



GLOBAL
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INITIATIVE
FOR FOOD
SECURITY



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Members' Newsletter

Issue #6

8 September 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: ali.seleman@croptrust.org

Want to stop receiving the newsletter?

Please send an email to the abovementioned address.

Important Updates

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security is convening its annual members meeting during the UNGA81 in New York from 21-22 September 2026. Check section 3 for more details.

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Welcoming our Newest Members!



Strengthening the Private Sector's Role in Food Security

The COMESA Business Council (CBC) is pleased to join the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security, recognising the importance of bringing the private sector more strongly into conversations and actions around food security.

Food security is sometimes viewed primarily through the lens of agricultural production. Yet, across the COMESA region and beyond, ensuring that people have access to sufficient, affordable and nutritious food also depends on how effectively food moves from producers to markets and consumers. It is about whether farmers and businesses can access markets, whether food can move efficiently across borders, whether value chains are competitive and resilient, and whether enterprises have access to the finance, technology and infrastructure they need to grow. These issues are closely connected to regional trade and integration, and to CBC's work to strengthen the role of the private sector in regional economic development.

Our participation in the Flagship provides an opportunity to connect with stakeholders working across different parts of the food system, exchange experiences and bring the realities and perspectives of businesses into the broader food-security agenda. We are particularly interested in exploring how regional cooperation and private-sector partnerships can help address persistent challenges along food value chains and create greater opportunities for businesses across the region.

As CBC begins its engagement with the Flagship, we look forward to contributing our regional private-sector perspective while learning from the experiences and expertise of other members. We believe that meaningful progress on food security requires collaboration across sectors and borders, and that platforms such as the Flagship can help build these connections and translate shared priorities into practical action.

CBC looks forward to being part of this collective effort to build more resilient, inclusive and competitive food systems across the region.

The Initiative in Action: Mongolia and Rwanda

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security Launches its Operational Phase at UNCCD COP17



On 27 August at UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the Flagship convened a Food Systems and Soil Health Day event, “Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security: From Commitment to Implementation”, to mark the launch of its operational phase. Held in the Action Dome and livestreamed on UN Web TV, the session brought together senior representatives of governments, UNCCD, development finance institutions and the scientific community to advance the Flagship’s implementation and investment agenda, nearly two years after its launch at COP16 in Riyadh.

Facilitated by Dr. Nasser Al-Kahtani, the session opened with remarks from Mr. Marcos Montoiro on behalf of UNCCD Executive Secretary H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad, who highlighted the importance of the Global Flagship Initiative within the wider UNCCD agenda. Dr. Stefan Schmitz then announced a new partnership between the UNCCD G20 Global Land Initiative and the Crop Trust, formalised through a Letter of Agreement.

The agreement establishes a formal basis for supporting the Flagship’s science, innovation and investment priorities and marks a significant step toward operationalisation. Dr. Conrad Rein then presented the Flagship’s key partners, milestones, guiding pillars, governance structure, Impact Agenda and early successes.

The session then moved to a panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Rein. H.E. Dr. Osama Faqeeha, UNCCD COP16 Presidency representative and Flagship Steering Committee member, opened the panel with reflections on the continuity



between the priorities set at COP16 and the direction the Flagship Initiative is now taking in its operational phase, as well as its potential to help restore degraded land and preserve existing agricultural land.

Mr. Choi-Ish Lkhagvasuren, Director General of Livestock, Policy and Implementation at Mongolia’s Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, shared lessons from Mongolia’s experience with food and agricultural systems and how these could inform the Flagship’s work in other countries.

Mr. Philip Nugent, Director General of EU International and Marine Affairs, speaking on behalf of H.E. Minister Tim Dooley, reflected on Ireland’s

own experience with famine and highlighted the importance of EU engagement in food systems transformation and the fight against hunger and malnutrition, with a focus on healthy diets, environmental sustainability, climate resilience and inclusive economic growth.

Dr. Nizar Zaied of the Islamic Development Bank highlighted IsDB’s support for the Cameroon Convergence Model, now one of the Flagship Initiative’s leading examples of coordinated investment, and discussed how the model could be replicated elsewhere.

He emphasised the importance of bringing actors such as development banks and the private sector into the process at an early stage.



Dr. Issa Sanogo, UN Resident Coordinator in Cameroon, offered specific advice for UN Country Teams elsewhere considering a similar model of coordination around food security, including engaging multiple ministries and relevant UN, private sector and civil society actors, ensuring programming is government-led, building on existing national priorities, and using co-funding to strengthen government ownership.

Closing the panel, Dr. Shenggen Fan, member of the Flagship's Scientific Advisory Committee, addressed how the Global Flagship Initiative can help translate research into practical, field-ready solutions and engage the private sector at scale. He highlighted the need for demand-driven research, cross-sectoral policymaking, and stronger knowledge capacity within the private sector to support increased investment in priority areas.

UNCCD COP17 Side Event on Strategic Partnerships and Co-Investment

Also on Food Systems and Soil Health Day at UNCCD COP17, the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security convened the event "From COP16 to COP17: Advancing Food Security Through Strategic Partnerships and Co-Investment". The discussion brought together representatives of governments, regional and multilateral institutions, development finance institutions, the private sector and the scientific community to identify concrete opportunities for joint programming, co-investment, replication and scale-up. Dr. Nasser Al-Kahtani opened the session by setting out its objective: to translate the Flagship's growing coalition into concrete opportunities for partnership, investment and implementation.



Dr. Stefan Schmitz traced the Flagship's progress from coalition building to implementation, positioning it as a platform for connecting country-led priorities and evidence-based solutions with financing and implementation partners. Dr. Conrad Rein then outlined emerging opportunities for partnership, investment and implementation as the Flagship builds its operational pipeline.

During the panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Conrad Rein, speakers explored four key topics. Dr. Issa Sanogo, UN Resident Coordinator in Cameroon, discussed how country and regional priorities can be translated into investable programmes and the conditions needed at national and regional levels to make this possible.

Representatives from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Islamic Development Bank shared their perspectives on the role of development finance, private capital and blended finance in mobilising investment and reducing risk, as well as the conditions needed to build effective co-investment and public-private partnerships in practice.

Representatives from the Flagship's Scientific Advisory Committee and Steering Committee addressed the role of science and evidence in identifying solutions ready for implementation, replication and scale-up, and how these can inform investment decisions. Private sector partners then discussed what makes a credible co-investment opportunity in food security and how such opportunities can be identified and developed.

Participants and panellists, including representatives from the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, UNIDO and UNCDF, identified a number of concrete opportunities for additional partners, financing, technical expertise and implementation support. These discussions also helped identify potential partners, financing needs and opportunities for co-investment and joint programming, which will feed into the Flagship's emerging pipeline for further partnership and investment engagement.

Dr. Conrad Rein, Dr. Nasser Al-Kahtani and Dr. Stefan Schmitz provided closing reflections, calling on governments, development finance institutions, private sector partners and other members to engage actively in the Flagship's work and carry the opportunities and partnerships identified at COP17 forward to the Initiative's inaugural Annual Members' Meeting at UNGA81.



Partnerships and Progress at UNCCD COP17

The Flagship Initiative's engagement at UNCCD COP17 extended beyond its two main events. The Secretariat held an extensive programme of bilateral meetings with governments, UN organisations, development partners, development finance institutions, research organisations and the UN Resident Coordinator system.



These discussions strengthened relationships with existing and prospective Flagship partners and opened further avenues for cooperation on investment mobilisation, country-level implementation and scientific engagement.

This included targeted strategic discussions with key stakeholders, which reaffirmed strong support for the Initiative and its direction as it moves into implementation. A discussion with Professor Shenggen Fan, member of the Initiative's Scientific Advisory Committee, explored the Flagship's potential and opportunities to further strengthen its scientific engagement. Engagement with representatives of the Irish EU Presidency explored opportunities for closer cooperation between the European Union and the Initiative during and beyond the Presidency, including potential EU co-funding and pathways toward longer-term partnership.



The Flagship Initiative was also invited to co-organise and participate in two additional events: “Evidence to Impact: Accelerating Finance for Resilient Dryland Forests and Food Systems” on Finance Day, and “Nutrition Security from the Ground Up”, which explored the connections between soil health, nutrition and food security. Both events positioned the Flagship at the intersection of food security, land restoration, finance and nutrition, and supported the Initiative’s objective of connecting food security more systematically across the Rio Convention agendas.

This wider engagement significantly strengthened the visibility and positioning of the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security at UNCCD COP17 and provided an important platform for communicating its transition from coalition building to implementation.

It also reinforced the importance of a governance framework that provides clarity and accountability while preserving the flexibility that has enabled the Initiative to move quickly.



The partnerships, financing needs and co-investment opportunities identified throughout the week will feed into the Flagship’s emerging implementation pipeline and be carried forward to the inaugural Annual Members’ Meeting at UNGA81 on 21 September.

Global Flagship Initiative’s Impact Agenda

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security is pleased to share its Impact Agenda, setting out key targets for its first operational year and through 2030. The agenda provides a framework for translating the Initiative’s ambitions into measurable results across programme and investment pipeline development, private sector engagement, innovation, regional initiatives, knowledge products, capacity building and partnership growth.

Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security: Impact Agenda

Output	Year 1 : June 2026–May 2027	Total Programme : 2026–2030
Programme and investment pipelines developed in priority countries and regions	✓ 10 countries identified ✓ 5 concept notes developed ✓ 1 project proposal submitted	➤ 40 countries identified ➤ 35 concept notes developed ➤ 10 project proposals submitted
Innovative solutions identified through Global Flagship Calls for Proposals	✓ IGAD regional Call launched ✓ 5 outreach events/campaigns ✓ 75 proposals reviewed — 30 by SAC ✓ 10 projects selected	➤ 4 Calls launched ➤ 23 outreach events/campaigns ➤ 525 proposals reviewed — 255 by SAC ➤ 100 projects selected
Regional initiatives supporting sustainable agriculture and land restoration developed	✓ Cameroon Convergence Model and Country Replication Framework developed	➤ 2 Regional programme initiatives developed
Global Initiative on Livestock, Rangelands, and Pastoral Systems developed	✓ Proposal developed ✓ Financing advanced ✓ Operationalisation plan developed	➤ Financed and fully operationalised (2027)
Knowledge products and technical guidance developed	✓ 3 reports published, including Food Security White Paper ✓ 5 case studies documented	➤ 18 reports published ➤ 35 case studies documented
Capacity building initiatives implemented	✓ Capacity building framework developed ✓ 5,000 practitioners trained*	➤ 80,000 practitioners trained*

*Subject to additional funding mobilised from partners and donors.

The Flagship Initiative at the Africa Food Systems Forum

At the Africa Food Systems Forum in Kigali, 31 August – 4 September, Dr. Conrad Rein delivered the opening keynote for the session Reimagining Somalia's Food Future, and participated in two panels addressing the financing and delivery of food security programmes across Africa. The first, on aligning investment with CAADP priorities, examined how development finance and private capital can be better directed towards Africa's agricultural transformation agenda. The second, on South-South cooperation, financing and scaling, explored how successful models can be adapted, financed and replicated across countries and regions. The Forum also provided an important platform for engagement with partners and stakeholders around the Flagship's implementation and investment agenda, strengthening its connections with Africa's food security priorities and partnership networks.





Upcoming Engagements

Looking Ahead: The Flagship in New York during UNGA81

The Flagship now turns its attention to New York, where four key events over three days during the 81st United Nations General Assembly will bring together members and partners to advance the Initiative's investment and implementation agenda.

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security will hold its inaugural Annual Members' Meeting on Monday, 21 September, bringing together members and new partners to take stock of progress since COP16 and set the direction for the year ahead. The meeting will feature a strategic discussion with the Flagship Steering Committee, high-level discussions on the Cameroon Convergence Model and Country Replication Framework, financing, partnerships and delivery at scale, as well as sessions on private sector partnership and innovation, the Cameroon model, and updates from the Flagship's working groups and regional programming.

On Tuesday, 22 September, the Flagship's Scientific Advisory Committee will hold a meeting led by Mr. Declan Kirrane to advance the Committee's role in guiding the Initiative's scientific and implementation priorities.

On Wednesday, 23 September, the Initiative will join 2Unlock for a roundtable on aligning investment with food security. Later that day, the Initiative will co-host "From Investment to Impact: Delivering Results for Food Security at Scale" with the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program and Action Against Hunger.



Members' Spotlight



Global Flagship Experts Featured in New International Book Exploring AI and Food Security

Can AI help feed a world of nearly 10 billion people while making food systems more resilient to climate change?

AI is already changing the way food is produced, distributed, and monitored around the world. From precision agriculture and smarter supply chains to disease surveillance and predictive analytics, AI is opening new possibilities for addressing some of the world's most pressing food security challenges. At the same time, it raises important questions about governance, ethics, inclusion, and ensuring that technological innovation benefits all communities.

These topics are explored in the new international book *ESG in the Age of AI*, which brings together **18 internationally recognised experts from four continents** to examine how artificial intelligence is influencing sustainability, governance, business, finance, cybersecurity, healthcare, urban development, and food security.

Published by **Packt Publishing**, one of the UK's leading technology publishers, the book offers perspectives from leaders in academia, industry, international organisations, and the sustainability community. Together, the contributors explore practical applications of AI alongside the policy, governance, and leadership needed to ensure these technologies support long-term sustainable development.

Members of the Global Flagship for Food Security will find particular interest in **Chapter 6, Food Security and Global Health**, written by **Dr. Conrad Rein**, together with **Kanika Joshi**, who represents the Global Flagship for Food Security through her organisation Impact Circle.

Their chapter examines how AI is influencing agriculture, food production, nutrition, supply chains, and global health. It discusses opportunities to improve resilience, strengthen food systems, anticipate shortages, and support better public health outcomes, while also highlighting the importance of international cooperation, responsible governance, and equitable access to emerging technologies.

The contributions by Dr. Conrad Rein and Kanika Joshi highlight the important role that food security experts play in shaping conversations about the future of artificial intelligence. Their chapter offers readers insights into how AI can contribute to healthier populations, more resilient food systems, and stronger international cooperation.

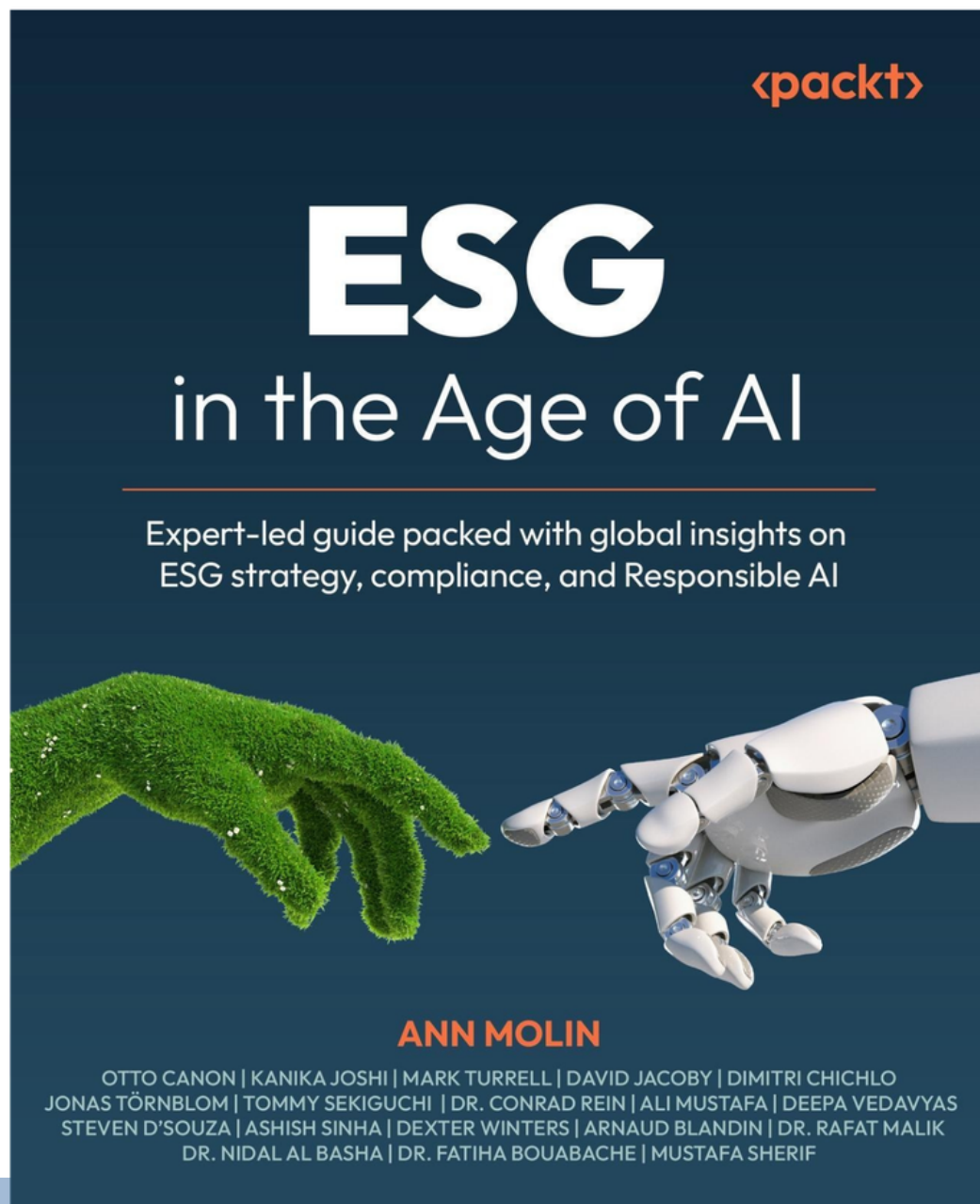
The book's lead author is **Ann Molin**, founder of **Hack for Earth Foundation**, an international non-profit organisation dedicated to accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals through citizen-driven innovation and global sustainability hackathons. Hack for Earth Foundation is also a proud member of the Global Flagship for Food Security, reflecting a shared commitment to strengthening resilient food systems through innovation and cross-sector collaboration.

Beyond food security, *ESG in the Age of AI* includes chapters on AI, governance, ESG strategy, sustainable finance, business strategy, youth engagement, cyber security and urban development. Together, the contributors provide a broad overview of how AI is shaping society and what responsible implementation looks like across different sectors.

The book will be officially launched on 24 September 2026 during Climate Week NYC and UN General Assembly Week, bringing together the lead author and several contributors for a session on AI, sustainability, and responsible leadership. The book launch event is hosted by International Youth Conference 14, by International Organisation of Youth.

Whether you work in food security, agriculture, sustainability, public policy, healthcare, research, or innovation, *ESG in the Age of AI* provides valuable perspectives on how artificial intelligence is influencing the future of sustainable development.

ESG in the Age of AI is now available for pre-order on Amazon ahead of its official launch in New York on 24 September 2026.



Partner Contributions: AI Can Tell a Farmer What to Do. Can She Afford to Do It?

By Lindsey Paulsen, Vice President-Digital Innovation, Opportunity International



Imagine a smallholder farmer asks an AI assistant how to save her maize crop from an emerging pest. Within seconds, she has an answer. There is only one problem: she cannot afford the treatment.

AI has extraordinary potential to transform agriculture in emerging markets, putting better information into the hands of the world's smallholder farmers: when to plant, what seed to use, and how to respond to drought, disease and changing weather. But information without the financial means to act on it will only go so far. If we want to reach millions of smallholder farmers and meaningfully strengthen global food security, we must connect intelligence, finance and trust in a system capable of reaching the last mile.

Opportunity International has spent more than five decades building financial systems that reach people traditional markets often leave behind. Our Agriculture Finance program works with financial institutions and rural communities to expand access to capital, strengthen farm businesses and connect smallholder farmers to the financial services they need to grow.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, we work through thousands of Farmer Support Agents (FSAs) – local farmers and community leaders who each train approximately 150 farmers – and Village Savings and Loan Associations, which extend that reach, particularly to women and farmers outside the formal financial system. We are now putting AI into that existing infrastructure.

FarmerAI, our AI-enabled agricultural assistant, equips farmers and FSAs with localized, on-demand agricultural guidance through familiar technology such as WhatsApp. The model operates across seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and preparing to expand into an eighth, deployed through more than 4,500 Opportunity FSAs and users, reaching approximately 300,000 farmers.

Since 2012, our 31 financial institution partners have provided \$686 million in agricultural loans, reaching more than 2 million farming households across 8 African countries. Fifty-five percent of our clients are women. That capital allows farmers to invest, and AI can help them invest it better.

In Kenya, 67% of direct FarmerAI users reported increased yields after one harvest. In Malawi, a farmer named Grace used FarmerAI alongside access to finance to make better decisions about seed, planting and inputs. In a single harvest cycle, her maize production increased from 14 bags to 60 – a 329% increase.

Savings groups extend that reach further: Opportunity works with nearly 26,000 groups representing more than 500,000 members, approximately 65% of whom are women. As groups mature, we connect them to banks and microfinance institutions, creating pathways into the formal financial system.

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security has set an ambition to deploy digital and AI-enabled tools across more than 10 countries, with a focus on women and youth and partnerships across governments, universities, development institutions and the private sector.

Philanthropic and development partners can fund expansion, financial institutions and impact investors can expand capital, governments and researchers can strengthen agricultural knowledge, and technology and agribusiness partners can strengthen data and market connections.



If we can put better information, capital and trusted support into the hands of millions of smallholder farmers, we can strengthen food systems and make meaningful progress toward a more food-secure world.



Partner Contributions: German-Azerbaijani Research Cooperation on Wheat Breeding Innovations for Global Food Security

By Prof. Dr. Ali Ahmad Naz, *Professor of Plant Breeding at University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück*

Our Mission

Our Germany–Azerbaijan partnership contributes to a global vision for climate-resilient wheat breeding by bridging the gap between genotype and phenotype. Through the discovery of valuable genetic diversity, advanced genomics, field-based phenotyping and modern breeding, we aim to unlock the genetic potential of wheat and translate it into higher, more stable and sustainable yields. By contributing our genetic resources and expertise to the broader Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security, hosted by the Crop Trust, we are excited to connect our research with a worldwide network working towards innovative and sustainable solutions for future food production.

Wheat Breeding for Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Food Production

Wheat is one of the world's most important food crops and a cornerstone of global food security. It is cultivated across a remarkable range of environments and provides a major share of the calories and protein consumed worldwide. Yet wheat production is increasingly challenged by drought, heat, water scarcity and other effects of climate change, while genetic gains in yield are becoming more difficult to achieve.

Meeting the food demands of a growing global population will therefore require a new generation of wheat breeding innovations—innovations that can increase the genetic potential of wheat while reducing the environmental resources needed to produce it.

Our Germany–Azerbaijan research partnership addresses this challenge by bringing together genetic diversity, modern breeding, field experimentation, genomics and computational science. At the heart of our approach is a fundamental question: How can we better translate the genetic potential hidden within wheat diversity into measurable plant performance in the field?

Bridging the Gap between Genotype and Phenotype for Global Food Security

Every wheat plant carries a unique combination of genetic information—the genotype—but what we ultimately see in the field is its phenotype: yield, plant architecture, photosynthetic activity, drought tolerance, flowering behavior, root development and many other characteristics.

The challenge for modern breeding is to understand the connection between the genotype and phenotype!

Our research seeks to bridge this genotype–phenotype gap by combining detailed genomic information with precise phenotypic evaluation under contrasting environmental conditions. By studying diverse wheat materials from Europe and Azerbaijan, we aim to discover which genetic differences are responsible for valuable characteristics and, importantly, under which environmental conditions these characteristics provide an advantage.

This approach moves beyond simply asking which wheat variety performs best. Instead, we ask why it performs well, which genes and genetic variants contribute to that performance, and whether these advantages can be transferred into future breeding materials.

Our collaborative research between Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences in Germany and the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB), Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, led by Prof. Dr. Habil. Ali Ahmad Naz and Prof. Dr. Irada Huseynova, addresses this challenge by looking back to crop diversity in order to develop future crops.

Building Bridges for Wheat Innovation. The Azerbaijani–German Partnership: Visit of the Azerbaijani project partner IMB to Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences (HSO), June 2024. The visit marked an important milestone in strengthening the Germany–Azerbaijan research partnership.



A) The partners formalized their commitment to scientific cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). **B)** Workshop on project development. **C–F)** A joint visit to the KWS Saat wheat breeding program, organized together with Dr. Monika Spiller, provided valuable insights into modern wheat breeding and the translation of research into practical breeding.



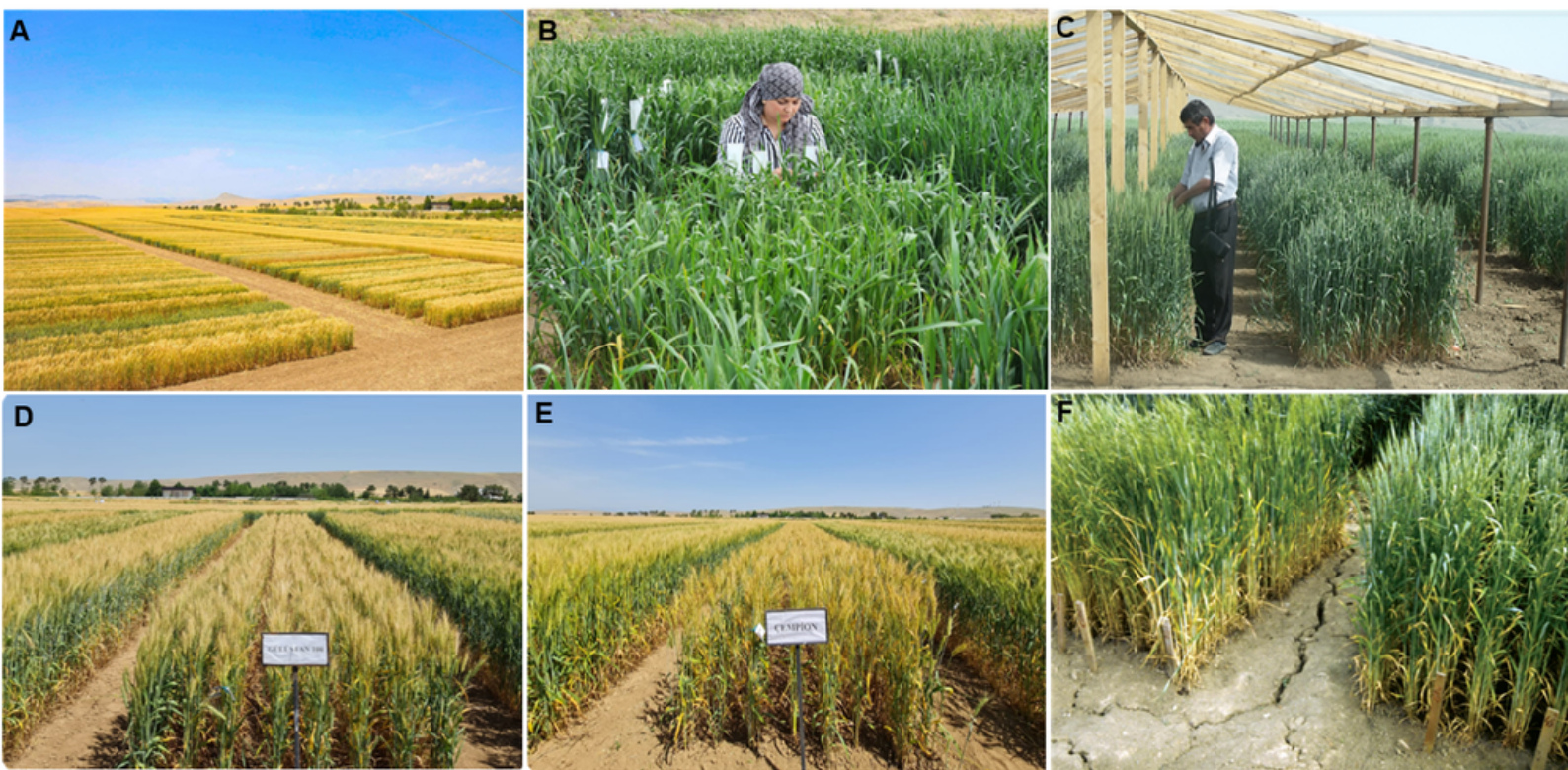
Breeding Innovation in the Field – Gobustan, Azerbaijan:

Researchers and breeders from Germany and Azerbaijan come together where innovation matters most: in the field. By examining wheat diversity, sharing expertise and connecting field observations with modern genomic and laboratory approaches, the workshop turns scientific cooperation into practical opportunities for future crop varieties.

Rediscovering the Genetic Diversity of the Wheat Gene Pool

Over generations, farmers and plant breeders have selected crop varieties primarily for high yield and other desirable agricultural characteristics. While this progress has greatly increased food production, it has also resulted in the gradual loss of valuable genetic variation.

Our research therefore focuses on recovering, characterizing and using genetic diversity from different geographical regions. In particular, Germany and Azerbaijan provide complementary resources for this work. Azerbaijan lies within an important region of crop diversity and has a rich history of agricultural biodiversity. Its diverse environmental conditions have also contributed to the development and preservation of plant material with potentially valuable adaptations to drought, heat and other stresses.



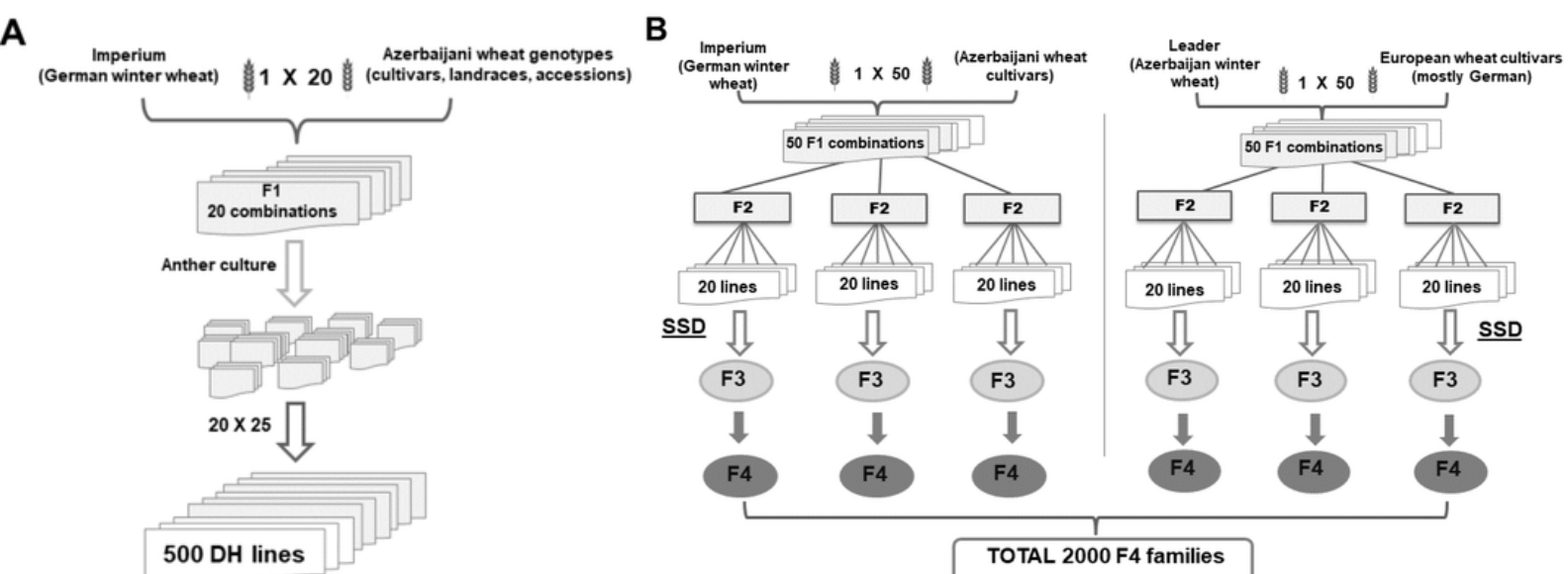
IMB Experimental Station for Crosses and Phenotypic Evaluations in the Gobustan Region near Baku, Azerbaijan: A) Overview of the experimental station with wheat plots. B–C) Wheat crossing and propagation facilities. D–F) Evaluation plots for individual wheat varieties.

By comparing European, particularly German, crop varieties with diverse genetic resources from Azerbaijan and the wider South Caucasus region, we aim to identify plants carrying naturally occurring characteristics that could help modern crops perform better under future climatic conditions.

Considering the complementary genetic potential and diversity of the German and Azerbaijani wheat genotypes for agronomically important traits, reciprocal crosses were performed to generate novel genetic combinations and broaden the breeding gene pool. The resulting populations are intended to facilitate the simultaneous improvement of grain quality and sustainability-related traits, while particularly enhancing yield potential and yield stability under adverse and changing climatic conditions.

The most promising and genetically diverse plant materials will be combined through targeted crosses to create new populations that contain a broad spectrum of genetic variation. These populations will serve as valuable resources for future research and plant breeding.

Crossing Concept and Strategy for Developing a Doubled Haploid (A) and a Single-Seed Descent Wheat Population (B).



Combining Field Research with Modern Genomics

A central feature of our research concept is the integration of traditional plant evaluation with modern genetics, genomics and computational approaches.

Promising plant materials will be tested in field environments in Germany and Azerbaijan, including under naturally occurring dry conditions. Evaluating the same or related genetic resources in contrasting environments allows us to understand how plants respond to different combinations of climate, soil and growing conditions.

At the same time, modern sequencing technologies enable us to examine the genetic makeup of these plants in unprecedented detail. By comparing genomes and linking genetic differences with measurable plant characteristics, we can identify genetic variants that may contribute to drought tolerance, improved photosynthesis, yield stability and other valuable traits.

Particular attention will also be given to the wild wheat relative *Aegilops tauschii*, an important source of genetic diversity for wheat improvement for sustainable traits. Highly diverse and fully sequenced populations provide an opportunity to discover naturally occurring genetic variants that may have been lost or underused during modern wheat breeding and selection.

Advanced computational analyses will help us connect large amounts of genetic, field and environmental data. This will allow us to better predict which genetic resources and plant characteristics are most promising for future breeding.

Climate change means that the crops of the future will need to achieve more with fewer resources. They will need to produce reliable yields while coping with drought, heat and changing environmental conditions. Achieving this will require not only new technologies, but also a better understanding and use of the genetic diversity that already exists in nature.

Our Germany–Azerbaijan research partnership brings these elements together. By rediscovering valuable crop diversity, understanding the biological mechanisms behind resilience, combining field research with genomics and translating scientific discoveries into plant breeding, we aim to contribute to a new generation of climate-resilient crops.

In this way, the research seeks to connect the agricultural heritage of the past with the technological possibilities of the future—helping to strengthen food security, conserve genetic diversity and support a more sustainable agricultural system in a changing climate.

Beyond the partnership itself, we are committed to making the genetic resources, research materials and knowledge generated through this work available to contribute to the wider global effort to improve wheat. We are ready to engage with and contribute to global initiatives, including flagship efforts supported by the Crop Trust, that seek to harness crop genetic diversity, broaden the genetic potential of breeding materials, accelerate genetic gain and enhance the yield potential of globally important crops such as wheat. Through this contribution, the Germany–Azerbaijan partnership aims to connect its research and genetic resources with the international scientific community and support collective efforts towards greater, more resilient and sustainable food production.