



ESFSAC
ETHIOPIAN SUSTAINABLE FOOD
SYSTEMS AND AGROECOLOGY
CONSORTIUM



PRESS RELEASE

Registration Opens for the Youth in Agroecology Startup Competition 2026

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | 20 July 2026

The Ethiopian Sustainable Food Systems and Agroecology Consortium (ESFSAC), with financial support from DKA Austria and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), has opened registration for the **Youth in Agroecology Startup Competition 2026**.

Now in its second edition, the competition aims to identify and support youth-led startups and initiatives advancing agroecology, sustainable food systems, indigenous food promotion, and climate resilience. Building on the success of the 2025 edition, it provides young entrepreneurs with a platform to showcase their innovations, connect with experts and mentors, and expand the visibility and impact of their work.

Who Can Apply?

The competition is open to young people aged **18 to 35** who live and operate their startups or initiatives in **Addis Ababa or Sheger City**.

Both individual entrepreneurs and youth-led groups are encouraged to apply. Young women and members of marginalized groups are particularly encouraged to participate.

Applicants may submit initiatives under either or both of the following categories:

- **Agroecological Farming and Innovation:** This category recognizes youth-led initiatives promoting environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. These may include composting, organic vegetable production, seed saving, local seed production, vermicomposting, agricultural waste recycling, and other innovations that strengthen climate resilience, biodiversity, soil health, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Healthy and Indigenous Food Promotion:** This category supports youth-led businesses and initiatives that promote nutritious and indigenous foods. Eligible activities may include traditional Ethiopian recipes, herbal and health-focused food products, healthy catering services, and the use of digital or social media platforms to promote indigenous food cultures and healthier diets.

Awards and Support

Outstanding startups will receive financial and non-financial support, including opportunities for mentorship, networking, professional visibility, and business development.

The top three winners will receive:

- **First Place:** ETB 300,000
- **Second Place:** ETB 200,000
- **Third Place:** ETB 100,000

All prizes are subject to applicable government tax regulations.

Application Period

Registration opens on **20 July 2026** and closes on **31 July 2026 at 5:00 PM**.

Applicants are required to submit a one-minute video introducing themselves and explaining or demonstrating their startup or initiative. They must then complete their application by filling the online registration form available on the competition page.

Full application instructions, competition process, and evaluation framework are available on the ESFSAC Competition Page: <https://esfsac-ethiopia.org/competition>

The Ethiopian Sustainable Food Systems and Agroecology Consortium (ESFSAC) is a multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to advancing sustainable food systems and agroecology in Ethiopia through research, advocacy, partnerships, capacity strengthening, and innovation. Learn more at www.esfsac-ethiopia.org.

Through this competition, ESFSAC and its partners reaffirm their commitment to empowering young people to drive sustainable food systems transformation through innovation and entrepreneurship. Members of the media, partner organizations, youth networks, educational institutions, and civil society organizations are encouraged to share this opportunity widely and support eligible young entrepreneurs to apply.

For and on behalf of the Ethiopian Sustainable Food Systems and Agroecology Consortium (ESFSAC)

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