



Country reference framework

Rwanda

February 2024

Inhoud

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Country reference framework Rwanda

Background

In FYP1 the VLIR-UOS country strategies presented the strategic niche for future VLIR-UOS cooperation in a specific country, leading to strategy-based calls for proposals.

In FYP2, however, we shift towards an approach whereby a country reference framework provides information rather than strategic guidance. The country reference frameworks will be used mainly to support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

The country reference frameworks consist of three components:

- (i) overview of VLIR-UOS projects in the country;
- (ii) context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector;
- (iii) overview of Belgian development actors (ANGCs involved in thematic or geographic JSFs & Enabel), their local partners and their regional/thematic focus.

The frameworks have been elaborated based on information available at the time of drafting this actor programme (1st half of 2021) and through consultations with both Flemish and local project promoters in 2020-2021, and with geographic JSFs, when applicable, to ensure relevant information for coherent project formulation is included.

Prior to the launch of competitive calls, the ANGCs active in the country/region will be invited to list a number of research themes/questions that can be addressed by HE&SIs in the framework of VLIR-UOS funded projects or scholarships. Synergy and complementarity will be integrated as an element in the selection of project proposals, more in particular when discussing the (developmental) relevance and coherence of the proposals and the extent to which the multi-stakeholder partnership principle has been reflected in the project's implementation set-up. By this mode of operation, the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development links up with the other geographic JSFs.

Evidently, the frameworks will be updated regularly in consultation with the HEI&SI stakeholders and with the respective geographical JSFs and, where appropriate, also with ARES, and especially prior to the launch of competitive calls by VLIR-UOS, to be compatible and responsive to evolving/emerging needs and priorities of academic and development actors active in the country/region/sector.

1 VLIR-UOS in Rwanda

1.1 Overview projects & scholarships (2003 – 2023)



Legend

- National University of Rwanda ●
- Kigali Health Institute ●
- Rwanda Agricultural Board ●
- Rwanda Agricultural Development Authority ●
- University of Rwanda ●

Projects 2003-2023		
Type	Budget (€)	Number
Total	1,886,166	18
TEAM	1,062,424	6
SI	823,742	12

Scholarships 2003-2023		
Type	Budget (€)	Number
Total	4,250,157	437
Ph.D.		
Subtotal	977,625	7
ICP PhD	110,175	1
VLADOC	867,450	6
Short term		
Subtotal	542,909	340
ITP	194,327	35
KOI	76,472	36
REI	264,685	268
Other scholarships	7,425	1
Study		
Subtotal	2,729,624	90
ICP	2,729,624	90

Rwanda is a partner country with potential for VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2023 VLIR-UOS spent over € 6.1 million in cooperation with Rwanda, including 18 TEAM/SI projects. 5 TEAM/SI projects are ongoing. More projects are expected to be selected during the coming years.

More detailed information can be found on our [Rwanda country page](#) on the VLIR-UOS website.

1.2 Ongoing projects and future calls (2022-...)

List of projects 2022-...						
Type	Runtime	Title	Flemish promoter	Local promoter	Local institution	Total budget (FYP 2) (€)
SI	2022-2024	Improving diagnostics, treatment and comprehensive care in people living with early-onset epilepsy in Rwanda	Kristl Vonck (UG)	Leon Mutesa	University of Rwanda	69.692,70
SI	2022-2024	Piloting a novel, scalable, eHealth technology for the control and management of elevated Blood Pressure in Rwanda (HeartCare@Home Project)	Marc Twagirumukiza (UG)	Aurore Nishimwe	University of Rwanda	70.000,00
TEAM	2022-2027	Improving gender balance in the transition from STEM secondary education to STEM higher education in Rwanda	Cecil Meeusen (KUL)	Jolly Rubagiza	University of Rwanda	279.989,62
TEAM	2022-2027	UNITED for Health Rwanda	Nadja Van Endert (UCLL)	Stefan Jansen	University of Rwanda	279.363,70
TEAM	2022-2027	Tackling the high prevalence of epilepsy in Rwanda: identification of risk factors, improvement of diagnostics and reduction of the epilepsy treatment gap	Paul Boon (UG)	Fidele Sebera	University of Rwanda	279.080,00

Abbreviations (type): SI=Short Initiatives; TEAM= TEAM projects.

Abbreviations (Flemish institutions): KUL= Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; UG=Ghent University; UCLL= UC Limburg.

Competitive calls for new SI and TEAM projects will be launched and announced on our website. Nationals of Rwanda are eligible¹ to apply for scholarships for the International Master Programmes (ICP) and International Training Programmes (ITP).

¹ Admission requirements, application procedures and selection procedures differ across the programmes and host institutions.

2 Rwanda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2.1 Rwanda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Rwanda has reported on progress made in implementing the sustainable development goals through the 2019 Voluntary National Review report (VNR). Rwanda is committed to the enhanced delivery and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Rwanda was actively involved in their formulation including being selected to pilot one of the Goals, Goal 16 on building effective and capable institutions. The SDGs have been integrated in the Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation, (NST1 2017-2024) and related sectors and districts' strategies.

The preparation of the VNR report followed a consultative approach and provides information on Rwanda's progress, challenges and lessons learned along five thematic areas;

- **Human Capital Development:** In line with SDG 4 focusing on quality of education and learning, the Education Strategic Plan is hinged on: (i) scaling up pre-primary enrolment (ii) improving learning outcomes (iii) improving relevance of curricula (v) promoting science, technology and innovation and (vi) access for all including those with special needs.
- **Inclusive Economic Growth:** Economic growth has reduced both income and multidimensional poverty. With a share of 43.5% of the population in the labor force, youth is regarded as a key driver of growth, requiring the economy to accelerate job creation. NST1 is targeting to create 1.5 million decent and productive jobs by 2024 supported by the National Employment Programme.
- **Environment and Climate Change:** Rwanda targets to become a green, climate resilient and low carbon economy by 2050. A green fund is in place since 2012 to mobilise resources. The National Disaster Management Policy has been revised in line with the Sendai Framework, a shift towards more integrated and anticipatory disaster risk management system in Rwanda.
- **Good Governance and Access to Justice:** Citizen participation and home-grown solutions such as performance contracts and community activities of public interest are put forward as being key to Rwanda's development. Tools like the Rwanda Governance Scorecard and the Citizen Report Card were put in place for enhanced citizens' participation and demand for accountability. Rwanda has also operationalized a decentralized civil registration system and reformed its judicial system to further enhance access to quality justice.
- **Strengthening the Means of Implementation, Global Partnership and Data for SDGs:** More efforts are put into domestic resource mobilization, prudent debt management and macroeconomic stability. Attracting private investments in key development sectors through Public Private Partnerships will be key to achieve SDGs. The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics and the Data Revolution have been adopted to strengthen statistical capacity in monitoring SDGs. Rwanda is also hosting the SDGs Center for Africa.

Areas requiring more support for taking forward the agenda 2030 were made explicit:

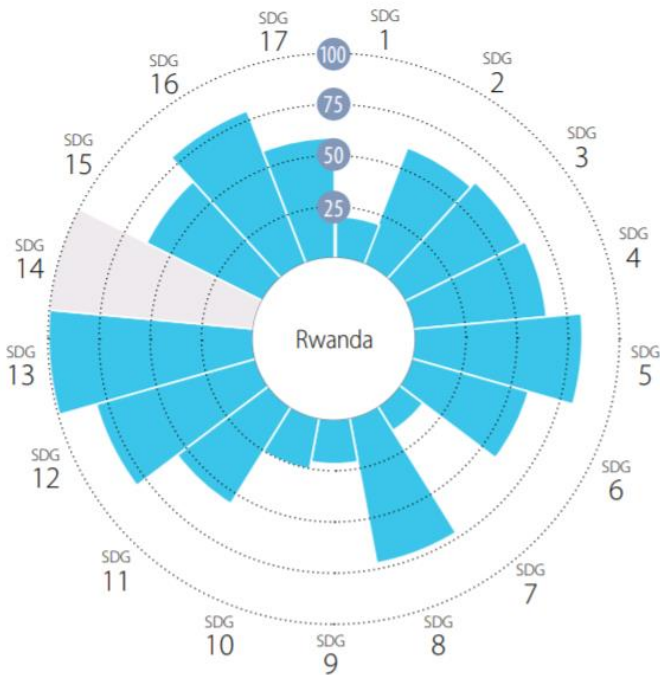
- Significant external resources are needed to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and to scale up successful interventions.
- There is need to support the national statistical capacity both technically and financially to cover all applicable SDG indicators (currently producing 60% of the required indicators).

Taking into account the global aspect of the SDGs, the [Sustainable Development Report](#) of 2021² assesses where each country stands with regard to achieving the SDGs. Rwanda ranks 130th out of 165 countries included in the report. The [Rwanda Country Profile](#) shows that the majority of goals is facing major or significant challenges.

▼ SDG DASHBOARDS AND TRENDS



▼ AVERAGE PERFORMANCE BY SDG



² Sachs et al. (2021): The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Report 2021. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

As an umbrella organisation that works with calls for proposals, VLIR-UOS supports interventions for and through higher education institutes, supporting them in the areas of education, research and uptake and thereby strengthening them in their role as development actor. Doing so, the impact of the interventions supported by VLIR-UOS can be found in a large variety of sectors. In line with its major intervention area, VLIR-UOS positions itself within the education sector, especially focused on higher education, research and innovation (SDG 4 and 9). However, through its interventions, VLIR-UOS intervenes in different sectors as well. VLIR-UOS recognises that given the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of current societal challenges, meaningful social, economic and ecological transformations can only be realised by starting from a holistic and integrated approach to the SDGs. When translated into SDGs, the projects that were financed by VLIR-UOS in Rwanda covered mainly, apart from SDG 4 and 9, SDGs 2, 3 and 16. Top sectors for VLIR-UOS in this country for the past decade are health and food security.

More background information and context analysis on Rwanda can be found in the **geographic Joint Strategic Framework** for Rwanda, which will be shared with (potential) project promoters when new calls are launched.

The **COVID-19** related health crisis and its consequences are interconnected with many domains of society. Data about the COVID-19 situation in Rwanda can be found [through this link](#).

Additional sources on progress related to higher education & science (SDG 4)

- [UNESCO-UIS](#): overview data resources indicators [related to SDG4](#)
- [Our World in data](#):
 - Indicators related to [educational mobility and inequality](#)
 - Indicators related to [tertiary education](#)
 - Indicators related to [projections of future education](#) (demand)
 - Indicators related to [science](#) and [research](#)
- [Student mobility](#): [UIS-data](#) showing shifting demand for higher education caused by COVID-19
- [COVID-19 and education](#): [UNESCO data](#) on (duration of) school closures

2.2 Higher education landscape in Rwanda

The **Ministry of Education** (MINEDUC) is responsible for policy formulation and setting norms and standards for all educational levels in Rwanda. The [Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2024](#) of MINEDUC puts forward the following ambitions for the higher education sector:

- The planned expansion of higher education will place a continued emphasis on fields of study that contribute directly to broader development needs in Rwanda, like engineering, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, health, education and other agreed critical areas. This will ensure that higher education graduates are not just of a high calibre, but that they have the skills required for the modern economy. Full scholarships will be awarded to identified needy students, and girls, to promote their enrolment in STEM programmes in higher education.
- Research will play an important role in promoting the relevance of higher education. Research capacity will be strengthened to ensure a strong alignment between courses and industry and commerce. Partnerships between HEI and business will be developed in both programme design and delivery, improving the relevance of programmes.

- International research collaboration will be promoted. In addition to a strong focus on the critical areas for economic transformation, HEI will also become more responsive to community needs and challenges.
- An increase in number of HEI academic staff who have pedagogical accreditation is put forward. Whilst almost all academic staff in Rwanda's HEI hold master's degrees, substantially fewer hold a formal qualification in pedagogy.
- An increase in number of HEI academic staff who have PhDs is also aimed for. There will be an emphasis on promoting access to PhD programmes, particularly in the priority subject areas. Study leave and financial incentives will be used to incentivise high performing academics to pursue PhD programmes. Programmes that target high performing female lecturers and strengthen local provision will be given special consideration.
- HEI courses will increasingly become benchmarked against regional and international standards, ensuring that Rwanda's higher education sub-sector becomes more regionally and internationally competitive.
- HEIs will establish multi-mode approaches to deliver programmes, with increased opportunities for online and distance learning.
- Higher education lags behind other sub-sectors in terms of gender parity. In order to be more proactive, HEI will develop institution-specific gender policies. HEI will establish mentorship and career guidance programmes for women and actively seek to ensure more women are recruited and retained as faculty staff.
- A national research agenda will be developed aligned to the SDGs and the socio-economic development of Rwanda. HEI will then ensure that their research and studies are aligned with the national agenda and that new research is prioritised based on the themes listed in the agenda and looking at innovative approaches to contribute to Rwanda's future development.

There are different **responsible bodies** for tertiary education. The Higher Education Council (HEC) is a semi-autonomous government agency which is responsible for securing coherent provision of quality higher education in Rwanda. The Rwanda Education Board (REB) has responsibilities related to student financing, ICT and open and distance learning. In the area of research, the National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST) serves as an advisory board for development, promotion and coordination of science, technology and innovation. The [Rwanda National Ethics Committee](#) examines all research projects on the human body in Rwanda and research permits for protected areas can be applied for with the online [Irembo](#) application.

Rwanda has two **public** Higher Education Institutions (HEI), the University of Rwanda and the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, and 29 **private** HEI. In 2013, seven public HEI merged into one University of Rwanda organized in 6 colleges, to increase institutional efficiency and coordination in the provision of public higher education. Relocations of departments is still ongoing.

Total **enrolment** in HEI grew by 18% between 2012 and 2016, reaching a total enrolment of 90.803. This represents a total of 787 persons enrolled in HEI per 100.000 of the population. Growth has been very largely driven by the expansion of private HEI, which account for 89% of the expansion. Private HEI now account for 57% of total higher education enrolment.

A [Tracer Study of Graduates from Higher Learning Institutes and Employers' Satisfaction of Graduates' Competencies](#) (HEC, 2015) conducted to assess graduates' competences, **relevance of higher education**, and employers' satisfaction with graduates, found that HEI had inadequate facilities, limited research capacity and had weak links with industry or to internships. The proportion of academic staff

with PhDs is about 15%, which makes it difficult for HEI to conduct impactful research and contribute meaningfully to the national science system. Whilst 80% of employers were satisfied with university graduates' skills, issues were raised regarding levels of practical skills, language proficiency (in English and/or French) and general knowledge.

Looking at international rankings like [Webometrics](#), the University of Rwanda reaches the highest rank (3.140), followed by 4 other institutions between rank 20.000-30.000 (East African University Rwanda, Catholic University Rwanda, Christian University of Rwanda and Rwanda Management Institute). None of the institutions in Rwanda are considered as international top institutions.

2.3 Leaving no one behind

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community pledged to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. The principle of leaving no one behind can be defined as a three-part imperative: to end absolute poverty in all its forms, to stop group-based discrimination that results in unequal outcomes for disadvantaged populations, and to take action to help the furthest behind.

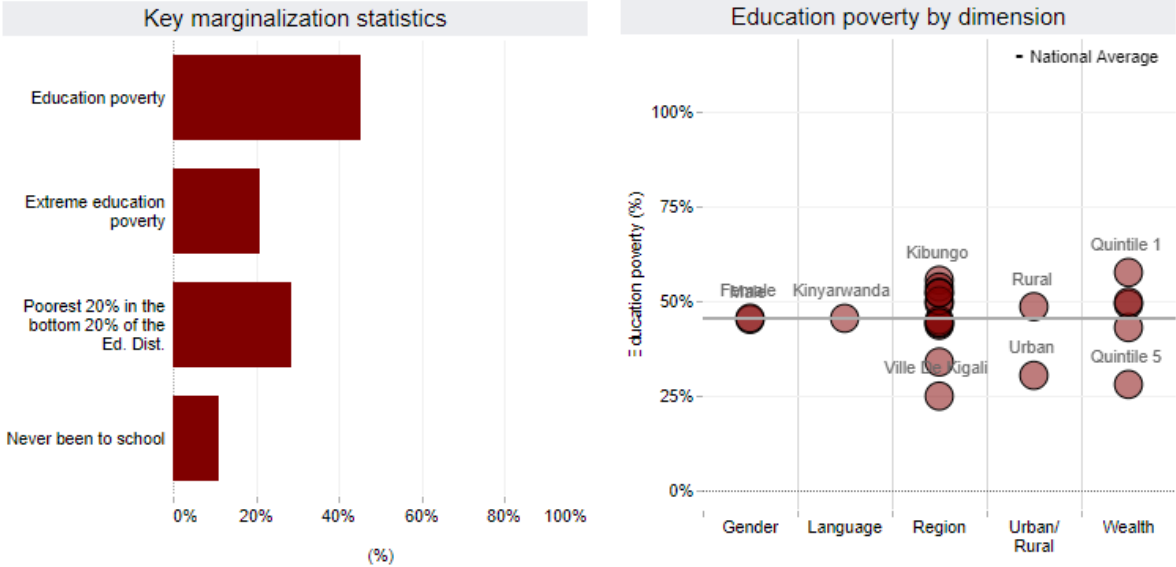
The [Voluntary National Review report of Rwanda](#) also covers the Leaving No One Behind principle. The Government of Rwanda is strongly committed to promoting equality and equity amongst all Rwandans by ensuring that socially and historically disadvantaged, as well as vulnerable, people are the main beneficiaries of its pro-poor programmes. The Constitution guarantees representation in the parliament for special categories of Rwandans including **youth, women, people with disabilities and historically marginalized people**. More specifically, the Constitution commits to building a State in which women occupy at least 30 percent of positions in decision-making organs. Rwanda has the highest number of female parliamentarians in the world (61.3 percent) and has an equal number of women and men in Cabinet. Eliminating gender disparities in education has been an important priority for the education sector in Rwanda. In 2018, gender parity had been stabilized, with girl's enrolment at 49.7 percent and 53.2 percent in primary and secondary levels respectively, while that of tertiary education was estimated at 42.6 percent. In an effort to increase women's employability skills, Rwanda has continuously strengthened demand-driven technical and vocational education training (TVET) programmes, increasing female enrolment from 41.8 percent in 2015 to 43.8 percent in 2018. Measures have also been put in place to promote job creation for women and youth. In 2016, the Government of Rwanda conducted a nationwide categorization exercise for people with disabilities, seeking to classify people with disabilities based on their levels and types of disabilities and design interventions and deliver services that fit the needs of each category of disability. The extreme poor are supported through social protection programmes. Rwanda is also piloting the comprehensive refugees' response framework for their socio-economic inclusion.

When looking at **equity in higher education**, male students continue to dominate higher education. Gender parity in higher education has declined from a gender parity index (GPI) of 0.79 in 2012 to 0.74 in 2016. The gender gap is far more marked in public HEI, where the GPI has fallen from 0.50 in 2012 to 0.43 in 2016. This discrepancy may be due to the greater flexibility offered by private HEI (part-time study, evening and weekend courses, etc.). Female enrolment in private HEI continues to exceed that for males. The most popular field of study is social science, business and law, with 45.2% of the total number of students enrolled, including 55.5% of all enrolled females. This is the only field attracting significantly more females than males. Students with disabilities are 432, or 0.48%, of all students enrolled in tertiary education (share of people with disabilities on the total population of Rwanda was 4%

in 2012). The largest group is those with physical disabilities (31%), followed by students with visual impairments (23.4%). Whilst access to higher learning education among the population aged 16 to 30 remains more prevalent in the urban population (8.5%), with Kigali city continuing to have the highest tertiary attendance of 8.6%, advances have been seen in other provinces, especially Southern and Eastern Provinces. [UNESCO data](#) on the education sector also provides information on deprivation and marginalization in Rwandese education, taking into account regional differences. Kibungo region has the highest level of education poverty in contrast with Kigali city.

The principle of leaving no one behind can also be applied to the level of institutions within the higher education sector, based on rankings. The Higher Education Council has undertaken a survey in 2016 to assess the **quality of provision by Rwanda’s HEI**. The [report](#) assessed and ranked all public and private HEIs against four broad criteria: infrastructure, faculty and research, curriculum and service delivery and industry interface. Each was awarded a composite score out of 1.000. The University of Rwanda was ranked the highest (scoring 592), with the lowest HEI scoring 171. The average score across all HEIs was 343.

The UNESCO data on [Deprivation and Marginalization in Education](#) (DME)³ presents the following scheme, showing that challenges remain between the two sexes, between rural and urban, as well as between regions.



3

- Education poverty: the proportion of the population with less than 4 years of education
- Extreme education poverty: the proportion with less than 2 years
- Poorest 20% in the bottom 20% of the Ed. Dist.: what proportion of the poorest 20% are also in the bottom 20% of the education distribution
- Never been to school: what proportion of 7-16 year olds have never been to school

Additional sources on Leaving No One Behind

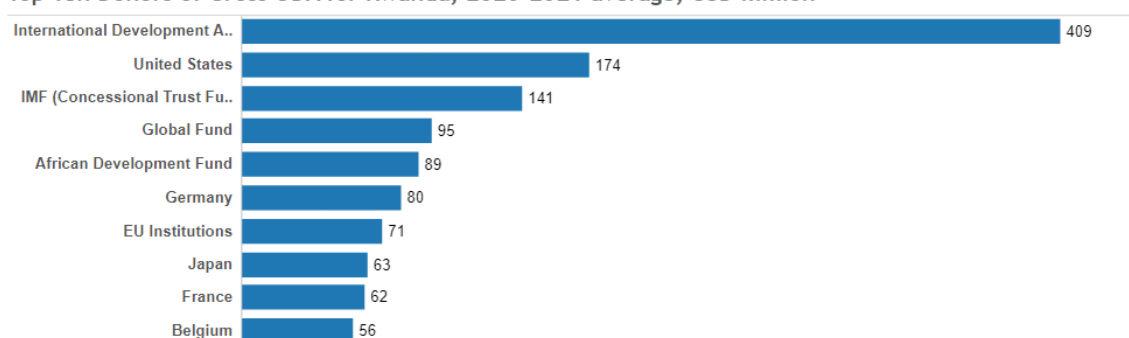
- Gender parity index: [school enrolment](#)
- [Global Gender Gap Report 2020](#), including country profiles
- ODI leaving no one behind index: summary [report](#) index 2019; annex [index 2019](#)
- World Inequality Database on Education: [Disparities in higher education attendance](#)
- Danish institute for human rights: [Human rights data explorer](#)

2.4 Multistakeholderpartnership - Stakeholder analysis

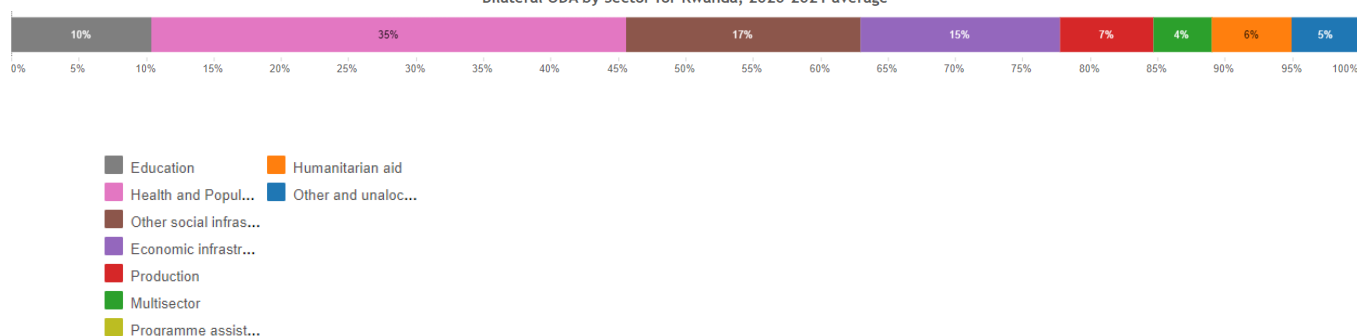
The complexity, scale, and interconnectedness of the current societal challenges that the SDG framework is seeking to address, requires a concerted effort of a wide variety of different stakeholders. As such, the principle of multistakeholderpartnership – which promotes cooperation and partnerships at different stages and spanning the boundaries of civil society, private sector, government, and academia – is ubiquitous across the 2030 Agenda. An analysis of these stakeholders is essential for each partnership.

Taking a look at the [development partners](#) of Rwanda, the International Development Association (IDA, fund of the World Bank Group) is the main donor of gross official development aid (ODA) in Rwanda. IDA supports the energy, agriculture and transport sectors. Also Belgium appears on the top list of bilateral donors.

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Rwanda, 2020-2021 average, USD million

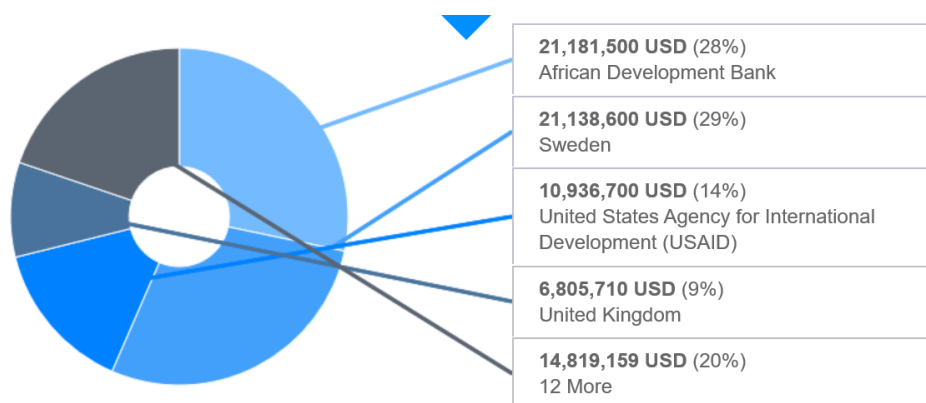


Bilateral ODA by Sector for Rwanda, 2020-2021 average



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm>

Based on data from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), Sweden (SIDA) and the African Development Bank are the main donors in the higher education sector ([full list of projects](#)).



Source: http://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?country_code=RW§or_code=11420#view=main

VLIR-UOS contributes to the 2030 agenda by realizing a societal impact, implying an impact on local communities, civil society, governments, private sector or other higher education institutions. In what follows we list the role and the desired change among the main actors involved in the change process that VLIR-UOS envisages to support through *its interventions*.

Actor	Role and interest/influence
Higher Education Institutions in Rwanda	HEIs in Rwanda are important boundary partners in the realization of VLIR-UOS outcomes in terms of its contribution to Agenda 2030, and the potential contribution to local sustainable development. As project owners they are expected to contribute to HEIs' enhanced institutional performance in the core tasks relating to education, research and societal service delivery strengthening the HEI's visibility and recognition as a centre of excellence. In the long-term, partner HEIs are also expected to have a multiplier effect on the higher education system and development sector in the country or region through their engagement in (global) knowledge-driven partnerships with academic and non-academic stakeholders.
DGD (incl. Belgian embassies in partner countries)	DGD has an advisory role in the VLIR-UOS selection commissions and follow-up on the VLIR-UOS portfolio and the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development. The Belgian Embassy in Rwanda can play a role in facilitating the uptake of knowledge, the identification, mobilisation and relation building with other stakeholders (e.g. links with European Union, national government, other donors), the contextual updates etc.
Students, professionals, and alumni	Students can be direct (e.g. as a recipient of a PhD scholarship within a project) or indirect beneficiaries (e.g. enjoying improved/innovative didactical approaches) of the projects. As direct beneficiary, their changed role will be about the generation and use of newly acquired knowledge, competences (e.g. global citizenship) and networks in view of sustainable development. Alumni from VLIR-UOS-projects in Rwanda will be important stakeholders in connecting VLIR-UOS projects with each other, with other actors, etc.
Academics/researchers	As direct beneficiaries of the projects, academics and researchers affiliated within Flemish and partner HE&SIs play an important role in co-creating, disseminating and creating conditions for uptake of knowledge relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in line with the needs, policies

	and priorities of the partner HE&SIs, local/national or regional stakeholders.
Members of the thematic JSF on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development	VLIR-UOS, ITM and ARES have initiated the JSF on HESD4SD to further unlock the developmental potential of higher education and science cooperation for sustainable development and make it accessible to other local, Belgian and international partners as scientific advisor to other partners' projects, partners or policy bodies, as a platform for sharing state of the art scientific results, information, expertise and experience and for exploration of possibilities for synergy and complementarity. In Rwanda, ARES and VLIR-UOS are present.
Belgian Actors of the Non-governmental Cooperation	VLIR-UOS continuously tries to identify and encourage synergy and complementarity between Belgian ANGCs and academic stakeholders. Through the uptake of research results, mobilisation of local stakeholders, participation in trainings or courses, identification and communication of relevant research questions/opportunities, hosting of international internships, facilitating student mobility... these actors play a critical role.
Belgian bilateral cooperation (BIO & Enabel)	VLIR-UOS will regularly exchange with Enabel and BIO to identify and communicate opportunities for synergy and complementarity with academic projects of the partner HEIs (e.g. through country reference frameworks, JSF platform).
International organizations and other donors (e.g. WHO, UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission...)	Interventions undertaken by international organisations like UN agencies such as FAO or international donors active in higher education cooperation can be complementary in the achievement of the objectives of projects. They can, for instance, play a role in the use and upscaling of new knowledge or practices or serve as seed money for bigger interventions financed by these international organisations.
Academic/science (inter)national and regional networks	Regional or (inter)national academic/science networks (e.g. CAMES, IUCEA) are among the potential indirect beneficiary as targeted HE&SIs strengthened in their research/educational capacities can improve the functioning of the networks they are part of through the co-creation, exchange and uptake of knowledge among academic stakeholders. Similar effects can be realized in the case of alumni and scholarship networks/associations when former scholarship students act as agents of change within these networks.
Public sector: Local or central government and political community	<p>Engage in evidence-based governance that puts knowledge to the test by being a stakeholder in the co-creation of inclusive (innovative) solutions and effective user of research results to foster good governance for sustainable and coherent policies.</p> <p>Since 2000, after the 1994 genocide, Paul Kagame of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is the president of Rwanda. Over the last two decades, the government of Rwanda has implemented several governance reforms with the aim of consolidating peace, building strong and accountable public institutions, and creating a safe, stable environment conducive to investment and growth. The Government of Rwanda drew on aspects of Rwandan culture and traditional practices to adapt its development programmes to the country's needs and context. The result is a set of so-called "home-grown solutions", practices rooted in the local culture that are translated into sustainable development programmes.</p>

	<p><i>Imihigo</i> (performance contracts) is one such practice, implemented as an accountability approach in the decentralization programme in 2000. It is a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool that the central and district levels use to set delivery targets and assess progress against agreed annual development targets, including SDGs.</p>
<p>Private sector</p>	<p>Individuals and companies who operate for profit and which are not controlled by the state can play a role within projects as users of the knowledge, applications and services (co-)created as result of the project and therefore contribute in particular but not only to SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure. Rwanda has emphasized the very important role of the private sector, beyond that of traditional partnerships, in the coming decades to achieve Rwanda's vision of becoming a strong private sector-led economy in 2030. It is proactively pursuing innovative partnerships with development partners, seeking to move beyond traditional financing and consider new, innovative ways to finance the private sector. Attracting private sector investment for critical development sectors is expected to play a pivotal role in delivering the SDGs by promoting public private partnership (PPP) and joint venture modalities. A PPP guideline was developed in 2018 to facilitate its smooth implementation.</p> <p>Within the transformational governance pillar of NST1, "strengthened partnerships between government, private sector, citizens, NGOs and FBOs (Faith Based Organisations) to fast track national development and people centered prosperity" is put forward as an objective. The National Voluntary Review also highlights the pivotal role of CSOs, private sector players and development partners in delivering SDGs and other national priorities.</p> <p>The private sector in Rwanda however remains relatively weak and lacks the economies of scale that are crucial for productivity. It also faces challenges related to high costs of finance and transport costs. The private sector is still small and predominantly dominated by micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. Foreign direct investment volumes have increased but remain low, at 3 percent of GDP. Weak domestic saving (10% GDP in 2018) is also a constraint on domestic capacity to generate financing for private sector investment.</p>
<p>Civil society, social movements and local communities</p>	<p>Civil society actors, social movements and local communities are expected to co-create, access and use the knowledge and research products generated within the framework of <i>projects</i> thereby making a potential contribution to the entire range of SDGs.</p> <p>A European Union financed project of mapping the civil society in Rwanda (2013) concludes that civil society risks to be lagging behind in Rwanda. Their contribution to citizen participation in policy making is often just responding to government inputs, by assuming the role of implementing partners or by assuming the role of service delivery bodies. In a very limited number of cases, some civil society organizations (CSOs) assume the role of "critical witnesses", but are not really engaging or influencing public policies and their implementation. An issue therefore emerges about the way CSOs can assume a more effective role in participating to Rwanda development dynamics, both at local and national level. Such a role seems to be particularly important in reference with dynamics, such as those related to decentralisation, social cohesion, building trust among citizens and public authorities, access to information and services, social inclusion and innovation. CSOs in fact can both, make more visible societal processes and interests and directly participate to decision making, policy implementation, policy</p>

monitoring and the improvement of service delivery at the different levels. CSOs position appears to be an uncertain one, since different elements challenge them. Spaces do exist in which dialogue among CSOs and with Government has been or carried out, but dialogue still appears largely guided by government and public authorities.

Although Rwanda has made remarkable progress in developing its governance structures, maintaining security, promoting reconciliation and strengthening the justice system, significant challenges in democracy, human rights and governance remain. According to [Amnesty International](#), “political opponents faced severe restrictions on the right to freedom of association and some disappeared or were killed. Those expressing opinions deemed to be critical of the ruling party, the government and its policies, faced prosecution and lengthy prison sentences”. [Human Rights Watch](#) states that “the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) exerts total control over political space in Rwanda. President Paul Kagame and other government officials regularly threaten those who criticize the government or the RPF. Independent media and civil society are weak, and political space is extremely limited”.

3 Synergy and Complementarity with other (Belgian) development actors in Rwanda

3.1 VLIR-UOS approaches to synergy and complementarity

Drawing upon their longstanding common history, VLIR-UOS, ARES and the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) jointly developed the thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science for Sustainable Development (JSF HES4SD). Through cooperation with civil society, private and public sector, the JSF initiators⁴ aim to further unlock the huge developmental potential of higher education and science cooperation for sustainable development and make it accessible to other Belgian, local and international partners, in different ways: as partner in a multi-actor partnership, as scientific advisor to other partners' projects, partners or policy bodies, as a knowledge broker for sharing state of the art scientific results, information, expertise and experience and for exploration of possibilities for synergy and complementarity. This reference framework for Rwanda will feed into the **platform** that the initiators of the JSF HES4SD plan to create to proactively communicate opportunities and facilitate such cooperation. More precisely, the platform can be used to:

- (i) communicate about the launch and results of competitive calls for projects;
- (ii) communicate other opportunities for projects or scholarships;
- (iii) gather/exchange on collaboration opportunities (e.g. requests for scientific advice);
- (iv) share information about ongoing projects, events and seminars in the country/region.

3.2 Bilateral development cooperation (Enabel) in Rwanda

Belgium ranks 10th on the ODA overview for Rwanda and the country is among the three largest beneficiaries of Belgian development cooperation. Rwanda is one of the 14 partner countries of the direct bilateral development cooperation of Belgium through Enabel. [Enabel](#) implements activities in three sectors in Rwanda: health, urbanisation and agriculture. Learning and capacity building support is available for the public finance management sector.

VLIR-UOS is part of the indirect development cooperation of Belgian actors. A Rwanda country platform to promote consultation and cooperation between the non-governmental actors was established in 2016, called the Joint Strategic Framework Rwanda. It is also a document which proposes several strategic objectives which the actors put forward, based on a context analysis of the country. The [JSF of Rwanda](#) developed in 2017 also gives an overview of the different Belgian non-governmental actors active in Rwanda and possibilities for synergy between them. In line with the policies of Belgian development cooperation, VLIR-UOS encourages synergy with Belgian actors in a country.

⁴ The three JSF initiators represent 60 Belgian higher education institutions (HEIs), being 11 universities, 32 university colleges, 16 school of arts, and ITM.

3.3 Belgian actors of the non-governmental cooperation in Rwanda

3.3.1 Thematic Joint Strategic Framework on Higher Education and Science

	Belgian HE&SI	Partner HE&SI	Topic/ thematic focus	Contact person
ARES	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	Université du Rwanda (UR)	Fellowship en chirurgie mini-invasive à l'Université du Rwanda	Christine Leroy
ARES	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Université du Rwanda (UR)	Analysis and Management of patients with distinct clinical presentations of malaria.	Christine Leroy
ARES	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	Université du Rwanda (UR)	Création d'un programme de master en biotechnologie à l'Université du Rwanda	Christine Leroy
ARES	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Institut d'enseignement supérieur de Ruhengeri (INES-Ruhengeri)	Landslide and flood hazards and vulnerability in NW Rwanda: towards applicable land management and disaster risk reduction (LAFHAZAV)	Christine Leroy

ARES (representing the French speaking higher education institutions in Belgium) has built up a long history of cooperation with the University of Rwanda, going back more than 30 years. An overview of ARES projects in Rwanda is available on their [website](#). A network of Rwandese alumni which studied in Belgium is active in Rwanda (“Alumnus Rwanda Belgium”), with the support of the Belgian embassy.

3.3.2 Rwanda Joint Strategic Framework

	Description of the strategic goal	ANGCs
SG1	Contribuer à l'émergence d'une société civile légitime, indépendante, forte, compétente et redevable	11.11.11, AFRICALIA, BD, CRB, FB, HI, RCN J&D, RKV, VSF, ADA, SFCG, SOS VE
SG2	Lutter systématiquement contre les facteurs d'exclusion selon le principe de « ne laisser personne de côté » et en particulier, promouvoir l'égalité des genres et l'empowerment des femmes et des filles.	PLAN, ADA, BD, EF, FB, HI, VSF, APEFE, VVOB, SFCG, RCN J&D, 11.11.11, SOS VE, LFTW, CI.be, CRB, CNCD-11.11.11, MRAC-KMMA
SG3	Assurer l'éducation de qualité inclusive et équitable et des possibilités d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie pour tous	APEFE, ACTEC, FB, HI, LFTW, PLAN, VVOB, SOS VE, EF

SG4	Permettre à tous, et surtout aux personnes les plus vulnérables, de vivre en bonne santé et promouvoir le bien être, l'accès à la santé, à l'hygiène et à des soins de qualité.	ADA, CDEB, CRB, HI, LFTW, MSV, RKV, SOS VE, VSF
SG5	Renforcer l'agriculture familiale durable qui contribue à la souveraineté alimentaire, la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et une économie rurale solidaire	ADA, BD, CI.be, CRB, EF, VSF, SOS VE
SG6	Promouvoir l'avènement d'une société pacifique et inclusive et contribuer au respect des droits humains et de leurs défenseurs	11.11.11, ADA, AFRICALIA, BD, HI, RCN J&D, SFCG, SOS VE
SG7	Soutenir le développement de l'emploi et de l'entrepreneuriat justes, équitables et inclusifs notamment pour les femmes, jeunes, groupes vulnérables...	APEFE, PLAN, ADA, ACTEC, BD, VSF, VVOB
SG8	Renforcer la résilience et les capacités d'adaptation des communautés face aux aléas climatiques et aux catastrophes naturelles via une gestion durable des ressources naturelles	ADA, APEFE, CRB, RKV, VSF, VVOB

ANGC	JSF - Strategic goals	Local partners	Geographic region	Contact person
11.11.11	SG1, SG2, SG6	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	11.11.11	Koen Warmenbol Claudia Furaha Many Madika
ACTEC	SG3, SG7	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	ACTEC	To be completed
Auto-Développement Afrique (ADA)	SG1, SG2, SG4, SG5, SG6, SG7, SG8	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	ADA	Nathalie Rucquoy
AFRICALIA	SG1, SG6	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	AFRICALIA	To be completed
APEFE	SG2, SG3, SG7, SG8	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	APEFE	Sigrid De Meester Marie Pierre Ngoma
Broederlijk Delen (BD)	SG1, SG2, SG5, SG6, SG7	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	BD	Toon Vrelust
Caritas International Belgique (CI.be)	SG2, SG5	To be added based on programme 2022-2026	CI.be	Gregory Claus

Chain D'Espoir Belgique (CDEB)	SG4	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 CDEB	To be completed
Croix-Rouge Belgique – Com. Francophone (CRB)	SG1, SG2, SG4, SG5, SG8	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 CRB	Veerle De Craene Issa Sawadogo
Entraide et Fraternité (EF)	SG2, SG3, SG5	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 EF	Philippine Cartier
Humanity & Inclusion (HI)	SG1, SG2, SG3, SG4, S6	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 HI	Victoria Binauld Gallican Mugabonake
Light For The World (LFTW)	SG2, SG3, SG4	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 LFTW	Martin Rotsaert
Médecins Sans Vacances (MSV)	SG4	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 MSV	Jan Leysen
Plan International	SG2, SG3, SG7	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 Plan	Nicolas Casale Frédérique Geron
RCN Justice & Démocracy	SG1, SG2, SG6	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 RCN J&D	Malik Ayari Hugo Jombwe
Rode Kruis Vlaanderen (RKV)	SG1, SG4, SG8	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 RKV	Pello Mugica Gonzalez
Search for Common Ground (SFCG)	SG1, SG2, SG6	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 SFCG	To be completed
SOS Villages d'Enfants (SOS VE)	SG1, SG2, SG3, SG4, SG5, SG6	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 SOS VE	To be completed
Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (VSF)	SG1, SG2, SG4, SG5, SG7, SG8	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 VSF	Expedithe Musengiyaremye Eddy Timmermans
VVOB	SG2, SG3, SG7, SG8	To be added based on programme 2022-2026 VVOB	Henriette Umulisa

3.3.3 Other Thematic Joint Strategic Frameworks

ANGC	JSF	Approaches	Local partners	Contact person
Rikolto	Sustainable cities	To be completed	- Les institutions publiques telles que les autorités de Rubavu (TBC) - Partenaires du secteur privé (TBD) - Groupes d'agriculteurs dans les zones périurbaines	Charlotte Flechet
COTA	Sustainable cities	To be completed	- Les autorités locales (TBD) - Les organisations de la société civile (TBD)	Emmanuel Gayraud
CEBioS	Resilience	To be completed	Ministère de l'Environnement	Luc Janssens de Bisthoven Hilde Keunen
MRAC-KMMA	Resilience	To be completed	University of Rwanda (UR)	Eva November
IFSI-ISVI	Decent Work	2.Promouvoir les droits des travailleur·euse·s 3.Promouvoir l'accès à la protection sociale 4.Renforcer le dialogue entre les partenaires sociaux.	CESTRAR –syndicat STECOMA –syndicat	To be completed
WSM	Decent Work	1.Créer des emplois décents et productifs 2.Promouvoir les droits des travailleur·euse·s 3.Promouvoir l'accès à la protection sociale 4.Renforcer le dialogue entre les partenaires sociaux.	COTRAF –syndicat FMP –économie sociale, formation et insertion professionnelle CEFOTRAR -économie sociale, formation et insertion professionnelle ARR –droits de retraités et personnes âgées ZAMUKA –Réseau national multi-acteurs pour la protection sociale AMI –médiation et prévention des conflits (approche sous-régionale)	To be completed