

June 2025

# NEWSLETTER

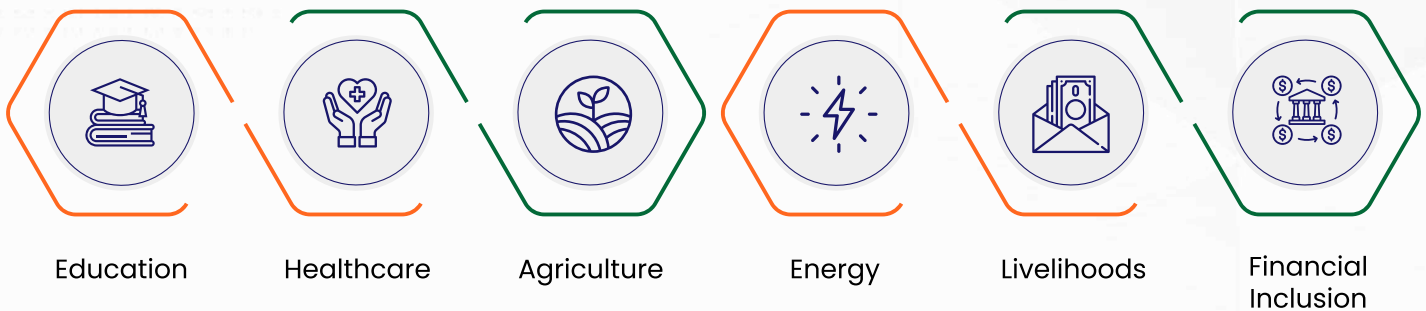
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Sowing Impact, Reaping Innovation  
Celebrating the Agri Cohort 2024–25's  
Journey of Growth.

## AFI's Mission

Action for India's mission is to help high-potential social entrepreneurs overcome barriers to scale and achieve greater impact. We connect social entrepreneurs with impact investors, mentors, technology resources, government contacts, and other ecosystem partners.

AFI mirrors the United Nations' philosophy that sustainable human development happens by enhancing human abilities and creating conditions for growth. In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, our focus areas are:



We are excited to introduce new initiatives aimed at accelerating your success:





## AFI Update

The Agri Cohort 2024–25 concluded on a high note with a successful Demo Day and a memorable valedictory session. The Demo Day attracted strong interest from investors, opening doors for potential collaborations and funding conversations. The valedictory session featured inspiring keynote addresses that underscored the importance of agri-innovation and grassroots impact. With energy, vision, and momentum, the cohort graduates now move forward, ready to create meaningful change across India's agricultural landscape.

## Program Update

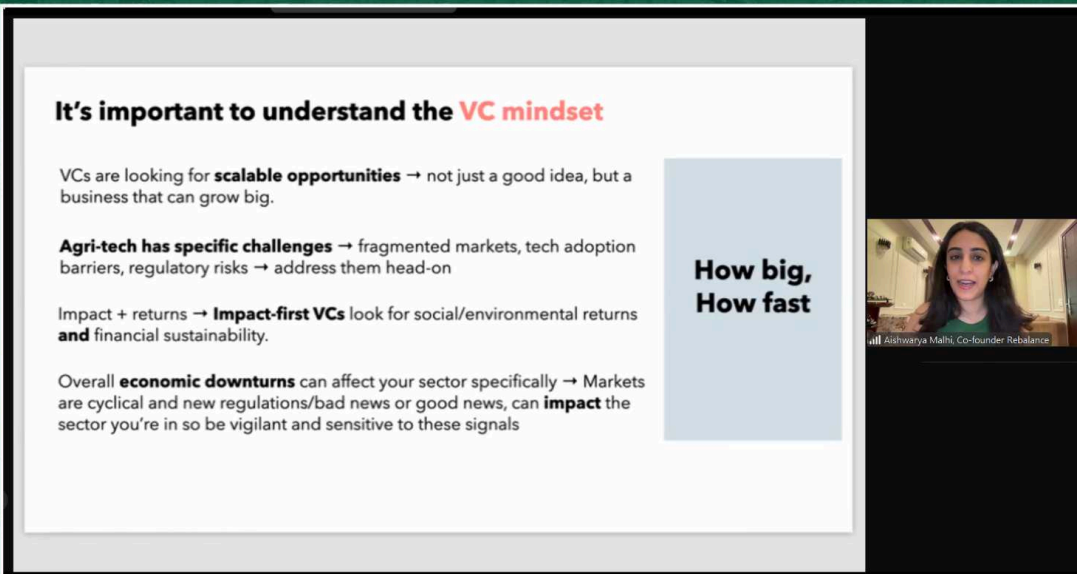
### Agri Cohort 2024–25

- Since January, the cohort engaged in 120+ one-on-one Ice Breaking Sessions with mentors, fostering deep connections and personalized guidance
- 12 Huddle sessions encouraged peer learning and experience sharing across the cohort.
- 4 Knowledge Building Sessions (KBS) delivered sector-specific insights and growth strategies from domain experts.
- 3 Leadership Circle (LC) sessions provided a reflective space for founders to discuss leadership challenges and collective solutions.
- The Demo Day showcased 15 high-potential startups, resulting in 31 investor and mentor connection requests, demonstrating strong external interest.
- The program culminated in a Valedictory Session held on 1st July, featuring inspiring keynote addresses by:
  - Will Poole, Co-founder & Managing Partner, Capria Ventures
  - Devendra Gupta, Co-founder & CEO, Ecozen Solutions
- Both leaders shared compelling insights on innovation, resilience, and building scalable impact ventures, setting an aspirational tone for the cohort's next phase.



## KBS SESSION

## KNOWLEDGE BUILDING SESSION BY AISHWARYA MALHI



**It's important to understand the VC mindset**

VCs are looking for **scalable opportunities** → not just a good idea, but a business that can grow big.

**Agri-tech has specific challenges** → fragmented markets, tech adoption barriers, regulatory risks → address them head-on

Impact + returns → **Impact-first VCs** look for social/environmental returns and financial sustainability.

Overall **economic downturns** can affect your sector specifically → Markets are cyclical and new regulations/bad news or good news, can **impact** the sector you're in so be vigilant and sensitive to these signals

**How big, How fast**

Aishwarya Malhi, Co-founder Rebalance

### Knowledge Building Session with Aishwarya Malhi: Fundraising with Strategy & Storytelling

- In a high-impact Knowledge Building Session curated for the AFI Agri Cohort 2024–25, Aishwarya Malhi, Co-founder of Rebalance, shared practical and strategic insights on navigating the fundraising journey for agri-tech startups. Rebalance is a platform that supports underrepresented founders by helping them access capital and leadership resources.
- The session focused on equipping early-stage founders with tools and mindset shifts needed to attract investment. Aishwarya emphasized the importance of building commercially viable ventures and moving beyond reliance on grants by strengthening business models, market clarity, and pitch delivery.

#### **Key highlights from the session included:**

- Understanding investor expectations and building alignment
- Shifting from grant dependency to commercial sustainability
- Avoiding common fundraising pitfalls faced by impact-led startups
- Clearly communicating unit economics and technological edge
- Crafting pitch decks that blend impact storytelling with strong business fundamentals
- Startups from the cohort also introduced their solutions across areas like drone technology, IoT-based irrigation systems, rapid soil diagnostics, and traceable dairy supply chains. The session highlighted the breadth of innovation emerging from the agri-tech space and reinforced the importance of strategy, scalability, and storytelling in successful fundraising.





## KBS SESSION

# HARVESTING INNOVATION: PARTNERING WITH BIGHAAT



## Knowledge Building Session with Sachin Nandwana: Scaling Farmer-Centric Innovation

- The AFI Agri Cohort 2024–25 had the opportunity to engage with Sachin Nandwana, Co-founder and CEO of BigHaat, in an insightful Knowledge Building Session focused on building digital-first, farmer-centric solutions. BigHaat has been at the forefront of transforming Indian agriculture through tech-enabled input delivery, advisory, and market linkages.
- In this engaging session, Sachin shared the inspiring journey of BigHaat, from its early days to becoming one of India's leading agri-tech platforms. He emphasized how digital innovation can drive meaningful change at the grassroots level when solutions are tailored to the needs of farmers.

### **Key highlights from the session included:**

- Lessons from BigHaat's growth journey and evolving product strategy
- Importance of understanding farmers as customers and building trust through localized solutions
- Leveraging technology to solve real-world problems across the agri value chain
- Using partnerships and platforms to scale reach and impact
- The session was highly interactive, with cohort founders asking sharp and thoughtful questions about customer acquisition, product adoption, and rural scalability. Sachin showed genuine interest in the startups' work and generously offered support through BigHaat's network and infrastructure, creating opportunities for future collaboration.



## AGRI COHORT DEMO DAY

### AFI AGRI COHORT DEMO DAY

#### Investors & Ecosystem Partners



#### Demo Day Highlights – Agri Cohort 2024–25

- The Agri Cohort 2024–25 Demo Day was held on 28th June, marking a significant milestone in the cohort's journey. After months of intensive mentorship, learning sessions, and peer engagement, 15 high-impact startups took the spotlight to pitch their innovative agri-tech solutions to a curated panel of investors, mentors, and ecosystem leaders. The event served as a powerful platform to showcase their progress and potential, setting the stage for future collaborations and scale.

#### **Key highlights from the session included:**

- The Demo Day marked the culmination of an intensive support journey for the Agri Cohort, showcasing the progress of 15 high-potential startups working in areas such as precision farming, climate-resilient solutions, agri-fintech, and rural livelihoods.
- Each startup delivered a focused pitch to a curated audience of investors, mentors, and ecosystem leaders, highlighting their traction, innovation, and future vision.
- The event saw enthusiastic participation from leading investors and ecosystem partners, including:  
IIMA Ventures, Upaya Social Ventures, ARAM Partners, Zetta Farms, Villgro, Excluto, Yunus Social Business, Social Alpha, Next Bharat Ventures, Sanchi Connect, Caret Capital, Caspian, Fluid Ventures, Marico Innovation Foundation, O2 Angels Network, and Green Trunk Ventures.
- The Demo Day generated 31 formal connection requests, signaling strong interest from investors and potential mentors in the cohort's work and growth potential.
- Overall, the event reinforced the ecosystem's confidence in supporting agri-innovation and highlighted the startups' readiness to scale their solutions for greater impact.







# AGRI COHORT 2024-25

## Selected Startups

**Koushik Bose**  
Koushik Bose



Azocado

**Devleena Bhattacharjee**  
ClimaCrew Pvt Ltd



clima crew

**Santosh Devidas Khawale**  
Dhenoo Tech Solutions Pvt Ltd



DHENOO

**Yogesh Sahu**  
GEECOM INDIA SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED



GeeCom

**Indu S**  
Agriminds Innovation private limited - Gokrit



GOKRIT

**Tribidesh**  
InQube Technologies Private Limited



inQube

**Sanket kedar**  
DruFarm Technology Private Limited



DruFarm

**Dharmendra Kumar**  
Flixdrop Technology Pvt. Ltd.



Flixdrop  
CHEMS  
Cattle Health Monitoring Solution

**Monisha Chahal**  
Sugee



sugee

**Atharva Naik**  
FlyLab Solutions Private Limited



FLYLAB  
FlyLab Solutions Private Limited

**Akshay Kawale**  
AgrowSure Products and Innovations Pvt Ltd



agrowsure

**Tarang Patel**  
Intech Harness Pvt. Ltd.



Intech Harness Pvt. Ltd.

**Subhajit Sinha**  
4CLIMATE (NATUREX AI)



4CLIMATE

**Mahadeva Swamy H M**  
Crop Domain



Crop Domain

**Dhiraj Chaudhary**  
Eksight Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

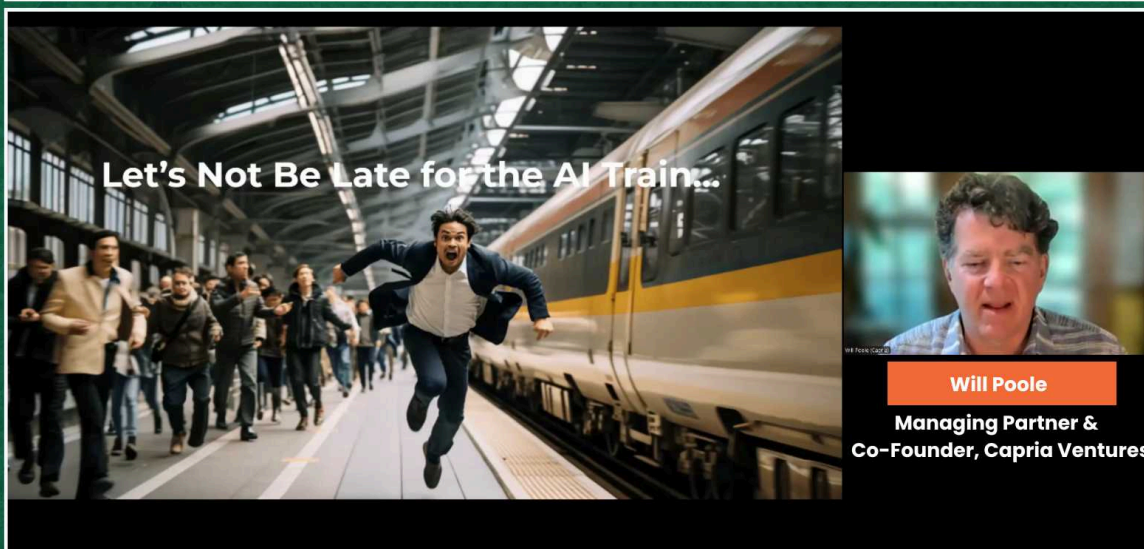


Ekosight



## AGRI COHORT VALEDICTORY SESSION

### VALEDICTORY SESSION - AFI AGRI COHORT 2025



#### Keynote Insights from Will Poole: Embracing AI for the Future of Agri Innovation

- At the Valedictory Session of the AFI Agri Cohort 2024–25, we were honoured to hear from Will Poole, Co-founder and Managing Partner of Capria Ventures, who delivered a forward-looking keynote address on the transformative power of AI for emerging market entrepreneurs. Will drew from his global experience working with startups across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, sharing practical insights on how founders can begin their AI journey—regardless of how far behind they feel today.

#### **Key highlights from the session included:**

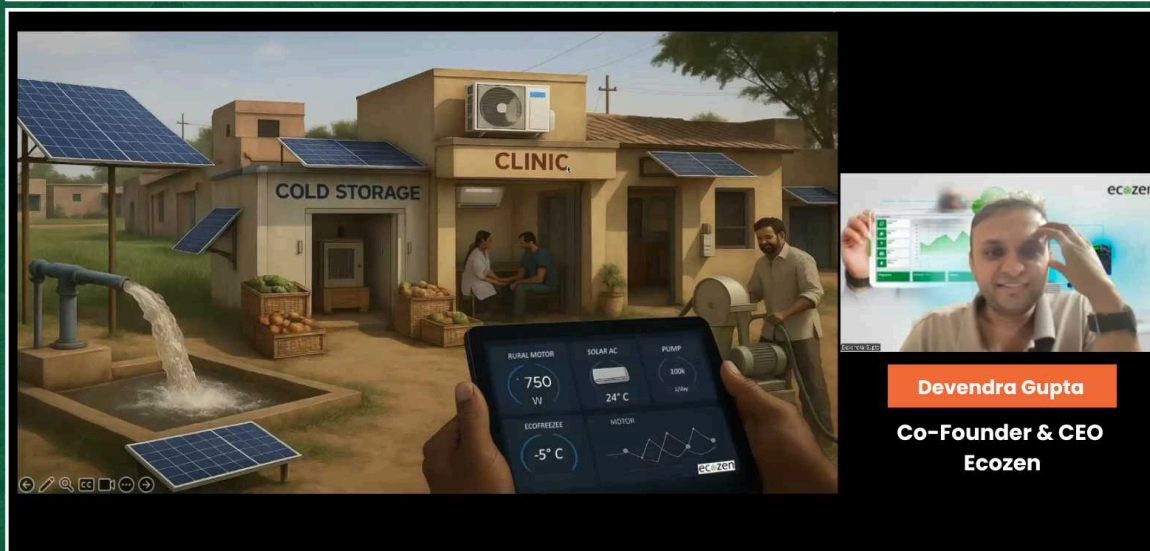
- Most founders are still early in their AI journey, with only 20% actively using generative or agentic AI. Now is the time to learn and start integrating it.
- AI hasn't used all the data, there's massive opportunity in private, real-time, and farm-level data that startups already possess.
- Startups can gain an edge by building AI tools trained on their own unique datasets, rather than competing with big tech.
- Agentic AI is here—AI systems that act independently are already transforming core business functions using low-code and no-code platforms.
- Founders were encouraged to act now and use the data and context they uniquely understand to build AI-led solutions.





## AGRI COHORT VALEDICTORY SESSION

### VALEDICTORY SESSION - AFI AGRI COHORT 2025



#### Keynote Insights from Devendra Gupta: Compassion at the Core of Entrepreneurship

- At the Valedictory Session of the AFI Agri Cohort 2024–25, Devendra Gupta, Co-founder and CEO of Ecozen, delivered an inspiring keynote that brought the spotlight back to what truly drives meaningful entrepreneurship — compassion for the customer. In a space often dominated by talk of scale, ambition, and strategy, his message was a refreshing reminder that the heart of innovation lies in empathy.

#### **Key highlights from the session included:**

- Businesses are not built out of ego or ambition. They are built out of compassion for the customer.
- True vision starts with something that inspires you — not just your team or investors.
- Emotional connection with the customer is essential to build impactful, lasting solutions.
- If your customers are not at the center of every decision, your journey from zero to one will remain difficult.
- The ultimate test of your vision is whether you keep going in the face of failure — that's when compassion becomes your compass.



## AGRI COHORT TESTIMONIALS

**"AFI gave me the clarity I needed to scale smartly, refining our rural marketing, strengthening on-ground operations, and connecting with a community that truly supports."**



**Akshay Kawale**

**"Thanks to AFI, Azeedo gained industry recognition, validated strong market demand, and built key connections that are driving our growth forward."**



**Koushik Bose**

**"AFI is more than just a platform, it's a community. The program provided us with access to visionary mentors, practical feedback, and powerful networks that significantly accelerated our journey."**



**Indu S**

**"AFI connected me with the right people, gave structure to my plans, and helped me move forward with clarity and confidence. The ecosystem truly empowered me to grow faster and stronger."**



**Subhajit Sinha**



## Mentor's Corner



### Vijay Nadiminti, CEO & Director of AgHub

Agri Cohort Mentor

- Vijay Nadiminti, CEO & Director of AgHub, has been a dedicated mentor with Action For India since 2018. With over 15 years of experience in the agri-business sector, he has been instrumental in shaping AFI's Agri Cohort by bringing deep industry insights and strategic direction to the program.
- Reflecting on his journey, he shares, "It's been an enriching experience designing the accelerator program, engaging with the cohort, and mentoring startups. I've learned a lot and I'm proud to be part of this impactful initiative."
- As part of the 2024–25 cohort, Vijay mentored two innovative startups—ClimaCrew and 4CLIMATE | Vertical Farming Technology—guiding them through the nuances of agri-tech scaling and market fit. He also highlighted the value of AFI's mentorship framework: "One of the biggest strengths of AFI is its structured mentoring system. The Engaging Huddles, where 4–5 mentors from diverse domains engage one-on-one with startups, are particularly powerful."
- Vijay continues to be a driving force in building a strong support system for emerging agri-entrepreneurs in India.



### Hemendra Mathur, Venture Partner – Bharat Innovation Fund

Agri Cohort Mentor

- Hemendra Mathur is a respected early-stage investor and a leading voice in India's agritech and foodtech ecosystem. A long-standing mentor with Action For India, Hemendra has supported social entrepreneurs and impact-focused startups for nearly a decade.
- Reflecting on his journey with AFI, he shares, "It's been a great experience working with AFI and interacting with passionate founders, supporting promising ideas, and watching many startups evolve into growth-stage companies."
- As a mentor in the AFI Agri Cohort 2024–25, Hemendra guided several promising startups, including FlixDrop CHMS, DruFarm, GOKRIT, and ClimaCrew, offering strategic direction across funding, go-to-market, and scale readiness.
- He also highlighted the power of AFI's Huddle Sessions as a key differentiator: "The Huddles bring together a diverse set of experts and make mentoring far more actionable. I look forward to continuing my association with AFI and wish the cohort's startups great success on their journey ahead."
- Hemendra's commitment to nurturing innovation continues to inspire a new generation of agri-founders driving change from the ground up.



## Feedback and Engagement:

# Your Voice Matters

Your feedback is invaluable to us as we strive to deliver content that is relevant and valuable to you. We invite you to share your success stories, suggestions for future topics, and any resources or opportunities you believe would benefit the community. Please fill in the form [here](#) to provide us your valuable feedback and suggestions. Together, we can continue to build a vibrant community of change-makers and innovators.

Thank you for being a part of the Action for India family. Here's to celebrating your achievements and driving impactful change together!

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## Gratitude to Our Esteemed Partners

Empowering Change Together with  
Action For India



## Ecosystem Partners

