Call for Expression of Interest

Get involved in the Agri-Hack Championship!

To the attention of tech hubs and labs from East Africa

From 4 to 8 November 2013, The Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Rwanda, will organize an international conference on ICT for Agriculture (ICT4Ag) in Kigali. This event will examine how ICTs are truly empowering producers and consumers along the entire value chain. It will showcase the exciting possibilities and incredible developments taking place in this area. In line with CTA's strategy, the ICT4Ag conference will promote the application of ICTs in the agricultural sector with particular emphasis on value chains, advocacy and policy development.

A regional hackathon on ICT4Ag solutions is planned as one of the key activities that will run in parallel to the conference.

Objectives of the regional championship on ICT4Ag solutions are :

1. To showcase the potentials of ICT applications in agriculture at the ICT4Ag conference;

2. To support the development of ICT innovations and entrepreneurship in agriculture, especially by youth.

Private and public sector run innovation entrepreneurship hubs/communities are invited to express interest in being partners nominating and supporting teams to the finals of the regional competition. The event is a pilot experience and focuses only on Eastern Africa.

1. Overview of the concept

The competition is dubbed regional *Agri-hack championship*. It is different from the traditional hackathons. The championship will start with selection events at different Eastern Africa Tech hubs and related institutions to identify representatives to the finals. **Up to twelve (12) Tech hubs will be selected** to organise hackathons or other selection events to nominate participating teams. The finals of the championship will take place in Kigali during the ICT4Ag international conference from 4th to 7th November 2013. Follow-up activities are also planned. CTA is collaborating with agricultural and ICT stakeholders for the organisation of the activity. A hub has been selected to manage technical aspects of this Championship, in collaboration with CTA.

Prizes and judging criteria
Teams in the championship will compete for seed grants amounting to EUR 5,000, EUR 4,000 and EUR 3,000 for the first, second and third overall positions respectively. The hubs nominating the three winning teams will also receive a EUR 3,000 grant to undertake post competition incubation and business support to the winning teams for a period of 6 months. Interventions provided during the incubation period will include support to finalise development of winning solutions.

At the regional finals, teams will receive coaching, mentorship and valuable feedback from players in the ICT and agriculture sector attending the ICT4Ag conference. This is in addition to time allocated for further development and refinement of their solutions. The finalists will also have the chance to network and establish key industry connections with participants of the weeklong conference.

CTA will facilitate airline reservations, accommodation and local transport for two members of competing teams, as well as for one representative of the selected hubs for their stay in Kigali during the competition.

The judging panel for the final regional competition will be drawn from three domain expertise areas of agriculture, ICT and business. The judging criteria to be used at the final competition will be circulated to participating hubs in advance for use in nominating teams.

2. Challenges: problem sets, business opportunities

Challenges for the competition will be in relation to improving access to agricultural data and improving communication between agricultural stakeholders in East Africa. More details will be provided on the challenges/business opportunities for the competition following selection of the hubs.

3. Expression of interest: partnership roles for participating hubs

ICT innovation labs, hubs and incubators are invited to express interest as partners to nominate teams that join and be part of the competition. The selected hubs will be invited to join CTA and its partners to collaborate in making the competition impactful. This is in addition to the potential of being one of the three beneficiaries of the EUR 3,000 grant to support winning teams.

Upon expression of interest, selected hubs will use their preferred processes to competitively nominate one team for the competition. CTA and its organizing partners will provide technical guidance and support to selected hubs in coming up with their best teams. The hub may also collaborate with their local partners and sponsors in any framework they opt for to make their nomination processes more competitive, fun and value adding.

CTA will not provide financial resources for the organizations of the selection event, but a prize will be given to each team selected (one per hub) during the international conference.

Once the best team is nominated, the hub will advise them to select the best two representatives to travel to Kigali for the finals. The nominating hubs will also commit to provide guidance as well as technical and business support to the nominated team to improve their prospects of winning at the regional finals.

4. Criteria for selecting partner Hubs/Labs

CTA and its organizing partners will use the following criteria to select partners

1. Organizations operating as tech hubs, incubators, labs or university communities in the following Eastern African countries are eligible: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda;
2. Organizations with an existing form of business incubation program for tech startups;
3. Organizations with entrepreneur/developer communities of 20 individuals or more;
4. Qualifying partners must have a physical space to host winning teams for a minimum of 6 months throughout the post competition incubation period;
5. Qualifying partners must have at least one business coach or advisor to provide coaching and business advice to competing teams before and after the conference - Pen profiles of at least one designated coach or business advisor is required;
6. A maximum of 2 hubs from the same country may be selected to nominate finalists depending on the strengths of their proposal; Up to twelve (12) tech hubs (irrespective of the countries) will be selected.
7. Qualifying organizations must be ready to organise at least one event as part of their competitive processes to nominate their best team to the regional finals **by 2nd October 2013;**

8. English language will be used throughout the selection of hubs and competing teams.

5. How to apply

Organizations interested in being part of this ICT4ag competition have to complete this application form: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Agri-Hackathon

The deadline to **apply is 05 September 2013**. The decisions made by CTA and its partners for the selection of hubs are final and beyond dispute. By responding to this call, all organizations accept this rule.

6. For more information:

- on technical management of the activity, write to agrihack-admin@ict4ag.org

- for general information, write to hackathon@cta.int

- on the conference, visit http://www.ict4ag.org