

Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience Programme

APPLY BEFORE 15 MARCH 2023



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Call for Applications

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Innovation Accelerator sources, supports, and scales bold new solutions to disrupt global hunger and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

WFP is launching the [Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience Programme \(AICR\)](#). This accelerator programme is a partnership between the WFP Innovation Accelerator and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and its Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture ([i4Ag](#)), commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). We are in search of scalable innovative solutions supporting farmers and other agriculture stakeholders to build capabilities to mitigate effects of climate change on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Climate change adversely affects agriculture as change in precipitation patterns, extreme weather events, pests and disease pose enormous challenges to smallholder farmers. Additionally, global demand for food is set to increase by 60 percent in the coming years, which means the world will need to produce more food crops than ever before.

Recent projections indicate that agriculture's sensitivity to climate change will likely increase in the coming decades with more erratic rainfall, prolonged dry periods, and shorter crop growing seasons. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), improving resource efficiency in agriculture is critical to ensure that we can produce enough food to meet the needs of a growing population. Resource efficient farming is key to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and is becoming crucial for the long-term sustainability of agriculture. Soil, land, and water are all natural components of the ecosystems on which agriculture relies on, and improving the efficient use of these resources is explicitly recognized at the global scale in the

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Greater efficiency reduces costs, enables production systems to become resilient to climate change, and can stimulate growth and jobs in the rural sector. In addition, food security is closely linked to resource-efficient farming practices as these methods increase crop yields and reduce waste while conserving land, water, and other resources. This not only helps to feed a growing global population but also ensures a sustainable food system for future generations.

The *Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience Programme (AICR)* aims to support high-impact solutions and agro entrepreneurs addressing resource efficient farming in LMICs. The programme will select early stage ventures and solution providers who will receive financial, technical, and methodological support from the WFP Innovation Accelerator, and other partners. With the collaboration of talented individuals globally, we will be able to drive climate resilience and the protection of natural resources, food security, improved income and employment.

Application Deadline: 15 March 2023 11:59 pm (CET)

What We Offer

- Selected ventures will be invited to participate in a fully virtual 4-day WFP Innovation Bootcamp in July 2023.
- Selected ventures will also be able to apply for the WFP Sprint Programme, which is a 6- to 9-month acceleration programme with access to:
 - Support from the WFP Innovation Accelerator and relevant partners through the duration of their Sprints.
 - Mentorship and access to a global network of relevant stakeholders in their respective fields.
 - Up to US\$150,000 in equity-free funding for the implementation of a proposed growth plan.
- Solutions that have proven their concepts, scale, and value for social impact could qualify for further funding and support in future programmes or events in our alumni community.
- The WFP Innovation Accelerator has a track record of organizing over 45 flagship innovation bootcamps to date, supporting over 395 teams to rapidly refine their innovations, field testing over 100 projects, and bringing disruptive innovations to scale. Join a high-impact network of over 300+ disruptive innovations that have positively impacted over 9 Million people.

What We Are Looking For

The [Agricultural Innovation for Climate Resilience Programme](#)'s priority topics are listed here. Selected ventures will be able to further develop their solutions toward scale during the 6- to 9-month WFP Sprint Programme.

We are looking for early-stage solutions that are building value for social impact and can demonstrate that they:

- Are at least at a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) stage. Proof of concept is preferred.
- Have conducted pilot(s) or already established feasibility.
- Have a product or service with a verified potential of commercial value and impact.

These solutions would be focused on one or more of the following priority topics:

- **Space-efficient Innovations:** Extreme weather events such as drought and flooding can reduce the productivity of agricultural land. Space-efficient innovations can help make farming more resilient to these challenges and ensure a stable food supply. We are seeking innovations and technologies that focus on optimizing land use, improving land productivity and resource mobilization. These solutions would revolve around urban farming, vertical farming, rooftop farming, remote-sensing data solutions for land classification based on satellite images, spatial optimization technology for generating alternatives for land-use and additional directions in spatial decision-making.
- **Soil-Saving Innovations:** Soil can store large amounts of carbon dioxide, which can help mitigate the effects of climate change. Soil-saving innovations can help improve the ability of soil to store carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help reduce erosion, and preserve the soil for future generations..The use cases include data-driven tools for precision application of soil inputs, utilization of agricultural waste products, natural substrates, cultivation without soil (soil alternatives), soil carbon sequestration & measurement, soil monitoring tools and response generation to eliminate or reduce the impact of soil compaction.
- **Water-Saving Innovations:** Water-saving through water treatment systems, irrigation systems optimization, conservation of water and equitable distribution of water is vital for conserving energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Potential solutions include efficient systems for a combination of plant breeding and animal husbandry or fish farming, data-driven tools for optimizing water use, alternative water sources, and precision irrigation management.
- **Renewable Energy Solutions:** The agriculture sector is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, largely due to the use of fossil fuels for irrigation, transportation, and other purposes. Renewable energy innovations can help reduce these emissions and mitigate the impact of agriculture on the environment. We are seeking solutions that include alternative energy sources, energy optimization management, alternative energy storage system, data-driven energy demand response, software to design and model farming operations for lower energy and carbon footprint, and capture excess renewable energy generation.

Geographical Focus

Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Togo, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Madagascar.

Eligibility Criteria

- Your solution should be part of an established legal entity in, at least, one of the target countries (for-profit or social enterprise).
- The applicant organization must have a presence and be locally rooted in the country of implementation: country office or other permanent presence
- Your innovation clearly addresses one or more of the priority topics related to building climate resilience in agriculture and the food sector in any of the target countries.
- Your innovation must be at least at the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) stage; or Proof of concept with a validated prototype.
- Your innovation has a verified potential commercial value and impact.
- Solution should have a committed founding team with at least 5 full time employees
- Applicants should be able to provide evidence of user/customer validation of the value proposition.
- Ventures should be in the process of developing a clear path to commercial viability (business model fit).
- Solutions should have a potential plan to implement as part of the 6- to 9-month Sprint programme
- Innovations should change existing or establish new routines and have a positive impact on one or more of the following aspects: food security, employment and income generation and/or climate resilience and natural resource protection.
- The beneficiaries of the innovative solutions should be small-scale farmers, food processing companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, consumers, youth and/or women.
- Ventures should be able to demonstrate they have a diverse, non-discriminatory, gender balanced venture with demonstrated leadership and entrepreneurial mindset and what the vision of the team is.
- We prioritize ventures that focus on promoting gender equality and empowering women, either through their beneficiaries, job creation, or by having a high representation of women in leadership positions.

In accordance with the above, applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria*:

- **Impact & Scalability:** Applicants should have a defined vision, an identified target group, and be able to demonstrate the potential to solve the posed challenge(s).

- **Team:** Applicants should be able to demonstrate they have a diverse, non-discriminatory, gender-balanced organization with demonstrated leadership and entrepreneurial mindset.
- **Novelty:** Applicants should be able to show how their solution and business model are innovative while being technically suitable, and viable.
- **Traction:** Applicants should be able to present evidence of feasibility and adoption by the target group.
- **Business Model:** Applicants should demonstrate the viability of their business model, how they intend to achieve a sustainable business, pricing, and financial model.

**We reserve the right to adjust eligibility criteria based on the changing context as new information becomes available.*

Application Process

1. To submit your application, please fill in the [Application Form](#) before **15 March 2023 11:59 pm (CET)**.
2. Or, if you know a relevant venture or solution for us to consider for this programme, please let us know by filling out [this Referral Submission Form](#).
3. We will review and select successful applications to participate in a fully virtual WFP Innovation Bootcamp in July 2023. While we value all applications, we are only able to contact shortlisted applicants.
4. Interested, but don't feel your idea is ready yet? Don't let this stop you! You can still send your application as we are creating a pool of solutions with a focus on climate resilient agriculture. This pool of solutions could be invited for future programmes.
5. For more information, see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

About the WFP Innovation Accelerator

The WFP Innovation Accelerator sources, supports and scales high-impact innovations to disrupt hunger and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Based in Munich, Germany, we provide WFP employees, entrepreneurs and startups with funding, hands-on support and access to WFP's global operations. Through the Innovation Accelerator, WFP is leveraging unprecedented advances in digital innovation — such as mobile technology, artificial intelligence, big data, robotics and blockchain — and new business models to transform the way we serve vulnerable communities across the world. Since 2015, the WFP Innovation Accelerator has supported more than 100 projects, with 16 innovations scaling up to achieve significant impact. These projects have impacted 9 million lives in 2021 alone and will continue to do so, in support of WFP's humanitarian field operations.

Find out more about us: wfp.org/enablers and innovation.wfp.org. Subscribe to our [e-newsletter](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and watch our videos on [YouTube](#).