innovation rarely succeeds in isolation. It takes science, policy, markets — and most of all, people — to turn ideas into impact. That belief shaped the launch of Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, a collaborative initiative by Social Alpha and Swaminathan Research Foundation (SRF). It sets out to resolve two solutions for smallholder farmers are discovered, scaled, and sustained.

Technotic innovations are rooted same principle in action: start use-entering new geographies, governments opening doors for collaboration, classrooms embracing technology, and farmers willing to try something new. Across pilots in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, certifications field deployments, each intervention is a reminder that progress is stitched together through many threads at other.

As you read through these updates, we invite you to see them not just as achievements, but as signals of what becomes possible when innovation is orchestrated with purpose.

COVER STORY
STATE OF

Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods: A Call to Reimagine the Future of Farming

Today's agricultural sector is undergoing a profound transition. Faced with the twin pressures of climate change and the urgent need to enhance farmers' incomes, SRF — with their distinctive lens, convener, and equity at the heart of agricultural transformation.

Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, launched by Social Alpha in partnership with the S.R.Swaminathan Research Foundation, is a response to this pivotal moment. It is a movement that reimagines agriculture as a space of opportunity, creativity, and dignity. By bringing together innovators, farmers, policymakers, and ecosystem enablers around sustainable value management, the initiative seeks to support solutions that are both locally relevant and globally scalable.

This challenge is deeply rooted in the vision of my father, Prof. S.S Swaminathan, whose life's work was guided by the principle that science must serve the most vulnerable. He believed that true progress has not only in increasing yields, but in empowering farmers, especially smallholders, with knowledge, tools, and agency to make decisions that sustain their livelihoods. Challenge carries forward this idea, encouraging a new generation of entrepreneurs to take bold, and act compassionately.

What excites me most about this initiative is its potential to reshape the innovation ecosystem itself. By creating pathways for young entrepreneurs, researchers, designers, and grassroots leaders to engage with real-world challenges, we are not just building solutions — we are building a future where agriculture is not a last resort or decline, but a frontier of innovation. Your ideas matter. Your solutions can change lives.

MSSRF is proud to be a partner role in this effort, bringing decades of experience in community engagement, ecological sustainability, and participatory research.

Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods reflects that vision, supporting innovations that are practical, inclusive, and rooted in lived realities. We believe that when combined that through this initiative, we will not only discover promising technologies but also nurture a generation of leaders who understand that agriculture as a space for hope, leadership, and lasting impact.

Dr Soumya Swaminathan
Chair, M.S Swaminathan Research Foundation

PERSPECTIVE

The Product Worked. The Pilot Succeeded. The Innovation Still Failed.

It's a pattern we see often in our India, where deep-tech breakthroughs that not because the science is weak, but because the ecosystem is fragmented. Investors fund technology, governments fund implementation, and farmers need results. Bridging that gap is where Social Alpha exists.

In this piece, Akash Pawar, Social Alpha lays bare the orchestration gap that derails scale and shows how Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods is being built to connect innovators with farmers, labs with markets, and policy with on-the-ground realities. Ecosystem orchestration is not a theme in this piece, it is the central argument. Read it if you're trying to turn lab to lab. Read it if you're trying to turn pilot into impact.

Read the full article here

MONTHLY
SCOOP

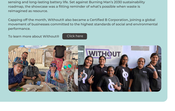
Building Conversations Around Decentralised Energy and Inclusion

September was a month of focused conversations around how renewable energy can power equitable growth and livelihoods. Carmel Newton, Director, Sustain Plus, spoke at the Sustainable Energy Conference, highlighting how decentralised energy models can strengthen rural livelihoods. Sustain Plus also participated in SIPA India's Connect Fest 2026 program, joining a session on Decentralised Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihoods and contributing to a panel discussion on Create Equitable Outcomes. Chandra Prakash Jain represented the Foundation at the Inaugural Conference and Social Alpha's continued focus on underserved and unserved geographies and Women, Dalits, Tribals, Agriculture, and Drought-resilient direct centers.

From Government Endorsement to Grassroots Adoption

In Odisha, we presented our work to the Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha, in support of support for scaling innovations from Biofunctions, Sequoyh, and Nary Farming.

In Uttar Pradesh, a multi-stakeholder workshop in Varanasi with Access Development Services and a Farmers' Meet in Hirapur created direct pathways between our cohort and stakeholders. Twelve Social Alpha start-ups showcased solutions to over 80 participants, including farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and ecosystem leaders. Discussions covered the current landscape of agriculture and the critical gaps that can be filled. Capabilities Agriculture, Nyra Farmtech, Sequoyh, Agrotuse, and Drought-resilient direct centers.



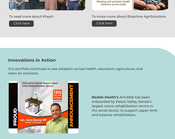
START-UP
SHOUT-OUT

Withsoil at Burning Man — and Beyond

Withsoil recognises, made from "impossible to recycle" multi layered plastic, made their way to the Burning Man Project in Black Rock City this year. They teamed up with Prol Recycling and Plastic Bank to collect and process the plastic waste generated at Withsoil — modular, flexible/weight, 100% unsiding, with advanced environmental sensing and long-lasting battery life. Set against Burning Man's 2030 sustainability goals, the collaboration was a fitting showcase of what's possible when waste is treated as a resource.

Capping off the month, Withsoil also became a Certified B Corporation, joining a global movement of businesses committed to the highest standards of social and environmental performance.

To learn more about Withsoil: Click here

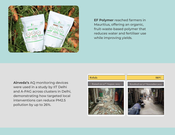


Partnerships for Resilient Agriculture

Two of our portfolio start-ups announced important collaborations this month.

Agrotech signed an MoU with the Directorate of Horticulture and Food Processing, Government of Madhya Pradesh, under the PMRKVY Scheme. As the appointed Implementing Agency, Agrotech will deploy its AI-driven platform across 10 districts, supporting around 350 smallholder farmers, helping them cut climate resilience and improve productivity.

Meanwhile, **Bioprime Agribusiness** has partnered with TCL Growing Solutions India' to integrate Biopreme's microbial solutions from its Bioinnovation platform with TCL's scale and expertise. The partnership aims to improve nutrient use efficiency, restore soil health, and support farmers with sustainable crop management.



To learn more about Agrotech: Click here

To learn more about Biopreme Agribusiness: Click here

Innovations In Action

Our portfolio continues to see adoption across health, education, agriculture, and clean air solutions.

Pragnosticks CERVIRAPID kits were deployed at the Cancer Screening Center in Lucknow in partnership with Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Health Sciences, advancing access to digitised cervical cancer screening.

Beelite Health's AirVeda has been embedded by Peace Valley, Kerala, largest tourism establishment center in Kerala, to monitor indoor air quality and track and balance rehabilitation.

Airmatrix's AQ monitoring devices were used in a study in Delhi and in 4 AHC across clusters in Delhi, demonstrating how indoor air quality interventions can reduce PM2.5 pollution by up to 26%.

ST Polymer reached farmers in Tamil Nadu with its biodegradable fruit-sealer based polymer that reduces water and fertilizer use while improving yields.

Blackfrog Technologies began its pilots in Gujarat, training farmers workers in Jigsaw and Bayeta with its AI-driven bioacoustic sensor carried to strengthen vaccine delivery.

Megafruits, with support from AIBI India Foundation, received the Best Teacher Enablement Program to Bio more than 1,000 teachers and students, now reaching 8% teachers and 30,000 students.

Luxpower became the first Inverd based company to receive certification from the Coastal Aquaculture Authority, CAA, for its silicon-based feed supplement in aquaculture.

MEDIA

And the Winners Are...

Our start-ups continue to be celebrated for their innovation and impact, and we couldn't be prouder of their achievements.

Capsher Agriculture was featured as a Top 5 Agritech Innovator in the World Food Prize Foundation's Increase for Impact Challenge.

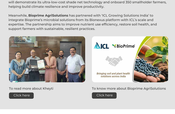
Climatrack's founder, Angel Parameswaran, received the Bharath Entrepreneur Award at the 4th Bharath Entrepreneurship Summit.

Bioprime Agribusiness was recognized as a winner of the Global Call for Impact 2025 by GIZ, in partnership with Bosch Social Impact Foundation, and Nexteer, and will present at the Stockholm Food Forum.

PadCare won the Sustainability Award at the ROUT Hygiene Achievement Awards 2026 for its biodegradable sanitary pad and recycling ecosystem.

Nalini Shekar, co-founder of Hasiru Dala Innovations, was featured in Vogue India's March issue for her work on dignity in waste work, including expanding waste pickers and pioneering decentralised, women-led textile waste management.

New Leaf Operate Technologies was recognized as a winner at ASTICOLD India 2025 – Cooperant Awards for its waste heat recovery technology in cooling applications.



PROGRAMS AND
INITIATIVES

Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods

Technotic Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods is a partnership of shaping sensors sustainable solutions for smallholder farmers and grassroots innovators. This initiative more than innovation. It calls for integrating the practices of farming communities with cutting-edge technologies. In honour of the legacy of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, the initiative is being jointly led by Social Alpha and the S.R. Swaminathan Foundation, in partnership with the M.S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), to identify and support start-ups creating farmer-first technologies in soil rejuvenation, farm mechanisation, and beyond.

The program will support innovators across all stages — from development to pilot to scale-up. Selected innovators will receive mentorship, technical support, access to pilot sites, and funding, market access to 200,000+ farmers and FPO PIPs with up to INR 2 crore in deployment support, community linkages through MSSRF's Village Knowledge Centres, and ecosystem visibility through Social Alpha's platform and Alpha Labs, and the opportunity to raise seed investment from Social Alpha and its partners.

Click here

IN THE
MEDIA

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