



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Empowerment of Young Agricultural Producers in Africa through inclusive mentorship Program (EYPA)

Call for application

• Background

The Pan-African Farmers' Organization (PAFO) is a continental organization with a membership base composed of Regional Farmer's Networks. Its Constitutive Assembly was held under the sponsorship of the African Union in Lilongwe, Malawi, from October 27 to 29, 2010. PAFO is recognized as the representative body of African farmers' organizations at the highest continental level. PAFO is the voice of more than 80 million African farmers integrated into nearly 73 national organizations, unions, federations, cooperatives, associations, etc., present in more than 48 countries on the continent, and united in five regional networks operating at the heart of African agriculture. For more details about PAFO, please visit www.pafo-africa.org.

• Context

PAFO and FAO have a formal partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2022. This collaboration focuses on several areas including developing the capacity of farmers' organizations across Africa to best serve their members and represent them effectively at high-level policy dialogue processes and other fora. FAO also engages with PAFO to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture, sustainable agroecological approaches, and agriculture as an attractive business opportunity for youth.

In addition, while PAFO has youth among cross-cutting areas, FAO takes into account youth in agriculture as the future of food security around the world. Therefore, in its Strategic Framework 2022-31, FAO has identified youth as a critical theme across all of our work. In the Medium-Term Plan 2022-25 and Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP), FAO acknowledges the importance of youth as managers of our agrifood systems.

FAO recognizes the immense potential of youth in revitalizing agriculture and food systems, particularly in Africa. By engaging youth, FAO aims to foster a new generation of agricultural leaders equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources to drive sustainable and inclusive development.

In Africa, where a significant portion of the population is young, investing in youth in agriculture is crucial for ensuring food security, economic growth, and poverty reduction. FAO supports initiatives that empower young people through training, mentorship, access to finance, and market linkages.

By creating opportunities for youth to thrive in agriculture, FAO contributes to building resilient and prosperous rural communities across the continent.

For this reason, FAO and its strategic partners must work together with youth to further our commitment to youth engagement in agriculture.

In this regard, PAFO, in close coordination with FAO, would like to initiate a pilot mentorship program focusing on creating innovative activities that empower young agricultural producers in Africa.

- The purpose of this project is to pilot a mentorship initiative aimed at inspiring and empowering African youth to engage in agriculture by addressing challenges such as limited opportunities and support for young agricultural producers. This mentorship will serve as a scalable model to enhance youth participation across the region, ultimately contributing to a more efficient, inclusive, resilient, sustainable and prosperous future for African agriculture and agrifood systems transformation
- **Project structure**
- A mentorship program for up to 50 young agricultural producers (mentees) from Africa. The program will provide them with skills and knowledge on sustainable agricultural practices, agribusiness, entrepreneurship and leadership.
- Three online capacity building workshops covering thematic areas identified by the mentees during the mentorship program (a survey to be undertaken during the selection of participants).
- One-on-one (or a pair to one, depending on availability/thematic area) mentorship between mentors and mentees with up to 1 meeting monthly (frequency/timing can be adjusted depending on needs/availability) and 3 combined virtual workshop(s) with all mentees.
- Up to 15 mentees from all regions who will show potential will be invited in the Young Farmer's Forum (in the framework of the General Assembly of the Pan African Farmer Organization) where they will present their products and stories.
- The first 3 finalists will receive best performers award during the PAFO youth forum
- **Key Selection Criteria for Young Agricultural Producers**
- Participants must be between the ages of 18 to 35 years old.
- Applicants should be African and actively involved in agricultural production in Africa, including but not limited to crop farming, livestock farming, agro-processing, or agribusiness activities.
- Applicants must have at least 2 years of practical experience in agricultural production or related fields. This could include any form of agriculture, whether small-scale or commercial farming, or involvement in agricultural businesses or cooperatives.
- Preference should be given to youth who are committed to sustainable agricultural practices, environmental stewardship, and innovative farming methods that contribute to food security and climate resilience.
- Applicants should demonstrate leadership potential in their community or agricultural enterprise. This can be shown through involvement in community activities, leading agricultural initiatives, or innovative approaches to agriculture.
- Applicants must show a strong willingness to engage in the mentorship program, including attending virtual workshops, participating in one-on-one **mentorship**, and actively contributing to the program's objectives.

-
- Applicants must show a strong willingness to engage in the mentorship program, including attending virtual workshops, participating in one-on-one mentorship, and actively contributing to the program's objectives.
- Preference will be given to youth involved in innovative agricultural practices or those with a clear business plan or vision to scale their agricultural enterprises. This could include tech-based solutions, agribusinesses, or any innovative approach that addresses local agricultural challenges.
- Applicants must demonstrate how their involvement in agriculture or agribusiness has had a positive impact on their local community (e.g., creating jobs, enhancing food security, reducing poverty). The more outreach and impact, the more chances to be selected. The impact will be analyzed in quantity and quality
- Participants must be available to attend and actively participate in all activities of the mentorship program, including workshops, one-on-one mentorship, and other program-related events.
- Applicants should be able to effectively communicate their ideas related to their agricultural ventures or business plans and show potential for developing these ideas further with mentorship support.
- Applicants needs to present their Agricultural Produce with or without processing/value addition, and should be able to present towards the end of the program.
- * The selection committee will ensure transparency and accountability among other values of PAFO and the principles of other International Organizations
- **Application Process**
- Interested candidates should submit the following documents:
 - Updated CV
 - A short video explaining the applicant's work and agricultural produce
 - Cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for joining the program and relevant experience
 - Two professional references (one from a relevant national farmer organization or regional farmer organization)
 - Summary of the initiative showing clearing background, objectives, achievements and impact qualitative and quantitative, future plans
 - Selection of up to three thematic areas they wish to receive mentorship.
 - Gender and Social Inclusion
- Reference is made to United Nations, and the African Union Commission, and as stipulated in its current strategic plan 2021-2025, the program encourages the participation of both male and female youth, with a particular focus on inclusive and equitable participation of marginalized groups, including youth with disabilities, rural youth, and those from underserved regions.

- **Conclusion**

This mentorship program, spearheaded by PAFO and FAO, aims to empower African youth by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to become leaders in sustainable agriculture and agribusiness. By addressing challenges such as limited opportunities, the program will help foster innovation, resilience, and inclusivity within African agriculture, driving positive change in local communities and contributing to the broader transformation of agrifood systems across the continent. Through targeted mentorship, capacity building, and a platform to showcase their achievements, the program will nurture the next generation of agricultural leaders, ensuring a prosperous and food-secure future for Africa.

- **Application process**

Interested experts should submit a motivational letter and CV to ceo@pafo-africa.org and assistant@pafo-africa.org, with a copy to info@pafo-africa.org , program@pafo-africa.org by 3rd March 2025.