

A new startup accelerator, 'HuzaX', has debuted in Rwanda and is aiming at accelerating digital tourism in the country through mentoring and investing in students and early stage startups.

Yan Kwizera, a Rwandan technology entrepreneur behind the accelerator, said that they have a target to create about 100,000 direct jobs by 2020 as a result of HuzaX's startups growth.

HuzaX's target area is tourism, an industry believed to be fast growing and harbouring potential to significantly contribute to the country's goals such as job creation.

"The country is investing a lot in tourism but when you look around, you hardly find startups focusing on tourism innovations. Yet, we see many areas in tourism where technology can be applied," Kwizera noted.

"We should be thinking of solutions like; how do you give experience to someone who can't travel all the way from the U.S. to come and see gorillas using technology, how do you use technology to track lions in Akagera National Park and many others," he added.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council latest report, tourism contributes 10 per cent of global GDP and every 1 job out of 10 is from the sector.

The sector has been growing at a rate of 4.6 per cent annually with an expectation to remain so until 2028.

Kwizera imagines that such statistics predict a bright future for startups in the space. The accelerator also hopes to tap into the growing number of tourists visiting Rwanda.

HuzaX currently has its base in Musanze district, one of the country's touristic hubs.

Just this week, the accelerator entered a partnership with the 'Integrated polytechnic college of Tumba' which will see them work with students to develop innovative ideas and projects.

This will particularly see 10 innovation projects benefit from the partnership in the beginning.

The selected projects will be nurtured to grow into businesses.

Rita Clémence Mutabazi, the Tumba IPRC Principal, believes the move will benefit the students who rarely get access to mentorship and could go a long way to develop the tourism industry in the country.