

Start-up Support for Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience

Implemented by the *Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag)*
As part of the special initiative *Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems*

The Challenge

Giving agropreneurs access to the capacities, networks and funding they need to realise their potential and contribute to food production in the face of climate change

The number of people affected by hunger worldwide is continuously increasing; global demand for food keeps rising. The pandemic has pushed these numbers even higher, and the current global food crisis is expected to force an additional 100 million people into hunger. On top of the violent conflicts closely intertwined with hunger, climate change is also exacerbating the situation. Its consequences are becoming increasingly clear and severe. At the same time that food systems are strongly influenced by environmental degradation and climate events, agriculture itself is a major driver of climate change. Improving efficiency in the use of scarce resources in agricultural production systems is important in building robust livelihoods and climate resilience. Innovative solutions by local entrepreneurs who are proximate to the problem can contribute to the pace of change in their local context and beyond. However, they often lack the necessary support, networks, and funding to develop a viable venture.

The Main Objective

Develop innovative solutions for resource-efficient farming by supporting start-ups that strengthen climate resilience

The Innovation

Sizing the innovation potential of start-ups for resource-efficient farming solutions that can contribute to climate resilience

The World Food Programme (WFP) Innovation Accelerator will launch a start-up competition and sprint programme. The goal is to identify and support high impact agropreneurs whose innovations will enable resource-efficient farming in partner countries. The selected agribusinesses may include space-efficient solutions, soil- or water-saving approaches, or ideas for renewable energy. They can be products, services, processes, or models that solve a problem in a replicable and scalable way. Within this diversity, their shared feature is their potential to contribute to climate resilience at the local and regional level.

Name of the Project	Start-up support for agricultural innovation for climate resilience
Name of the Global Fund	Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Region	Global
Implementing Partners	World Food Programme Innovation Accelerator
Duration	07/2022 — 12/2025



The Different Phases of the Competition and Sprint Programme

15 high potential start-ups sourced

55% led by women

8 selected for 12-month sprint programme each with access to funding of up to **USD 150,000**

3 gender-sensitive learning opportunities for start-ups within the sprint programme

The project contributes to the achievement of these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Methodological Approach and Innovation Partnership

After launching a call for innovations to identify relevant start-ups, a sourcing campaign will follow that will result in 15 start-ups being invited to an innovation bootcamp. The bootcamp includes a pitch event to showcase the innovative solutions. Following this, 10 of the eligible start-ups with the highest potential will be given the opportunity to participate in a nine-month sprint programme. They will benefit from coaching, mentoring and support in refining their solutions to advance the feasibility and viability of their ventures. They will get access to a community full of resources, tools, news and contacts and funding of up to USD 150,000 each.

The programme will be realised through the WFP Innovation Accelerator with its extensive experience in the design and implementation of such formats, leveraging existing best practices. Further stakeholders with expertise in the fields of agriculture and climate resilience will be involved in a targeted, needs-based manner.

Important Activities

The project implementation is designed through complementary selection and promotion steps:

- **Design:** Onboarding of relevant stakeholders and setup of the overall programme, including communications strategy and call for innovations
- **Source:** Promotion of the call for innovations and proactive sourcing of relevant start-ups leading to the selection of 15 bootcamp participants
- **Boost:** Implementation of a bootcamp for the selected start-ups including workshops, networking opportunities and a pitch event
- **Award:** Select 10 start-ups for the nine-month sprint programme and access to funding
- **Accelerate:** Implementation of sprint programme with coaching, mentoring, networking, etc., with a midterm and final share out event

Sustainability and Scaling Strategy

As part of the sprint programme, the selected local start-ups are supported with knowledge and networks that will enable them to scale sustainably. A special focus is set on the feasibility, viability and replicability of their innovative solutions. Tests will be carried out to validate assumptions about key elements of their business models. A human-centred design approach will be pursued and local and international support networks will be mobilised. Through coaching on business modelling, partnerships, funding and scaling options, as well as the knowledge and personal skills gained, along with the organisational development and embeddedness in the ecosystem, the start-ups will be strengthened beyond the scope and timeline of the programme.

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Photo credits

World Food Programme Innovation Accelerator

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