

Tearfund Rwanda has wrapped up a five-year agricultural project that supported more than 30,000 small-scale farmers in improving fruit and vegetable production across four districts.

Launched in 2020, the initiative targeted farmers in Bugesera, Kayonza, Rwamagana, and Gasabo districts. It was funded by the European Union through Rwanda's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and implemented by Tearfund Rwanda in partnership with AEE Rwanda and the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB).

The project aimed to boost local agriculture and increase Rwanda's exports of fruits and vegetables. Despite beginning during the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said it exceeded expectations.



*Dr. Emmanuel Murangira, Country Director of Tearfund Rwanda*

"At the start, our goal was to support 30,000 farmers. We reached 30,072, including over 7,200 youth and nearly 21,700 women," said Dr. Emmanuel Murangira, Country Director of Tearfund Rwanda. "The project not only strengthened agricultural productivity but improved livelihoods and increased export volumes by nearly 64%."

Farmers were trained in modern farming and market-oriented practices. Many also received start-up capital to expand their businesses. Jean Bosco Irimaso, a chili pepper farmer, said the project changed his life.

"Before the project, I farmed for survival. Today, I run my own business, employ 10 full-time staff and 20 casual workers, and earn over 850,000 francs monthly," Irimaso said.

EU Project Officer Mugeni Kayitenkore said the project significantly raised crop yields. Chili pepper production jumped from 24,705 kilograms to 867,512 kilograms, and French bean yields increased from 87,142 kilograms to more than 4,400 metric tons.



Kayitenkore said farmers received more than financial aid — they were equipped

with the technical skills to sustain their operations beyond the project's timeline.

Other EU-funded programs are underway, including the *Kungahara* initiative, which is focused on food security and nutrition across 21 districts.

Alice Mukamugema, Director General of Agriculture Value Chain Management and Trade at the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, said the project played a key role in advancing the country's horticulture sector, which is a national development priority.

"This work aligns with Rwanda's strategic plans, including NST2 and the agricultural transformation strategy," she said. "It's a vital contribution to rural development and export growth."