

***Youth finding solutions to challenges
in agriculture and rural development using ICT¹!***

ESSAY CONTEST

Win up to 1,500 euros and improve your capacity!

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA), in collaboration with FARA, Yam-Pukri, CAFAN, AYF, ANAFE, PAFPNET², is organizing an essay writing contest on “*Youth and ICTs in Agriculture and Rural Development*”. This is the first activity of the project “*Agriculture, Rural Development and Youth in the Information Society*” (ARDYIS) initiated by CTA; this project aims at raising the awareness and capacity of youth on the issues of rural and agricultural development for ACP (Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific) countries through new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

(Read more on next pages)



¹ “ICT” stands for “Information and Communication Technology”

² FARA: Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa; AYF: African Youth Foundation; ANAFE: African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources education; Yam Pukri; PAFPNet : Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network; CAFAN : Caribbean Farmers' Network.

1. Aim of the essay contest

The contest aims at identifying innovative solutions on challenges faced by youth in agriculture and rural areas using ICTs, in ACP³ countries. The essay contest will contribute to raising youth awareness on the potential and opportunities of ICTs in agriculture and rural areas.

What do we mean by ICTs?

UNESCO defines ICTs as the "new or advanced technologies that enhance the dissemination or creation of information and communication". In the same line of thought, ICTs include, within the framework of this contest, all "new" information and communication technologies (Internet, mobile phones, computers, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), etc.), associated or not with "traditional" communication technologies (such as radio, television, written press, video, etc.). Entries submitted should not deal exclusively with the use of traditional information technologies (traditional radio, video, etc.).

2. Who can participate

The essay contest is open to young people, aged 18 - 25 years old, from urban or rural areas of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific countries. Young women, young agricultural producers and students in agricultural training courses are particularly encouraged to participate. Applicants will submit their entry in French or English.

3. How to participate

Participants will write an essay (between 1,200 and 1,500 words) responding to any of the following questions or issues:

- a) *Choose two challenges which you experience in your country or region related to agriculture or rural development, and explain how you could use ICTs to address them;*
- b) *How can ICTs be used for effective advocacy and lobbying to promote agriculture in your country or region?*
- c) *How can ICTs be used to improve access to market for agricultural products from your country or region?*
- d) *Tell the story of a youth producer or a youth leaving in rural area, in your country/region, who uses ICT successfully or in an innovative way (even if the experience was not a full success) for his/her work. Describe lessons learnt and alternatives envisaged, especially if the experience was not successful.*

³ "ACP" stands for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific. It's an organization composed of countries signatories of the ACP-EU (European Union) *Cotonou Agreement*. ACP countries are the following: South Africa - Angola - Antigua and Barbuda - Belize - Cap Vert - Comores - Bahamas - Barbados - Benin - Botswana - Burkina Faso - Burundi - Cameroon - Central African Republic - Congo (Brazzaville) - Congo (Kinshasa) - Cook Islands - Ivory Coast - Cuba - Djibouti - Dominican Republic - Dominica - Eritrea - Ethiopia - Fiji - Gabon - Gambia - Ghana - Grenada - Republic of Guinea - Guinea-Bissau - Equatorial Guinea - Guyana - Haiti - Jamaica - Kenya - Kiribati - Lesotho - Liberia - Madagascar - Malawi - Mali - Marshall Islands - Maurice - Mauritania - Federated States of Micronesia - Mozambique - Namibia - Nauru - Niger - Nigeria - Niue - Uganda - Palau - Papua New Guinea - Rwanda - Saint Christopher and Nevis - Saint Vincent and Grenadines - Saint Lucia - Solomon Islands - Samoa - Sao Tome and Principe - Senegal - Seychelles - Sierra Leone - Somalia - Sudan - Suriname - Swaziland - Tanzania - Chad - East Timor - Togo - Tonga - Trinidad and Tobago - Tuvalu - Vanuatu - Zambia - Zimbabwe

Each candidate will address only one issue and submit only one essay. The title of the issue or question chosen and the name of the author should be clearly written on the cover page to the essay. For each essay, concrete examples to support arguments developed have to be presented.

4. Selection process and prizes

An international panel of judges, made up of experts in ICT, agriculture and rural development will be set up to review entries. The selection process and prize awarding will be conducted as follows:

a) Finalists – Oral presentation

In the first instance, the best two (2) essays from each of the six ACP regions (West Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, Pacific and Caribbean) will be pre-selected. The 12 finalists will participate in an international meeting on rural development⁴ where, apart from attending the sessions, they will make an oral presentation of their submission before an international jury.

b) Regional Winner Prizes

Based on oral presentations, prizes will be awarded to the best entrant from each region (“East Africa Prize”, “West Africa Prize”, “Central Africa Prize”, “Southern Africa Prize”, “Caribbean Prize”, “Pacific Prize”). Thus, there will be 6 regional winners. Each of them will receive a cash prize of 1000 € (one thousand Euros).

c) Overall ACP Winner Prize

From the regional winners, another round of selection will be conducted to choose the “ACP Prize”, as the culminating award of the competition. The winner selected will receive an additional prize of 500 Euros (five hundred Euros); the author of the best essay from all regions will then receive 1,500 Euros in total.

The best essays received will be published and promoted on the project website and in other CTA and partners’ publications. Participants in the contest, in particular prize-winners, will have the opportunity to be involved in other ARDYIS project activities.

Complementary or consolation prizes, at CTA discretion, could be awarded, notably to other best candidates.

5. Deadlines

- Applications should be sent to CTA by email (see addresses in section 8 below) by 31 July 2010
- Finalists (the 12 authors pre-selected) will be announced in mid-October 15 October 2010.
- Oral presentation and final selection of winners will be made in November 2010.

6. Selection criteria

The main selection criteria for the written essays are:

- Originality;
- Personal vision;
- Relevance and responsiveness to development challenges;
- Potential for replicability of the experiences or solutions;
- Quality of the analysis;
- Quality of language (engaging writing style, good spelling and grammar, etc.);
- Presence of bibliography and/or other relevant references;
- Respect of the prescribed format of the text:

⁴ To be organized by CTA in November 2010

- Number of words: between 1,200 and 1,500.
- Font : Arial;
- Size of characters : 11;
- Line spacing: 1,5.

For oral presentations, the main criterion will be the youth's capacity to articulate his/her arguments and respond adequately to jury questions on issues addressed in the essay.

Essays should demonstrate that their authors understand the issues they are addressing, that they understand what ICTs are, as well as the potential of ICTs in agriculture and rural development. Youth experiences or perspectives should be clearly indicated. Applicants' positions should be adequately articulated (in the written document and during oral presentations).

7. Documents to be submitted

All applications should include the following documents:

- The essay the participant is submitting (in French or English);
- A short biographical note (to introduce the applicant), including participant full contact details (email address, telephone number(s), postal address, town, country, etc.) - no more than 1 page;
- A scanned photocopy of the applicant's identification card or passport details.

8. Address for submitting applications or for more information

All applications should be sent simultaneously to the following two addresses:

Ardis-project@cta.int and ictprogramme@gmail.com

While sending the applications, the subject of the e-mail should be "**Entry for essay contest**".

9. Other rules for participation

- a) The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation reserves the right to disqualify any entry if it does not meet the contest criteria and present regulations;
- b) By entering, participants warrant that their entry materials are original and do not infringe on any third party's rights;
- c) Entry to the contest constitutes an agreement to allow CTA to make, if necessary, articles, name, occupation and state of residence of applicants, public. In addition it constitutes an agreement to allow CTA to use submitted texts in its publications and in the framework of promotional activities. Applicants will retain ownership and all other rights to future use of their texts;
- d) CTA will not return submitted articles to their authors;
- e) All local taxes and fees on prizes are the sole responsibility of the winner;
- f) If, for any reason, the competition is not completed as planned, CTA reserves the right at its sole discretion to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend it;
- g) The decisions made by the panel of judges and CTA are final and beyond dispute;
- h) All participants in this contest implicitly accept the rules presented in this document.

More about the ARDYIS project:

The purpose of the ARDYIS (*Agriculture, Rural Development and Youth in the Information Society*) project is to raise youth awareness and improve their capacity on agricultural and rural development issues in ACP countries through ICTs. Its initial activities include an essay contest, a web 2.0 training, animation of an information portal, facilitation of networking among project participation, participation in conferences for best participants. An *Advisory Committee* for the project has been created; it's composed of the following key ACP institutions: Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network (PAFPNet), Caribbean farmers' Network (CAFAN), Yam-Pukri association, African Youth Foundation (AYF). ARDYIS activities will contribute to the promotion of opportunities for youth in ACP countries in the agricultural, rural development and ICT sectors.

For more information, write to : Ardyis-project@cta.int