Volkswagen Group Africa has launched a multifunctional facility in Rwanda featuring electric tractors to modernise agriculture and enhance livelihoods. The initiative, part of the ‘GenFarm Project,’ aims to create a sustainable ecosystem of mechanised farming services tailored for rural communities in Africa.

The project, currently focused on farmers and cooperatives in Gashora, Bugesera district, began in June 2023 following a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Volkswagen and the Rwandan government. President Paul Kagame welcomed Volkswagen executives during their visit to mark the fifth anniversary of their partnership.

Under the MoU, the Rwandan government has committed to providing land for the project and facilitating necessary permits. The GenFarm Project is designed to deliver reliable and environmentally friendly e-powered farming solutions, including clean energy, training for local farmers, and trials of electric tractors.

Central to the initiative is developing an “Empowerment Hub (e-Hub),” scheduled to launch by mid-2025. This facility will feature a photovoltaic power system and energy storage capabilities, supplying clean energy and operational space for cooperatives, including e-tractor and e-scooter services.

Martina Biene, Chairperson and Managing Director of Volkswagen Group Africa, emphasised Rwanda’s significance as a growth market. “This project demonstrates our commitment to sustainable practices and highlights our ability to provide mobility solutions that benefit both rural and urban communities,” she stated.

Collaboration is critical to the project’s success. Volkswagen Group Africa will lead the stakeholder steering committee, while the Volkswagen Group Innovation Centre Europe will supply electric tractors. Support will also come from the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture (RICA) and the German development organisation Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), providing essential machinery.

Nikolai Ardey, Managing Director of Volkswagen Group Innovation, shared insights on the hub’s operations: “Farmers will be able to book e-tractors with trained drivers for sustainable farming. Our battery swap system will integrate the battery into the hub’s energy infrastructure.”

As Rwanda’s agricultural sector continues to thrive—accounting for 25% of the national GDP—projects like GenFarm are essential in advancing the country’s economic development while fostering innovation and sustainability in farming practices.