



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of The Netherlands

Multi-Annual Country Strategy 2023-2026 **[Rwanda]** (Condensed version)

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Introduction

This Multi-Annual Country Strategy (MACS) outlines the areas of international cooperation in which The Netherlands wishes to collaborate with Rwanda for the period 2023-2026. This document is a condensed version containing the policy priority areas, strategic results and strategic interventions. The resources supporting this strategy are assigned through the annual budget and annual planning cycles.

I The Netherlands and Rwanda

Present day Rwanda is a country of relative stability in an otherwise volatile region. Rwanda is an influential regional actor that belies its small size. Its influence is felt in its immediate neighborhood, as well as further away in sub-Saharan Africa. It can be both constructive and benign, as well as self-interested where its interests are deemed to be threatened. Multilaterally, Rwanda is a nation that in areas of climate, environment, gender equality and LGBTI-rights is in many ways an example to others, whilst concerns remain regarding civic and political rights in its society.

In the intermediate period Rwanda's domestic stability will depend on the ability of its government to continue to provide security, economic growth and social development to its young and fast growing population. Its focused efforts to promote growth and a conducive business climate, as well as its relative intolerance for corruption makes this a convincing effort. However, important bottlenecks remain and equitable growth is an important concern.

The next four years will be challenging as the country recovers from the dual economic shocks of the pandemic and the global effects of the Russian invasion in the Ukraine. Furthermore, upcoming national and presidential elections are likely to bring to the surface the strains in its society.

The above makes Rwanda an important partner for the Netherlands in a volatile region. The relationship will change in character as in 2023 bilateral development cooperation ends. The Netherlands and Rwanda will need to craft a mutually important relationship between equals. The Netherlands engages Rwanda on the fundamental freedoms that will be crucial for longer term stability. It will continue its ongoing judicial cooperation in the struggle against impunity in particular for the Genocide Against the Tutsi. In the domain of the economy the Netherlands will contribute to sustainable growth and jobs by making available expertise to address bottlenecks in the Rwandan economy and link Dutch business expertise to Rwandan opportunities.

In the regional context, secure and transparent value chains and sustainable development that steer the region away from instability and organized crime, are both in Rwanda's interest and in the interest of the Netherlands and the EU. This will be addressed through the strategy for the Great Lakes Program.

II Objectives for 2023-2026

International legal order, human rights and host national policy

Through continued engagement with civil society actors and human rights defenders as well as through continued dialogue with government institutions, the Netherlands will continue to support and protect respect for human rights in Rwanda. The Embassy will continue strengthening its network through periodic meetings for human rights defenders, prepare for biannual Human Rights Tulip Awards and develop partnerships with civil society organizations under the Human Rights Fund.

The Embassy will continue to play its role in the bilateral cooperation between the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security and the Rwandan authorities through regular contact with the monitors of the International Commission of Jurists (Kenya section).

Sustainable Trade and Investment

The Netherlands will capitalize on the experience and gains from bilateral development cooperation to promote a thriving, mutually beneficial, economic relationship between Rwanda and the Netherlands. This will mean better market access for Rwandan producers and Dutch companies; working with both national and international partners to improve **business climate for Rwandan and Dutch companies; make use of Dutch added value** to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer for sectors with economic potential. Support catalytic initiatives that steer innovations, **entrepreneurship and job creation among youth and women**, by making better use of financing instruments made available by the Netherlands and other partners. A flexible approach will be undertaken in pursuing business opportunities for sectors that include agri-food, digitalization, logistics, infrastructure, energy, circular economy, water and climate change. The above highlighted objectives will be achieved by:

- setting up a **trade facilitation program** as pilot to operationalize the agenda, and serve as an example for other embassies in a similar situation.
- addressing bottlenecks **in business climate and market development**, by making use of NL Invest International financing instruments public window eg DRIVE, SDGP, WE4F, PwF. Wherever applicable, cooperation will be sought with EU delegation on themes of mutual interests, in the framework of Team Europe Initiative (TEI) .
- the Embassy will work together with other organizations such as Netherlands Food Partnership, to combine Dutch knowledge and skills with local efforts to pursue the objective of Sustainable Agriculture within the Food System Transformation Framework.
- Maintain, expand and utilize the Embassy's public and private sector networks to facilitate Dutch companies sustain and expand their businesses in Rwanda, or to invest in Rwanda.
- Facilitated market access (co-financed); business coaching (PUM); access to finance (DGGF, Dutch equity/Debt providers and climate mitigation through centrally funded programmes.

3) Bilateral dimension

A constructive and honest **policy dialogue** with the Rwandan government both bilateral and in the EU context will continue on a broad range of topics. Specific attention will be given to political, justice and HR, macro-economic, water management, WASH and Food & Nutrition Security building on the existing experience, and security developments in Rwanda and the wider Great Lakes region. The Netherlands will

ensure that regional developments remain high on the EU's agenda in Kigali, in line with the renewed EU strategy for the region. Regular reporting to The Hague will continue.

A new **public diplomacy** strategy will be developed in 2023 with a focus on continued engagement with our audience on the Netherlands' policy objectives and added value in Rwanda and preserving the network of NL alumni.

To enhance the bilateral trade and investment relationship between the Netherlands and Rwanda; the Embassy will develop an **Orange Carpet policy**, continue the **bilateral tax treaty** negotiations and engage with the EU delegation on possibilities of an **Investment Protection Policy** with Rwanda.

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