Rwanda’s satellite teleport has received Tier 3 certification from the World Teleport Association (WTA), becoming the only facility in Sub-Saharan Africa to hold the designation and marking a milestone in the country’s efforts to expand its space and satellite communications capabilities.

The certification recognizes the reliability and operational resilience of the facility, which is operated by the Rwanda Space Agency (RSA) and serves as a ground station linking satellites in orbit with users on Earth.

Located in Mwurire Sector in Rwamagana District, eastern Rwanda, the teleport enables the country to receive and process satellite data domestically, reducing reliance on foreign infrastructure. Since launching its first satellite, RwaSat-1, in 2019, Rwanda has depended on facilities outside the country to access some satellite-generated data.

The certification was awarded on Aug. 3 under the WTA’s Teleport Certification Program, which evaluates facilities based on infrastructure, operational standards, service quality and reliability.

The Rwanda facility is the second in Africa to receive Tier 3 certification after Egypt’s Nilesat teleport and the first government-operated teleport worldwide to earn the designation.

Gaspard Twagirayezu, Chief Executive Officer of Rwanda Space Agency (RSA)

“This certification demonstrates confidence in Rwanda’s capabilities in technology and shows how we are continuing to develop infrastructure for space science and satellite-based communication services,” RSA Chief Executive Officer, Gaspard Twagirayezu said.

Tier 3 certification indicates that a facility can maintain continuous service during maintenance or upgrades through redundant systems and backup capabilities, ensuring uninterrupted operations around the clock. The certification is valid for three years.

World Teleport Association CEO, Randall Barney said the achievement reflects growing progress in Africa’s space and satellite communications sector.

The facility is expected to support a range of services, including satellite internet connectivity, earth observation, agricultural monitoring, disaster management and aviation operations. Officials say the certification could also strengthen investor confidence in Rwanda’s technology sector by demonstrating that the country has internationally recognized satellite communications infrastructure.

Established in 2020, the Rwanda Space Agency has invested in developing local expertise and infrastructure as part of the country’s broader ambition to position itself as a regional hub for space technology and satellite-enabled services.