African Young Entrepreneurs

Brief on Eleven Young Innovators and Entrepreneurs from Rwanda in the Top 139 of the 756 Applicants

Introduction

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM, see www.ruforum.org) is a Network of 66 Universities in 26 African countries. RUFORUM was created by African Vice Chancellors with the vision for a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities that can produce high performing graduates and high-quality research, responsive to the demands of Africa’s farmers for innovations, and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development.

RUFORUM recognizes the need for greater youth participation in enterprise envelopment and business incubation and through its member universities and partners has supported training and skills development in this respect. It has also supported start-ups through innovative financing mechanism of the revolving fund implemented in some member universities. RUFORUM believes in youth entrepreneurship as the game changer in ensuring greater youth participation and integration into the economic growth at national and regional levels and for youth employment.

During the Fifth Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 17th - 21st October, 2016 in Cape Town, South Africa that focused on ‘Linking Agricultural Universities with Private Sector, Governments and other Stakeholders in support of Agricultural Development in Africa’, RUFORUM launched the African Young Entrepreneurs Competition Series, 2016.

This competition invited applications from young African innovators, entrepreneurs and incubatees (<40 years) with innovative business ideas, enterprises, and innovations.

The purpose was to provide the Young Entrepreneurs and Innovators a platform to be heard, exposed, and supported to increase their social capital, networking horizon and opportunity to showcase their ideas and innovations to potential venture capital financiers that would attend the conference.

While the focus of the competition was on innovations in agribusiness, other innovations, incubations, business
enterprises and business concepts along ICTs, health, engineering, natural resources, meteorology, urbanization, green economy, and transport and communication, among others were eligible.

Over a period of 2 months, a total of 756 applications from 38 African countries were received. The selection process involved the following stages:

I. All 756 applications were screened for compliance to the set guidelines and application rules.

II. A total of 663 applications were compliant. Each of these applications were evaluated by three independent reviewers (Round one).

III. A shortlist of 139 (20.9%) applicants were selected for Round two evaluation. Each of these applications was once again evaluated by 3 independent evaluators.

IV. A shortlist of 20 (13.6%) applicants were evaluated by a panel of six reviewers to select the final list (Round 3).

Owing to the competitiveness of the enterprises and innovations in Round 3, the panel made a decision to select 15 Young African Entrepreneurs instead of 10 that were originally planned.

The selected young entrepreneurs had the opportunity to present their innovations at the main plenary session at the Biennial Conference before an audience of 850 participants that included: HE Dr. Nkosazana Zuma (Chairperson African Union Commission) and Development partners.

In this brief, a summary description of Eleven (11) Young Entrepreneurs and Innovators from Rwanda that emerged among the Top 139 from the 756 submissions to the competition is profiled. A profile of the overall 15 winners from the 756 submissions is available at the following link: https://blog.ruforum.org/
Severe Weather Consult Ltd

Led by Gilbert Mwangi

Severe Weather Consult Ltd (www.severewc.com) is a company created in 2015 based in Kigali, Rwanda. It is currently led by Mr. Gilbert Mwangi and focuses on developing quality and sustainable weather products that are easy to access, mitigate climate related risks and positively impact people’s lives.

The company developed “iHewa” platform which combines satellite weather data with data from ground weather stations to generate localized weather predictions.

Predictions are translated into meaningful information passed on via phone (SMS, USSD and Weather App) to consumers of weather information like farmers who can use this information to make decisions such as when to plant, apply pesticide, and apply fertilizers, as well as in disaster management preparedness.

To ensure that their products meet local people’s needs, the company signed pre-contracts with one co-operative that has 8000 farmers and 300 seed producers. They partnered with iIMPACT BOOSTER (www.impactbooster.com) for business development and sustainability of the company and they have other strategic partners such as TAHMO (www.tahmo.org) and Delft University of Technology. The core team is composed of five young engineers in various relevant field and they are raising $150,000 to fund their operations.
Agro Sustainable Industry (AGROSI) Ltd

Led by Eng. Eric Nisingizwe

AGRO SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY (AGROSI) LTD is a company based in Kigali, Rwanda created in 2014 and currently led by Eng Eric Nisingizwe. The company specializes in transformation of Soya bean into calcium- fortified and flavored Soy milk and soy meat (Tofu).

The Company’s market consists of malnourished children, diseased people, and public health institutions. The management team is composed of four qualified young individuals. They have two hectares of land and need to raise US$39,000 to fund their operations.

UDI Ltd

Led by Serge Ganza

UDI LTD is private company limited by share officially registered in July 2012 and operating in horticultural sub-sector whereby it is working with farmers to promote the horticultural business from inputs supply to distribution, support farmers via Village Information and Training center. The company operates in Southern province of Rwanda, Kamonyi District where it has sales point from where the targeted farmers and the company itself will sell the harvest (fruits and Vegetables) while operating as a medium-scale fruit and vegetable producer.

The company is looking towards starting sales and distribution channels/outlets for its produce and that of surrounding farmers. The Company is working with 50 groups of farmers totaling 1,500 families. The core team consists of seven (7) qualified individuals currently led by Mr. Serge Ganza. The company received $ 115,000 from USAID in partnership with GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) and they are still looking for strategic partners to fund their operations.
Biotech Researchers and Consultants Ltd

Led by Emile NTEZIRYAYO

Biotech Researchers and Consultants Ltd is a registered company operating from Kamonyi District, Rwanda. It was created in 2009 and is currently led by Mr. Emile NTEZIRYAYO. The company’s business consists of developing and selling tissue culture as a mass propagation of high value horticultural crops in Rwanda. The core team is composed of seven (7) people majority of whom are Biotechnology graduates who have applied tissue culture in rapid multiplication of cultivars with desirable traits and production of healthy and disease-free plants.

It is the only one private company working in biotechnology innovations and having cooperation with public and private university in domain. A number of progressive farmers and nurseries as well as government Agriculture Departments will be the major consumers of Tissue culture plants particularly for flowers, Macadamia, banana and medicinal plants. The company’s needed capital investment is $1,250,000.

I FEED the WORLD Ltd (IFW)

Led by Mugisha Norman

I FEED the WORLD Ltd (IFW) is a company led by Mr. Mugisha Norman, created in 2016 and based in Rwamagana, Rwanda. It intends to create market, increase food supply and stabilizing the costs of agriculture commodity by buying agricultural products such as maize, banana, cassava, ground nuts, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and beans which are highly grown and consumed in Rwanda.

It will also be adding value by mainly focusing on processing peanut butter from groundnuts, chips from sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and bananas, and adding values to the products. They also to produce and sell maize and cassava flour. The company has five (5) permanent staff and plans to work with 450 local farmers as suppliers of the raw material. Total capital investment of $390,730 is estimated to initiate the company.
Eco-Sound Solutions Ltd

Led by Parfait Yongabo

Eco-Sound Solution is a private company officially registered in Rwanda in 2015. The company has designed technologies for handling L. tanganyikanus (An introduced and invasive species in Lake Kivu) and for its value addition; salt fermented fish sauce, natural and fortified fish flours and fish bread.

The company was initiated through the fund won by its CEO, Mr. Parfait Yongabo; through a competition under the Rwanda Innovation Endowment Fund (RIEF), a funding mechanism established under the collaboration of the African Development Bank and the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Education.

Project was funded to a tune of 27,704,125 FRW to be used for 3 years for establishing and sustain the company. The company has released two products on the market, namely Fish Bread and the Fish Flour and is starting the certification process for the fortified flour while continuing the stabilization of the processing of the Fish Sauce. The core team consists of a CEO, four Managers and two advisors. An additional capital of 20,000,000 FRW to expand their business.
Golden Aroma Ltd

Led by Bosco Gatete

Golden Aroma Ltd is a company created in 2016 and based in Kigali, Rwanda, currently led by Mr. Bosco Gatete. The company’s business idea is to make premium golden berry fruit juice from golden berry collected from both contracted growers and the company’s own farm. The targeted market is supermarkets and fast-food restaurants of the country.

They envision to become the pioneer in golden berry production and value addition in the region. The company has five (5) temporal staff and is co-managed by two co-founders. It has already invested 3,375,000 Rwf and is yet to raise 6,400,000 Rwf to sustain their operations.

Cooperative Icyerekezo Kinigi

Led by Elisa Nduwayezu

Cooperative Icyerekezo Kinigi established in Musanze District, Rwanda, was created in 2013 under the leadership of Mr. Elisa Nduwayezu. Its core business is Irish potato seed multiplication.

Members intend to expand the business of Irish potatoes multiplication, germination and primary production by building more storage facilities and increasing area grown by members which will improve members’ living standards as well as benefiting neighboring Irish potatoes growers in getting on a timely basis good quality Irish potatoes.

The local market of potato growers is targeted. The management team is made of 3 agriculture graduates and total capital investment is estimated at 15,000,000 Rwf.
Modern Agri Inputs Supply and Consultancy (MAISCO) Ltd

Led by Rukwaya Colombe

MAISCO Ltd is a company created in 2015 in Rwanda currently led by Mrs RUKWAYA Colombe. Its business is to produce grafted and non-grafted vegetable seedlings (Tomatoes, eggplants, sweet and hot peppers, cucumbers, watermelons) in a controlled environment inside greenhouses and deliver them to farmers after skipping sensitive stages of germination. This came as a solution for farmers struggling to get healthy and disease resistant vegetables seedlings.

MAISCO Ltd was the first to introduce vegetable seedlings production in Rwanda and introduced the system of double production where tomatoes and Irish potatoes are grown on single plant by grafting tomato scion on Irish potato rootstock. The company offers free follow up to farmers who buy the seedlings to guide them on field so that we can ensure good production of its partners.

The targeted market is both farmer’s Cooperatives as well as commercial farmers and parastatal agencies. The company has eight permanent employees who are University graduates and 10 casual workers. The project requires a total amount equivalent to $ 70,513.
AgriYouth Ltd

Led by Patrick Mugiraneza

Agriyouth ltd is a Rwandan youth-led Agribusiness enterprise based in Kigali, Rwanda. The company was founded by Patrick Mugiraneza in 2015. It aims to design low cost animal feeds units for dairy farmers in Rwanda all year from a landless system by growing fodder crops using hydroponics technology.

The company’s products include farm landsaver forage units of all sizes. Through this low-cost technology, farmers are able to grow fodder by using mineral and water without soil and get the fodder within a short period of time (10 days after planting).

Furthermore, this landsaver forage unit is designed to also use solar energy as part of a low cost system designed to be accessible in areas where there is no electricity and be easily-maintained for dairy farmers.

The enterprise is also planning to expand its innovations and launch a mobile application that would link dairy farmers to feed supplier units close to their proximity.

The targeted market is Rwandan smallholder dairy farmers. The company has two part time employees and an advisory board. It has invested a $2,500 so far and needs to raise $15,000 to start replicating its operations.
G5 Skyway Growth Ltd

Led by

G5 Skyway Growth Ltd aims at producing the first instant coffee in Rwanda and in east Africa. This company has been involved in business in Rwanda for the past five years, and this project is within the company’s strategic growth.

Developed under ten years, this project will cost a total of 150,430,100 Rwandan francs. The company is in possession of liquidity, and assets ready to be used in the project worth 44,494,000 Rwandan francs, meaning that only 29.6% is covered already.

Once on its production and sales, the market research conducted and the business plan budget produced, show that the project will be able to generate 1,129,933,200 Rwandan francs in the first full production year (three years from the start of the project). The three big target customer segments are hotels, airlines, super markets and shops.
Training the Next Generation of Scientists for Africa

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