

Call for Application

lab of tomorrow (lot) 14: Towards a circular food system in Rwanda

Application deadline: **May 14, 2021**
 Innovation sprint: **June 2-4 / June 7-8, 2021**
 Place: **Remote / in-person in Kigali, Rwanda**
 Language: **English**

About the challenge

Our current linear food system is based on a 'take-make-waste' model and faces several challenges, such as extraction of finite resources, air pollution as well as soil and water contamination harming the environment and the human health. A circular food system, in contrast, keeps products and materials in use, regenerates natural systems and reuses waste. Rwanda's fast population growth and accelerated urbanization is increasing pressure on land, water, and food resources. Malnutrition, access to food, land tenure and degradation, soil erosion, vulnerable supply chains, low agricultural productivity as well as post-harvest loss are among the major challenges related to food systems in Rwanda.

The lab of tomorrow (lot) is an open innovation process that aims to tackle challenges related to the food system in Rwanda. It brings together key stakeholders to co-create sustainable entrepreneurial solutions that enhance resilience and improve the lives of the local population.

Apply to be part of the lot

In the Innovation Sprint built around design thinking, you will work in a team and co-create an entrepreneurial solution for food system challenge over the course of 5 days. Committed teams with innovative solutions will then have the chance to apply for the incubation phase.

Benefits

- Discover and co-create new business opportunities
- Work together with other impact-driven, entrepreneurial actors, establish relevant partnerships and strengthen your network
- Be inspired with new ideas and ways of working – experience the power of design thinking
- Chance for 3-9 months of incubation support including expert coaching and mentoring, space and infrastructure, financial contribution (up to USD 25'000) as well as opportunity to access additional funding from lot partners and participating organizations

Expected outcome

- Entrepreneurial solutions that contribute towards a circular food system in Rwanda (either new ventures or partnerships)

We are looking for you if you:

- Have an **entrepreneurial mindset** and strive for turning challenges into solutions and new business opportunities
- **Face a challenge** related to **food systems in Rwanda** and/or already thought about how to tackle one
- Can contribute with **skills, expertise, and insights** valuable for the advancement of a circular food system
- Are willing to **work on solutions together** with other companies and organizations in Rwanda and committed to **invest your time and resources** to implement them
- **Want to create positive impact!**



Apply to be part of a small, multi-national and multi-disciplinary team and develop entrepreneurial solutions for one of the following sub-challenges

1. Access to high-quality organic farm inputs

Agriculture is the backbone of the Rwandan economy, with 89% of rural households practicing small-scale farming. Agricultural productivity, however, remains low, with smallholder farmers facing many issues such as land degradation and soil erosion, low and inadequate input use, decline in water quantity and quality and lack of adequate production techniques/farming practices.

How might we create accessible, affordable, high-quality organic farm inputs for small scale farmers to increase productivity and promote regenerative farming?

2. Sustainable and affordable animal feed products

One of the main constraints for animal productivity and production in Rwanda is poor animal nutrition. This is largely due to the low quality and low availability of animal feed. Ensuring sustainable access to feed can contribute to the efficiency of livestock production and reproduction, their health and welfare, human health and the livelihoods of livestock farmers.

How might we develop sustainable, local, affordable animal feed products and services in order to create revenues for producers and inputs for livestock farmers?

3. Utilization of the maize value chain by-products

Poor post-harvest drying, and storage facilities result in a 22 percent loss of overall maize production. On top of that, excess produce from harvests is traditionally sold on the market in raw form, and by-products are not used with no added value. Smart business models and new products can use the currently untapped potential of waste produced to improve the economic situation of all stakeholders in the supply chain.

How might we create new products and business models to utilize the by-products of the maize value chain in order to improve the economic situation of all the stakeholders in the supply chain?

4. Access to infrastructures and equipment for farmers

Agricultural productivity remains low in Rwanda, with post-harvest losses accounting for 15-30% of the decrease.

One main issue is the lack of proper packaging and storage, as well as absence of storage facilities.

How might we create new and sustainable business models to allow farmers access to crucial infrastructures and equipment in order to decrease post-harvest loss and increase their productivity and livelihood?

5. Linking rural and urban food systems

Market access remains a significant challenge for smallholder farmers. Connecting farmers in rural areas to city markets means increasing the availability of agricultural products for city dwellers as well as increasing the incomes for farmers, helping them move beyond subsistence and to get out of the poverty cycle.

How might we better link rural and urban food systems in order to improve market access of smallholder farmers and ensure access to healthy, nutritious, locally grown foods?

About

The *lot* approach was developed by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It has a proven track record of nine completed processes and over 50 business model sketches created. 11 of those went to market and raised a total of 6 million Euros in third party investments.

The *lot 14* was co-initiated by the Competence Center for Social Innovation (CSI-HSG) at the University of St.Gallen in Switzerland and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It is implemented in a collaboration between CSI-HSG, SDC, Nestlé and GIZ, among others.

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