LILONGWE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES (LUANAR)

Knowledge | Innovation | Excellence

AgrInoPact

CALL FOR BUSINESS IDEA PITCHES

Transformative Agriculture for Graduate Youth Job Creation (TAG)

A three year Experiential Learning and Enterprise Development Initiative under the ***LUANAR Mega Teaching Farm***



ELIGIBILITY

Recent LUANAR and other eligible agriculture-related graduates who graduated in 2022-2026 seeking to build commercially viable farming and agro-processing enterprises.

1. Background and Purpose

Malawi faces a dual challenge of high youth unemployment among agricultural graduates and low agricultural productivity on smallholder farms. In response, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) is implementing the Mega Teaching Farm Program, which leverages the University's expertise, infrastructure and practical learning platforms to contribute to creation of the next generation of agripreneurs. The programme aims to contribute towards agricultural transformation, increased productivity and commercialization.

As part of this initiative, LUANAR is introducing the three-year Transformative Agriculture for Graduate Youth Job Creation (TAG) programme. The programme aims to develop entrepreneurial minded graduates into commercially oriented farmers and agribusiness leaders. Through an incubation-based experiential learning model, it integrates industrial crops, annual crops and livestock into diversified, climate-resilient farming enterprises hat promote income generation, business growth and enterprise creation.

TAG builds on LUANAR's proven experience in experiential learning and agribusiness development through TACE, Agrinopact, who will spearhead delivery and research; and the Israeli-Kinneret "learning by doing" internship model. Where appropriate, enterprises will also create synergies with LUANAR Holdings Company Limited through production, aggregation, value addition, service delivery and market access. The three-year initiative therefore strengthens the Mega Teaching Farm agenda by developing graduate-led, market-oriented agribusinesses that learn by doing, generate income and are capable of scaling..

The call therefore invites ambitious, entrepreneurial-minded LUANAR and other eligible agriculture-related graduates to participate. Applicants are required to form a three-member team comprising both male and female members and submit business proposals for commercially viable enterprises. Each team will select a mix of agricultural commodities consisting of at least one conventional crop, one horticultural crop and one livestock enterprise, with the combination justified through a business plan demonstrating commercial viability. Selected teams will have access to concessionary financing to support stipend requirements, production inputs and operational services. The call therefore seeks business proposals that are not simply production ideas, but credible commercial enterprises with clear markets, realistic financial logic, sound technical plans and measurable learning and employment potential.

2. Objectives of TAG

- Translate graduates' agricultural knowledge into practical, commercially viable enterprises.
- Use the Mega Teaching Farm as a platform for experiential learning, demonstration, innovation and commercial production.
- Promote integrated enterprise models combining crops, horticulture, livestock and, where feasible, value addition or agro-processing.
- Develop entrepreneurial, managerial and technical capability among participating graduates.
- Create pathways for graduate self-employment, enterprise growth and additional employment opportunities.
- Build enterprises that can progressively operate on commercial principles, repay concessionary financing and scale beyond the incubation period.
- Encourage business models that can complement LUANAR commercial activities including those undertaken through LUANAR Holdings Company Limited, without making such linkage a condition for selection.

3. What Selected Teams Will Access

- Opportunity to utilise to up to 2 hectares of land at Bunda or NRC campus, subject to enterprise suitability and programme allocation
- Hands on learning for implementing commercially oriented climate-smart agriculture entreprises in collaboration with LUANAR farms at Bunda and/or NRC.
- Access to technical support, mentorship and business coaching services through LUANAR AgrinoPact.
- A concessionary loan facility designed to facilitate access to approved inputs and services subject to programme financing terms and an approved enterprise budget.
- A modest participant stipend renewable yearly based on availability of funds for up to 3 years

4. Eligible Applicants and Team Composition

- Applicants must be recent graduates (2022-2026) from agriculture or closely related programmes to the entreprises they want to run.
- Applications must be submitted by a team of three graduates. Each team must include both male and female members.
- Team members must demonstrate willingness to participate directly in hands-on production, processing, marketing and enterprise management.
- The team must identify complementary roles to run the proposed entreprises.
- The proposed enterprise must be implementable within the Mega Teaching Farm allocated spaces and comply with relevant university farm, environmental, biosecurity and safety requirements.

5. Enterprise Requirements

Each team shall propose an integrated enterprise portfolio that includes, at minimum:

- one conventional/field crop enterprise;
- one horticultural enterprise; and
- one livestock enterprise.

Teams may additionally propose agro-processing, value addition, mechanization, digital agriculture, input/service provision or other complementary activities where these strengthen feasibility and viability. The chosen enterprise mix must be justified by market demand, technical compatibility, land and resource requirements, risk diversification and expected returns.

6. Business Proposal and Video Pitch

Applicants must submit:

- A concise business proposal of no more than 3 pages submitted through the application link
- A video pitch of no more than 3 minutes presented by the team, submitted through the application link.

The business proposal should clearly cover:

- Business opportunity/problem and proposed solution;
- Proposed enterprise mix and why the enterprises fit together;
- Target customers, evidence of potential market demand, marketing channels and likely buyers;
- Production/operations plan, including expected use of land, water, facilities and services;

- Simple financial plan showing start-up/operating costs, expected sales, gross margin or profit logic, cash-flow considerations and ability to service the concessionary loan;
- Roles and relevant strengths of all three team members;
- Expected learning outcomes, growth pathway and plan for continuity after the three-year incubation period;
- Any proposed commercial linkage with the Mega Teaching Farm and/or LUANAR Holdings Company Limited.
- Integration of value addition, innovation, climate-smart practices will have an added advantage;

7. Selection Process and Criteria

Selection will be competitive and evidence-based. Applications should first pass the eligibility screening below. Eligible proposals will then be scored out of 100 using the published rubric. Shortlisted teams may be invited to clarify or defend their pitches before final selection.

7.1 Mandatory Eligibility Screening (Pass/Fail)

- All three applicants meet the graduate eligibility requirement (2022-2026; agriculture or a closely related programme).
- The application is from a three-member team and includes both male and female members.
- The proposal and video pitch are submitted by the deadline and within the stated length limits.
- The proposal includes at least one field/conventional crop, one horticultural crop and one livestock enterprise.
- The team confirms willingness to undertake hands-on farming/processing and operate within the TAG/Mega Teaching Farm framework for three years. Early graduation after a year wil be based on demonstrated transition plan.

7.2 Scored Selection Criteria (100 points)

Criterion	Weight	What evaluators will look for
1. Commercial viability and market evidence	**20**	Clear customer/market need; credible buyer or channel; realistic pricing and sales logic; evidence that the enterprise can generate sustainable revenue.
2. Financial feasibility and loan repayment capacity	**15**	Realistic costs and revenues; cash-flow awareness; profitability/gross-margin logic; credible capacity to meet concessionary loan obligations.
3. Technical feasibility and enterprise integration	**15**	Agronomically/technically sound plan; suitable enterprise combination; realistic production cycle, resource requirements and management approach.
4. Strategic fit with the LUANAR Mega Teaching Farm	**15**	Contribution to experiential learning, demonstration, productive use of university farm resources, commercialization and scalable farm enterprise development.
5. Innovation, value addition and climate resilience	**10**	Practical innovation; value addition/agro-processing where viable; resource efficiency; climate-smart and risk-reducing practices.
6. Team capability, complementarity and commitment	**10**	Relevant knowledge/skills; clearly assigned roles; teamwork; evidence of hands-on commitment and entrepreneurial drive.

Criterion	Weight	What evaluators will look for
7. Job creation, scalability and post-incubation pathway	**10**	Credible potential for self-employment/additional jobs; growth beyond the initial plot; milestones for scaling and continuity after incubation.
8. Potential linkage with LUANAR Holdings/value chains	**5**	Credible opportunities for commercial supply, aggregation, processing, services or market linkage with LUANAR Holdings or related LUANAR commercial value chains.

Recommended minimum quality threshold: A team should score at least 60/100 overall and at least 10/20 under Commercial Viability and Market Evidence. Meeting the threshold does not guarantee selection; final awards remain subject to available program places, land, financing and due diligence.

8. Application Deadline and Submission

Deadline: 13 November 2026. Interested teams should submit the 3-page business proposal and 5-minute video pitch to the LUANAR Mega Teaching Farm Coordinator at **Tag@luanar.ac.mw** and **agrinopact@luanar.ac.mw**

9. Important Note

TAG is an agribusiness incubation opportunity, not an automatic grant award. Shortlisting or selection may be subject to verification of qualifications, team composition, proposed budgets, land/resource suitability, financing conditions and other programme requirements communicated by LUANAR. Selected teams will be expected to maintain production, financial and marketing records and participate in training, mentoring and enterprise performance reviews.

The programme aims to develop entrepreneurial minded graduates into commercially oriented farmers and agribusiness leaders. Through an incubation-based experiential learning model, it integrates industrial crops, annual crops and livestock into diversified, climate-resilient farming enterprises hat promote income generation, business growth and enterprise creation.