



Agritech startup, Qarbotech secures US\$1.5mil in a seed extension round

By Digital News Asia September 26, 2024

- 500 Global, Better Bite Ventures, others, participated in this round
- Funds will be used to scale operations in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand & Vietnam



(Left to Right): Chor Chee Hoe, CEO of Qarbotech Sdn Bhd, Prof Dr Suraya, founder and chief scientist of Qarbotech and Amirul Merican, co-founder and COO.

Qarbotech Sdn Bhd, which claims to be a technology pioneer in photosynthesis enhancement through advanced carbon quantum dots, has announced its expansion across Southeast Asia, driven by US\$1.5 million (RM6.2 million) in a seed round from investors, including 500 Global, Better Bite Ventures, ID Capital, EQT Foundation, and Epic Angels Limited.

Launched in 2018, the investment solidifies Qarbotech's commitment to introducing its pioneering technology to new markets. It had earlier announced in Feb that it raised US\$700,000 in a seed round. It describes the current announcement as its seed extension round. Data from Crunchbase shows Temasek Foundation among its investors, while Khazanah Nasional gave it a grant and Petronas Future Tech gave support with non-equity assistance.

The funding will allow it to scale operations in markets such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, where demand for advanced agritech solutions is rising.

"We're thrilled to embark on this new chapter of growth," said Chor Chee Hoe, who joined the company in 2021 as co-founder and CEO. "Our product, QarboGrow, is a breakthrough in plant science, using organic, biocompatible carbon quantum dots to dramatically boost light absorption and increase crop yields by up to 60%. This addresses food security challenges and optimises fertiliser use, reducing the need for excessive application that can lead to soil degradation and pollution."

[Ed: Para edited for accuracy to reflect Chor's position.]

As part of its expansion, Qarbotech is opening its first manufacturing facility in Puchong, Malaysia, capable of producing 100,000 litres of QarboGrow monthly. This facility marks a significant milestone in meeting the region's growing demand for advanced agricultural technology.

"This investment will allow us to ramp up production and bring our patented solutions to more farmers across the region, empowering them to produce more with less environmental impact," said Amirul Merican, who invested into the company in March 2024 and now the COO and a co-founder.

[Ed: Para edited for accuracy to reflect Amirul's position.]

The innovator behind Qarbotech's breakthrough technology is founder and chief scientist of Qarbotech, Prof Dr Suraya Abdul Rashid, a leading nanotechnology researcher ranked among the world's top 2% scientists in 2022, 2023, and 2024. Her work, aligning with the 2023 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the discovery of quantum dots, further validates the science behind QarboGrow.

"With over two decades of experience in nanotechnology, I am thrilled to see quantum dots finally achieving practical, large-scale impact in agriculture," said Suraya who is also director of the Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, University Putra Malaysia. "Our patented technology solves the inefficiencies of photosynthesis using a scalable and sustainable approach, bypassing the need for genetic modifications, allowing us to directly address challenges in crop yield and climate resilience."

Qarbotech's innovations are already making an impact. In Indonesia, a pilot project with PT Icheh Agro Indonesia across 400 hectares of rice fields showed yield increases of up to one tonne per hectare and significantly boosted farmer incomes.

"Imagine the same farmer with the same land, labour, and workflow being able to produce up to 60% more food. Qarbotech's photosynthesis multiplier makes that possible. We are proud to provide additional financing to Qarbotech and believe their technology will be mission-critical for regions vulnerable to climate change," said Khailee Ng, managing partner, 500 Global.

Michal Klar, founding partner at Better Bite Ventures, added, "Qarbotech embodies our commitment to supporting a more sustainable, climate-friendly food system through transformative technology, improving economic outcomes while lowering emissions. We are excited to back this dynamic team and their journey to transform the global food system."

With over 500 million smallholder farmers worldwide, the potential to increase crop yields across diverse climates and agricultural practices presents a significant market opportunity.

"Qarbotech impressed us with their breakthrough in photosynthesis enhancement during our entrepreneurship competition in Southeast Asia. Their innovation demonstrates that it is possible to drive better yields and economic outcomes for farmers while reducing carbon emissions. With EQT's global expertise in agricultural investments, we aim to help Qarbotech overcome barriers to achieving scale," said Cilia Holmes Indahl, CEO of EQT Foundation.

Beyond productivity gains, QarboGrow's unique carbon quantum dot technology also enhances carbon sequestration by enabling plants to absorb more carbon dioxide, contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Scaling QarboGrow globally could significantly impact efforts to combat climate change, with each litre of product increasing carbon dioxide capture. This provides opportunities for carbon credits and offsets—an increasingly valuable asset in a world focused on reducing emissions.

This dual benefit of increased yields and climate action makes Qarbotech's technology a breakthrough in agritech, with far-reaching economic and environmental impacts.

Related Stories :

- [Agritech startup, Agroz launches 8k sq ft vertical farm in mall in KL](#)
- [Agritech startup Fefifo closes ECF campaign with staggering 1,031% of initial funding](#)
- [Gobi Partners invests undisclosed amount into agritech BoomGrow](#)
- [JCorp to invest US\\$1.7mil into Singapore agritech, Archisen](#)

For more technology news and the latest updates, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#)

Keyword(s) :

[Qarbotech](#) [Better Bite Ventures](#) [EQT Foundation](#) [Michal Klar](#) [Khailee Ng](#) [Cilia Holmes Indahl](#) [500 Global](#)
[Dr. Suraya Abdul Rashid](#) [Chor Chee Hoe](#) [Agriculture](#) [Funding](#)

Author Name :

[Digital News Asia](#)