Agro-business Plan Competition:
A Search for New Talents

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BANGLADESH being an agro based economy, there are much potential in the agricultural sector. To take advantage of this potential and to aware the students about the huge opportunities in the agricultural sector, the Young Entrepreneurs' Society of North South University (YES! NSU) has undertaken the Agro- business plan Competition.

YES! NSU is the business club for the undergraduate students of NSU that aims at developing entrepreneurial skills among the students. Therefore, it arranges opportunities for the young entrepreneurs. For the same reason, YES! NSU is holding this business plan competition.

The Agro- business Plan Competition is designed to explore students' agro- business innovations and identify real opportunities for growth in the agricultural sector of Bangladesh. In short, the competition is focusing on new agricultural business (es) opportunities. In addition, the competition aims at potential young entrepreneurs, who are finding creative ways to promote business.

The YES! NSU started the processing for the competition on June 20, 2008. The undergraduate students of thirteen different public and private universities of Bangladesh were invited to participate in the competition. Each university could send a maximum of two teams and every team could have a minimum of two members and a maximum of three members The teams were also required to be authorized by their respective university. The closing date for registration was July 14, 2008. All the criteria for participating in the competition were defined in the invitation package.

After the registration process, a workshop was arranged on July 23, 2008. All the participants were invited to attend the workshop. The workshop, which was voluntary, focused on developing and writing a business plan. Many eminent people attended the workshop to share their experience and knowledge with the participants. The workshop was, therefore, very successful with the precious words of Mr. Hasan Mazhar (Brand Manager, Lifebuoy, Uniliver Bangladesh Ltd., Mr. Sahdat Hossain, Executive Vice President & Head of Credit Division, Premier Bank. Nabil Ahmed, Head of Human Resources, Bangla Cat,Mir Mijanur Rahman, Manager, Pesticide Division, Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

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The participants had the opportunities to discuss and clarify any issue they wanted and meanwhile enhance their knowledge.

After a successful training session, the participants were given three weeks time to prepare their respective business plan. The business plans had to strictly be innovative and focus on the agricultural sector of Bangladesh. The business plans were required to follow the template that was provided with the invitation package. August 14, 2008 was the deadline for submitting the business plan. Twenty- three business plans had effectively met the deadline.

The business plans that had been qualified for the competition are distributed among the esteemed judges. The respected top managers from the corporate world are selected as the judges. Each business plan is to be cross checked twice by two different judges and they would mark the business plan separately. The average of the two marks will be the final mark.

The Grand Finale is planed to be held in the second week of October. Five finalists will be selected based on the final marks. The finalists will be given a week to prepare their presentation of their respective business plan. Along with the finalists all other teams are cordially invited to the Grand Finale. The Grand Final will be a gathering of the members from the corporate world which will give the finale a grand ambience.

The top three business plans will be awarded. The champion team will get Tk. 30,000, the 1st runner-up will get Tk. 20,000 and the 2nd runner-up will get Tk. 20,000 as a token of recognition.

The YES! NSU will like to thank the media partners. New Age, Channel i and the radio partner- Radio Today have proactively helped throughout the competition. Their enthusiasm and cooperation has been one of the major reasons for the success of the competition.

We all are waiting to get some creative and innovative agro-business ideas from this competition which can be successfully implemented in Bangladesh. We hope our search will be successful.