

UNIVERSITY FUND  
**WAGENINGEN**



**WAGENINGEN**  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



**Stimulating entrepreneurship  
for societal solutions**

creating a difference together

## Colofon

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**Cover photo:** Algreen, converting organic waste into valuable proteins

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[www.universityfundwageningen.nl](http://www.universityfundwageningen.nl)

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# Our dream

Practice what your preach. Creating impact starts right now by supporting all employees, students and alumni of Wageningen University & Research in their ambition to contribute to global transitions. Together we can create innovative and groundbreaking solutions to work towards a sustainable future.

With the increasing complexity and urgency of global issues, it is more important than ever to connect the scientific insights and innovative solutions of WUR with joint programmes, concrete (regional) initiatives, valuable patents, inspiring dialogues and innovative startups.

## Accelerate global transitions

Where solutions to societal challenges are interwoven with sustainable innovation, respect for nature, humanity and economic perspectives, the resulting solutions will last for generations.

Innovative and sustainable solutions, with their agility to enable swift responses, can significantly accelerate sustainable food systems, resilient ecosystems and a circular

society. These efforts also promote sustainable water and land use, climate-proof systems and improved health for humans and animals.

Emerging new initiatives can quickly change direction and adapt to shifting market demands and societal needs. By doing so, pressing societal issues will be addressed in more effective and efficient ways.

To accelerate and enhance these transitions, we offer guidance and skill development programmes and raise funds to support innovative ideas of young (student) entrepreneurs from WUR, helping them progress through various stages of development, from stimulating innovative ideas to prototyping, developing a proposition and quantifying impact.

## Catalyzing innovative solutions

To foster entrepreneurship, WUR and University Fund Wageningen are consolidating existing funds, resources and guidance to launch a new initiative: the **Wageningen Impact Catalyst**. Through this initiative, we aim to enhance our support for talented individuals with innovative ideas, technologies or initiatives. By doing so, we provide more effective pre-incubation support for promising Wageningen projects helping them achieve greater impact.

**Let's drive sustainable solutions, economic vitality and societal well-being together!**

This magazine provides an overview of some of the entrepreneurial showcases that are supported by WUR in the last 20 year. We hope these cases inspire you to support our entrepreneurial talent and contribute to our Wageningen Impact Catalyst initiative with your time, talent or treasure.

**Sebastian Berendse,**  
Director Value Creation  
Wageningen University & Research

**Lies Boelrijk,**  
Director University Fund Wageningen



Sebastian Berendse



Lies Boelrijk

# Fostering entrepreneurship through philanthropy

With the support of philanthropic funding, University Fund Wageningen enables the realization and acceleration of initiatives that might not qualify for regular funding. In doing so we increase WUR's impact and contribute to the Wageningen mission to accelerate transitions in our domain.

We support fundamental and cutting-edge research, excellent degree programmes for students and we foster entrepreneurship at WUR. All three of these elements are essential to find solutions to the societal challenges of today and tomorrow.

Strengthening entrepreneurship is important for driving sustainable innovations to accelerate global transitions. We raise funds to advance

innovative ideas of WUR (student) entrepreneurs in different stages of their development. This is particularly important for tech-heavy or scientific initiatives that require substantial investments before upscaling. Moreover, initiatives focusing on societal impact, such as those addressing environmental issues, healthcare, education and poverty often struggle to attract conventional investors.

By providing financial support, resources and strategic guidance, philanthropy plays a crucial role in fostering innovation and enabling starting initiatives to thrive and create a positive impact. University Fund Wageningen aims to advance these entrepreneurs by soliciting (substantial) donations. In this way, we aid potential impactful Wageningen initiatives with more and better pre-incubation.

University Fund Wageningen is the independent expert in connecting donors with exceptional talent, research and entrepreneurship at WUR.

## UNIVERSITY FUND WAGENINGEN



All finalists and jury of the Atlas Invest Entrepreneurship Grant 2023

# Wageningen Impact Catalyst

To foster entrepreneurship and to be more effective in supporting innovative ideas and sustainable solutions, Wageningen University & Research and University Fund Wageningen are bundling existing WUR funds, resources and guidance in one overall support programme: the **Wageningen Impact Catalyst**.

The Wageningen Impact Catalyst will empower, facilitate and fund promising ideas and bring them to society. It aims to nurture and accelerate innovative ideas into successful businesses and societal initiatives that can address global challenges in food, agriculture and the living environment.

We collaborate with strategic partners in our ecosystem, such as KplusV, StartGreen, Noorderwind and FoodvalleyNL. Together we amplify our impact, fostering an innovation ecosystem where knowledge, financing, entrepreneurship and practice converge. Our diverse community enables us to deliver solutions in The Netherlands, Europe and beyond.

The Wageningen Impact Catalyst is an initiative of Wageningen University & Research supported by University Fund Wageningen and a number of highly



engaged alumni. The incubation space StartHub Wageningen serves as an entrepreneurial hub and incubator located at Wageningen Campus in the Netherlands.

## Showcases

Together with our partners in our ecosystem Wageningen University & Research supports innovative ideas and impact initiatives throughout the different stages of their development. We aim to nurture innovative ideas and accelerate their development into successful business and societal initiatives that can address global challenges in food, agriculture and the living environment.

### 1. INSPIRE – FROM IDEA TO PLAN

*problem - solution fit*

Scientists create ideas for impact and explore the possibilities to develop a sustainable proposition, focusing on the potential user needs and related societal challenges.

### 2. INFORM – FROM PLAN TO PROPOSITION

*desirability and impact plan*

Nascent entrepreneurs and change makers build and validate their concepts and start developing a first version of products and services that can be tested with actual users.

### 3. IMPROVE – FROM PROPOSITION TO SOLUTION

*economic and technological feasibility*

Propositions are validated, tested and improved. Entrepreneurial teams are formed around a joint mission for impact.

### 4. IMPACT – FROM SOLUTION TO CHANGE

*viability check and impact readiness*

Final decisions must be made by evaluating the viability of the solution, the potential for achieving sustainable change with the product, service, or technology and the approach to scaling without losing focus on impact.

# 1 Afropulse

*Paradigm shift in how Africa is perceived*

Rethinking Africa's role aims to provoke a paradigm shift in how Africa is perceived and engaged with, bridging cultures and continents by empowering local entrepreneurs. Elisabeth Obeng, sustainable food systems researcher: "Afropulse seeks

to challenge the status quo and empowers African partners to lead the way in research, development and business creation, achieving more balanced and sustainable food systems. As mediators between continents and cultures

we connect Africa and Europe while partnering with businesses to drive meaningful change". The follow-up of the business idea has already commenced.



# 2 Green Diligence

*Promoting sustainable development in local communities*

Green Diligence is a sustainability consultancy dedicated to promoting sustainable development in local communities. They assist SMEs who want to measure, report and improve their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance. Their expertise lies in simplifying the complexities of EU sustainability regulations and reporting standards, opening doors to green finance.

The longer-term vision of Green Diligence is to develop an AI-driven platform that automates sustainability measurement and reporting,

making it even easier for SMEs to embrace sustainable practices and fuel improvements through ESG-based grants and subsidies. The founder Lyubomir Spasov brings a decade of academic and professional experience in environmental issues. His passion for supporting SMEs led him to pitch the idea for the company back in 2018 at the student entrepreneurial challenge StartUp Sussex. Today, Green Diligence is turning that vision into reality, one SME at a time.

[greendiligence.nl](https://greendiligence.nl)





Afterlife

### 3 Wastebook

*A smart waste distribution platform to monitor and manage the impact of waste prevention and reduction digitally*

With a team of students, Wastebook wants to support food companies to manage their waste, digitally with a smart waste and loss distribution platform. Their mission is to revolutionize the waste management industry by prioritizing resource maximization, purifying waste streams and ensure the best distribution towards current and market-available valorisation treatment technologies. Through

waste collection and upstream manufacturing companies, waste data on food waste and losses quality is shared, enabling users to find the best economically and environmental friendly solution to manage waste efficiently. Food waste should not end up in a landfill but should be re-used as much as possible.



### 4 Afterlife

*Closing the loop, feeding the world*

Afterlife is a startup aiming to revolutionize global food systems by converting waste into valuable resources through innovative fungal fermentation technology. Addressing current food system inefficiencies and the growing demand for eco-friendly protein sources, Afterlife transforms large volumes of food industry leftovers

into versatile, neutral and functional protein ingredients suitable for meat replacers and other applications. Their ground-breaking work earned them the Rethink Waste Challenge 2023 and the Dutch 4TU Impact Challenge 2023.



## 5 Hippotainer

*Container vertical farm with hydroponics system*

Hippotainer is a vertical farm in a 40ft freight container with a Deep Water Culture (DWC) hydroponics system. This makes it possible to grow a variety of plants with the Hippotainer, like lettuce, herbs, seedlings etc. A new design in the making will make

growing more vegetables like kale and fruiting vegetables possible. The Hippotainer carefully controls the environmental conditions for optimal plant growth, allowing cultivation at any time, in any location and in any weather.

A pilot project is running in Ukraine growing vegetables and providing jobs for local refugees in partnership with Rijk Zwaan, Signify, Grow Foam and many more.

[hippotainer.com](http://hippotainer.com)



## 6 ValueSort.AI

*Implementing AI in the textile sorting process*



ValueSort.AI enables decision makers to develop highly-scalable vision AI for the entire second-hand textiles value chain, transforming the traditional processes with more customization, automation and increased efficiency. Bart van Gorcum, founder of valueSort.AI: "We enable sorters to identify high-value items with AI visual recognitions, removing the challenge of sourcing on-demand quality second-hand

textiles, sorters can surpass traditional methods that focus on weight, allowing textile sorters to capitalize on the second-hand textile market's growth. ValueSort's technology can assist humans, reducing costs in training humans and increasing revenue".

[valuesort.ai](http://valuesort.ai)



Hippotainer





SoualiGas

## 7 SoualiGas

*Transforming waste into valuable resources*

SoualiGas was inspired by the founder's home island of St. Maarten, which has a huge waste management problem. Its landfill is an uncontrolled, dangerous eyesore that frequently catches fire, polluting the air and damaging the environment. The health of the island's citizens, biodiversity and economy is currently at great risk because of the large amount of waste pollution brought in via tourism activities and the island's reliance on importing its needs. SoualiGas

aims to solve this by empowering not only St. Maarten, but all Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by transforming waste into resources through Advanced Thermochemical Conversion, a process that transforms solid materials into a wide array of valuable products. This technology offers numerous benefits, including high efficiency energy production, transformation of waste into chemical feed stocks, reduced environmental impact, carbon capture and resource recovery. It also provides near-

complete waste volume reduction, reduced dependence on fossil fuels and is a versatile system with high adaptability, scalability and a small footprint. By converting waste streams into valuable resources, SoualiGas aims to help SIDS become more resilient to climate change, more future-proof amid global instability, and more autonomous, thus empowering local communities and restoring their natural beauty.

[soualigas.com](http://soualigas.com)

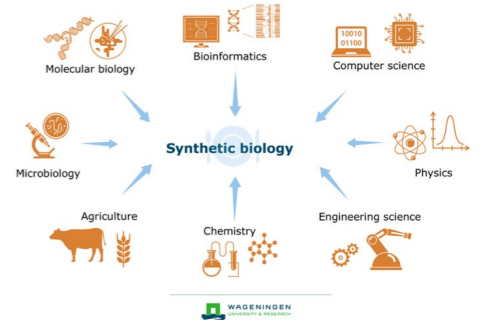


## 8 Super-Mendelian micro factories

*Cutting-edge intersection of genetics, synthetic biology and biotechnology*

Super-Mendelian micro factories represent a cutting-edge intersection of genetics, synthetic biology and biotechnology, offering revolutionary potential for various industries. Their ability to propagate desired traits rapidly and efficiently could transform production systems, though careful consideration of ethical, ecological,

and regulatory aspects is essential for their responsible deployment. There are regulatory challenges in approving and overseeing the use of gene drives and other advanced genetic engineering techniques and acceptance of these technologies by the public and stakeholders is crucial.



## 9 Maxairea - better air indoors

Smart ventilation technology that reduces ventilation needs by 50%



Maxairea is working on a pilot project at WUR to integrate its CO<sub>2</sub> filtration technology into an existing HVAC system. Co-founder Rabih Hamid is very excited about the pilot project: "Maxairea is my third company and my background in engineering and ten years in construction has significantly shaped my entrepreneurial journey." Together with Co-founder William Janssen,

who has a longtime experience in the ventilation industry and with that build up an extensive network in this industry, Rabih and William are currently working on the commercial validation of Maxairea. For Rabih the work has focussed on the physics of building management and energy efficiency of HVAC systems.

[maxairea.com](https://maxairea.com)

**maxairea**  
CLEVER AIR CARE

## 10 InsectSense

Exploring the potential of insects through biomimicry

InsectSense leverages insect biomimicry to develop innovative solutions. By mimicking insect senses, which have evolved over 300 million years, they created devices and biochips that work like insect antenna for flavour measurement, disease diagnosis, water quality monitoring and the development of novel nutraceutical and pharmaceutical ingredients. Initially, they trained bees as biosensors to detect COVID-19,

then advanced to a biochip that replicates insect sensing. This biochip works with different DNA from humans and insects, enabling the objective measurement of taste and smell, as well as identifying the health effects of ingredients. For instance, it can identify the cause of off-taste in novel food products, help improve flavour and evaluate potential health effects, all on a single chip. Their first product, ReceptomiX, is a benchtop

device for lab-use expected to launch in late 2025. Their second product, LumiNose, applies this biochip technology for field use, such as inline measurements in factories. By use of these technologies, companies can bring sustainable, tasty and healthy products to market more quickly, reducing both time and costs while making a significant impact.

[insectsense.com](https://insectsense.com)

**INSECTSENSE**  
Insect Inspired Innovations





Zwamcijsje

## 11 Zwamcijsje

*Vegan pastry roll filled with circular home-grown mushrooms*

The savory roll filled with circular, locally grown mushrooms, *Het Zwamcijsje*, is captivating the Netherlands with its crispy, golden-brown exterior and deliciously tender, juicy interior. Both supporters and skeptics are amazed by how tasty this completely plant-based successor to the traditional sausage roll is. The sausage roll is beloved and deeply ingrained in Dutch food culture. However, as the most

environmentally taxing bakery products, it increasingly poses a challenge for food service companies that are modernizing en masse. *Het Zwamcijsje* offers a solution for a rapidly growing number of businesses due to its fantastic taste and innovative production process, which is logical and sustainable in every aspect. The filling is made from oyster mushroom stems, providing the characteristic bite, even though

this part is often wasted due to the complexity of processing it. By using oyster mushrooms as the base for the filling, *Het Zwamcijsje* is entirely plant-based, with significantly less fat, a lower carbon footprint, reduced water usage and less arable land required.

[zwamcijsje.nl](https://zwamcijsje.nl)

**ZWAMCIJSJE**  
HEERLIJK VAN EIGEN BODEM

## 12 Convivial conservation

*Integrated approach for environmental conservation*

Convivial (literally: 'living with') conservation offers a new and integrated approach to understanding and practicing environmental conservation. It is a Whole Earth vision that responds to the major ecological, social and political-economic challenges facing people and biodiversity in the 21st century. Several research projects are ongoing to learn from innovative practices and

to support them by providing a vision that unites different struggles in pursuit of a socially and ecologically just conservation. The idea is to build on promising examples to develop a general conservation model embodying more convivial principles both within these sites and elsewhere. Bram Buscher, Professor Sociology of Development and Change at WUR: "Convivial

conservation offers an alternative to dominant approaches to biodiversity conservation, grounded in 10 central principles. Together these make up our manifesto intended to help guide activity in pursuit of convivial conservation in policy discussions and diverse local spaces".

[convivialconservation.com](https://convivialconservation.com)

**CONVIVIAL**  
CONSERVATION

## 13 Greencovery

*Reduce food waste and make upcycled ingredients the norm*

Greencovery upcycles ingredients that are tasty and good for people and the planet. They are on a mission to reduce food waste and make upcycled ingredients the norm in the food industry. At Greencovery food will be upcycled that otherwise would be wasted, extracting high-

quality, safe and environmentally friendly ingredients that retain their natural functionality. In this way Greencovery enables leading food companies to produce sustainable ingredients from production side-streams, enhancing productivity, reducing waste and lowering carbon

emissions. Greencovery accelerates the time-to-market for new, sustainable ingredients, aligning with SDG-2, SDG-9 and SDG-12.

[greencovery.com](https://greencovery.com)



## 14 Algreen

*Optimising and scaling up galdieria biomass production*



Algreen offers services starting from the proprietary collection of microalgae to the production plant. Algreen is capable of working with various cultivation techniques, such as open ponds and tubular photobioreactors and supports the customer by designing a new process from scratch, conducting R&D lab-scale processes or optimising an established process as well as dealing with the regulatory aspect to have a food grade/organic certified production.

Algreen is working on optimising and scaling up galdieria biomass production. Like spirulina, galdieria can be used as a superfood. However, it is cheaper, easier to grow and even more nutritious as it can convert organic waste into valuable proteins. Galdieria has great potential to improve human health, encourage a transition to a more plant-based diet, reduce energy consumption and make good use of organic waste.



Greencovery



No Fairytales

## 15 Solynta

*Envision a future where hybrid potatoes are widely used*

Solynta's mission is to enhance global food security by providing innovative hybrid potato solutions that improve the livelihoods of producers worldwide. We believe in ensuring nutrition for all. Our pioneering breeding method, based on true potato seed, addresses the growing demand for robust, new potato varieties among farmers. This breakthrough guarantees year-round access to clean, high-quality potato starting material, empowering farmers globally to cultivate delicious and nutritious potatoes successfully.

Solynta is the first to breed hybrid potatoes from true seeds, offering sustainable solutions to global challenges. Through worldwide collaboration and our cutting-edge technology, we aim to make a significant lasting impact on the global food supply and envision a future where hybrid potatoes are widely adopted.

[solynta.com](https://solynta.com)

**\*Solynta**  
true potato seeds



## 16 No Fairytales

*Making frequently eaten food delicious*

It is No Fairytales mission to make frequently eaten food delicious. No Fairytales wraps are innovative, health-conscious tortillas made from vegetables, designed to provide a nutritious and delicious alternative to traditional wraps. By incorporating a significant percentage of vegetables

like carrots and beets, these wraps offer enhanced nutritional value, including higher fiber content and essential vitamins, while maintaining a low-calorie profile. No Fairytales makes it easy to increase daily vegetable intake without compromising on taste or

convenience, supporting a balanced diet and a sustainable lifestyle.

[nofairytales.nl](https://nofairytales.nl)



# Team & info

## Team

Sebastiaan Berendse  
Lies Boelrijk  
Tanja Borst  
Yannick van Gelder  
Stefan Nortier  
Gitte Schober  
Robbin Reijnen  
Brechtje Vreenegoor

## Our mentors and experts

Ansa Baykuş - Wasim  
Ronald de Bruijn  
Carlos Carbrera  
Nynke Geerts  
Paula Gonzalez  
Bernadette Kooijman  
Anja Sinke  
Martin van Zwol  
And many more

## Our Ecosystem - partners

Biotech Booster  
FoodvalleyNL  
Mercator Launch  
Noorderwind  
StartLife  
UtrechtInc  
And many more

## Contact

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**Let's drive sustainable solutions, economic vitality and societal well-being together**

# About Wageningen University & Research

## Science for Impact

WUR prioritizes interdisciplinary research to address complex global issues, collaborating with governments, industries and NGOs to share knowledge and co-create innovative solutions. Natural and social sciences are integrated to ensure that scientific discoveries lead to practical, scalable applications that benefit society.

## Education for Impact

WUR emphasizes training students to be future leaders and change-makers. The educational programmes are designed to be research-driven and problem-oriented, encouraging students to engage with real-world challenges. This includes promoting internationalization and

diversity, ensuring students gain a global perspective and are well-prepared to contribute to sustainable development worldwide.

## Partnerships and Networks

WUR leverages strategic partnerships to amplify the impact, engaging in collaborations with stakeholders at local, national and international levels. These efforts ensure that WUR's research and education align with societal needs and reach a broader audience. Situated at Wageningen Campus, WUR provides a space where research facilities are shared and scientists, (emerging) entrepreneurs and students work together on innovative solutions to global challenges.

## Contribute to our new Wageningen Impact Catalyst Programme!

*It is often challenging for budding entrepreneurs to secure financial support in the very early stages of their ideas. Obtaining a loan can be difficult and new initiatives might not yet attract interest from investors. The University Fund Wageningen aims to advance this programme by soliciting (substantial) donations. Financial support is crucial in the incubation phase to further develop business models, create prototypes and acquire knowledge. By opening your networks, you can help (student) entrepreneurs develop solutions that contribute to sustainable change worldwide.*

[universityfundwageningen.eu/entrepreneurship](https://universityfundwageningen.eu/entrepreneurship)



[www.wur.nl/en/value-creation-cooperation.htm](https://www.wur.nl/en/value-creation-cooperation.htm)



# Our Manifesto

We stand for  
a healthy and  
liveable future  
on Earth

We make a  
demonstrable  
contribution to a  
more sustainable  
world

We do this by  
building on  
our rich history  
spanning almost  
75 years

By connecting  
special donors with  
special, talented  
WUR academics  
and WUR  
research

By finding  
new ways to  
make a difference  
off the beaten  
track

By seeking  
solutions to  
today's societal  
challenges

By stimulating  
scientific  
talent and  
entrepreneurship

With philanthropic  
partners who play  
a vital role in fulfilling  
our mission and  
whose valuable gifts  
facilitate our  
meaningful work

We talk to donors  
about their passions and  
motivations, as we value  
a personal connection  
with our partners who are  
committed to making a  
difference with us

→ **Welcome to  
University Fund  
Wageningen!**

creating a difference together