

Pathways to a Greener, More Productive Firm Landscape in Rwanda's Built Environment

NCST/482/0426/2025

Our Research Topic

Rwanda is a low-income country with rapid economic growth and high urbanisation rate, alongside ambitious commitments to climate action and sustainable development. In this context, the country faces three interrelated challenges:

- (1) shifting to a green, circular economy without compromising its development needs,
- (2) providing adequate housing for its rapidly growing urban population, and
- (3) developing a skilled workforce while creating sufficient job opportunities for young people.

This research addresses these challenges through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of firm-level capabilities and worker skill gaps with qualitative analysis of the construction industry. This approach provides insights into policy frameworks and value chain structures, thereby shaping pathways toward a greener and more productive construction industry in Rwanda. By identifying skill gaps, regulatory and market barriers, as well as upgrading opportunities - particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and informal firms - the research provides actionable guidance for national policymakers and development partners.

Beyond Rwanda, the findings contribute to international debates on green industrial policy, small- and medium sized firm upgrading, and sustainable urban development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Research Questions

- 1 How can firms in the construction value chain become greener and more productive?
- 2 What are the within-firm, market, and policy barriers?
- 3 How can such barriers be overcome?

Specific Research Question

To what extent and under which conditions do the characteristics of green materials and technologies shape effective green upgrading among construction firms?

Methodological Approach

We adopt a mixed-methods approach: qualitative data will be collected through 60-80 semi-structured expert interviews with key stakeholders, including policy makers, academics, development practitioners, industry experts and firm managers, as well as focus group discussions with construction workers. Supported by GIZ-Rwanda, quantitative data will be gathered through a survey with around 250-300 firm managers of SMEs in the construction industry.

Research Locations

- City of Kigali
- District of Kamonyi
- City of Huye and/or Musanze

Our Partner Institutions



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Calendar

February 2026:

Arrival in Kigali, Rwanda

February – April 2026:

Field Research in Rwanda

Late April 2026:

Stakeholder Workshop with Preliminary
Results and Return to Germany

May 2026:

Finalization of Report and Presentation
of Results

About IDOS

IDOS is one of the leading think tanks for global development and international cooperation worldwide. It is located in the UN City of Bonn. IDOS's work is based on the interplay between Research, Policy Advice and Training. The institute is building bridges between theory and practice.

Research at IDOS is theory-based, empirically driven and application-oriented. It provides the basis for the consulting activities of the Institute. IDOS develops policy-relevant concepts, advises ministries, governments and international organisations, and refers to current policy issues. The training programmes of the Institute for university graduates and young professionals are integrated into the research and advisory process.

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