



Concept Note for Pitching of Business Ideas

Egerton University, Kenya in partnership with the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and Gulu University in Uganda received support from Mastercard Foundation to implement a Program titled “**Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa’s Growth and Development (TAGDev)**” for a period of eight years (2016-2024). The program provides scholarships to students from across Africa and aims at developing the capacity of African universities to effectively train, and nurture graduates with relevant skills. The Program has up to date offered full scholarships to 80 students 55 at undergraduate level and 25 at postgraduate level. The program has also offered partial support to over 100 students at both undergraduate and master’s level within the university. The students’ are drawn from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, Benin, Lesotho, Rwanda, Cameroon, and Liberia. TAGDev program aims at transforming students into innovative leaders who will catalyze Africa’s growth and development. The program also aims at facilitating the students’ transitions to livelihoods with a special focus on career-fairs, internship and entrepreneurship. This can be achieved by improving the program linkages between Universities and agricultural industry players, potential investors among other partners.

One very important element of being an [entrepreneur](#) is the ability to pitch or making a strong case for one’s product, project, innovation or a creative idea with an intention to sell. Young entrepreneurs must be prepared to pitch their business ideas in the most concise, convincing and appealing manner to both the market opportunities and potential investors/partners. Young entrepreneurs faces various challenges, most notably, trying to accelerate their ideas into meaningful income generating business entities. Igniting the entrepreneurial spirit among budding entrepreneurs involves not only training and capacity building on how to successfully deliver compelling “elevator pitches” but also providing such opportunities of direct engagement with

potential investment partners and sponsors. TAGDev program seeks to expand the advancement of such knowledge and understanding of the youth in tertiary agriculture education by linking staff and students to national agricultural innovation system actors for demand articulation and exposure to the needs of the sector. With many agricultural industry players and potential investors expected to participate in the forthcoming 13th Egerton University International Conference and 3rd TAGDev Program National Forum, there lies an important opportunity for students to pitch their business ideas as a way of strengthening agribusiness/entrepreneurship and agricultural innovations at institutions of higher learning.

Rationale

With the growing need to strengthen agribusiness/entrepreneurship and agricultural innovations among the student entrepreneurs, there arises the need to not only provide a guide for students on how to successfully deliver compelling pitches but also to provide a framework through which such innovative ideas can be screened/assessed through a competitive, transparent and fair evaluation process. It is only then that the most creative, viable, innovative business ideas/pitches can be matched to the high standards and demands of potential investors and partners.

This initiative thus seeks to

- i. Roll out business ideas/plans call for young student entrepreneurs/innovators
- ii. Offer a one day training on “accelerator pitching” to shortlisted participants
- iii. Screen, evaluate and recommend the most outstanding business ideas/innovations

The business pitches and plans will be *evaluated based on*;

- Innovativeness for the proposed intervention
- Suitability/viability of the business model

(See attached detailed evaluation tools for reference)

The focus areas in the call will include;

- Production, marketing and processing of agri-related products
- Appropriate technology and innovations viable for upscale
- Agri-related creative arts and design

- Value chain systems management and dynamics

Methodology

- Public call for proposal/business plan submission
- Capacity building through training on business idea “escalator pitching”
- Screening, evaluation and assessment of shortlisted business ideas