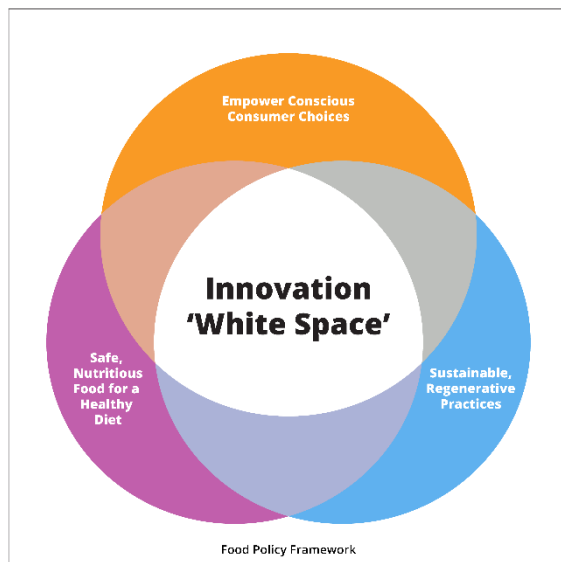


## Institute of Food Technologists Launches Seeding The Future Global Food System Challenge

Funded by [Seeding The Future Foundation](#), the [Global Food System Challenge](#) seeks to inspire and support impactful innovations to transform our food system and improve the health of people and planet. To incentivize innovation at all levels, including idea generation, development, and scale up, the Challenge offers three levels of awards consisting of Seed Grants, Growth Grants, and a Seeding The Future Grand Prize category, totaling more than \$1 million USD annually:

- **\$25K Seed Grants:** Awarded to organizations that are planting and nurturing high-potential, innovative ideas and have developed prototypes and/or initial proof of concept demonstrating that their innovation is feasible
- **\$100K Growth Grants:** Awarded to organizations that have demonstrated that their innovation is doable at least on a small scale and have developed early projections for both economic feasibility at scale and the impact potential to transform the food system
- **\$250K Seeding The Future Grand Prizes:** Awarded to organizations that have created innovations that are scalable, economically feasible, trusted by and compelling to consumers, and demonstrated major impact potential to transform the food system

### Supporting Innovation at Critical Intersections



As hundreds of millions of people suffer from chronic hunger or obesity, and with the world population expected to surpass 9 billion by 2050, unhealthy diets and unsustainably produced food pose a global risk to the health of people and the environment<sup>1</sup>. The Challenge was initiated by the Seeding The Future Foundation to inspire and support highly impactful solutions aimed at making our food system more sustainable and healthy diets more accessible, while empowering consumers to make choices benefitting both personal and planetary health. The Challenge focuses on scalable and high impact innovations that reside at the intersection of three domains: a) safe and nutritious food for a healthy diet, b)

produced sustainably and without waste and c) accessible, appealing, affordable, and trusted by consumers.

In the first year of the Challenge, nearly 900 applications were submitted from startups, nonprofits, universities, research institutions, and multi-organization collaborations, from more than 60 countries. The vast and varied interest demonstrates the recognized need to create a more resilient and sustainable food system.

### Innovation Across the Value Chain

Among the top winning projects of 2021 are innovations across the food value chain, creating scalable and transformative solutions to support particularly small holder farmers in developing geographies - who provide over 80% of the food supply in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia<sup>2</sup>. Examples range from natural fertilizer and animal feed to safer, more nutritious grains and protein sources, to off-grid solar dryers and solar powered refrigeration units that extend the shelf life and avoid spoilage of fresh produce in high temperature geographic regions with lacking infrastructure. These integrated solutions are promising and sustainable approaches to improving our food supply and enhancing living conditions in the face of health crisis and climate change.



The Seeding The Future Grand Prize winners are:

- [International Rice Research Institute](#) for its arsenic-safe rice project which will deploy newly developed arsenic-excluding rice varieties that are much safer for human consumption in target arsenic-polluted regions to create socioeconomic and human health benefits.
- [Solar Freeze](#) for its project on portable, solar-powered cold storage units for rural smallholder farmers of perishable produce. The purpose is to reduce post-harvest food loss that currently accounts for over 45 percent of fresh produce going to waste among rural farmers in developing countries.
- [WorldFish](#) for its homestead aquaculture project to bring sustainable, nutrient-rich small fish production to small scale actors for a healthy and affordable option for consumers especially those who need it most such as young children, and pregnant and lactating women.

The Growth Grant winners are:

- [African Centre for Technology Studies](#) in collaboration with Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute and United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi Office for its project which promotes enhanced access to solar drying technologies to smallholder farmers; thus, providing optimal dehydration of fresh produce for enhanced product quality and post-harvest management.
- [Food Systems for the Future Institute \(FSF\) and Afya Feed Ltd.](#), for its use of black soldier fly larvae to overcome the poultry and aquaculture industry feed affordability challenge. Through a partnership with Protix, a Dutch-based commercial black soldier larvae (bsl) producer, Afya and FSF will design and scale commercial production to provide an alternative bsl protein as a protein supplement in animal feeds.
- [International Development Enterprise \(iDE\)](#), for its project to establish community-managed vermicompost fertilizer enterprises that incorporate *Trichoderma*, a beneficial fungus that improves plant growth and yields while speeding up the composting process to transform organic farm and household waste into nutritious food for rural communities while acting as a proof-of-concept to catalyze replication across multiple regions.

In addition to the Grand Prize and Growth Grants, IFT also awarded 8 Seed Grants. Recipients included [Association 3535](#), [Eatwell Meal Kits](#), [Center for Nanoscience and Engineering](#), [Indian Institute of Science](#), [INMED Partnerships for Children](#), [Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute](#), [Tanzania Environment Management Catalyst](#), [University of Missouri](#), and the [World Wildlife Fund](#).

### **Innovation and Dedication Abounds**

While we are very pleased to support the winners of the inaugural Seeding The Future Global Food System Challenge, IFT recognizes the vital contribution, creativity and dedication of those projects that were not selected for an award. The scientific community is mobilizing across the globe with many local empowerment and education programs that have the potential to impact the livelihood, nutrition, and holistic wellness of communities everywhere, in developed and developing nations. The need is great, and IFT will continue to explore avenues to expand efforts and leverage our international community of scientists, engineers, and innovators in support of one another and their quest for a better life for all.

### References

1. Walter Willet et al., *Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems* 393 *The Lancet* 447 (2019), [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31788-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31788-4/fulltext).
2. FAO: The State of Food And Agriculture, <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2014/en/>