



# **Supporting Youth & Startups Turning Agri-Food Challenges into Solutions in the MENA Region**

UN-ESCWA - Beirut  
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# Turning Challenges Into Opportunities

## CHALLENGES

- **Global Food Security Problems**, major challenges in the MENA Region
- **Brain-Drain** of graduates & **High unemployment rate** for educated youth
- **Poor practices** and Low productivity
- **Lack of innovation** in the sector

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Strong Human Capital**
  - Excellence in STEM education
  - Strong Diaspora
- **Striving Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**
- **Funding opportunities** for Knowledge Economy Based Businesses – **C331**
- **Dutch Expertise**
- **MENA Market**
- **International community interest**



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PROCESSING &  
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CONSUMER

# Promoting Innovation In for the Agri-Food Sector:



Robotics



Remote Sensing



Automation



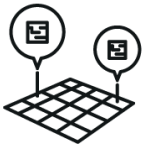
E-commerce



Traceability



Big Data



Artificial Intelligence



Sensors



IOT



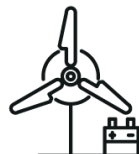
Internet



Logistics



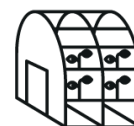
Drones



Energy Efficiency



Payments



Urban Agriculture



Supply Chain

[ the above is a **NON EXHAUSTIVE** List ]

# Hub Pillars



## Grants + M. Grants

Cash grants to support MVP, acceleration and matching grant for the incubation phase



## Acceleration & Incubation

Competition, hosting, acceleration and incubation to support, validation, commercialization internationalization  
Access to funding



## Clustering



Providing a range of support to grow the sector and lobby and support startups and SMEs  
Bring in Expertise



## Online Platform + communication

Promoting the program, open innovation, support interventions



## Tech Transfer

Supporting the valorization of research to commercialization

NL Supporting partners



Program  
co-  
funded

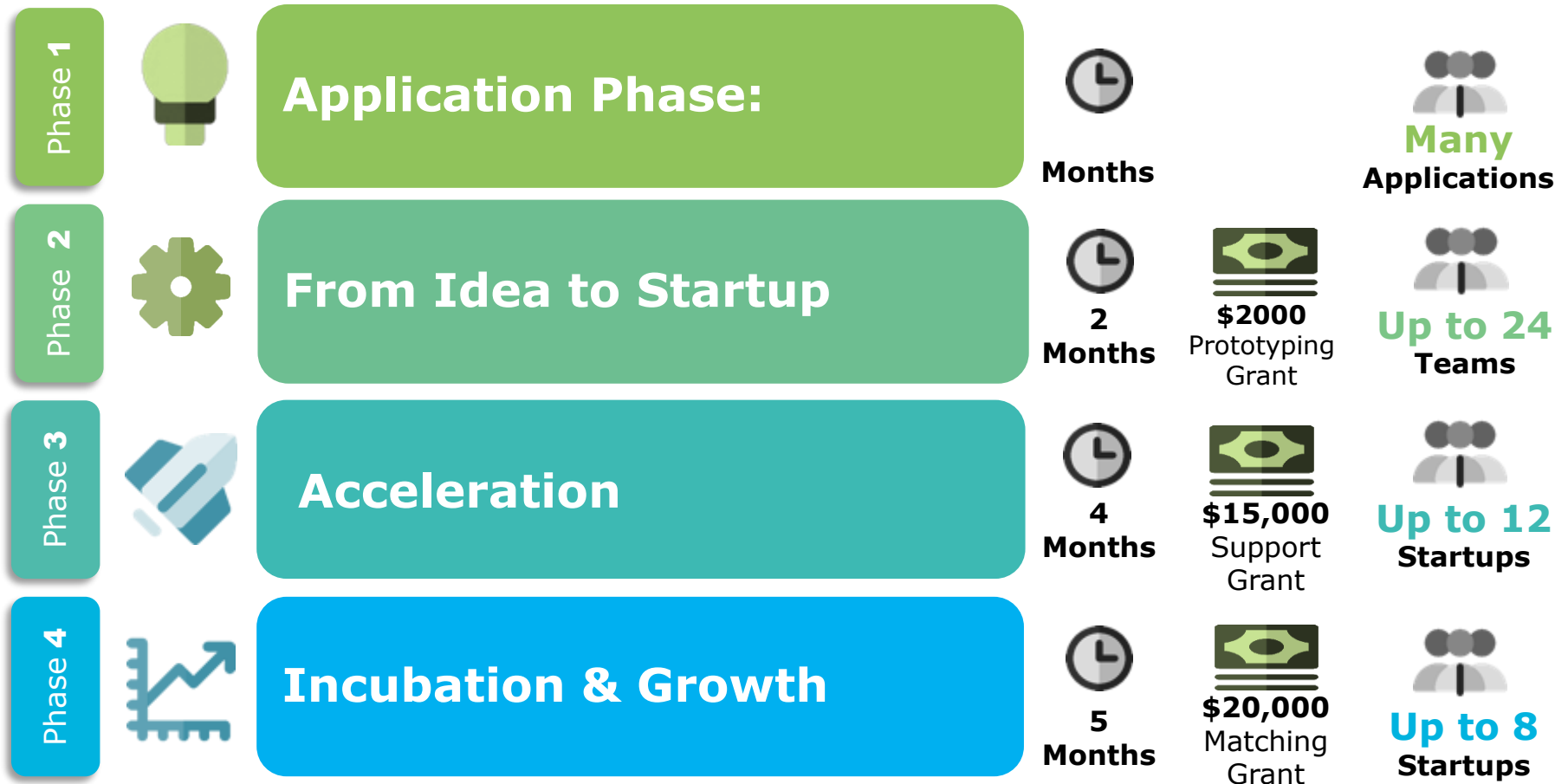


Kingdom of the Netherlands

Berytech

# Agrytech ACCELERATOR (up to \$37,000 cash)

Agri-food Innovation Hub



STARTUP  
FUNDING



PROTOTYPING  
FACILITIES



BUSINESS  
COACHING



CUSTOMER  
ACCESS



INDUSTRY  
CONNECTIONS



FOLLOW-ON  
MENTORING



# Activities



# ACCELERATOR Support

- **Bootcamp:** *Validating business is scalable, investable, has right team:*
  - Business Modeling: Market Validation and Customers Testing
  - Minimum viable product / prototyping
  - Demo, pitching
- **Acceleration:** *Taking product to market*
  - Commercialization / early adopters
  - Investment readiness
  - Business establishment
- **Growth:** *Funding and Internationalization*
  - International exposure / soft landings
  - Investment and scaling





# Batch 1 – Startups who created the value.



Helping Farmers reducing fruits waste and generating more revenue.



Providing Opportunities to freelance caterers  
Increase revenues in underused industrials kitchens & rural cooperatives



Helping Wineries especially in rural areas accessing the market and increasing revenue and production.



100% Natural Meals  
Up to 6 Months shelf life



Providing income to staying home Mothers  
Providing fresh cooked meal to working millennials



Indoor modular vertical Hydroponics system with contract Farming potential



Fresh made Humous with a Click of a Button



Convenience of Freshly cooked health Lebanese Breakfast anywhere



# Batch 2 – Startups who created the value.



Small scale smart Fruit  
Sorting machines adapted to  
local and regional context



Biodegradable Styrofoam  
substitution based on  
Mushroom



AI and Machine learning  
Smart Trap to provide  
direction for Farmers for  
smarter pest management.



Digital Maximization of  
Promotion in small retail to  
improve purchasing activities  
in rural/ small communities



Farm to Processing  
Traceability solution  
adapted to local context, with  
impact on export



Waste Water Composting  
Units to optimize reuse of  
water for agriculture



Last Miles Traceability  
solution for fragile chilled  
food chain



Women empowerment  
platform that promotes rural  
delights and economic growth

Quick test tool for travellers  
to prevent them from turista  
virus

# Reach & Impact



agrytech

## INDIVIDUALS

**+2100 personally informed**

Talks, sessions

**+ 5700 reached**

Social media

**+550 involved**

Participated in at least a full day event [ideation, startup weekend, hackathon]

**+75 funded**

Startups and competition winners

**+ 100 engaged**

Mentors, coaches, influential

## ORGANIZATIONS

**+50 local NP**

**organizations**

**+30 businesses**

**+20 iNGOs and Donors.**

**+15 Universities & Research Institutes**

**+5 investment and Business Angels groups**

# Dealing with Challenges and Scaling impact



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# Connecting the Dots

## - Among Main Challenges Faced

**Disconnect between Agriculture & Technology/Engineering Sectors:** No Clear Understanding (or interest) of Current Status, Challenges and Potential Solutions



**Private Sector Resistance:** Resistance towards posing challenges, and initiating partnerships with potential entrepreneurs for solving challenges

**Lack of Structured Pipeline for Innovation from Universities:** Scarcity of Joint Faculty Research, Lack of Student Orientation towards innovation, R&D.

**Difficulty accessing Syrian/Palestinian** potential Entrepreneurs/co-founder in Batch 1 ventures

# Translating to actions

**Promoting Partnerships with NGOs-  
Post Challenges** for generation of interest /  
Applications



**Promoting Spin-off** as pilot activity with  
small group of companies engaged in  
innovation



Working with Universities on selection  
number of **research projects that can be  
commercialized**



**Holding more Agri-Food Ideation Camps**  
to promote the concept of Smart Agri-Food  
Innovations



# Activities & Outreach



# Be part of this Revolution

- **Be involved, challenge the youth to innovate and solve your challenges**
- **Become a mentor or an advisor**
- **Bridge Sectors**
- **Invest in Innovation**
- **Word of mouth works, Please spread it**



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# Scaling Up Impact!



- **Bridging:**

- Lead a movement of support in the MENA Region Focused on innovation in the Agriculture Water and Energy Nexus.

- **Accelerating:**

- Development of a regional accelerator with international connections and networks in the private and public spaces.

- **Funding:**

- Support the creation of a specialized VC fund for Agri-Food Innovations





**Agrytech**  
Agri-food Innovation Hub

**THANK YOU**  
[www.agrytech.org](http://www.agrytech.org)



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