



## YAP - The Youth AgriPreneurs Project

### **1. Background:**

CGIAR (the Global Agricultural Research Partnership) and GFAR (the Global Forum on Agricultural Research) co-organize the global event of GCARD3 (the Third Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development) in April 2016. This event will be held in Johannesburg, co-hosted by the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa.

In cooperation with YPARD (the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development), we aim to fully integrate youth in the whole GCARD3 process, to showcase their crucial role in the future of agriculture.

We also want to use the GCARD3 global event to pilot a number of innovative projects and approaches. One of these projects is "YAP", the Youth Agripreneurs Project. YAP is a pilot project seed funding young agricultural entrepreneurs ("agripreneurs").

### **2. The Purpose**

It is our firm belief that youth are pivotal for the future of agriculture and the world's food security.

However, "agriculture" (crops, livestock, fisheries, and the larger scope of the agricultural supply/market chain) are no longer seen as a viable future by young people. Increasing input costs, climate change, depleted natural resources, etc. make farming (and all related businesses) a risky business. Also, farming has an "image" problem: society often considers farmers as low-level manual laborers. On top of this, rural communities face numerous challenges in developing countries in the areas of infrastructure, market access, health care and education.

All of these factors make agriculture and all related businesses unattractive for young people, who migrate in mass to take on low-skilled jobs in urban areas. If this trend continues, we will soon face a new food security challenge: "No Farmers, No Food", in spite of all the past and current agricultural development we have done:



researching new crops, fisheries, innovative live stock management and natural resource conservation.

We need to reverse this negative trend and prove to youth that agriculture and all value added services **ARE** a viable, respectable and profitable business.

What better way to do this, than by showcasing success stories? But even better: to seed-fund promising projects, proposed by young agripreneurs, and helping them grow their business into a success story.

### **3. The Project**

Within the framework of the GCARD3, we want to select ten young agripreneurs, and provide a seed fund to facilitate the startup of their project. At the same time, we want to mentor them within their project by linking the youth with seasoned researchers and practitioners. We also want to teach them new ways to advocate and network using innovative communication tools.

In short, the proposed process is as follows:

- We will launch a public call for young agripreneurs to submit a proposal for an agricultural project “they always dreamt of, but never had to means to realize”. Their project proposal has to be submitted through a short introduction video (typically made on a mobile phone), and an introductory text. The proposals can be submitted in English, Spanish or French.
- These project proposals will be published online on the GFAR blog. We will encourage the online public to vote and comment on these projects for a period of 6 weeks.
- Based on the public voting, we will shortlist 20 projects, which are presented to a jury of specialists who will select the 10 winning projects, based on their presentation, viability and sustainability.
- The 10 winning young agripreneurs will be invited to the global GCARD3 event, travel and accommodation paid by the organizers. They will be integrated in an intense mentoring program which includes linking them up with seasoned researchers and practitioners in the field of their projects, and a thorough social media training. The winners will also be integrated in the onsite panel discussions at the GCARD3 global event.
- After their onsite mentoring program, each winner will receive a seed fund allocation of US\$5,000, disbursed in three tranches, over the period of one year. Every two months, the young agripreneurs will have to report on their progress



through a blog post on the GFAR blog. During the year their mentors will continue to guide them in their project.

#### **4. What projects and agripreneurs qualify?**

- The agripreneurs have to be younger than 40, at the time of their submission. The project is open for agripreneurs from any part of the world.
- The projects have to be in the wider domain of agriculture: crops, fisheries, forestry, livestock or sustainable management of natural resources in function of food security, or within the larger supply chain of these, like inputs (seeds, fertilizers,..) and value-added services and market access.
- The projects have to be concrete, viable and sustainable.
- It has to be clear what the actual seed funding will be used for.
- We will only fund projects from individuals or small entrepreneurial projects

#### **5. What makes this project so different?**

There quite a few micro-funding or seed-funding projects “out there”, however, few focus on agripreneurs, our niche market.

But beyond purely providing “funding”, we offer the selected candidates a full one year’s long mentoring and training program: These youth will be trained on how to use online media to network and connect to others, and advocate for their project. They will also be integrated into the YPARD mentoring program.

We don’t want to just “fund” the program of these youth; we want to equip them with the right tools to turn their project to a success and by connecting them to experienced people (senior entrepreneurs or scientists) working in their field.

#### **6. Call for sponsors**

To fund this project, we are looking for sponsors who will collectively contribute to the seed fund, for a total of US\$75,000. This will be used to fund \$5,000 to each of the 10 selected agripreneurs and US\$2,500 for their participation at the GCARD3 global event (travel and accommodation). Sponsors can be institutes, organizations, private donors or companies.

Sponsors will be able to disburse the funds directly to the agripreneurs. We do not charge ANY overhead costs to this project.



## **7. What will we offer in exchange?**

In exchange, we will provide ample visibility to our sponsors throughout the process and at the GCARD3 global event; both via our online media, our outreach through conventional media, and through any of the printed and visibility material we produce.

## **How can you help?**

For more information on how to get involved in this exciting initiative, please submit your expression of interest via mail to Fiona Chandler (GFAR Secretariat) - [fiona.chandler@fao.org](mailto:fiona.chandler@fao.org)