



RWB
Rwanda Water
Resources Board

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FOREWORD



On behalf of the Management and Staff of the Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB), we wish you a Happy New Year 2026. We are pleased to present this edition of our newsletter, highlighting key activities, achievements, and milestones recorded during the second quarter of the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

RWB continues to advance climate resilience through the implementation of nature-based solutions. During this coming year 2026, we are set to commence the USD 9.4 million Nature-Based Flood Adaptation Project in Karongi and Rusizi Districts, an initiative aimed at protecting vulnerable communities from recurrent floods and landslides while safeguarding critical water infrastructure in Western Rwanda.

Innovation remains a cornerstone of our approach. The 4th edition of the Water Resources Modelling Hackathon will once again provide a platform for young engineers to develop data-driven solutions that support sustainable water resources management and erosion

control. In parallel, we highlight ongoing efforts to investigate urban water pollution, reinforcing our commitment to safeguarding the quality and safety of Rwanda’s water bodies.

Strategic partnerships continue to underpin our mandate. The operationalization of the Groundwater and Non-Revenue Water workstreams under the Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) represents a significant step toward enhancing coordinated action and achieving long-term water security.

We also reflect on the successful progress of the Volcanoes Community Resilience Project (VCRP), which concluded the year with strong momentum. The project delivered notable results in catchment restoration, flood risk management, and livelihood improvement, including the distribution of livestock to vulnerable households

RWB continued to demonstrate its commitment to strengthening partnerships and knowledge sharing. During the quarter, RWB was honored to host delegations from Egypt and Ghana, further reinforcing bilateral relationships and facilitating meaningful shared learning for mutual benefit

We extend our sincere appreciation to our partners, stakeholders, and communities for their continued collaboration and support. Together, we look forward to another year of impactful action in safeguarding Rwanda’s water resources for sustainable development.

RICHARD NYIRISHEMA
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON



RWB TO IMPLEMENT \$9.4 MILLION NATURE-BASED FLOOD ADAPTATION PROJECT IN KARONGI AND RUSIZI

The Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) is set to implement a USD 9.4 million Nature-Based Flood Adaptation Project in Karongi and Rusizi districts, following approval of funding by the African Development Fund. The project will strengthen climate resilience, protect communities from recurring floods and landslides, and safeguard key water infrastructure in Western Rwanda.

Through nature-based solutions such as reforestation, catchment restoration, vegetated flood barriers, and riverbank rehabilitation, the initiative will reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance sustainable land productivity. An estimated 1.2 million residents will benefit from improved early warning systems and strengthened protection of vital water resources, while over 620,000 people will directly benefit from reduced flood risk.

The project will also focus on capacity building, with more than 6,000 people receiving climate adaptation training and

120 students gaining practical experience in eco-engineering and water management. These efforts align with Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy and reinforce national efforts to build climate-resilient communities and ecosystems.

Speaking on the initiative, RWB Executive Chairperson Richard Nyirishema commended the African Development Bank for funding this project noting its benefits .

“ This investment will help secure lives, livelihoods, and natural resources for generations to come. ”

By prioritizing nature-based solutions, the project will help protect lives, restore degraded landscapes, secure essential infrastructure, and contribute to long-term climate resilience and sustainable development in Rwanda.



WHY INVESTIGATING URBAN WATER POLLUTION MATTERS

Across Rwanda's growing cities, water resources face increasing pressure from urban runoff caused by domestic waste, industrial activities, and poorly managed discharge outlets. When pollutants enter rivers and wetlands, they threaten ecosystems, public health, and economic activities that depend on clean water.

To address this challenge, the Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) continues to play a central role in investigating, identifying, and preventing water pollution at its source.

From 10 to 15 November 2025, RWB conducted a comprehensive water quality investigation in major urban discharge outlets located in Huye, Muhanga, Rusizi, Karongi, Rubavu (Mahoko), and Musanze. These outlets are critical points where city runoff enters natural water bodies, making them key locations for understanding the state of water pollution.

At each outlet, water samples were collected directly from the discharge points. Using advanced portable equipment, instant readings of key water quality parameters (PH, EC, Chemicals, Turbidity) were obtained, providing an immediate snapshot of the condition of the water.

To ensure accuracy and deeper understanding, additional samples were preserved and transported to laboratory for

comprehensive analysis. These laboratory tests allow RWB to detect pollutants that are not immediately visible, including chemical and biological contaminants that may pose long-term risks to human health and aquatic life.

Generally, the assessment reveals that human activities such as erosion from land use, urban runoff, and the discharge of untreated domestic wastewater are heavily polluting water resources across Rwanda's major urban areas.

RWB uses these results to communicate evidence-based findings to relevant institutions, local authorities, industries, and communities. Where pollution levels exceed acceptable standards, corrective actions are initiated to address the problem at its source.

Regular water quality monitoring is essential because pollution often develops silently. By the time polluted water reaches downstream users, the damage may already be done. Continuous monitoring allows early detection, timely intervention, and prevention of wider environmental and health impacts.



MSP IN ACTION: GROUNDWATER, NON-REVENUE WATER

WORKSTREAMS LAUNCHED

The national Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) for water resources has moved swiftly from establishment to active implementation, marking a significant milestone in Rwanda's quest for water security. In late 2025, the Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) and its partners successfully launched two critical technical workstreams: Groundwater Management and Non-Revenue Water (NRW) Management.

During the launch, stakeholders reviewed key achievements from ongoing groundwater mapping initiatives and presented a roadmap for scaling up sustainable groundwater supply. The engagement emphasized the need for data-driven decision-making and integrated approaches to safeguard ecosystems while addressing priority water management challenges.

Tackling Non-Revenue Water

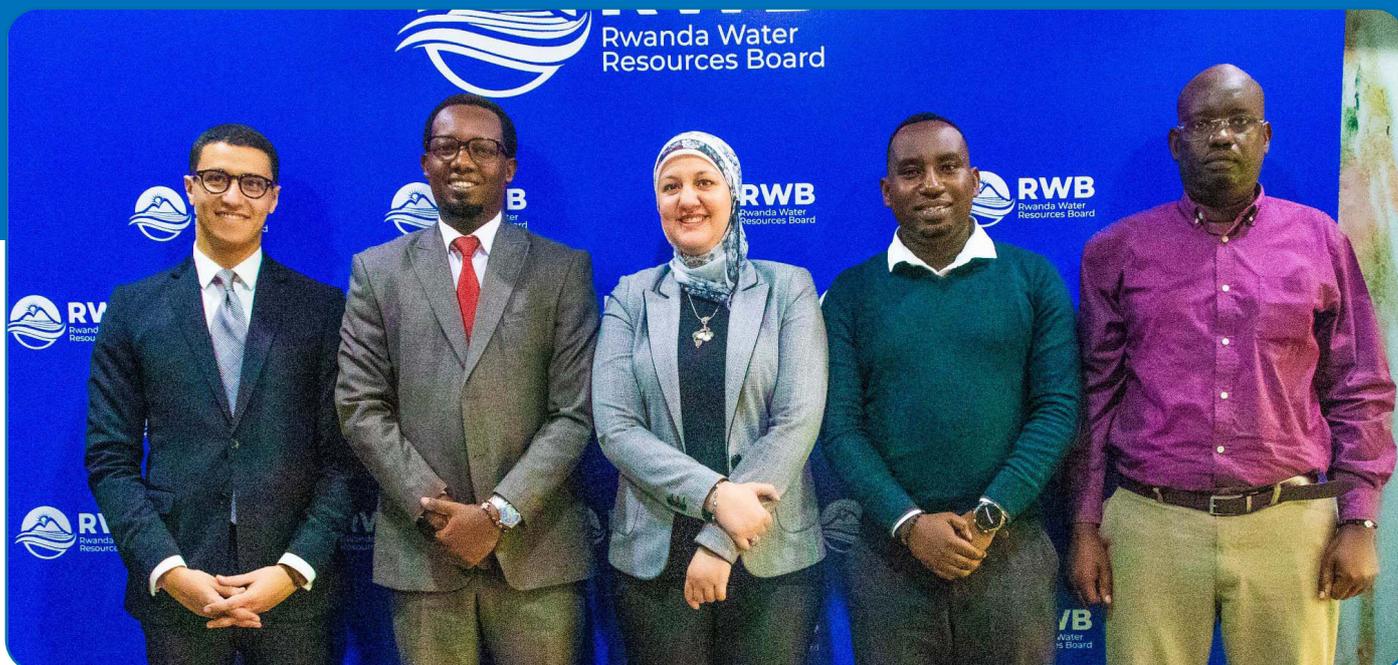
The MSP was originally launched in 2024 with the objective of supporting Rwanda in achieving water security for economic growth by promoting dialogue and joint planning across public, private, and civil society sectors. Hosted by the RWB with technical support from the World Bank's 2030 Water Resources Group (2030WRG), the platform has now operationalized its mandate by activating specific thematic teams to co-design solutions for pressing water challenges.

Building on this progress, stakeholders convened again on December 12, 2025, to launch the Non-Revenue Water (NRW) Workstream. This meeting brought together key stakeholders including the WASAC Group, JICA, Water for People, VEI, GIZ, AfDB, World Vision, and the World Bank 2030WRG.

Strengthening Groundwater Management

The momentum began on November 26, 2025, with the launch of the Groundwater Technical Workstream. This initiative is co-chaired by UNICEF and the private sector player Inyange Industries Limited, with RWB serving as the secretariat.

Chaired by WASAC Group, and co-chaired by Water for People, this workstream addresses the urgent challenge of water lost before reaching consumers. While NRW rates dropped to 39.5% by the end of 2024, the sector aims to reach a target of 25% by 2029. To achieve this, the workstream will focus on digital transformation, including switching to smart meters, and developing performance-based contracts for loss reduction.



RWB DIRECTOR GENERAL & EGYPT AMBASSADOR DISCUSS COOPERATION

The Director General of the Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB), Dr. Emmanuel Rukundo, received Her Excellency Ms. Hanan Abdelaziz El Said Shahin, the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Rwanda, for a courtesy visit aimed at cementing the long-standing partnership between the two nations in the water sector.

The meeting served as a crucial platform to reaffirm the robust bilateral cooperation that exists between Rwanda and Egypt. With water security becoming an increasingly global priority, the dialogue focused on moving beyond diplomatic pleasantries to concrete, practical avenues for action.

Key to the discussion was the operationalization of the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on water resources management. Both leaders agreed on the necessity of upholding this framework to ensure sustainable management of shared resources.

Furthermore, the meeting highlighted the importance of human capital. Director General Dr. Emmanuel Rukundo and

H.E. Ambassador Shahin explored avenues for enhancing capacity-building efforts, specifically identifying specialized training needs that would benefit Rwandan technical teams.

The discussion concluded with a commitment to identify further mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperation, ensuring that water resources development remains a pillar of the Rwanda-Egypt partnership.

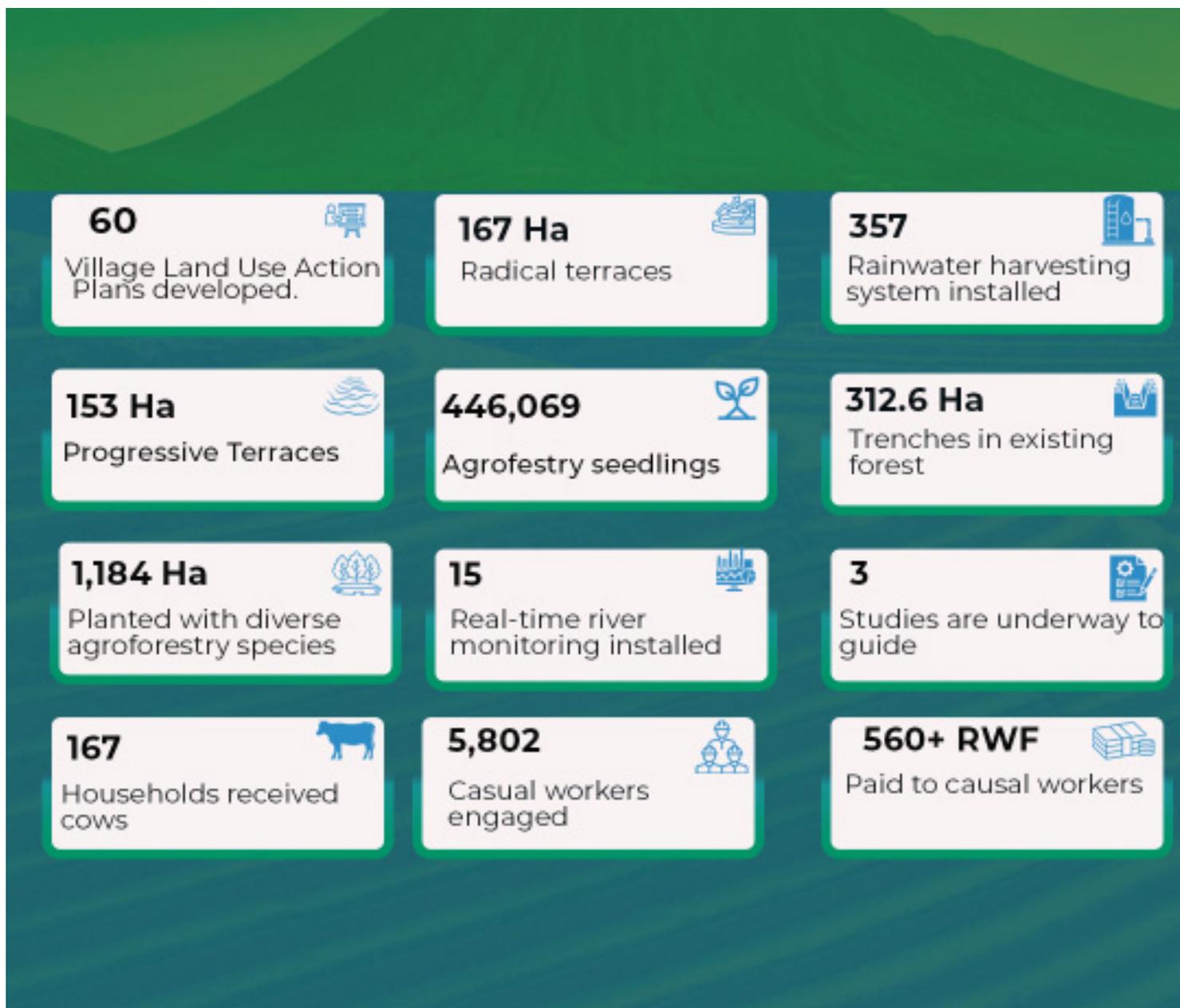


VCRP: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

With World Bank support, the Government of Rwanda is advancing the Volcanoes Community Resilience Project (VCRP), a bold initiative strengthening climate resilience in vulnerable catchments.

Implemented by a consortium led by the Ministry of Environment—including RWB, RDB, REMA, and Meteo Rwanda—the project targets flood risk reduction, watershed restoration, and improved

livelihoods. As feasibility studies are completed and catchment-based Village Land Use Plans gain approval from citizen assemblies and district committees, VCRP has moved decisively into implementation. Achievements recorded in 2025 signal strong momentum, with activities set to accelerate sharply in 2026





RWB SHOWCASES RWANDA'S WATER RESILIENCE STRATEGIES TO GHANAIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS' DELEGATION

December 3, 2026 – The Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB) hosted members of Ghana's Parliamentary Committee on Sanitation and Water Resources for a benchmarking visit aimed at strengthening bilateral learning and cooperation in sustainable water resources management.

The delegation was received by the RWB Management Team, which provided an overview of Rwanda's water sector, the national water resources context, and ongoing initiatives to enhance water security in support of sustainable development. The visit created a valuable platform for the exchange of experiences and practical insights on addressing emerging water-related challenges common to both countries.

During the briefing, RWB highlighted key interventions currently being implemented nationwide, including flood risk management, water storage development, catchment restoration, and water quality monitoring. Discussions also emphasized Rwanda's regulatory framework, particularly the Water Use Permit system, as a critical mechanism for promoting sustainable and equitable water allocation.

The delegation was further introduced to innovations and lessons learned from Rwanda's efforts to build water resilience, underscoring the importance of data-driven planning, community engagement, and integrated catchment management.

The Ghanaian delegation commended Rwanda's structured and forward-looking approach and expressed interest in adapting several of the presented strategies to their national context. Both parties reaffirmed the importance of continued collaboration and knowledge sharing among countries facing similar water sector pressures.





HOW COWS ARE TRANSFORMING HOUSEHOLDS' LIVELIHOOD IN RUBAVU

Murekatete Sylvie was among 40 families of Cyanzarwe Sector, Rubavu District who gathered to receive cows through the Volcanoes Community Resilience Project (VCRP) in September 2025. While the day was a milestone for the entire community, it held a unique surprise for her; the cow she was assigned gave birth on that very day, providing her family with an immediate double blessing that has since reshaped their future.

Before this intervention, Sylvie describes a life defined by difficult choices. "Life was difficult," she recalls with deep emotion. "When the children needed milk, I had to buy it, but my resources were never enough. I often watched them go without." That reality changed the moment she arrived home with her new cow and calf. "I came home with so much joy," she says. "Now, my children drink their fill of fresh milk every morning before heading to school. Their health has improved, and for the first time, they have no problems at all."

The transformation extended beyond the household and into the soil of her farm. For years, Sylvie struggled with poor harvests in the mountainous terrain of Rubavu.

"I used to plant crops, but they produced very little because the soil was exhausted," she explains. The cow provided the missing ingredient: a steady supply of organic fertilizer. "Now, my crops are growing tall and strong. Even the fodder seeds provided by the project have flourished because I had the manure to nourish them. Today, my fields are lush and green."

Sylvie attributes this new chapter of her life to the "Citizen First" vision of the national leadership. "I thank our parent, President Paul Kagame, for ensuring our wellbeing," she says. For her, the cow is not just an animal; it is the foundation of a dignified life.

Sylvie is one of 90 residents in Rubavu District who are seeing their lives changed by the VCRP. This success is a preview of a much larger mission; as the project continues, it is projected to distribute 10,000 cows across its operational districts by 2025/2026. This ongoing effort remains central to the VCRP's goal of building lasting resilience and transforming the livelihoods of families throughout the Volcanoes region.



RWB LAUNCHES THE WATER RESOURCES MODELLING HACKATHON 2026

Kigali, Rwanda – The Rwanda Water Resources Board (RWB), in partnership with the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS Network), has officially launched 4th edition of the Water Resources Hackathon, a national innovation competition targeting university students across Rwanda.

The hackathon aims to promote innovative, data-driven solutions that support sustainable water resources management, erosion control, and biodiversity conservation. It brings together students from public and private universities, as well as Rwanda Polytechnic, to apply technical and analytical skills to real-world environmental challenges.

The competition is structured around two specialized technical tracks:

1. Water Resources Modelling

Participants in this category will focus on hydrological and hydraulic modelling using tools such as HEC-HMS, QSWATplus, and HEC-RAS. RWB will provide selected catchment boundaries, while participants will be responsible for sourcing additional datasets required for their analyses.

2. Erosion Control

This category emphasizes software engineering and IoT-based solutions. Participants will use programming languages—preferably Python or R—to extract and analyze radical terraces. Satellite imagery or LiDAR data required for the analysis will be provided by RWB.

Eligibility Criteria

The hackathon is open to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Undergraduate students of all ages are eligible to apply. However, for Master's level applicants, age limits apply: male applicants must be 25 years or below, while female applicants must be 28 years or below.

To promote inclusivity and provide opportunities for new innovators, winners of the 2024 and 2025 editions of the hackathon are not eligible to participate in this edition.

Awards

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three performers in each category as follows:



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