



## AGRO -TOURISM ASSOCIATION

### ***Call for Off-Farm Innovations in the Agriculture Sector***

#### **Background**

Although, the national economy heavily relies on agriculture, which employs about 65% of the working population, the young women and men involved in the sector still face a wide range of challenges. These include the inability to own or access land, lack of affordable financing for agribusiness start-ups, lack of necessary equipment, limited access to market information, as well as a lack of technical know-how. To address unemployment and underemployment and revitalize the agricultural sector, Swisscontact Uganda, in partnership with Agro -Tourism Association (ATA), aims to utilize the agribusiness incubation model as a pathway to solving challenges faced by youth and young mothers involved in off-farm opportunities.

Access to tailored agribusiness and entrepreneurship skills remains a key challenge as to why many youth and young mothers remain underemployed and unemployed in the agriculture sector and cannot take or absorb the off-farm available employment opportunities. Therefore, EcoProsperity's intervention in enabling the youth and young mothers to have agribusiness and entrepreneurship skills through an incubation program provided by the Agro-Tourism Association will contribute to reducing youth and young mothers' employment, contribute to 600 jobs hence a pathway to increased household income, food security and adapt to climate change.

Additionally, this intervention will assist youth and young mothers in starting businesses that are more resilient to shocks, sustainable, and able to avoid the common fate of many businesses collapsing within the first year. This will be achieved through providing strong entrepreneurship and comprehensive business management training to the youth and young mothers through incubation programs. As a result, more jobs will be created for other youth and young women entering the workforce each year.

This intervention is targeting 500 start-up agribusiness young mothers and youth entrepreneurs whose growth is hindered by limited access to finance, lack of necessary equipment, limited access to market information, and lack of technical business know-how to undergo agribusiness incubation with Agro-Tourism Association to enable them unlock their business growth potential. The vision of change logic is to have entrepreneurs whose business technical skills are enhanced, more jobs for other youth created, and start-ups have access to affordable finance, and access

to market information thus being able to produce agricultural produce that meets the demands of diverse markets and creating diversified employment opportunities.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this intervention are:

- a) To significantly accelerate the growth of enterprises led by youth and young mothers through mentorship and coaching from seasoned entrepreneurs;
- b) To prepare participants for investment readiness and support them to overcome the challenges of limited access to finance;
- c) To expand business partnership opportunities through networking events and provide a structured environment where start-ups are monitored for over a year;
- d) To increase the survival rates of these businesses from the usual 44% to an impressive 87%; and
- e) To create a clear pathway for youth and young mothers to achieve self-employment and reduce underemployment within the agriculture sector.

## **Agribusiness incubation pathways**

The model will use five pathways as elaborated below.

1. Facilitate the development and dissemination of information about off-farm opportunities for youth and young mothers to be able to find employment opportunities that align with their skill set.
2. Facilitating the skills development among the youth and young mothers to align with off-farm available opportunities in the agriculture sector.
3. Facilitating linkage between the youth and young mothers with financial and non-financial institutions to enable them to have access to affordable finance.
4. Facilitating coaching, mentorship programs, and networking events that connect youth and young mothers with industry professionals and entrepreneurs to enable access to access to job opportunities or business partnerships.
5. Facilitating access to infrastructure, including workshops, communication, training centers, and technology access to the youth and young mothers necessary for off-farm activities.

## **Target**

- a) Young mothers operating Start-up agribusinesses
- b) Youth entrepreneurs

## **Geographical location**

- a) Kagadi
- b) Mitooma
- c) Kyenjojo
- d) Kyegegwa
- e) Kibaale

### **Nature of innovations**

We are looking for innovations in the agriculture sector (agri-input supplies, seedlings production and agro processing) and these may take the form of;

1. New products or services
2. Innovative inputs and their delivery models
3. New ways of scaling proven solutions
4. Business model innovations

### **Core assessment criteria**

The innovation must be unique and ready to launch (not looking for ideas). The applicant must be based in the targeted districts and physical verification of the location will be carried out.

### **How to apply**

Download the background information and application form from [www.agro-tourism.org](http://www.agro-tourism.org) or request for application forms from [info@agro-tourism.org](mailto:info@agro-tourism.org). You can also request for information/clarifications from Tel: +256778371891 / +256752251710. Complete the application form and submit it to [philip@agro-tourism.org](mailto:philip@agro-tourism.org) and copy to [info@agro-tourism.org](mailto:info@agro-tourism.org). The application can be made in **English, Rukiga/Runyankole and Rutoro/Runyoro.**

The deadline for receiving the application forms is **30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 4:59pm East African Time.**