

ProAgro YOUTH

Support to integrated agribusiness hubs in Algeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Malawi

Regional policy dialogue on youth employment in the rural economy

5 April 2023

Platform: **Virtual Event - Zoom**

[Register here](#)

Concept note

Background

Many countries in Africa are characterised by a rapidly growing youth population. This workforce brings an opportunity for the country to benefit from a demographic dividend. Yet, most young people in these countries lack the skills, knowledge, and (other) resources to capitalise on economic opportunities. At the same time, private sector partners also struggle to find suitably trained employees and entrepreneurs.

Creating and promoting decent jobs for young people in the rural economy offers an opportunity to gain from the demographic dividend and absorb skilled young people into the agricultural labour market in these countries. In addition to the self-employment options in family plots, job creation through private sector development is at an all-time high on the policy agenda of most countries across the continent and constitute a pivotal element of the ambitious development policies of donor countries, also further spurred by commitments made towards SDG 8. Promoting decent jobs for young women and men is a key priority for the ILO and its tripartite constituents as highlighted in the [2019 Abidjan Declaration](#).

The overall goal of the project ProAgro YOUTH Support to integrated agribusiness hubs in Algeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Malawi is to increase decent self and wage employment for rural youth through integrated agribusiness hubs. The project represents the vision of the consortium, led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), of engaged collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), private and public sector leaders, and youth to enact systemic labour force and industry change in the rural economy, resulting in measurably improved youth economic opportunities in the evolving agribusiness sectors of Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Malawi.

To reach these goal, ProAgro YOUTH is providing young people with the skills needed to access employment and/or start their business and support enterprise and value chain development so that the private sector can grow and provide more and better jobs. The ILO is leading the consortium in each of the four countries where the project will be implemented.

ProAgro is creating new agribusiness enterprises or taking up quality employment across the agriculture and its adjacent sector value chains in the expanding local processing to capture greater value-added. The project is offering technical, vocation & business training, followed by coaching, business development and job placement (apprenticeships and internships) support to young people resulting in 1,500 directly created jobs of both wage workers and entrepreneurs and further indirect jobs in each country.

During the start-up phase of the project, close consultations were carried out with key stakeholders (including government and social partners) and (other) implementing partners in each country. Rural employment diagnostic studies have been initiated with the aim of refining the project strategy and adapting it to national realities.

A regional forum is being proposed as a dialogue forum on the pressing issue of youth employment challenges in rural areas.

Objectives:

The main objective of the Regional policy dialogue is to reaffirm the commitment of the ILO and IFAD to promote decent jobs in Africa, in particular for young women and men in rural areas, with the start of the ProAgro YOUTH project. More concretely, the regional event will:

1. Reinforce ILO and IFAD policy dialogue with governments and other key stakeholders on the promotion of decent work in rural areas in Africa by sharing experiences and lessons from related interventions across the region.
2. Showcase how investments in integrated agribusiness hubs in the region can create decent jobs for young women and men and how interventions such as ProAgro YOUTH can be brought to scale.

Audience:

The event will be open to and attended by:

- Officials from governments, such as Ministries of Employment/Labour, Finance and Development Planning, Agriculture, Youth, trade, SMEs and related institutions
- Representatives of workers' and employers' organisations
- International financial institutions and development partners
- Youth-led organisations and youth representatives including students in the agricultural and its adjacent sector
- Media representatives-interested in agriculture and its adjacent sector, or youth employment
- Officials from regional organizations such as the African Union and relevant regional economic communities
- ILO and IFAD offices in the region.

Language:

Interpretation services in Arabic, English and French will be made available.

Communication:

The event will be widely promoted through ILO's and IFAD's networks, incl. social media. Consortium partners, journalists and young people networks across the four ProAgro YOUTH countries will be actively involved in advertising the event. A press release will be published on the ILO and IFAD websites a week prior to the event.

Meaningful youth engagement:

As a target group of the project, a sustained commitment will be made, before, during and after the event to ensure effective involvement of young women and men in this event as well as throughout the implementation of the project. The organizers will reach out to and encourage the active participation of young people to the event. After the event, follow up and support will include

- a short post-event debrief to provide feedback and share opportunities for continued engagement,
- Providing ongoing and consistent information to engaged youth/ youth structures about the project implementation, opportunities to participate and exchange.
- Providing additional follow up support to relevant project leads/country representatives to support on-going youth engagement in project activities.

Agenda: ProAgro YOUTH Regional policy dialogue

Moderator: Ms. Joannie Bewa

All times are UCT (GMT+0)

#	Time	Agenda item
1	09:00 – 09:05	Introduction and housekeeping
2	09:05 – 09:20	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon – ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa • Mr. Bernard Mwinyel Hien, IFAD Regional Director West and Central Africa Division
3	09:20 – 09:40	Integrated agribusiness hubs as a response to youth employment challenges in rural Africa. <i>Session description & outcome: ILO and IFAD discuss employment challenges for youth, particularly in rural areas and showcase how investments such as ProAgro YOUTH in the region can create decent jobs for young women and men.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ILO's approach to promoting decent work for young women and men, particularly in rural areas: Showcasing ProAgro YOUTH project</i> Mr. Ken Shawa, Senior Economist, ILO Regional Office for Africa • <i>Lessons from IFAD's work experience in rural youth employment in Africa</i> Mr. Tom Anyonge, Lead Technical Specialist (Rural Youth), IFAD • <i>Agribusiness hubs, Cameroun</i> Representative TBC
4	09:40 – 09:55	Spotlight: Working with youth/youth structures as partners. <i>Session description & outcome: Speakers discuss how to identify young people and engage with private sector companies to assess skills needs, identify job opportunities and soft skills training for youth.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth representative with lived experience of the project • Mr. Lanto Ratsida, Président, Observatoire de la jeunesse, Madagascar
5	09:55 – 10:50	Policy Roundtable: Investing in Decent Jobs for Young People in rural Africa <i>Session description & outcome: This interactive policy roundtable will invite government representatives, social partners as well as youth representatives to discuss which enabling environment and policies are needed to translate the strategic priority of investing in rural youth into concrete action.</i> Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E Ms. Agnes Makonda Nyalonje, Minister of Labour, Malawi • H.E. Mr. Harifidy Ramilison, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Madagascar • Mr. Dofra Sekongo, Youth Member, CISL Dignité, Côte d'Ivoire • Ms. Saïda NEGHZA, Présidente, Confédération Générale des entreprises Algériennes, Algeria
6	10:50 – 11:00	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bernard Mwinyel Hien, IFAD Regional Director West and Central Africa Division • Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa