

# DRIVING CIRCULAR INNOVATION FOR FOOD SYSTEMS

Open Call for Ideas

15.03.25 — 20.05.25



CIRCULAR FOOD  
SYSTEM LAB  
POLITECNICO MILANO 1863



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MILANO 1863





# DRIVING CIRCULAR INNOVATION FOR FOOD SYSTEMS

**Driving Circular Innovation for Food Systems** is an experimental initiative developed by the Circular Food System Lab at Politecnico di Milano ([www.circulafoodsystemlab.polimi.it](http://www.circulafoodsystemlab.polimi.it)) with the goal of designing **innovative solutions** to foster circularity in urban and peri-urban agrifood systems, focusing on the following themes:

1. **Smart Farming and Circular Precision Agriculture**, automated solutions for collaborative, precision, and small-scale urban agriculture, as well as for monitoring biodiversity in agricultural systems.
2. **Circular and Digital Food Processing**, alternative food transformation and preservation solutions leveraging IoT technologies and digital manufacturing.
3. **Smart and Circular Food Logistics**, solutions for tracking, processing, and circular packaging within food logistics and distribution systems.
4. **Extended Food Experiences**, advanced technological solutions to enhance sensory experiences related to food knowledge.
5. **Inclusive Food Systems**, solutions to increase social inclusivity in food experiences and Food Systems.
6. **Circular Food Waste**, tools and devices for managing, sorting, and valorizing food waste through circular recovery and recycling processes of post-consumer materials.
7. **Space Food and Food for Extreme Environments**, development of solutions for growing, processing, and consuming food in extreme environments or areas affected by climate change.

## ROADMAP OF THE INITIATIVE

Driving Circular Innovation for Food Systems unfolds in **four phases**:

1. **Launch of the Open Call for Ideas**, inviting young designers from Politecnico di Milano to submit ideas—individually, in teams, or in collaboration with experts and stakeholders in Food Systems—focusing on product-service solutions for technological transition and circular innovation in Food Systems.
2. **Selection of Ideas** from those submitted, carried out by an evaluation panel composed of experts in Food Systems, including designers, innovators, and scientists.
3. **Project Development**, where selected designers will create prototypes with the technical and scientific support of the CFS Lab, demonstrating the feasibility of materializing solutions with real production potential.
4. **Project Promotion** on the CFS Lab website and social media channels.

Driving Circular Innovation for Food Systems does **NOT** offer cash prizes or direct funding to designers but **finances** the development of the selected projects.



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## WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR

The Open Call for Ideas encourages young designers to freely propose ideas for **product-service solutions** dedicated to **circular transition and technological innovation in Food Systems**. Projects may involve products, analog and digital tools, IoT devices, and more—designed to enhance knowledge and process management across various areas of the agrifood value chain.

Participants are invited to develop ideas that consider the **use and valorization of the technologies available at the CFS Lab** (a list of available equipment can be found in the [Brochure EN](#)).

## SELECTION AND EVALUATION

A **panel** of designers, innovators, and Food System experts will evaluate all submitted proposals at its sole discretion. The ideas selected for development and prototyping will be chosen based on the following criteria:

1. **Impact** of the idea's potential to drive circular transition and digital transformation in Food Systems;
2. **Technical Feasibility** of the idea as a future product-service, either partially or entirely realizable within spaces like the CFS Lab or in production and distribution contexts with similar interests or characteristics.

## PROTOTYPING AND PROMOTION OF THE PROJECTS

The selected designers will develop their ideas independently while participating in **scheduled review and prototyping sessions**. During these sessions, they will have access to the Design module space and technologies at the CFS Lab (Building B3, Campus Bovisa Durando). In addition to providing **technical and scientific support** for project development, CFS Lab will offer its technologies to build the prototypes and **cover the costs of purchasing materials and components**.

CFS Lab will also support the promotion of the projects and the designers through its **social media channels and within initiatives dedicated** to the circularity of Food Systems.

## IMPORTANT DATES

|                     |                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 15.03.25            | Launch of the Open Call for Ideas |
| 20.06.25            | Deadline for Project Submissions  |
| 25.06.25            | Selection of the ideas            |
| 01.07.25 – 15.11.25 | Project development               |



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## PARTICIPATION AND SUBMISSION OF IDEAS

Ideas can be submitted by **students from various faculties of Politecnico di Milano**, either individually or in groups of up to five people. External members such as scholars, independent innovators (e.g., citizen scientists), experts or enthusiasts in Food Systems, and technical support figures can also join the project teams.

Applications can be submitted from **March 15 to May 30, 2025, by 11:59 PM**. Proposals must be sent to the email address **circularfoodsystemlab-design@polimi.it**, with the subject line "Open Call for Ideas CFS Lab + Idea Name." Submissions must include three attached documents:

1. **Project Proposal:** A description explaining the level of innovation and usefulness of the project in the agrifood systems field, including its technical feasibility as a prototype and product using one or more technologies available at CFS Lab.
2. **Rendering or Illustration:** A comprehensive rendering or illustration (1 or more images), along with preliminary technical drawings and key technical and construction details that can help the evaluation panel understand the technical feasibility of the idea.
3. **Participant Profiles and Contact Information:** A text file containing personal data (name, address, email, and phone) along with a brief profile (max. 500 characters including spaces) for each group member.

**CFS Lab does not take responsibility for any technical issues, third-party errors, or force majeure events that may affect the submission process.**

## CONTACTS AND INFORMATIONS

Throughout the entire duration of the Open Call for Ideas, an helpdesk will be available to provide guidance and information to anyone wishing to submit an idea.

**circularfoodsystemlab-design@polimi.it**  
[instagram.com/cfslab.polimi](https://www.instagram.com/cfslab.polimi)