

Econet, Yara launch Generation Africa, brings youth entrepreneurship to Africa

Econet and Yara International ASA have launched "Generation Africa", a partnership initiative to inspire young African entrepreneurs to join the agri-food sector for its viable business opportunities. Generation Africa will reach thousands of young people through its "GoGettaz" competition, which will award \$100,000 in prize money to two exceptional business ventures in the agri-food sector.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The partnership initiative will support a cohort of 12 budding young agri-food entrepreneurs to scale and prosper their ventures.

"Africa's agri-food sector presents a \$1tn [business opportunity](#) by 2030, especially when connected with the current technology revolution.

"Across Africa's agri-food chain, innovations can be found in how we grow, harvest, process, store, transport, package, sell and consume food. Together with the pioneers of Africa's next generation, we want to seize these opportunities. Generation Africa will help youth entrepreneurs launch, grow and mature agri-food businesses that will drive job creation, inclusive growth, and better food supply," says Svein Tore Holsether, President and CEO of Yara.

Africa has about 600 million hectares of arable land, yet it imports food for \$35bn a year – a figure that is estimated to rise to \$100bn by 2025. At the same time, over 60% of young people across Africa are unemployed. Innovative entrepreneurship could retain more value on the continent, helping to counterbalance rural-urban migration, professionalise farming, generate employment and provide affordable, healthy food to Africa's growing population.

"Africa is full of entrepreneurs. We have more entrepreneurs than any other continent. But where the average age of an entrepreneur is 19, the average age of a farmer is 60! The time is now for Africa's entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and embrace the incredible opportunities that agri-food businesses offer. If we do not, someone else will." says Strive Masiyiwa, Econet's founder and group chairman.

Generation Africa's vision is to strengthen the ecosystem for youth entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector across the continent, allowing them to unlock this untapped potential.

Generation Africa's [GoGettaz competition](#) is open to young agri-food entrepreneurs aged 18-35 from across Africa. Budding ventures can be submitted to the competition by 15 July 2019. Twelve finalists will be selected by an expert jury to pitch live at the African Green Revolution Forum in Accra, Ghana 3-6 September 2019. Two winners (one man and one woman) will each win \$50,000 to grow their businesses with guidance from Generation Africa.

"This is Africa's Generation. Never has there been a more powerful moment in history – nor a more digitally-capable generation – to leapfrog Africa's agri-food sector from a net importer of food to feeding the planet," concludes Masiyiwa.

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