



SCIENCE &
INNOVATION

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION FOR CLIMATE ACTION

FAO Science and Innovation Forum 2023

Digital innovations for climate-resilient agrifood systems: Applications from Asia

Food And Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok

A Webinar

October 17, 14:00 – 16:00 hours (Bangkok, Thailand time)

[Join webinar here](#)

CONTEXT

The Science and Innovation Forum Regional Event for Asia-Pacific will bring together voices of experts and innovators who are driving local solutions applied to agrifood systems that tackle climate change and resource stewardship challenges in their countries.

This year's theme of the FAO SIF will be "Science and Innovation for Climate Action", aligned with the overarching World Food Forum (WFF) theme "Agrifood systems transformation accelerates climate action".

FAO SIF 2023 will focus on enhancing the accessibility of the most appropriate climate technologies, innovative practices and local knowledge in agrifood systems for climate change adaptation, resilience and mitigation. It will allow a more focused and strategic debate on how science, technology and innovation affect vulnerability, impact and capacities, and are essential to transform agrifood systems and boost climate action.

Food Science and Innovation Forum 2023

World Food Forum 2023

ISSUES ADDRESSED

1. Youth-led agritech and startups with successful innovations addressing climate change in agrifood systems results in fresh perspectives in responding to longstanding problems.
2. Leveraging local and community-based knowledge and combined with scientific and technological advances are critical for a sustainable future of the planet.
3. Supporting economic opportunities through innovation and entrepreneurship. Youth or community driven innovations in agrifood systems can create economic opportunities. With the right investments, the development and scaling-up of creative approaches that foster climate-smart agricultural practices can open doors to entrepreneurship. It can lead to green enterprises, value chains and start-ups that can generate employment, incomes and rural enterprises.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Primarily aimed at young entrepreneurs and agritech leaders and innovators who are passionate about addressing climate change issues within agrifood systems. It also targets professionals, researchers, policymaker and organizations interested in youth engagement in agrifood system transformation

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. **Explore** – An increased awareness about ongoing and future climate-related challenges to agrifood systems in the Asia-Pacific region, and the role science and innovation can play to address climate change challenges and to manage trade-offs in encouraging agricultural production, boosting rural incomes while also protecting the environment.
2. **Inspire action** – Showcasing the role of agritech founders and young people in driving innovative technologies and solutions aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change such as climate-smart agriculture, sustainable food production and processing, digital solutions, data-driven decision-making, and community mobilization.
3. **Empower** – Identify barriers and opportunities for integrating science and innovation to address present and future risks from climate change. Using the success stories on innovations shared by the panelists to highlight the capacities, investments and partnerships needed to foster/scale up climate actions in the region.

SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

Opening remarks:

Aziz Elbehri, Senior Economist
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok

Keynote speaker:

Hemendra Mathur, Venture Partner
Bharat Innovation Fund (India)

Theme: Recent developments in science-driven technology innovations targeting climate-compatible and resilient agrifood systems

Panellists

1. **Prateek Srivastava**, Vice President, CropIn (multi-country)

Theme: IOT innovations for healthier soils

2. **Mrinalika Dhapola**, CEO, Grassroots Trading Network for Women (India)

Theme: Sustainable clean energy for rural poor in India

3. **Tushar Gaware**, CEO S4S Technologies (India)

Theme: The role of decentralized renewable energy-based innovations for empowering small holder women farmers

4. **Wisuwat Songnuan**, CSO Advanced GreenFarm (Thailand)

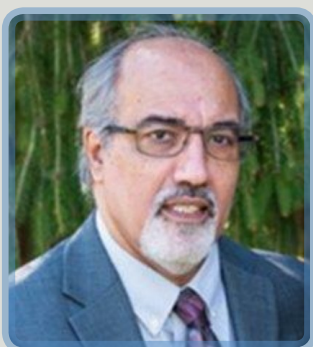
Theme: Wolffia: The Small Plant with a Big Impact on Food Safety and Climate Resilience

Related links:

[Food Science and Innovation Forum 2023](#)

[World Food Forum 2023](#)

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Aziz Elbehri, Senior Economist, FAO RAP

Aziz Elbehri is Senior Economist and stream leader in the Socio-economic Policy and Rural Development Stream at FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok. Aziz was research economist at the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (1999-2008) and from 2008 joined FAO as Senior Economist and Trade and Development Specialist and in 2018 he moved to the Bangkok regional Office. Aziz has a long track of publications in food and agriculture and economic policy issues across a range of subject areas. Aziz was the lead author of the IPCC Special Report on Climate change and Land (issued in 2019). Aziz has worked in over 50 countries across all continents. Aziz holds a Ph.D. in Trade and Development from Purdue University, master's degrees in agronomy and agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota, and an Ingenieur degree in agronomy from the Institut Agronomique in Rabat, Morocco.



Hemendra Mathur, venture Partner, Venture Partner, Bharat Innovation Fund (India)

Hemendra has over 27 years of experience in venture capital, private equity, management consulting and investment banking. He is an investor, board member and adviser in many food and agritech start-ups. Throughout his career, he invested in several early stage agritech and mid-sized companies in the agricultural supply chain. Hemendra is currently working as Venture Partner with Bharat Innovation Fund – investing in early stage deep-tech start-ups across sectors. Hemendra is the co-founder of ThinkAg – a platform for accelerating the adoption of innovations in agriculture space. He is the Chairman of FICCI Task Force on Agri Start-ups. He is also an advisor to a few Foundations, Multilaterals, Corporates and Funds with interest in investing the tech startups in India. He has authored many papers on the subject and speaks regularly at conferences pertaining to food and agribusiness sector as well as start-up ecosystem. He is a management graduate from IIM (Ahmedabad) and Agricultural Engineer from Rajasthan Agricultural University.



Prateek Srivastava, Vice President, Cropln

Prateek Srivastava is Vice President at Cropln, an Agtech multi-country firm. Prateek has over two decades of experience in technology, management, consulting, entrepreneurship, and investing. At Cropln, Prateek is responsible for expanding Cropln's presence in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East, and Africa) with a portfolio encompassing revenue, investments, capacity building, and fostering academic partnerships within the region. Prateek is an entrepreneur who has successfully established startups and raised funds over 20 years of experience. The most recent venture was leading for five years a global precision agriculture startup focused on perennial crops, operating across Spain, the US, and Australia. Prateek was featured in various media platforms, including Fortune, Forbes, The Economist, Bloomberg, Mint, ET, and Nikkei Asia. Prateek Srivastava is based in Arnhem, Netherlands.



Mrinalika Dhapola, CEO, Grassroots Trading Network for Women (Green Initiative of SEWA)

The Grassroots Trading Network for Women seeks to improve clean energy access for rural poor in India and support financial inclusion and gender empowerment of SEWA women members. Mrinalika has 28 years' experience in education, skill development, and corporate social responsibility. Mrinalika specializes in program design and implementation, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and research in a range of fields from health to education, maternal and child health, and community mobilization. She also engaged in initiating training and development programs, identifying skill and competency gaps, and aligning them with overarching business strategies. Her work spanned a range of stakeholders from the private, government, academia to non-profit organizations.



Tushar Gaware

Tushar, leads the Food R&D and Value-Added Products Unit at S4S. This Food R&D unit collaborates with existing S4S business units and Indian and Global companies, to enhance the product line and generate additional margins. Tushar has experience of over 12 years, in areas such as New Product Development, Technology Commercialization, and Supply Chain Management. He established a Central Production Facility of Global Standard (FSSC/ISO) at S4S which caters MNC's. Additionally, he served as the Project Lead for significant initiatives, including Grain Drying with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Cassava Processing and Value Addition in Kenya with UKAID. Tushar has a Ph.D. in Food-Bioprocess technology from the Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai.



Wisuwat Songnuan (Fu), CSO, Advanced GreenFarm

Wisuwat Songnuan (Fu) is the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) at Advanced GreenFarm, a startup specializing in cultivation and product development from *Wolffia globosa*, a highly sustainable food plant. With a background in Genetics and a Ph.D. from Harvard Medical School, Fu is dedicated to plant-microbe interactions, plant defense systems, and molecular plant improvement. In her role as CSO, she guides Advanced GreenFarm towards a more sustainable future, aligning her startup journey with the mission of addressing climate impacts through sustainable agritech innovations.