**Young African Entrepreneurs Competition**

**RUFORUM 2016 Open Awards Competition**

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM; [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)) is a Network of 55 Universities in 22 African countries. RUFORUM was formed 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 development and business incubation and through its member universities and partners has supported training and skills development. It has also supported start-ups through innovative financing mechanism of the revolving fund implemented in the 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.

RUFORUM runs aBiennial convening every two years with the aim to provide a means to strengthen training by enhancing engagement of universities with key stakeholders including industry to enhance lesson learning, knowledge sharing, demand articulation and ultimately improve smallholder agriculture in Africa. The 5th RUFORUM Biennial Conference slated for 17th-21st October in Cape Town, South Africa will focus on ‘***Linking Agricultural Universities with Private Sector, Governments and other Stakeholders in support of Agricultural Development in Africa****’*. The conference will provide a platform for sharing experiences and lessons among Higher Agricultural Education actors in Africa and industry. In line with fulfilling the aims of the conference, RUFORUM invites young African entrepreneurs to participate in the conference to show case their enterprises, innovations and business concepts.

The Young African entrepreneurs deserve every opportunity to be supported to succeed in their business ventures; they also deserve the opportunity to be heard, exposed and supported to increase their social capital and network horizon. RUFORUM invites young (<40 years) African entrepreneurs and incubatees, to compete for **10 conference** awards to show case their innovations, enterprises and business concepts and propositions. The focus is for the young entrepreneurs to share their story at an International stage with close to 700 participants drawn from academia, business and industry, development organisations, practitioners and philanthropists. It is hoped that through this competition, young entrepreneurs’ business concepts, impact, innovation and business opportunities can be expanded. **While the focus of this competition is on innovation 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 other areas, will be considered.

The ten (10) competitively selected business enterprises will receive all expenses paid trip (air ticket, conference registration, and hotel costs) for participation at the RUFORUM Biennial Conference (17th -21st October, 2016) in Cape Town, South Africa. The selected young innovators will also receive a competition cash price award.

**Eligibility**

Applications are invited from enterprises and individuals that meet the following eligibility criteria.

* Persons with an established business enterprise and/or those with innovations that can potentially be commercialized and/or those with business concepts
* The business enterprise/potential enterprise should have a defined business model that show case the innovativeness of the proposed enterprise/business/innovation.
* Submissions should be in English or French using the template provided.

Deadline for submissions is 30th July, 2016. Results will be announced by 30th August, 2016.

**Application submission process**

All applications should be sent to biennial@ruforum.org with copy to Dr. Egeru Anthony (a.egeru@ruforum.org) and Dr. Uwituze Solange (s.uwituze@ruforum.org).