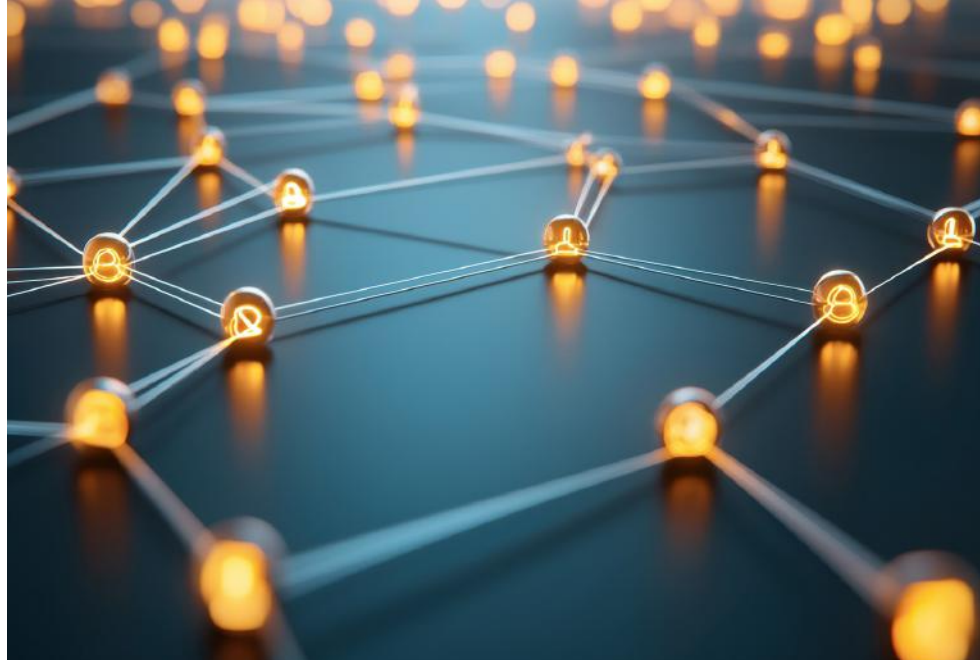


A4IP 2025 FLAGSHIP EVENT

IDEATION | DEVELOPMENT | DEPLOYMENT

15 October 2025
8:30 - 20:00

Alliance Bioversity-CIAT HQ
Via di San Domenico 1
Rome, Italy



15 OCTOBER | ROME

Innovating Agri-Food Research & Development
Models for a Changing Landscape

MAIN TOPICS

- 01 Role of multidisciplinary research & priorities
- 02 Emerging trends and technologies
- 03 New research models and industry collaboration
- 04 Valorizing science & empowering scientists
- 05 De-risking technological development
- 06 Building next-gen scientific talent
- 07 Technology transfer & international cooperation

[Register Here](#)

Held under the patronage of



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

AGENDA

MORNING SESSIONS

8:30 - 9:30

REGISTRATION & WELCOME COFFEE

9:30 - 9:50

OPENING REMARKS & KICKOFF

Juan Lucas Restrepo, Director General, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

Filippo Lonardo, Deputy Head of Unit for Finance for Development, Environment and Digital, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Don Andrea Ciucci, Coordinator of the Secretariat, Pontifical Academy for Life

9:50 - 10:20

FIRESIDE CHAT: RESHAPING INNOVATION MODELS

Fast paced, insight-rich conversation between star players in the industry and participants in the audience, spotlighting the cutting-edge trends shaping the future of innovation—across sectors and geographies. A4IP team members and/or volunteers can be armed with strategic questions to shape the conversation when needed.

Dorothy Shaver, Global Foods Sustainability Lead, UNILEVER
Dr. Elliott Grant, Visiting Fellow, Cambridge University Institute for Manufacturing

10:20 - 11:10

PANEL I: THE POWER OF IDEATION: FUTURE-PROOF SCIENCE TO MARKET

From the lab to real-world impact—what does it take to make early-stage innovation thrive? This high-energy panel dives into the future of scientific ideation, spotlighting how AI is reshaping discovery, the rise of venture-client models, and how co-designed, multidisciplinary research is driving agility and relevance in today's research institutions.

Moderator: Dr. Shiva Loccisano, CEO, AlmaCube

Dr. Fernando Cantão, Crop Physiology & Food Security, Fundraising, Technology Transfer & Innovation (ICGEB)

Dr. Winnie Wambugu, Venture Scientist, Agriculture & Food Systems, Deep Science Ventures

Fabio Beninati, R&D Manager, Granarolo

Dr. Mohamed Wageih, Project Officer, PRIMA Foundation

Elzandi Oosthuizen, SVP, Head Enterprise Corn Product Team, Bayer

Dr. Jacob van Etten, Research Director, Digital Inclusion, Alliance/CGIAR

11:10 - 11:30

COFFEE BREAK

11:30 - 11:50

FISHBOWL: ACCELERATING INNOVATION FROM WITHIN

How do we make sure promising science-based innovations don't fade away when the grant cycle ends? This session will spotlight RAMP—an internal accelerator redefining how research teams engage with markets, partners, and investors. Get an inside look at how A4IP is shifting the culture across CGIAR to equip purpose-driven scientists with the tools to build real-world solutions, not just papers.

Megan Steele, Project Coordinator of RAMP, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

Chris Fellingham, Co-Founder and Director, Kindling Ventures

MORNING SESSIONS (continued)

AGENDA

11:50 - 12:40

PANEL II: FINANCING DEVELOPMENT: POWERING INNOVATION FROM LAB TO LAUNCH

How can we better finance the development phase of science-based innovation? This session explores practical strategies for bridging the gap between early-stage research and real-world deployment. From public-philanthropic partnerships to EU policy levers, hear how diverse funding models are catalyzing market-ready solutions in food and climate tech.

Moderator: Cecilia D'Alessandro, Policy Officer, ECDPM
Alberto Barbari, Board Member and Regional Vice President for Italy, Eatable Adventures
Elisabet Nyquist, General Manager, Opes Fund
Justin Ahmed, Director, Beanstalk Agtech
Ygor Scarcia, Industrial Development Expert, UNIDO
Wendy-Yam Osman, Founder, Norma Tech
Elisa Pettinati, Technical Officer at the Rural Development and Food Security Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

12:40 - 13:10

INNOVATION SHOWCASE I: PITCHING SESSION

Get inspired by a fast-paced pitching round featuring cutting-edge science-based solutions supported by A4IP's RAMP accelerator. Each team will deliver a 3-minute pitch followed by rapid Q&A, showcasing how early-stage research can translate into impactful, market-ready innovations.

Moderator: Megan Steele, Project Coordinator of RAMP, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT (Alliance/CGIAR)
Hana Gajdosova, Research Team Leader, Artemis (Alliance/CGIAR)
Michael Selvaraj, Leader, Digital Agriculture Platform, Tumaini (Alliance/CGIAR)
Dr. Christopher Kettle, Principal Scientist, My Farm Trees, (Alliance/CGIAR)
Julien Simonis, Programme Manager, Cacao of Excellence, (Alliance/CGIAR)

13:10 - 14:10

NETWORKING LUNCH

AGENDA

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

14:10 - 14:15

MORNING DEBRIEF

Kick off the afternoon with a sharp recap of the morning's biggest insights. This rapid-fire debrief will spotlight key takeaways, unexpected synergies, and set the stage for the sessions ahead.

14:15 - 14:30

PRESENTATION: TECHNOLOGY IS PROVEN, INVESTMENT IS FLOWING, MOMENTUM IS BUILDING: TODAY IN AGRITECH DATA

This data-driven snapshot will unpack the current landscape of agri-tech innovation—from capital trends to startup signals—highlighting where opportunity meets urgency.

Moritz Dolinga, AgriTech Market Research Analyst Consultant, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

14:30 - 15:20

PANEL III: SCIENCE FOR IMPACT: DEPLOYMENT THROUGH GLOBAL COLLABORATION

This session will spotlight how international cooperation and public-private partnerships accelerate the deployment of agrifood innovations. Speakers will share models of cross-border and cross-sector collaboration, emphasizing technology and knowledge transfer. Discussions will focus on delivering real impact to end users—particularly farmers—through accessible, affordable, and context-specific solutions that enhance resilience and transformation across food systems.

Moderator: Prof. Brando Okolo, Head of the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation, AUDA-NEPAD

Charlotte Verburg, First Secretary of Water and Food Security Advisor, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Niger

Biagio Di Terlizzi, Director and Head of Planning and Cooperation, CIHEAM Bari

Francesco Tramontin, VP Global Public Affairs, Ferrero

Dr. Fatma Trabelsi, International Cooperation Director, IRESA

Monika Froehler, CEO, Ban Ki-Moon Centre

Ana Maria Loboguerrero, Director of Adaptive and Equitable Food Systems, Gates Foundation

15:20 - 15:50

THE ROLE OF INNOVATION HUBS AS CATALYSTS FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION

By connecting researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers, Innovation Hubs create dynamic ecosystems that accelerate the deployment of science-based solutions, foster cross-border partnerships, and stimulate inclusive innovation. The discussion will highlight successful models and examine how such hubs can bridge local needs with global opportunities, driving transformative impact in food, climate, and development.

Moderator: Federico Ronca, Lead, Data and Digital Solutions for Food and Water, World Economic Forum

Lisa Blangy, Deputy Director of the Directorate for Science Impact and Marketing (DIMS) CIRAD

Dr. Guido D'Urso, Agritech Center (Fondazione Agritech), the Italian National Research Centre for Agricultural Technologies

AGENDA

15:50 - 16:15

MARKET-DELIVERY MECHANISM: THE ROLE OF INNOVATION CHALLENGES TO UNLOCK AGRITECH POTENTIAL

This session will explore how innovation challenges can help speed up the development and use of agritech solutions to modernize the agrifood sector in the Global South. It will look at whether these challenges can be a scalable, sustainable way to promote technology adoption in resource-limited settings, and how they can support inclusive, market-driven innovation.

Moderator: Mariëlle Karssenbergh, Partnerships Builder, Netherlands Food Partnership

Ena Derenoncourt, Senior Officer at the CGIAR Hub for Sustainable Finance (ImpactSF), Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

Claudia Zaccari, Senior Project Analyst at A4IP, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

16:15-17:00

INNOVATION SHOWCASE II: PITCHING SESSION

A dynamic session featuring rapid-fire pitches from high-impact agrifood innovations drawn from A4IP's portfolio and Eatable Ventures. Each presenter will have 3 minutes to pitch, followed by brief Q&A. This session highlights both early-stage breakthroughs and more mature solutions driving transformation across the food system.

Moderator: Susanna Ercolani, Science Valorization & Market Strategy Consultant, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT (Alliance/CGIAR)

PeelPack, Slava Drigloff

Trusty, Alessandro Chelli

GreenAnt, Mario Simmaco

JaniAI, Reggie Okoko

Norma Tech, Wendy-Yam Osman

AlmaSerum, Antonella Bellina

Regrowth, Michael Odintsov Vaintrub

17:00 - 17:20

CLOSING REMARKS AND WRAP UP

Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, Managing Director, Africa, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

Dr. Annette Schneegans, Deputy Permanent Representative – EU Delegation to UN in Rome

Dr. Gianpiero Menza, Senior Manager, Partnerships & Innovative Finance, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT

17:20 - 20:00

EVENING NETWORKING COCKTAIL RECEPTION

SPEAKERS



Alberto Barbari

Board Member and Regional Vice President for Italy, Eatable Adventures

Alberto Barbari is a FoodTech expert specializing in innovation and early-stage investments, with over 8 years of experience across both industry and startups. He currently serves as Board Member and Regional Vice President for Italy at Eatable Adventures, and sits on the investment committee of FoodSeed, the accelerator supported by CDP Venture Capital. Previously, he worked at Barilla on product development and innovation projects.



Ana Maria Loboguerrero

Director of Adaptive and Equitable Food Systems, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Ana Maria Loboguerrero leads the foundation's efforts to support women in agriculture, expand access to nutritious and affordable foods, and drive climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. A Colombian economist, she previously served as Director of Climate Action at CGIAR, building strong partnerships with governments and

stakeholders across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. She also directed global policy research for the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and its Latin American Regional Program, after earlier shaping Colombia's Climate Change Policy and National Adaptation Plan at the National Planning Department.

Her research combines social and natural science approaches to address climate challenges in the Global South, with a focus on how science can inform policymaking and empower farmers. She has advanced dialogue between researchers and rural communities, assessed the economic impacts of adaptation and mitigation, and contributed to national and international strategies for food system transformation. Ana Maria holds a master's degree and Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Los Angeles.



Annette Schneegans

Deputy Permanent Representative – Head of UN Section, EU Delegation to the UN Organisations in Rome

Annette Schneegans is Deputy Permanent Representative and Head of the UN section at the EU Delegation in Rome. Before coming to Rome she was based in Brussels working for more than 20 years in the area of European research policy and research funding,

notably in the areas of life sciences and agriculture. More specifically, she was responsible for research programming and policy development in the areas of crop production and natural resources. She had a key role developing and launching the Horizon Europe mission "A Soil Deal for Europe". Annette has an academic and research background in agricultural sciences and international agricultural development.



Biagio Di Terlizzi
Director, CIHEAM Bari

Biagio Di Terlizzi is the Director of CIHEAM Bari. An agronomist by training, he has dedicated his career to advancing sustainable development and international cooperation in agriculture. With over three decades of experience at CIHEAM Bari, where he served in various roles since 1987, including Deputy Director and Head of Planning and Cooperation, he has been instrumental in numerous training, research, and technical assistance initiatives. His expertise spans a wide range of fields, from project management for key international donors to leading diverse teams on country-specific and regional projects across the Mediterranean, the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond.



Professor Brando Okolo
Head of Science Technology and Innovation, African Union Development Agency - NEPAD

Brando Okolo is Head of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) at African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, overseeing STI policies across Africa. With 20+ years in additive manufacturing, materials science, and hydrogen energy, he has held roles in academia and industry, including professorships, CTO and management positions. He has mentored professionals, advised governments, and developed industry-focused applications. Dr. Okolo holds an MSc in Chemical Engineering from the University of Leeds and a PhD in Chemistry & Physical Metallurgy from the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems and the University of Stuttgart. He is a sought-after speaker and industry leader.



Cecilia D'Alessandro
Policy Analyst, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

Cecilia D'Alessandro is a Policy Analyst at ECDPM, a leading 'think and do tank' focused on EU-Africa relations and sustainable development. She works within the Sustainable Food Systems and Climate Action and Green Transition Workstreams and serves as the Gender Focal Point for the Sustainable African Economies and Climate Action Cluster. Her expertise covers governance of food systems transformation, food finance, and climate adaptation and resilience in sub-Saharan Africa. She combines research, policy analysis, and active engagement with policymakers and partners across Africa, Europe, and internationally.

SPEAKERS



Charlotte Verburg

**First Secretary of Water and Food Security Advisor,
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Niger**

Charlotte began her career as a researcher, exploring sustainable options to address challenges in food systems and resource management. Building on this foundation, she joined the Dutch government, where she focused on translating knowledge into policy and practice, navigating the complexities of decision-making and the trade-offs

across agriculture, water, and land use.

She is currently posted at the Dutch Embassy in Niamey, Niger, where she works on national food and nutrition security as well as water security. In this role, she brings together scientific insights, policy frameworks, locally led approaches, and international cooperation to advance relevant and sustainable solutions.

Her career reflects a strong commitment to integrated thinking and to bridging knowledge, policy, and practice in order to strengthen food and water systems at different scales.



Chris Fellingham

Chris Fellingham is Co-Founder of Kindling Ventures, working with researchers and research organisations to build impact-at-scale ventures from academic research. Previously, at Oxford University Innovation, he spun out 12 companies as Licensing and Ventures Manager. Before that, he served as Strategy and Research Manager at FutureLearn, supporting the education startup through its Series A funding.



Claudia Zaccari

**Senior Project Analyst, A4IP, Alliance of Bioversity
International and CIAT**

Claudia Zaccari is a Senior Project Analyst at the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, where she works with the Accelerate for Impact Platform to design and implement accelerator programs and innovation challenges across the Middle East and North Africa. She has developed methodologies to scout, support, and

scale science-based innovations in sustainable agriculture and climate action, linking them with CGIAR research to maximize impact. She also helps build partnerships with funders, investors, and strategic stakeholders to advance CGIAR innovations and position them on global platforms. Claudia holds a Master's degree in International Development from the University of Edinburgh and previously worked on projects connecting African agribusinesses with European entrepreneurs.



Filippo Lonardo

Deputy Head of Unit for Finance for Development, Environment and Digital, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Filippo Lonardo, born in Rome in 1983, earned a Law degree from Luiss Guido Carli University in 2009. After passing the diplomatic entrance examination, he was appointed Legation Secretary on probation in November 2011 and attended the Carlo Sforza training course at the

Diplomatic Institute. He began his career at the Directorate General for Political and Security Affairs, working in the Units for Afghanistan and later for the Russian Federation and Eastern Europe. Confirmed in his position in August 2012, he served in the Directorate's Secretariat. From 2014 to 2018, he was Deputy Consul at the Consulate General of Italy in Montreal, assuming Commercial Consul duties in 2015. He then served at the Embassy of Italy in Canberra from June 2018 with vicarious functions. Returning to Rome in November 2021, he joined the Directorate General for Development Cooperation, first in the Unit for Global Strategies and Processes, where he was promoted to Legation Counsellor in July 2022. Since January 2024, he has been serving with vicarious functions in the Unit for Development Finance, Environment and Digital Technology within the same Directorate General.



Don Andrea Ciucci

Coordinator of the Secretariat, Pontifical Academy for Life

Born in Milan in 1967, in 1992 he was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Milan and worked as a parish vicar in several parishes of the city. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Theology at the Theological Faculty of Northern Italy and a degree in Philosophy at the State University of Milan, he obtained a PhD in Philosophy at the Pontifical Athenaeum

of St. Anselm in Rome with a dissertation dedicated to reinterpretations of the Platonic chora in twentieth-century philosophy (The Fascination of Chora, Mimesis 2019). He currently lives and works in Rome. From 2012 to 2016, he worked at the Pontifical Council for the Family; he is currently the Secretariat Coordinator of the Pontifical Academy for Life, where he is also responsible for institutional relations and cultural projects. His cultural work focuses mainly on the relationship between technology and life, with particular attention to its impact on various subjects and spheres of human experience (families, youth, education, religiosity). This work resulted in the book *Excuse me, but why are you here?* (Terre di Mezzo 2022). He teaches "Pastoral Care of the Family" at the ISSR of Florence and Bologna, at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute of Rome, and in various ecclesial and civil training courses in Italy and abroad. He also contributes columns to several specialized journals and has considerable international speaking experience. He is Secretary General of the Vatican Foundation *RenAissance* for the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and a member of several scientific committees (International Center for Family Studies – CISF, Federation of Public Relations, Amazon Planetary Health Chair at the Catholic University of Ecuador). For more than 30 years, he's been engaged in catechesis, family pastoral care, youth ministry, and scouting. He resides at the parish of Saints Joachim and Anne in Tuscolano, where he follows young people and families, and founded a support service for the homeless in the Tuscolano area. On these pastoral themes, he has published several articles. For several years, he was a member of the Commission for Christian Initiation of the Italian Episcopal Conference.

SPEAKERS



Dorothy Shaver

Global Foods Sustainability Lead, Unilever Food Business Group

Dorothy Shaver is the Global Foods Sustainability Lead for Unilever's €13 billion Food Business Group, where she drives sustainability initiatives for brands like Knorr, Hellmann's, and Horlick's. With 20 years of experience in product innovation, marketing, and personalized nutrition, she has significantly advanced health and environmental outcomes. Dorothy is a founding board member of the Food for Climate League and advises small and medium-sized food startups and scale-ups. She led the creation of the Knorr and WWF's Future 50 Foods report and conceived Unilever's regenerative agriculture transition strategy, which has demonstrated substantial impacts on nature and climate. Frequently quoted by major media outlets, Dorothy inspires the industry to shift to have positive outcomes on people and the planet linked to business impact.



Elisa Pettinati

Technical Officer at the Rural Development and Food Security Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

Elisa Pettinati is a Technical Officer at the Rural Development and Food Security Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). She has over fifteen years of experience in international cooperation, with a strong focus on food security, rural development, and socio-economic inclusion. Previously, she served as NGO Coordinator for Central and South America overseeing complex EU and government funded programmes. She holds a degree in Foreign Languages and Literature and a Master's in Non-Profit and NGO Management. Her professional background includes extensive experience in project design, monitoring and evaluation and in fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development. Beyond her professional career, she is a wine connoisseur and advocate for sustainable gastronomy. She is an active member of the Slow Food network, promoting local food cultures and responsible consumption.

SPEAKERS



Elisabet Nyquist

Managing Director, Opes Fund

Elisabet Nyquist joined OPES-LCEF as General Manager in 2019, where she oversees the organization's current investment portfolio. She has played a key role in spearheading initiatives such as the COVID-19 relief facilities "Restart East Africa" and "Restart Italy" and their successors, "Restart Catalyst" in East Africa and "Rigenera" in Italy.

With over 30 years of management experience across various sectors, including education, health, and venue management, Elisabet brings extensive expertise in integrating and coordinating business functions to optimize organizational efficiency. She has successfully led several company turnarounds.

Earlier in her career, she worked as a consultant with McKinsey & Company in Scandinavia, Italy, and Russia and served as a Trade Commissioner for the Swedish Trade Council in Italy. She is also a board member of Bastogi S.p.A., a publicly traded Italian company. Elisabet holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Stockholm University and an MBA from INSEAD in France.



Dr. Elliott Grant

Visiting Fellow, Cambridge University Institute for Manufacturing

Elliott Grant works at the intersection of technology and agriculture, and has led the development and commercialization of breakthrough technologies throughout the global food system. In 2017 Dr. Grant joined Google[X] to lead the development of foundational AI for agriculture, and in 2023 became CEO of Mineral - one of

Alphabet's "Other Bets". He serves on the boards of Sun World International and the International Fresh Produce Association, and is a Scientific Advisor to Driscoll's. Prior to joining Google, he was the CEO of ShopWell Labs, a pioneer of personalized nutrition; the founding CEO of HarvestMark, a world leader in food traceability; and a management consultant at McKinsey & Company. He has been awarded over 50 US Patents and invented the VoiceCode - a traceability standard on every case of fresh produce in N. America. He earned a PhD in Engineering from Cambridge University. He advises startups and is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing, where he researches AI and the future of agriculture.



Ena Derenoncourt

Senior Officer at the CGIAR Hub for Sustainable Finance (Impact SF), Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Ena Derenoncourt is a Senior Officer at the CGIAR Hub for Sustainable Finance (ImpactSF), where she integrates gender dimensions into investment strategies, due diligence, and technical assistance to accelerate agri-SME growth and mobilize private capital for climate-resilient food systems. She leads the Rwanda

Adaptation Acceleration Program and Agritech4Rwanda Innovation Challenge, and has advanced gender-smart accelerator programs in Senegal supporting women-led agribusinesses. With 15 years of leadership experience in agri-SMEs and an MBA in Agribusiness, Ena has supported over 200 enterprises and facilitated fundraising for 30, securing average investments of \$150K.

SPEAKERS



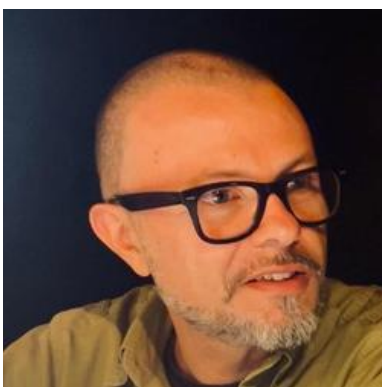
Elzandi Oosthuizen

SVP Head Enterprise Corn Product Team, Bayer

Elzandi Oosthuizen is part of the global strategy leadership team at Bayer's Crop Science division where she leads the enterprise corn product team.

She has held various global and regional leadership roles across the company's Seed & Traits, Crop Protection and Vegetable operations and lived and worked in several countries. Prior to her current role, she was part of the R&D leadership team leading the crop technology team

focusing on corn, soy and cotton crops. Before working in the corporate setting, she taught post graduate mathematics, and high school science and math. She advocates for S.T.E.M. education and is passionate about inspiring and developing people. Elzandi is passionate about promoting diversity and inclusion, as well as empowering women. She demonstrates this through her involvement in several initiatives. She was a recipient of the 2024 Women in Agribusiness Demeter Award of Excellence, she was also an advisory board member for the 2019 Women in Food & Agriculture event and was named an Eisenhower Fellow for the Zhi-Xing 2017 program. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Science and Mathematics and a Bachelor of Science Honors in Genetics from the University of Pretoria. She also holds a Master of Science in Agricultural and Horticultural Plant Breeding from University of the Free State and an MBA from North-West University in South Africa.



Fabio Beninati

Research & Development Manager at Granarolo

Fabio Beninati is a Research & Development Manager at Granarolo, the leading Italian dairy group, where he spearheads innovation across product lines—enhancing versatility, shelf life, and adapting to evolving consumer and environmental needs.

With over 20 years of experience in NPD across Italy, Ireland, and the UK, he brings a deep passion for food and a proven ability to deliver disruptive, market-ready

solutions. Beninati leads cross-functional teams in developing breakthrough innovations in the protein space—dairy, meat, plant-based, cell-based, and upcycled by-products—balancing strategic, technical, and commercial viability.

He actively scouts global trends, startups, and emerging technologies, driving both internal R&D and Open Innovation initiatives also in alternative proteins.



Dr. Fernando Cantão

Crop Physiology & Food Security, Fundraising, Technology Transfer & Innovation (ICGEB)

Fernando Cantao is an Agronomist Engineer with a degree from the Federal University of Lavras (UFLA), Brazil, where he also earned a Master's in Agronomy/Plant Physiology and a PhD in Applied Botany. He further specialized as a Crop Physiologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), USA and later completed a second PhD in Molecular Physiology at the University of Udine (UNIUD),

Italy. With more than 15 years of experience bridging academia and industry including serving as Director of Product and Field Development at Provivi Inc. in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. In 2024, Fernando joined the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) in Trieste, Italy, where he coordinates agricultural programs and works to translate new technologies into real-world applications, particularly across Sub-Saharan countries.

SPEAKERS



Dr. Fatma Trabelsi

International Cooperation Director, IRESA

Dr. Trabelsi is an expert in Hydrogeology and Geospatial Sciences and a senior international project manager. She is Associate Professor at the Higher School of Engineers of Medjez El Bab (University of Jendouba), with a Ph.D. in Geology (FST, 2013) and a Habilitation (HDR, 2023). Her research focuses on hydrogeology, GIS, remote sensing, hydrology modeling, and machine learning for sustainable water management. She has

authored over 60 scientific contributions. With more than 12 years of experience, she has coordinated 16 international R&D projects and contributed to 8 others, funded by programs such as Interreg NEXT MED, ERASMUS+, PRIMA, PEER-USAID, and bilateral cooperations with Korea, India, France, and Italy. She has also held leadership positions, including Director of International Cooperation at IRESA (Ministry of Agriculture) and National Contact Point for Horizon Europe (Cluster 6) at the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Dr. Trabelsi is president of the NGO ADEP, Secretary General of the Tunisian Chapter of Hydrogeologists (IAH), and an executive board member of Women in GMES & Africa (African Union), where she launched a mentoring program for women in geospatial science. She is also part of the UNU drought committee (AID program). Actively engaged in advocacy and capacity-building, she works to promote sustainable natural resource management and gender equity in science.



Federico Ronca

Lead, Data and Digital Solutions, Food and Water, World Economic Forum

Based in Geneva, Federico is working on the development of the Food Innovation Hubs global initiative and its global community of practice, the Food Innovators Network. With a specific focus on data and digital solutions, he focuses on innovation as a main driver for food systems transformation. Before joining the Forum, he has been running several startup accelerators and innovation programs in Italy and in Sweden to support entrepreneurs to scale their impact, with a specific focus on the agri-food etch sector.



Francesco Tramontin

VP Global Public Affairs, Ferrero

Francesco Tramontin is Vice President at Ferrero, where he leads Global Public Affairs and the European Government Affairs and Communications team. Since joining in 2020, he has driven the company's external engagement on food policy, sustainability, responsible marketing, and health and nutrition, particularly with EU institutions.

Previously, he spent 15 years at Mondelēz International (formerly Kraft Foods) in Brussels, Zurich, and Chicago, where he held senior roles in public affairs and sustainability at global and regional level. He began his career with Cargill and Eridania Beghin-Say, focusing on environmental, trade, and agricultural policy. Francesco holds a degree in International and Diplomatic Sciences from the University of Trieste. He lives in Brussels with his wife and two daughters.



Dr. Gianpiero Menza

**Senior Manager, Partnerships & Innovative Finance,
Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT**

Gianpiero Menza, PhD, is an International Development Professional with expertise in business strategy, management, entrepreneurship, development finance, stakeholder engagement, and resource mobilization. He serves as Senior Manager for Partnerships & Innovative Finance at Alliance/CGIAR. In this role, Gianpiero forges

strategic collaborations between the public and private sectors, cultivate and steward relationships with governmental institutions including Italy, research centers, and universities, and coordinate the Alliance and CGIAR's engagement with G7 and G20 Presidencies. He also contributes actively to global processes like the United Nations on Climate Change (UNFCCC CoP).

Gianpiero's achievements include conceptualizing and launching the CGIAR Accelerate for Impact Platform in 2022. A venture space that nurtures collaboration between scientists and entrepreneurs, driving the development, acceleration, and funding of agri-food and climate-tech solutions. Under his leadership, he manages a dynamic portfolio of global projects within this platform and a team of talented professionals.

Gianpiero holds a Master's in "Business Strategy and Entrepreneurship" from the Bocconi School of Management, as well as a Ph.D. in "The Economics and Management of Natural Resources" with a thesis on "Unlocking the potential of cross-sector Partnerships: a shared value perspective", completed as a Junior Visiting Fellow at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. Beyond his professional pursuits, Gianpiero has also a background as an elite athlete, competing both in sailing and triathlon.



Dr. Guido D'Urso

**Agritech Center (Fondazione Agritech), the Italian
National Research Centre for Agricultural
Technologies**

Prof. Ing. Guido D'Urso, PhD earned his Civil Hydraulic Engineering degree cum laude at University of Naples (Italy) and the Phd in Environmental Sciences at Wageningen Agricultural University. Since 2006 is Full Professor of Water Management and Remote Sensing

at Dept. of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Naples Federico II. He's Member of the Academic Senate and President of the Commission for Research of the University of Naples Federico II, and Delegate of Rector for International Cooperation and Development. From 2011-2020 he has coordinated the PhD Course on "Agricultural Sciences". He has been working since early '90s in the field of Agricultural Engineering, developing new methodologies for Earth Observation data interpretation for water management in agriculture and related hydrological processes. He has coordinated several international research projects in this field, as documented by more than 120 publications on international scientific journals. His research activities, carried out in several countries, including U.S.A., Australia, Near East, have also interested the development of agro-hydrological models for irrigation management and the estimation of soil water content by means of in-situ and remote active microwaves. He has started in 2006 the first "spin-off" company of the University of Naples Federico II, called "Ariespace" with the mission of developing operative applications of satellite remote sensing for land and water management and environmental monitoring.



Dr. Jacob Van Etten

Research Director, Digital Inclusion, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Jacob van Etten is Principal Scientist and Director of the Digital Inclusion research program at the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

In his work, Jacob brings together insights and methods from the social, environmental and plant sciences. His

research focus is on new digital solutions for food systems, agricultural citizen science, and rural extension. He supports the emergence of digital ecosystems in this area, in which digital entrepreneurs, farmers and their organisations, service providers and others create value and synergies by interacting and partnering around digital tools, data, and human capacities. Before joining Bioversity in 2012, he worked for Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Mali, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, and IE University in Spain. He is a Dutch national.



Juan Lucas Restrepo

Director General, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Juan Lucas Restrepo is the Director General of the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), and Trustee for Bioversity International UK/USA. A Colombian and French national, he worked in the agricultural domain, both in the public and private sectors, for the past 25

years. He has significant experience in policy, value chains, markets, and leading agricultural research. He has supported the work of CGIAR through the various governance roles he held over the years in the Committee of Genetic Resources Policy, Oversight and Executive Committees, and as the representative of the Colombian Government on the CIAT Board of Directors as an ex-officio member. Among other positions, in Colombia, he served as the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, as the Executive Director of AGROSAVIA, the largest agricultural research organization in the country, and as Chief Commercial Officer of the National Federation of Coffee Growers. As its Chair, he also led the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR), hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and its efforts to better integrate the agricultural research for the development community, with change and innovation by farmers. He holds a degree in civil engineering from Universidad de los Andes and an MS in agricultural economics from Cornell University.

SPEAKERS



Justin Ahmed

Director, Beanstalk AgTech

Justin is an agribusiness strategy expert and development practitioner who has spent the last decade acting on a commitment to a farmer- and planet-friendly transformation of the global food system. Justin has worked collaboratively with a wide range of food and agriculture focused entrepreneurs and

organisations - smallholder farmers, governments, investors, and Fortune 100 companies alike - to develop, refine, and execute strategies.

Before joining Beanstalk, Justin was a project leader within McKinsey & Co.'s Global Agriculture practice. Previous professional experience included time with Enclude (now Palladium), Syngenta Foundation, and CIMMYT. With on-the-ground experience across North America, Africa, South Asia, and Australia, Justin brings a global view to food and agriculture systems development, as well as deep experience in managing programs and technology transfer across borders. Core topical areas of expertise include digital agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, and food security; functional competencies include commercial strategy, corporate strategy, due diligence, and analytics.

Justin holds an M.A. in International Development Economics and Finance from Johns Hopkins University, and a B.A. in Environmental Economics & Policy from University of California-Berkeley.



Lisa Blangy

Deputy Director of the Directorate for Science Impact and Marketing (DIMS) CIRAD

With a background in languages and international trade and an Executive MBA (Montpellier Business School), Lisa Blangy has been working at CIRAD and within its ecosystem for over 20 years. At CIRAD, the French agricultural research centre for cooperation in tropical and Mediterranean countries, and for a time as sales

manager of its subsidiary PalmElit, she has developed her knowledge of scientific issues in agroecology and the environment, as well as advanced skills in research promotion, intellectual property and science marketing in the socio-economic sector. Now Deputy Director of Impact and Science Marketing, she co-leads a professional team working on the project cycle, from promoting scientific offerings to public and private donors, to capitalisation and advocacy, including project design, 'change-oriented' approaches, contractualisation, and harmonised practices for the implementation of major structural projects. Convinced of the value of strengthening innovation processes by bringing together stakeholders from ecosystems including research, she contributes to innovation for impact in the South and to Montpellier's international stature by contributing to structure an International Innovation Hub rooted in Montpellier.

SPEAKERS



Mariëlle Karssenbergh

Partnerships Builder, Netherlands Food Partnership

Mariëlle Karssenbergh is a Partnership Builder at the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP), an organization dedicated to promoting, initiating, and facilitating multiple stakeholder partnerships that accelerate sustainable food system transformation globally. In her role, she connects diverse stakeholders across sectors and scales to advance food systems in low- and middle-income countries. She supports the strategic partnership between the Netherlands and CGIAR and driven by a deep passion for integrating biodiversity into food system transformation, she works to break down silos and foster synergies that enhance both food security and ecosystem resilience at local, regional, and global levels.



Megan Steele

Project Coordinator, A4IP, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Megan supports scientists and entrepreneurs in translating research into scalable solutions by coordinating accelerator programs, fostering strategic partnerships, and organizing high-impact innovation events: such as RAMP – Research and Market Pathways, an internal accelerator helping CGIAR-led innovations reach market readiness; the Venture-Out Events series, seminars connecting researchers with startups and investors to spark scientific entrepreneurship; and other global engagement activities, including CGIAR's presence at international industry events like the World AgriTech Innovation Summits. Originally from the Washington D.C. area, Megan holds a degree in International Relations from The College of William & Mary. Prior to joining the Alliance, she worked as a Senior Research Assistant at AidData.



Monika Froehler

CEO, Ban Ki-Moon Centre

Monika Froehler is CEO of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens and is a passionate change maker, advocate, founder and speaker. She was entrusted to create the BKMC after working at the UN in Geneva, NY and Vienna, the EU, the Austrian Foreign Ministry and in field missions around the globe. She is passionate about the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. Throughout her career she managed to support hundreds of women, young people and communities all over the globe e.g. working in Africa and Latin America to ban landmines; working to improve hospital care in rural Central Asia and Africa; assisting in eco-friendly city planning in Asia and bettering the living conditions of women in the Middle East and West-Africa.



Dr. Mohamed Wageih

Project Officer, PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area)

Certified STI/M&E Specialist, an International Expert in EU Project Development & Coordination

Dr Wageih is working at the PRIMA Secretariat, based in the vibrant city of Barcelona. He is a certified STI policy professional and M&E specialist from the International Labour Organization (ILO) with a proven track record of

expertise in EU project management. Before PRIMA, he served as the Director of the Observatory of Business Innovation & Social Entrepreneurship at an Egyptian private University, besides holding a pivotal position as an EU Project Coordinator at the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology and an R&I consultant at various Egyptian and European institutions. Over the years, Dr Wageih has successfully developed and coordinated a portfolio of over 25+ EU-funded projects and actions (EuropeAid, FP7, H2020, Horizon Europe, DG NEAR ...others) across Egypt, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, reflecting his deep understanding of international cooperation and R&I dynamics. The projects were mainly in Entrepreneurship and business acceleration/incubation of agribusiness (i.e. InnoEgypt, MEDUP, WOMENUPI, TED PPP, MC2...and others). More than 30+ Agribusiness SMEs and startups have been created via the projects. He is monitoring and overseeing more than 45+ PRIMA Agrofood-funded projects spanning Europe and the MENA region. His visionary leadership has led to the creation of innovative tools such as the PRIMA Intelligent Analytical Tool and PRIMA Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Platform (PRIMA MEL). He has further enriched his knowledge through certified training and specialized internships at prestigious institutions, including UNESCO, the World Bank, DLR, iFQ, and Manchester Univ. Moreover, he has co-authored several policy papers, reports, and a book chapter on Social entrepreneurship in Africa and MENA. He has represented PRIMA at numerous regional and international conferences and delivered training sessions at different EU-Mediterranean countries.



Moritz Dolinga

AgriTech Market Research Analyst, A4IP, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Moritz Dolinga works as AgriTech Market Research Analyst Consultant at the CGIAR Accelerate for Impact Platform (A4IP). As an anthropologist with over 5 years of experience researching innovation processes in the agricultural and food sectors, Moritz supports A4IP's mission through in-depth market research, policy recommendations, and research outputs. His work involves collecting and analyzing data, synthesizing insights, and developing publications tailored to diverse audiences, including industry players, policymakers, business leaders, and the scientific community. Moritz has an academic background in the social sciences, specializing in agriculture and food technology innovation. Before joining the Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT, he worked as a research associate in the projects "Reimaginings of Land and Agriculture in The Context of Digitisation" and "Negotiating, converting and interconnecting life in digital agriculture". He holds a Master's degree in Sociology and Cultural Anthropology from the University of Basel and is currently pursuing a PhD focused on the founding, funding, and scaling processes of agrifoodtech startups. His research examines the role of industry partners, venture capital firms, and innovation intermediaries in the development of new agricultural and food technologies. Driven to contribute to more sustainable, ethical, and just food systems, Moritz aims to leverage his interdisciplinary knowledge, research skills, and analytical expertise to support the creation, funding, and scaling of impactful agrifoodtech innovations.



Dr. Shiva Loccisano

CEO, Almacube

With more than 18 years' experience in Technology Transfer and Innovation, Shiva has been the Head of Technology Transfer at Politecnico di Torino for more than 10 years. He is currently CEO at AlmaCube srl, the incubator and innovation hub of the University of Bologna and Confindustria Emilia Area Centro and at BeHold srl, the holding company managing the University of Bologna's Spin-offs portfolio. He sits on the board of InnovUp (the Italian innovation and startup ecosystem) and was board member at Netval (where he launched and served as Senior Project Manager for the Knowledge Share project) and Council Member within ATP (Alliance of Technology Transfer Professionals). He also served as Vice-chair of the Technology Transfer Committee within LES International and is an active member of ASTP.



Susanna Ercolani

**Science Valorization & Market Strategy Consultant,
Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT
(Alliance/CGIAR)**

Susanna Ercolani is Science Valorization & Market Strategy Consultant at the CGIAR Accelerate for Impact Platform (A4IP). She works closely with entrepreneurs, supporting them through accelerator programs and fostering connections with industry experts, corporates,

and investors — helping bridge the gap between scientific research and market-ready solutions. She supports the design and implementation of lab-to-market programs across countries, ensuring content alignment, program design consistency, and cross-country collaboration.

Susanna is passionate about startups, entrepreneurship, and innovation, particularly in emerging markets. She had 5 years of experience working with founders, and advises and mentors scientists on business validation, go-to-market strategy, business modeling, and fundraising.

Prior to joining the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, she managed the startup incubator and accelerator programs at eWorks, Esade's startup platform, where she served as the main point of contact for its founder network. She also teaches entrepreneurship at Esade Business School.

Earlier in her career, Susanna worked in innovation consulting, delivering startup programs and entrepreneurial training. She also co-founded a tourism-tech startup, gaining hands-on experience in team building, product launch, and early customer acquisition.

She currently serves on the board of BeEntrepreneurs, an NGO that trains African entrepreneurs and connects them with the European innovation ecosystem.



Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg

**Managing Director, Africa, Alliance of Bioversity
International and CIAT**

Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg is a distinguished leader in food systems and social inclusion, currently serving as Managing Director for Africa at the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and as a Trustee on the Bioversity UK/USA Board. She previously served as a Senior Fellow at the Ford Foundation, Founder and Executive Director

of Black Women in Executive Leadership (B-WEL), and Executive Director of the Rise program, a joint initiative of Schmidt Futures and the Rhodes Trust. Earlier, she directed African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) and founded Akili Dada, an award-winning leadership incubator for young women.

Dr. Kamau-Rutenberg sits on several influential boards and committees, including the Syngenta Foundation, Autodesk Foundation, Global Food Banking Network, and the Council of Co-Impact's Gender Fund. She also serves on the Malabo Montpellier Panel and the Africa Food Prize Selection Committee.

A former assistant professor of Politics at the University of San Francisco, she has been honored as a White House Champion of Change, one of the 100 Most Influential Africans, and a Ford Foundation Champion of Democracy, among other accolades. Born in Kenya, she holds a PhD and MA in Political Science from the University of Minnesota, and a BA and honorary doctorate from Whitman College (USA).

SPEAKERS



Winnie Wambugu

Venture Science Doctorate Candidate, Deep Science Ventures

Winnie Wambugu is a Venture Science Doctorate candidate at Deep Science Ventures, currently based in Kenya. She is dedicated to translating deep scientific research into scalable, real-world solutions, working towards the commercialization of innovations that address pressing agricultural challenges. Her work focuses on reducing postharvest losses in tropical export markets, strengthening smallholder farmer livelihoods, and integrating gender and climate resilience into sustainable food systems. Ms. Winnie bridges frontier research with market ready technologies, fostering inclusive approaches that balance economic viability, environmental sustainability, and social impact. Through her work, she aims to demonstrate how science driven innovation can be effectively applied in emerging markets while generating global relevance and impact.



Ygor Scarcia

Industrial Development Expert, UNIDO

Ygor Scarcia is an Industrial Development Expert with more than 15 years of service at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). His career has been dedicated to supporting private sector development in some of the world's most fragile and crisis-affected contexts, with a strong focus on SME growth, access to finance, and industrial policy reform.

Currently based in Vienna, Ygor provides strategic guidance on the growing Somalia technical cooperation portfolio while also working to replicate successful approaches in other post-crisis countries. His recent work includes advancing projects that integrate climate adaptation, renewable energy, and bioeconomy solutions into SME and value chain development, aligning local industrial and productive sector growth with global climate adaptation and sustainability goals. Ygor holds an MBA from the University of San Francisco and degrees in MA in International Relations and BA in Political Science from LUISS University in Rome. He has also authored publications on special economic zones, private sector development, and post-crisis economic transformation.

SPEAKERS



Romano De Vivo

Speaker Coordinator and Chair

Romano De Vivo is a senior executive and thought leader with over thirty years of international experience advancing sustainability, innovation, and governance across the health, agriculture, and food sectors. An economist by training, he has held global leadership roles including Vice President of Sustainability at CropLife International, Global Head of Sustainability at

Givaudan, and Global Head of Environmental Policy at Syngenta.

He currently serves as Vice Chair of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAiR) and Chair of the Advisory Board of A4iP's Research and Market Pathways (RAMP). Recognized for his ability to bridge corporate, academic, and institutional sectors, he fosters collaboration among international organizations, industry, and research networks to accelerate sustainability and innovation in food systems.

He is a Senior Research Fellow at CCRS in Zurich and OPERA Research at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Piacenza, and regularly contributes to international dialogues on climate and sustainability. Based in Basel, he holds Swiss and Italian citizenship.

ARTEMIS

IMAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR A FOOD SECURE FUTURE



Represented by: Hana Gajdosova
Internal Innovation of Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, part of A4IP's RAMP

Artemis leverages AI to develop and deploy transformative tools to support digital phenotyping for crop breeding in the Global South. Artemis uses both Computer Vision and Large Language Models to increase the efficiency, consistency, relevance and

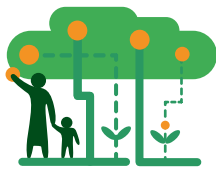
quality of phenomic data collection. Better data leads to better and faster decision-making on which germplasm performs best. Artemis democratizes data collection and enables the collection of data from the farm so that new varieties better reflect farmer conditions.



Represented by: Julien Simonis
Internal Innovation of Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, part of A4IP's RAMP

The Cacao of Excellence Training and Certification Programme is the first global initiative dedicated to building skills and recognition in cacao quality assessment. It provides structured training and certification in the application of science-based

international standards, enabling stakeholders to understand and communicate on the quality and flavour of their cacao. With demand already from over 40 origins, it is set for rapid global adoption – unlocking new opportunities to value cacao quality across the sector.



MY FARM TREES

RESTORATION FOR RESILIENCE



Represented by: Christopher Kettle
Internal Innovation of Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, part of A4IP's RAMP

My Farm Trees empowers restoration for resilience and provides a platform to promote tree cover using native trees, and includes documentation, verification and quality control. It uses blockchain to create a transparent link of information from seed collection to tree growth – to improve livelihoods, food security and climate.

mitigation. The platform is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and executed by the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), with additional funding in Cameroon from the Darwin Initiative.



TUMAINI APP

DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM TO ENHANCE CROP HEALTH



Represented by: Michael Selvaraj
Internal Innovation of Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, part of A4IP's RAMP

Tumaini is a digital tool that uses artificial intelligence, smartphone-based imaging, and drone technologies to detect and diagnose crop diseases early, provide tailored management advice, and connect farmers with actionable knowledge. It empowers smallholder farmers

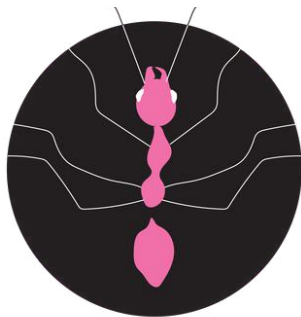
by transforming their mobile phones into portable plant health assistants while drones capture larger-scale field imagery to monitor crop health, stress, and disease spread across landscapes. Together, these tools generate rich phenotyping data that can feed into breeding and genomics pipelines. By integrating farmer-driven citizen science with advanced analytics, Tumaini enhances both immediate on-farm decision-making and long-term crop improvement efforts.

STARTUPS

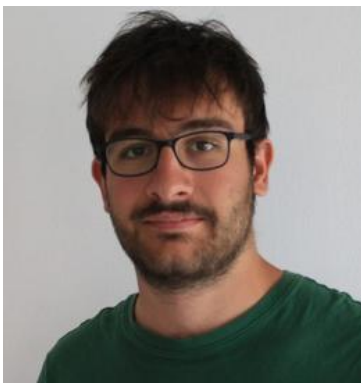


Represented by: Antonella Bellina
Co-Founder and CEO, AlmaSerum

Italian nanotech startup specialized in the creation of innovative and sustainable filtration system, focusing on whey by-products. We innovate sustainable filtration using electrosun membranes from proprietary machines. Our membranes filter seroproteins from whey, clean water and become nutrient-rich new product for cosmetic and biomedical industries.



GreenAnt



Represented by: Mario Simmaco
CEO, Green Ant

GreenAnt leverages satellite radar and AI to deliver accurate flood risk forecasts, real-time monitoring, and proactive insurance solutions. Through our Desidera platform, we also provide insights on crop yield, deforestation, and soil health to strengthen climate resilience across sectors.



Represented by: Reggie Okoko
CEO and Co-Founder, Jani AI

JANI AI is a cloud platform that digitizes the traceability of food systems in Africa, from farm to fork. It helps agribusinesses track their resources across the supply chain, generate reports easily, as well as record keeping management.

NormaTech



Represented by: Wendy-Jan Osman
Founder, NormaTech

Norma Tech is an innovative solution to one of the world's leading crises: food security. It harnesses innovative farming techniques such as aquaponics, soilless gardens, hydroponics, and other agroecological methods to produce food in areas with limited space and resources, such as coastal cities and urban centers, where demand for food is high but supply chains are broken and food quality is poor. By merging technology and agriculture, Norma Tech makes it possible to grow food anywhere, regardless of climatic conditions or resource constraints. Its locally fabricated aquaponics systems can grow peppers, lettuce, herbs, and even beetroot. While such innovations have been proven effective in other parts of the world, they remain underdeveloped in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Norma Tech is taking the lead. Life depends on the food we eat. At Norma Tech, they believe life is green!

PeelPack



Represented by: Slava Drigloff
Co-Founder & CEO

PeelPack is a Swiss-based company that transforms agricultural by-products into industrially compostable, food-safe packaging for fresh berries, fruits and vegetables. Our novel proprietary bioplastic combines the functionality of conventional plastic with the sustainability of compostable materials, ensuring cold-chain stability, moisture resistance, and easy integration into existing retail automation. By replacing single-use plastics with a circular, cost-competitive solution, PeelPack helps retailers and producers cut CO₂ emissions and comply with upcoming sustainability regulations.

Regrowth

ANIMAL-BASED INTELLIGENCE



Represented by: Michael Odintsov Vaintrub & Pierfrancesco Di Giuseppe

Regrowth is an Italian startup developing Precision Livestock Farming solutions for small-scale farmers, making production more sustainable both economically and environmentally. Our system, LEAF – Live Environmental & Animal Feedback, is affordable,

scalable, and adaptable to different livestock systems. It combines customizable sensors with proprietary AI analytics, giving farmers real-time insights into animal health, behavior, and environmental conditions. With LEAF, farmers can improve animal welfare, cut antibiotic use, boost efficiency, and provide the first mile of digital traceability for the entire supply chain—even in marginal areas. Beyond farmers, governments and industry players can also leverage this data, turning LEAF into a true enabler for the whole livestock sector, from producer to consumer.



**Represented by: Alessandro Chelli
CEO and Co-Founder of Trusty**

Trusty is a Benefit Corporation specializing in digital traceability for agri-food supply chains. Founded in 2022 as a spin-off from a blockchain solution developed by Apio S.r.l., Trusty combines advanced technology, industry expertise, and strategic partnerships to help companies manage data and meet regulatory requirements. Its solutions are active in supply chains worldwide, including cocoa in Africa and coffee in South America and India. Trusty is a participant of the United Nations Global Compact and adheres to its principles-based approach to responsible business.

REMOTE SPEAKERS



Barbara Glover

Program Officer, African Union High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies, African Union Development Agency (NEPAD)

Barbara Glover is a dedicated advocate for science, technology, and innovation in Africa. With a background in innovation and emerging technologies and extensive experience in research and policy, Dr. Glover currently serves on the secretariat of the African Union High-Level

Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET) at the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD). In this role, she works towards harnessing scientific advancements for the sustainable development of the continent. Dr Glover's passion lies in promoting collaborative efforts that leverage technology for positive impact across diverse sectors.

She also spearheads work on the AUDA-NEPAD Artificial Intelligence Continental White Paper and Roadmap and the development of innovative policy instruments around AI in sectors like health, education, climate change, and food security. Her current work builds upon experiences working since 2016 at AUDA-NEPAD in aiding African countries in identifying, harnessing, and implementing emerging technologies for Africa's socioeconomic development. In this role, Dr. Glover supports conducting research, analysing data, and strengthening capacity on frontier technologies for socio-economic development. Additionally, she engages in evidence-based analysis of science, technology, and innovation (STI) papers, drafts policy recommendations, develops guidelines for deploying emerging technologies, and contributes to the creation and implementation of capacity-building programs aimed at fostering a culture of innovation among the youth.



Dr. Marcela Quintero

Associate Director General, Research Strategy, and Innovation, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

With 20 years of strong track record of building and leading teams focused on multidisciplinary research for innovation, Marcela Quintero has spent much of her career — from junior scientist to research director — working with diverse disciplinary teams from soils,

forages, crops, to climate change, agrobiodiversity, and socioeconomic studies. Marcela has occupied different leadership positions as Ecosystem Services Theme Leader and Agroecosystems and Sustainable Landscapes Research Director at CIAT, and recently as Multifunctional Landscapes Research Director of the Alliance. Her work entailed building, sustaining and expanding the teams, which required massive efforts to consolidate a coherent research agenda, to promote teamwork, and raise funds. Marcela has been part of core groups that designed research strategies at the organizational level, including the Alliance's 2020-2025 research strategy. She led projects of the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food, and was flagship leader at the CGIAR program on Water, Land and Ecosystems. She has also led the design and now leads the implementation of the CGIAR Agroecology initiative, a transdisciplinary global research initiative that responds to the needs of food system actors in seven countries while aligning with funders priorities. Marcela is an ecologist from the Universidad Javeriana of Colombia, and holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Agronomy at the University of Florida.

Since November 2022, Marcela Quintero is Associate Director General, Research Strategy, and Innovation for the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.



Dr. Vincenzo Lorusso

**Policy Officer, EU-Africa Cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation
EU Chair, AU-EU Innovation Agenda Working Group
European Commission, DG Research & Innovation (DG RTD)**

Dr. Vincenzo Lorusso is a Policy Officer at the European Commission's DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD), where he manages EU cooperation on Research and Innovation

with the African Union and key partner countries, including Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa. He serves as EU Co-Chair of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda Working Group under the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation, and as sherpa to the Governing Board of the Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking. In 2024, he contributed to establishing the African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation (APTF) at the African Development Bank in Kigali. Before joining the Commission, he spent eight years in the pharmaceutical industry as Head of Research and Innovation for infectious parasitic diseases, while co-supervising postgraduate projects in Public Health and Rural Development through an Honorary Fellowship at the University of Salford, UK.

He holds a PhD in Public Health and Rural Development (University of Edinburgh), a Master's in International Development and African Studies (Sciences Po), and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (University of Bari), alongside executive and specialist diplomas in Diplomacy & Health and Veterinary Parasitology and Microbiology. Vincenzo teaches at Sciences Po Paris and is also a multilingual artist and writer, producing hip-hop, reggae, and slam poetry inspired by his experiences "Between Africa and Japan."

ORGANIZERS



Dr. Gianpiero Menza

Senior Manager, Partnerships & Innovative Finance,
A4IP Team Leader, Alliance of Bioversity International
and CIAT



Lindsey Hook

Event Host & Communications and Events
Management Coordinator



Romano De Vivo

Speaker Coordinator and Chair



Federica Siviglia

Programme Assistant