



In partnership with



**Value-added Initiative
to Boost Employment**

VIBE connects Rwandan women in horticulture to UK markets

Kigali, 12 June 2024 – Women entrepreneurs in Rwanda have secured new business opportunities with fresh produce companies from the United Kingdom (UK) through the Rwanda – UK Trade Mission, made possible through the "Value-added Initiative to Boost Employment" (VIBE) Programme. Eight UK companies focusing on key products including fresh and processed chillies, French beans, passion fruits, and mini vegetables, participated in the mission in Rwanda from 28-31 May 2024, as part of the five-year programme, being implemented by TradeMark Africa (TMA) and ITC in partnership with Mastercard Foundation.

The trade mission was organised in collaboration with the SheTrades Rwanda Hub host institution, Private Sector Federation – Specialized Cluster, Rwanda Development Board (RDB), and the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB). Seventeen Rwandan women-led businesses in horticulture established new business connections with the eight UK buyers through business-to-business (B2B) networking sessions, as well as one-on-one visits to company farms and product processing locations. Several UK-based chambers of commerce supported the mobilisation of UK-based wholesalers and distributors for the trade mission.

The opening day included remarks from key stakeholders and a panel discussion featuring representatives from Mastercard Foundation, TMA, the UK's Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry, logistics company Multilines International, ITC, and a Rwandan woman entrepreneur. Additionally, during the four-day event, participants received crucial information on exporting Rwandan horticulture products to the UK, including presentations on export processes and opportunities in the UK Developing Countries Trading Scheme. A visit to the NAEB Packhouse provided firsthand insights into the exporting procedures for Rwandan women-led horticulture businesses.

RDB Head of Transaction Structuring and Support Mr. Dennis Gatera said, "This mission represents more than exploring opportunities for trade; we expect to create meaningful relationships with the entire Rwandan horticulture value chain. Together, we can unlock the full potential of Rwanda's horticulture sector and foster more interconnected and resilient bilateral trade and export industries."

British High Commissioner, H.E. Omar Daair OBE stated, "We were delighted to welcome this important trade mission from the UK to Rwanda. This was a wonderful opportunity to deepen our trade relationship and to forge new partnerships between British businesses and local companies. In this case we were particularly delighted that the focus was on female entrepreneurs, of which there are many impressive ones in Rwanda, which I am sure the delegation interacted with."

TradeMark Africa Country Director Rosine Uwamariya remarked; "This trade mission provided a significant stepping stone for Rwandan women entrepreneurs in horticulture to connect directly with their counterparts in some of our important export markets such as the UK, exchange valuable experiences and create meaningful and sustainable business relationships. There is a big export opportunity for Rwanda's fresh produce in international markets including the UK, with the potential to increase the earnings for these women-led enterprises, create decent jobs and improve the livelihoods of communities in Rwanda."

Ahead of the B2B sessions, the VIBE Programme also developed business catalogues of participating companies and organized preparatory webinars to prepare Rwandan women-led businesses to interact with potential buyers.



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Through market-relevant training, trade fair exhibition, and trade mission opportunities, the VIBE Programme supports Rwandan women entrepreneurs in horticulture to scale up their businesses and unlock greater regional and global markets.

About the VIBE Programme

In partnership with Mastercard Foundation, TradeMark Africa (TMA) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) are jointly implementing a five-year Value-added Initiative to Boost Employment (VIBE) Programme. The VIBE Programme aims to increase dignified employment, particularly among excluded groups such as women, youth, refugees, and people living with disabilities in Rwanda.

Through its flagship programme on women and trade, the SheTrades Initiative, ITC is working with 150 women-led businesses in Rwanda's horticulture sector so they can become more competitive, access new market opportunities, and create more jobs, especially for young women. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with the SheTrades Rwanda Hub, co-owned by ITC and hosted by the Private Sector Federation Specialized Cluster.