

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) and the Belgian Development Agency, Enabel, have awarded €280,000 (over 414 million Rwandan Francs) to women and youth with promising business projects.

The award ceremony took place on February 14, 2025, and aimed to support businesses focused on trade and industry.

A total of 310 projects from eight districts — Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, Gasabo, Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rutsiro, and Rubavu — were recognized in the competition. These projects were divided into three categories. The first category received €300, the second category was awarded €5,000, and the third category received €6,000.

The competition was designed to encourage job creation, improve living standards, and promote a culture of entrepreneurship.

One of the winners, Ngango Jean de Dieu, runs Inkesha Ltd, a company that makes doughnuts, cookies, bread, sausages, and more. Based in Gatsata, Gasabo District, Ngango won €6,000 in the third category.

“Before, I couldn’t meet the demand because I had little capital. This funding will help me grow. I used to make 5,000 sausages and sell them in Kigali and the Eastern Province. Now, I can expand to other areas and produce every day instead of twice a week.” Ngango shared.

Another winner, Niyonsenga Festus, leads a cooperative in Nyamasheke that sells animal feeds. Niyonsenga’s cooperative was awarded €5,000.

“We used to sell eight tons of feeds per month. Now, we plan to reach 15 tons per month. This funding will help us reach that goal. We thank the government for supporting small businesses,” Niyonsenga said.

Godfrey Gakire, the Project Officer at MINICOM, thanked Enabel and other partners for their support in organizing the competition and funding these projects. He encouraged project owners to visit local business advisors, available in every sector, who can help them develop strong business plans and access loans for further growth. He also urged local governments to keep supporting the winners to ensure their projects succeed.

This initiative is part of the government’s National Strategy for Transformation (NST2). The strategy focuses on five key areas: creating jobs, promoting exports,

improving education quality, reducing malnutrition, and enhancing service delivery. The government aims to create 1.25 million jobs and 250,000 new jobs each year.

Urujeni Martine, the Deputy Mayor of Kigali in charge of Economic Affairs, encouraged the winners to use their awards wisely to grow their businesses and create jobs for others.