

AGCO Africa skills programme to tackle youth unemployment

AGCO Africa has announced that it will be providing a fully funded year-long programme called African Agribusiness Qualification (AAQ) that will equip and empower the future of participants to enter the agricultural business with the closing date for applications ending on 11 June 2021.

"We need to change this narrative and encourage young people to embrace agriculture by building their capability to leverage on the available agribusiness opportunities to generate sustainable incomes, build sustainable economies and achieve food security," says Dr Dominik Reus, AGCO managing director: Africa



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Last year the estimated youth unemployment rate in South Africa was 55.5%. This represents a major challenge for both the education and labour sectors, specifically in terms of skills development and retention. In addition, Africa's youth population is burgeoning, with over 60% being under the age of 35 in most African countries.

To assist in addressing the skills gap, AGCO Africa is driving a skills development initiative under the banner of 'Advancement in Agricultural Education'. Fully funded by the AGCO Agriculture Foundation (AAF), the initial intake for the Africa Agribusiness Qualification (AAQ) will comprise 20 participants.

"We believe that access to quality education and hands-on training leads to the enhancement of capacity building and skill development in farming," says Metti Richenhagen, Director, AAF.

"Almost two-thirds of the world's arable land is in Africa, so the continent has great potential to feed itself and the global population. Through the AAQ programme, we hope to empower Africans who have a passion for the agricultural sector, particularly technical and sales representatives, who can serve as trusted partners to African farmers."

"We are confident that once the participants have completed the course, they will be able to contribute to the agricultural industry in a meaningful, sustainable and profitable manner. We must ensure that our resources, including soils, biodiversity and environments, are well protected as we strive to achieve high quality and efficiency of production. We can achieve this by equipping talented individuals with the right range of skills and attitudes to impact the agricultural sector," adds Dr Reus.

Qualification programme details

Commencing on 1 September 2021, the AAQ programme will provide successful participants with quality agro-industry training, technical and sales skills, leadership development, agro-entrepreneurship management and work experience. The programme is facilitated through the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), together with Harper Adams University in the UK. Furthermore, technical expertise and support are provided by AGCO South Africa and Cerealis Technology Institute in South Africa.

The AAQ is a 12-month, part-time accelerated programme targeting participants from across the continent. Activities will be hosted in South Africa and include virtual lectures (theory), field training (practical) and workplace experience. The 12-month programme will be delivered in six modules.

"The main objective of the AAQ programme is to empower participants with technical and sales skills, knowledge, training and opportunities needed to create a robust agribusiness sector for Africa," says Dr Reus.

This will contribute to Africa's Agenda 2063 and the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 of the United Nations:

Goal 1: No Poverty,
Goal 2: Zero Hunger,
Goal 4: Quality Education,
Goal 5: Gender Equality and
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

The AAF is a private foundation committed to ending hunger through sustainable agricultural development. In order to extend the coverage of the AAQ programme and make it accessible to even more people, AAF and AGCO in Africa are inviting organisations and stakeholders in the agri-food value chains to support, collaborate and contribute to the programme.