



**Network of Young African Researchers in Agriculture**  
**Réseau de Jeunes Chercheurs Africains en Agriculture**  
**Rede de Jovens Pesquisadores Africanos na Agricultura**

# **Network of Young Researchers in Agriculture (YARA)**

**Call for proposals: Small grants**  
**Submission date: 31 December 2018**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The current rapid processes of change in Africa's countryside necessitate urgent in-depth and systematic enquiry in order to have deeper, meaningful and productive debates around the trajectories of agrarian change and the protracted implications for food security for the current and future generations in Africa. They require deep and contextualized expertise to help shape a constructive and well informed public and policy debates. They also require skilled and adaptive scholars who can work collaboratively and interdisciplinary to identify needs, build partnerships, provide evidence and reverse the negative trends of these processes.

Many young African scholars are actually working on various issues related to agrarian change and rural transformation in Africa and they come together in the network of Young African Researchers in Agriculture (YARA) to collaborate, to share the information and develop a more theoretical understanding of the current processes of change occurring on the continent; a process that is intended to contribute to developing a cohort of the next generation of seasoned African academics in the agrarian field and food security.

The ultimate long-term goal of YARA is to bring about systemic change in Africa's research by building the capacity of the next generation of knowledge producers and policy influencers in agriculture, food and land sectors in Africa, in academic and non-academic institutions. YARA seek to produce robust and rigorous research output that will help various stakeholders that are involved at various levels of agricultural development in Africa to enhance their

understanding of the landscape within which these processes of change in agriculture are taking place, and to provide input to policy development that will ensure that the long-term interests of African people are not compromised by current and future agricultural development priorities.

What makes YARA different and its unique contribution is its ability and capability to coordinate, shape and orient the research work exclusively undertaken by young and early career African researchers working on Africa's agrarian transformation and African food systems residing in and outside Africa through cultivating the culture of supporting one another, sharing information, networking, and collaborating for comparative and contextualized research projects throughout the African continent. In addition, YARA network strives to bridge the detrimental gap in that stage of career-pathing when young African researchers needed much more multiform support and exposure to build their confidence and healthy progression towards becoming seasoned and respected researchers in their respective scholarly fields.

The major objective of the Young African Researchers in Agriculture Network is primarily to develop a cohort of the next generation of seasoned African knowledge producers that will provide rigorous and contextualized input to policy development processes in Africa that will bring about a broad-based transformation for the benefit of the peoples, institutions and economies of the African continent.

## **2. AREAS OF WORK**

YARA has four areas of work.

### **Land governance in Africa**

- Changing institutional relations affecting land governance and land rights.
- The politics of land governance and land rights, including traditional leaders, state actors and external investors.
- Compensation and benefit-sharing, expropriation and relocation, including free and informed consent of communities.

### **Food security in Africa**

- Measurement of food security and the usefulness and applicability of international metrics in Africa – contributing to NEPAD's goals and the information base across Africa.
- Food systems analysis, food security, and the social relations and power relations within them.
- Food waste through the value chain and what interventions may be possible.

### **Rural livelihoods in Africa**

- Coping strategies in relation to climate and market risk.
- Policy interventions to mitigate climate and market risk for smallholders,

- Local knowledge systems and how these could combine with agricultural technology to mitigate climate change risk, reduce market risk, and promote food security.

### **Commercializing agriculture in Africa**

- The generational impacts of different commercialisation models on youth and other social groups and their futures in farming, processing and services at various stages of the value chain.
- Problematizing the large-scale agriculture model, and understanding the complex interaction between large-scale agriculture and smallholders.
- ‘Hybrid’ models of commercialisation, their livelihood possibilities for smallholders through contracting arrangements, and institutional governance arrangements that can deliver the most benefit.

### **3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

This call is only open for YARA members to unlock their full intellectual potential and enhance the quality and quantity of research output produced by YARA network. There are a limited number of \$3000 small grants available for those aiming to produce ***Working Papers*** in any of the four YARA areas of work outlined above (Land governance in Africa, Food security in Africa, Rural livelihoods in Africa, and Commercializing agriculture in Africa).

The grantees will be linked with senior academics that will guide their work through skype, telephone and WhatsApp calls as well as reviewing the outputs to ensure the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, research expertise and experience on issues relating to land governance, food security, rural livelihoods and agricultural commercialisation across the African continent.

In addition, a workshop will be organised to enable the grantees to go beyond just doing empirical research but rather critically engage with both classical and contemporary scholarly grand theories that underpin both classical and contemporary socio-economic process of change in Africa. Further, the grantees will also benefit the methodology training to equip them to keep up with the ever changing technological innovations for both data collection and analysis methods. The theory and methodology workshop will be organised in Cape Town, South Africa, following the completion of the selection process for the beneficiaries of the YARA small grants programme in 2019.

Finally, excellently written papers will be selected and sponsored to be presented in high profile international academic and policy conferences as individual or panels in order to maximise the visibility of the network and promote the voices of Young African academics in these gatherings.

The selection of the beneficiaries will be carried out according to the meritocracy principle through a competitive selection process that will be undertaken by an independent scientific committee made of senior academics.

If you wish to apply for one of these grants, **the deadline is 31 December 2018**. Final papers are due at the latest on **31 December 2019**.

Please send a short application in one Word format file, including:

- a one-page abstract;
- a half-page-word statement on how you will spend the funds;
- and a half-page short bio, including the applicants' names, applicants' background, applicants' institutional affiliation and its **full contact details** (e.g. University of the Western Cape, Robert Sobukwe Rd, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, Republic of South Africa, [www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za) , Tel.: +27 21 959 2405 (Office Hours 8:30 – 16:30), Fax.: +27 21 959 3753, Email: [info@uwc.ac.za](mailto:info@uwc.ac.za) ) and the country where the study will take place.

Please do take note that the applications which don't comply with all these criteria will be automatically rejected.

**Applications should be sent in English or French to: [chakizimana@plaas.org.za](mailto:chakizimana@plaas.org.za), with the subject line marked **YARA SMALL GRANT APPLICATION**, followed by the thematic area the application focuses on (Land governance, Food security, Rural livelihoods, Agricultural commercialisation).**