

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

The International Cycling Union (UCI) voted Thursday to select Rwanda as the host city for the 2025 World Cycling Championship.

Rwanda outdistanced one other finalist —another African city, Tangiers, Morocco— during the year's World Championships in Louvain, Belgium on Thursday.

It means, Rwanda will be the first African nation to host the event since it was inaugurated in 1921.

Rwanda launched its bid to host the 2025 world championships back in 2019 after the UCI invited bids from African countries.

The Rwandan President Paul Kagame was in Flanders for the announcement Thursday morning.

The hosting of this tournament gives Rwanda the opportunity to prepare hard in several perspectives. Considerable resources have to be disbursed by the state to prepare ahead of this tournament to meet up UCI requirements.

In May, UCI president David Lappartient visited the Tour of Rwanda, which has been on the UCI calendar since 2008.

Lappartient was at the Tour of Rwanda and then held high-level talks with officials and Rwanda President Paul Kagame.

Lappartient has been supportive of Rwanda's bid since he became UCI President in 2017.

Rwanda formally submitted a bid two years ago and has reportedly produced a detailed and convincing bid document.

"The World Championship will take place in Africa in 2025, that's for sure," Lappartient told L'Equipe.

In the bid to win the race to host the World Championships, Rwanda was taking a serious lead and the case was very solid with already existing infrastructure and enormous possibilities for adaptation..

Rwanda has enforced strict anti-COVID-19 measures and so avoided the worst of the global pandemic.

The Tour du Rwanda has roots back to 1988 as a regional race, and was elevated to the international UCI calendar in 2008.