



ECOWAS COMMISSION
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY TO SUPPORT YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY IN THE AGRO-SYLVO-PASTORAL AND FISHERIES SECTOR

Information Note on the Call for Applications for Farm Manager Training at the SONGHAI Center

1. Context

Youth represents a significant part of the West African population, with over 60% under the age of 30, estimated at 450 million in 2024. Approximately 35% of the regional population was made up of young people aged of 15 to 34. This high proportion of young people, coupled with a population growth of over 2.3% per year, constitutes an opportunity for the development of the region. However, this opportunity is underexploited: youth faces high unemployment and low employability, with over three millions young people entering the labor market each year, but only 900,000 finding gainful employment.

The consequences of this situation include an increased migration of young people seeking to escape unemployment, as well as a low economic productivity, exacerbated by a development model based on the exploitation of raw materials. The agro- sylvo -pastoral and fisheries sector, essential for food security, particularly suffers from a lack of skilled labor and low attractiveness, despite the fact of employing more than 50% of the region's workforce.

ECOWAS has recognized these challenges and suggested some initiatives to improve youth integration, particularly through the Agricultural Investment Regional Plan. The new political guidelines seek to make the Agro- sylvo -pastoral sector a creator of decent jobs and strengthen the resilience of family farms, with an emphasis on youth commitment. Transforming this sector, through the modernization and the promotion of the value chains, is seen as an essential way to diversify activities and provide stable employments for young people.

ECOWAS initiatives to improve youth integration also go through the training and the capacity building for agro ecological intensification. The choice of the Songhai Centers for this strategic initiative is neither random nor purely technical. It responds to a requirement for rigor, efficiency, and impact commensurate with the colossal challenges facing West Africa today. The ECOWAS–Songhai training initiative selected six Songhai Centers in response to crucial issues in West Africa, where population growth and land degradation threaten food security and social development. Faced with this crisis, it is imperative to quickly train 600 young leaders capable of transforming their environment. The selected centers, including three (03) in Benin and three (03) in Nigeria, have operational technical platforms, infrastructure, technologies, and supervision necessary to embody a vision of sustainable development. These places are living laboratories that promote responsible sustainable agriculture and

social innovation. Investment in this training is presented as a vital emergency for the region, aimed at triggering a dynamic of social, economic and ecological regeneration.

2. Description of the training

The training is open to all young people from ECOWAS countries. It is organized as a boarding school in the Songhai centers. It is a practical training, a real capacity building and incubation, in the activities of integrated animal production, fish farming, crop production, agro-food processing (added value chain), with innovative practices, creation and management of agricultural businesses and development of business plans.

It lasts one (01) month in the following Songhai Centers:

-  Songhai Center Porto-Novo (Benin)
-  Songhai Center Parakou (Benin)
-  Songhai Center Savalou (Benin)
-  Songhai-IGRC: Songhai Imo Green Community (Nigeria)
-  Songhai-Moniya (Nigeria)
-  Songhai-MOF: Songhai Mbara Oziona Foundation (Nigeria)

At the end of the one (01) month training and incubation, beneficiaries will be expected either to establish their own businesses and carry out their activities in their respective countries or to continue developing their initial agricultural enterprises.

3. Required profile

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- Be a young girl or boy aged of 18 to 35;
- Be a nationality and resident of one of the ECOWAS member countries;
- The minimum diploma required is the JSS (Junior Secondary School) diploma, a secondary school leaving diploma or its equivalent in the country;
- Be an active agricultural entrepreneur seeking to develop their business and bring it to a higher level of management and performance;
- Have a minimum of experience in agricultural or para-agricultural activities;
- Be able, fully available and free from any commitment (academic or professional) to follow the training and ready to set up on their own account at the end of the training;
- Having identified your business project and having a certain idea of how to make it happen and bring it to fruition;

4. Application file

The application file must include:

- 1) A handwritten training request,

- 2) A copy of the national identity card or passport, or nationality certificate;
- 3) A certified copy of the diploma;
- 4) A detailed Curriculum Vitae ;
- 5) A medical and fitness certificate;
- 6) A commitment of honor to respect the internal regulations of the training and incubation Centers and to set up on their own account at the end of the training (form available on the site www.songhai.org).

Note: Possession of a title for a plot of land and/or a cultivable land available to the applicant for their installation is an asset.

1. Deadline and place for submitting applications

Applications files are accepted from September 1st to 30th, 2025, only by email via the following address: ecowassonghai25@gmail.com. No physical application files will be accepted.

Any incomplete file or one received after the deadline will be declared inadmissible.

For any further information, please contact:

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