

MAY 2026

WORK IN PROGRESS

At Social Alpha, we are in the middle of a great experiment, and everything will remain a work-in-progress.

A newsletter often captures milestones, but the more important story is usually what sits around them. This month, that story sits in the middle, between cotton stalks and carbon removal, between cattle dung and clean energy, between a start-up's product and the capital, validation or deployment pathway that helps it move further.

These are not isolated updates. Each one shows a different part of the journey from invention to adoption, making science usable, making solutions trusted, making deployment viable, and making markets work for people who are too often left at the margins.

At Social Alpha, we continue to see that progress is built through patient work. It needs founders who can stay with hard problems, partners who can stay with long timelines, and institutions that are willing to learn from the field, not just design for it. It also needs humility, because every deployment teaches us something that a lab, a boardroom or a proposal cannot fully anticipate.

Thank you for reading Work In Progress. We hope it offers a closer look at the work behind the milestones, and at the many people, partnerships and ideas that keep moving innovation from promise to practice.

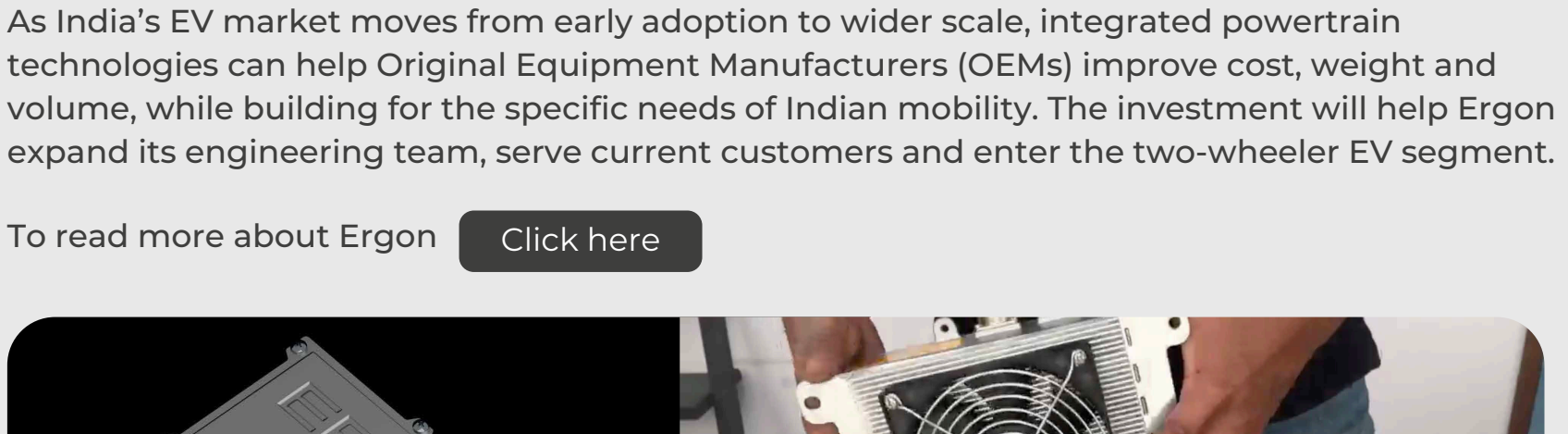
START-UP SHOUT-OUT

Canvaloop Raises \$1.5 Million to Scale Alternative Fibres

Canvaloop, a biomaterials start-up in Social Alpha's portfolio, has raised \$1.5 million from Gujarat Venture Finance Limited (GVFL) and Rockstud Capital to scale its manufacturing capacity, expand its team and strengthen its alternative fibre platform.

The start-up converts agricultural waste and plant-based feedstocks, including pineapple, banana, hemp, flax and nettle, into textile-grade fibres through a low-water, low-chemical process. Its alternative fibres currently help save 20 lakh litres of water per year, require 20% less dyes and chemicals and 25% less land compared to cotton. The funding will help Canvaloop increase production, deepen material innovation and build supply readiness for the textile industry's shift towards more sustainable and circular materials.

To know more about Canvaloop [Click here](#)

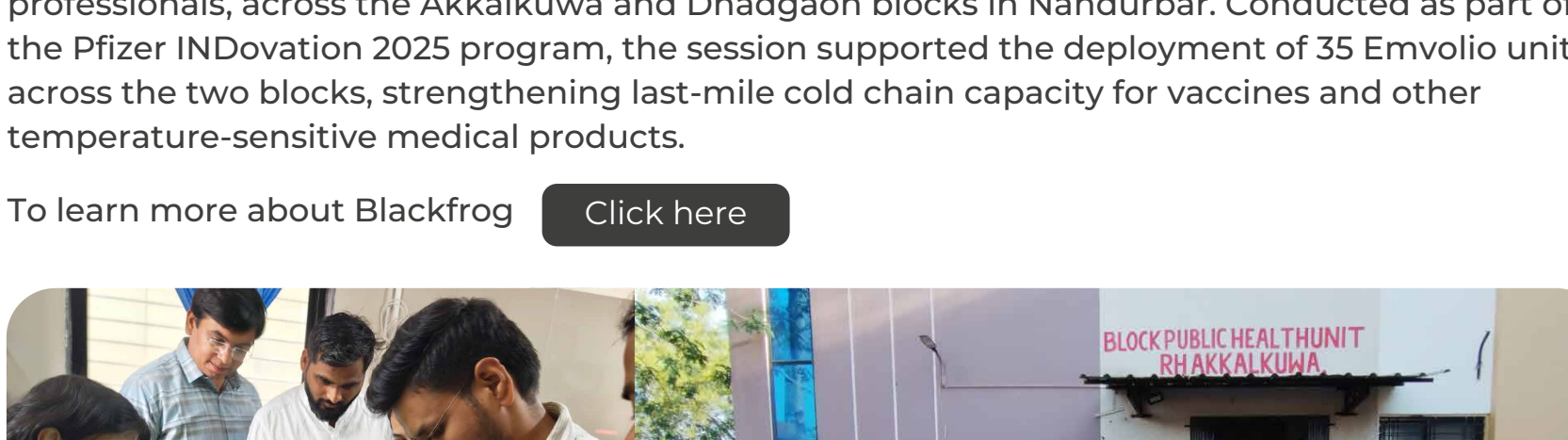


Ergon Raises ₹8 Crore to Scale EV Powertrain Technology

Ergon, a Social Alpha portfolio company, has raised ₹8 crore to scale its team and production capacity for its Integrated Power Converter (IPC), a powertrain technology designed for electric two- and three-wheelers. The round was led by Rainmatter by Zerodha and 3I Partners, with participation from IIMA Ventures and Spectrum Impact.

As India's EV market moves from early adoption to wider scale, integrated powertrain technologies can help Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) improve cost, weight and volume, while building for the specific needs of Indian mobility. The investment will help Ergon expand its engineering team, serve current customers and enter the two-wheeler EV segment.

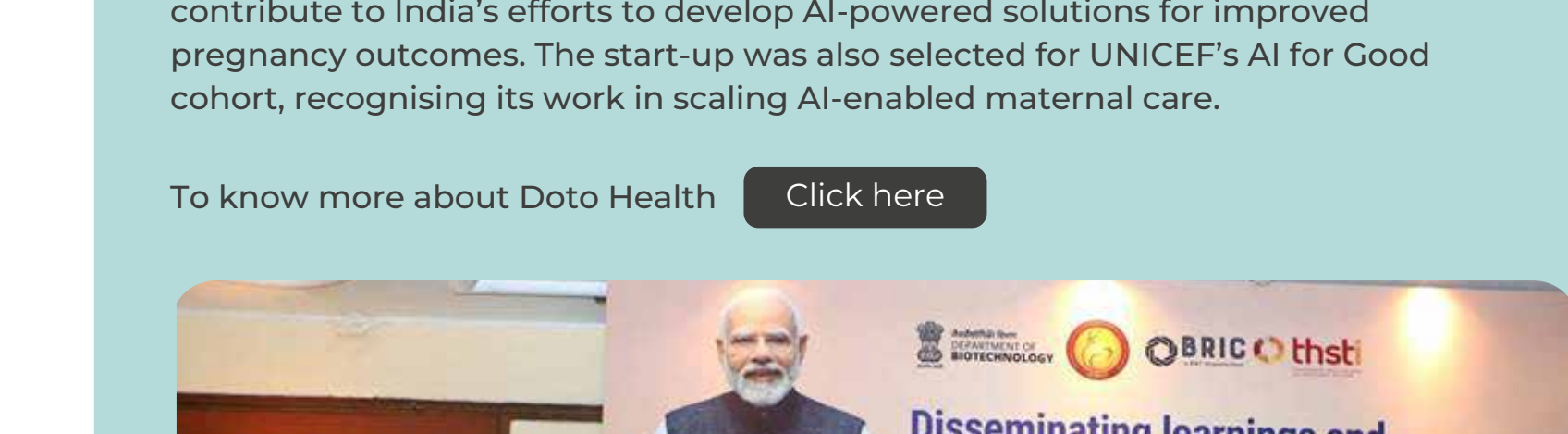
To read more about Ergon [Click here](#)



Blackfrog Strengthens Last-Mile Cold Chain Readiness in Nandurbar

Blackfrog, a Social Alpha portfolio company, conducted a training workshop for 40 healthcare professionals, across the Akkalkuwa and Dhadgaon blocks in Nandurbar. Conducted as part of the Pfizer INDOvation 2025 program, the session supported the deployment of 35 Emvolio units across the two blocks, strengthening last-mile cold chain capacity for vaccines and other temperature-sensitive medical products.

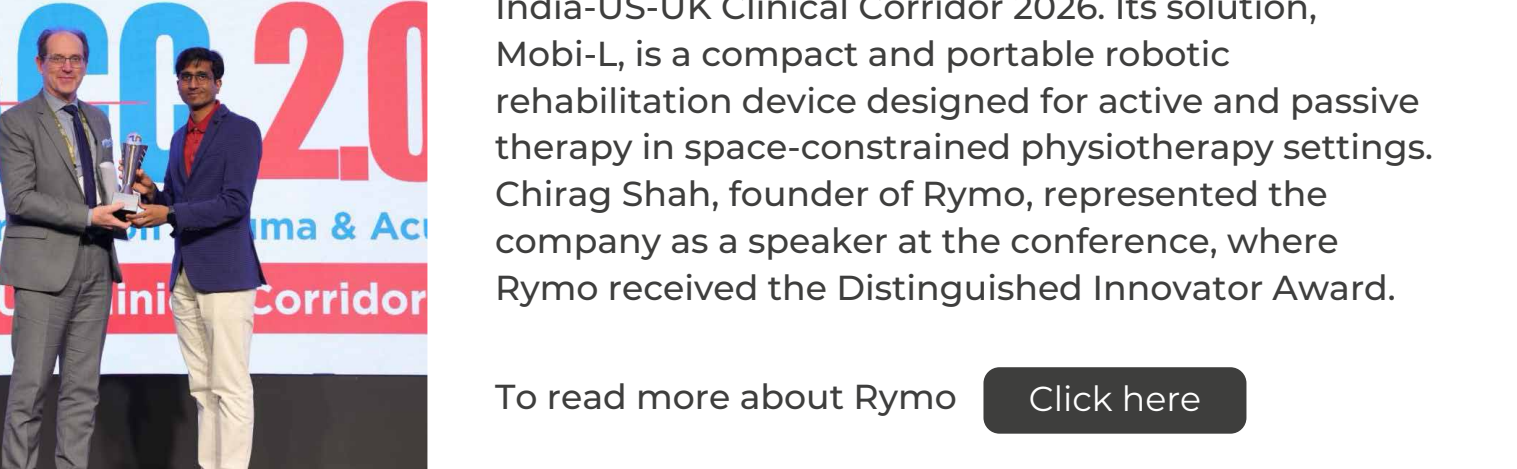
To learn more about Blackfrog [Click here](#)



Doto Health Advances AI-Enabled Maternal Care

Doto Health, a Social Alpha portfolio company, formalised an association with GARBH-INI, a flagship initiative of the Department of Biotechnology, to contribute to India's efforts to develop AI-powered solutions for improved pregnancy outcomes. The start-up was also selected for UNICEF's AI for Good cohort, recognising its work in scaling AI-enabled maternal care.

To know more about Doto Health [Click here](#)



Marengo Asia Hospitals

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Rymo Recognised for Emergency Care Innovation

Rymo, a Social Alpha portfolio company developing smart rehabilitation devices to support mobility recovery, was recognised at the International Conference on Trauma & Acute Care (ITACC 2.0), India-US-UK Clinical Corridor 2026. Its solution, Mobi-L, is a compact and portable robotic rehabilitation device designed for active and passive therapy in space-constrained physiotherapy settings. Chirag Shah, founder of Rymo, represented the company as a speaker at the conference, where Rymo received the Distinguished Innovator Award.

To read more about Rymo [Click here](#)

MONTHLY SCOOP

An Evening with the Authors of *LeanSpark*

At Bangalore International Centre, Prof. Jaideep Prabhu, Prof. Mukesh Sud and Manoj Kumar came together for a conversation on *LeanSpark*, a new book on how India's ingenuity under constraint is shaping a practical approach to innovation across sectors, from drones, EVs and fintech to AI, space, sports and public policy.

Drawing on a decade of research and fieldwork, the book introduces a framework for building ventures, products and systems that are lean in execution, purposeful in simplicity, adaptive in scale and sustainable by design. It also offers tools such as the Frugal Innovation Canvases to help entrepreneurs, institutions and policymakers turn constraints into sharper design choices.

We were also proud to see Social Alpha featured in the book, as part of its exploration of how lean, scalable and sustainability-oriented innovation can move from idea to practice.



From Cotton Stalks to Carbon Removal

Under the Sustain Plus program, Social Alpha has implemented a biochar-based greenhouse gas removal project in Gujarat to reduce emissions from open cotton-stubble burning while creating local livelihood opportunities.

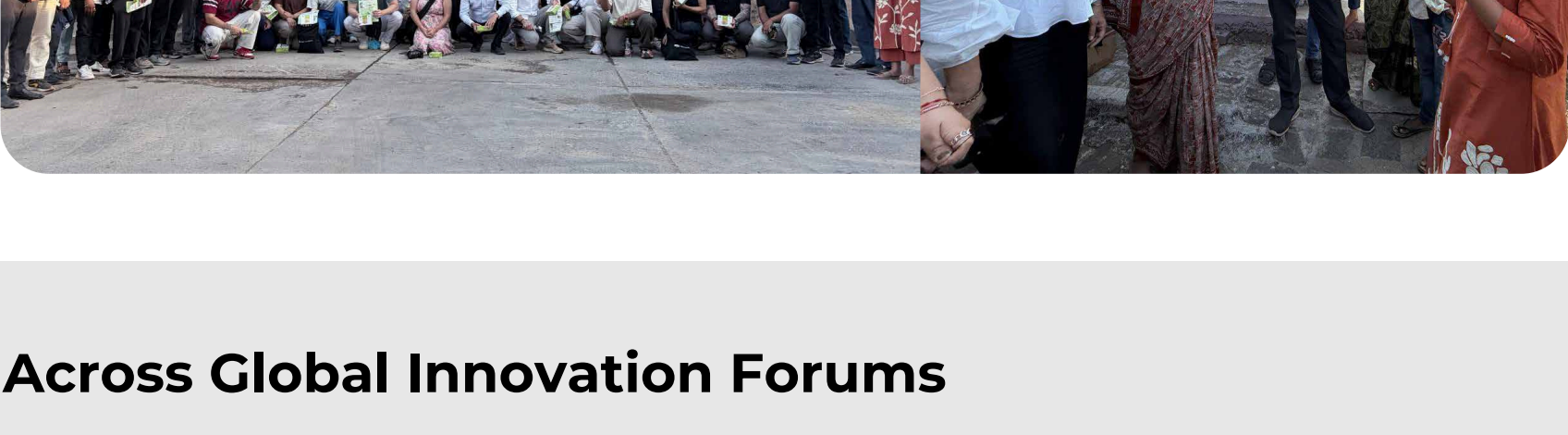
Implemented with CSPC (Coastal Salinity Prevention Cell) and KriSHE Carbon in coastal Saurashtra, the project converts leftover cotton stalks into biochar, which is then used as a soil amendment to help improve soil structure, water and fertiliser retention, and microbial activity. Local entrepreneurs, referred to as Climapreneurs in the project, have been trained to collect cotton stalks at the farmgate, operate Kon-Tiki kilns, and register the biochar produced on an e-MRV (electronic Measurement, Reporting and Verification) app for carbon credit verification and monetisation.

Since January 2026, the project has produced 144 tonnes of biochar, contributed to an estimated 300 tCO₂e mitigation of emissions, engaged 80+ households across 10 villages.



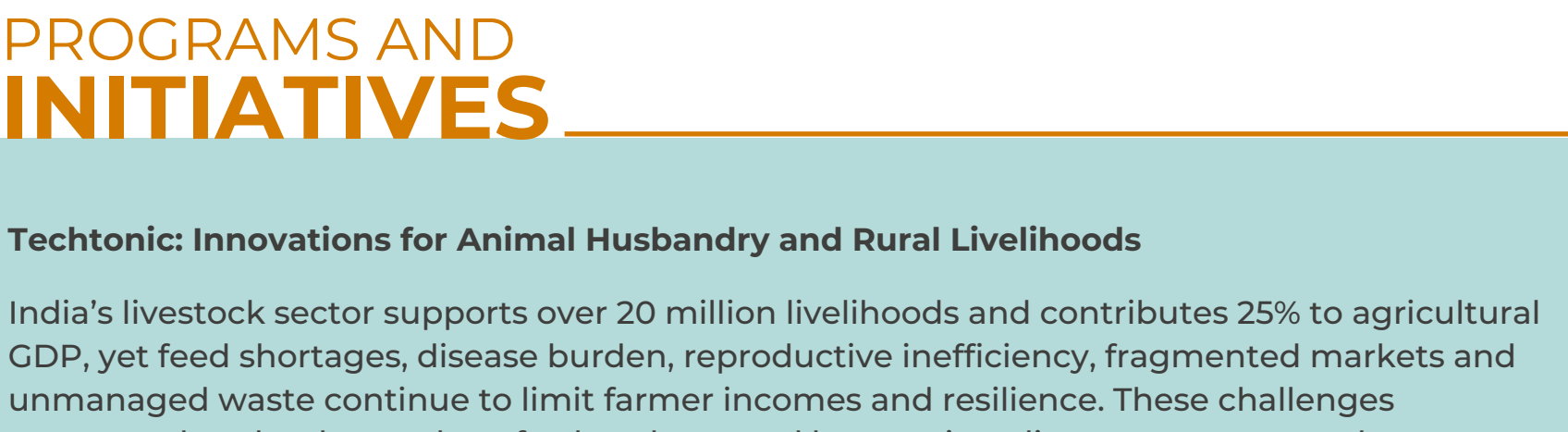
Linking Agri-Innovations to Local Markets

Social Alpha, in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sitapur, organised a workshop for agriculture and allied sector start-ups, bringing together 130+ participants including farmers, FPOs, agripreneurs, dealers, distributors, Cluster-Based Business Organisations (CBBOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and scientists. Featuring 13 start-ups from the India Agriculture Incubation Network (IAIN) program the workshop opened conversations on product trials, dealership opportunities and local market linkages, while generating insights to help start-ups refine their solutions for adoption in the region.



A Closer Look at Rural Circularity

Sustain Plus engaged with IKEA Foundation Ambassadors, along with the Foundation's CEO, Jessica Andersen, and the Foundation's team, through a field immersion on livestock-linked circular economy and climate-smart agriculture. The visit focused on the technical and operational model behind decentralised biogas, including dung-to-energy conversion, slurry processing into organic fertiliser, farmer income pathways, emissions reduction, and the role of grassroots institutions in enabling adoption and scale.



Across Global Innovation Forums

Social Alpha attended two ecosystem convenings in the US this month, Climate Week SF and the MIT KSC Annual Conference on Prosperity and Entrepreneurship. The conversations offered opportunities to build new connections around innovation for people and planet, while also reflecting growing recognition of Social Alpha's work and portfolio.



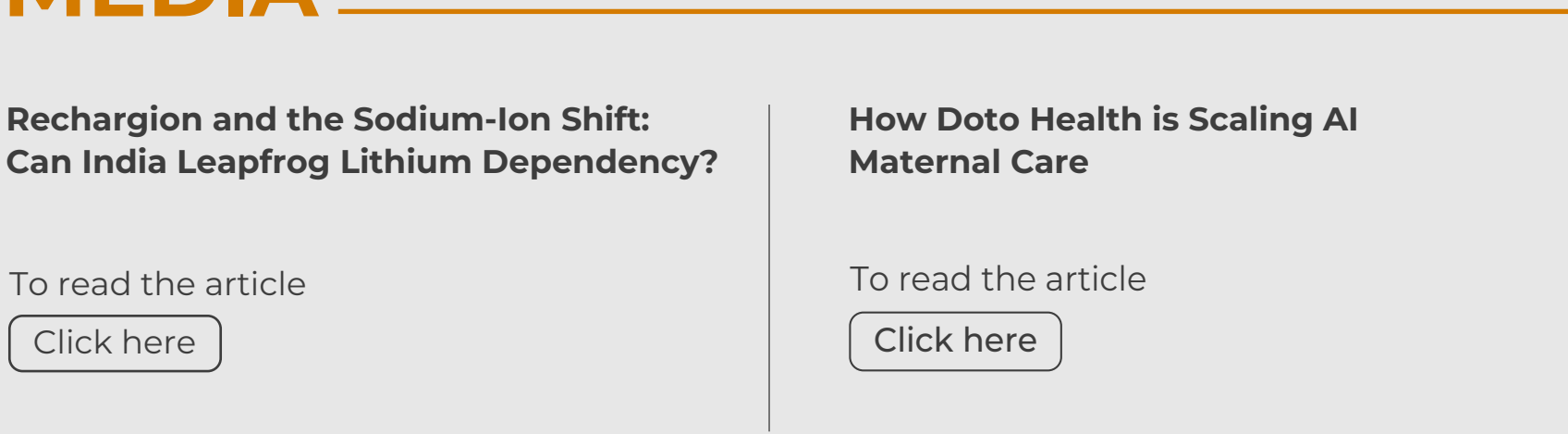
PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Techtonic: Innovations for Animal Husbandry and Rural Livelihoods

India's livestock sector supports over 20 million livelihoods and contributes 25% to agricultural GDP, yet feed shortages, disease burden, reproductive inefficiency, fragmented markets and unmanaged waste continue to limit farmer incomes and resilience. These challenges compound each other and are further deepened by growing climate pressures and underutilisation of livestock waste streams that could otherwise generate clean energy, organic fertilisers, and additional farm income.

To address these interconnected challenges, Social Alpha has launched Techtonic: Innovations for Animal Husbandry and Rural Livelihoods to scout and support science-backed, farmer-centric innovations across five focus areas: animal nutrition, animal health, animal reproduction, value chain strengthening and biogas. Selected start-ups will receive up to ₹50 lakhs in catalytic funding, access to 200,000+ farmers and 200+ FPOs across India, incubation support at Social Alpha Labs, structured field trials, go-to-market strategy support and mentorship from sector experts.

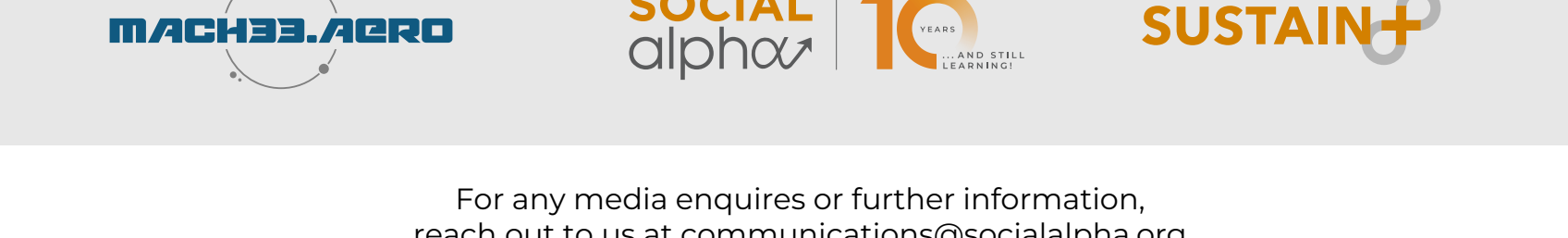
[Apply now](#)



Building Future Cities

This month, Social Alpha, in collaboration with the U of T India Foundation, announced the winners of Techtonic: Innovations in Sustainable Urban Transition, a program designed to support start-ups developing solutions for India's evolving urban landscape. The selected start-ups will receive pilot grants, incubation support, potential access to seed capital, and opportunities to showcase their innovations with government and industry stakeholders. This support will enable the start-ups to test, refine and advance solutions that can contribute to more sustainable, resilient and inclusive urban systems.

Congratulations to the winning start-ups.



At Social Alpha, we are on a mission to drive Economic Growth, Social Justice and Climate Action through the power of Entrepreneurship and Market-creating Innovations.

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