

PRESS RELEASE

Africa top journalists to battle it out for the 2020 OFAB Africa Media Awards

Demystifying agricultural biotechnology for better public understanding and acceptance of sciences, technologies and innovations for food security and sustainable development



Nairobi, November 23, 2020 – Top journalists from Africa will be competing for the 2020 OFAB Africa Media Awards to be held virtually for the first time on December 3, 2020.

The 2020 OFAB Africa Media Awards (OMAs), now in its 4th year, recognizes exemplary journalism that promote best practices in science reporting with emphasis on agriculture biotechnology through responsible, professional, ethical and effective reporting.



The annual Award is sponsored by African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) through its Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB) project.

The Award is open to journalists in the seven countries where OFAB is currently operational; Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Journalists will compete in three categories: Print and Online, Television and Radio with the overall winner, 2020 OFAB Journalist of the Year, receiving USD 3,500 in prize money, iPhone 12 Pro and a certificate. Each category winner will receive USD 1,500, iPhone 12 Pro and a certificate while first runner ups for each category will receive USD 1,000 each, iPhone 11 Pro Max and a certificate.

Zadok Kwesi Gyesei, 2020 OFAB Africa Media Awards finalist from Ghana, urged journalists to pay attention to science and agricultural sector noting that it is important for the media to explain the complex concepts for agricultural biotechnology to be understood by farmers and policy makers.

“Last year I covered the 3rd edition of the OFAB Media Awards as a reporter and I was sitting at the back and told myself that I must win this year. I am so excited...I am very happy I am the overall winner [Ghana chapter]. OFAB Media Awards is very challenging because we are not dealing with ordinary issues – it is about science. I would like to urge my fellow journalists to do more to equip themselves with information on agricultural biotechnology. If we promote it by creating awareness and providing factual information, it will help farmers to understand the technology and the policy-makers to make good decisions based on facts,” said Zadok Kwesi Gyesei.

The chief guest during the award ceremony will be Prof. Hamadi Iddi Boga, Principal Secretary State Department for Crop Development and Agricultural Research in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kenya.

Speaking during the Kenya chapter, OFAB Media Awards, Vitumbiko Chinoko, project manager, OFAB, said the initiative was born out of the need to connect science to the society and appreciate the contribution of media in addressing misinformation about agricultural biotechnology.



“There are quite a number of opinions out there about biotechnology that are not correct, and we wanted to ensure that farmers understand the technology. In the era that we are in, one of the most important avenues for us to do that [address the misinformation] is to engage the media and let people appreciate science. It was important for us to work with the media to ensure that science is simplified and communicated...and people get to understand what it is,” said Mr Chinoko.

The OFAB Africa Media Awards (OMAs) was first held in 2017 where Omolara Afolayan, a broadcast journalist from TVC Nigeria emerged the overall winner.

About AATF (<https://www.aatf-africa.org/about-us/>)

Founded in 2003 to address Africa’s food security prospects through agricultural technology, AATF believes that the agricultural sector is a key foundational pillar as Africa consolidates its economic growth and carves out its new position as a major global economic powerhouse and the next growth market in the world. It was formed in response to the need for an effective mechanism that would facilitate and support negotiation for technology access and delivery and formation of appropriate partnerships to manage the development & deployment of innovative technologies for use by smallholder farmers in SSA.

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