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INITIATIVE  
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SECURITY



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# Members Newsletter

Issue #2

19 May 2026

## Welcome to the Members newsletter!

Welcome to our monthly members newsletter. Through this newsletter, you will be able to stay updated on past and upcoming Flagship engagements, our newest members, member achievements, webinars, and more!

Got any **feedback or want to be featured** in our upcoming newsletters? Please contact: [lina.khoury@croptrust.org](mailto:lina.khoury@croptrust.org)

**Want to stop receiving the newsletter?** Please send an email to the abovementioned address.

## Important Updates

- The Flagship is coordinating **three side events** hosted at the Crop Trust in Bonn, Germany during the **June Climate Meetings (SB64)**. More information on page 4. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) to stay updated.

**Please contact us for inputs and suggestions for our annual meeting at the UN Science Summit (21-22 September 2026)**

**More details coming in next months' newsletter.**

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# Welcoming our Newest Members!

## ESENCIA - Circular Economy

We are advancing a circular economy model that transforms agricultural and organic waste into sustainable economic opportunities for youth while contributing to environmental restoration and food security. Through research, innovation, and community-driven solutions, we are developing value-added agricultural by-products and bio-based solutions that convert waste into commercially viable products.

One of our key areas of innovation focuses on the development of persistent beneficial microorganisms that enhance biological nitrogen fixation, improve soil health, and support sustainable agricultural productivity. By reducing dependence on synthetic fertilizers, our work contributes to climate-smart agriculture and regenerative food systems.

In addition, we are creating innovative by-products from agricultural waste streams, including eco-friendly personal care products and other sustainable consumer products. Our approach not only reduces waste and environmental pollution but also creates green jobs, entrepreneurship pathways, and income-generating opportunities for young people across the agricultural value chain.

Through strategic partnerships, research collaboration, and scalable innovation, we aim to build resilient communities, promote sustainable livelihoods, and attract investment toward inclusive green economic transformation.

We welcome collaboration with development partners, donors, investors, and institutions committed to sustainability, youth empowerment, climate resilience, and circular bioeconomy solutions.

Cornel Michael  
Founder & CEO, ESENCIA  
Kind regards



See what ESENCIA is up to by following their LinkedIn page:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/essencegro-up2024/posts/?feedView=all>

Or visit their website:

<https://laesencia.my.canva.site/>

# The Initiative in Action

## Our engagements at the World Bank Group and IMF Spring Meetings - Washington DC - 13-18 April 2026

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security engaged with various partners across international financial institutions, UN agencies, regional organisations, and the private sector during the World Bank Group and IMF spring meetings in Washington D.C.

High-level engagements were held with development banks, global funds, UN partners, and private sector leaders. Some key points of discussion included:

- The advancement of co-financing opportunities
- Strengthening investment-ready pipelines
- Scaling impact across priority regions - including Africa, the IGAD region, and fragile contexts.

A strong emphasis was placed on the critical role of the private sector—from value chain development and agro-processing to unlocking investment through blended finance and de-risking mechanisms. Many discussions led to one clear message - it is now the time to start unlocking investment at scale for resilient, inclusive, and economically viable food systems.



## Our engagements at the 13th Africa Europe Science Collaboration Platform (AERAP) Annual Forum - Brussels, Belgium - 20-22 April 2026



The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security held bilateral meetings with various European and African partners, and participated in engagements alongside the AERAP Annual Forum together with some flagship members. The goal of these discussions and engagements was to advance collaboration on food security, resilient agriculture, research, and investment priorities for 2026. Discussions also focused on strengthening joint programming opportunities, aligning innovation and financing efforts, and expanding partnerships around sustainable agricultural systems, capacity development, and country-level implementation.

Additional exchanges explored pathways for supporting agricultural recovery and resilience in fragile contexts through coordinated humanitarian and development approaches.

These discussions reinforced a clear direction — delivering food security at scale requires coordinated action across institutions, regions, and financing instruments.

With partners bringing complementary strengths — from community-driven development to large-scale investment platforms — the opportunity is to move from alignment to implementation.

This is how we move forward: connecting programmes, mobilising investment, and delivering impact where it is needed most.

*Partnership in action. From dialogue to delivery.*



## UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

### SB64 Side-Events hosted at the Crop Trust in Bonn, Germany

#### **One Planet, One Food System: Aligning Climate, Land and Nature Action** **High-Level Ministerial Dialogue - Monday 15 June 2026**

**Hosted by:** the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security, The Crop Trust, UNCCD

**Co-hosted by:** the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Mongolia.

This high-level dialogue aims to elevate food systems as the shared delivery agenda for climate, land, and nature action, strengthening political and institutional alignment across the Rio Conventions. It will advance integrated implementation of Rio commitments through food systems approaches; promote coherence across NDCs, NAPs, LDN targets, and biodiversity strategies; sustain momentum from COP16 to COP17 and other key multilateral milestones; and catalyze increased, better-aligned financing to enable coordinated, on-the-ground impact through strengthened partnerships among governments, financiers, and implementers.

#### **Climate Smart Agriculture: An Opportunity for the Future of Youths** **Thursday 11 June 2026**

**Hosted by:** Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network Global (GCSAYN) & the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security

This side event aims to showcase CSAYN's work and the impact of the Virtual Academy, highlighting how youth-led capacity-building initiatives can contribute to the implementation of climate-resilient agricultural systems and support the objectives of the UNFCCC, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

# Members Spotlight

## Hack for Earth at Davos: Driving Food Security Innovation through the Spirit of Action

At this year's Spirit of Action hackathon in Davos during WEF, Hack for Earth convened a global innovation effort bringing together 250 teams from over 60 countries to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. As an official partner, the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security played a key role in shaping and supporting the Food track—one of five core categories in the competition.

The hackathon demonstrated the power of rapid, collaborative innovation across sectors and geographies, with participants developing scalable, actionable solutions aligned with global priorities such as climate resilience, sustainable food systems, and inclusive economic growth.

### Spotlight on the Food Category Winner: Team Verdant

The winner of the Food category, Team Verdant, stood out for its highly practical and scalable approach to addressing climate-driven food insecurity. Their solution, "Verdant Initiative: Subscribing to Resilience," proposes a distributed, community-owned agricultural infrastructure model designed for climate-vulnerable regions.

At its core, Verdant introduces a Farming-as-a-Service model that removes the need for high upfront investment by farmers, instead providing modular growing systems combined with ongoing technical support. The approach is built around low-cost, locally sourced hydroponic systems that dramatically reduce resource use—achieving up to 90% water savings compared to traditional farming while increasing yield efficiency.

A key innovation lies in Verdant's use of substrate-based growing systems, which maintain moisture during power interruptions—an essential feature in regions with unreliable electricity. This design enhances resilience while reducing system costs by up to 75%, making the technology accessible to underserved communities.

Beyond technology, Verdant emphasizes community empowerment and economic sustainability, combining low-cost installation (under \$200 per unit) with a subscription-based support model that ensures long-term viability. Their pilot vision includes establishing community food hubs and household production units, enabling localized, year-round food production and strengthening food sovereignty.



Importantly, Team Verdant is now part of **Hack for Earth's Build for Earth accelerator**, where they are receiving tailored support, strategic guidance, and business development expertise to bring their solution to market and scale impact globally.

This integrated approach—bridging innovation, affordability, and resilience—exemplifies the type of solution needed to transform global food systems under climate pressure.

### Looking Ahead

The outcomes of the Spirit of Action hackathon in Davos reinforce the importance of cross-sector collaboration and bold experimentation in addressing food security challenges. Hack for Earth remains committed to advancing such solutions and supporting their path to implementation and scale.

**Learn more about Team Verdant's solution:**  
[<https://verdant-woad.vercel.app/index.html>]  
(<https://verdant-woad.vercel.app/index.html>)

**More about Hack for Earth:**  
<https://hackforearth.com/>



# De-Risking the Future: The Power of Blended Finance and Strategic Alignment

If crop diversity and scientific innovation—such as the climate-resilient breeding advancements championed by international research networks—are the raw materials for a secure food future, innovative finance is the catalyst that brings them to scale.

Through Africa Climate Finance ([www.climatefinance.co.tz](http://www.climatefinance.co.tz)), As a climate-smart portfolio start-up, Africa Climate Finance, we are working to address this bottleneck by developing specialized climate-smart portfolios designed to de-risk the entire value chain. To move from vulnerability to long-term sustainability, the financial sector must align directly with the aspirations of the GFIFS Secretariat and the core tenets of the Crop Trust Strategy:

# 1

## Catalyzing Blended Finance Mechanisms

Mobilizing development finance and public capital to absorb early-stage risks, thereby unlocking subsequent flows of private investment for cooperatives and agrifood SMEs.

# 2

## Institutionalizing Integrated Risk Mitigation

Restructuring credit facilities to seamlessly bundle financing with progressive crop insurance models—akin to successful regional frameworks like ACRE—to shield smallholders from climate-induced shocks and stabilize yields.

# 3

## Incentivizing Regenerative Supply Chains

Establishing robust frameworks that reward corporate buyers and aggregators who invest in long-term soil health, localized data management, and transparent, direct-purchasing partnerships.

## A Shared Vision for Long-Term Food Security

The mission of the Crop Trust and the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security reminds us that true sustainability is achieved when global stakeholders operate as a coordinated, global system. By building investment-ready pipelines that align development financiers, research institutions, and national banking systems around sovereign goals, we can effectively turn climate vulnerabilities into commercial and ecological strengths.

Answering the profound questions surrounding the future of food requires an unwavering commitment to securing both our fields and our financial systems. Through dedicated localized action in East Africa and strategic alignment with the wider international community, we are proud to contribute to a shared global legacy: transforming agrifood ambitions into permanent, climate-resilient action.

**To explore collaborations regarding regenerative agriculture value chains or climate finance frameworks in East Africa, please reach out to Kenneth Davis Kasigila via Africa Climate Finance or follow the journey at Mbeya Avocados.**



# MENA Youth AgriVation Competition - Outcomes

The MENA Youth AgriVation Innovation Hub is an agrifood entrepreneurship competition where 8 youth-led enterprises from the MENA region got the chance to present how their innovations are aiding their communities in building more sustainable and resilient food systems. The final competition took place on Sunday 17 May 2026.

This program was a part of the action plan of the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region Youth Policy Board (YPB). It was a collaboration between MAHARAT MENA, the World Food Forum - Youth Assembly, and the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security. It was also supported and funded by the Youth Impact Initiative by UNESCO and the Global Green Grant Fund (GGF).

## Winners

## Panel of Judges

1



Terrasens is an agritech and weather-tech startup that combines optimised ground weather station networks with satellite remote sensing data, powered by artificial intelligence. We provide both the data and the recommendations, helping farmers, scientists, and governments make smarter decisions around agriculture, climate adaptation, and natural resource management.

**TUNISIA**



**Mahboobeh Majeedzadeh**  
Employment Programme Specialist  
a programme of Education Above  
All Foundation Qatar



**Dr. Osama A. RAYIS**  
Chair & Expert, Enterpreunership  
and Digital Transformation, Arab  
Organization for Agricultural  
Development

2



Qatfa is an agritech startup developing natural edible coating solutions that extend the shelf life of fresh fruits and vegetables after harvest. Our technology helps reduce moisture loss, slow down spoilage, and maintain product quality during storage and export. By improving post-harvest preservation, Qatfa supports exporters in reducing waste and reaching more distant markets. Our mission is to provide a sustainable and cost-effective solution that strengthens the agricultural value chain.

**EGYPT**



**Abir Kharrat**  
Youth Innovation Specialist and  
Lead of the Startup Innovation  
Awards at the FAO Office of Youth  
and Women,



**Bassem Katleb**  
PhD Researcher at University of  
Lisbon and Co-Founder MAHARAT  
MENA.

3



AgriShield is an offline AI-powered solution for arid and remote farming regions. It uses smart sensors to optimize irrigation and detect plant diseases early. The system works without internet access, helping young farmers boost productivity and save water.

**ALGERIA**

## Crowd's Favorite



NebtRa is an AI-powered smart agricultural web platform designed to help farmers make data-driven decisions that maximize productivity while minimizing resource waste. By leveraging NASA satellite data and soil analysis, NebtRa recommends the most suitable crops for any given land, provides personalized irrigation and fertilization plans, and detects plant diseases through simple mobile camera scans. Our primary customers are research centres, large-scale farmers, and smallholders.

**EGYPT**

**MEET THE REST OF THE STARTUPS  
ON THE NEXT PAGE**

# MENA Youth AgriVation Competition - Outcomes

## The Rest of the Startups



Laheq Halak is a mobile app that connects vendors (From Bakeries, Fruit and vegetable shops, supermarkets and food manufacturers) with extra or near-expiry food to consumers looking for quality food at lower prices. It's a win-win-win situation: vendors earn more money instead of wasting and they reach new customers, consumers save on fresh meals, while for the environment we cut emissions by reducing landfill waste.

**PALESTINE**



Zad Al-Kheir Entrepreneurial Initiative is a youth-led community movement from "Abu Karinka" dedicated to enhancing food and water security. We adopted an integrated model that combines rainwater harvesting, smart nurseries, and livestock production within a sustainable circular economic loop. Distinguished by being data-driven and utilizing AI to bridge the gap between humanitarian response and sustainable development according to the HDP Nexus approach, seeking to empower women and youth while supporting social entrepreneurship.

**SUDAN**



We are a startup that uses remote sensing and satellite data analysis to identify agricultural land affected by climate change in Hadramout. We monitor soil moisture, salinity, and plant health indicators to recommend the best crops for each region and design sustainable irrigation systems that reduce water waste. Our goal is to rehabilitate degraded land, increase farmers' productivity, and ensure smart farming that adapts to Yemen's weather fluctuations.

**YEMEN**



Mazraty (مزرعتي) is an agri-tech startup developing an intelligent robotic system for fruit harvesting and precision pesticide spraying. The solution leverages computer vision and robotics to detect fruits, assess their ripeness, and harvest them with high accuracy while reducing labor costs and improving farm efficiency. Mazraty also provides a digital platform that enables farmers to monitor operations, analyze crop health, and control the robot remotely. By integrating AI with practical farming needs, Mazraty aims to modernize agriculture and increase productivity in a sustainable way.

**JORDAN**

**A HUGE CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE  
COMPETITION, AND WISHING ALL OF THE STARTUPS THE  
BEST OF LUCK IN THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVORS! AND THANK  
YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS HAPPEN.**

**Visit the NENA YPB LinkedIn page to watch all the startup  
pitches (Arabic), or to learn more about each startup:**

[https://www.linkedin.com/search/results/all/?  
keywords=wff%20youth%20policy%20board%20nena%20region&origin=RIC  
H\\_QUERY\\_SUGGESTION&spellCorrectionEnabled=false&heroEntityKey=urn%  
3Aali%3Aorganization%3A107909566&position=1](https://www.linkedin.com/search/results/all/?keywords=wff%20youth%20policy%20board%20nena%20region&origin=RIC_H_QUERY_SUGGESTION&spellCorrectionEnabled=false&heroEntityKey=urn%3Aali%3Aorganization%3A107909566&position=1)

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