MGA - Young Talent of the Year Award - Edition 2022
Public Competition for Finalists

Date and Time: 22 July 2022, 10.30 - 12.30 CET

Context

According to the last edition of the United Nations' World Population Prospects (2019), over 258 million young people aged between 15-24 were estimated to be living in Africa in 2020. Recent statistics confirm that Africa is retaining its record as the continent with the youngest population worldwide, with the median age as low as 20. In a region also endowed with natural resources, young Africans are a fundamental asset for their potential to catalyze change and drive Africa’s sustainable development.

In the virtual discussion organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in December 2021, it has been reaffirmed the essential role of youth in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, framed under the conference’s theme of “Africa's Youth in the Decade of Action: Actors or Bystanders”. While increased emphasis is being placed on ensuring the voices of youth can be heard, young Africans still face significant challenges in accessing adequate social and economic opportunities in their countries. As highlighted in the Africa Economic Brief study (2021), unemployment affects one-third of African youth, while another one-third are vulnerably employed, which, coupled with skill deficit, is the other face of the youth employment issue in Africa. Hence, the importance of investing in and supporting Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship, increasing high-quality job growth and creating, in turn, the enabling environment for young people to become agents of change in their communities.

RES4Africa Foundation believes that Empowered Youth can offer innovative solutions and perspectives to the Just Energy Transition, contributing to communities and cities' modernization as well as their environmental, social and economic development. For this reason, since its foundation, RES4Africa has invested in building the capacities of African young people and professionals through capacity-building programmes such as the Advanced Training Course and the Micro-Grid Academy. The Foundation has well recognized that investing in human capital and knowledge transfer has positive spillover effects in other domains, including socio-economic growth. This perspective is especially relevant given not just the youth's pivotal role in the present and future of national economies and societies but also considering the highly dynamic African environment, where technological and economic development is often fast and unpredictable. Young people are willing and able to influence decisions about energy and climate change, claiming their rightful place at the forefront of tomorrow’s decision-making processes. From this outlook, the one of a private

sector-driven foundation, youth can contribute great value to the renewable energy industry. They can anticipate and adjust to the business, technological and environmental changes that characterize the African context and societies. Thanks to their different and innovative thinking, youth represent the backbone of a sustainable future for Africa, where access to energy for all will be a reality. Therefore, empowering young people is crucial to fostering long-term sustainable growth and encouraging positive social outcomes.

The MGA and the Award

The Micro-Grid Academy (MGA) is a vocational capacity-building programme that aims at creating a skilled and conscious workforce to deploy decentralized renewable energy solutions in the East Africa region and beyond. With its activities, the MGA contributes to filling the technical gap while providing young women and men with access to job opportunities in the renewable energy (RE) and rural electrification sectors.

Within the MGA framework, in collaboration with Enel Green Power and the European Investment Bank (EIB), RES4Africa Foundation has launched the Third Edition of the MGA Young Talent of the Year Award. The Award supports brilliant African young talents in addressing the most pressing environmental and social challenges that hamper the development of African countries by proposing innovative project ideas to boost the RE sector in Africa and contribute to SDG#7.

The participation and support of Enel Green Power and the European Investment Bank in the young talents contest represent an added value as it brings together the contribution of industry and investment entities to the empowerment of African youth. By identifying innovative RE projects and solutions, the Award and its promoters give voice to young, talented entrepreneurs and start-ups and ultimately open up new opportunities for the energy transition in Africa.

The proposed ideas and projects submitted will fit in at least one of the following focus areas and cross-cutting themes:

1. Entrepreneurship: proposals that foster innovation through start-up and entrepreneurial initiatives in the RE sector.
2. Renewable energy solutions: proposals that present ground-breaking ideas or prototypes as relevant to Productive Uses of Energy, Water-Energy-Food Nexus, Electric Mobility and Circular Economy (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle).
3. Women empowerment: proposals that contribute to the empowerment of women and their involvement in the RE sector.
4. Youth empowerment: proposals that promote and foster the involvement of young people in the RE sector.
5. Climate change: proposals that contribute to creating awareness and winning the fight against climate change, with a focus on reducing emissions, waste and deforestation in rural areas.
6. Advocacy: proposals that contribute to increasing public interest and awareness on clean energy access and RE solutions production and discussion, ensuring and promoting a long-lasting impact.
7. Social impact: proposals that drive social impact (health, education, economic development, etc.) by costs-benefits fair distribution among community stakeholders, generating additional social value.

The 3 most innovative and best proposals will be selected, awarded with a monetary contribution of €5,000, and promoted by RES4Africa. The young winners identified will be announced by RES4Africa during a public ceremony or event set to take place in the fall of 2022 or towards the end of the year, giving the awardees visibility and networking opportunities.

In addition, RES4Africa will be facilitating participation in mentorship activities, mobilizing its extensive pool of experts and partners from the energy field. This will ensure tailored support and fostering of specific competencies related to the entire business cycle as well as access to further financing and investment opportunities.

The Objectives of the Webinar

This webinar is conceived as a public contest where 6-8 shortlisted candidates are invited to present their innovative project ideas. Besides RES4Africa, the webinar will see the participation of the entities supporting the activity, Enel Green Power and the European Investment Bank. At the end of the contest, a second round of evaluation will take place and lead to the identification of 3 winning projects to be publicly announced by the end of the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tentative Agenda</th>
<th>10.30-10.35</th>
<th>Session opening</th>
<th>RES4Africa Foundation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.35-10.55</td>
<td>Highlights on the Young Talent of the Year Award’s objectives and impact on youth participation in the RE sector</td>
<td>RES4Africa Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.55-12.15</td>
<td>Presentation of the Young Talent of the Year Award 2022 - Finalists’ project proposals</td>
<td>RES4Africa Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15-12.30</td>
<td>Feedbacks and closing remarks from the organizing entities</td>
<td>RES4Africa Foundation, European Investment Bank, Enel Green Power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RES4Africa Foundation (Renewable Energy Solutions for Africa) envisions the sustainable transformation of Africa’s electricity systems to ensure reliable and affordable electricity access for all, enabling the continent to achieve its full, resilient, inclusive and sustainable development. The mission of the Foundation is to create favorable conditions for scaling up investments in clean energy technologies and accelerate the continent’s energy transition and transformation. See more: www.res4africa.org