

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

ECOWAS YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME (EYEP)

Call for projects for young people aged 18 to 35 who already have an existing business

1. Background

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), through its Centre for Youth and Sports Development (CDJS/ECOWAS), is implementing the **ECOWAS Youth and Women's Entrepreneurship Programme (EYWEP)** with the technical and financial support of AUDA-NEPAD.

This program aims to promote the economic empowerment of young people through capacity building, technical support, mentoring, networking, access to business support services and the development of sustainable entrepreneurship in the community space.

As part of the pilot phase, ECOWAS is launching this **call for projects** to select young entrepreneurs aged **18 to 35 who** already have an existing business or an operational entrepreneurial activity, and who need targeted support to properly start, consolidate, develop or continue their production.

The pilot phase covers the following seven countries:

- Benin
- Ivory Coast
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea-Bissau
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone

2. Purpose of the call for projects

This call for projects aims to identify and support young entrepreneurs already engaged in an economic activity or with an existing business, in order to strengthen their production, management, structuring and development capacity.

The objective is to enable beneficiaries to:

- consolidate their business;
- improve their production or service delivery;
- strengthen their entrepreneurial and financial management;
- access mentorship, networking, and partnership opportunities;
- improve their visibility and market access;

- increase their resilience and growth potential.

3. Target Audience

This call is open exclusively:

- young **people aged 18 to 35**;
- nationals or residents of one of the seven pilot countries;
- young people who already have an existing business, formal or informal, or an entrepreneurial activity already underway;
- start-ups, structuring or growth start-ups;
- young developers in need of support to strengthen, stabilize or develop their business.

4. Eligible Domains

Businesses or activities must fall under one of the following priority sectors:

- pharmaceutical industry;
- information and communication technologies (ICT);
- solar energy and renewable energy;
- agrosilvopastoral activities and agricultural value chains.

5. Program Format

At the end of the process, the best projects selected from each country will be able to benefit from **grants, special prizes** and a connection with financial and technical partners, according to the modalities set by ECOWAS.

Category	Indicative amount
First Place	\$15,000.00
Second Place	\$10,000.00
Third Place	\$5,000.00
Special Award Best Regional Business Plan	\$5,000.00

6. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, the application must:

- be submitted by a young person between the ages of **18 and 35**;
- be from a national and resident of one of the seven pilot countries;
- concern an existing company or an economic activity that is already operational;

- fall under one of the priority sectors;
- be submitted within the required deadlines;
- include a complete file.

7. Selection criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- relevance of the activity or company;
- level of structuring of the entrepreneurial project;
- potential for strengthening and growth;
- economic and financial viability;
- real need for support and networking;
- production or service capacity;
- current or potential socio-economic impact;
- potential for job creation or maintenance;
- motivation of the candidate;
- Ability to take advantage of the coaching program.

8. Supports for Recipients

The selected young people will benefit in particular:

- targeted training;
- technical and managerial support;
- one-on-one mentoring;
- support for the improvement of the management of the company;
- networking and visibility opportunities;
- putting them in touch with partners, support institutions and financing actors;
- support for the consolidation of their activity and the development of their production.

9. Application file

The application must include:

- an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- a copy of a valid identity document;
- a presentation note of the company or activity;
- a simplified business plan or a presentation of the business model;

- a projected financial plan;
- the company's legal documents, if applicable;
- any additional document useful for the assessment of the activity.

All documents must be consolidated into a **single PDF file**.

10. Selection Process

The selection process will include the following steps:

1. reception and analysis of files;
2. administrative verification;
3. technical evaluation of applications;
4. pre-selection of the best applications;
5. additional maintenance or checks, if necessary;
6. final selection of beneficiaries;
7. integration into the support program.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

11. Submission of applications

Complete applications must be sent to the email address corresponding to the candidate's country.

Subject of the email: "EYWEP Program Application - Existing Businesses"

Country	Email address
Benin	benin.eywep@cdjscedao.org
Ivory Coast	cotedivoire.eywep@cdjscedao.org
Gambia	gambia.eywep@cdjscedao.org
Ghana	ghana.eywep@cdjscedao.org
Guinea-Bissau	guineabissau.eywep@cdjscedao.org
Senegal	senegal.eywep@cdjscedao.org
Sierra Leone	sierraleone.eywep@cdjscedao.org

12. Deadline

The deadline for applications is **16 July 2026 at 23:59 GMT**

Any application that is incomplete or submitted after this deadline will not be reviewed.

13. Additional information



- Participation in the program is free of charge.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.
- The program aims to support young entrepreneurs who already have an existing activity or business and need support to strengthen their production, structuring and development.

For any further information, candidates can contact: cdjs@ecowas.int