

World Food Forum Young Scientists Group

Selection process

Objective

The main objective of the World Food Forum (WFF) Young Scientists Group (YSG) is to provide scientific evidence and technical knowledge to the various initiatives of the Forum, and to develop a biannual WFF young scientists report on specific policy issues of particular concern to youth, related to agrifood systems transformation. Leveraging the areas of expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and engaging partners and relevant academic networks, the Group plays a critical role in providing the WFF with the necessary science-based direction, and allowing for formal scientific opinions related to documents, statements or action-oriented proposals generated by the participating youth.

Key attributes and experience sought in YSG members

- Present record of academic excellence;
- Possess experience and knowledge acquired by training or work experience on one or more thematic areas related to agrifood systems transformation – connected to the FAO Four Betters;
- Experienced or familiar with inter/transdisciplinary research in fields related to global agrifood systems and enthusiastic about joining a young, multidisciplinary team;
- Demonstrated commitment to serve society at large and engagement towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Ability to work cooperatively in a team and respect differences between people; ability to develop creative and practical solutions; ability to take initiative for delivering high-quality work; ability to communicate to different target audiences;
- Excellent command of any of the FAO official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish), and at least conversational English.

Selection process

Round 1

In the first round of selection, each complete and eligible application is reviewed by expert reviewers from different organizations and universities. The latter follow a common scoring grid as provided by the WFF team. They assess each criterion as listed, adding up to a total score for each candidate.

The scoring grid considers academic and professional excellence, sensibility to inter/transdisciplinary research, science and communication skills, personal engagement, languages, and creativity and proactivity. Reviewers also consider candidates' ability to work as part of a team and to collaborate with researchers from other disciplines and backgrounds successfully. They also reflect on candidates' ability to communicate scientific information to various audiences, including youth, policymakers and civil society actors.

At the end of the first round of selection, candidates' scores are added up to shortlist the higher-scoring candidates. Approximately 30 percent of the top-scoring candidates are then submitted for a second round of selection.

Round 2

In the second round of selection, the top-scoring candidates are reviewed by YSG members from the previous cohort, who are responsible for the final shortlisting of the new members of the YSG for the new term. Following the same criteria as the first round of evaluation, the reviewers put together a list of their top 15 applicants after evaluating motivation letters, video presentations and CVs.

Reviewers then join a meeting with the WFF Secretariat to come to an agreement on the final top 15 candidates. If an agreement is not reached, a vote takes place. Members are encouraged to consider gender, geographical and disciplinary balance.