

IMPACT REPORT

Sustain.AI Accelerator

August 2026

BRIGHT
TIDE



In collaboration with:

HOGAN LOVELLS
CADWALADER ■



boatfolk

OakNorth 



Kennedys



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Foreword

Harry Wright

CEO and Founder, Bright Tide

We are living in a decisive decade. The challenges we face, from climate change and biodiversity loss to food insecurity and social inequality, are complex, interconnected, and global in scale. They demand not only new ideas but also new ways of working together across sectors, geographies and disciplines.

At Bright Tide, our mission is to create the spaces where this collaboration can happen. The Sustain.AI Accelerator was designed with this in mind: to bring together a community of innovators, experts and leaders committed to reimagining how we live and work in balance with the natural world.

What makes this programme special is not simply the ingenuity of the ventures involved. It is the spirit of collective action that underpins it. From our partners and advisors to the entrepreneurs themselves, each participant brings a unique perspective, yet all share the belief that the solutions to our greatest challenges will only emerge when we act with intention, integrity and courage.

This report captures a moment of progress, but it also points to a bigger journey ahead. The work of building a more sustainable future is never finished. It is a continual process of learning, adapting and daring to think differently. What gives me hope is the energy and commitment of the people driving this change.

To everyone who has contributed to this programme, thank you. Your vision and determination are a reminder that when innovation is guided by purpose there is no limit to the positive impact we can achieve together.



John Elkington

Founder at Volans and Renowned Author

Every transformative technology arrives trailing both promise and wreckage. Steam power fouled the air for a century before cleaner energy systems emerged. AI is no different, though the timescales are compressed and the stakes are planetary from the outset.



Today's data infrastructure is mind-numbingly costly, in capital, energy, water, land, and embedded carbon. Dismissing such challenges is as misguided as dismissing AI's potential. The impacts will be exponentially negative and exponentially positive. This is not a binary choice.

Crucially, AI must now tackle the problems its infrastructure creates. Optimizing energy grids. Accelerating materials science for low-impact compute. And modelling ecological tipping points with a precision humans cannot match.

The technology is not separate from the solution, it is the solution, if we direct it effectively. This is why early-stage innovators, entrepreneurs and investors, spotlighted by the Sustain.AI Accelerator, are so important.

The architectures now being adopted; for chips, cooling systems, energy sourcing, model efficiency, will calcify into infrastructure for decades to come. The multi-trillion-dollar question is not whether AI can be sustainable. It is who decides what sustainability implies - and whether they are in the room early enough to matter.

Dr Nathalie Moreno

Partner, Technology & Data Protection, Kennedys

As a global law firm that assists businesses and insurers identify and mitigate risks, it has been a privilege to participate in this collective programme - where code meets conscience and innovation dares to dream green.

As AI reshapes the sustainability landscape, the Sustain.AI Accelerator offers strategic insight into both its risks and opportunities for ventures and their stakeholders. The programme examines how AI can accelerate sustainability goals, optimise resource-use and unlock data-driven innovation, whilst addressing emerging legal exposures, claims risks, and governance challenges and responsibilities.

From a legal perspective, Sustain.AI demonstrates how law can enable progress with purpose – helping innovators move forward with confidence while safeguarding against unintended harm, ensuring that innovative ambition remains anchored in duty, diligence and thoughtful design.

Advising and collaborating with this cohort of innovative ventures has been enlightening and extremely rewarding. Collectively, they will continue this journey, equipped to help forge a new era of smart solutions to bridge the protection gap and strengthen societal resilience.

We wish the ventures every success.

Our involvement in this programme reflects Kennedys' broader commitment to responsible business, guided by our priorities across environmental stewardship, social impact and ethical governance and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Read our latest report [here](#).



About Bright Tide

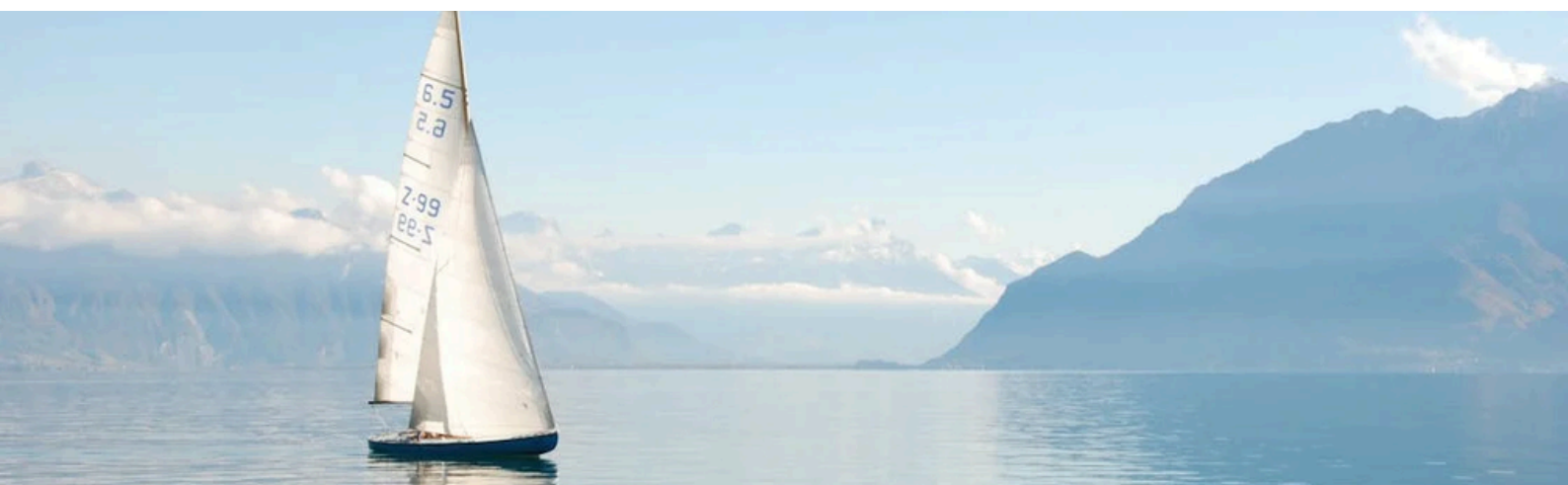
Bright Tide is a leading UK environmental consultancy and social enterprise that works at the intersection of nature, climate, innovation and business. We advise organisations on climate and biodiversity risks and opportunities, support the development of sustainability strategies, and help connect businesses with emerging solutions that can accelerate environmental progress. Alongside our consultancy work, we design and deliver accelerator programmes that bring together start-ups, corporates, investors, academics and subject-matter experts to help scale practical solutions to environmental challenges.

Since 2022, accelerator programmes have become a core part of Bright Tide's work. Our first Blue Economy Accelerator supported ventures working across areas including sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, offshore wind and ocean health. Since that first highly successful programme, the primary programme focus has shifted slightly each time but key priorities around a more sustainable regenerative economy remained with the Blue Carbon Accelerator, Regenerative Farming Accelerator and more recently, our Sustain.AI and Agri.Blue programmes, which introduced a more explicit focus on how artificial intelligence can help address environmental challenges.

These accelerator programmes provide founders with varied multi-layered support and we are proud of the significant positive impact they contribute to the cohorts of innovative founders who pass through them. Supporting over 350 ventures from across the world has also helped to develop Bright Tide's strong global network across the nature and sustainability sector.

With a deep commitment to driving positive change, Bright Tide also recently launched The Atlas Club - a private members club which brings together leaders from across business, finance, policy, science and conservation committed to restoring nature and shaping a more resilient future. Members enjoy access to networking events at prestigious London venues, nature field visits, expert-led roundtables, webinars and more with a key emphasis on cross-sector collaboration and relationship building. The Atlas Club extends Bright Tide's mission beyond individual programmes by creating an ongoing community where ideas, partnerships and projects can spark and evolve in an intimate and friendly setting. Only six months old, its membership is growing and we look forward to seeing how this engaged community evolves.

At its core, Bright Tide's work is centred on helping environmental solutions move further and faster, and we are excited to continue supporting ventures and organisations tackling some of the world's most pressing climate, nature, and biodiversity challenges.



Executive Summary

The Sustain.AI Accelerator was launched by Bright Tide in early 2025 to support ventures using artificial intelligence to address environmental and sustainability challenges. At a time when AI was rapidly entering the mainstream, the programme sought to identify promising founders and provide practical support to help them develop, test and scale their solutions.

Over a one-month programme, ten ventures from six countries took part in a structured series of workshops, mentoring sessions, networking events and pitch opportunities. The cohort represented a broad range of applications, including biodiversity monitoring, wildfire detection, sustainable agriculture, ocean health, climate risk, environmental intelligence and sustainable finance. Together, they demonstrated the growing range of ways in which AI could be applied to real-world environmental challenges.

The programme was designed to address the practical needs of early-stage founders and delivered with the support of a diverse group of partners spanning law, finance, technology, sustainability and innovation. Sessions covered resilience and leadership, market positioning, investment readiness, pilot project development and legal considerations. Participants engaged directly with corporates including Unilever, The Crown Estate and Boatfolk, alongside investors including Pelican Ag and Sand River VC. They also gained insights from entrepreneurs and practitioners working at the forefront of sustainable innovation, including examples of large-scale environmental projects already deploying AI in practice.

Alongside the formal programme, Sustain.AI created opportunities for founders to connect with investors, corporates, policymakers and environmental experts. More than 200 people attended programme events, including a House of Lords gathering, networking sessions and the final pitch event hosted by The Crown Estate. These connections helped participants build relationships beyond the programme itself. In one example, a founder met an investor through a Sustain.AI event and subsequently secured a £200,000 investment.

The programme highlighted both the opportunities and challenges facing ventures operating at the intersection of AI and sustainability. While the cohort was applying AI across very different sectors, many founders faced similar questions around commercialisation, customer adoption, investment and responsible deployment. Bringing these ventures together created opportunities for peer learning and helped establish a network of founders navigating a rapidly evolving landscape.

Looking back, Sustain.AI was launched before sustainable AI had become a widely recognised category within the innovation ecosystem. The programme helped showcase the breadth of emerging applications, strengthened connections between founders and key stakeholders, and provided early evidence of how AI could support climate and nature-focused innovation. This report reflects on the ventures involved, the activities delivered and the lessons generated through the programme.

Overview of the Sustain. AI Accelerator Programme

Background to the Programme

The Sustain.AI Accelerator was launched at a time when both the environmental and technology landscapes were changing rapidly. By early 2025, climate change, biodiversity loss and pressure on natural resources were continuing to intensify, while organisations across every sector were being asked to respond more quickly and effectively. At the same time, artificial intelligence had moved from being a specialist technology to a mainstream topic of discussion. Following the rapid growth of generative AI and large language models during 2023 and 2024, businesses, investors and entrepreneurs were all exploring how AI could reshape the way they worked.

This surge in AI innovation coincided with the continued growth of climate-tech and the emergence of nature-tech as important sectors in their own right. New start-ups were developing tools for biodiversity monitoring, environmental reporting, climate risk analysis, regenerative agriculture, carbon management and resource optimisation. Many of these solutions were beginning to incorporate AI, creating new possibilities for analysing complex environmental data, improving decision-making and delivering impact at greater scale.

Through our previous accelerator programmes, we had worked with hundreds of founders, investors and corporate partners and could see AI becoming a recurring theme across environmental innovation. Founders were experimenting with new tools and exploring how AI could strengthen their products and improve efficiency. At the same time, many were grappling with questions around responsible deployment, data quality, environmental impacts and how to apply AI in ways that delivered genuine value rather than simply following a technology trend.

Against this backdrop, we believed there was a need to create a dedicated programme that would help founders apply these technologies responsibly and effectively within climate and nature-focused ventures. We saw significant potential for AI to support positive environmental outcomes, but also felt it was important that the sustainability sector played an active role in shaping how these new technologies were developed and applied, rather than simply responding to them afterwards.

Sustain.AI was therefore designed to support the new generation of start-ups operating at the intersection of sustainability and artificial intelligence. The programme sought to demonstrate how AI could be used in ways that deliver ground-breaking benefits for climate, nature and society and encourage a positive direction for the use of AI in service of climate and nature.

Programme Summary

The Sustain.AI Accelerator was a one-month programme designed to support early-stage ventures applying artificial intelligence to sustainability challenges. Delivered between January and March 2025, the programme combined expert-led workshops, mentoring, investor engagement, networking opportunities and pitch events to support our brilliant cohort of founders.

The programme focused on four main objectives:

1. Fostering Collaboration and Growing Networks
2. Developing Essential Skills and Knowledge for Founders
3. Technical and Advisory support
4. Identifying and Aiding Funding Opportunities

To support these core areas and the accelerator as a whole, partners from various business sectors supported the programme in different ways, bringing invaluable expertise and resources to the cohort.

30+

APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED

10

VENTURES
SELECTED

100%

IMPACT-BASED
VENTURES

6

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED BY
VENTURES

10

PARTNERS

12

EVENTS AND
WORKSHOPS

5+

UN SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS ADDRESSED

200+

PEOPLE ATTENDING
NETWORKING EVENTS

Cohort Profiles: Participating Ventures

This programme brought together 10 incredible ventures, carefully selected for their contributions to advancing our understanding of how AI can transform the landscape for sustainable solutions. From wildfire detection and biodiversity monitoring to sustainable land use and regenerative agriculture, each venture was applying AI to build a more resilient, nature-positive future.

The diversity and reach of these ventures is testament to the impact of our accelerator programme and we were thrilled to support the journeys of ventures working both locally in the UK and as far away as Argentina.

Ventures



Satellites on Fire uses AI, satellites, and ground cameras to detect fires ahead of NASA's satellite alerts.



Wilder Sensing uses smart microphones and AI to track wildlife through sound. This helps ecologists and investors measure and protect biodiversity.



Loamin applies geospatial AI to guide sustainable land use, balancing conservation with development, especially in agriculture.



Ecodetect automates marine life monitoring with AI, making biodiversity assessments for offshore projects faster, easier, and scalable.



Atmo helps make decarbonization projects investable by improving risk analysis and sustainability metrics for net-zero transitions.

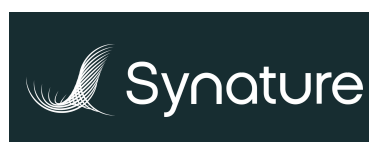




Applied Genomics collects marine biodiversity data across the British Isles to train AI and improve conservation and environmental policy.



Gamaya transforms sugarcane farming with AI and hyperspectral imaging, helping farmers boost yields and adapt to climate change.



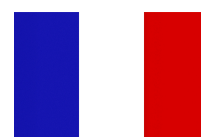
Synature builds smart audio tools that monitor nature's soundscape, providing real-time biodiversity insights for land and ecosystem managers.



Tese helps SMEs become investment-ready by offering sustainability tools that connect them to ESG-focused financial institutions.



Seabex offers AI-based irrigation tools without sensors, helping farmers save water, cut costs, and grow more sustainably.



Unlocking Impact: Key SDGs Covered in our Accelerator Programme

Ventures were selected and supported based on their potential to directly contribute to several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This section outlines the core SDGs where the programme made measurable impact, highlighting the work of participating ventures and the collaborative partnerships that helped turn innovation into action.



SDG 13: Climate Action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by lowering greenhouse gas emissions, building resilience, and promoting sustainable development.

Sustain.AI addressed SDG 13 by supporting ventures that used AI to reduce emissions, build climate resilience, and improve environmental decision-making. Ventures developed tools for wildfire prediction, climate-smart farming, and carbon tracking, enabling businesses and communities to adapt more quickly to climate threats. One cohort member helped farmers access climate finance through AI-linked metrics, while others used satellite data to improve land management and prevent emissions-intensive disasters. Together, these solutions contributed to more adaptive and climate-resilient systems.



SDG 14: Life Below Water - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development by preventing marine pollution and protecting biodiversity.

Ocean-focused ventures in the programme applied AI to protect marine biodiversity and promote sustainable development offshore. One developed a marine monitoring system using computer vision to track wildlife in real time around tidal and wind installations. This helped renewable energy operators to avoid harming marine species and reduced the environmental impact of infrastructure. Sustain.AI also supported ventures focused on sustainable aquaculture and nutrient management, helping to address challenges like ocean acidification and biodiversity decline in coastal waters.



SDG 15: Life On Land - Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, and halt biodiversity loss.

The programme played a key role in tackling biodiversity loss and restoring degraded land. Ventures used bioacoustic sensors, geospatial modelling, and predictive analytics to monitor ecosystems and support regenerative practices. Innovations in soil health restoration and wildlife tracking empowered landowners, farmers, and conservationists with better data and tools to make informed decisions. Sustain.AI helped accelerate solutions that protect endangered species, restore habitats, and promote sustainable land use across agriculture and conservation.



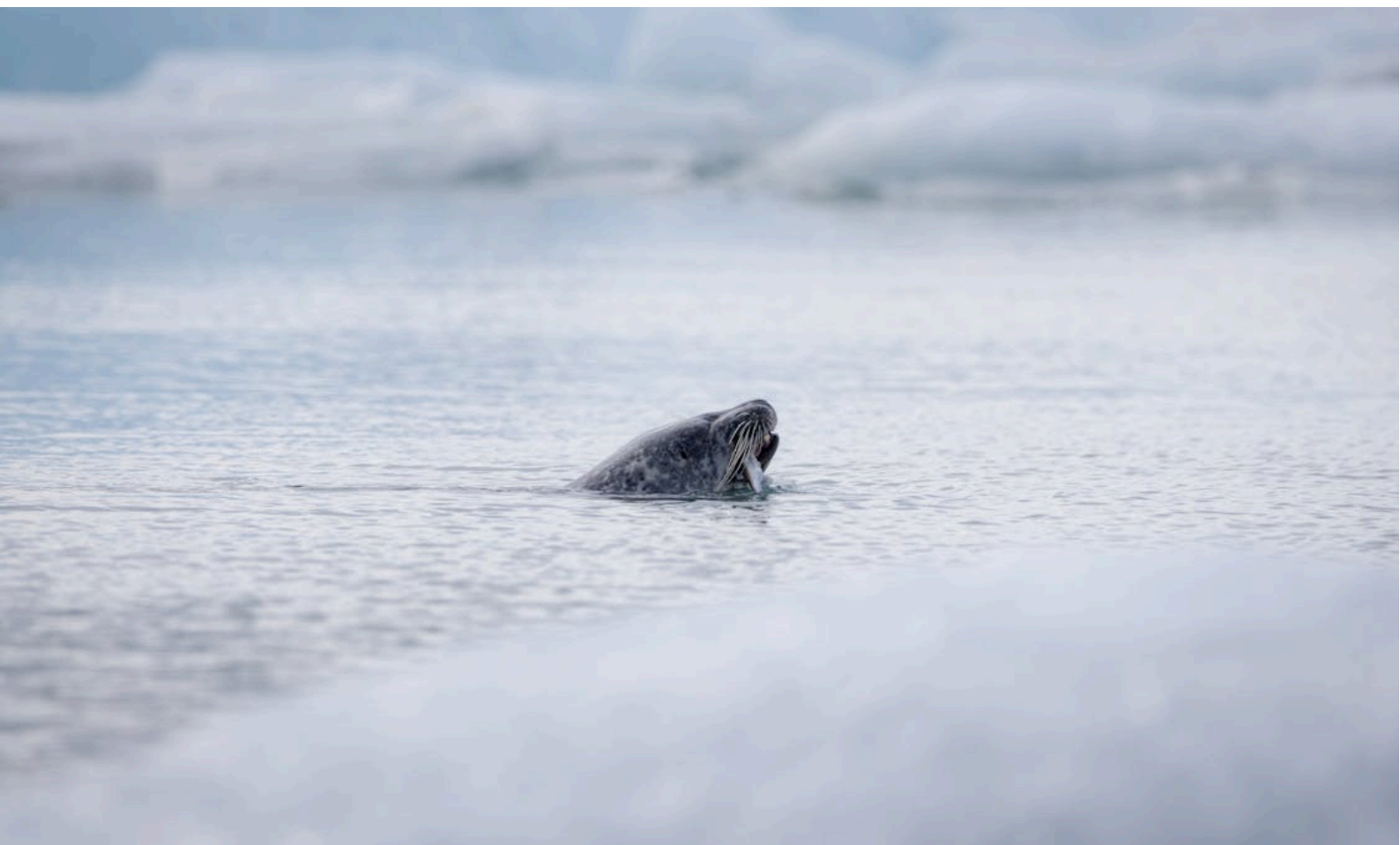
SDG 2: Zero Hunger - End hunger, achieve food security and promote sustainable agriculture.

Several ventures in Sustain.AI focused on transforming food systems. From precision irrigation and drought forecasting to crop analytics and soil optimisation, the cohort helped improve yields, reduce waste, and increase climate resilience in agriculture. AI tools enabled farmers to monitor crops more accurately and use fewer inputs while improving food quality and reliability. These innovations directly contributed to improving food security and the future of sustainable agriculture.



SDG 17: Partnerships For The Goals - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

At its core, Sustain.AI was built on collaboration. The programme brought together start-ups, corporate partners, law firms, investors, and public sector champions to support the scale-up of impactful technologies, supporting a more positive future. By fostering deep cross-sector partnerships, Sustain.AI created an ecosystem where innovation, policy, and business aligned to accelerate progress on the SDGs.



Partnership Summary

LEGAL & INSURANCE

HOGAN LOVELLS
CADWALADER ■

BaSE
BUSINESS &
SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE

AXA

Kennedys

FINANCE

 **BARCLAYS**

OakNorth 

TECHNICAL

 UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH

 ecosulis

 creditnature

boatfolk

NETWORKING

 GITEX
IMPACT

 x

 EXPAND
NORTH
STAR

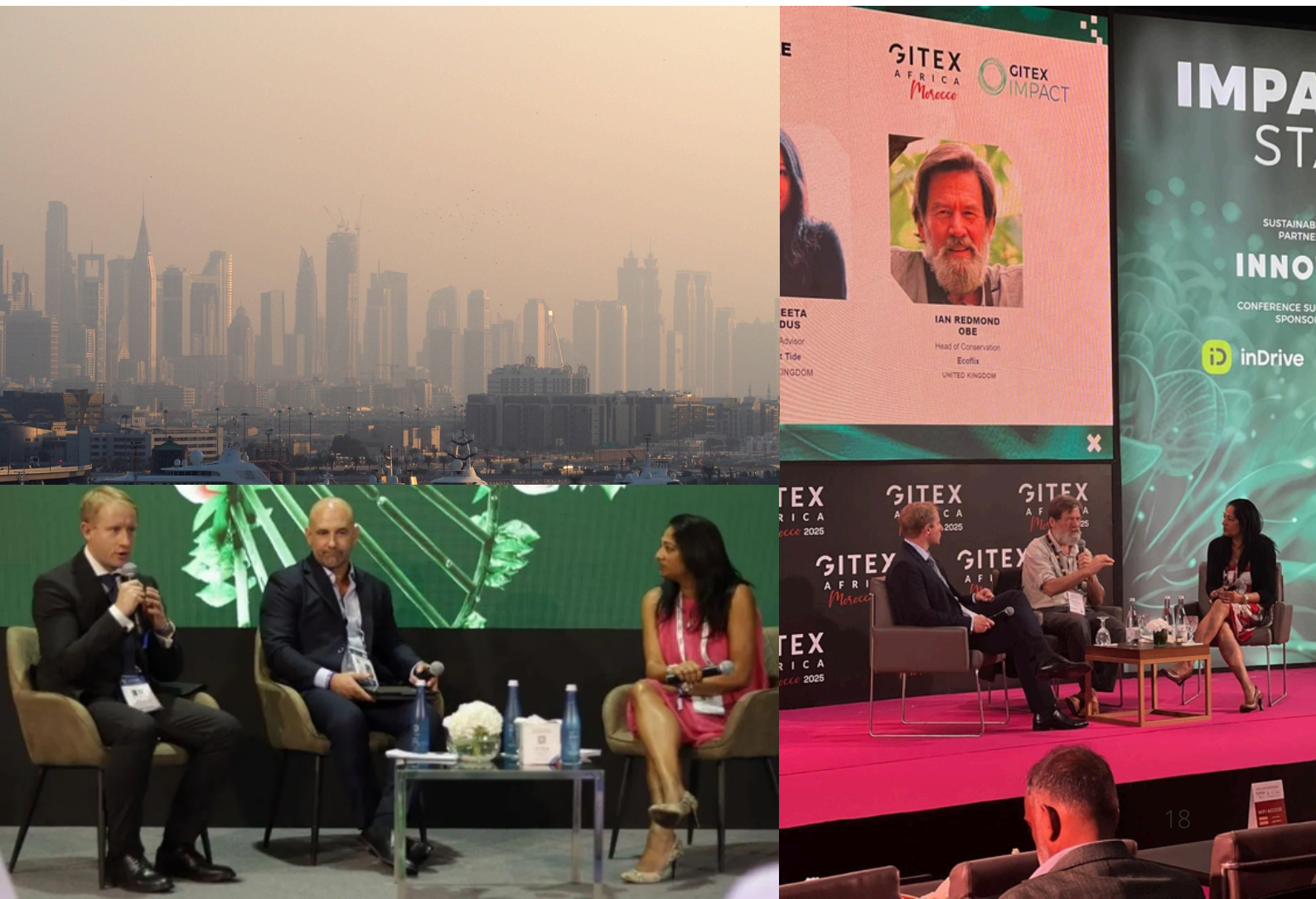




Before going into the events of the programme, it is important to recognise the international launch of Sustain.AI at GITEX Impact 2024, alongside Expand North Star in Dubai. Bright Tide took it to a global audience at one of the world's leading technology and innovation events, held at Dubai Harbour, against a backdrop of growing international interest in AI's role in tackling environmental and sustainability challenges.

GITEX Impact, the impact-tech counterpart to GITEX Global, the world's largest technology and startup event, ran at Dubai Harbour from 13 to 16 October 2024, organised by Dubai World Trade Centre. Bright Tide's session, held with Expand North Star on 14 October, fell within an event that drew exhibitors, investors and policymakers working across green finance, climate tech and ESG. The timing also placed it inside the UAE's Year of Sustainability, which President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan extended through 2024 to build on the UAE's hosting of COP28 the year before.

The Dubai launch gave Sustain.AI a strong start. Bright Tide announced the programme to an international audience for the first time and opened applications beyond the UK, building a global pipeline of founders from the outset. The momentum from this announcement was carried on by support on social media and global interest in the cohort of Sustain AI and the events that followed.



Key Events

The Sustain.AI Accelerator Programme featured a series of high-impact events designed to facilitate networking and collaboration as well as showcasing the innovation of the cohort.

Launch Event

The programme launch event was hosted in partnership with Hogan Lovells Cadwalader and their HLC BaSE team, bringing together more than 120 leaders from policy, investment, technology, and sustainability. Our partnership with Hogan Lovells Cadwalader is a longstanding one and this event was a particular highlight, bringing together a fascinating cross-sector group of people who share a belief in the powerful role AI can play helping address some of the planet's most pressing environmental challenges.



The evening began with inspiring keynote speeches from House of Lords speakers Lord Kulveer Ranger and Baroness Manzila Uddin. They shared thoughtful perspectives on the role AI can play in creating more inclusive and sustainable systems.

Their messages were followed by a fireside chat with sustainability pioneer John Elkington, who encouraged us to think differently about how progress is measured and to embrace more regenerative approaches to innovation and business. The final speaker was Ralph Chami, a leading voice in biodiversity finance, who reminded us of the urgent need to realign our economic systems with the health of the natural world.

Following this important message, the stage was set to introduce selected ventures from the Sustain.AI cohort: Jen Godderidge of atmo, Paolo Stagni of Satellites on Fire, Piyush Harsh of GAMAYA, Hugh Sturrock of Loamin, Geoff Carss of Wilder Sensing, Samantha Jane Howlett of Applied Genomics, and David Gold of ecodetect. Each founder shared how their work is using AI to tackle different environmental challenges and it was inspiring hearing about some of their personal stories and motivation for creating the ventures.



With the cohort now officially introduced to all present, it was then time for networking and refreshments. As with all our in-person programme events, these networking moments are designed with two objectives: enabling the programme cohort to make valuable connections with programme partners, sponsors and event attendees (all invited because of their connection to the programme focus); but also to support wider dialogue and debate on the programme focus area, bringing important cross-sector voices into the same room.

This launch event marked the beginning of the journey for the cohort but also the start of important conversations and connections which grew and developed over the six weeks that followed.



House of Lords Parliamentary Reception Event

Another key event was a reception held at the UK House of Lords, celebrating the achievements and contributions of the programme cohort, partners and sponsors. The event welcomed over 100 guests from across government, business, and the environmental innovation space, providing an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the programme and build momentum for the work ahead.

The evening was opened by Lord Teverson, who shared his reflections on the importance of bridging climate action and technological innovation, particularly in the context of cross-sector policy development. This was followed by Lord Kulveer Ranger, who spoke about the opportunity for AI to play a critical role in advancing sustainable outcomes across both land and ocean ecosystems. These were important reminders for the overwhelming need for collaboration and connected thinking in an environment where such conversations are carried out in silos far too frequently.



A special moment in the evening was a mini awards ceremony, where several members of the cohort were recognised for their outstanding contributions to sustainability and innovation. We also thanked the sponsors and supporters who helped bring Sustain.AI to life, including Dana Clouston from Barclays, Suzanne Scatliffe from AXA XL, Richard West from Kennedys, Cain Blythe from Ecosulis, Hugo Oliveira Sousa from OakNorth, and Dominic Zammit from boatfolk. Their support has been invaluable to us and, crucially, enabled the cohort to grow and develop through the programme. Thank you again to all of them!



We were honoured to welcome Andy Cato, co-founder of Wildfarmed and a leading voice in regenerative agriculture, as our keynote speaker for the evening. Andy spoke passionately about the systemic challenges in our food system, drawing on his own journey from music producer to regenerative farmer and explained the practical steps needed to create scalable change in land use and soil health. His call to action reinforced the programme's mission to support ventures tackling root-cause environmental degradation.

The evening concluded with closing remarks from Jeremy McKane, artist and ocean advocate, who reflected on the emotional and cultural power of storytelling in environmental work. His words reminded us of the importance of keeping people and nature at the centre of technological progress.

The House of Lords was a fitting setting for what proved to be a highly thought-provoking evening exploring the rich offering which technology can bring to us whilst staying firmly connected to and protecting our precious earth.

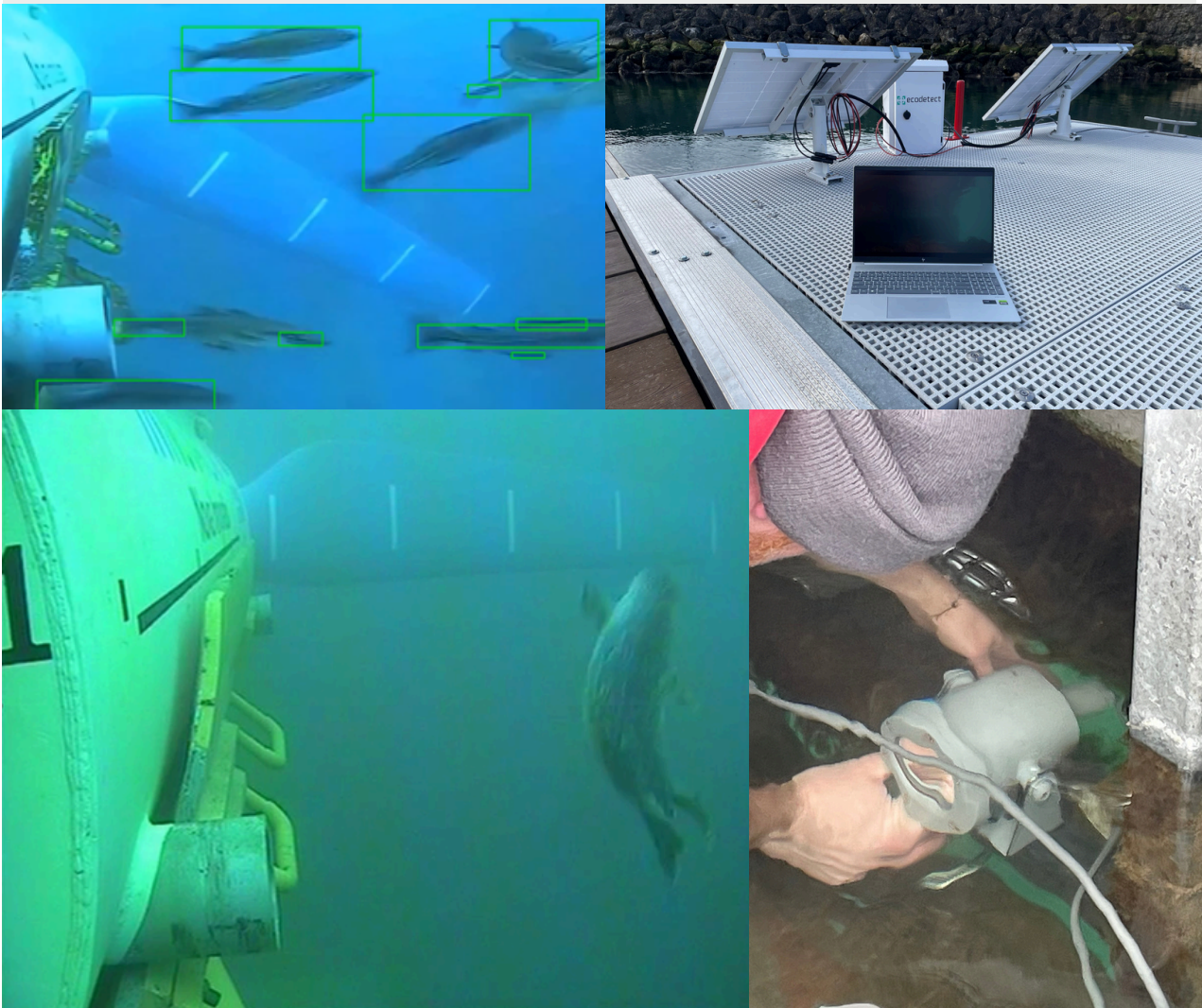
"Participating in the Bright Tide Sustain.AI accelerator programme was transformative for our business. We were a very early stage start up when we took part, and it really helped us increase our brand exposure. In addition, we benefitted from lots of valuable legal advice covering aspects relating to IP and compliance, as well as making key connections. The final pitching event was attended by sector relevant investors, potential customers, and environmental stakeholders. As a direct result, we met an investor at the event who subsequently **invested £200k in the business**, none of this would have happened without being on the programme".

- David Gold, Founder of ecodetect

CASE STUDY 1: ECODETECT - ADVANCING MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING THROUGH AI AND UNDERWATER SENSING

Ecodetect is an award-winning Welsh ClimateTech company pioneering the next generation of marine environmental monitoring. By combining advanced underwater sensing technologies with artificial intelligence, Ecodetect provides unprecedented insight into the interactions between marine wildlife, human activities, and offshore infrastructure. Their solutions enable evidence-based decision making that supports both nature recovery and sustainable offshore development.

Through innovation, collaboration, and knowledge transfer, Ecodetect is helping to build a more sustainable blue economy—protecting marine ecosystems while creating skilled employment, developing local expertise, and strengthening the long-term resilience of coastal communities.



Venture Showcase Event

As the Sustain.AI programme moved into its final phase, the cohort gathered at The Crown Estate for a showcase pitch evening that highlighted the strategic role of AI in addressing pressing environmental challenges. Held in front of a full room of investors, industry leaders, policymakers and supporters, the evening served as a celebration of innovation and gave the ventures a platform to demonstrate the progress they had made through the programme.

The event began with opening remarks from Aruj Haider of The Crown Estate, who spoke about the growing role of technological innovation in supporting nature recovery and environmental resilience. This was followed by Viscount Camrose, who offered valuable insights into the UK's ambition to lead on AI and sustainability, while reinforcing the need for cross-sector partnerships that bridge policy, technology and environmental action.

The highlight of the evening was the pitch session itself, where eight ventures from the Sustain.AI cohort presented their solutions to the audience. Each pitch reflected the unique ways AI is being applied to solve urgent climate and nature challenges.

The quality of the pitches was outstanding, with each founder speaking confidently and passionately, bringing often complex technology to life in an engaging way. Their work highlighted the vast potential for AI to become a core enabler of climate action, ecological restoration and sustainable production systems.



Collaborator Workshop Summaries

Alongside the larger public-facing events, the cohort had a timetable of focused workshops and webinars as a group. Developed and delivered with the support of our programme and learning partners, these sessions were designed to provide ventures with the knowledge and practical skills needed to overcome barriers commonly faced by early-stage ventures and accelerate their businesses' growth.

This section provides an insight into these workshops and some of the lessons and priorities that emerged for the cohort.

Legal Risk and Compliance

By prioritising legal compliance, early-stage ventures can mitigate risks, build trust with stakeholders, and operate within the boundaries of applicable laws and regulations.

Given how central legal issues are to our ventures, they had two dedicated in-person workshop sessions with two of our key programme sponsors: law firms Hogan Lovells Cadwalader and Kennedys.

Hogan Lovells Cadwalader (BaSE)

HLC BaSE supported 8 of the Sustain.AI ventures, 7 of which were advised as part of an in-person pro bono legal workshop, [HLC BaSE Catalyst](#). 17 lawyers from Hogan Lovells and 5 client volunteers advised on a range of legal issues, including IP, contract review, the implications when working with UK and EU entities, and general commercial law considerations.

As part of the Catalyst programme and follow up advice, HLC BaSE dedicated 139.8 hours for the total value of £117,000 to supporting the Sustain.AI ventures.

**HOGAN LOVELLS
CADWALADER** ■



"We offer pro bono legal advice to sustainability-focused AI ventures because it's catalytic. Practical legal advice at an early stage empowers bold ideas to take root, clears a path for ethical innovation, and ensures the future these ventures are designing is built on strong foundations. Through partnering with Bright Tide and supporting the Sustain.AI programme we have worked with entrepreneurs and innovators tackling some of the greatest environmental challenges we face".

Fenella Chambers, Counsel, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader

"It is clear that Hogan Lovells Cadwalader has incredibly skilled lawyers, both on a professional and on a social level. The legal advice session was tremendously helpful to have a better understanding of product law; we learned how to keep things simple, what pitfalls to avoid and how to set up our product agreements for long-term success. This will help us on our mission to make nature more measurable with our Synature smart mics!"

Olivier Staehli, Synature

"The support Hogan Lovells Cadwalader provide through their BaSE Catalyst programme is second-to-none in helping social enterprises understand and navigate the world of setting up and running your own business, legal compliance, data protection and intellectual property. The Hogan Lovells Cadwalader BaSE Catalyst programme gave us the confidence to develop tools to conserve marine wildlife and accelerate the transition to clean energy technologies at scale."

David Gold, ecodetect

Kennedys Breakfast Briefing

Kennedys

Kennedys hosted a Sustain.AI Breakfast Briefing at their office in London's iconic Walkie Talkie building, bringing together legal experts to engage directly with the cohort. The goal was to create an open forum where the ventures could explore the legal, financial, and risk management challenges of scaling AI-driven sustainability solutions.

The session focused on how AI ventures can operate responsibly within complex regulatory and financial systems while building resilience and credibility with investors, insurers, and partners.

What was discussed?

Kennedys' lawyers shared expertise on data governance, intellectual property, and ESG compliance, helping founders navigate global frameworks such as GDPR and sustainable finance regulations.

Ventures presented their work, including innovations in biodiversity monitoring (Applied Genomics, EcoDetect, Wilder Sensing), sustainable finance (Tese), and wildfire detection (Satellites on Fire).

All parties also explored risk management, political and economic challenges, and how AI-driven data could de-risk environmental projects and improve access to capital.

The conversation also examined how insurance and finance sectors can recognise sustainability metrics - turning reduced environmental risk into lower premiums or better loan terms.

Outcome

The workshop deepened collaboration between ventures and our lawyer experts, demystifying pathways for compliance and investment readiness. Participants left with a stronger grasp of how to protect intellectual property, engage investors, and use data responsibly. It also sparked new ideas around embedding sustainability metrics into insurance and finance models, setting the stage for continued joint exploration between Kennedys, Bright Tide, and the Sustain.AI ventures.



'It was inspiring to see how these ventures are using AI to tackle sustainability challenges with such ambition. Social Impact programmes like Sustain.AI give us the chance to help founders navigate life as entrepreneurs while building businesses that are needed for a sustainable future. By sharing our legal insight early, we can help these ventures grow with confidence and stay resilient as they scale.'

- Kennedys Legal Team

CASE STUDY 2: WILDER SENSING - TRANSFORMING ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS THROUGH AI

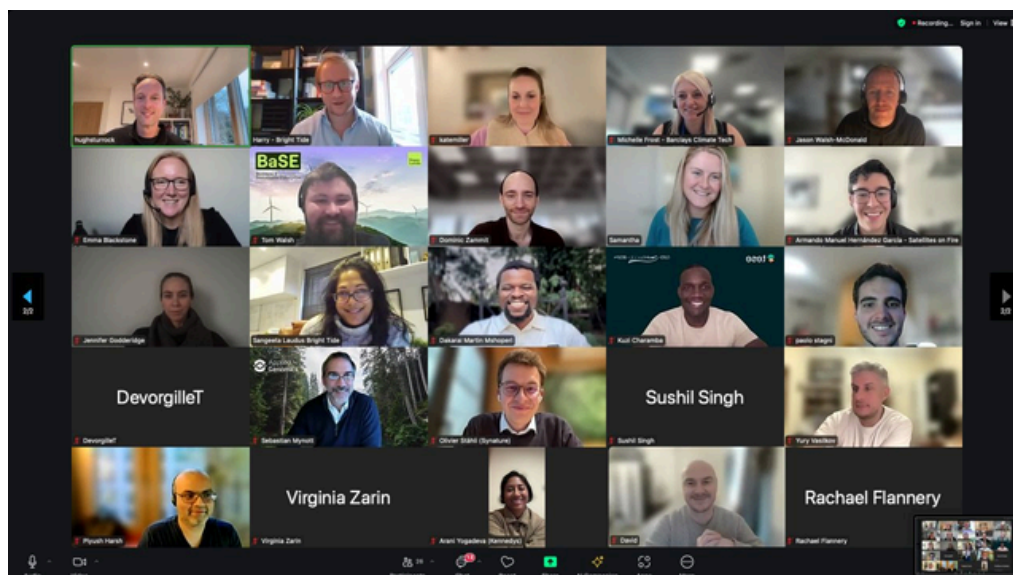
Understanding our impact on the animals and insects around us is crucial across many sectors; from regenerative farming, to site development, such as housing and solar farms. Our ecosystems are under enormous pressure, with the UK being one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.

Traditional ecological assessment is costly, time consuming and requires a high degree of experience. By using AI and innovative recording devices Wilder Sensing automatically track how birds, bats and insects change across a site and over time. Insects are a crucial part of the food chain and many species are specific to key habitats. Pulling all of the data together enables you to understand the impact you are having on habitat quality and health.



Virtual Workshops

Pathways to Resilience with Dan White, Gentian AI. Dan opened the virtual programme with a session on climate and nature resilience, drawing on Gentian's work using satellite and aerial imagery to assess green infrastructure for insurers and developers. The discussion gave the cohort a useful frame for thinking about how AI-led environmental data is bought, used and trusted by larger organisations.



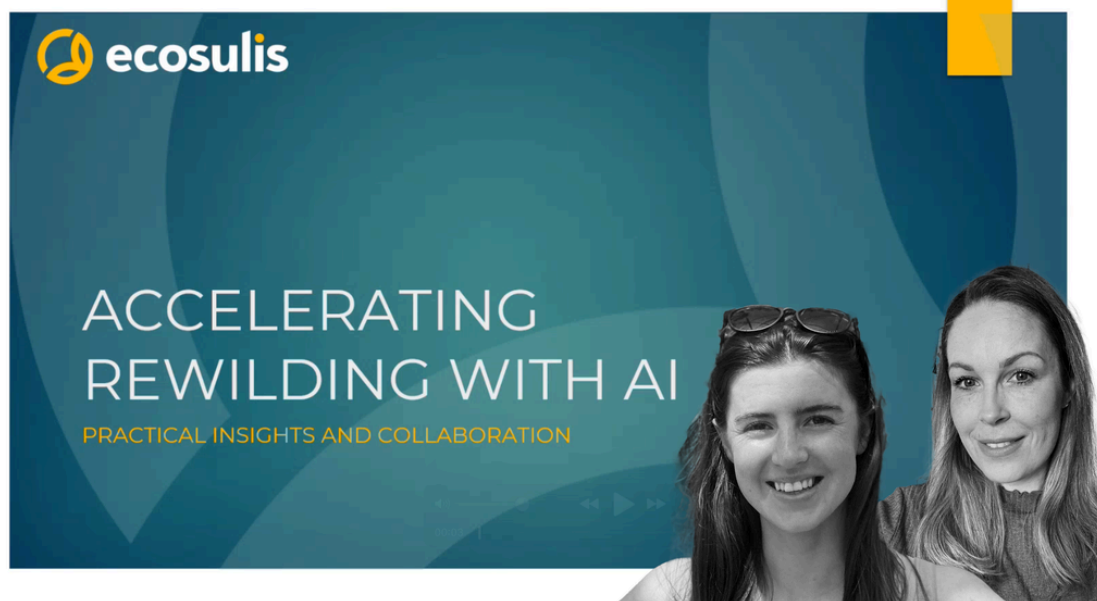
Boatfolk Session on Pilot Projects. Dominic Zammit ran a working session on designing and structuring pilots, using Boatfolk's marina network as a worked example.

Sand River VC Session. This session was run by Gabbi Barker and Ed Thorne, who brought a venture-capital perspective on how the AI-for-sustainability category is being read by investors, what kinds of metrics matter at seed and Series A, and where the funding environment is heading.

Unilever Workshop. Rocco van den Berg led a session on what large FMCG buyers actually need from sustainable AI suppliers. The conversation focused on supplier onboarding, evidence requirements and how ventures can position themselves to be considered in corporate procurement processes that were not built with early-stage companies in mind.

Pelican AG Investment Readiness. Simon Evill of Pelican AG took the cohort through what good looks like when raising for AI ventures in the sustainability space. The session covered traction signals, common pitfalls in pitch decks and how to talk about impact in a way that holds up under investor scrutiny.

Stand Out and Scale Up with Laura Secorun, Meridian. Laura's session on market positioning was one of the most directly applicable of the programme. She worked with founders on crafting clearer propositions, sharpening their messaging and finding language that travels across investor, customer and policy audiences.



On 10th July, Ecosulis hosted the first instalment of our Innovation Webinar Series, "Accelerating Rewilding with AI: Practical Insights and Collaboration." The session was led by Kate Miller, Head of Business Growth, and Ella Milne, Ecosystem Analyst at Ecosulis.

The webinar focused on exploring the growing role of artificial intelligence in the rewilding and nature recovery sectors. Kate and Ella shared their experiences of integrating AI into their work, acknowledging that while the journey is still at an early stage, the potential is exciting and rapidly evolving.

Key Topics Covered:

Introduction to Ecosulis – an overview of the organisation's mission and work in ecosystem restoration.

AI in Rewilding – how AI technologies are beginning to assist in conservation and restoration efforts.

Case Study Highlights – real-world examples demonstrating the application of AI in nature-based projects.

Risks & Challenges – ethical, technical, and operational considerations when implementing AI.

Future Potential – emerging opportunities where AI could significantly accelerate rewilding outcomes.

The session closed with a short Q&A and also teased Bright Tide's next accelerator programme, AgriBlue.AI.

CASE STUDY 3: THE CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN INTELLIGENT AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS (CRISPS)

The Centre of Research Excellence in Intelligent and Sustainable Productive Systems (CRISPS) at the University of Plymouth is an interdisciplinary research centre focused on developing innovative solutions to support sustainable food production, environmental resilience and ecosystem health. Bringing together expertise from marine, agricultural, environmental and technological disciplines, CRISPS works to address challenges across both terrestrial and marine systems.

A key area of expertise is the application of advanced technologies, including environmental DNA (eDNA) and environmental monitoring tools, to support evidence-based decision-making and sustainable resource management. CRISPS works closely with industry, policymakers and environmental organisations to ensure its research delivers practical impact.

Through its partnership with Bright Tide's accelerator programmes, CRISPS provides scientific expertise, mentoring and technical insight to environmental innovators developing solutions in areas such as regenerative farming, aquaculture and climate resilience. As a partner, CRISPS helps bridge the gap between academic research and commercial innovation while supporting the development of scalable, environmentally focused solutions.



Our involvement with Bright Tide has provided a valuable platform to share CRISPS expertise, build new collaborations, and support innovators developing solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing sustainable food production and environmental management.

- Richard Preziosi, Director of CRISPS

Programme Impact Summary

As an early-stage accelerator, Sustain.AI was designed to support founders, strengthen networks and encourage collaboration across an emerging field of innovation. While many environmental outcomes associated with participating ventures will take years to materialise, the programme generated a number of immediate and observable impacts. Here are a few key outcomes we wanted to share:

1. The Importance of Diverse Learning

A key outcome was a deeper appreciation of how varied backgrounds and lived experiences strengthen problem-solving. Despite the relatively short programme duration, the cohort benefited from being part of an international community of founders facing similar challenges.

Founders brought perspectives shaped by different economic conditions, climate realities, regulatory environments and levels of technological maturity. This diversity helped broaden participants' understanding of how sustainable AI is being applied globally and reinforced that solutions designed must be adaptable to different local contexts rather than assuming a single universal pathway. This point is all the more important in an environment where climate change is being experienced so unequally across the globe. As such, the programme reaffirmed how sustainable AI solutions must be informed by globally diverse priorities.

2. Increased Confidence Navigating a Complex Ecosystem

Many founders operating in sustainable AI are building within markets that are still emerging and often poorly defined. Exposure to investors, corporates, legal advisors and industry practitioners gave the cohort a more grounded understanding of how the wider ecosystem functions, including the realities of funding, regulation, enterprise adoption and partnership development.

Sessions on procurement, pilot design and market positioning gave ventures greater clarity on how to translate technical capability into commercially credible propositions, particularly when engaging with large organisations that may not be structured to work easily with early-stage companies.

3. Demystifying Legal, Regulatory and Risk Questions

Legal and regulatory concerns are often where early-stage ventures lose time, with founders either over-engineering compliance before they have a customer or not confronting difficult legal issues due to complexity. Once again, feedback demonstrated the huge value which founders got from being able to work through such questions in plain language with experts from Hogan Lovells Cadwalader and Kennedys through the programme's tailored legal workshops.

4. Impact in Numbers

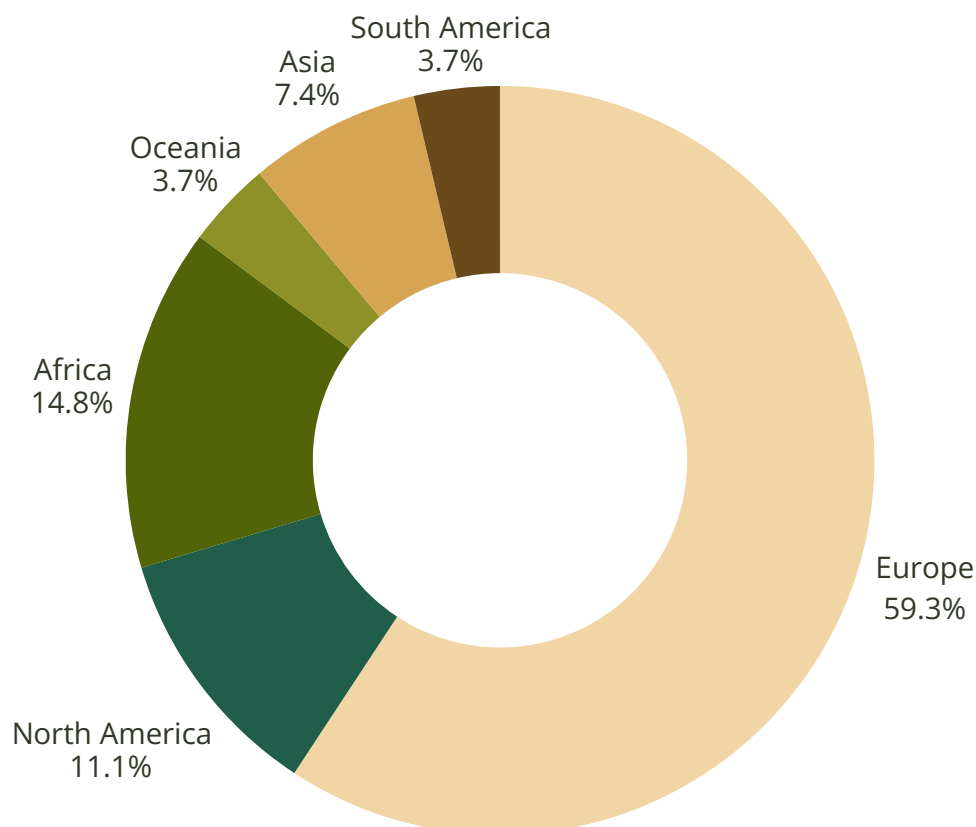
More generally, the programme increased access to expertise and decision-makers through the various programme workshops and events. These interactions provided practical support and helped founders build relationships that extended beyond the programme itself. One venture subsequently secured a £200,000 investment from a connection first made through a Sustain.AI event, demonstrating the potential value of the networks created.

More than 200 people participated in programme events, contributing to a broader conversation about how AI can be applied to environmental challenges. By bringing together stakeholders from different sectors, Sustain.AI created opportunities to share knowledge, explore partnerships and exchange perspectives on responsible innovation.

While many longer-term outcomes will continue to emerge over time, Sustain.AI provided an early platform for founders, partners and investors to explore the opportunities presented by sustainable AI.

5. Global Scope

With the international launch of Sustain.AI at GITEX in Dubai, we hoped to attract a truly global pool of applicants. While the majority of applications came from Europe, we were delighted to receive applications from ventures across six continents. This demonstrated the growing international interest in the intersection of AI and sustainability and reinforced the value of launching the programme on a global stage. We hope to continue attracting diverse international cohorts in future programmes and look forward to further international launches in the years ahead.



Lessons Learned and Tips for the Next Programme

After another successful programme, we reflected on points and changes to take forward for future programmes as we continue improving and optimising what we offer to our cohorts.

1. Value of peer-to-peer exchange

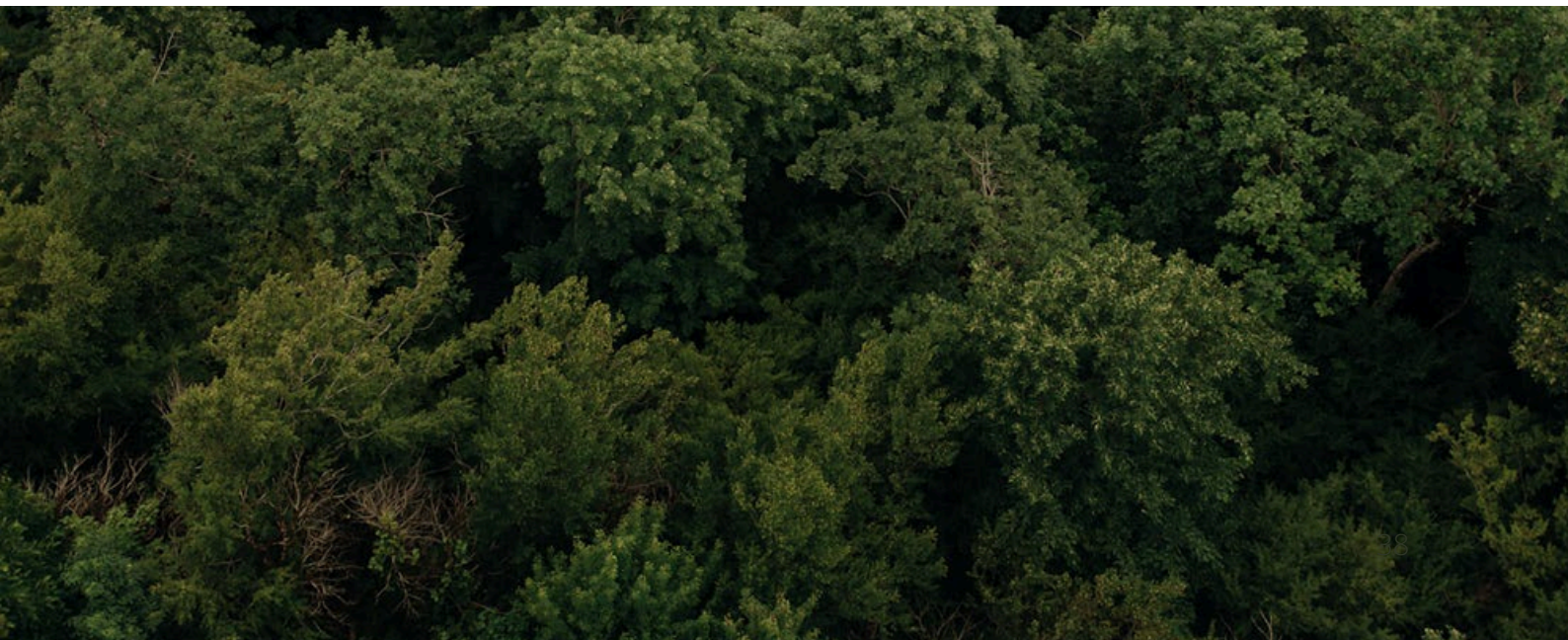
We saw some great connections made within the cohort despite the fact that much of the programme happened online. We know how valuable peer-to-peer exchange is for early-stage ventures going through similar challenges and experiences (and this is particularly true in international and mission-driven founder groups) and would like to support this dimension more effectively. So we have made a conscious decision that future programmes will have more time and space built in for cohort interaction, problem-solving and relationship building.

2. Build pitch practice into the schedule, not around it

Most founders sharpened their pitch through the programme, but the heaviest practice happened in the week before The Crown Estate showcase. By that point, structural changes to a deck or narrative are hard to absorb. The Laura Secorun positioning session and the Sand River VC session both surfaced messaging issues that founders might have usefully acted on sooner so we will ensure that the next programme cohort has a more dedicated pitch session earlier in the programme timetable.

3. Post-programme support and community

The six-week timeline was intense and inevitably the end of the programme feels abrupt after the energising week of in-person events which close it. Conversations kept running with certain cohort members who stayed in touch but we reflected that we wanted something more structured to continue. Watching where the cohort would have benefitted from further support helped shape our early thinking for The Atlas Club. The aim is to give alumni from our accelerators a permanent home: continued access to the partner network, structured check-ins after the programme ends, and a peer group that does not fall away in the weeks following the programme close. We hope to welcome many of our accelerator cohorts to the Atlas Club community!

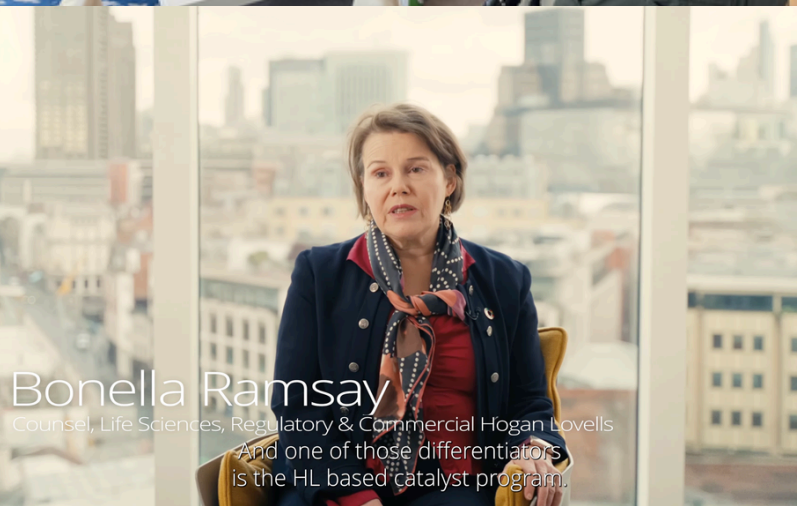


Short film - Sustain.AI: Powering Sustainable Futures with AI

We were thrilled to make a short film produced with and funded by Hogan Lovells Cadwalader that tells the story of the Sustain.AI programme and introduces some of the key voices behind it. Whilst it is a short watch, the video captures the spirit of what the cohort, partners and wider programme community set out to do.

The film is framed by Lord Kulveer Ranger, Sustain.AI Programme Ambassador, with opening and closing remarks reminding us of the extraordinary potential AI offers for people and planet. This message is reinforced by Bright Tide's Harry Wright and Sangeeta Laudus, who speak about their vision for the programme, including how such support can be transformative for early-stage founders. Hogan Lovells Cadwalader counsel Bonella Ramsay then reflects on how rewarding she finds it providing pro bono advice to the founders through the HL BaSE Catalyst programme and how impactful it can be for ventures operating with small teams and tight resources. Three of the cohort then bring the story to life explaining their start-ups' innovative use of AI: Dr Piyush Harsh (Gamaya), Olivier Staehli (Synature) and David Gold (ecodetect).

The film is a powerful reminder of a key moment in the earlier days of AI but also an enduring reminder of why this work matters. If you would like to watch it, you can find the video [here](#).



Emerging Trends

Looking back from mid-2026, Sustain.AI feels less like a standalone accelerator and more like an early marker in a much larger shift taking place across technology, sustainability and investment. Since the programme ran in early 2025, the pace of AI development has accelerated dramatically. New models, tools and applications (such as Claude) have entered the market at extraordinary speed, driving intense competition and fundamentally changing expectations around innovation, productivity and scale. As AI capabilities have become more accessible, the market has also become significantly more crowded.

For founders, particularly SMEs and early-stage ventures, this has created both opportunity and considerable pressure. However ventures applying AI to tangible climate and nature challenges play an important part of the emerging AI economy. As climate impacts intensify and pressure grows on governments and industries to respond more effectively, there is increasing recognition that AI can play a meaningful role in helping organisations interpret complex environmental systems, improve forecasting, optimise resource use and strengthen resilience. There is therefore a strong case that ventures like the Sustain.AI cohort are a critically important segment of the market that require active support and investment.

The past year has also brought much greater scrutiny to the sustainability implications of AI itself. Questions around energy consumption, data governance, transparency, regulation and environmental cost have become far more prominent within public and policy discussions. Increasingly (and importantly), founders are expected to communicate clearly how their systems are trained, governed and deployed, how impact is measured and evidenced, and where AI genuinely adds value over existing approaches. Sustainable AI ventures increasingly sit at the intersection of multiple disciplines at once: technology, climate science, policy, infrastructure, finance and communications.

This is one reason why London's role within the sustainable AI ecosystem feels particularly significant. The city continues to strengthen its position as a major global hub for climate investment and sustainability-focused innovation. London brings together investors, corporates, universities, policymakers and founders within a relatively concentrated ecosystem, creating opportunities for collaboration across sectors that few other cities can match. As international competition around AI intensifies, there is a strong case for doubling down on sustainable and responsible applications of the technology, ensuring that climate and nature-focused innovation remains a visible and strategic priority within the UK's wider AI ambitions.

Seen from this perspective, Sustain.AI captured an important moment in the development of the market. The cohort reflected many of the interest areas that have since continued to grow across the sector: environmental intelligence, resilience, nature monitoring, sustainable infrastructure and data-driven decision-making. The programme also reinforced that the future of sustainable AI will not be defined solely by technical advancement, but by the ability to connect innovation to real-world environmental needs, commercial realities and public trust.

Looking back now, the value of Sustain.AI lay not only in the support provided to individual founders, but in the wider insight it offered into where the sustainable AI ecosystem was heading and the kinds of collaboration and long-term support structures that will be needed for it to succeed responsibly.

Conclusion

Sustain.AI marked an important step in Bright Tide's journey to better understand what sustainable AI founders need in order to build, scale and succeed responsibly within one of the fastest-moving sectors in the global economy. Across the six weeks, the programme brought together founders working on challenges ranging from biodiversity monitoring and wildfire detection to marine data, geospatial analysis, climate risk and sustainable food systems. While the technologies and business models varied, the cohort shared a common ambition to apply AI in ways that deliver environmental value and respond to real-world sustainability challenges.

The programme reinforced that early-stage AI ventures require support structures that go far beyond technical mentoring alone. Founders in this space are navigating rapidly evolving markets, increasing competition, regulatory complexity, investor scrutiny and difficult pathways into procurement and large organisations. Sustain.AI helped Bright Tide deepen its understanding of this landscape and that learning has continued to evolve through Bright Tide's subsequent work.

Since Sustain.AI, Bright Tide has delivered three further AI-related programmes aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals in partnership with EY, exploring themes including responsible and ethical AI, women's empowerment through technology and the potential role which AI can play helping address water-related challenges. Alongside this, programmes such as AgriBlue.AI have enabled a deeper exploration of how AI can support more resilient and sustainable agricultural and aquaculture systems. Together, these programmes have strengthened Bright Tide's expertise within the sustainable AI space and provided valuable insight into the evolving needs of founders, investors, corporates and ecosystem partners operating across this sector.

Looking ahead, we believe there is a significant opportunity to help shape the next phase of sustainable AI innovation. London is now a major global hub for climate investment, responsible technology and sustainability-focused entrepreneurship, creating strong foundations for collaboration between startups, corporates, policymakers, investors and researchers. Accelerators can play an important role in helping create the conditions for sustainable innovation to succeed by fostering trusted ecosystems around emerging technologies and connecting founders more directly to commercial, investment and policy networks.

We are hugely grateful to the many organisations and individuals who helped make Sustain.AI possible. Partners including Hogan Lovells Cadwalader, Kennedys, OakNorth, Ecosulis, Boatfolk and the University of Plymouth gave their time and expertise very generously throughout the programme, as did our many learning partners and programme mentors who helped deliver the programme sessions. The programme's success is testament to their kind support and the cohort benefitted hugely from this.

Thank you also to the fantastic Sustain.AI cohort for committing your time and energy to the programme. For us at Bright Tide, the group confirmed the huge talent, ambition and creativity emerging across the sustainable AI ecosystem and we hope to continue supporting your work in years to come. The programme also reinforced our view that this is an area which we must continue to invest in and help shape to ensure and maximise positive outcomes. As such, we hope to continue building programmes that help create a resilient and globally connected future for sustainable AI innovation.

Glossary of Terms

This section aims to ensure that readers have a clear understanding of some of the more technical concepts referenced in the report.

1. Machine learning models: Mathematical programs that learn patterns from data, allowing computers to make predictions or decisions automatically without being explicitly programmed for every specific task.

2. Regenerative Farming: An agricultural approach that focuses on restoring and improving the health of the soil and ecosystems. It involves practices like crop rotation, reduced tillage, and cover cropping to enhance soil fertility and biodiversity.

3. Sustainable aquaculture: Farming of aquatic organisms like fish, shellfish, and plants in a way that meets current food and commercial needs while protecting marine ecosystems, minimizing pollution, and conserving resources.

4. Blue Economy: An economic model that promotes the sustainable use of ocean resources for growth, jobs, and ecosystem health. It encompasses sectors like aquaculture, marine restoration, and low-impact tourism.

5. Precision irrigation: A targeted agricultural practice that delivers the exact amount of water and nutrients directly to a plant's root zone at the optimal time, heavily reducing waste compared to traditional field flooding

6. Predictive analytics: Using historical data, statistical modelling, and machine learning to forecast future trends and behaviours, enabling organisations to make proactive, data-driven decisions.

7. Hyperspectral: An advanced technology that captures and processes images across wavelength bands collecting spectral data for every pixel in an image so specific materials and their chemical properties can be identified.

8. Bioacoustics sensors: Devices that record and analyse the sounds produced by living organisms to monitor their behaviours, identify species, and assess ecosystem health

9. Nutrient management: The practice of supplying crops with essential nutrients in a specific way so as to maximise yield and economic returns while protecting the environment.

10. Green infrastructure: A strategically planned, interconnected network of natural and semi-natural areas (e.g. parks, green roofs etc.) that are designed to mimic or support ecological processes while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits.

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