



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Rwanda's Tea Strategy moves one step closer

NAEB's SEQI got global accreditation: What it means for Rwanda's agri-export sector

NAEB crowns top coffees at Best of Rwanda 2026, setting sights on higher export revenues



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Rwanda's agricultural exports generated **\$1.1 Billion** during **the 2025–2026 Fiscal Year**, compared to **\$893 Million in the 2024–2025 Fiscal Year**, representing a **24.3% increase**. This achievement marks the highest annual export earnings ever recorded by the sector and reflects the continued transformation, resilience, and global competitiveness of Rwanda's agricultural exports.

Key drivers behind the milestone:

- Strengthened export infrastructures like Specialized Export Quality Infrastructure...;
- Enhanced traceability systems to strengthen product credibility and market access;
- Quality assurance and international standards compliance;
- Expanded market promotion, diversification and logistics development;
- Facilitation of stronger linkages with international buyers;
- Driving innovation and technology in the export sector like annual Best of Rwanda National Specialty Coffee Competition;
- Increased productivity;

As well as farmer empowerment and awareness.

"Surpassing the US\$1 billion mark is a significant achievement for Rwanda's agricultural export sector and reflects the Country's commitment to transforming the sector and strengthening its position in global markets. As Rwanda advances towards the goals of the Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) and the 5th Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA5), NAEB remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders to further increase export earnings, diversify products and markets, enhance value addition, strengthen resilience." Said Claude Bizimana, Chief Executive Officer of NAEB.



NAEB crowns top coffees at Best of Rwanda 2026, setting sights on higher export revenues



Winners of the Best of Rwanda 2026 pose with officials after receiving their awards in Kigali, on August 27.

Rwanda is turning its finest coffee into a bigger export opportunity, with the country's top specialty lots recognized at the third Best of Rwanda National Specialty Coffee Competition as it seeks to raise the value and global profile of its coffee.

The National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) selected 25 outstanding coffees from 320 samples submitted from across the country, with the winning lots set to be sold to global specialty coffee buyers at a live auction on October 21, 2026.

In the Special Process Category, an Anaerobic Natural coffee from K-Organics in Huye District emerged first with a score of 90.74 % points, while Great Coffee Farmers Ltd - Cyeza Coffee Washing Station's in Muhanga District topped the Fully Washed category with 89.74 % points.

From the farm to the global stage: Winners share their journey

Evariste Karangwa, owner of K-Organics, whose coffee won the Best Processed Coffee category for the second time – as it also won it last year – emphasised the importance

of careful harvesting and processing to maintain quality. "To ensure quality coffee, we must harvest cherries at full maturity. Harvesting too early or too late affects the coffee's quality and taste. Timely processing is equally important; coffee should be washed soon after harvesting to prevent quality deterioration. We also ensure that coffee is properly prepared and dried, avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun. Farmers must follow the right processing practices and ensure that coffee is fully washed and handled carefully at every stage. Maintaining quality requires attention from harvesting through processing" he said.

Esther Uwimana, from Cyeza Coffee Washing Station in Muhanga District, said: "I am very excited. We have invested significant effort in producing high-quality coffee for the fully washed category. We work closely with farmers throughout the farming process, supporting them to apply fertilisers and improve their practices." she said.

The journey towards higher value coffee

The Best of Rwanda National Specialty Coffee Competition is an annual initiative organized by NAEB to identify, recognize and promote Rwanda's exceptional coffees, showcase them on the global stage, expand market opportunities, contribute to

increased coffee export revenues, and recognise the efforts of coffee farmers, processors and exporters while strengthening the country's reputation in the global specialty coffee market.

The process begins with the submission of coffee samples by farmers, processors, and exporters from across the country. National coffee cuppers, led by an international head judge, evaluate the samples and select those that advance to the national jury stage. The top-ranked coffees are then declared winners.

Speaking at the award ceremony, the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Telesphore Ndabamenye, emphasized the strategic importance of coffee to Rwanda's economy and livelihoods, as well as the country's ambition to increase the value earned from every quantity of coffee exported.

"The Government recognizes coffee as a national strategic commodity with the potential to contribute significantly to Rwanda's economy and to the livelihoods of Rwandans. We also intend to double our average export price. Let us work together so that, in the years to come, Best of Rwanda becomes one of the most anticipated events in the global coffee calendar, a benchmark for quality and a symbol of what collaboration and commitment can achieve." he said.

The ambition is already reflected in the results of the competition's previous editions. Winners from the first two editions fetched \$71.8 per kilo in 2024 and \$88 per kilo in 2025, demonstrating the growing market value and global interest in Rwanda's exceptional specialty coffees, according to NAEB.

NAEB's SEQI got global accreditation: What it means for Rwanda's agri-export sector



Accredited NAEB's Specialized Export Quality Infrastructure

On 29th June 2026, NAEB's Specialized Export Quality Infrastructure (SEQI) was accredited against ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for the competence, impartiality and consistent operation of testing laboratory.

Laboratory accreditation is a formal, independent assessment that verifies a laboratory's technical competence, accuracy, and adherence to strict

international standards. It is crucial for ensuring reliable diagnostic testing, maintaining consumer trust and satisfying legal or regulatory requirements across various industries.

This accreditation confirms that NAEB laboratory (SEQI) has qualified personnel, properly calibrated equipment and validated methods to consistently produce accurate and reliable results.

The accreditation is essential for agri-exports as it provides globally recognized proof that Rwandan products meet strict international food safety and quality standards and fostering consumer trust.



Rwanda's Tea Strategy moves one step closer



Participants pose for a group photo during the validation workshop for the 10-Year Rwanda Tea Strategy

On 25th September 2026, stakeholders gathered in Kigali to validate the 10-Year Rwanda Tea Strategy (2027–2037), a strategic framework aimed at strengthening the competitiveness, sustainability and long-term growth of Rwanda's tea sector.

Opening the workshop, NAEB CEO emphasized the importance of aligning the strategy with Rwanda's long-term development ambitions.

"As we look ahead, our ambition must be fully aligned with Vision2050 and the priorities of NST2: increasing agricultural productivity, promoting private investment and value addition, expanding exports, creating decent jobs, and building a more climate-resilient and inclusive economy." He noted.

Tea remains a strategic sector for Rwanda, contributing to export revenues while supporting the livelihoods, employment and

incomes of thousands of farmers and communities across the country.

The validation marks an important milestone towards a stronger, more competitive and sustainable tea industry for the next decade.



How Africa Coffee and Tea Expo 2026 advanced Coffee and Tea industry



Officials posing for a group photo after opening ceremony of ACT Expo 2026

The Africa Coffee & Tea Expo (ACT Expo) 2026 successfully concluded in Kigali, reaffirming Rwanda's role as a leading hub for Africa's coffee and tea industries and providing a platform for stronger collaboration, trade and investment across the continent's value chains.

Held from 8 to 10 July 2026, the three-day Expo brought together coffee and tea producers, exporters, buyers, processors, investors, policymakers, researchers and development partners from Africa and beyond.

The Expo provided a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, business networking, product promotion and innovation, while showcasing the quality, sustainability and competitiveness of African coffee and tea in global markets.

The Expo was officially opened by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Rwanda, setting the tone for three days of dialogue and engagement around the future of Africa's coffee and tea sectors. The opening ceremony highlighted the strategic importance of coffee and tea in driving economic transformation, creating employment and increasing export earnings across Africa.

Government representatives, industry leaders and international partners emphasized the importance of stronger partnerships, value addition, market diversification and increased investment to enhance the competitiveness of African coffee and tea on the global market. Discussions also underscored the need for stakeholders across the value chains to work together to address emerging challenges and capitalize on new market opportunities.

Participants exchanged experiences and best practices on strengthening resilient value chains, improving product quality, enhancing traceability and embracing innovation. The discussions provided practical insights into how industry stakeholders can respond to an increasingly competitive global marketplace while building sustainable and resilient coffee and tea value chains.

Throughout the Expo, exhibitors from across Africa and beyond showcased premium coffee and tea products alongside technologies, equipment, packaging solutions and other innovations supporting the development of the sector. The exhibition created valuable opportunities for producers, exporters and companies to promote their brands,

demonstrate product quality and engage directly with potential international buyers and partners.

The Expo demonstrated the value of bringing together stakeholders from across the entire value chains to exchange knowledge, showcase products, build partnerships and identify new opportunities. Strengthening collaboration, improving quality, increasing value addition, embracing innovation and expanding access to international markets remain important pathways towards greater competitiveness and sustainable growth for Africa's coffee and tea industries.

Inside NAEB and C4Impact signed MoU to strengthen agri-export value chains

On 21st August 2026 The National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) and Connect for Impact Advisory Group (C4Impact) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a framework for collaboration to strengthen Rwanda's agricultural export value chains and create new opportunities for export-oriented agriculture.

The MoU was signed by Claude Bizimana, Chief Executive Officer of NAEB, and Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Founder and Chair of Connect for Impact Advisory Group, marking a new chapter in collaboration aimed at enhancing the competitiveness, quality and market access of Rwanda's agricultural products.

The partnership will focus on several strategic areas, including technical assistance, traceability, compliance with international quality and phytosanitary standards, export market diversification, improved post-harvest management, investment mobilization and inclusive participation in export-oriented agriculture.

The partnership brings together NAEB's mandate and experience in agricultural export development with C4Impact's expertise and networks in agriculture, food systems and international development. Through this collaboration, the two institutions



Claude Bizimana, NAEB's CEO (L) and Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Founder and Chair of Connect for Impact Advisory Group (R), signing the MoU.

will work together to identify practical interventions that can strengthen Rwanda's agricultural export ecosystem.

"The signing of the MoU came as Rwanda continues to advance efforts to transform agriculture into a more productive, market-oriented and export-driven sector. Strengthening quality, traceability, value addition, market access and investment is essential to positioning Rwanda's agricultural products competitively in global markets." Noted Claude Bizimana, NAEB's CEO.

"The partnership between NAEB and C4Impact is therefore expected to contribute to stronger and more resilient agricultural export value chains, while supporting greater market opportunities and inclusive participation in Rwanda's export-oriented agriculture." He added



NAEB and Africa House Pakistan signed MoU to promote Rwandan Coffee trade in Pakistan



Claude Bizimana, NAEB's CEO (L) and Muhammad Rehan Yunas, Founder and Chairman of Africa House Pakistan (R), after signing the MoU.

On 24th September 2026, NAEB CEO and Mr. Muhammad Rehan Yunas, Founder and Chairman of Africa House Pakistan, signed

a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in promoting Rwanda's coffee culture, education, expertise and trade between Rwanda and Pakistan.

The partnership establishes a framework for collaboration to create greater awareness of Rwanda coffee, connect businesses and explore opportunities for increased trade between the two markets.

The MoU builds on engagements initiated during the NAEB CEO's working visit to Pakistan earlier in 2026, which explored opportunities to expand the presence of Rwandan coffee and tea in the Pakistani market.

The partnership marks another step towards expanding market access and creating new opportunities for Rwanda's coffee and tea exporters.

NAEB to extend horticultural farmers' selling window through new post-harvest facilities

Horticultural farmers in Rwanda's major chilli and onion-producing areas are set to benefit from new post-harvest facilities being developed by the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), which will enable them to preserve their produce and extend their selling window beyond periods of peak production.

The facilities are being developed under the Smart Food Value Chain Management (SFVCM) Project, designed to strengthen the chilli and onion value chains by addressing post-harvest losses, improving product quality, strengthening market linkages and promoting digitalization.

Local Post-Harvest Centres are being established in the high-production areas

of Rubavu, Rulindo, Nyagatare and Bugesera districts, and one National Post-Harvest Center at NAEB, where they are expected to support more than 5,000 farmers. The facilities are strategically located close to production areas to facilitate the collection, handling and preservation of horticultural produce before it reaches domestic and export markets.

According to Aimable Rusingizandekwe, SFVCM Project's Manager at NAEB, the facilities will help address a major challenge faced by farmers during periods of high production, when market demand may not be sufficient to absorb the available supply.

"When production is high and farmers outpace market demand, prices fall. Some farmers then leave their produce in the fields because harvesting it is no longer worthwhile," he said.





National Post-Harvest Center under construction

The new facilities will provide farmers with an alternative by allowing them to preserve their produce and sell it later when market conditions are more favourable. This is expected to contribute to reducing distress sales during peak production periods while helping farmers make better use of market opportunities.

Each Local Post-Harvest Centre will have the capacity to receive up to 9.6 tonnes of chilli and 34.4 tonnes of onions twice a week. The centres are equipped with temperature-controlled drying rooms and dedicated areas for washing, sorting, grading and storage.

The National Post-Harvest Centre will have the capacity to receive and process up to 40 tonnes of chilli twice a week, providing additional capacity

for handling and processing produce collected from farmers and other value-chain actors.

Once fully operational, the facilities are expected to dry and cure approximately 1,168 tonnes of chilli and 3,650 tonnes of onions annually. Properly dried chilli and cured onions can be stored for up to six months, allowing farmers and other value-chain actors greater flexibility in determining when to bring their products to market.

NAEB through SFVCM Project targets a significant reduction in post-harvest losses in the targeted districts, with chilli losses expected to decline from 17.2 per cent to 8.7 per cent, while onion losses are targeted to decrease from 15.4 per cent to 7.7 per cent.

Inside NAEB's initiatives to boost coffee production and productivity

Coffee remains one of Rwanda's leading agricultural exports and an important contributor to the national economy. In a bid to contribute to the achievement of Rwanda's Fifth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 5), 2024–2029, which targets US\$160 million in coffee income by 2029, NAEB is stepping up efforts to strengthen coffee production, productivity and the incomes of smallholder farmers.

One of the key pathways towards this target is the rejuvenation of Rwanda's aging coffee plantations, whose productivity has declined with age. Through the Promoting Smallholder Agro-





High-yielding and climate resilient coffee seedlings ready for planting

Export Competitiveness Project (PSAC), NAEB is implementing a coffee replacement and rehabilitation programme in six pilot districts: Karongi, Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Nyamagabe, Huye and Ruhango.

Over six years, old coffee trees aged more than 30 years are to be uprooted and replaced with high-yielding coffee seedlings across 3,050 hectares, while coffee trees aged more than eight years will be rehabilitated across 1,082 hectares. The rehabilitation is aimed at improving the vigor and productivity of existing coffee trees while supporting the production of better-quality coffee. Together, these interventions are designed to increase yields, improve coffee quality and strengthen the long-term competitiveness of Rwanda's coffee industry.

Producing and planting high-yielding and climate resilient seedlings

Over the six-year programme, 9 million coffee seedlings are expected to be planted in the areas where old trees have been uprooted across the six pilot districts. To date, over 4 million seedlings have been distributed and planted, with over 3.7 million additional seedlings expected to be planted this year.

Seedling production is being promoted through a community-based approach involving youth and women's groups, creating income-

generating and employment opportunities while responding to the growing demand for quality planting materials. Beneficiary farmers receive high-yielding RAB-C15 coffee seedlings at no cost. Under appropriate management, the variety is expected to start producing after about two years, allowing farmers to begin benefiting from the renewed plantations relatively early.

Combining inputs with knowledge

Under the initiative, farmers also receive fertilizers at no cost and benefit from regular training in improved coffee production practices through extension services and Farmer Field Schools (FFS). These interventions equip farmers with practical knowledge of improved agronomic practices, enabling them to make better use of the inputs provided and improve the performance of their coffee farms.

From rejuvenated trees to improved livelihoods

By increasing productivity and supporting better-quality coffee production, the initiative is expected to contribute to improved incomes for smallholder farmers while creating opportunities for young people and women along the coffee value chain. For NAEB, the ultimate goal is to build a more productive, competitive and sustainable coffee sector capable of generating greater value for farmers and contributing to Rwanda's agricultural export ambitions.



Strategic engagements and events

From 22nd to 31st July 2026, NAEB participated in the 19th Rwanda Agricultural Show, showcasing the services, initiatives, innovations and flagship projects implemented to strengthen Rwanda's agri-export sector.

The exhibition provided an opportunity for NAEB to engage with farmers, businesses, partners and other stakeholders, showcase Rwanda's export-oriented agricultural products, and share information on initiatives supporting the competitiveness and market access of Rwanda's agricultural value chains.



03rd September 2026: On the sidelines of the African Food System Forum 2026, NAEB's CEO delivered opening remarks during the knowledge session on "Farm to Markets: Enhancing Inclusive Competitiveness and Export-Ready Agri-Food Value Chains."

The CEO emphasized the need for Africa to produce better, add more value, and connect its agricultural products to markets that reward quality and competitiveness. He called for practical solutions to transform African agriculture from production-driven to market-driven, from commodity-based to value-based, and from fragmented value chains to integrated, export-ready systems.



10th September 2026: #NAEB and partners, through the KWIHAZA Project, brought cooperatives, SMEs and buyers together in Kigali to strengthen market linkages.

The B2B meeting connected producers of avocados, passion fruits, onions and tomatoes directly with buyers, supporting stronger commercial relationships, better market access and increased opportunities for farmer incomes and agricultural exports. #NST2 #PSTA5





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