

Rules and Guidelines for Hosting the YouthConnekt Africa Summit



Table of Contents

1. Overview of YouthConnekt Africa	3
2. Objectives of this Manual	3
3. YouthConnekt Africa Summit	3
4. Eligible Countries.....	3
5. Application Process and Hosting Rotation Mechanism.....	3
6. Expression of Interest (EOI) & Bidding Phase.....	4
• Phase 1: Submission of the Bid Dossier	4
• Phase 2: On-site technical inspection.....	5
7. Evaluation.....	5
8. Final Award	6
9. The Host Country Agreement (HCA) & Payment Schedule.....	6
10. Continuity & Contingency Planning.....	6
11. Annexes:.....	7
Annex I: List of Eligible Countries.....	7
Annex II: Standard Bid Dossier Template.....	8
Annex III: YCA Mandatory Technical Venue Specifications Template.....	11

1. Overview of YouthConnekt Africa

YouthConnekt Africa is a continental initiative aimed at accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2063 by connecting African youth for socio-economic transformation.

Launched in 2012 by the Government of Rwanda, in partnership with UNDP and other stakeholders, YouthConnekt has become a unique model for youth empowerment, endorsed by the African Union. Today, it is a growing family uniting 39 countries and a strong network of regional partners committed to unlocking the potential of Africa's demographic dividend.

2. Objectives of this Manual

This manual is intended to provide guidance for government representatives expressing interest in hosting a YouthConnekt Africa Annual event. The document is organized into ten sections and outlines the procedures and requirements for applying to host a YouthConnekt Africa Summit or Regional Forum, building on established standards and procedures of the YCA hub.

3. YouthConnekt Africa Summit

As part of YouthConnekt Africa's flagship initiatives, the YouthConnekt Africa Summit has positioned itself as the largest and most impactful youth gathering on the continent, offering continental networking opportunities as well as policy and business exchanges to advance the youth development agenda.

Convening an average of 6,000 young Africans each year, the first edition of the YCA Summit was launched in Rwanda in 2017 as a result of the expansion of an initiative born in Rwanda, which has been recognized as a model to be replicated in other African countries and beyond. Since then, the Summit has grown into a continental platform that champions youth empowerment and collaboration.

It serves as a unique space for direct dialogue between policymakers, private-sector leaders, development partners, influential figures in arts and culture, and Africa's youth on issues of shared interest. Through these conversations, exchanges, and networking opportunities, the Summit ignites new momentum, initiatives, and partnerships and, above all, renews the collective ambition to position African youth as the driving force behind the continent's transformation.

To amplify the Summit's momentum across the continent, the YCA Hub has introduced a strategic regional approach to decentralize efforts and expand opportunities across different parts of the continent, through regional groupings aligned with existing country representations such as the Sahel, Mano River, and Congo Basin among others.

4. Eligible Countries

Any YouthConnekt Africa member state (see Annex I) is considered eligible to host a Continental or Regional Summit, in coordination with the YouthConnekt Africa Hub, subject to compliance with established procedures and requirements.

5. Application Process and Hosting Rotation Mechanism

The YouthConnekt Africa Hub implements a fair, transparent, and competitive two-stage application process through an open call, published annually to identify prospective host countries for the YouthConnekt Africa Summit. This process aims to ensure equal opportunity and uphold high standards in the selection of host countries. According to the agreement between the Government of Rwanda, as the initiator, and the YouthConnekt

Africa Hub, the YCA Summit is hosted in Rwanda, rotates to another country the following year, and then returns to Rwanda thereafter.

6. Expression of Interest (EOI) & Bidding Phase

• Phase 1: Submission of the Bid Dossier

Interested Member States are invited to respond to the Open Call by submitting a formal **Bid Dossier**. The call is launched in June of the preceding year (N-1) and remains open for two months.

Submissions must strictly adhere to the **official YCA Bid Template** (see Annex II). To be deemed valid, a dossier must include:

- **Introduction:** A statement outlining the rationale for hosting the Summit and the strategic alignment of the bid with national youth priorities.
- **Programmatic Proposal:** A description of the proposed programmatic vision of the Summit including thematic priorities and specific objectives of the Summit.
- **Operational Proposal:** A presentation of the operational roadmap for the implementation of the Summit including proposed venue and logistical arrangements. It shall also include an indicative budget framework specifying key expenditure categories (e.g. venue, event production, local transportation, security, and protocol, catering, translation...).
- **Proposed National Organizing Committee (NOC) Structure:** A preliminary organogram identifying key positions and structure, responsible for content, logistics, security, and youth engagement with an emphasis on involving other institutions from the government and stakeholders.
- **Visa and Entry Facilitation Measures:** A formal commitment to support pan-African mobility and participation in the Summit, including visa facilitation measures (e.g., "Summit Visas free" or "Visa-on-Arrival") for African Union Member States' passport holders.

Mandatory Annexes

- **Budget Intent Letter:** A formal document signed by the Government confirming that the necessary operational funds, including venue and production-related costs, local transportation, on-site meal and translation provisions, will be allocated and prioritized within the national budget for the Summit year.
- **Hosting Fee Commitment Letter:** A formal letter to be submitted (by all candidate countries as part of the Bid Dossier), confirming their readiness, if selected as the host country, to assume the non-refundable fixed YCA Hub hosting fee. This fee, equivalent to 5% of the total budget, covers Secretariat oversight, technical assistance provided by the YCA Hub once selected as host country, as well as activities related to international visibility, branding, and positioning of the initiative. The fee is included in the Host Country Agreement (HCA).
- **High-Level Security Guarantee:** A formal letter of commitment from the relevant authorities guaranteeing a secure environment and measures for all participants and dignitaries.

- **Mandatory Technical Venue Specifications (TVS):** Bidders are required to complete the standardized YCA Technical Data Sheets (see Annex III), detailing the main characteristics of the proposed event venue, including the main plenary hall and breakout session rooms.

Any Bid Dossier missing one or more mandatory annexes shall be declared inadmissible. Where a Member State is unable to meet the submission deadline for a required document, it shall promptly inform the YCA Hub, which reserves the right to grant an extension or reject the Bid Dossier.

- **Phase 2: On-site technical inspection**

The two most successful applications, following the initial administrative screening, shall proceed to the next stage and undergo a mandatory on-site technical visit conducted by the YCA Hub.

The on-site technical inspection shall be conducted to take stock of the hosting and security infrastructure, as well as the capacity of the proposed National Organizing Committee (NOC).

To ensure fairness among bidding countries, all costs associated with the on-site inspection conducted during the bidding phase shall be borne by the YCA Hub.

Following each inspection, the YCA Hub shall produce a Technical Visit Report. This report shall outline the strengths, opportunities, and potential risks identified, assessed against the YCA scoring benchmarks, and shall be submitted to the YCA Co-Chairs for information and further guidance.

7. Evaluation

The YCA Hub is the main technical evaluator. The Hub evaluates proposals against a weighted scoring rubric. To incentivize domestic engagement, a specific portion of the score is dedicated to the YouthConnekt National Chapter track record.

The Scoring Rubric

1. **Infrastructure & Logistics (30%):** Quality of venues, hospitality, and digital connectivity.
2. **Financial & Fee Commitment (25%):** Budgetary intent and commitment to the Hub Hosting Fee.
3. **Security & Stability (20%):** Assessment of the "enabling environment" and security protocols.
4. **National Chapter performance (15%):** A symbolic yet important score rewarding countries with active, consistent, and impactful national YouthConnekt chapters.
5. **Strategic Alignment & Executive Capacity (10%):** The relevance of the proposed summit vision to the continental agenda and the technical capacity of the NOC.

In the event of a perfect tie between two candidates, the YCA Hub reserves the right to hold virtual interviews with the respective candidates for the purpose of determining the final selection.

8. Final Award

Upon completion of this review, the YCA Hub synthesizes its findings into a Technical Evaluation Report, ranking viable candidates based purely on objective capability. This report includes a formal Hosting Recommendation (either designating a single top-ranked candidate or a prioritized shortlist of a maximum of two countries) based on who best meets the operational requirements.

The YCA Hub then submits the Technical Evaluation Report to the Co-Chairs. The Co-chairs hold the ultimate executive authority to review the technical merits, assess political and strategic alignment, and make the final selection decision. While the Hub's technical recommendation is the primary baseline, the Co-chairs retain the executive's discretion to accept, modify, or pivot from the recommendation based on overarching considerations.

The Co-chairs' final decision is presented to the YCA Steering Committee under a no-objection protocol: upon receiving the Co-chairs' final decision, the Steering Committee is granted a review period of ten (10) working days. In the absence of a formal, written objection supported by a two-thirds majority of Steering Committee members and grounded strictly on an alleged breach of the established technical criteria, the decision is considered automatically and officially endorsed upon the expiration of the tenth day.

Following the conclusion of the Steering Committee review window, the selection is finalized. The YCA Secretariat is then authorized to make the public announcement and to immediately initiate formal negotiations on the Host Country Agreement with the selected state.

All bidders will be formally notified of the outcome for institutional transparency.

9. The Host Country Agreement (HCA) & Payment Schedule

Following selection, the designated Host Country and the YCA Hub will sign a formal **Host Country Agreement (HCA)** defining the operational, financial, legal, and technical framework for the preparation and execution of the Summit, including host country obligations, intellectual property provisions, and privileges and immunities of the Secretariat.

Upon signature of the HCA, the Host Country shall proceed with the payment of the first instalment of the Fixed Hosting Fee, corresponding to fifty percent (50%) of the total amount. The remaining fifty percent (50%) shall be payable no later than six (6) months prior to the Summit (N-6).

10. Continuity & Contingency Planning

To safeguard the YCA brand and ensure the Summit is never cancelled due to domestic disruptions:

- **Quarterly Readiness Reviews (QRR):** The Hub will conduct monitoring reviews. If significant risks are identified at the six-month mark (N-6), a "Corrective Action Plan" will be triggered.
- **The Standby Protocol:** In the event of an irrecoverable *Force Majeure* or a domestic crisis that makes hosting impossible, the YCA Hub reserves the right to trigger a Contingency Roadmap. This includes relocating the event to a "Standby Venue" or transitioning to a Hybrid/Virtual Format.
- **Withdrawal Liability:** Any Host Country that withdraws for reasons other than *unavoidable Force Majeure* shall be liable for **100% of the non-recoverable costs** incurred by the YCA Hub and partners. The country will also be suspended from bidding for the subsequent three cycles.

For further information, please contact the YouthConnekt Africa Hub Senior Programs Lead, Patient Ndizeye (patient.ndizeye@youthconnektafrica.org), or the Summit Operations Associate, Myriam Sangaré (summit@youthconnektafrica.org).

11. Annexes:

Annex I: List of Eligible Countries

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. The Gambia | 21. Namibia |
| 2. Burkina Faso | 22. São Tomé and Príncipe |
| 3. Congo Brazza | 23. Mali |
| 4. Madagascar | 24. Central Africa Republic |
| 5. Tchad | 25. Togo |
| 6. Liberia | 26. Comoros |
| 7. Nigeria | 27. Cameroon |
| 8. Malawi | 28. Gabon |
| 9. Kenya | 29. Democratic Republic of Congo |
| 10. Uganda | 30. Guine Bissau |
| 11. Zimbabwe | 31. Ethiopia |
| 12. Zambia | 32. Guinea |
| 13. Ghana | 33. Niger |
| 14. Libya | 34. Senegal |
| 15. Botswana | 35. Rwanda |
| 16. Tanzania | 36. Sierra Leone |
| 17. Angola | 37. Lesotho |
| 18. Benin | 38. South Sudan |
| 19. Cape Verde | 39. Eswatini |
| 20. Mauritania | |

Annex II: Standard Bid Dossier Template

**REPUBLIC OF [COUNTRY NAME]
[LEAD GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION]**

YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA SUMMIT BIDDING DOCUMENT TEMPLATE APPLICANT COUNTRY SUBMISSION DATE

I. INTRODUCTION

Briefly present the country's commitment to youth empowerment and its engagement with the YouthConnekt Africa initiative. Highlight alignment with national development priorities and relevant continental framework.

II. OBJECTIVES

Outline the strategic objectives of hosting the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, including expected national and regional impact.

III. PROGRAMMATIC VISION AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Describe the overall vision of the Summit, including:

- *Thematic priorities aligned with the YouthConnekt Africa framework*
- *Proposed duration of the Summit and indicative dates*
- *Pre-Summit and preparatory activities (if applicable)*

IV. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

i. VENUE AND LOGISTICS

Provide an overview of premium venues in the country with capacity and readiness to host the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, including relevant infrastructure visuals and operational arrangements (e.g., conference capacity; connectivity infrastructure; security and protocol arrangements; transportation systems; hotels accommodation capacity; as well as health, safety, and emergency preparedness systems.)

ii. INDICATIVE BUDGET FRAMEWORK

Provide an indicative budget covering the main expenditure categories:

- **Venue & Production:** *Conference venue rental, audiovisual equipment and services, and overall branding of all conference rooms in accordance with established standards.*
- **Logistics and transport:** *YCA delegates are facilitated with local transportation, including airport-to-hotel transfers and daily transport between hotels and the venue, with arrangements tailored to different delegate categories.*
- **Catering:** *The standard practice of the YCA is to provide on-site meals, with guest categorization in line with protocol arrangements.*
- **Security and protocol:** *YCA delegates will be supported throughout their participation in the conference, from airport arrival to departure, through appropriate protocol arrangements. Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers, and Heads of Delegations will be accorded appropriate protocol support in line with established standards, to ensure smooth coordination and full participation in all official proceedings.*
- **Accommodation:** *While all delegates are expected to cover their own accommodation expenses, the host may, at its discretion, choose to cover certain costs for selected guests.*
- **Communications and visibility:** *The core impact of YCA events lies in its ability to reach young people beyond the conference setting. Therefore, the communication strategy should adopt engaging formats that attract not only youth from the host country but also a wider audience of millions of young people across the continent, while actively engaging partners and governments.*

iii. NATIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Provide information on the National Committee structure, responsible for coordinating the preparation and implementation of the Summit, including its composition and mandate.

iv. VISA & ENTRY FACILITATION MEASURES

Outline specific measures to be taken by the country to support international mobilization and ensure continental youth participation at the Summit, including visa facilitation measures such as "Summit Visas free" and/or visas on arrival for holders of African Union Member States' passports.

V. CONCLUSION

Provide a brief concluding statement reaffirming its commitment and readiness to host the YouthConnekt Africa Summit.

VI. REQUIRED ANNEXES

Attach the mandatory supporting documentation including:

- **Budget Intent Letter from the Government** (e.g. Ministry of Finance where possible), confirming that the necessary operational funds will be allocated and prioritized within the national budget for the Summit year;
- **High-Level Security Guarantee Letter** from relevant national authorities (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior);
- **Hosting Fee Commitment Letter** confirming the country's engagement to assume the YCA Hub-related hosting fee in the event of designation as host;
- **Mandatory YCA Technical Venue Specifications Data Sheets** (see Annex III);
- Any other relevant supplementary information.

VII. NOTE ON ADMISSIBILITY

Incomplete submissions, or submissions missing any mandatory annex, will be considered inadmissible. The YCA Hub may request clarification or grant limited extensions at its discretion.

Annex III: YCA Mandatory Technical Venue Specifications Template

Click here to access the YCA Template : https://youthconnekt-my.sharepoint.com/:x/q/personal/summit_youthconnekt africa_org/IQATLZOaP4sQRa179WpLan_3AT/8-1XinmWavSPG9XK0f9c