**A. Quick summary of the presentation**

Background

* Edible algae has remarkable technical potential in terms of both its productive properties and its consumption benefits, as demonstrated by a strong evidence base from both research and industry.
* Yet current production and use levels remain minimal in both the global North and South, raising questions as to why this is.
* The UN has recognised the potential of edible algae to reduce hunger and foster sustainable development in the global South, and has repeatedly called for action to foster its wider production and use in poor countries.
* While numerous algae initiatives exist across the world (both private and charitable), none has seriously responded to the UN’s call to action.

The proposed initiative…

* Answers the UN’s call by forming strategic partnerships to methodically identify and address critical constraints.
* Seeks to unlock the potential of edible algae for poor rural communities in the developing world, as both a source of food and a livelihood diversification option.
* Includes several types of activities, namely analysis, piloting and roll-out prep.
* Sets the stage for action to foster widespread production and use of edible algae in the global South.

**B. Questions for the Meet 19 Network participants**

1. Can you help me flesh out roles I need to fill for this project?
   * I’ve listed the obvious ones below, but any others you could specify would be greatly appreciated. Ideally, it would be great if you could also add several words to clarify what this role would involve, or what it would bring to the initiative.
   * If by chance you would be interested in helping out with one of these roles, please feel free to spell this out as well.
2. Can you help me elaborate the idea of teaming up with a corporate partner?
   * In my presentation, I imagined a business model that involved charitable or CSR funding.
   * Yet one thing that came out of your feedback was the idea of teaming up with a corporate partner as part of their core product lines. The suggestion was to team up with a corporate partner with a recognised, trusted brand, namely one that sees the proposed initiative as a way to bolster their image as a good corporate citizen (one focused on both their customers’ best interests and making the world a better place).
   * Under this scenario, the corporate partner could help develop algae products and marketing materials for its target consumers, while also supporting the initiative’s work in developing countries as part of its CSR commitments.
   * This makes a lot of sense, but also raises a few questions.
     + Does anyone have any comments about how I have frame this, notably suggestions about how this framing might be improved in order to appeal to corporates?
     + Can anyone suggest suitable corporate partners to contact, or thoughts about how to identify such suitable partners?
3. Can you help me think about naming / branding for the initiative?
   * One question is how to refer to the final product. One option is ‘edible algae’, while another is ‘spirulina’. Still another is ‘blue-green algae’. Does anyone has comments about these options?
   * I have provisionally suggested that the social enterprise be called ‘Green Oomph’. Does this seem like a good option for the initiative, or is it too flippant? The main reasons I have suggested this include:
     + The various dictionary definitions of ‘oomph’[[1]](#footnote-1) suggest qualities that fit well with what edible algae offers
     + These associations could be useful for counteracting the image of edible algae as a quirky or unpleasant substance associated with ‘new age’ people or starving children
     + It seems catchy and potentially memorable
     + Its acronym is GO, which also fits well with the image I think the initiative should convey

**C. Proposed roles**

Please note that the roles listed below seek to cover two alternative scenarios. One alternative is follows the business model as presented, namely a charitable model whose early activities include analysis, piloting and roll-out prep. The other alternative would involve teaming up with a corporate partner that would (a) integrate edible algae into its offerings for consumers in the global N and its corporate image and (b) support the charitable work in the developing world described in the presentation. The points below that only apply in the event that the initiative involves a corporate partner are listed in rust-coloured font for easy identification.

1. Applied and experimental research (based on document review, consultations, and fieldwork)
   * + Overview of existing knowledge and practice (to ensure this work builds on experience to date and get provisional ideas of constraints)
     + Appropriate technology (to develop a concept version of improved production kit that would be accessible and affordable for poor communities but also effective)
     + Behavioural economics/psychology (to identify key economic, informational and behavioural constraints and possible ways to address them, notably in South Asia / Sub-Saharan Africa but perhaps also in the global N)
     + Experimental economics (to test alternative possible ways to address constraints in each target context, including their efficacy and any side-effects)
     + Impact analysis (to assess the impacts of adopting algae consumption/production in each target context, namely economic, health, socio-cultural, environmental, and GHG emissions)
2. Product development
   * + Branded proprietary: Focus on the final product (algae) by linking it with an established brand in the global North, ideally one that has trust and faithful customers.
     + Branded but non-proprietary: Focus on algae production kit to enable dynamic individuals from poor communities in the global South to become small-scale entrepreneurs in algae production. This improved but low-cost production kit could enable these local entrepreneurs to provide local algae supplies on an profitable basis despite the low purchasing power of local consumers.
3. Marketing
   * + In the global North: Convince consumers who can afford branded products to prefer those containing algae, while also supporting the story about how algae can help the poor
     + In the global South: Convince poor rural communities that (1) algae is an attractive supplementary food, and (2) becoming algae entrepreneurs is an attractive livelihood pathway
4. Prospective funders and benefits to highlight
   * + Corporate partner in global North: Benefits to brand image from incorporating algae into core products and supporting international work
     + Research funding: Innovative research (action-oriented, multi-disciplinary) with potentially large future impacts; could set the stage for addressing key government objectives.
     + International donor: Responds to repeated UN calls, takes a bold and forward-looking approach to addressing key donor objectives
     + Foundation / angel investor / crowdfunding: A serious and methodical response to these UN repeated calls. Offers real potential to have a major impact on those in the global South who face stark needs, while also helping address key challenges facing the global North

1. Definitions include (a) energy or vitality; (b) enthusiasm; (c) spirited vigour; (c) strength, power, passion or effectiveness; (d) a lively, emphatic, eager quality or manner; (e) the attractiveness of an energetic personality. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)