THE CHALLENGE

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Food systems as they are generate vast hidden costs, which undermine human health and the resilience of natural systems. Climate impacts further degrade food systems. The systemic impact of these degradations of health and wellbeing leaves societies more vulnerable to economic shocks and food supply disruptions, and to novel pathogens like the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. Business as usual is unaffordable, so urban policy and city-level investment strategies need to foster food systems that build health and resilience, while mitigating climate emergency, eliminating food waste, and building a circular economy.

HOW WE WORK

The Impact Investors Living Lab convenes people and institutions, including city governments, positioned to make investments that will lead to transformational outcomes in urban food systems. The purpose of the Lab is to facilitate the discovery of targeted investment strategies that can shift urban food systems, building public good value through enhanced human health, reduced vulnerability, and more agile, innovative business environments, where health-building sustainable practices are welcomed and rewarded.
Participants in the Impact Investors Living Lab come together to share knowledge about challenges, innovations, and opportunities, and to identify the business strategies and financial arrangements that can unlock capital to shift urban food systems toward healthy, sustainable standards.

Impact investors include not only firms that describe themselves as such, but also municipalities, banks, agencies, asset managers, and philanthropies positioned to motivate better outcomes. The Lab aims to provide evidence of the efficacy of specific impact investment actions.
THE ASK

- Join 1 meeting of Lab participants every month, focused on thematic deep-dives and sharing of knowledge, experience, and views
- Starting in February 2022 and concluding in March 2023
- Review pre-reads and outcome documents from these meetings
- Contribute to background knowledge production through bilateral and small-group meetings, from time to time
- Conceptualize and work to advance city-level food system improvement strategies, linked to early-stage finance
- Join a Capstone Meeting of the Lab in March 2023
Investors lab is a Food Trails initiative - a four-year EU-funded Horizon 2020 project aiming to translate the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact’s collective commitment to integrated urban food policies. The project co-design and co-implement Pilot Actions, through participatory Living Labs in 11 European city-regions: Bergamo (IT), Birmingham (UK), Bordeaux (FR), Copenhagen (DK), Funchal (PR), Grenoble (FR), Groningen (NL), Milan (IT), Thessaloniki (GR), Tirana (AL) and Warsaw (PL).

The city of Milan leads the project featuring 19 consortium partners – composed of 11 European cities, 3 prominent universities and 6 European stakeholders – that will work in conjunction with 21 follower cities.

[Project website]
Deliverables

• Final report summarizing the findings of knowledge and ideas produced by the Lab

• Urban food system impact measurement framework

• Detailing of impact functions of different investor types and stakeholders in city-level food system impact investment

• Investment instruments and adjacent services for investors and policy-makers for the pilot interventions of urban food system transformation
HOSTED BY

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Vice Mayor of the City of Milan and deputy mayor for public safety

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