



Republic of Rwanda
Western Province
Rubavu District

RUBAVU DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (DDS) 2024 - 2029



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List of abbreviations

Acronym	Description	Acronym	Description
CBDRM	Community-Based Disaster Risk Management	NCPD	National Council of Persons with Disabilities
CBT	Cross-Border Trade	NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
CCA	Cross Cutting Areas	NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
CENR	Climate change, Environment and Natural Resources	NTBs	Non-tariff barriers
DDS	District Development Strategy	NST	National Strategy for Transformation
DDMCs	District Disaster Management Committees	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
DPRS	District Planning and Reporting System	MEIS	Monitoring and Evaluation Information System
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	MFI	Microfinance Institutions
ECDs	Early Childhood Development	MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
EICV	Integrated Household Condition Survey	MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
GBV	Gender Based Violence	MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
HH	Households	ICLM	Integrated Community-Led Monitoring
HGS	Home-Grown Solutions	OPDs	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
ICT	Information Communication Technology	PWD	People with Disabilities
IDP	Integrated Development Program	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum	SSP	Sector Strategic Plan

FOREWORD

The Rubavu District Development Strategy (DDS) 2024–2029 embodies the collective vision and aspirations of our citizens and reaffirms our unwavering commitment to inclusive and sustainable development. This strategic document aligns seamlessly with Rwanda's overarching frameworks, including Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1 and NST2), and relevant Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs), thereby translating national priorities into actionable initiatives at the local level.

The priorities articulated in this DDS are informed by Rubavu's unique positioning as a secondary city and a strategic hub for cross-border trade. The strategy also addresses the district's key development challenges and harnesses emerging opportunities. Special emphasis is placed on job creation, agricultural transformation, infrastructure development, enhanced social service delivery, and improved governance and citizen engagement.

This strategy is the product of inclusive and participatory consultations with a broad spectrum of stakeholders from the village level to the district leadership. It serves as a guiding framework for all development actors and partners working in Rubavu over the next five years.

We are confident that the ambitious targets and strategic partnerships outlined in this DDS will catalyze accelerated economic growth, foster poverty reduction, and enhance the overall well-being of our population. In doing so, Rubavu will continue to contribute significantly to the realization of Rwanda's national development agenda.

We express our sincere appreciation to all citizens, partners, and stakeholders whose dedication, resources, and commitment will be instrumental in the successful implementation of this strategy.


Prosper Mulindwa

The Mayor



Executive summary

Rubavu District, located in Rwanda's Western Province along the shores of Lake Kivu and bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo, plays a strategic role in regional trade, agriculture, and tourism. With a population of 546,686 people, over half residing in urban areas, the district benefits from its geographic location and economic potential. However, it continues to face major development challenges, including high poverty levels, infrastructure deficits, low productivity in key sectors, and limitations in public service delivery.

The District Development Strategy (DDS) 2024–2029 presents a comprehensive roadmap to address these constraints and unlock Rubavu's development potential. Economic transformation is a central priority, with proposed investments in modernizing agriculture, expanding agro-processing capacity, upgrading road infrastructure, and extending access to electricity and renewable energy. The strategy also emphasizes entrepreneurship support through MSME development, vocational and technical training, and platforms for youth-led innovation. Targeted investments in tourism, cross-border trade facilitation, and transport are expected to boost local economic activity and competitiveness.

The DDS also prioritizes social transformation by improving access to essential services in education, health, and social protection. Key interventions include expanding quality education infrastructure, strengthening healthcare systems and personnel, enhancing nutrition programs, and improving access to clean water and sanitation. Special attention is placed on supporting vulnerable populations to promote equity and reduce disparities between rural and urban communities.

Under transformational governance, the strategy aims to strengthen institutional performance, enhance transparency, and improve service delivery. This includes expanding the use of digital platforms, reinforcing infrastructure in underserved administrative sectors, and building local government capacity for effective planning and implementation. Investments in culture, sports, and civic engagement are also envisioned to foster social cohesion and strengthen community identity.

Rubavu's development agenda builds on its comparative advantages in cross-border trade, tourism, fisheries, renewable energy, and secondary city growth. Cross-cutting themes such as gender equality, youth inclusion, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, HIV/AIDS and NCDs prevention, and institutional capacity development are fully integrated into all planned interventions to ensure inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

To ensure alignment with national development priorities, the district's focus areas have been structured around the NST2 pillars and corresponding Sector Strategic Plans. This alignment is presented in **Table 1 of the Annex**, which maps the district's priority areas and interventions to national pillars and sector targets, and in **Table 2**, which links DDS objectives to broader national outcomes. Backed by local ownership, active partnerships, and a focus on effective delivery, Rubavu District is prepared to drive inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development over the next five years.

1. Introduction

Rubavu District is located in Rwanda's Western Province, sharing a border with the Democratic Republic of Congo and lying along the shores of Lake Kivu. Its central town, Gisenyi, plays a critical role as a cross-border hub due to its proximity to the bustling city of Goma. With a population of 546,683 people, more than half of whom live in urban areas. Rubavu is among the most densely populated districts in the country, with 1,614 people per square kilometer.¹ The district is known for its fertile volcanic soils, scenic landscapes, and growing role in national and regional commerce, tourism, and agriculture. Over 12,600 businesses are registered in Rubavu, making it one of Rwanda's most dynamic local economies in terms of private sector activity². Its location along a key trade corridor, combined with access to Lake Kivu and the Congo Nile Trail, positions it as a strategic district for investment, value addition, and mobility. However, Rubavu also faces significant challenges, including pressure on land and services due to rapid urbanization, environmental degradation in high-risk zones, and gaps in infrastructure and service delivery.

To respond to both the opportunities and persistent development needs of the district, the District Development Strategy 2024–2029 sets out a practical and results-oriented plan. The strategy is intended to steer Rubavu's transformation over the next five years in line with Rwanda's national priorities, particularly Vision 2050 and the Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2). Its central objective is to improve the quality of life for Rubavu's residents through investments that create jobs, enhance productivity, strengthen public services, and build resilience across all sectors. The strategy places particular emphasis on economic transformation, prioritising agriculture and agro-processing, cross-border trade, tourism, and urban infrastructure. It also recognises the need for stronger systems to improve education, health, social protection, and local governance. Beyond the economic and social pillars, the DDS integrates critical cross-cutting areas such as gender equality, youth inclusion, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and digital innovation. These areas are not treated as add-ons but are woven into the strategy's priorities to ensure inclusive, sustainable, and forward-looking development. The rationale behind these choices reflects the district's comparative advantages as well as the realities on the ground, what communities need, what is achievable with available resources, and where the greatest impact can be made.

The development of this strategy was led by Rubavu District in collaboration with national and local partners. It began with a reflection on the district's performance under the 2017–2024 DDS, identifying key achievements, persistent challenges, and areas requiring renewed attention. From there, the process involved a series of inclusive consultations at the district, sector, cell, and village. These consultations brought together local government officials, community representatives and civil society organisations. Their insights shaped the priorities of the strategy and helped to ensure that it is grounded in local context, owned by its stakeholders, and aligned with national development frameworks. A detailed list of stakeholders consulted throughout the strategy development process is provided in **Annex – Table 3**. This DDS is intended to guide decision-making, support planning and budgeting, and coordinate investments that contribute meaningfully to the district's development over the next five years.

2. District Situational Analysis

2.1 Current state of the district (Profile)

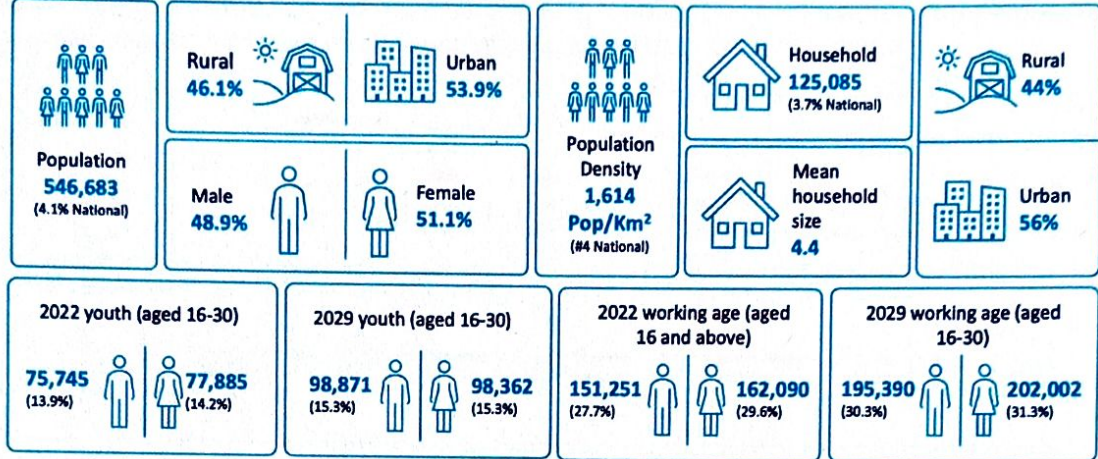
The objective of the Rubavu District Profile is to provide a comprehensive overview of the district's socio-economic, demographic, and infrastructural characteristics. It aims to identify

¹ Rwanda Population and Housing Census (2022)

² Rwanda Establishment Census (2023)

the challenges, opportunities, and potentialities within the district to inform policymaking, strategic planning, and development initiatives. By highlighting key areas such as population dynamics, economic activities, healthcare, education, and infrastructure, the profile serves as a valuable resource for stakeholders to understand the current state of the district and to guide future interventions.

Population Dynamics

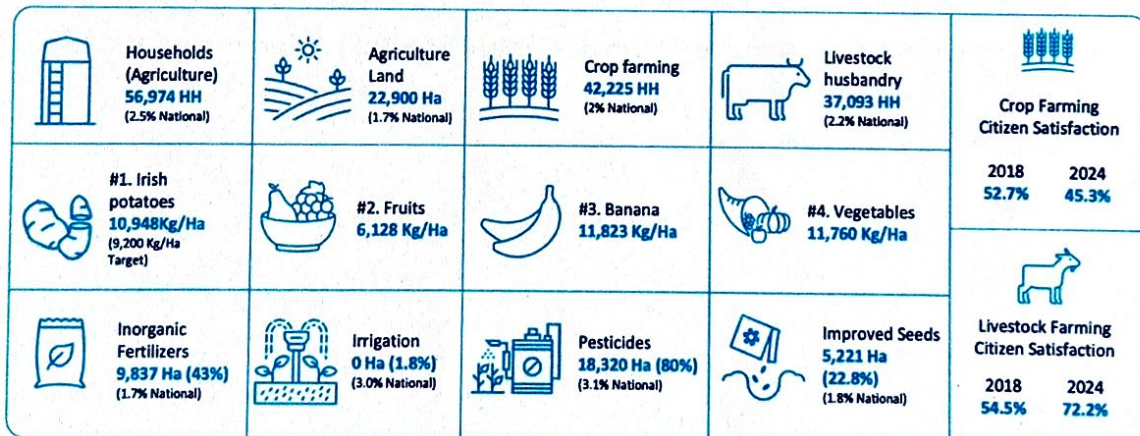


Source: NISR, Rwanda Population and Housing Census 2022

Rubavu District has a predominantly youthful and urban population, with 28.1% under the age of 30, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced investment in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Coupled with a high population density of 1,614 people per square kilometer, well above the national average, the district faces significant pressure on land and natural resources, resulting in overuse of farmland, environmental degradation, and declining soil fertility.

2.1.1 Economic transformation

2.1.1.1 Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (ALF)

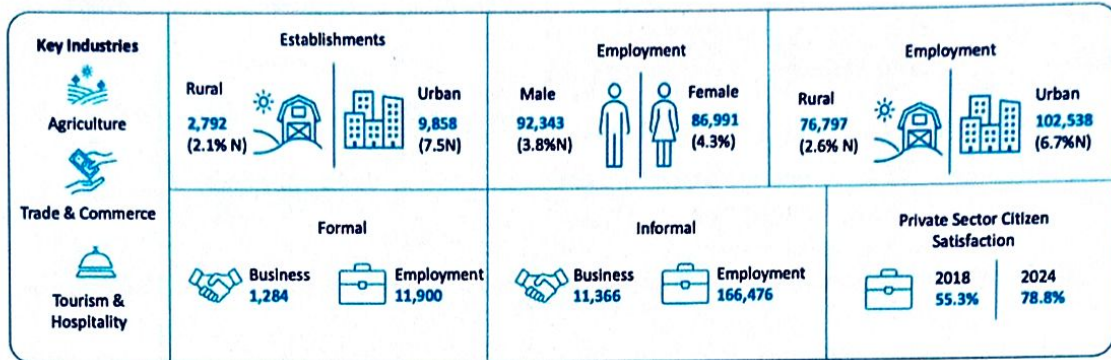


Source: NISR (2024), Seasonal Agriculture Survey; MINAGRI (2024) PSTA5 2024; NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; NLA (2023-2050), District Land Use Plan; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

Rubavu District holds significant potential to boost its agricultural economy by enhancing skills and infrastructure for agro-processing, which can create jobs, increase farmers' incomes, and reduce post-harvest losses. By improving the use of agricultural inputs, adopting modern farming practices, and expanding value addition through processing, the district can substantially increase its agricultural productivity. Realizing this potential would not only improve livelihoods for farming households but also strengthen the local economy and reduce dependence on external food sources.

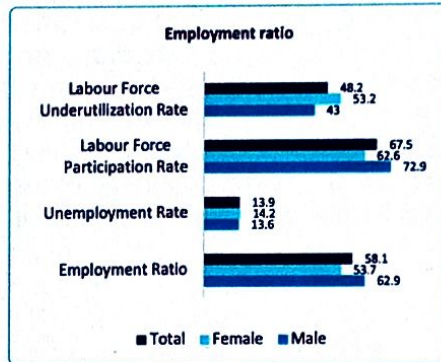
2.1.1.2. Private Sector Development & Youth Employment (PSDYE)

Rubavu District's economy is predominantly informal, with most residents engaged in illegal small-scale activities, reflecting a heavy reliance on informal employment. Despite ranking among the top five districts for micro and small businesses, indicating a strong entrepreneurial spirit, the district lags in large-scale enterprises, ranking only 12th, which limits its ability to generate stable, high-quality jobs and drive industrial growth. The labor market also exhibits notable gender disparities, with men participating more actively while women face higher rates of underutilization and are more frequently excluded from the labor force.



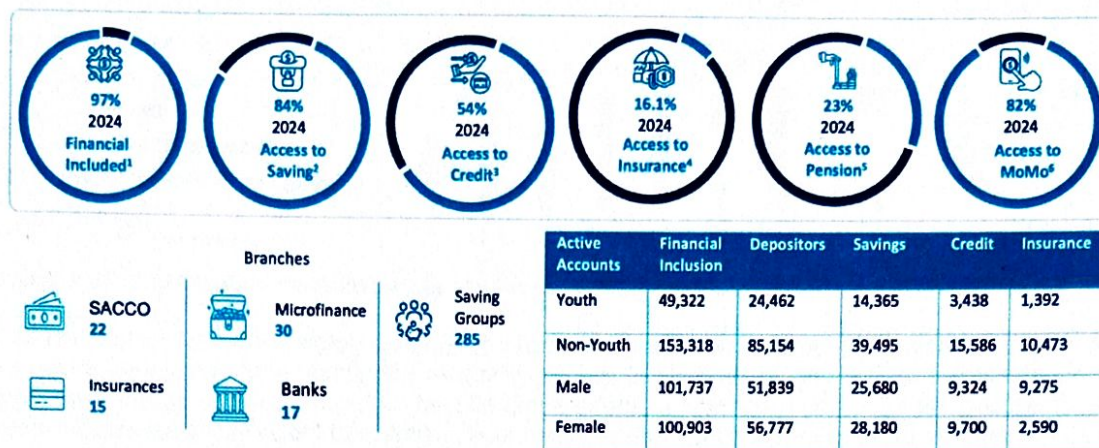
Types of Establishments			
Type	Rubavu	District Rank (High)	National
Private sector	12,654	#5	258,280
Cooperative	114	#6	2,496
Public sector	126	#12	3,830
Public Private Partnership	49	#24	2,047
NGO (Rwanda)	55	#19	2,017
International	10	#19	656

Number of Establishments			
Size	Rubavu	District Rank (High)	Rwanda
Micro (1-3)	11,809	#5	241,179
Small (4-30)	714	#4	16,730
Medium (31-100)	116	#6	3,103
Large (100+)	11	#12	537



Source: NISR (2023), Establishment Census; NISR (2024), Labour Force Survey; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

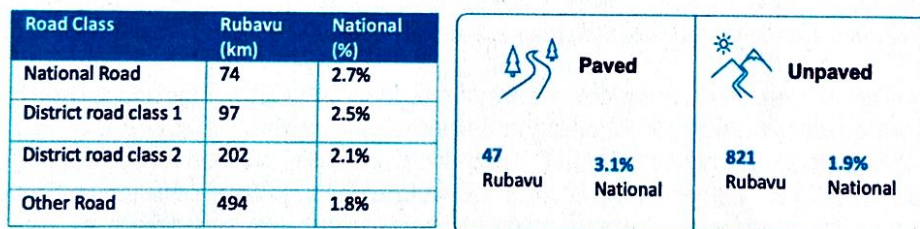
2.1.1.3 Financial Sector Development (FSD)



Source: AFR (2024); FinScope Survey Data Aggregated to District Level, BNR (2023); Saving Groups Data, BNR (2025); Financial Inclusion Dashboard⁹

Rubavu District shows encouraging progress in financial inclusion, with broad participation in basic services; however, a significant gap remains, particularly for youth and women in accessing credit and insurance. While women are active savers, men and non-youth dominate advanced financial services, with only 2,950 women having insurance compared to 9,275 men. As a border district with dynamic trade, agriculture, and tourism sectors, Rubavu has strong potential to drive inclusive economic growth. Leveraging its diverse financial institutions to expand financial literacy and improve access to credit and savings is key to empowering small traders, farmers, youth, and women, thereby addressing persistent socio-economic gaps.

2.1.1.4 Transport



Source: RTDA (2022); NLA (2023-2050), District Land Use Plan

Rubavu's road infrastructure presents a mixed picture, while urban areas and national trade routes are relatively well developed, rural and hilly sectors face significant connectivity challenges that hinder livelihoods and limit broader economic potential. To address this, the district's transport plan prioritizes strategic investments in tarmac and feeder roads, urban transit systems, and cross-border infrastructure, aligning with national development goals. Enhancing transport infrastructure is key to unlocking Rubavu's economic potential in cross-border trade, tourism, and agro-processing by improving access to markets and facilitating the effective and efficient movement of goods.

⁹Financial Inclusion: 22% banked, 71% other formal and 4% informal.

²Access to Saving: 21% saving in the bank, 46% saving in other formal, 13% save in informal and 4% save at home.

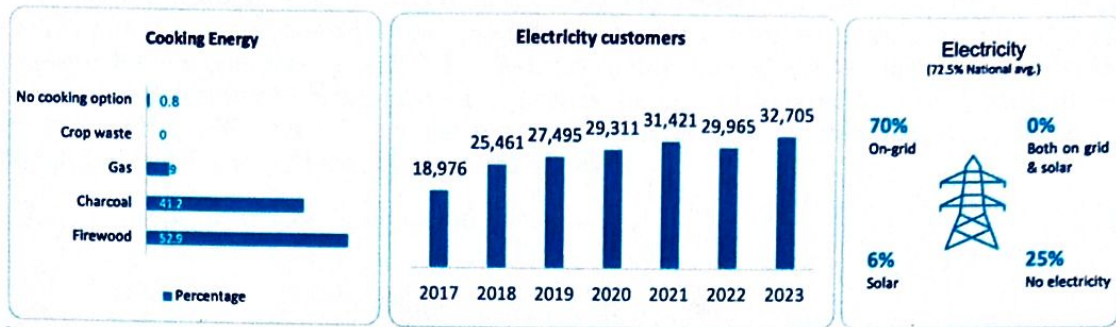
³Access to Credit: 11% credit from bank, 15% credit from other formal, 25% credit from informal and 3% get credit from family and friends.

⁴Access to Insurance: 83.9% are not insured

⁵Access to Pension: 23% contribute to pension fund and 77% do not.

⁶Access to MoMo: 82% use mobile money and 18% do not use mobile money

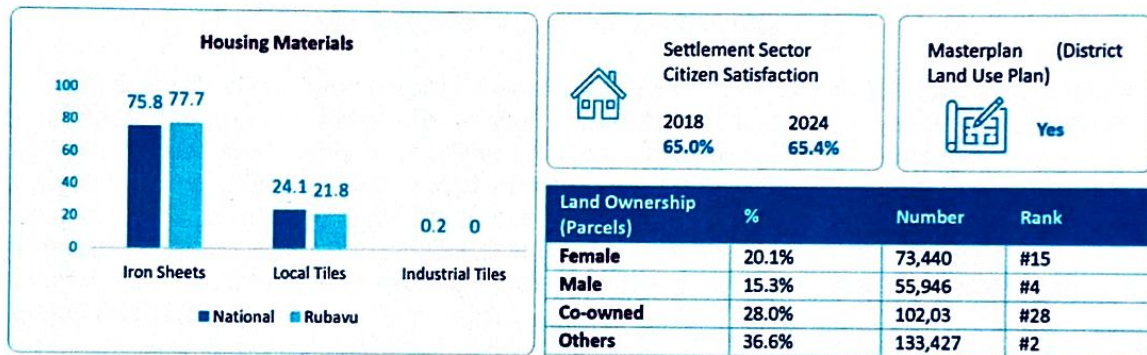
2.1.1.5. Energy



Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; NISR (2024), Statistical Yearbook, EICV7 2025

Rubavu District has made notable strides in promoting renewable energy, particularly through solar power initiatives that have expanded electricity access in rural areas and reduced dependence on traditional energy sources. However, despite these efforts, a significant portion of the population still lacks reliable electricity as of 2024, limiting economic development and quality of life. Addressing these gaps remains crucial to ensuring inclusive economic growth and sustainable energy access across the district.

2.1.1.6 Urbanization and Rural Settlement

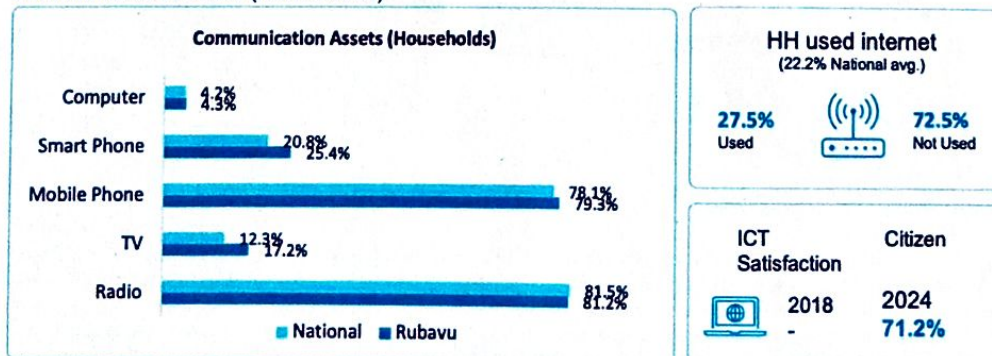


Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; NISR (2024), Statistical Yearbook; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

Rubavu District faces significant challenges in urban planning and infrastructure development due to the lack of detailed implementation plans for its urban master plan and an insufficient budget for executing existing strategies. These issues are compounded by, inadequate staffing for urbanization and rural settlement, limited financing for infrastructure, and the high cost of expanding electricity access, which hinder sustainable urban growth and service delivery.

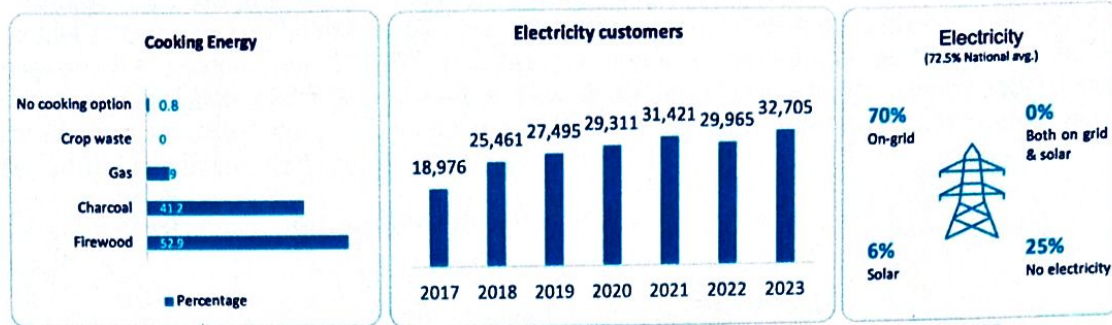
2.1.1.7 Information Communication and Technology (ICT)

Communication Assets (Households)



Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

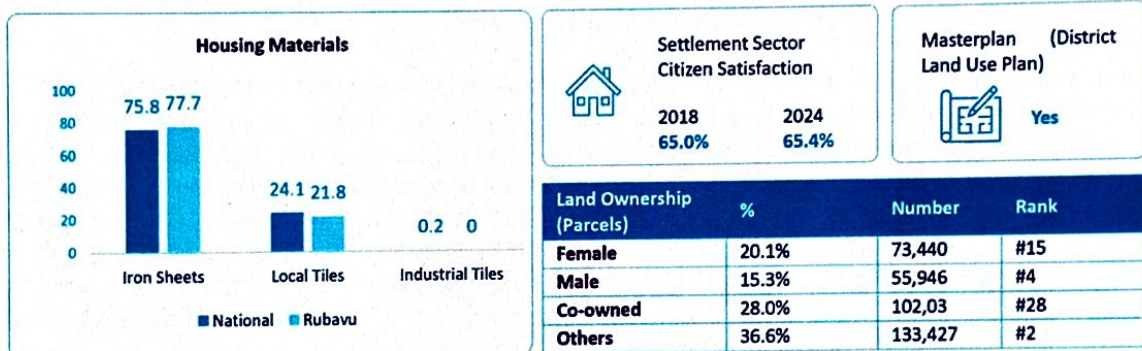
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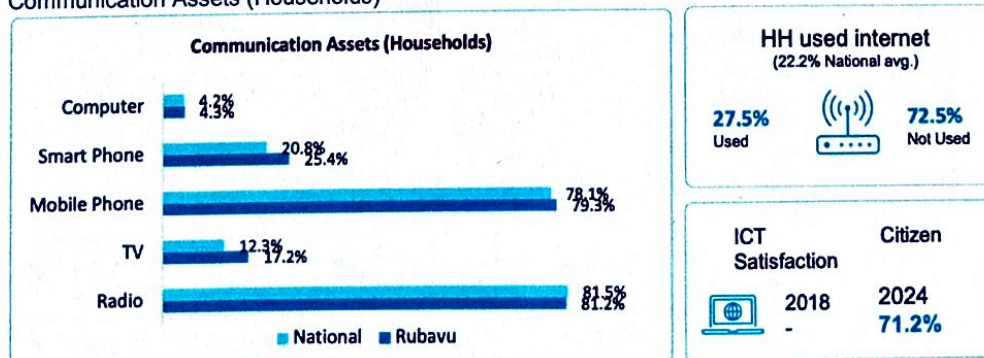


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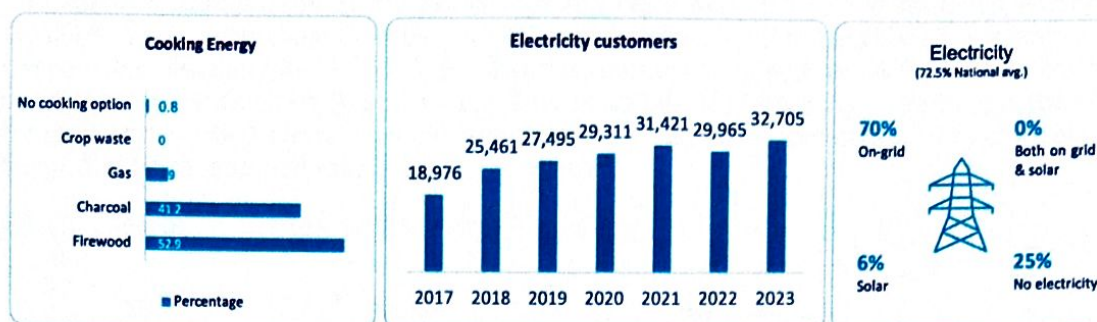
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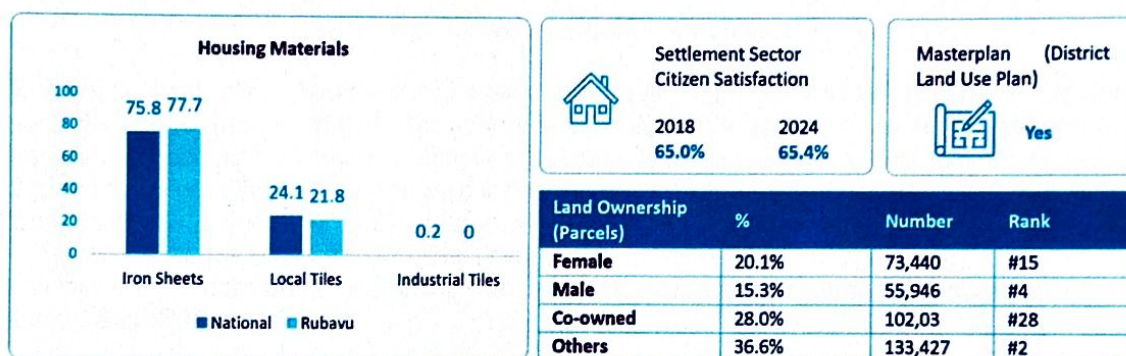
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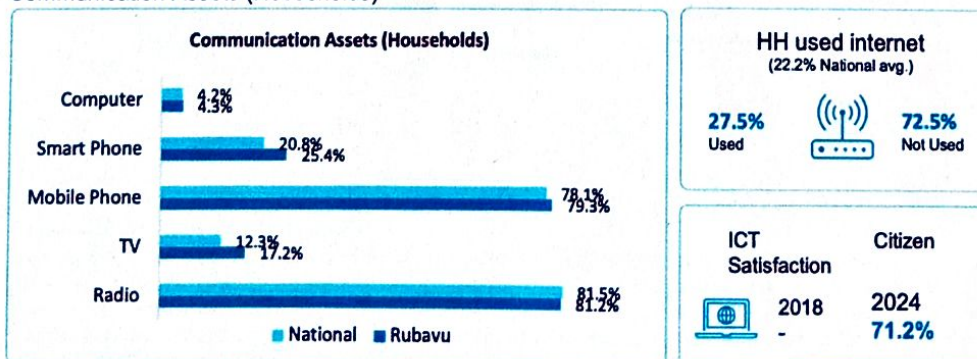


Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; NISR (2024), Statistical Yearbook; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

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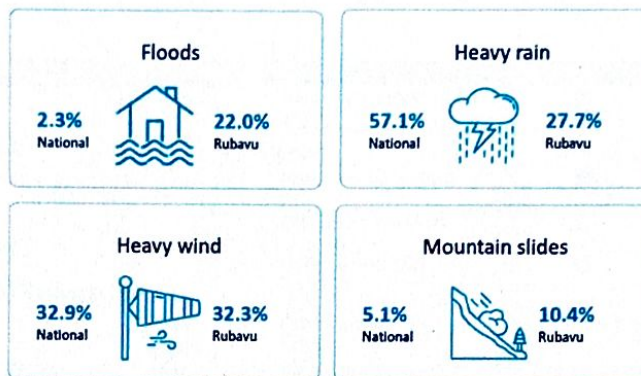
Communication Assets (Households)



Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

The use of mobile phones in Rubavu is relatively high, with 79.3% of households owning a mobile phone which is slightly above the national average, while smartphone ownership also exceeds the national rate of 20.8%. However, computer ownership remains very low, limiting internet access through traditional means. This digital landscape presents strong opportunities for leveraging USSD-based financial services and radio-driven communication campaigns, supported by widespread mobile and radio access.

2.1.1.8 Climate, Environment and Natural Resources

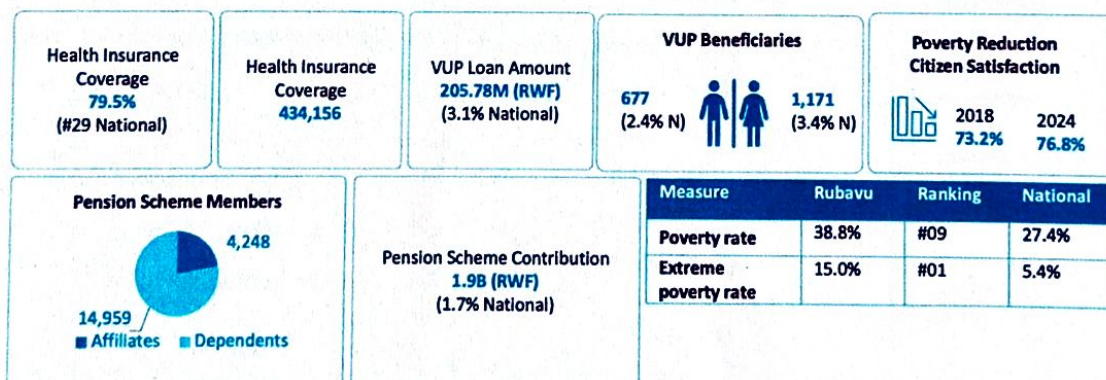


Source: REMA (2018) Rwanda Climate Vulnerability Assessment⁴

Rubavu District's climate vulnerability assessment indicates high exposure to climate hazards such as floods and landslides. The district's sensitivity is significant due to its reliance on agriculture, making it highly susceptible to climate variability. The impacts include reduced agricultural productivity and damage to infrastructure, which adversely affect local livelihoods. Despite efforts to enhance resilience through sustainable practices and community initiatives, Rubavu's adaptive capacity remains limited due to resource and technology constraints. Overall, the district's vulnerability is a result of high exposure and sensitivity, combined with limited adaptive capacity.

2.1.2 Social transformation

2.1.2.1 Social Protection



⁴ **Exposure** – the frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards such as floods, droughts, and landslides.

Sensitivity – the extent to which climate impacts can affect the livelihoods, health, and infrastructure of communities.

Impact – the direct and indirect effects of climate hazards on agriculture, water resources, health, and overall socio-economic conditions.

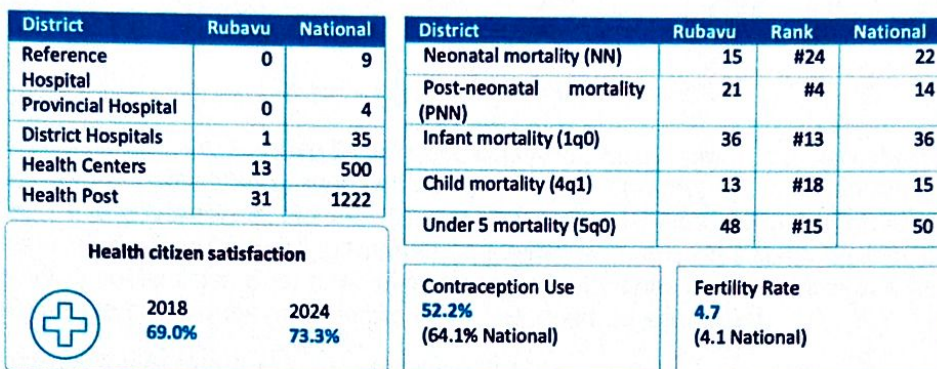
Adaptive capacity - the availability of resources, technology, and knowledge to implement effective adaptation strategies.

Vulnerability - the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change. It is a function of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity

Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; NISR (2024), Statistical Yearbook; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card ⁵, EICV7 (2025)

Rubavu District faces notably high poverty levels, ranking 9th nationally, underscoring the urgent need for strengthened social protection. The district currently benefits from national programs such as Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), the Pension Scheme, Girinka, and the Vision Umurenge Program (VUP), which provide a solid foundation for support. However, there is significant potential to expand the coverage and improve the adequacy of these programs to reach more vulnerable populations and enhance their overall impact.

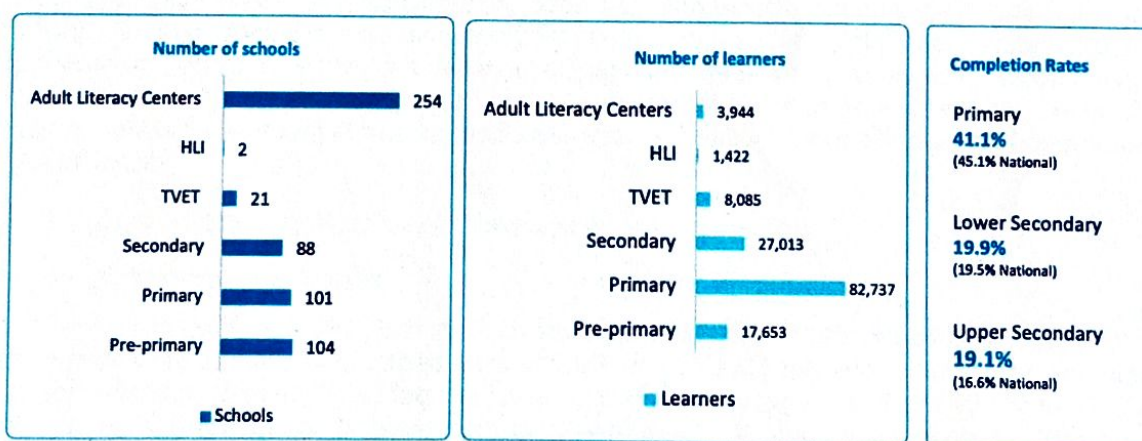
2.1.2.2 Health



Source: NISR (2019-2020), Demographic and Health Survey; MoH (2022); RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

Rubavu District records the highest national rates in neonatal, infant, child, and under-5 mortality, highlighting a critical need for improved maternal and child health services. The absence of reference or provincial hospitals further limits healthcare availability, particularly in rural areas. In this context, Community Health Workers (CHWs) play a vital role in bridging access gaps and delivering essential care at the village level. **Expanding health facilities** within settlements, alongside expected urban growth, presents an opportunity to reduce service gaps and **improve health outcomes** through better **coverage and accessibility**.

2.1.2.3 Education



Source: NISR (2022), Rwanda Population and Housing Census; MINEDUC (2024), School Census; RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card
 Rubavu District hosts a large school-age population, particularly in primary and adult literacy programs, placing significant pressure on existing education infrastructure and leading to overcrowded classrooms and limited resources. The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2024–2029, aligned with national

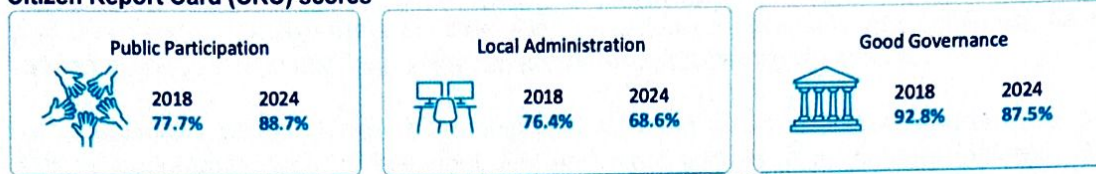
⁵ **Affiliates:** individuals who are registered and contribute to the various schemes managed by RSSB, such as pension, medical insurance, and community-based health insurance
Dependents: family members of the affiliates who are eligible for coverage under the affiliate's RSSB schemes.

strategies like NST2 and Vision 2050, provides a framework for improving education and guiding investments. Given Rubavu's strategic focus on tourism, trade, and agro-processing, there is a growing demand for a skilled workforce, underscoring the need to expand and strengthen Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to deliver market-relevant skills.

2.1.3 Transformational governance

2.1.3.1 Governance and Decentralization

Citizen Report Card (CRC) scores

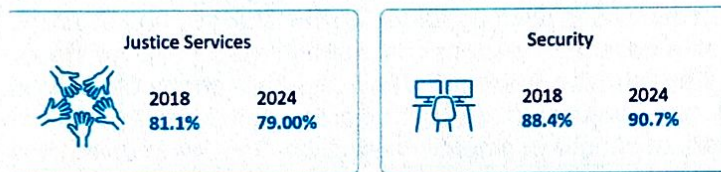


Source: RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

Between 2018 and 2024, Rubavu District demonstrated mixed progress, with notable gains in citizen satisfaction and participation, reflecting stronger community engagement and strides toward inclusive governance. However, perceptions of local administration, governance, and justice services declined, signaling the need for renewed focus on improving service delivery and rebuilding public trust. Sustained investment in institutional performance will be essential to address these challenges and ensure more balanced development.

2.1.3.2 Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order (JRLO)

Citizen Report Card (CRC) scores



Source: RGB (2018 and 2024), Citizen Report Card

Between 2018 and 2024, Rubavu District made mixed progress, with notable improvements in citizen satisfaction and participation, reflecting enhanced community engagement and efforts toward inclusive governance. However, perceptions of local administration, governance, and justice services declined, highlighting the need for renewed focus on service delivery and public trust. Strengthening institutional performance through continued investment will be essential to address these gaps and ensure more effective and responsive governance.

2.2 Rubavu DDS 2017-2024 Performance

2.2.1 Achieved milestones

From 2017 to 2024, Rubavu District achieved notable economic transformation under the DDS framework. Fish production surged from 100 MT to 1,673 MT following restrictions on small-species fishing, strengthening food security. Electricity coverage rose from 40.8% to 77.3%, and over 170 km of roads were built or rehabilitated to improve connectivity. The local economy saw renewed momentum through 13 agro-processing units, industrial park zoning, and direct support to more than 5,000 youth- and women-led MSMEs to enhance financial access and business expansion.⁶

In the social and governance pillars, substantial progress was made. VUP Classic support rose from 4,984 to 29,044 households, while Expanded VUP rose from 421 to 14,862 beneficiaries. Minimum Package for Graduation participants grew from 781 to 2,681. Health

⁶ Participatory workshop with Rubavu District. Key Achievements of Rubavu District in DDS1 and Key Planned Projects for DDS2 Report

infrastructure expanded with 14 health centers and 26 health posts, and staffing ratios improved to 1 doctor per 10,000, 1 nurse per 800, and 1 midwife per 2,500. Stunting rates dropped from 46.3% in 2015 to 25.4% in 2023. Education infrastructure delivered 1,455 classrooms (out of 3,424 planned), 6,745 adults completed literacy training, and 2,463 teachers were recruited.⁷

Governance saw digital service access reach 97%, with 179 institutions connected, and citizen engagement enhanced through Umuyobozi mu isibo program, Imihigo Hour, Igitondo cy'isuku, and Umuganda, which generated over RWF 1 billion. Justice was strengthened via legal training for 644 Abunzi and insurance coverage for 3,220 family members.

For sustainable security, new infrastructure, including a rehabilitation center, two police stations constructed and professional day and night patrols in all sectors initiated. Social cohesion was promoted through 87 peace clubs, anti-corruption campaigns, 720 sports events, three international competitions, and heritage promotion via two Itorero sessions and 22 cultural unity campaigns.

2.2.1.3 Cross-cutting areas

Rubavu District has advanced inclusive and sustainable development through strategic cross-cutting efforts in alignment with NST1 and NST2. **Women's empowerment** has been promoted by improving access to finance, fostering participation in cooperatives, and encouraging leadership, with notable progress in financial inclusion and involvement in land use activities.⁸ **Youth engagement** has increased through innovation hubs, digital literacy initiatives, and support for startups, contributing to employment and the district's growing digital sector.⁹ **People with disabilities** have been supported through inclusive infrastructure, vocational skills development, and mobility enhancements such as non-motorized roads and accessible sports facilities. **Environmental sustainability** has seen marked improvements through reforestation, erosion control measures, and the rehabilitation of the Sebeya catchment area, reinforcing commitments to climate resilience and green growth.

2.2.2. Challenges faced

The district faces multifaceted development hurdles under the NST1 pillars, impacting its DDS 2017–2024 delivery.

Under economic transformation, severe flooding destroyed 82 hectares of tea plantations in 2023, while erosion, insufficient land, delayed seed/fertilizer distribution, and limited agri-input access continue to hinder crop yields. Infrastructure gaps persist, with 21.7% of households lacking electricity and incomplete water supply systems, especially in rural zones. Livestock suffers from disease, costly feeds, and poor vaccine access, while youth entrepreneurship and exports remain weak due to limited skills, funding, and infrastructure. Tourism stagnates due to underdevelopment in sites like Kivu Beach and Rubavu Mountain, and ICT access is limited by poor connectivity and minimal digital services. Environmental efforts such as the Sebeya River protection and mining oversight lack funding and training.

Social transformation is hindered by high poverty rates (38.8% general, 15.0% extreme), understaffed health services, delayed projects such as the relocation of Gisenyi Hospital, insufficient classroom facilities, slow TVET expansion, and low adult literacy. Governance struggles include under-resourced administrative offices in two sectors, no internet in 106 schools, and stalled infrastructure projects due to budget shortfalls and reduced private investment.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Rubavu District, Gender Statistics profile report (2023)

⁹ Rubavu District Development Strategy (2018 – 2024)

¹⁰ MINALOC District Assessments (Unpublished)

2.3.1 Rubavu District Potentialities

Consultations with Rubavu District stakeholders, supported by evidence from RALGA (2024) report on rural district potentialities, identified key areas where the district holds strong comparative advantages. These insights are summarized below and further detailed in **Annex – Table 4**.

Rubavu's location along Lake Kivu and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border positions it as a gateway for regional trade and integration. Daily movement between Rubavu and the city of Goma drives cross-border commerce, creating opportunities to formalize markets, enhance customs operations, and improve trade logistics. The district also benefits from fertile volcanic soils that support high-value crops such as Irish potatoes, Maize, Beans, bananas, vegetables, pyrethrum, Tea and coffee. These agricultural advantages make Rubavu a candidate for agro-processing investments and rural industrialization.

Tourism is a key strength, with attractions including sandy beaches, hot springs, the Congo Nile Trail, Nengo hill, mount Muhungwe, Rubavu mountain eco park and proximity to Volcanoes National Park. These assets provide a foundation for developing eco-tourism, community-based tourism, and adventure travel, contributing directly to local employment and small enterprise growth. In parallel, Lake Kivu supports both subsistence and commercial fishing, and the district's natural setting provides a backdrop for recreational activities and sports development.

Rubavu is also emerging as a financial services hub, especially for clients from eastern DRC, owing to its stable environment and the presence of banks, SACCOs, and microfinance institutions. Urban growth in Gisenyi and other centers presents further opportunities for infrastructure investment, including integrated housing, energy access, transport, and ICT. Additional opportunities exist in mining, methane gas extraction, and lake transport, while smaller sectors such as beekeeping and conservation play a role in supporting biodiversity, climate resilience, and community engagement.

3. Strategic framework

3.1 Priorities and innovations

The Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) for the period 2024–2029 identifies five key priority areas that guide Rwanda's development efforts. These priorities are a continuation of those set out under NST1 and are closely aligned with Vision 2050, which seeks to ensure sustainable economic growth and a high standard of living for all Rwandans. The Rubavu District Development Strategy (DDS) has been developed to translate these national priorities into concrete local actions. Through consultations with district officials and stakeholders, Rubavu has tailored its development focus to align with the national agenda. In the area of economic transformation, the district will focus on modernizing agriculture, increasing cash crop production, improving climate resilience, and linking farmers to insurance schemes. It will also support local job creation through MSME support, vocational training, and youth-focused entrepreneurship. Investments in tourism, digital literacy, innovation hubs, road construction, electricity access, and renewable energy are also planned to support economic growth.

Social and governance priorities are centered around expanding access to education and health services, strengthening social protection, and improving local governance. The district will build and rehabilitate schools and vocational centers, improve health infrastructure, and increase the number of trained health workers. Vulnerable households will benefit from housing support, financial assistance, and disaster risk reduction measures. Governance efforts will emphasize community participation in planning, improved service delivery through digital platforms such as IREMBO, and greater accountability at the local level. Cultural

initiatives and sports development will be supported to promote national identity and community engagement. These district-level efforts are designed to ensure that Rubavu plays its part in meeting national targets and advancing the goals of NST2 and Vision 2050

3.2 Strategic alignment with district potentialities

Rubavu's strategic priorities have been carefully designed to align with the district's strengths, ensuring that development interventions are feasible, inclusive, and sustainable. By mapping potentialities identified in Section 2.3.1 to strategic actions, the DDS provides a clear link between what the district can excel at and how it plans to achieve meaningful development outcomes. This alignment is presented in detail in **Annex – Table 5**.

For example, investments in eco-tourism and cross-border travel packages respond directly to Rubavu's natural beauty and location. Agro-processing zones, expanded irrigation, and input access align with the district's agricultural productivity and land availability. The focus on formalizing informal trade, enhancing financial access, and improving urban infrastructure reflects Rubavu's role as a commercial and financial center. Similarly, plans for sports facilities, youth innovation hubs, and green urban spaces build on the district's dynamic youth population and recreational geography.

This strategic alignment ensures that Rubavu's development efforts are grounded in local reality, driven by community priorities, and oriented toward inclusive growth. It also strengthens the district's contribution to national development goals under NST2 and Vision 2050 by turning potential into practical, targeted results.

3.3 Alignment with NST2 and SSPs

The effectiveness of district development planning depends not only on identifying local priorities but also on aligning them with national and sectoral priorities. **Table 1** below presents a structured alignment between the district priority areas, respective interventions, and their alignment with the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) as well as Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs) 2020–2029. This alignment ensures that proposed interventions are not developed in isolation but are anchored within broader policy frameworks and reinforces the district’s role in achieving national transformation targets while adapting them to local realities. For a more detailed breakdown of this alignment, refer to **Table 6 in the Annex.**

Table 1: District priorities and mapping against objectives in vision 2050 and NST2

Pillar	DDS Priorities (2024-2029)	NST2 Priority Area	District Interventions	Strategic Objectives in Vision 2050	Sector Priority Area
Economic Transformation	Agriculture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernize and increase the productivity of Agriculture and livestock Promote risk management of agriculture and livestock production. Increased production of cash crops availability of postharvest facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1. Climate-resilient, productive and modernized agri-food systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the farmers to maintain the area consolidated with priority crops Mobilize farmers and connect them to insurance companies Supporting farmers to increase the area of cash crop plantations. 	Pillar 3: Agriculture for wealth creation	PA-1: Increase productivity of priority crops by 50%
	Private Sector Development and Youth Employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote home-grown industries Create decent and productive jobs for economic development Empower MSME support through business advisory businesses youth competition, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2.3 Creation of sustainable and decent jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilizing Private Sector to construct modern hotels, recreational activities and accommodation facilities. Equip Youth and women with skills in project management and investment capital for the entire community and provide assistance to their business development through BRD guarantee scheme 	Pillar 2: Competitiveness and Integration	PA-08: Position Rwanda as a world-class, high-value ecotourism destination PA-11: Create and sustainable decent jobs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> innovation hubs, and village model projects Establish business centers with economic development infrastructures Develop cross-border trade Support businesses through subsidized scheme 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of MBUGANGALI Modern market Completion of Gisenyi modern market Construction of Tourism Information Center 		
<p>Climate, Environment and Natural Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of natural resources and the environment towards a green economy Upgrade the exploration mining to be eco-friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3.1 Building resilience to climate change and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation of progressive terraces Bamboo and tree planting close to gullies, even check dams' construction Increase the Ha of land reforested Organisation of training on mining rules and regulations 	<p>Pillar 4: Urbanization and Agglomeration</p>	<p>PA-12: Disaster risk reduction and management</p>
<p>Transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve urban and rural transportation services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5.1 Enhanced transport connectivity for economic growth and trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of Rubavu ring road Rehabilitate Access to Gitwa Milk Collection Center road Rehabilitate Mahoko-Nkomane road Develop and implement Rubavu City mobility plan, Increase Km of Tamarac roads constructed Increase the length of public lights constructed Construction of bridges 	<p>Pillar 4: Urbanization and Agglomeration</p>	<p>PA-19: Develop transport infrastructure and services to facilitate economic growth and trade</p>
<p>Energy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.6.1 Renewable & clean energy transition & universal access to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of Electrical lines to increase connectivity 	<p>Pillar 4: Urbanization and Agglomeration</p>	<p>PA-20: Scale up to electrification</p>

		electricity (Sector: Infrastructure - Energy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilisation of citizen to use Improved Cooking Stoves • Construction of BIHONGORA Hydropower plant. • Mobilize community for the use of modern cooking stoves so as to decrease the use of Firewood and charcoal as their main source of cooking. 		achieve universal access
	Urbanization and Rural Settlement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate sustainable urbanization of Rubavu secondary city • Improve land administration and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.7.1 Enhanced urbanization and settlements for agglomeration benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate from high risk zone to planned developed settlements • Urban street naming • Mobilize rural households in scattered settlements to settle to planned resilient settlements • Implementation of CBD Phase I 	Pillar 4: Urbanization and Agglomeration	PA-23: Establish initiatives to promote sustainable growth of urban and rural areas
	Water and Sanitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to clean water • Promote hygiene and sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.4.1 Increased access to Water for socioeconomic development [4.5] • 2.4.2 Increased access to Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) services for improved wellbeing [5.3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of Volcano Belt Water Supply Systems (Supply of water in Bugeshi, Mudende, Kanzenze Sectors), Rehabilitation of water supply networks • Upgrading of YUNGWE Treatment plant • Construction of RUTAGARA landfill • Elaborate Rubavu City Storm water Management master Plan 	Pillar 4: Urbanization and Agglomeration	PA-39: Scale up drinking water access to all villages countrywide PA-40: Increase access to Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services for improved wellbeing
	ICT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.8.1 Digital transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote digital literacy 	Pillar2: Competitiveness and Integration	PA-24: Foster digital transformation across

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ICT Promotion and increase the number of citizens with ICT literacy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of Hanga Hub centers for ICT startup Construction and equip innovation and technology community centers (service access points) Construction of ICT Lab. in boarding schools by creating innovative hubs for ICT start-up Working with partners in installation of new towers and gap fillers to maximize internet, TV-Radio & phone coverage 		key economic sectors
	Financial Sector Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote financial services Increase domestic savings through Ejo heza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4.1 Resilient and broadened financial sector for private sector growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operationalize e-banking and automation by upgrading e-banking at the lower level; Facilitate eligible people to access financial services loans 	Pillar 2: Competitiveness and Integration	PA-16: Strengthen Domestic Savings & Expand Financial Inclusion
Social transformation	Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase education facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1 Improve the quality and market relevance of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of Smart Classrooms Construction and rehabilitation of new schools and TVET schools in RUBAVU Sector, GISENYI Sector, BUGESHI (Agriculture and livestock) and completion of RAMBO TVET school (Maritime transport and fishing). Construction of ESG Gisenyi dormitory Connect schools to clean water and electricity 	Pillar 1: Human Development	PA-27: Ensure timely access to quality education in basic education PA-28: Scale up access to market - relevant Education in Basic TVET and Higher Education

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health: ● Ensure a quality, healthy population ● Fight drug abuse and reintegrate former delinquents ● Improved child nutrition and early childhood development ● Strengthening Community Health Systems for Nutrition and Maternal-Child Wellbeing ● Increase the ratio of health workforce to the population ● Upgrade health facilities and infrastructures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2.2.1 Enhanced quality of health, strengthened health systems, and reduced stunting (Health Sector - including nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishment of Library in Gisenyi sector. ● Increase numbers of doctors, nurses, Midwives ● Making advocacy to upgrade INYEMERAMHIGO college health option from A2 to A0 ● Construction of Modern Gisenyi Hospital ● Purchase hospital ambulance from 5 to 15 ● Organization of community mobilization on Mutuelle de Sante 	Pillar 1: Human Development	PA: Continuously improving the access and quality of health services through primary health PA-31: Improving Child Nutrition PA-33: Expanding the Health Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Protection: ● Promoting resilience and enhancing graduation from extreme poverty ● Enhancing Social Protection and Financial Resilience for Vulnerable Households ● Support cooperatives of people with disability ● Provide citizens with appropriate housing ● Enhance disaster risk reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2.3.1 Enhanced graduation from poverty and increased resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance the programs of supporting vulnerable groups to eradicate extreme poverty by increasing the number of people benefiting from VUP Classic. ● Scaling up the minimum package for graduation. ● Rehabilitation of vulnerable houses through Human security issues resolution. ● Implementation of the projects related to disaster preparedness, response and mitigation. 	Pillar 1: Human Development	PA-36: Promote graduation by creating an enabling environment for income opportunities PA-37: Protect those in poverty by ensuring access to essential services, through social security and income support PA-38: Prevent people from falling into poverty by providing income and security

					<p>insurance mechanisms to safeguard individuals and families from shocks</p>
<p>Governance transformation</p>	<p>Governance and decentralization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase institutional good services delivery capacity • Enhance citizens' participation, engagement and partnerships in development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1.1 Enhance citizen-centered local development and effective service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Services delivered online by IREMO • Organisation of participatory planning at Village, Cell, Sector and District levels • Mobilization of Women and Youth in Planning in all sectors. 	<p>Pillar 5: Accountable and capable state institutions</p>	<p>PA-41: Strengthen institutional frameworks, collaboration, and coordination for inclusive, climate-resilient and gender transformation Local Economic Development (LED)</p>
	<p>Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce Rwandan culture and values as a foundation for peace and unity • Strengthen Justice, Law and Order • Ensure safety and security of citizens and property • Strengthen family cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.2.1 Enhanced Rule of Law • 3.2.2 Strengthen Accountability • 3.2.3 National Unity, Resilience, culture and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Anti-corruption members at the cell, sector and district level. • Organization of Ndi Umunyarwanda sessions; Training of ABUNZI in order to increase their legal knowledge • Organize the campaign against GBV at cell and sector level • Integrate teen mothers in schools and vocational training centers. 	<p>Pillar 5: Accountable and capable state institutions</p>	<p>PA-41: Strengthen institutional frameworks, collaboration, and coordination for inclusive, climate-resilient and gender transformation Local Economic Development (LED)</p> <p>PA-42: Strengthen local government institutional, organizational, and human resource capacities for effective coordination and collaboration and implementation of citizen-centered service delivery</p>

	<p>Sports and Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sport activities Promotion of art and culture Construction of multi purpose hall (Rubavu Intare arena) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.1 Fostering National Unity, Resilience, culture and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of Multipurpose halls. Construction of Mass sport activities. Organization of Sport competitions. Organization of Culture festival Equip Genocide against Tutsi memorial with historical signs 	<p>Pillar 1: Human Development</p>	<p>PA-43 Enhance effectiveness of existing citizen participation spaces and mechanisms to strengthen transparency and accountability for better service delivery and national transformation</p> <p>PA-49: Preserve and promote Rwandan Culture, values, norms and Rwandan Heritage</p>
<p>Public Finance Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote PFM and accountability 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.4.1 Strengthen Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Audits recommendation Organization of PFM meetings to achieve Clean Audit opinion. Organization of Taxes meetings to increase own revenue. 	<p>Pillar 5: Accountable and capable state institutions</p>	<p>PA-50: Increase compliance with PFM rules and improve oversight of value-for-money</p> <p>PA-51: Strengthen and sustain critical capabilities for effective PFM</p>

Source: Consultations with Rubavu District Stakeholders

3.4 Mainstreaming CCA

Rubavu District has integrated key crosscutting areas (CCAs) from NST2 into its Development Strategy, with a strong focus on climate resilience, gender equality, and social inclusion. Environmental sustainability is advanced through afforestation, terracing, and agroforestry initiatives aimed at reducing soil erosion and mitigating flood risks.¹¹ Disaster risk reduction is prioritized through major infrastructure projects such as flood retention dams, gully rehabilitation, and the relocation of families from high-risk zones near Lake Kivu.¹² Youth and women are actively engaged in community restoration projects, savings groups, and peacebuilding initiatives, promoting inclusive economic participation.¹³ These CCAs are mainstreamed across sectors like agriculture, urban development, and infrastructure, all aligned with national goals under Vision 2050.

3.4.1 Capacity Development

Mainstreaming capacity development in local government is essential for the successful implementation of the District Development Strategy. In this strategy, capacity development has been thoughtfully embedded across planning and implementation processes. The focus is on strengthening the skills and performance of local government staff, aligning training and support with district priorities, and ensuring that capacity-building efforts directly contribute to the achievement of the goals. This includes improving coordination between central and local levels, integrating capacity needs into planning frameworks, and working closely with partners to support delivery. Key actions involve identifying capacity gaps, offering practical training tailored to district needs, developing a clear framework with targeted modules, and establishing systems, tools, and career development paths. Efforts will also support skills development for unskilled and semi-skilled individuals, especially in areas like private sector growth and youth empowerment, with the aim of expanding employment opportunities and improving competitiveness in local markets.

3.4.2 HIV/AIDS and Non-Communicable Diseases

Rubavu District faces a dual health burden of HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with HIV prevalence at 2.6% nationally among adults aged 15–49 and Rubavu ranking among the districts with higher rates. However, national progress includes 96% awareness and 98% treatment coverage for people living with HIV, supported locally by the Integrated Community-Led Monitoring (iCLM) initiative targeting HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria. Regarding NCDs, findings from Kibuye Referral Hospital highlight increased risks of Type 2 Diabetes—eightfold among the physically inactive, ninefold among smokers, and significantly elevated for 60% of individuals with poor diets. The 2017–2024 District Development Strategy (DDS) incorporated robust actions to reduce both disease burdens by promoting integrated health service delivery, policy alignment, community mobilization through trained health workers, and stakeholder engagement tied to clear timelines and funding frameworks—key indicators for improved health outcomes.

3.4.3 Youth in Rubavu

Youth in Rubavu District make up 28.1% of the total population of 546,683, slightly above the national average of 27%.¹⁴ Of these, 77,885 are female, showing a relatively balanced gender distribution. Employment among youth in the district is at 39.2%, with higher rates among males (44.2%) than females (34.7%). Sectors such as Bugeshi, Mudende, and Cyanzarwe report better employment outcomes, while Nyamyumba and Nyakiriba are among the lowest.¹⁵ Nationally, 68% of youth are employed, making Rubavu's rate considerably lower. About

¹¹ <https://www.iucn.org/blog/202302/sebeva-project-strengthens-climate-resilience-rwandas-western-province>

¹² <https://www.rwb.rw/actualites/info-details/rwb-highlights-major-infrastructures-established-to-curb-floods-in-rubavu>

¹³ <https://arde-kubahorwanda.org/landscape-restoration-through-agroforestry-in-rubavu-district-boosts-community-livelihoods-and-environmental-resilience/>

¹⁴ EICV7 – Youth Thematic Report, 2025; RPHC – Rubavu District Profile, 2022

¹⁵ RHPC - Rubavu District Profile, 2022

40.2% of youth in Rubavu are not in employment, education, or training (NEET), and this is more common in rural areas (43.9%).¹⁶ Financial inclusion is relatively strong, with 49,743 youth recorded as financial customers and 14,713 holding savings accounts, though data on actual saving behavior is not available.¹⁷ Education indicators show challenges, with 9.5% of youth having never attended school and only 5.6% reaching university.¹⁸ Health insurance coverage is high at 95.6%, but the district lacks age-disaggregated data on school dropouts, youth poverty, and disability.¹⁹ Youth involvement in local governance is limited, with no available data on participation or experiences with violence and GBV. There is a need for better representation, leadership training, and civic education. Improved data collection, stronger youth engagement in decision-making, and targeted support for education, employment, and financial inclusion would help ensure youth are fully integrated into Rubavu's development priorities.

3.4.4 Disability and Social Inclusion

Over the last decade, Rwanda has demonstrated strong policy commitment to Disability and Social Inclusion through frameworks such as the Disability Mainstreaming Guidelines (2014), the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, and the Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021–2024). However, district-level implementation, particularly in Rubavu, remains uneven. Indicators highlight critical gaps: the proportion of people with major disabilities aged 5 and above in Rubavu declined from 4.5% in 2012 to 3.1% in 2022;²⁰ yet nationally, 81% of persons with disabilities have no formal education or only primary schooling, and children with disabilities represent just 0.4% of all learners.²¹ Labor participation is similarly limited, with only 16.5% employed and 79% out of the labor force; among youth with disabilities, 76% are out of the labor force and 61% not actively seeking employment. Structural barriers, such as stigma, inaccessible services, weak enforcement of inclusive labor laws, and outdated or undifferentiated data, compound exclusion.²² To address these gaps, the district should prioritize strengthening disability data systems by integrating disaggregated data into local planning and monitoring. District authorities need to localize and enforce national disability policies, ensure schools and TVET centres are accessible and staffed with trained personnel, and promote inclusive employment through targeted programs and employer incentives. Public awareness campaigns and anti-stigma initiatives must be scaled up to shift societal attitudes, while Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) should be fully engaged in governance, planning, and service delivery through dedicated funding and leadership development initiatives.

3.4.5 Gender and family promotion

The Gender and Family Promotion cross-cutting area focuses on advancing gender equality and empowering families to contribute to national development. Rubavu District's gender landscape is shaped by a slight female majority (51.1%) and notable disparities in household headship, widowhood (7.4% for women vs. 0.9% for men),²³ and financial access, where women lag in formal services (30.9% vs. 41.2%) but lead in informal savings (31% vs. 22.2%).²⁴ Though women manage 44% of informal enterprises, only 26.3% own formal businesses, and they face higher unemployment (23.2%) despite land access and farmer group participation.²⁵ Education indicators reveal higher school attendance among girls but lower adult literacy (74.4% vs. 82.7%),²⁶ and poverty among female-headed households

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ FINSCOPE – Youth Thematic Report, 2024

¹⁸ RPHC – Rubavu District Profile, 2022

¹⁹ EICV7 – Youth Thematic Report, 2025; GMO Gender Profile – Rubavu District 2023

²⁰ Rwanda Population Housing Census – Rubavu Gender Statistics Profile Report, 2022

²¹ FINSCOPE, 2020 – Thematic Report on Persons with Disabilities; MINEDUC, 2021/22

²² NISR Labour Force Survey, 2023; Labour Law, 2018

²³ NISR (2022) Rwanda Fifth Population and Housing Census

²⁴ FINSCOPE 2020

²⁵ National Establishment Census, 2020

²⁶ RPHC, 2022

remains slightly elevated (39.5%).²⁷ Improvements in maternal health (institutional deliveries at 91%, contraceptive use at 45.6%)²⁸ contrast ongoing challenges like child malnutrition and GBV—where emotional violence rose for both women (29.7%) and men (30.7%), despite decreases in physical and sexual violence.²⁹ Governance-wise, women hold 35% of District Council seats.³⁰ Mainstreaming efforts in the DDS aim to enhance women's access to agriculture inputs, vocational training, financial literacy, STEM education, gender-responsive health services, and policymaking through gender-disaggregated data, safe spaces for GBV survivors, and inclusive monitoring mechanisms.

3.4.6 Environmental and Climate Change

Rubavu District faces significant environmental and climate challenges, including only 28% forest cover (15,001 ha)³¹ with widespread soil erosion across 38% of land, most severely in Bugeshi (86%), Kanama (50%), and Nyundo (46%)³², alongside increased floods and droughts, deforestation in Nyamyumba and Nyundo, low public environmental awareness, and urban vulnerabilities in Gisenyi due to poor green infrastructure. To mainstream environment and climate change resilience, the district can scale afforestation beyond its recent 68.5% forest cover increase to reach 30%,³³ develop eco-tourism around Lake Kivu and Gishwati Forest, promote public-private partnerships for clean energy and sustainable fuel, embed green infrastructure in urban planning, and enhance environmental education.³⁴ Disaster management structures, led by MINEMA and supported by DDMCs and SDMCs, coordinate preparedness and response through risk assessments, training, and early warning systems, but face resource and capacity constraints.³⁵ The mainstreaming strategy includes mobilizing resources via private and international partnerships, expanding resilient infrastructure (e.g., drainage systems), continuous capacity building via workshops and simulations, and strengthening Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) and public awareness programs to boost grassroots preparedness and resilience.

3.4.8. Regional integration and international positioning

The Regional Integration and International Positioning Crosscutting Area (CCA) under NST2 aims to strengthen Rwanda's regional and global presence by enhancing cross-border trade, particularly in districts like Rubavu, through the elimination of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), infrastructure upgrades, and regulatory alignment. Rubavu, a key CBT hub bordering the DRC and positioned along Lake Kivu, has benefited from strategic investments such as the modern Rubavu Cross-Border Market and Rubavu Port, which facilitate agricultural and manufactured goods exchange.³⁶ Implementation of the National Cross Border Trade Strategy by MINICOM emphasizes infrastructure development, trader capacity building (especially targeting women and youth),³⁷ regulatory compliance with regional protocols like the EAC Simplified Trade Regime (STR), coordinated stakeholder engagement involving EIF and TradeMark Africa, public awareness campaigns, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems.

²⁷ EICV, 2013/14 – 2016/17

²⁸ RDHS, 2020

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ District administrative records, 2022: Rubavu District

³¹ MOE, Forest Cover Mapping Report, 2019

³² RWB, State of Soil Erosion Control in Rwanda, 2022)

³³ MOE, Forest Cover Mapping, 2019)

³⁴ Rubavu District ESMP, 2023

³⁵ Minema (2022) National Disaster Preparedness Plan for Damage Control and Initial Rehabilitation in Rwanda

³⁶ <https://www.mininfra.gov.rw/updates/news-details/rubavu-port-a-catalyst-for-trade-regional-integration-and-maritime-transport-transformation-in-rwanda>

³⁷ <https://minicom.prod.risa.rw/news-detail/minicom-concludes-series-of-capacity-building-workshops-for-cross-border-traders>

4. Implementation Framework and Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix

This section presents the institutional framework and performance tracking systems behind the execution of the Rubavu District Development Strategy (DDS) 2024–2029. It defines the respective roles and responsibilities of key actors—local government bodies, central ministries such as MINALOC and MINECOFIN, development partners, and community stakeholders, in driving coordinated implementation across sectors and administrative levels. Additionally, the section outlines the district's approach to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), emphasizing how measurable results, participatory mechanisms, and real-time data systems will be used to assess progress, enhance accountability, and inform continuous improvement in line with national priorities under NST2 and Vision 2050.

4.1.1. Stakeholder Engagement

Rubavu District's approach to stakeholder engagement in implementing the DDS 2024–2029 is grounded in community ownership, inclusivity, and multi-level coordination. The district actively involves stakeholders at all administrative levels, district, sector, cell, and village, through consultations that shape priorities and validate interventions. Platforms like the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) serve as strategic coordination entities, bringing together civil society, private sector actors, NGOs, and development partners to foster shared responsibility in delivering on DDS commitments. To ensure effective execution, citizens are mobilized around participatory governance structures such as umuyobozi mu isibo program Imihigo Hour, while targeted efforts are made to engage youth, women, and marginalized groups in the planning and monitoring processes. This inclusive structure promotes transparency and sustains feedback throughout the DDS implementation period.

4.1.2. Approach to Resource Mobilization

To drive the successful execution of the DDS, Rubavu District employs a strategic and multi-faceted resource mobilization plan. Core funding will come from central government subventions, coordinated with MINECOFIN and MINALOC to integrate into annual budgets. Additional resources will be secured from development partners, sector ministries through Sector Strategic Plan (SSP)-aligned agreements, and non-state actors supporting growth in areas such as agriculture, health, and tourism. The district aims to boost its own revenue through enhanced public financial management and contributions from JADF partners and Umuganda activities. Community-driven financing will be expanded via local savings groups and cooperatives, while private sector partnerships, particularly in agro-processing, cross-border trade, and urban infrastructure will attract investment to fuel inclusive development.

4.1.3. Annual Action Plan and Imihigo Targets

The DDS will be put into action through Annual Action Plans that outline the district's priorities under the NST2 framework, assigning clear roles to each administrative unit and grassroots entity. These plans provide a roadmap for turning strategic goals into tangible yearly outcomes, linked to Imihigo targets that balance national transformation ambitions with local community needs. Cross-cutting themes such as gender equality, climate adaptation, and youth employment are woven into each plan to ensure sustainable and equitable progress. The planning process aligns with national systems like the MEIS and DPRS for effective performance monitoring and accountability. Through this coordinated approach, Rubavu District contributes to both local advancement and Rwanda's broader Vision 2050 goals.

4.1.4. Approach to assessing and tracking progress in the DDS

The following approaches will be used in assessing and tracking progress in the implementation of the DDS.

- **Results-Based Monitoring System** - Each DDS includes a logical framework with clearly defined goals, outcomes, outputs, and indicators. These indicators are aligned with the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) and sector strategic plans. Progress is tracked using baseline data, annual targets, and performance indicators that are regularly updated.
- **Use of Digital Tools and Systems** - Districts use platforms like the District Planning and Reporting System (DPRS) and Monitoring and Evaluation Information System (MEIS) to collect, analyze, and report data. These tools support real-time tracking of activities and facilitate the generation of quarterly and annual performance reports.
- **Participatory Monitoring and Feedback** - The approach emphasizes inclusive monitoring, involving stakeholders such as the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), civil society, and citizens. Tools like community scorecards and citizen report cards are used to gather feedback on service delivery and ensure accountability.
- **Regular Reporting and Evaluation** - Districts are required to produce quarterly and annual progress reports, submitted to MINALOC and MINECOFIN. These reports contribute to national performance reviews and inform policy adjustments. To ensure comprehensive assessment, a mid-term evaluation will be conducted around 2027–2028, providing an opportunity to review progress and refine strategies midway through the DDS lifecycle. An end-term evaluation will follow in 2030, aimed at measuring the overall impact, sustainability, and alignment with long-term transformation goals.
- **Isaha y'imihigo** : is a tracking tool whereby all concerned staff with indicators lagging behind gather every morning to discuss challenges and strategies to meet the target.

4.2 M&E results framework

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) serves as a cornerstone of Rubavu District's Development Strategy, providing a structured mechanism to assess progress, align interventions with NST2 priorities, and guide evidence-based decision-making. Through a results matrix detailed in **Table 7 of the Annex**, key performance indicators and targets are tracked annually from 2025 to 2029, using baseline data to facilitate both mid-term and final reviews. By integrating tools such as citizen scorecards and participatory feedback mechanisms, the M&E framework not only strengthens transparency and accountability but also fosters continuous learning, inclusive service delivery, and adaptive governance.

4.2.1 DDS Risk and Mitigation Matrix

The Rubavu District Development Strategy Risk Matrix will be used to assess and identify risks that may hamper the implementation of the strategy. The risk matrix includes the following.

- **Identified Risk:** A brief description of the risk. Identification of all the potential risks that could impact DDS implementation.
- **Risk Category:** Part of identification is determining the category of risk, such as financial, operational, or strategic or Natural disaster.
- **Risk Analysis:** A more detailed description of the risk, including the possible causes, likelihood, impact, and overall rating i.e., the probability that it will occur, the severity of the consequences if it does occur and lastly, the combination of its likelihood and impact.
- **Mitigating Factors:** The actions that will be taken to mitigate the risk

Table 2: Major risk matrix for District Development Strategy

No	Identified Risk	Risk Analysis			Mitigating Factors
		Causes	Likelihood	Impact	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders dis-engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to involve stakeholders in planning and execution of District initiatives 	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize all possible stakeholders to be part of DDS preparation and implementation in all levels of administration. Provide incentives to attract private investment in the DDS plans
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sufficient funding for all district strategic initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to implement identified strategic priorities 	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritization of strategic interventions based on available resources. Strengthen Resource mobilization at the district level. Promote efficient use of available resources.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public health emergencies and lack of emergency preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New or resurging pandemic diseases and inadequate disaster readiness 	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnerships with health agencies to anticipate and respond proactively. Develop emergency preparedness plans including early warning systems and rapid response protocols.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District High staff turnover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of Local Government staff Incentives 	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement District retention strategies

5. Costing

As a district, we have developed a comprehensive costing framework to guide the implementation of our District Development Strategy (DDS). This section outlines the estimated financial resources required to achieve our strategic priorities over the next five years. Our costing approach is grounded in realistic assumptions and prioritization of interventions, drawing from historical budget allocations and aligned with the methodologies used in the NST2 and SSPs. We have ensured that only targets with clearly defined interventions are costed, providing a practical and actionable roadmap. The estimated costs serve not only as a planning tool but also as a foundation for mobilizing resources from diverse sources, including central government allocations, development partners, the private sector, and civil society. We recognize that successful implementation of the DDS will require a coordinated effort across all levels and stakeholders, and we are committed to fostering these partnerships to fully realize our development goals. Below is a breakdown of the total budget per year across the five years.

- 2024-2025: **54,848,490,364**
- 2025-2026: **78,713,702,982**
- 2026-2027: **136,809,488,991**
- 2027-2028: **149,808,335,922**
- 2028-2029: **172,060,692,080**

The total estimated cost for implementing this strategy in Rubavu District from July 2024 to June 2029 amounts to **592,240,710,340 Rwandan Francs**. This funding will be mobilized from multiple sources, including central government allocations, external grants and loans, district own-source revenues, and contributions from development partners, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Rubavu District Development Strategy (2024–2029) provides a practical framework for addressing local development needs while aligning with national priorities under Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), and Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs). The strategy reflects the district's context and builds on its strengths in agriculture, trade, tourism, and urban growth to support inclusive and sustainable development.

By implementing the strategy, Rubavu expects to make tangible progress in several areas: improving agricultural productivity and market access, creating jobs through support to small businesses and vocational training, expanding access to clean energy and water, strengthening health and education services, and upgrading infrastructure. Efforts to promote tourism, improve local governance, and expand digital access will also contribute to better service delivery and economic opportunities. These improvements will help reduce poverty, promote equity, and raise the overall quality of life in both urban and rural areas.

Environmental protection, climate resilience, and disaster risk management are integrated into the strategy to safeguard natural resources and reduce vulnerability to shocks. Priority is also given to promoting gender equality, supporting youth, and ensuring that vulnerable groups are included in all stages of development.

The success of this strategy will rely on strong coordination and shared commitment. The involvement of government institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, and local communities will be essential for effective implementation. Rubavu District remains committed to working with all stakeholders to achieve the goals of this strategy and to achieve lasting, inclusive progress.