The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) is thrilled to announce the 2026 Big Data Hackathon, designed to engage university students in developing innovative data-driven solutions. This hackathon brings together innovative university students to develop data science solutions aligned with NST2's priorities, using data from NISR and other open or public datasets, to support evidence-based interventions.

HACKATHON TRACKS

Note to Participants: The Track Scope under each track is designed to give you a clear picture of the scope and real-world applications of each track. Participants are not limited to these. Creativity and innovation are encouraged, as long as your solution addresses the track challenge and uses relevant data.

TRACK 1: Agricultural Productivity

Challenge	**Use data to develop innovative solutions that address real agricultural challenges facing Rwanda.**
	
	Hint:
	
	• Solutions may address areas such as:
	  ◦ small-scale irrigation
	  ◦ soil conservation and fertility management
	  ◦ post-harvest collection and storage
	  ◦ agricultural productivity processing and value addition
	  ◦ export market opportunities for Rwandan agricultural products.
	• Solutions must be informed by NISR data with or without other open/public datasets related to agriculture, food security, or climate.
	• Tangible practical impact for farmers, agricultural planners, or policymakers is encouraged.

TRACK 2: Financial Inclusion & Poverty Reduction

Challenge	**Use data to understand financial exclusion, poverty dynamics, and the impact of social protection programs in Rwanda.** **Hint:** • Solutions should address a real gap or showcase financial intervention impact. • Solutions must be informed by NISR data with or without other open/public datasets related to poverty, household income, or financial access. • Tangible practical impact to vulnerable households, policymakers, or civil society is encouraged

TRACK 3: Open Innovation

Challenge	**Develop innovative applications or solutions tackling national priorities as per NST2, Vision 2050.** **Hint:** • Contestants are free to focus on any sector: health, education, agriculture, finance, transportation, etc. • Solutions must be informed by NISR data with or without open/public datasets. • Solution usability, impact, and alignment with national priorities are encouraged (NST2 or vision 2050).

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

- Competition is open to all undergraduate or master’s students, regardless of their field of study.
- Students must have a student card or other official document confirming their eligibility.
- A team must be composed of 2 students with at least one Rwandan citizen. Team members can be from the same university or different universities or Colleges.

- Students from the final year and female participants are encouraged to apply.
- Participants are allowed to use any programming language of their choice.
- Submissions for the hackathon will be expected as a public GitHub link and a deployed app link and documentation
- By entering the competition, participants agree to assign and transfer all intellectual property rights in their submitted work, including but not limited to copyright and patent, to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). NISR reserves the right to use, reproduce, modify, publish, and distribute the submitted work in any form and for any purpose.
- Previous winners of the NISR Big Data Hackathon (members of 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place teams from any past edition) are not eligible to participate
- Plagiarism is prohibited. You must declare that the submission is your own original work, has never been submitted to any other competition or entity in the past and that all applicable sources of reference are acknowledged in full. AI tools may be used as assistants, but participants must disclose their use and are fully responsible for the submitted work. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

TIMELINE

Date	**Activity**
1st September 2026	**Competition Launch:** Registration portal opens.
1st –30th September 2026	**Awareness and Outreach:** Engagement and mobilization of potential participants.
20th October 2026, 11:59 PM	Registration Deadline
30th October 2026, 11:59 PM	Submission Deadline
1st –5th November 2026	**Review and Evaluation:** Technical review and evaluation of submitted projects.
13th November 2026	**Announcement of Shortlisted Participants:** Announcement of first-phase winners and invitation to the coaching and mentorship phase.

16th November– 4 th December 2026	**Coaching, Mentorship and Final Evaluation:** Coaching and mentorship sessions, hands-on workshops, project refinement, final presentations, and evaluation of projects.
11th December 2026	**Awarding Ceremony:** Recognition of winning participants and presentation of awards.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criterion	Description	Points
1. Problem Understanding & Relevance	Clarity in identifying and understanding the challenge and its alignment to national priorities (NST2 or vision 2050 alignment).	20 pts
2. Data Use & Methodology	Appropriate and innovative use of datasets (NISR + external), sound analytical or AI/ML methods, and data preprocessing quality.	20 pts
3. Tech Innovation	Quality and relevance tools and technology used to develop the solution. Creativity in approach (e.g., predictive models, satellite analysis, smart alert systems).	20 pts
4. Usability & Design of Tool/Prototype	Intuitive interface, clear data visualization, or user-friendliness of the solution	20 pts
5. Tangible Impact	1. Potential for real-world use by government, Rwandan citizen, civil society, or development partners.	20 pts

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE COMPETITION

PRIZES

The best-quality laptops will be awarded to the first three winning teams. Final-year Rwandan students from the winning teams may be considered for professional internship opportunities upon completion of their studies, subject to the availability of internship vacancies and applicable eligibility requirements, including that the student’s field of study is relevant to the duties and requirements of the available

internship position and that the academic programme pursued is the programme leading to at least the award of the student’s Bachelor’s degree upon completion.

□□ CONTACT

For further information about the competition, please contact:

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