

# CultivateNext: Sowing innovation, harvesting impact.

Pilot program for: Colombia, Mexico and Guatemala

A collaboration between Seedstars, TechnoServe and CGIAR-Digital Innovation dedicated to sourcing and supporting innovative entrepreneurial solutions to solve some of the biggest challenges in agriculture today.

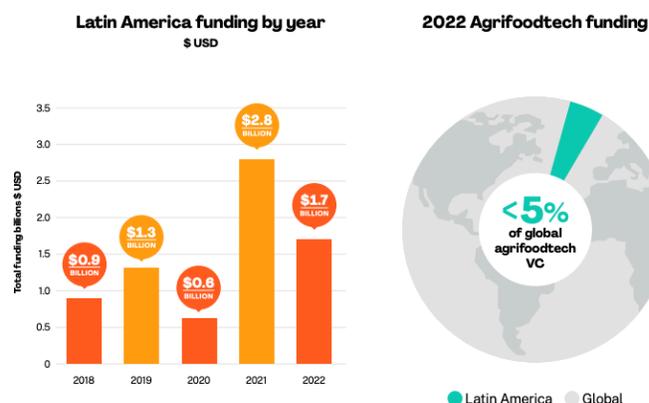
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CultivateNext is a Seedstars, TechnoServe and CGIAR-Digital Innovation initiative designed to accelerate agrifoodtech innovations in Latin America, focusing on sustainable practices and technological advancements. The initiative aims to accelerate agrifoodtech innovations in Latin America by addressing key gaps in digital innovation within agriculture. These include providing sufficient funding, technical assistance, and research-based evidence to prevent pitfalls such as widening digital and gender divides, promoting unsustainable agricultural practices at the landscape level, and developing digital solutions without considering the needs and context of end-users. The program will deploy a targeted **one-year pilot to support high-potential, early-stage enterprises, culminating in investment for scalable solutions**. The pilot will be followed by a four-year program aiming at expanding the initiative globally. Through expert mentoring, rigorous impact measurement and financing opportunities, CultivateNext aims to enhance regional agricultural efficiency and drive significant socio-environmental benefits across three impact areas: poverty reduction, gender equality and climate adaptation.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Latin America is pivotal to global food production, accounting for over a quarter of global exports in agricultural and fisheries products. With its favorable land, water and workforce availability, **Latin America is uniquely positioned to provide two to three of every five fruits and vegetables globally by 2050 (WEE)**. The agri-food system in the region is critical for its potential to moderate and stabilize global food prices, offering widespread benefits to consumers globally. Despite these strengths, the sector is grappling with the **need to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and social equity**. Many of the region's agri-food systems are lagging due to **technical inefficiencies, social inequalities, and environmental challenges**.

Seedstars and TechnoServe see a **transformative opportunity** in supporting local agrifoodtech entrepreneurs in addressing these challenges and thus contributing to advancing innovation and sustainability within the global food system, as well as addressing the pressing challenges of inefficiency, inequity, and environmental sustainability in the region. **The AgriFoodTech sector in Latin America, today receives just 5% of the global investments made**, and although it has experienced remarkable growth, it remains largely underfunded.



## THE SOLUTION

TechnoServe, Seedstars and CGIAR-Digital Innovation have joined forces in designing and delivering **CultivateNext**, a program dedicated to **sourcing and supporting innovative entrepreneurial solutions to some of the biggest challenges in agriculture today**. The program has three key objectives:

1) Building capacity of local agrifoodtech entrepreneurs

2) Mobilizing capital for enterprises in the sustainable agrifoodtech sector

3) Generating positive social and environmental impact (see more in impact framework)

CultivateNext initiates with a **pilot one-year accelerator + investment program in Latin America and the Caribbean**, tailored towards pre-seed and seed stage high-growth potential enterprises with innovative solutions in **(I) regenerative agriculture, (II) renewable energy use in agriculture, and (III) generative AI systems for sustainable agriculture**. These particular sectors have been selected due to their potential to exponentially impact some of the most critical technical inefficiencies and environmental challenges the region is currently facing.

The pilot program will allow for testing the Seedstars, TechnoServe and CGIAR-Digital Innovation methodologies for supporting this type of enterprises in Latam, providing evidence of the results and a basis for creating a long-term initiative at a global scale. The pilot consists of a **six-month accelerator program**, focused on personalized advice and mentoring with agrifoodtech experts from the region and globally, with the **opportunity to validate the innovations** of each participating enterprise by an independent third party. Each innovation will further be evaluated with an **'impact scorecard'**, ensuring that it contributes to the expected social and environmental impact of the program as a whole. Following the accelerator program, the **most promising solutions will receive an investment**, enabling them to scale and grow their businesses. The pilot enterprises will be followed by an additional year after completing the program to measure their progress and impact.

## LONG-TERM VISION

Seedstars, TechnoServe and CGIAR-Digital Innovation see CultivateNext evolving into a **cornerstone global initiative by 2030**, extending beyond the initial Latin America pilot to catalyze agrifoodtech entrepreneurship on a worldwide scale. With a commitment to long-term engagement, the

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program will offer **sustained post-graduation support**, including matchmaking and strategic guidance, ensuring continued growth and success for participating enterprises. This vision, backed by continuous Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), promises a transformative impact on food systems and an attractive opportunity for funders looking to invest in scalable, sustainable agricultural innovations with a clear, long-range strategic outlook and proven impact track record.

September 2024 - February 2025	March 2025 - February 2026	September 2025 - February 2029	March 2029 - January 2030
<p><b>Pilot Program in LAC</b></p> <p>Active engagement of selected enterprises through 1:1 mentorship, collective sessions, strategic guidance on scaling business models and technical expert advice on advancing innovations, complete with validation by third-party and assessment through impact scorecard.</p> <p>The program culminates in a Demo Day where most promising solutions will be selected for investment.</p>	<p><b>Measuring impact results</b></p> <p>Each enterprise is initially assessed with the innovation impact scorecard, and based on its results, a MEL framework is established for each enterprise to ensure it works towards improving its overall score. Seedstars and TechnoServe will continue to offer regular mentorship support throughout this phase.</p> <p><b>In this phase, the results of the pilot will be used to design a long-term global initiative.</b></p>	<p><b>Four cohorts of the CultivateNext program are implemented globally</b></p> <p>Based on the results of the pilot, the global program is developed and adapted according to the needs in each region.</p> <p>Each cohort receives additional support as a member of the alumni network for at least one year post-program.</p>	<p><b>Impact measurement and program evaluation</b></p> <p>Apart from measuring the individual impact of the innovations introduced through the program, CultivateNext will measure the collective impact of end beneficiaries, as well as the broader agrifoodtech ecosystems in regions where cohorts were implemented.</p>

## IMPACT FRAMEWORK

CultivateNext's **unique value proposition** lies in its specialized support for agrifoodtech entrepreneurs in emerging markets, fostering responsible innovations in sustainability, efficiency, and social equity within the agricultural sector. The program uniquely blends targeted mentorship, capital mobilization, and a robust **impact scorecard approach** based on CGIAR-Digital Innovation's **responsible innovations considerations** to catalyze scalable solutions that address pressing global food challenges. The following impact framework outlines the indicators that will be used to set targets for the innovation impact scorecards of each participating enterprise, and enable the program to monitor and evaluate its impact as a whole:

Impact areas	Poverty reduction	Livelihoods and Jobs	Gender equality, youth and social inclusion	Climate adaptation and mitigation
Outcomes	Increased wellbeing and economic security for smallholder farmers and rural communities.	Enhanced income opportunities, improved productivity, and access to resources for farmers.	Increased participation, decision-making power, and access to resources for women, youth and marginalized groups in agriculture.	Increased climate resilience and adoption of sustainable practices among farmers.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increase in average net income per smallholder farmer (disaggregated by gender, youth, and socioeconomic status).</li> <li>* Reduction in food insecurity levels among participating households.</li> <li>* Number of rural communities with improved access to financial services facilitated by digital platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Number of jobs created in the agricultural sector as a result of digital innovation (disaggregated by gender and youth).</li> <li>* Increase in average agricultural productivity per worker.</li> <li>* Percentage of farmers reporting improved access to agricultural information and extension services through digital platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Proportion of women and youth accessing and benefiting from digital agricultural services.</li> <li>* Number of women and youth trained in digital literacy and agricultural skills.</li> <li>* Percentage increase in women and youth participation in leadership roles within agricultural cooperatives and value chains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reduction in water usage per unit of agricultural output through the adoption of precision irrigation technologies.</li> <li>* Increase in the area of farmland under sustainable land management practices (e.g., conservation agriculture).</li> <li>* Percentage decrease in greenhouse gas emissions per unit of agricultural production.</li> </ul>

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To initiate the CultivateNext pilot program, we are seeking **70,000 USD for capacity building efforts** and an additional **1 million USD to invest in pioneering companies** demonstrating high growth potential in the agrifoodtech sector. Looking ahead, for the global expansion of CultivateNext, our financial goal encompasses \$1.5 million annually for program implementation and \$3 million for investments into promising agrifoodtech solutions. This strategic investment will enable us to scale innovative solutions, foster sustainable agricultural practices, and drive significant socio-economic and environmental impacts globally, offering a compelling opportunity for funders committed to shaping the future of global food systems. **We are actively seeking funding partners to achieve these goals and drive impactful change. Join us in this investment opportunity to shape the future of agriculture.**

 <p><b>TechnoServe</b> Business Solutions to Poverty</p> <p>TechnoServe addresses poverty by collaborating with the private sector across nearly 30 countries, empowering individuals in low-income communities to build competitive farms, businesses, and industries. They provide skills, confidence, and connections while facilitating access to information, capital, and markets, ultimately helping millions achieve lasting prosperity.</p>	 <p><b>seedstars</b></p> <p>Seedstars, a Swiss organization, fosters entrepreneurship and talent development globally. With an impact investment fund in emerging markets, it has formed a community of over 250,000 change agents across 90 ecosystems worldwide. Collaborating with various stakeholders, including governments and financial institutions, it works towards building entrepreneurial ecosystems that drive social, environmental, and economic progress.</p>	 <p><b>CGIAR</b></p> <p>CGIAR is a global partnership of 15 research centers working together to address food insecurity, poverty, and environmental degradation through agricultural research and innovation, particularly in low-income countries.</p>
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