



2022 RUFORUM Young African Entrepreneurs Competition

Call Announcement: deadline 15/September/2022

Kampala, Uganda

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a consortium of [147 Universities](#) in 38 African Countries, is pleased to announce the call for 2022 RUFORUM Young African Entrepreneurs Competition (RUYAEC). The overall purpose of the RUFORUM Young African Entrepreneurs Competition (RUYAEC) is to catalyse entrepreneurship through promotion of business innovation and provision of seed funding to young entrepreneurs with creative and innovative business ideas among Southern Africa youth. The call targets young entrepreneurs and incubates below 35 years of age to compete for **20 awards** that show case their innovations, enterprises, business concepts and propositions.

This fifth round of the RUFORUM Young Innovators Competition will be a regional competition and this particular call targets only Southern Africa countries¹. The awards will be made in Harare, Zimbabwe during the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting “AGM” slated for 12 to 16th December 2022.

RUFORUM targets to provide awards to young innovators and entrepreneurs especially in the following fields: Food and agribusiness, ICTs, Health, Engineering, Natural Resources, and Meteorology, among others. All the 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2021 RUFORUM Young Innovators Awardees are **NOT eligible to apply**.

The RUYAEC operates within one of RUFORUM’s values and principles of creativity seeking to offer opportunities to develop innovative solutions both in addressing the problems faced by smallholder farmers, and in designing innovative solutions to emerging challenges and opportunities.

About RUYAEC

Africa is a continent of hope; its youth are at the centre of its renaissance and they are the fastest-growing demographic with Africa’s population expected to more than double by 2050 to 2.4 billion. There are over 200 million Africans aged between 15 and 24 years making Africa the youngest continent on the globe and by 2040, Africa’s young workforce will be the largest in the world, surpassing that of both China and India. The youth in Africa are ambitious; most

¹ Eligible Countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

becoming economically active and entrepreneurial out of necessity, and they are demonstrating a wealth of resourcefulness and inventiveness providing a range of enterprises and services. An African youth is at least doing something be it in the garden, or at least in a corner of an urban centre. Despite this ingenuity, these young entrepreneurs have limited right opportunities and access to skills development, mentors, social networks, and finances that could escalate their business enterprises. Several have learned the power of telecommunication technology and social media and are growing their businesses on this front, many are still struggling but have a high potential given increased access to financial services and markets, business connections, education, training and exposure, mentorship and support systems for networking that unlock their full potential.

Increasingly, it is being recognized that Africa needs to utilise a different set of capital to grow its entrepreneurs to a competitive level on a global dimension. In seeking to do so, it is recognized that collaboration and professionalism are two important ingredients to building an entrepreneurial culture and base that can facilitate entry, survival and further innovativeness of the young African entrepreneurs in business. It is therefore imperative that a dynamic ecosystem of actors and resources that further business incubation, facilitate access to capital and business development services, strengthen mentorship, networking and exposure, as well as peer-to-peer support, are explored, implemented and supported sustainably. The focus of such actions is to ensure that the burgeoning young enterprises' mortality is reduced and they are spurred to achieve their considerable potential in speeding inclusive economic growth and facilitate better livelihoods and poverty reduction. Despite active involvement in enterprise development, many of Africa's youth businesses are concentrated in limited sectors; for example, 64% of the youth in sub-Saharan Africa involved in the retail, hotel and restaurant trade with almost all (97%) of youth businesses in the retail sector being low-growth businesses and 54% of which offer employment to only the business owner. Even amidst these presumably grim statistics, Africa's young entrepreneurs offer great opportunity to; create new businesses, drive and shape innovation, speed up structural changes in the economy, and introduce new competition-thereby contributing to productivity and expanding the employment base by absorbing several other young people into their enterprises. Africa's young entrepreneurs thus need critical support to successfully go through the entrepreneurial pipeline with the focus being to see more young people as established business owners; who own and manage a business that has been in operation for more than 42 months. Moving this direction is not only strategic but important at the national and regional level as a foundation to increasing the range of jobs that they create in the economies, increase their participation in the economy as well as strengthen financial inclusion of the youth in Africa.

Purpose

The RUFORUM Young African Entrepreneurs Competition primary purpose is to promote business innovation through entrepreneurship and provide seed funding to young

entrepreneurs with creative and innovative business ideas to be valorized and enhance and foster a spirit of entrepreneurship among African youth. The competition specifically seeks to:

- Provide young entrepreneurs with the opportunity to showcase their businesses and share their development as an inspiration to many young African potential entrepreneurs
- Bring collective action towards the provision of seed funding to young entrepreneurs through a transparent and competitive process.
- Provide a platform for young entrepreneurs to demonstrate their impact and pitch their business with investors and stakeholders through capacity building opportunity.
- Create a network of young entrepreneurs across Africa working together and sharing experiences that escalate youth contribution and job creation in Africa.

Target group

Guidance: When you are registering there is a place for you to upload your business/enterprise logo, which is not mandatory, if it does not work at time you can skip it and upload it later. After registering for you to apply you need to click on "*calls*" where you will see different calls and selected the one that are still active, click on it and it will take you directly to the online Application form. Kindly note that you will not be required to upload a word document as an application form but you need to fill the form online. For now, you cannot save the form, you are only required to fill the form once and submit it. If you are not ready, you can copy the question in Word, work offline and then paste the answers in the online application form and submit it before the deadline on ***15 September 2022***.

For more information, please visit <https://ruforum.smehub.africa/>.