

The Rwandan government and World Bank Group today signed a US\$150 million (approximately Rwf.142 billion) financing agreement to support Rwanda's efforts to expand opportunities for the acquisition of quality, market-relevant skills in selected economic sectors. Half of the financing is grant while the other is a concessional loan payable in 38 years, with a 6-year grace period at 0.75% interest rate.

The proposed Rwanda Priority Skills for Growth project has four components: (a) Reinforcing Governance of the Skills Development System (b) Provision of Quality Training Programs with Market-relevance; (c) Expanding Opportunities for Continuous Upgrading of Job-relevant Skills for Sustained Employability, and (d) Capacity Building for Program Implementation.

"Skills development and employment promotion are central to Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation. Equipping the workforce with the right skills for economic transformation is central to our long term development objectives, so this support will contribute to upskill Rwanda's workforce for long-term economic transformation," said Dr. Uzziel Ndagijimana, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning

The project is expected to increase access to technical and vocational education and training as well as higher education programmes that are responsive to both labour market needs and the social and economic development of Rwanda. It will also strengthen private sector capacity through targeted firm level support, improve access to markets for micro, small and large enterprises, increase employment mainstreaming in investment and bilateral projects; expand access to evidence-based information on skills demand and supply and access to labour market Information and employment services.

"Targeted interventions for skills development will support Rwanda's efforts to establish a strong base for skills needed in the productive sector, and at the same time equip the youth with relevant practical and technical skills to increase their chances of sustainable employability". Said Ruth Karimi Charo World Bank Task Team Leader for the project. "I would like to thank all our counterparts in the Government for their collaboration and hard work throughout the preparation of this project".

The World Bank cooperates with Rwanda in key sectors including agriculture, energy, social protection, education and skills development, transport, urban development and housing alongside cross-cutting and regional projects

interventions.