

The African Development Bank has signed a grant agreement with the Ministry of ICT and Innovation in Rwanda to support the Rwanda Coding Academy, set up to develop top technology talent to drive a booming, innovation-driven digital economy in the East African nation.

The Rwanda Coding Academy was set up as a proof-of-concept model school for developing ICT and other 21st century skills for high school level students who want to pursue a career in coding and computer science. The Academy selects high performing students and trains them in advanced software programming and cyber security skills to facilitate their emergence as world-class programmers.

The grant funding of \$150,000, from the Rockefeller Trust Fund which the Bank administers, will be directed to the implementation of activities, including acquisition of computers and furniture equipment for an ultra-modern innovation center of excellence, internet connectivity, teacher training and organization of job career orientation events.

The Academy's learning approach aims to strengthen the school-to-work transition by focusing on competency-based learning and providing technical skills as well as soft skills, such as agile learning, critical thinking and self-leadership.

Rwandan Minister for ICT and Innovation, Paula Ingabire, said her government welcomed the partnership with the African Development Bank. "The Rwanda Coding Academy is part of our broader vision to grow a local pool of highly talented Pan-African workforce in science, technology and innovation," she said adding that the Academy's learning model requires robust digital infrastructure and a dynamic teaching approach from the instructors.

The grant will also be used to finance on-job training for teachers and equipping the school with the necessary tools to facilitate the learning experience of students.

"This collaboration between the Bank and the Government of Rwanda aims to demonstrate that empowering African youth with demand-driven skills and providing them with opportunities to be part of the ICT ecosystem as early as possible, will enable them to claim their space in the digital sector and be equal drivers of innovative ideas that are shaping the present and the future of Africa and the globe," said Nnenna Nwabufo, Acting Director General for the African Development Bank's Eastern Region.

"This proof-of-concept has profound implications on how the education sector can adapt an effective response to the persistent skills mismatches in the labour market, not only in Rwandan but in Africa at large," she added.

