



Status Report COVID-19 Report

Exchange Rwanda

[Abstract](#)

Report on the effects of COVID-19 in Rwanda

Version 6.0

5th February 2021



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The information in this volume is destined to provide a description of the COVID-19 status and its impact on social and economic life in the 5 Sub-Saharan African countries with cooperation programmes of Exchange vzw. The ambition is to give insights, based on information gathered by Exchange’s business development managers based in these countries. Exchange vzw. can not be held responsible for errors, omissions or lack of accuracy and disclaims any liability in connection with the use of this information. Feedback is welcome at info@exchangevzw.be

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1. Summary of the situation in Rwanda

Since the virus first emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the Rwandan government has established a multidisciplinary team to assess and strengthen preparedness and response to the pandemic.

The first case of COVID-19 in Rwanda was confirmed on 14 March 2020. The Rwanda government has engaged the African Union (AU) on the acquisition of Covid-19 vaccines in the country's latest efforts to secure more doses. Rwanda's current vaccine efforts have been more leaning towards the COVAX facility—a global initiative that aims at accelerating fair and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines for every country. COVAX has pledged to facilitate Rwanda, and a number of other African countries under it to access the vaccines at a subsidised cost to cover 20 per cent of their respective populations. Owing to the initiative, Rwanda is in line to get over 1.1 million Covid-19 vaccine doses in the first and second quarter of 2021 from the COVAX facility.

However, Rwanda's Ministry of Health says it is looking at AU's African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) for additional vaccine doses, as it takes effort to vaccinate 60 per cent of its population.



When the vaccine comes, the first doses will benefit people at high risk of the virus, for example, front-line workers in healthcare and people above 65. Others to benefit are those whose immunity can be easily compromised like those with cancer, diabetes, HIV and other serious diseases.



2. General overview and statistics

Situation 4th of February 2021 (most recent figures available)

1. Infections : total cases is 15.988 persons
2. Active Cases : 4.426
3. Recovered : 4.0851
4. Tested : 903.382
5. Deaths : 210
6. Test positivity rate : 3.7%

Source : https://www.rbc.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/annoucement/Update-on-COVID-19-04-02-2021-eng.jpg

A timeline of Rwanda's policy response

3. Current measures

On February 2, 2021, the Government of Rwanda announced updated COVID-19 prevention measures, extending existing measures countrywide including the current lockdown of Kigali from February 3 through February 7, 2021.

From February 8 through February 22, 2021, the following measures will be in effect in the city of Kigali General preventive measures that still remain in place:

- Masks must be worn in public at all times.
- All resumed services must continue adhering to health guidelines from health authorities (hand hygiene, mask wearing and social distancing).
- All traders are required to accept digital payments as an alternative form of payment

Specific measures that still remain in place:

Movements will be prohibited between 7:00 PM and 4:00 AM.

- Public offices will be closed.
- Private businesses will resume with essential staff at not more than 30 percent capacity. Business resuming operations must close by 5:00 PM.
- All schools (public and private), including universities, will remain closed.
- Movement between Kigali and other provinces and districts will not be permitted, except for essential services or tourism.
- Tourism activity will continue in strict adherence with COVID-19 guidelines. Tourists must possess negative COVID-19 test results. Travelers, including drivers, traveling to tourism entities within Kigali and other provinces and



districts are required to complete and submit movement requests through the Tourism Movement Facilitation Form found here. Travelers are also required to send copies of negative COVID-19 test results to visitrwanda@rbd.rw at least 24 hours prior to the trip. More information is found here.

- Public transport will resume within Kigali and should not exceed 50 percent capacity. Motorcycle taxis will be permitted to carry passengers.
- Physical meetings, events, and gatherings will not be permitted.
- Gyms and recreational centers will remain closed. All swimming pools will be closed except for those at hotels hosting tested guests. Only individual sports will be permitted from 5:00 AM to 9:00 AM.
- Restaurants and cafés will only provide take-away service. All bars will remain closed.
- Places of worship will remain closed.
- From February 8 through February 22, 2021, the following measures will be in effect in all other areas of Rwanda (outside of Kigali):
 - Movements will be prohibited between 7:00 PM and 4:00 AM.
 - Movement between districts will be prohibited.
 - Schools will continue operating with appropriate COVID-19 prevention measures.
 - Places of worship will remain closed.
 - All social gatherings will be prohibited.
 - Public transportation, including motorcycle taxis, will continue operating.
 - All bars will remain closed.
 - Public gyms and swimming pools will be restricted from the public with the exception of tested guests staying at hotels.

Updated Procedures for Arrival to Rwanda from February 8, 2021:

- Kigali International Airport will remain open.
- Arriving passengers must present a negative PCR COVID-19 test result taken within 72 hours of first departure to Rwanda.
- All arriving passengers must self-quarantine for 7 days and take a PCR COVID-19 test at the end of this period.

Fines for Non-Compliance:

- Violations of COVID-19 restrictions may face punishments ranging from fines of up to 50,000 RWF and/or to up to five days in police custody depending on the violation.



4. Impact

4.1. International travel

Kigali International Airport will remain open. Arriving passengers must present a negative PCR COVID-19 test taken within 120 hours prior to their first departure. Departing passengers must present a negative PCR COVID-19 test before departure. Designated hotels for arriving passengers will remain open under strict COVID-19 prevention measures.

- a. Entry to Rwanda: Kigali International Airport reopened on 1 August 2020. All arrivals must present a negative COVID-19 PCR test result taken within 120 hours of departure. Negative test certificates must include the term 'PCR'. The government of Rwanda have published guidance for passengers arriving into Rwanda. Land borders remain closed, except to returning Rwandan citizens and legal residents.
- b. Screening on arrival: Screening procedures are in place for coronavirus at all entry points.
- c. Quarantine requirements: After providing proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test (as outlined above), all arriving passengers must then enter quarantine at a designated hotel whilst awaiting the results of a second COVID-19 test, taken on arrival, which can be up to 24 hours. Designated hotels can be found in the Government of Rwanda guidance. The test will cost 60USD. If the results are negative you are free to leave quarantine. If the results are positive and you have severe symptoms, you will be required to enter a government treatment facility. If the results are positive and you do not have severe symptoms, you will be moved from the hotel in which you were quarantining to your own choice of accommodation. Once there the Rwanda Biomedical Centre will send a medical team to assess whether you can remain there.
- d. Testing on departure: Exit screening is in place for all departing travellers. Any travellers exhibiting a symptom associated with coronavirus will be prevented from leaving the country and will be moved to isolation for testing. If an individual tests positive, they will be treated in a Government of Rwanda healthcare facility.
- e. In the remaining part of Rwanda a curfew is in place between 6pm and 4am.
- f. Public and private transport is prohibited to and from Kigali city as well as between different districts. Travel is only permitted for medical reasons and essential services. Domestic and international tourists are allowed to travel across districts with proof of a negative COVID-19 test.
- g. All tourists are required to take a COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to visiting Rwanda's National Parks, at their own cost. Tests can be booked by appointment via reservations@rdb.rw +250 (0)788313800. Tourists without a negative test result will not be admitted to the national parks.
- h. Accommodation: Accommodation is open and available for bookings.



- i. Public places and services: Facemasks must be worn in public. Penalties will be issued for non-compliance with health measures, including, wearing facemasks. You should check the latest cabinet communiqué published on the website of the Prime Minister's office for more details on measures in place. The city of Kigali is in lockdown. Measures in place include:

Source : <https://travelbans.org/africa/rwanda/>

Rwanda responds to UK on travel ban

On Thursday, January 28, Grant Shapps, UK's Secretary of State for Transport announced that his country had added Rwanda, Burundi and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to its travel ban red list with effect from Friday, January 29.

The British High Commission in Rwanda commented on the development on the same day, saying the decision was taken due to the risk of new variants rather than "any reflection on Rwanda 's strong handling to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic."

On Saturday, January 30, the government of Rwanda has come out to question the UK's decision, saying that the sparse information communicated in regard to The statement concluded with a request to the UK to give clarifications on the motivations behind the "arbitrary decision" by their government to impose the travel ban on Rwanda. The travel ban does not stand up to scientific scrutiny.

Source : <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/rwanda-responds-uk-travel-ban>
<https://www.gov.rw/blog-detail/statement-on-uk-travel-ban>

4.2. Economic impact

Rwanda's central bank has acted to contain the worst economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, says an International Monetary Fund staff report. The staff report, issued on January 4, projects that Rwanda's GDP will contract by 0.2% in 2020, compared with the IMF's previous projection of 8% growth. The National Bank of Rwanda's monetary policy committee cut its policy rate by 50 basis points to 4.5% at its April meeting, but has left it unchanged since. The NBR governor is John Rwangombwa.

Rwanda's economy is expected to grow by 5.7 per cent this year after contracting by an estimated 0.2 per cent in 2020.

"Improving exports are also expected to support the recovery in Rwanda, along with efforts to improve public service delivery and efficiency through performance-based salary incentives, increased training and capacity building of public servants, and streamlining of operational procedures," the report's authors noted.



Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to rebound by moderately to 2.7 per cent in 2021, after contracting by an estimated 3.7 per cent in 2020.

The World Bank forecast recovery buoyed by private consumption and investment which are likely to be slower than previously envisioned with export growth expected to accelerate gradually, in line with the rebound in activity among major trading partners.

“The resumption in activity in major advanced and emerging economies and key trading partners of the region (Europe, China, US) is chiefly underpinned by positive news on vaccine development and rollout as well as new rounds of fiscal stimulus,” the World Bank noted.

World Bank Group President David Malpass said that there is need for a push to improve business environments, increase labour and product market flexibility

Source : <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/global-economy-grow-4-2021-world-bank>

5. Government support to local economy

Several initiatives were have been implemented in Rwanda and in different sectors from the government and private sector ;

Government proposes incentives to ‘angel investors’ for startups :

Government is looking to attract alternative financing for early stage ventures if the new draft law relating to investment promotion and facilitation is passed by the cabinet.

Under the bill which was tabled to the Parliament last week, the Government is looking to offer angel investment incentives for local individual investors investing in startups.

The push to provide incentives to angel investors is based on the fact that conventional sources of financing for startups such as commercial banks are not working currently.

The new draft law also proposes that angel investors will also be eligible for exemption from withholding tax applicable to dividends paid for five dividend issuances by the start-up.

The Government is currently spearheading the efforts to turn the country into an international financial centre. Rwanda Finance Ltd was set up to take on that role.

Source:<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/govt-proposes-incentives-angel-investors-startups>



New Rates For Property Tax On Land To Be Considered As Declaration And Payment Continues.

President Paul Kagame has asked government officials to consider a review on the recent increase on the land taxes regime, an issue that had raised public debate. "This recent increase on land taxes is too high and could result to many citizens not being in position to pay. They fear that this could result to loss of their property through auction as a result of failure to pay," Niyitanga told the President during a State of the Nation address in which Kagame took time to listen to citizen's concerns.

Source : <https://www.ktpress.rw/2020/12/land-taxes-could-be-reviewed-president-kagame/>

5.1. Rwanda COVID-19 Emergency Response Project

Rwanda launches new Covid-19 treatment facility with over 130 ICU beds : A few weeks ago, the Rwandan Biomedical Center opened the main COVID 19 treatment enter at the Nyarugenge District Hospital of Kigali. The newly completed hospital, constructed with the support of the Belgian cooperation and Enabel, has a capacity of admitting 140 patients in its intensive care unit. It will contribute to significantly enhance Rwanda's fight against COVID-19.

Currently, Rwanda uses both institutional and home-based management of Covid-19 cases.

According to RBC, home-based care (HBC) is for patients who are asymptomatic and those with mild symptoms. They should also not be above 65 years of age.

For a patient to qualify for HBC, the suitability of their home environment is considered.

Source : <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/rwanda-launches-new-covid-19-treatment-facility-over-130-icu-beds>

5.2. Financial support for Rwanda's response to COVID-19

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to support the implementation of AFR's Phase III Strategy from 2021 to 2025. (www.afr.rw)

Kigali, December 3rd, 2020: Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR) today welcomes a SEK 60 million (USD 6.7 million) grant from Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to support the implementation of AFR's Phase III Strategy from 2021 to 2025.

Source : (www.afr.rw)

5M Euros signing ceremony with KfW Bank – COVID19 SMEs Emergency Program

The Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD) and the German Development Bank KfW have signed a financing agreement of a COVID-19 Emergency Program for SME to



support the exporting SMEs affected by the pandemic and the preservation of employment.

Source : www.brd.rw

A digital platform to support the most vulnerable

Like many governments across the globe, the Government of Rwanda took early action after the first COVID-19 case was reported mid-March, halting all incoming commercial flights, closing borders and imposing travel and movement restrictions across the country. As an important outbreak management strategy the country was put into lockdown.

While these measures are important to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have had and continue to manifest severe devastating socio-economic effects on the most vulnerable such as day laborers, smallholder farmers, women, youth, rural dwellers, cross-border traders (mostly women), and persons with disabilities. In particular, the lockdown paralyzed all forms of casual livelihoods activities.

Leaving no one behind

The system will capture the contributions from the private sector and donors and show how these resources were distributed and to whom. This system will be regularly producing snapshots showing the mobilized resources and how the resources are being used daily. It will also enable households that have received support to send an acknowledgement through their mobile phones. Leaving no one behind calls for a strong and efficient social protection and economic recovery strategy.

Source : <https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/blog/2020/a-digital-platform-to-support-the-most-vulnerable.html>

Source : http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/documents/NDPR/Sector_Strategic_Plans/Social_protection.pdf



6. Conclusions and recommendations

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the effectiveness of the Government of Rwanda in mobilising the population in a decisive and effective public health response. Even so, a number of very serious economic challenges lie ahead as the global economy braces itself for a recession. Consequently, Rwanda faces intensifying demand and supply-side shocks both in the domestic and external sectors.

Top sectors to look out for in 2021

2021 is expected to be characterized by economic recovery in the aftermath of a global and national economic slowdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Rwanda, there are a couple of sectors to watch in the year that are likely to have significant activity based on recent developments, market trends among other aspects.

Finance

The finance sector is one to watch this year as it's likely to be characterized by innovation, disruption and fast paced. From a service provision view, local players such as banks and telcos have been staying up at night figuring ways to drive up formal financial inclusion and banking services.

Hospitality and tourism

Arguably, the most adversely affected sector by the pandemic, hospitality and tourism will be one to look out for as it attempts to stay afloat amid the turbulent times. In 2020, players in the sector showed innovativeness in an attempt to remain in business. This is likely to persist in 2021 as operators attempt to save their firms, reduce losses and give confidence to clients.

Insurance

The local insurance is set to gain a new player this year as Equity Rwanda diversifies into the sector. Equity Rwanda has so far rolled out brokerage services and is set to Rwanda's insurance industry has below 2 per cent penetration despite having 12 players.

Equity hopes to use their expansive branch network and agency network to increase countrywide access of insurance services.



E-commerce

In 2020 as the public was advised to reduce physical movement in a bid to curb the spread of the pandemic, e-commerce popularity on the local scene increased as many used operators in the platform to make purchases.

Experts however argue that the sector was not ready for the surge in demand during 2020 but nevertheless managed to make the most of it.

Advertising/ communication

As businesses and organizations seek to recover, and drive business operations to post covid-19 levels as well as communicate adjustments in their operations and business lines, the advertising and communications sector is likely to be a hub of activity.

Manufacturing and construction

In the coming days, the government is set to commence the implementation of the 'Manufacture and Build to Recover Programme', which will roll out tax incentives, for two years, to help stimulate investments in the manufacturing and the construction sectors.

The programme is designed to significantly reduce the cost of setting up industries of select products as well as existing firms who would like to expand their current operations.
