The special economic zone is attracting investors, expanding manufacturing capacity and strengthening Bugesera’s role in Rwanda’s industrial transformation.

Bugesera Special Economic Zone (BSEZ) is emerging as a key pillar of Rwanda’s industrial strategy, as construction and investor activity accelerate in one of the country’s largest planned industrial parks.

The zone is being developed through a public-private partnership between the Government of Rwanda and ARISE Integrated Industrial Platforms, with a combined investment of about $100 million. Ownership is split 60 per cent for ARISE IIP and 40 per cent for the government.

Covering about 335 hectares in Gashora Sector, Bugesera District, the industrial park is located approximately 56 kilometres from Kigali and near a new international airport under construction. Officials say the location gives manufacturers direct access to key transport networks and strengthens the district’s position as a future logistics and trade hub.

Development is progressing in phases, with roads, water systems, electricity networks and industrial facilities being rolled out to support manufacturing operations. According to officials, the first phase has reached about 85 per cent occupancy, reflecting growing investor confidence in the project.

Several factories are already operational, while others remain under construction. Industries represented in the zone include agro-processing, construction materials, packaging, textiles, timber processing and beverages. Emerging pharmaceutical and light manufacturing facilities are also taking shape.

RDB Chief Investment Officer Michelle Umurungi said the zone has attracted about $100 million in approved investments during its first phase.

“The zone has already recorded tangible progress in infrastructure delivery, including internal roads, water systems, wastewater facilities and electricity networks,” Umurungi said while appearing before a Senate Committee on Economy and Finance.

According to Pushpendra Kumar, Project and Operations Manager at BSEZ, the zone currently supports between 1,500 and 2,000 jobs across 12 operational companies. Five additional firms are under construction, while several others are assessing opportunities to establish operations within the park.

Once fully developed, BSEZ is expected to host more than 75 industries and create approximately 45,000 direct jobs, supporting Rwanda’s efforts to expand its manufacturing base and boost exports.

Kumar noted that attracting companies into the zone remains a challenge, particularly as some industries continue to operate outside designated industrial parks. He also pointed to the absence of targeted incentives for firms choosing to locate within the special economic zone.

The project has also highlighted the need for continued infrastructure development. It has also invested in environmental and utility infrastructure, including wastewater treatment and sewage systems, as essential to supporting future industrial growth.

Kumar added that BSEZ management participates in community activities such as Umuganda and supports environmental sustainability initiatives.

Beyond manufacturing, the zone hosts Rwanda’s e-waste collection and recycling facility, which processes thousands of tonnes of electronic waste annually. The facility reflects growing efforts to integrate environmental sustainability into the country’s industrial development agenda.

ARISE IIP operates industrial platforms across several African countries, including Gabon, Benin and Togo, and is expanding projects in other countries.

The zone is expected to strengthen Rwanda’s manufacturing sector by attracting new investment, expanding industrial production and creating employment opportunities. Its location near Kigali and regional transport routes is also expected to improve market access for businesses operating within the park.

As development continues, the Bugesera Special Economic Zone is steadily evolving into one of the most important industrial centres, underscoring the district’s growing role in the country’s economic transformation.