

Rwanda's mining industry is calling for a dedicated industrial zone for mineral processing to increase production and exports, industry leaders said Wednesday.

Representatives from the Rwanda Mining Association told members of Parliament's Economic and Trade Commission that the current scattered locations for mineral processing plants limit output and complicate investment.

"If we are given a space dedicated to mineral processing, it would accelerate operations and exports because companies would have room to process minerals freely," said Kagenga Innocent, president of the association. "Right now, existing plants are so small that even accommodating two trucks is a challenge."

Rwanda currently has three processing plants: two for Gasegereti and Coltan, and one for gold. According to Kagenga, these facilities operate at only 5% to 10% of their potential capacity. The sector employs more than 92,000 people and contributes about 3% of the nation's GDP.

Industry officials are in discussions with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) to develop the dedicated processing zone in Gahanga, Kicukiro District, in an area called Kagasa. MINICOM officials confirmed that feasibility studies are underway and experts are being consulted to guide the project.

The Rwanda Mines, Petroleum, and Gas Board reports that in 2024, the mineral sector generated more than 2.4 trillion Rwandan francs (\$1.7 billion). National targets aim to increase this figure to 3.15 trillion francs (\$2.17 billion) by 2029. Rwanda is rich in minerals such as Wolfram, Gasegereti, and Coltan, which are processed into tungsten, tin, and tantalum, with annual extraction ranging between 8,000 and 10,000 tons.

Industry leaders said the new zone would attract investors, enable the sector to scale up production, and increase exports, supporting Rwanda's goal to maximize the economic value of its mineral resources.