



Press Release

Kampala, 9th November 2018, Hotel Equatorial

National Agribusiness Innovation Challenge 2018

CURAD and Swisscontact award 27 final winners of the National Agribusiness Innovation Challenge 2018

CURAD and Swisscontact organized the final award Gala on the 9th November 2019 at Imperial Royale Hotel for 27 young people who emerged winners of the National Agribusiness Innovation Challenge 2018. The gala was presided over by the State Minister for Finance Planning and Economic Development, Hon. David Bahati. The minister applauded Swisscontact and CURAD for championing this innovation challenge.

“As government, we recognize the role played by development partners in advancing agribusiness in Uganda. I would like to commit that government will consider revising taxes for business startups to facilitate establishment and growth especially for young agripreneurs”.

The challenge ran from 12th July 2018 to 9th November 2018 attracting over 450 applicants from all regions of Uganda. The applications were assessed by a team of independent experts and as a result, 71

applicants with potential business ideas were selected. The selected applicants received trainings by Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA) and Billbrain Technologies in pitching and e-marketing respectively. A final judging event was held on 8th November 2018 in which 27 young people with exceedingly promising business ideas were selected in the different categories. This year's challenge registered unique and innovative ideas in the 8 categories of Best horticulture group, Best start-up enterprise, Best student enterprise, Best coffee trade idea, Best agribusiness Enterprise using ICT, Best Climate smart enterprise, new coffee product, and Best established enterprise.

The end goal of the challenge was to provide winning businesses with incubation support, human resources, capacity-building and start-up or expansion capital through CURAD's incubation program. The challenge mainly targeted young people (both in and out of school) between the ages of 18 - 35 years in the agribusiness sector across the country.

The 27 winners were awarded prizes ranging between UGX 2m – 6.5m across the 9 categories that will go directly to support the ideas and start-ups. The winning ideas were assessed based on clarity of the business idea, marketability of the service/product, innovativeness and capacity to invest the funds. Swisscontact and CURAD together with private partners invested over UGX 235 million in all activities ranging from awareness, trainings and cash prizes. Swisscontact in partnership with MasterCard Foundation is implementing a five-year youth employment project (ULEARN) focusing on agribusiness as one of the sectors.

CURAD is equally implementing the Agribusiness and Agripark project to set up common user production facilities for fresh and horticultures and packaging supported by aBi TRUST, putting in place an Incubation facility for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This National Agribusiness Innovation Challenge 2018 is part of CURAD and Swisscontact interventions within the two projects to promote youth innovation creativity and enterprise development.

Swisscontact's country director Mrs. Haidara Tania in her remarks congratulated the winners on their well-deserved success. She pointed out that ***"This year's national agribusiness challenge is an opportunity for Swisscontact and CURAD to demonstrate that all young people regardless of their social and education background, have potential to become entrepreneurs and establish strong SMEs"***.

The 2018 National Agribusiness Innovation Challenge was sponsored by the private sector partners with Stanbic bank as lead sponsor and other sponsors included KK Fresh Produce Exporters Ltd, Centenary bank, Billbrain Technologies, Hackcmap, Humuza Innovations Hub, Tropical Dynasty Ltd Monitor Publications Limited, Hamuand Bank of Africa, as well as development partners, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and Uganda National Young Farmers Association.

Mr. Segawa Apollo the Executive Director of CURAD in his speech said that the partnerships with the private and public sector has brought *'a sense of optimism'* which would benefit the youth ***"Together we can definitely achieve more. These partnerships are crucial for nurturing and growing entrepreneurship among the Youth and women of this country and no single organization can fully solve the youth unemployment problem"***.

CURAD and Swisscontact together with Stanbic Bank will further provide the 27 winners with skills in business management, coaching and mentoring as well as incubation services and linkages to catalyze business start-up and growth. Swisscontact and CURAD would like to recognize the role and engagement of private sector players in promoting agribusiness in Uganda. Through such an initiative, it's anticipated that more players and partners will get on board to consolidate and scale up this innovation.



Kato Enock - Overall winner of the 2018 challenge, and category winner for the Best Coffee Trade Idea making his remarks



Judges taking notes during the judging event



The Hon. Minister for Finance David Bahati awarding Kahwa Luke under the Best Coffee Trade Idea category

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