; (5) renewable energy; and (6) green construction. From this list, EDC and RDB engaged in a participatory process with multiple ministries and agencies to focus on two sectors: sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and sustainable tourism and hospitality.

- + Due to limited time and budget, the nature of this assessment was more qualitative than quantitative, although we anticipate more work to be done by a funded project that can revisit this report and expand research into the other sectors. In addition to the desk research contributed by RDB, EDC conducted key informant interviews and youth focus group discussions.

## Key Informant Interviews

The research teams conducted key informant interviews with local employers, government officials, and youth service support agencies. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information about labor market opportunities in their target geographic sites.

**EDC and the RDB selected the two sectors of focus in this report: sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and forestry and sustainable tourism and hospitality.**

## Youth Focus Group Discussions

Research teams also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and business owners to better understand youth perceptions of green opportunities and models for youth-owned green businesses.




**Table 1. Stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions**

Stakeholder Interviews and Youth FGDs		Number
<b>Sustainable tourism and hospitality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Large hotels (3)</li> <li>+ Eco-lodges (2)</li> <li>+ Eco-tours (2)</li> <li>+ Rwanda Convention Bureau (1)</li> <li>+ Private Sector Federation, Chamber of Tourism and Hospitality (1)</li> </ul>	9
<b>Sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Agro-businesses (2)</li> <li>+ Youth cooperatives (5)</li> <li>+ Rwanda Organic Agricultural Movement (1)</li> <li>+ Ministry of Agriculture (1)</li> <li>+ National Agriculture Export Development Board (1)</li> <li>+ Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (3)</li> <li>+ Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (1)</li> </ul>	14
<b>District Officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Rwamagana District (2: Youth Officer and Employment Promotion Officer)</li> <li>+ Rulindo District (2: Employment Promotion Officer and Agronomist)</li> <li>+ Rubavu District (1: District Agronomist)</li> <li>+ Rutsiro District (1: District Act. Director of Agriculture )</li> </ul>	6
<b>Cross-cutting informants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Ministry of Youth (2)</li> <li>+ FONERWA (1)</li> <li>+ Rwanda Development Board (2)</li> </ul>	5
<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ World Vision International (2)</li> <li>+ SNV (1)</li> <li>+ Kilimo Trust (2)</li> <li>+ Agriculture with Innovation (1)</li> </ul>	6

Research teams also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and business owners

Photo: Paolo Patruno

A young woman with short dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and a light-colored skirt, stands in a rural landscape. She is holding a basket of ripe, orange-colored fruits, likely oranges or tangerines, in front of her. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape with sparse vegetation and a few buildings in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

**NEET youth have the potential to be an economic powerhouse, addressing Rwanda's skills shortages and advancing social and economic development, including in green jobs.**

# Twin Challenges: NEET Youth Unemployment and Climate Change Impacts



**8%**

**Rwanda's economy is swiftly recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Growth is anticipated to top 8% in 2024.<sup>1</sup>**

**1%**

**Current estimates place these climate change impacts as equivalent to a 1% loss in annual gross domestic product each year by 2030.<sup>2</sup>**

Yet climate change is already impacting key sectors, such as agriculture. Rwanda's National Strategy on Climate Change and Low Carbon Development (under revision) underscores the existing threat and outlines the potential opportunity in following a climate-smart development pathway, thereby

reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building Rwandans' resilience to climate change impacts through green and blue economic development and sustainable job creation.

**1.2 million**

**Rwanda has 1.2 million NEET youth, which is over 40% of the Rwandan youth population, and youth unemployment is increasing.<sup>3</sup>**

These NEET youth are vulnerable, lack economic opportunities, and are perceived by others as engaging in risky behavior. When equipped with the skills and know-how to enter and navigate labor markets, NEET youth have the potential to be an economic powerhouse, addressing Rwanda's skills shortages and advancing social and economic development, including in green jobs.

**The Government of Rwanda (GOR) prioritizes building the resilience of youth through decent, sustainable jobs that increase NEET youth employment.**

To support the GOR in addressing the twin challenges of high rates of NEET youth unemployment and the impacts of climate change, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Education Development Center (EDC) are proposing an approach that puts Rwanda's NEET youth at the center by equipping them with the skills and know-how to find jobs and launch businesses that support and grow Rwanda's green economy.

This effort aligns with the objectives of the GOR's new Youth Employment Promotion Strategy (draft 2023) which aims to create over 300,000 direct jobs from 2023–2024, with over 3.4 million jobs to be created over the next five years.<sup>4</sup> These jobs will be created through a community-based approach focusing on environment, infrastructure, and agriculture.<sup>5</sup>

## Purpose of This Report

- + EDC and RDB envision a workforce development system that prioritizes green and blue opportunities and ensures that all youth—and particularly NEET youth—succeed in the world of work.
- + To achieve this vision, we have partnered together on a labor market assessment to identify economic opportunities for NEET youth in sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry and in sustainable tourism and hospitality. However, this focus is just a start. As we grow our project, we will address other sectors in Rwanda that are rapidly greening.

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**About the RDB:** Established in 2009, the RDB spearheads Rwanda's government initiatives aimed at building economic resilience by accelerating private sector growth. RDB's Chief Skills Office is the primary coordinator of the National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019–24. This strategy aims to upskill Rwanda's workforce to facilitate long-term economic development by enabling the private sector to play a leading role. The RDB recognizes that green and blue sectors, such as waste management, conservation, and biodiversity restoration, are key to ensuring sustainable economic development and job creation.

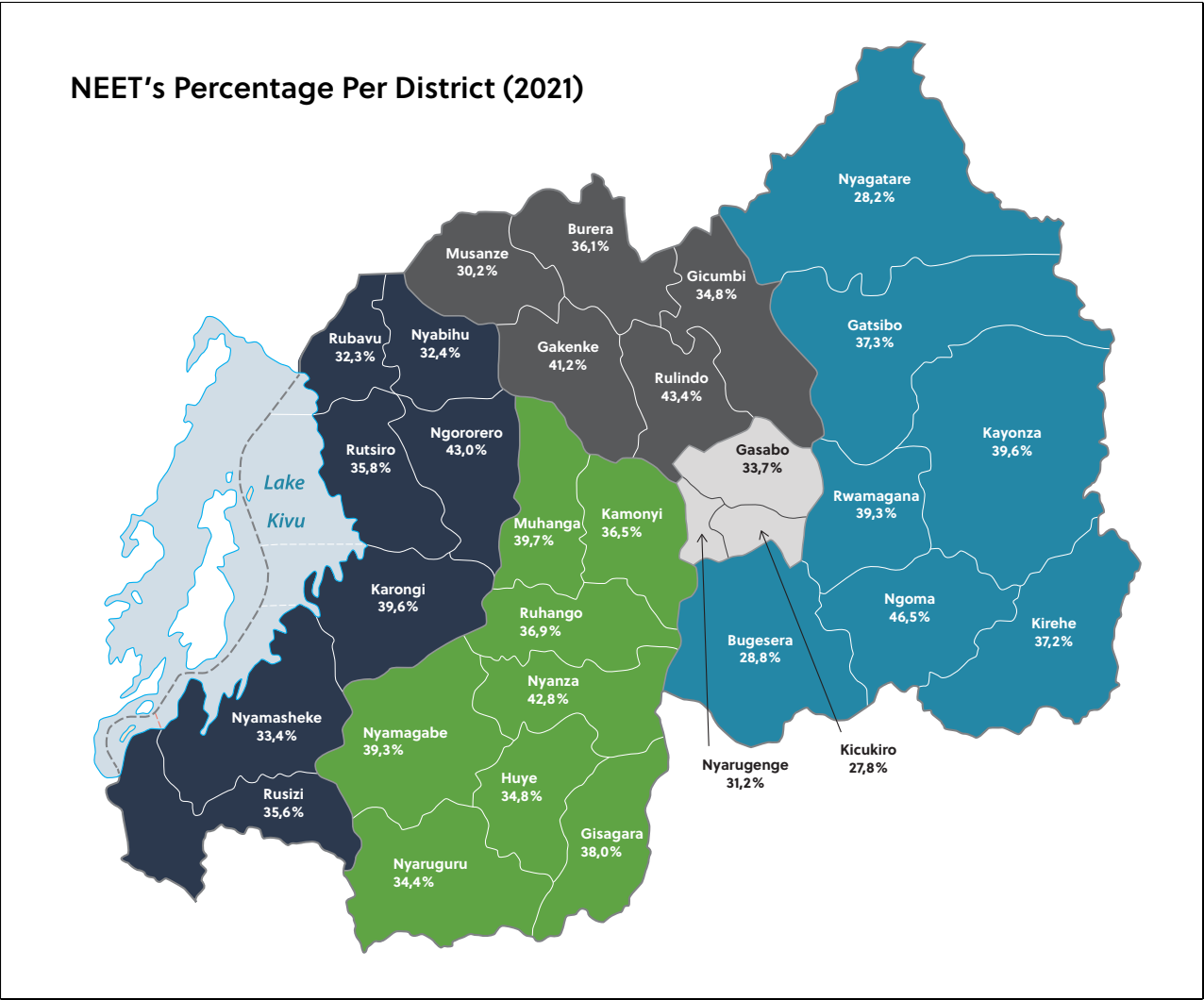
**About EDC:** EDC has been working in Rwanda since 2009 through multiple projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Mastercard Foundation, and the Department for International Development/Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office's (DFID/FCDO's) Innovation for Education fund. During this time, EDC has developed long-lasting relationships with government stakeholders, development partners, and the private sector. Through EDC's programs in Rwanda, we have reached more than 91,000 youth, including youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET), 68% of whom acquired employment or self-employment after completing their training. Of these youth, 32,000 started their own businesses, and 70% of those businesses were still operational after two years, leading to an average 225% increase in incomes among young entrepreneurs. To achieve these results, EDC worked hand in hand with a network of more than 65 service providers, building their capacity to deliver local high-quality employability programming to youth. In 2022, EDC launched Our World, Our Work, a 10-year initiative to place 1 million youth, of which 60% will be women, in employment or self-employment in the blue and green economies.

## Understanding Green Opportunities: EDC's Global Findings

- + **EDC's global research has identified four main barriers that inhibit youth transition to blue and green economic opportunities:**
  1. Skills mismatch
  2. Lack of information
  3. Low market demand for green products and services
  4. Low investment in green business processes and products
- + **What are green jobs?** EDC defines *green jobs* as decent jobs that reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, protect and/or restore ecosystems, and enable enterprises and communities to adapt to change.
- + In partnership with a broad consortium of donor partners, national and local government, service providers, and businesses, **EDC proposes two self-reinforcing pillars that put NEET youth at the forefront of greening the Rwandan economy:**
  1. **Transform existing jobs:** Many jobs are candidates for being greened through practices that reduce climate or environmental impacts. In many cases, this transformation can generate opportunities across a wide range of sectors, including, but not limited to, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable fishing, regenerative forestry, sustainable tourism, and renewable energy.
  2. **Create new jobs:** New technologies and green approaches can generate jobs for youth in wage or self-employment in green or blue industries. For example, by leveraging Rwanda's recent investments, programs, and policies to generate jobs in waste management, or in green construction.



# NEET Youth in Rwanda: An Urgent Challenge and an Untapped Workforce<sup>6</sup>



**18%**

of NEET youth have completed upper secondary or university education.

Youth with no education and youth with a university education make up the **two fastest growing categories** of NEET youth. Youth with technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are more likely than youth with a general education to be engaged in the labor force.

**18%**

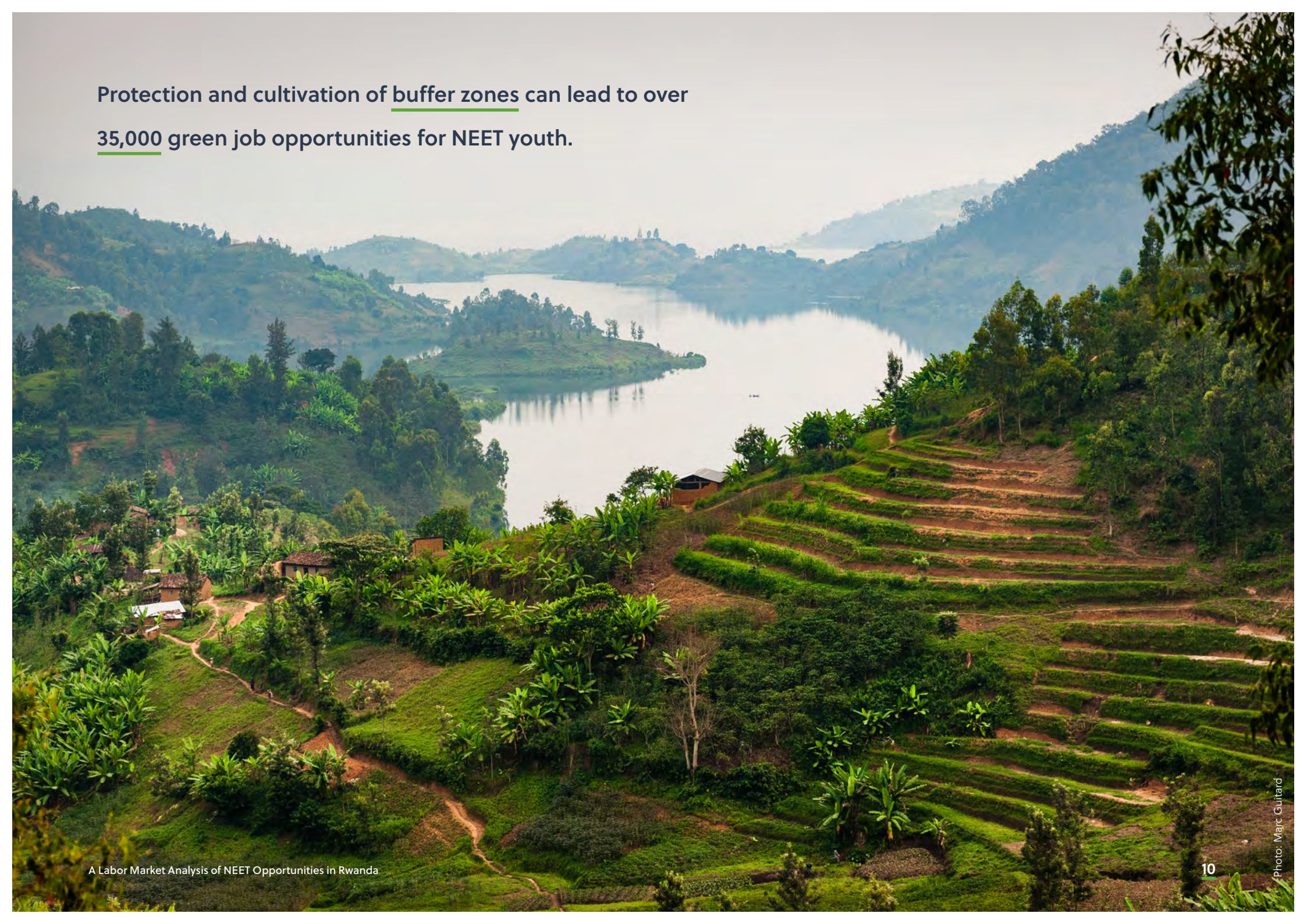
NEET youth are 18% more likely to be women rather than men.

Transitioning NEET youth into employment or education is an **urgent challenge**.

**10%**

Transitioning 10% of NEET youth into employment annually would contribute to half of Rwanda's national target for new jobs per year.<sup>7</sup>

Protection and cultivation of buffer zones can lead to over 35,000 green job opportunities for NEET youth.



# Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

There is lack of awareness around good agriculture practices or climate-smart agriculture.



## 25%

Agriculture contributes to 25% of GDP (mainly food crops) and accounts for 39.7% of employment.<sup>8</sup> Key exported crops include coffee, tea, and some value-added agricultural products such as canned tomatoes, honey, French beans, passion fruit, macadamia, and mushrooms.

## 60%

of agricultural workers are youth, and about half of all agricultural workers are at subsistence level. Youth also struggle to access land. There is a lack of awareness around good agricultural practices or climate-smart agriculture. Some current practices, such as using chemical fertilizers, contribute to erosion and water contamination.

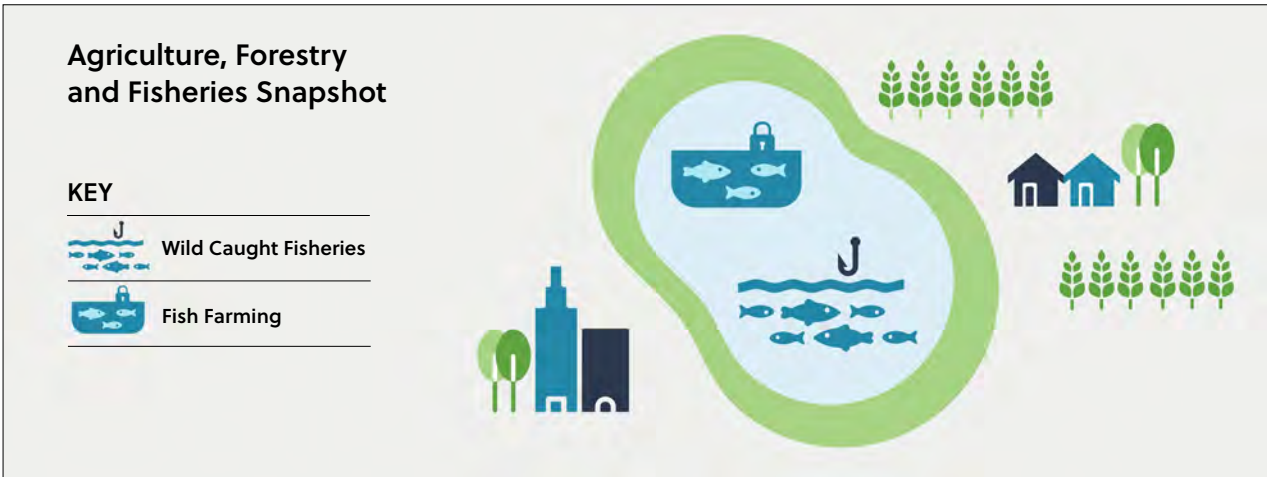
## 2050

Vision 2050 aims to increase agricultural productivity eight-fold by 2035 to address food security.<sup>9</sup> However, it is critical to increase productivity in a way that does not harm Rwanda's environment.

**Climate change is impacting rainfall and temperature and shifting the growing season,** which is reducing crop yields, increasing soil erosion, and causing catastrophic floods leading to human and economic losses.

## 5.33 million

Total emissions, excluding forestry, are estimated at 5.33 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)<sup>10</sup> in 2015. **The agriculture sector accounted for the largest share of the total** (2.94 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e, 55% of total), followed by energy (1.68 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e, 31% of total) and waste (0.64 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e, 12% of total).<sup>11</sup>



## 50-meter

Rwandan law requires 50-meter buffer zones around lakes and waterways to conserve the ecosystems surrounding Rwanda's 23 lakes and 860 marshlands and wetlands.<sup>12</sup> These buffer zones are a high potential nexus of green activity that can impact several sectors at once. Using Lake Kivu as an example, soil erosion and climate-smart agricultural activities in the buffer zones and just outside of them could create more than 12,400<sup>13</sup> green and blue jobs for youth. This number could be scaled nationally to over 35,000 jobs.<sup>14</sup> This also provides youth with access to government land.

**Building progressive terraces outside of buffer zones and/or planting bamboo inside buffer zones** limits soil erosion and is one of the recommendations of the *UNDP Situational Analysis Report on Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Agriculture*.<sup>15</sup> Terraces can be built and bamboo can be planted by youth with low levels of education. Bamboo can also be sustainably harvested and used as inputs to other subsectors, such as furniture making.

Using Lake Kivu as an example, our research estimates that up to 11,270 temporary jobs (6 months) can be created by building and maintaining terraces, or approximately 1,200 jobs per Ha.<sup>16</sup> In addition, planting bamboo could lead to 740 jobs.<sup>17</sup> These are low-paying jobs, but with the right structure, such as offered by EcoBrigade, youth terrace builders can be supported in pathways that lead to entrepreneurship or into cooperatives as a bridge to decent employment.

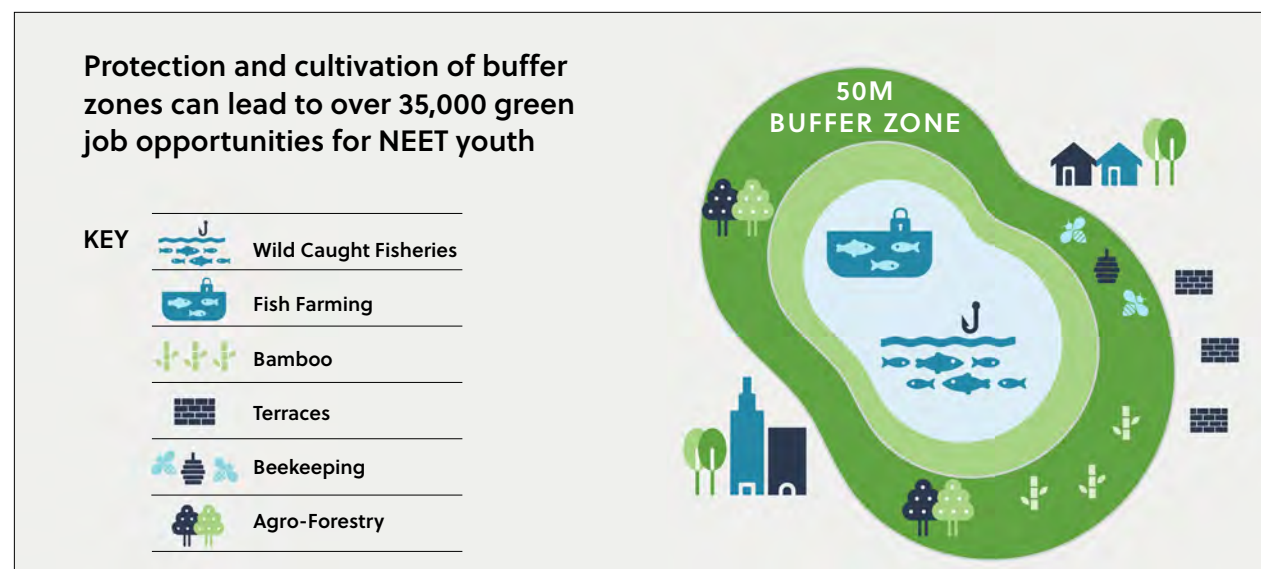
Buffer zones can also be used to cultivate youth-friendly crops that require only organic fertilizers. Examples include palms, fruit trees, and edible flowers, as well as activities such as beekeeping. Each of these activities has the potential to employ youth along the value chain from production to post-harvest processing, packaging, transport, marketing, and sales. We estimate that the jobs created only through planting the buffer zone in Lake Kivu at 430<sup>18</sup> jobs. In addition, we expect a multiplier effect across the value chain as new jobs in post-harvest processing, transportation, storage, and sales are considered.

**With soil erosion and fertilizer run-off into lakes and rivers minimized, wild caught and farmed fish provide opportunities for youth.** Investment from districts can support more youth transitioning into fisheries.

## Additional Youth-Friendly Green Opportunities Identified during Research

Our research has also identified the following youth-friendly green opportunities:


- + Installing and maintaining solar-powered lighting, irrigation, and cold chain systems
- + Production of fish larvae, fish feed, and animal feed
- + Horticulture; mushroom, avocado, and mango farming
- + Waste collection and/or waste management
- + Production of organic fertilizer and manure
- + Bamboo harvesting, making bamboo furniture



## Youth-Led Farmed Fish Cooperative: Hagurukadukore Fumba Advocates for Water Protection

- + **Hagurukadukore Fumba was launched in 2018 by a group of 19 youth, of which 10 were women, who sought to form a cooperative.** The youth had been trained by Maarifa Africa, a local organization and a partner of EDC's Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze program. Inspired by their newly acquired business management skills, the youth formed a savings group and began to save RWF 100 a day. When they had saved RWF 70,000, they approached Rwamagana District (Fumba Sector), which then invested in fish-farming equipment for them under a youth employment program.
- + **Although the youth in Hagurukadukore Fumba initially lacked a clear business idea, as they saved, they learned about the potential profitability of fish farming,** and how profits can be gained over a short period. They also learned about the demand for fish in both the local area and Kigali markets.
- + **In 2022, oxygen depletion in the water led to a massive fish die-off.** Hagurukadukore Fumba estimates the losses at RWF 11,000,000. This die-off happened just as the fish were nearing maturity, and it significantly impacted the lives and livelihoods of the cooperative members.
- + **Investments from the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA), and the cooperative members saved the livelihood.** To prevent a similar incident, Hagurukadukore Fumba invested in the following preventative measures:
  - + Erosion control in the buffer zone near their fish farming area and the planting of grasses to help reduce erosion
  - + Enhancing the skills of their members for monitoring fish health, enabling them to detect potential issues and take prompt interventions when necessary
  - + Acquiring equipment to monitor water temperature
- + **With these new investments, Hagurukadukore Fumba is looking ahead to a good harvest and has plans to expand their business in the upcoming years.** The youth request that the GOR continue investing in efforts to limit soil erosion and protect the environment.





Managers we spoke to expect to hire, on average, 50 new workers in the next 2 years.

# Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality



## The Tourism and Hospitality Sector is a Nexus of Potential Green Opportunities for Youth



**The growth of tourism and hospitality combined with Rwanda's focus on green growth and sustainability can generate opportunities for youth to launch their own enterprises.** These enterprises can support green growth of other sectors.

**1,328 jobs**

A recent world bank report estimates that for each \$1 million USD invested in nature-based tourism can generate up to 1,328 new jobs<sup>19</sup> in Rwanda with impacts across transport, accommodation, and hospitality sectors.

**Hotels are a nexus of overlapping industries and work opportunities, many of which can be greened:**

- + **In-house:** Reception, housekeeping, food and beverage service, catering, driver, janitors, gardening/landscaping, laundry service, accounting
- + **Outsourced:** Audio-visual capabilities, event planners and managers, waste management, HVAC systems, solar panels, catering, tours and eco-tours, construction

**Hotels already invest in green practices and technologies** by using solar panels to reduce electricity costs, collecting rainwater in rain barrels, using glass or reusable bottles for water, or planting and maintaining green spaces.



Photo: Miles Astray



A Labor Market Analysis of NEET Opportunities in Rwanda

Photo: Inzu Lodge, Marie-Noëlle Devito

## 1.1 million tourists

Rwanda was ranked by International Congress and Convention Association as the second most popular destination in Africa for hosting conferences and events. In 2022, Rwanda saw 1.1 million tourists visit the country.<sup>20</sup>

## \$445 million revenue

In 2022, tourism revenues rose by 171.3% from \$164 million in 2021 to \$445 million (about RWF 496 billion).<sup>21</sup>

## 70–80% youth workers

Interviews with managers of large hotels revealed a large youth workforce (about 70%–80% youth workers) across all levels of education.

## 50 new workers

Hotel managers we spoke to expect to hire, on average, 50 new workers in the next 2 years. Hotels will hire about 100 casual workers for each large event.

- + **Outside of Kigali**, small lodges and eco-lodges cater to international tourists interested in visiting national parks and seeing the gorillas or participating in nature-based and community-based tourism or home-stays, which can include learning about agriculture and agro-forestry.
- + **The Nobleza Hotel** utilizes a large solar energy panel to heat water for all 54 rooms. This initiative has significantly contributed to reducing electricity costs from 3 million to 2.5 million RWF per month.
- + **Inzu eco-lodge** uses biodegradable materials to produce organic manure. The hotel maintains its own kitchen garden, does not use plastic bottles, uses bamboo straw, and solar energy for lighting (with four lamps in the restaurant) and solar heating (with one heater) to ensure energy efficiency.



## Youth-Owned Green Business—Golden Insects: Turning Waste into Organic Manure

- + Golden Insect Ltd. is a private company located in Musanze District and owned by a youth named Dominique Xavio Imbabazi. It was established in 2019 and specializes in waste collection and the production of two types of fertilizers. This business includes waste collection, organic manure production, and packaging of organic manure. Golden Insects also produces a second type of organic fertilizer called Vermiliquid compost. The company has a workforce of 20 employees, including 16 youth. In the next 2–5 years, the company plans to employ more than 50 workers.
- + The primary buyers of the organic fertilizers produced by the company are individual farmers, along with some institutional buyers and agro-dealers. Currently, the annual production capacity stands at approximately 120 tons of organic manure and 120,000 liters of Vermiliquid. These products are produced and packaged to fulfill orders placed by buyers. The technology utilized in the production of organic manure and Vermiliquid is environmentally friendly, making it desirable for farmers who are seeking to go green or to improve their practices to be more climate friendly.

### Skills required for organic manure production:

- + Mixing different materials (which have different nutrients) to produce organic high-quality fertilizers.
- + Skills in collection and waste management
- + Skills in packaging techniques
- + Standard skills and knowledge of the application of organic fertilizers

### Barriers to growth:

- + The mindset of many skilled youth who perceive organic manure production as “dirty work”
- + Lack of certification standards for organic manure



**The primary buyers of the organic fertilizers produced by Golden Insects are individual farmers, along with some institutional buyers and agro-dealers.**



# Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to demonstrate the potential of Rwanda’s economy to support the transition of NEET youth into green jobs.



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This report reviewed two sectors: (1) sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and forestry and (2) sustainable tourism and hospitality. We found the potential for significant employment among new and existing green opportunities.

Our primary recommendation is to dig deeper: more opportunities exist across the many sectors and subsectors of the Rwandan economy. These opportunities range from short-term to long-term, and have different skills requirements. Our intent is to follow this report with in-depth local assessments that highlight these opportunities at the district

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level. More than this, there is an imperative—a call to action—that we as global citizens all recognize: to go green is to ensure a just and sustainable future for all.

From the findings of this report, we recommend further actions to address the four barriers identified by EDC global research: skills mismatch; lack of information; low market demand for green products and services; and low investment in green business processes and products. Find our specific recommendations on the next page.

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**We recommend further actions to address the four barriers to capturing green job opportunities: skills mismatch; lack of information; low market demand for green products and services; and low investment in green business processes and products.**



## Skills mismatch:

**Introduce rapid skills pathways for green jobs:** Skills for green technologies are needed in sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries as well as in sustainable tourism and hospitality. The technical knowledge to support upskilling and reskilling of NEET youth differs by technical area and level of education. In partnership with the Rwanda TVET Board and Rwanda Polytechnic, short courses at Level 1 and Level 2 of the TVET system could be developed that allow for rapid skills acquisition and hands-on workplace learning at lower levels. These courses could also benefit employed youth seeking to green their skill sets. At higher levels of education, partnerships with hotel and tourism training institutes, the University of Rwanda, and agricultural colleges can support integration of green skills on-the-job training or the creation of short courses for continuing education of those already employed and seeking to green their skills.

**Use first jobs as a springboard:** For low-educated youth, entry-level green jobs may be low wage. However, as part of a holistic package that includes work readiness and entrepreneurship training, work-based learning situated in real workplaces, accompaniment, access to finance, mentoring and coaching, and support to form cooperatives, these early work experiences can be stepping stones on a pathway to skilled labor and higher wage employment. EcoBrigades and EDC's USAID-funded Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze are examples of how youth can use entry-level work as a first step to transforming their lives and positively impacting the lives of others.

**Increase enforcement of current environmental regulations and increasing extension services provide opportunities** for educated youth to re-enter the workforce through training or retraining programs. The programs will then equip them to enforce environmental regulation or to educate farmers on climate-smart agriculture.

Photo: Paolo Patrundo



## Lack of information:

**Youth lack pragmatic knowledge about savings and financial products and services.** This includes but is not limited to understanding how to access savings and loan products, financial products and programs supporting green and youth lead businesses, as well as what to look for when determining whether a product is a good fit for their personal or business needs.

**Green technologies exist, and many Rwandans are inspired to be green, but they don't know how.** Throughout key informant interviews and focus group discussions, it was evident that many Rwandans do not know the types of work opportunities or business practices that are green. To drive transformative change, the desire to green must be met with pragmatic guidance and government support at the local level through districts and district governance as well as from national programs.

**Increasing knowledge about good agricultural practices and climate-smart agriculture is imperative.** More than 40% of Rwandan agriculture uses chemical fertilizer, yet Golden Insects shows that the demand for organic fertilizer is growing. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment, we suggest creating demonstration and teaching plots that can show smallholder farmers and larger agro-businesses how to implement climate-smart agricultural practices while maintaining a focus on food security and productivity.

Photo: Glowimages



## Low market demand for green products and services:

**The demand for organic products is small but growing.** GOR can incentivize the growth of these products and others, such as organic pesticides and biodegradable packaging, while still maintaining a focus on Vision 2050 priorities. In addition, the lack of organic certification standards is a barrier to businesses trying to establish themselves as producers of organic material. The development of organic certification standards could complement and stimulate the growth of organic products.

**Sustainable tourism and hospitality can contribute to green job growth by building linkages so that hotels can outsource services to youth-led green start-ups.** In addition, many hotels told us they use green technologies, and they teach them to new hires on the job. Creating more work-based learning programs would allow young people to gain hands-on experience with green technologies, so hotels can contribute to enhancing green technical skills across the sector.

**Based on the high potential of buffer zones, a change in existing regulation would allow youth and youth cooperatives to cultivate buffer zones that are 20–50 meters from waterways.** In combination with continuing to fund soil erosion control measures near lakes, rivers, and waterways, cultivation of buffer zones can generate jobs across the value chain for youth. It also addresses critical access to land issues for youth by granting youth rights to cultivate environmentally friendly crops on government-owned land.

Photo: Marc Guitard



## Low investment in green business processes and products:

**Financial service providers struggle with issues of risk mitigation and lack of collateral.**<sup>22</sup> Supporting youth in accessing finance, particularly for green businesses, and supporting financial institutions in piloting youth-friendly and eco-friendly products can address this gap. In particular, we advocate for the development of youth and eco-friendly financial products and services. We envision products that provide incentives for green entrepreneurs and offer financing across a range of thresholds to support micro-entrepreneurs as they move from saving money to creating youth-led businesses to building cooperatives poised to grow. These products can be developed in partnerships with Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA) and financial service providers and through the provision of donor-funded seed funds and matching grants.

**Throughout our interviews, our informants discussed the high perceived price of green technologies.** These costs currently impede the growth of green enterprises and prevent youth from gaining experience with green jobs that may later foster the development of green enterprises. Encouraging investment in green businesses, encouraging youth-friendly financing of green entrepreneurs, and subsidizing costs of existing green technologies can generate new opportunities. These actions can be done in partnerships, such as with FONERWA, financial service providers, and others.

**Conducting innovation events and hackathons can encourage youth to think out of the box on green entrepreneurship.** Inspiring others to think green is a first step, and one that can gain momentum with the investment of local and national actors to support youth in moving from ideation to prototype to market. An example of this innovation is the Zero Energy Cooling Chambers introduced by the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority and developed by the Rwanda Polytechnic Institute of Science and Technology - Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centre (RP-IPRC) in Musanze to introduce locally developed and climate-friendly products.<sup>23</sup>

Photo: Hagurukadukore Fumba

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This report was researched and written by EDC and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) to demonstrate the potential for green job growth for NEET youth in the Rwandan economy. It also looked at two sectors specifically and discovered the potential for thousands of jobs for youth with low education as well as those with higher education. The potential is there. EDC and RDB look to our partners to help us realize that potential for Rwandan youth. Join us.

# Endnotes

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13. Across the 5 districts adjacent to Lake Kivu there are 1,240 Ha with terraces forecasted to be built. To estimate 6 months of working days this is 1,200 jobs per Ha per day divided by 132 days (using 264 working days/year) times 1240 Ha, or 11,270 jobs. Adding to this 740 jobs for bamboo planting and 430 jobs for planting of crops in the buffer zone, we estimate 11,270+740 + 430 = 12,440.
14. To be conservative when estimating national scale, we used a multiplier of 3 to scale from Lake Kivu data to Rwanda's smaller lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and other waterways. 12,400 x 3 = 37,200. We round to 35,000 to ensure the estimate remains conservative.
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16. Across 5 districts adjacent to Lake Kivu there are 1,240 Ha with terraces forecasted to be built. To estimate 6 months of working days this is 1,200 jobs per Ha per day/ 132 days (using 264 working days/year) \* 1240 Ha = 11,270 jobs.
17. Using an estimate of 814 Ha in existing buffer zones along Lake Kivu and an estimate of 120 working days for 6 months, this results in (120/132) \* 814 = 740 bamboo planting jobs.
18. Using an estimate of 814 Ha in existing buffer zones along Lake Kivu and an estimate of 70 working days for 6 months, this results in (70/132) \* 814 = 430 agricultural planting jobs.
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# Our World, Our Work

[www.edc.org/owow](http://www.edc.org/owow)

Our 10-year mission to support 1 million youth in their pursuit of inclusive and sustainable jobs in the green and blue economy. The global climate crisis is laying the foundation for a historic transformation of our global economy—one with tremendous implications for the future of work.

Our World, Our Work initiative at EDC is responding with a youth-centered approach, advancing workforce development in the new green and blue economy that prioritizes the creation of new jobs (renewable energy, circularity and recycling of waste, and electric vehicle manufacturing) and the greening of existing jobs (climate-smart agriculture, sustainable fishing, regenerative forestry, retail services, and manufacturing).



**Rwanda Development Board** is mandated to accelerate Rwanda's economic development by enabling private sector growth. In doing so, RDB coordinates skill development and employment promotion contributing to the National Strategy for Transformation-1 target of creating 1.5 million productive jobs by 2024.

Therefore, the OWOW green projects comes as a huge opportunity for the NEET youth to get employed in the green economy. RDB strongly supports the project to ensure that Rwandan Youth tap into green market opportunities.

