



EXPO 2020 إكسبو
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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Press Release

Norwegian innovation to turn barren soil into fertile land to amplify impact with support of Expo 2020 Dubai

- **Desert Control's 'liquid nanoclay' may cut future global food shortage**
- **Innovation slashes time to rejuvenate land from 7 years to just 7 hours**
- **Firm may have opportunity to showcase solution at Expo 2020 Dubai**

DUBAI, 14 May, 2018 – An innovative yet simple mixture of water and clay that transforms dry, sandy soil into lucrative arable land is to receive a major boost from global social impact programme Expo Live, run by organisers of the next World Expo, Expo 2020 Dubai.

Norwegian firm *Desert Control's* 'liquid nanoclay' could help prevent a future global food crisis, with the United Nations estimating that agricultural productivity must increase by as much as 70 per cent to feed the expected 9 billion people on the planet by mid-century.

Liquid nanoclay – a scientific mixture of water and common industrial clay – can be sprayed directly onto affected land using existing irrigation methods. The liquid nanoclay particles seep into the sand and create spongy, hollow structures that retain water about 40 to 60 centimetres underground – the typical depth of plant roots.

The conditions created by liquid nanoclay allow water and nutrients applied to the soil to be retained far longer than traditional irrigation methods, allowing grass, wheat, carrots, corns and other vegetation to thrive.

The concept of liquid nanoclay was invented by **Kristian P. Olesen, Inventor and Chief Technology Officer**, while he was travelling in the Middle East.

Brage Johansen, Chairman and CEO at Desert Control, said: "Kristian noticed that farmers were applying clay on sandy patches of land to grow their crop and combined this with knowledge from his oil and gas background to create liquid nanoclay. The solution is patented in more than 60 countries, including the UAE."

Eight years of research and development later, *Desert Control* has proven the effectiveness of liquid nanoclay and intends to start the first commercial application in the UAE. Agricultural field tests in Egypt have shown the liquid nanoclay process cuts the need for irrigation by more than 50 per cent and produces similar or increased crop yields, with the effects lasting up to five years.

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Atle Idland, Director – Middle East at *Desert Control*, says: “Liquid nanoclay is going to be a game-changer for the agriculture and landscaping industry in desert regions. In line with the UAE leadership’s vision to push the limits of innovation, we are glad to have this country as the first benefactor.”

With less water costs and better quality yields, *Desert Control* claims farmers can recoup the cost of liquid nanoclay within six months, and even faster for commercial greenhouses.

Desert Control will use the Expo Live grant to build new mixers with larger capacity. Remaining funds will go towards further research and development.

Expo Live is Expo 2020 Dubai’s innovation and partnership programme and has an allocation of USD 100 million to back projects that offer creative solutions to pressing challenges that impact people’s lives or help preserve the world – or both. Organisers are looking for projects that would not reach their full potential without its support.

Launched in January 2017, Expo Live has several programmes. The flagship global Innovation Impact Grant Programme provides up to USD 100,000 per successful initiative, to be made available incrementally as the project meets ongoing conditions. Projects are also supported with business guidance and promotion, and may have the chance to showcase their work to many millions of visitors at Expo 2020 Dubai.

With Expo 2020’s theme ‘*Connecting Minds, Creating the Future*’, collaboration among Global Innovators is encouraged. Already, *Desert Control* has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UAE’s International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, which received an Expo Live grant during the second cycle in 2017. They will test the effectiveness of liquid nanoclay in halophyte agriculture – an experimental form of agriculture that attempts to grow plants in salt water.

Yousuf Caires, Vice President – Expo Live at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: “This is a great story of socially charged individuals and groups applying their expertise and knowledge to solve some of the greatest challenges of our time. It is also exciting to see that *Desert Control* is already ‘*Connecting Minds*’ with one of our previous grantees in order to make a more sustainable future.”

He continued: “Expo Live is based on a firm belief that innovation can come from anywhere to everyone. This is a major component of our redefinition of what a World Expo can and should do: tap into its convening power well before the event to enable problem-solvers around the globe to promote innovation and build partnerships that leave a lasting legacy not only in the UAE and the region but across the world.”

Minna Crozier, Senior Commercial Adviser at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Abu Dhabi, who attended *Desert Control*’s Expo Live finalist presentation, said: “It is absolutely impressive that *Desert Control* has come so far with a breakthrough in an innovation in sustainability that Norway prides itself in. Expo Live is a great platform and I would encourage other Norwegian social entrepreneurs to get involved.”

Expo 2020 Dubai will take place from 20 October, 2020 to 10 April, 2021 and will be the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region. It will be a festival of human ingenuity that gives a glimpse into the future, guided by its three pillars: *Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability*.

To date, Expo Live’s Innovation Impact Grant Programme has attracted more than 2,300 applicants from 136 countries. Following a rigorous evaluation process, which included live presentations in Dubai, 70 grantees from 42 countries have joined Expo Live’s community of Global Innovators, including these new members from the third cycle.

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To stay tuned for the fourth cycle of the programme and to learn more about Expo Live and its Global Innovators, visit www.expo2020dubai.com/expo-live

To find out more about *Desert Control*, visit www.desertcontrol.com

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About Expo 2020

Expo 2020 Dubai is guided by the belief that innovation and progress are the result of people and ideas combining in new ways. During the six months from 20 October 2020, Expo aims to bring together hundreds of countries and millions of people to celebrate human ingenuity: *'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future'*.

- Between 20 October, 2020, and 10 April, 2021, we expect Expo to be visited by many millions of people.
- 70 per cent of all visitors are expected to come from outside the UAE - the largest proportion of international visitors in Expo history.
- We aim to create and deliver an inclusive and global Expo with over 200 participants, including nations, multilateral organisations, businesses and educational institutions.
- Expo 2020 also has an ambitious volunteer programme, which aims to include more than 30,000 volunteers from a wide range of ages, nationalities and cultures and backgrounds.
- The Expo site covers a total of 4.38 sq km, including a 2 sq km gated area. It is located within the Dubai South District, adjacent to Al Maktoum International Airport.

Visit: <https://www.expo2020dubai.com>

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About World Expos

In 1851 the Crystal Palace was the centrepiece of London's Great Exhibition - the first World Expo. It celebrated the man-made industrial wonders of a rapidly changing world. Architecture, contents and a theme, 'Industry of All Nations', coalesced to create a big idea of nations meeting nations in shared technological and commercial progress. In more recent years, participants in World Expos, including governments, international organisations and companies, have gathered to promote their achievements, products, ideas, innovations, their national brand, and their nations as destinations for tourism, trade and investment.

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