

Good Smelling Company Equipped for Sustainable Growth and Smallholder Farmers Ensured a Stable Market

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GOOD SMELLING COMPANY EQUIPPED FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND SMALLHOLDER FARMERS ENSURED A STABLE MARKET

Good Smelling Company (GSC) – established in 2019 and specialised in trading poultry and fish products – operates in Kayonza District in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. GSC celebrates a successful partnership with the CASA Programme: they have grown in capacity to operate as a reliable business, be investment ready, and purchase appropriate transport means to increase products sourced from a strong network of smallholder farmers built through an offtaking contract model. Speaking at the event “Learning and Investment Insights from the Agribusiness Sector”, the CASA Rwanda close-out event, Mr Jean Damascene Rutembesa, the GSC CEO, said, “CASA helped me buy a cold truck to increase quantities of fish sourced from smallholder farmers and meet the demand on the market. Their experts helped me to grow my network with cooperatives of fish farmers using an efficient contract farming model with 2 to 10 cooperatives comprising over 1,762 members.”

During the same testimony, Mr Rutembesa added that CASA also helped him to put in place proper financial management systems with cashflow predictions and to develop a business plan, a strategic tool that allows him to know clearly where he wants to be in the future. With emotion in his voice, Mr Jean Damascene shared that he is enjoying the positive impact of having a cold truck to satisfy the demand on the market, stating that he was moved from the small to the large taxpayer bracket by the Rwanda Revenue Authority because of his increased revenue of up to 900%. He also said, “This vehicle also helped me to build trust with the cooperatives of fish farmers because this created in them the confidence of having a stable buyer with a good price to avoid any more losses.”



Jean Damascene Rutembesa, CEO of Good Smelling, sharing his testimony at the close-out event



Irabaruta Francois, a fish farmer celebrating a stable market for his products with the CEO of Good Smelling

Irabaruta Francois, a member of COPECO Gishanda – a cooperative of fish farmers located in Kayonza District who met with the CASA team while supplying products from his cooperative to the company – stated, “Before we started working with GSC, we struggled to find clients and our quality fish would spoil because we couldn’t deliver it to the market and on time. We could only sell about three tonnes a month, but today we can sell up to 12 tonnes in the same period because there is a vehicle that makes it easier to transport our produce to the market.”

CASA is funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and implemented in Rwanda by Swisscontact and NIRAS. Rob Hale, representing FCDO in Rwanda, spoke with journalists at the close-out event about the support being provided by CASA Rwanda to agri-SMEs that represent 90% of businesses in Rwanda. He mentioned that, subsidising the purchase of a cold truck for this agri-SME to source more fish has enabled it to supply to a much wider market, increased its income, and demonstrated to banks that an investment of a commercial loan can be paid off within a certain timeframe. The purpose of the CASA Programme is to demonstrate exactly that. Mr Hale concluded by saying, “Three years on, we should note CASA’s achievements that mark the beginning of a sustainable agriculture transformation.”



Rob Hale of the UK's FCDO in Rwanda, speaking at the close-out event

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During the one-year partnership with CASA, Good Smelling Company initially aimed to reach 420 smallholder fish farmers through contract farming with their cooperatives. Today, the company has managed to buy from over 9,409 fish farmers. They wanted to offer to cooperatives sustainable access to the fish market as well as a stable price and this and more has already been achieved. Good Smelling Company has grown from purchasing 100 kg of fresh fish (using a motorcycle) twice a week to buying over 800 kgs (using the recently purchased cold truck) for each of the two to three rounds every week.

After introducing a new efficient contract farming model, the company is confident of being on good track towards its objective of fully satisfying the market demand for fish at competitive prices. After signing an offtaking contract with Gishanda Farm – the first cooperative of fish farmers to do so in August 2025 – the company was able to source almost a whole tonne of fresh Tilapia just from them in the same month. Efficiency in harvest collection using the cold truck is also helping the company to reduce post-harvest losses and gain consistent supply for Kigali markets, with plans to work soon with fish farmer cooperatives to set up collection centres for easier pick-up of the harvest.

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Jean Damascene Rutembesa, the GSC CEO



The Good Smelling CEO checking his digital records



Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness

