רשות החדשנות
Israel Innovation
Authority

Agri-Impact

Bayer – Israel Innovation Authority Pilot Program

Background

Smallholder farmers around the world face diverse challenges that require holistic solutions. More than 500 million of these farmers, spread across Asia, Africa, and South America, provide 80 percent of the food supply for their communities. To a large extent, succeeding to solve the global food challenge will depend on the ability of these farmers to improve their productivity and profits while reducing their environmental impact. Now, more than ever, supporting smallholder farmers to achieve this goal is of the utmost importance, and holds tremendous market value.

Smallholder farmers face many challenges, both on and beyond the farm. On the farm, they must effectively manage irrigation, soils, plant nutrition, pests and diseases, and wrestle with the impact of climate change. Off the farm, they struggle to access modern agricultural technologies and information, affordable finance, and access to quality inputs and output markets, instead having to rely on partial market information, middlemen and imperfect market linkages.

Call for Proposals

The Israel Innovation Authority, Bayer, the Fooksman Foundation and the Nitsan Lab at Tel Aviv University (TAU) invite interested Israeli companies and innovators to submit applications to pilot and adapt **affordable and innovative solutions that address the challenges faced by smallholder farmers, specifically vegetable growers. The goal of the process is to help proven solutions reach large-scale commercialization in India.**

What are we looking for?

We are seeking innovative, technically proven solutions that can be adapted to fit smallholder farmers in India and enable them to implement:

- Precision agriculture to increase efficiency and productivity and reduce environmental impact (e.g. irrigation, fertilizers, and crop protection).
- Climate smart solutions to increase their resilience to climate change related to but not limited to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enable carbon sequestration, preserve soil health, related monitoring techniques etc.
- Post-harvest solutions to reduce losses.
- Market linkages to improve profits.

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- Other solutions that address smallholder farmers' challenges on and beyond the farm.
- Gender smart solutions that can help decrease the gender gap and expand women access to land and resources and decision-making power.
- Affordable and accessible credit or insurance for smallholder farmers that could incentivize them to adopt sustainable practices.

An Opportunity for Technology Providers in Israel

Supported by the Israel Innovation Authority, this call offers a special opportunity for companies who are interested to scale their impact and grow their business in one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

India is the second largest producer of fruits & vegetables in the world and the largest producer of vegetables such as okra. With a market size of close to US$100bn, it is expected to grow annually by 8.72% (CAGR 2022-2027) and continue to be dominated by smallholder farmers for decades to come.

Successful applicants will enter into a process of testing and adaptation in real field conditions that will culminate in a locally viable product and business model that is field-proven to be commercially viable and socially beneficial.

What We Offer

Successful Israeli applicants will receive funding from the Israel Innovation Authority, in-kind support from Bayer, and expert advice from Tel Aviv University, to pilot and adapt their technologies with smallholder farmers connected to Bayer's Better Life Farming (BLF) Centers in India:

Funding

- A grant of up to 50% of approved Pilot Expenses, in adherence with the regulations and procedures of the Israel Innovation Authority.

Logistics

- Access to on the ground facilities and resources such as experimental fields and testing facilities operated by Bayer in India.

Expertise

- Agronomic and technical mentoring and advising by Bayer field experts, and economic and behavioral advising by expert faculty at TAU.

Human resources

- A team of outstanding and specially trained TAU students who will help the design, execution and evaluation of the pilots in the field throughout the pilot period. The students

will provide the company with "eyes and ears" in the field, forming a bridge between the company and field staff.

All pilots will be carefully evaluated, in the field, from agricultural, economic and behavioral perspectives in order to enable a process of adaptation and creation of appropriate business models. At the end of the process, when a solution's commercial value is field-proven, Bayer Crop Science will provide the company access to the Better Life Farming (BLF) network as a platform for commercialization, sales and scale-up in India.

What are the Better Life Farming (BLF) Centers?

Better Life Farming Centers enable smallholder farmers to access technologies and services such as market linkages, access to inputs, crop advice, and more. **Training programs and workshops** conducted in the centers introduce farmers to modern agricultural practices as proven on-site through demonstration plots.

- **BLF operates** 1150 Farming centers in India reaching **~700.000** smallholders. Its goal is to reach
- **2.5 million** Smallholders through **5.000 BLF** Centers globally by 2025.

Process and Timeline

Program launch	2/12/2024
Applicants submit Expression of Interest (EOI) form	30/12/2024
Israel Innovation Authority and Bayer invite shortlisted applicants to submit a full application.	9/1/2025
Shortlisted applicants submit a full online application to the Israel Innovation Authority. TAU students provide these applicants with technical support in the preparation of the proposal.	19/02/2024
Israel Innovation Authority and Bayer notify selected applicants of final decision	May 2025
Agreement signing and submission to the Israel Innovation Authority	June 2025
Pilot kick-off in India	July 2025

Selection Criteria

A joint committee will review proposals and select the most promising applications, also taking into consideration applicants' willingness to share the costs of the pilot. In general, technology providers will be expected to offer continual technical support in order to ensure the success of the pilots. The number of solutions to be invited to the pilot phase will depend on the number of promising applications and the degree of cost sharing by the companies.

The committee will include experts and representatives from the Israel Innovation Authority, TAU and Bayer.

Contacts

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