**Main Objectives:**
- Increase food production and decrease the reliance on import and harmful practices along the value chain of the Iraqi agricultural sector through a more sustainable and efficient usage of water and/or energy.
- Increase income for poor women and men in both rural and urban areas all over the country who are consumers or work in farming.
- Sustainably scale innovators’ solutions to meet the challenges in the WE4F nexus.
- Promote climate and environmental resilience and biodiversity through the sustainable, holistic management of Iraq’s natural resources and ecosystems.

**Geographic area:** Iraq
**Budget:** $1.5 million
**Project Duration:** July 2021 - January 2023
**Implementing Partner:** Middle East and North Africa Regional Innovation Hub (MENA RIH)

**CONTEXT**

Iraq is facing many challenges to sustainable resource management. Insufficient food production capacity and limited water and energy resources pose serious threats to Iraq’s stability and prosperity. Outdated and unsustainable farming practices, climate change, a reliance on energy and food imports, and ongoing conflict make it increasingly difficult for Iraq to meet the growing demands of its citizens in terms of food, energy, and water. Supporting local innovations in the water-energy-food nexus offer opportunities for tackling these challenges in a sustainable manner, contributing to greater prosperity, stability, and food security for the people of Iraq.

**SCALING WATER-ENERGY-FOOD INNOVATIONS IN IRAQ**

The private sector is at the forefront of solving Iraq’s challenges by introducing innovation and new technologies. Yet, it needs additional resources to continue and accelerate its growth. Through the generous support of USAID, the Middle East and North Africa Regional Innovation Hub (MENA RIH) is helping Iraq-based companies and organizations, called innovators, to produce more food while using less water and cleaner energy. Together with investors and partners, the MENA RIH works to scale mid-to-later stage enterprises that have an environmental and social impact on the water-energy-food nexus.

**FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT & INVESTMENT MATCHING**

Through WE4F, innovators from Iraq can now access the financial and technical support, as well as investment matching, to improve the sustainability and productivity of food production and farming across the country. Supported projects must fulfill strict environmental, social, and governance criteria, have positive effects on the environment, strive for gender equality and inclusion, and ensure secure access to food for all.

**IRAQ CALL FOR INNOVATIONS GOALS**

Together with Iraq-based innovators, investors and partners, WE4F aims to:
- Increase food production and decrease the reliance on import and harmful practices along the value chain of the Iraqi agricultural sector through a more sustainable and efficient usage of water and/or energy.
- Increase income for poor women and men in both rural and urban areas all over the country who are consumers or work in farming.
- Sustainably scale innovators’ solutions to meet the challenges in the WE4F nexus.
- Promote climate and environmental resilience and biodiversity through the sustainable, holistic management of Iraq’s natural resources and ecosystems.
WHAT WE OFFER

FOR LOCAL INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS
Are you an Iraq-based innovator with a proven solution tackling water and/or energy issues in urban or rural food production? Do you want to scale your business from a few hundred to thousands of clients? We will help you to make your vision come true!

After participating in the Iraq Call for Innovations, you will join the MENA innovator cohort and get access to free technical support from the region’s most qualified water-energy-food business experts. Depending on your needs, we can provide you with additional grants, soft loans, or other direct financial support of up to $150,000 USD. The RIH will also link you with investors and investment opportunities that will make sure you can multiply your impact in Iraq and across the MENA region.

Please note that WE4F is not a startup program. Your solution needs to be proven and you need to have a running production, an existing customer base and recurring sales.

FOR INVESTORS
Are you looking for commercial or sub-commercial, impact-oriented investments in the water, energy and/or food sector in Iraq, but having trouble finding viable candidates? Are potential investments currently too risky for you? Contact us for more information on our growing portfolio of mid-to later stage water-energy-food enterprises and innovative financing mechanisms. We can help you with de-risking investments by backing them up with grants, soft loans, or other financial instruments at our hand. Furthermore, investors profit from our complimentary due diligence processes and substantial technical assistance we provide to our portfolio companies.

FOR PARTNERS
The WE4F MENA RIH is in an on-going dialogue with key institutional and financial players in Iraq and beyond. The Hub promotes the potential of water-energy-food innovations in tackling Iraq’s challenges through targeted communication, awareness raising and joint advocacy to create a more enabling environment. If you are a government or private sector actor striving for the same goals, contact us to explore synergies and potential partnerships to support local water-energy-food innovators.

WHO WE ARE
Through the Iraq Track of MENA RIH-WE4F, USAID supports Iraqi innovators working in the water-food-energy nexus to get a double chance for accessing finance and technical support to scale-up their businesses, create job opportunities, and modernize the food industry.

The MENA RIH is a consortium of regionally rooted organizations, with long histories of working with each other and countless partners towards a more sustainable Middle East and North Africa. The consortium is led by Berytech, in collaboration with cewas, Chemonics Egypt and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). Besides the Iraq track, the RIH will launch a regional Call for Innovations in the fall of 2021 for which Iraqi innovators can also qualify.

CONTACT US

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