



YOUNG INNOVATORS IN AGRIBUSINESS

Press Release

17th September, 2015

East Africa Youth-owned SMES and Start-Ups to participate in the Africa Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) in Zambia

Organizers of the Young Innovators in Agribusiness Competition announced 6 nominees to participate in the upcoming AGRF in Lusaka Zambia as part of the exposure, mentorship and training program targeting 18-35 year old youth-owned enterprises.

The nomination process targeted the early bird applicants that had submitted entries by September 15, 2015. Out of the 75 entries, 6 were nominated. The nominees are not winners of the Young Innovators in Agribusiness Competition as the competition has not commenced. The competition will commence when the top 120 entrants (60 SMEs and 60 Startups) will be trained at the Agribusiness Innovation Hub. The top 30 trainees will showcase their enterprises in the Agribusiness Innovation and Trade Fair while the top 6 finalists will receive seed capital amounting to USD 20,000.

Mr. Abrhame Eudria`s Green Agro Mechanization enterprise in Ethiopia focuses on hiring farm machinery to farmers, supplying farm chemicals and offering farm credit services. Ms. Vava Angwenyi`s Vava Coffee enterprise in Kenya grows the value chain among smallholder coffee farmers, from farm to the coffee cup. Mr. Pascal Furaha`s PEBEK Ltd enterprise in Rwanda focuses on chilli production and capacity building for farmers. Mr. Nyiringabo Ignace`s WinWin Agritech enterprise in Rwanda equips farmers with quality seeds and emerging technologies. Ms. Catherine Mbondo`s Proactive Merit enterprise in Kenya focuses on honey production and supply. Mr. Noah Ssempijja`s Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment enterprise provides credit facilities and farm inputs to youths and women in Uganda.

The competition Team Leader Mr. James Shikwati pointed out: “The Journey of the Young Innovators in Agribusiness Competition is a continuation from the last year’s Agribiz4Africa-2014. This year’s competition has 4 key

components: exposure and networking at Africa Green Revolution Forum (AGRF); training of 60 Startups and 60 SMEs from East Africa at the Toyota Kenya Academy; the competition to select top 30 entrepreneurs from the region and an Agribusiness Innovation and Trade Fair that will take place in May 2016.”

Speaking at the event, Ms. Nelly Ngunguru, Sector Analyst, East Africa Trade and Investment Hub said: “The USAID supported East Africa Trade and Investment Hub (EATIH) is proud to partner and be associated with supporting youth owned enterprises in the region to help grow a constituency of innovators towards food security and job creation.”

On his part, Mr. Kinyua M’Mbijewe, Head of Corporate affairs, Africa and Middle East at Syngenta expressed appreciation to invite more partners in the initiative. “With Africa’s population increasing and the middle class population rising, the food and agriculture Industry is vital to improve living standards on the continent. I express delight in the partnership that includes USAID-EATIH, Syngenta, IREN and Toyota Kenya meant to give East African youth economic opportunities,” said Mr. M’Mbijewe.

The Young Innovators in Agribusiness Competition’s main objective is to enable East African youth to stimulate sustainable enterprises that attract potential investors and stakeholders through competition. It also aims at strengthening existing start-ups and SMEs; and demonstrating the interconnectedness of players along the agricultural value chains for the purpose of promoting investment, job creation and productivity in the agribusiness sector.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub: The Hub is the U.S. Government’s flagship project under the presidential **Trade Africa** initiative, launched in 2013 to boost trade and investment with and within Africa. The goal of the Hub is to deepen regional integration, increase the competitiveness of select regional agriculture value chains, promote two-way trade with the U.S. under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and facilitate investment and technology that drives trade growth intra-regionally and to global markets. www.eatradehub.org

Syngenta: Syngenta is one of the world's leading companies with more than 28,000 employees in over 90 countries dedicated to our purpose: Bringing plant potential to life. Through world-class science, global reach and commitment to our customers we help to increase crop productivity, protect the environment and improve health and quality of life. www.syngenta.com

IREN: The Inter Region Economic Network (IREN) is a leading independent African think tank that promotes ideas and strategies geared towards causing prosperity in Africa through free enterprise and sound public policy. IREN's key focus areas include targeted events, trainings, research, consultancy, communication and its flagship magazine: The African Executive - published in English every Wednesday. IREN hosts the Enactus Kenya which has managed university undergraduate business competitions for the last 13 years. IREN and Enactus Kenya successfully managed last year's Agribusiness Competition that attracted 800 participants across Sub Saharan Africa. www.irenkenya.com

Toyota Kenya Academy (TKA) Toyota Tsusho Corporation Group Company -Toyota Kenya Limited opened its human resources training center, Toyota Kenya Academy, on July 16, 2014 at the Toyota Kenya Business Park (total area of 60,000 m²) located three kilometers southeast of Nairobi. Toyota Tsusho has operated an automotive training center at Toyota Kenya to nurture its own technical staff. The training center since relocated, expanded and now reopened as the Toyota Kenya Academy to provide learning opportunities that develops the skills, knowledge and attitudes of our staff, customers, stakeholders and communities. Toyota Kenya Academy offers courses on automobile & autotronics technology, entrepreneurship, agri-prenuership and agri-mechanization.

Through partnering with various recognized institutions in the provision of skills development, the Academy will achieve its overall objective of being a learning Centre of Excellence within the region in relevant training, and as part of Company's corporate social responsibility, it will partner with various recognized institutions in the provision of skills development. www.toyotakenyafoundation.org

To speak with us on this topic, please contact;

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