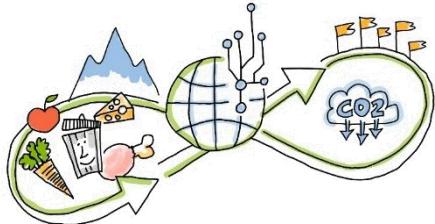




Circular Food Hubs in the Alpine Space: Business Models, Key Learnings & Pathways for Replication

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- E-Institute – Institute for comprehensive Development solutions (SL)
- BSC, Business support organisation, ltd. (SL)
- IDM Südtirol Alto Adige (IT)
- LAMORO Development Agency (IT)
- Nice Côte d'Azur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FR)
- Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories (FR)
- Munich University of Applied Sciences (GER)
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Introduction

The Alpine Space faces increasing pressures to create more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems. In response, the Interreg Alpine Space project [CEFoodCycle](#) launched five **pilot Circular Food Hubs** in five regions: Salzburg-Bavaria (AT/DE), South Tyrol (IT), Piemonte (IT), Gorenjska (SI), and Nice-Côte d'Azur (FR). Each hub developed a regionally tailored approach to circularity in food systems, addressing unique local contexts, capacities, and challenges.

This **Business Model Catalogue** brings together the stories, strategies, challenges, and lessons of these pilot hubs, developed during the project's implementation phase (2023–2025). It serves as a practical guide for regional authorities, innovation hubs, agri-food stakeholders, and policy actors who aim to set up similar initiatives in their own regions.

Rather than showcasing ideal models, this catalogue captures the essence of the CEFoodCycle project's pilot activities across five Alpine Space regions. It presents key insights from the establishment and operation of regional Circular Food Hubs, offering concrete examples, tested approaches, and replicable lessons.

By documenting these implementation experiences, the catalogue aims to inspire and support replication across other Alpine and European regions seeking to activate the potential of circular food systems.



1. Shared Insights Across Regions

Despite the regional diversity, several common patterns and insights emerged across the five pilot hubs:

1.1. Key Challenges Identified Across Regions

Based on the pilot experiences, the following common barriers emerged:

Fragmented ecosystem and lack of collaboration between key actors in the food system was a defining obstacle across the pilot regions. Businesses, public institutions, research bodies, and civic organisations often worked in silos, with little tradition of joint planning. Differences in language, expectations, and priorities further limited cross-sectoral dialogue, making it difficult to align strategies, exchange knowledge, and co-create circular food solutions.

Limited awareness and readiness to adopt circular practices also slowed progress, particularly among SMEs. For many stakeholders, circularity remained an abstract concept disconnected from day-to-day operations, and the absence of practical examples or peer learning hindered understanding and uptake.

Shortage of human and financial resources posed another major barrier. Small enterprises and public institutions often lacked dedicated staff or expertise for innovation, while available funding opportunities were difficult to access or too complex for smaller actors to navigate.

Administrative complexity and institutional fragmentation added further challenges. Unclear regulatory frameworks, bureaucratic hurdles, and weak coordination between government departments, especially across agriculture, waste management, and innovation, slowed down pilot actions and hampered scaling.

Low consumer demand for circular food products limited market incentives. Many consumers were unaware of the added value of circular solutions or perceived them as less convenient or more expensive, discouraging businesses from investing in new models.

1.2. Main Enablers of Success

Despite the challenges, hubs reported several key drivers that supported successful implementation:

Regional anchoring and alignment with Smart Specialisation Strategies proved essential for credibility and long-term viability. Where hubs aligned with existing regional development goals, such as agri-food innovation, bioeconomy, or green transition, they secured stronger support from policymakers and integration into funding and planning frameworks.

Trusted intermediaries and committed coordinators made a crucial difference. Hubs that were led by organisations with deep local ties (e.g. chambers, development agencies, or research institutes) found it easier to convene diverse actors and mediate between sectors. Personal trust and consistent communication helped build momentum.

Co-design with stakeholders from the start ensured ownership and relevance. Involving farmers, SMEs, municipalities, researchers, and citizens early in shaping value propositions and activities made initiatives more grounded in real needs and easier to sustain.

Flexible, iterative implementation allowed hubs to adapt to regional realities. Rather than following a rigid blueprint, successful hubs used pilot actions, workshops, and feedback loops to test what worked, refine tools, and build engagement over time.

Leveraging visibility through communication and public events helped raise awareness and legitimacy. Activities such as circular food awards, hackathons, zero-waste lunches, and public showcases inspired broader interest and gave the concept of circularity a tangible presence.

Digital tools like FoodCycle.ai supported impact measurement and learning. Hubs that tested digital solutions found them valuable for visualising circular flows, identifying gaps, and communicating benefits to stakeholders and the public.

1.3. What did we learn?

Start small, act locally. Circular food systems work best when built from the ground up. Hubs that began with modest, concrete actions such as small-scale pilots, workshops with local actors, or targeted interventions in public canteens, achieved early wins, built credibility, and adapted flexibly to local realities.

Value proposition matters. Clearly articulating the benefits for each stakeholder group was essential. Understanding what farmers, processors, retailers, municipalities, and citizens needed helped hubs to offer tangible, compelling benefits from reducing food waste to accessing new markets or funding opportunities.

Trust-building takes time. Most regions started with fragmented ecosystems and little tradition of cross-sectoral collaboration. Hubs that invested in dialogue, co-design sessions,

and neutral facilitation created stronger partnerships, broke down silos between public, private, and research actors, and laid the foundations for long-term cooperation.

Good practice grows from context. There is no “one-size-fits-all” model for circular food hubs. Success depended on tailoring activities to local assets, governance structures, and cultural factors. Approaches that were too rigid or imported directly from other regions proved less effective than flexible, context-driven strategies.

Circularity needs visibility. Making circular food practices visible to the public was a key driver of engagement. Events like zero-waste meals, hackathons, awards (e.g. Circular Food Award), and storytelling not only educated communities but also attracted new partners and strengthened local ownership of hub initiatives.

Digital tools are powerful enablers. The introduction of FoodCycle.ai, the project’s digital lifecycle and circularity assessment tool, significantly supported planning, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making. Beyond impact quantification, FoodCycle.ai enabled matchmaking between actors producing by-products and those able to upcycle them, turning waste streams into new opportunities. Regions that actively used the tool reported stronger collaboration, better data-driven planning, and a shared understanding of circular flows.



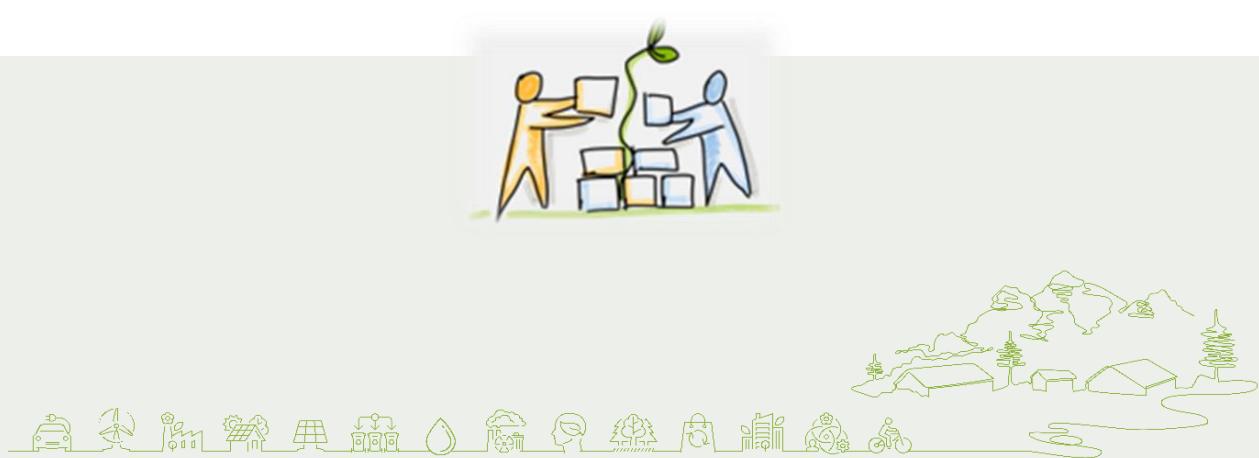
2. Alpine Space Circular Food Hubs

Five pilot Circular Food Hubs across the Alpine Space demonstrate how regional collaboration and innovation can turn circular food principles into practice.

The following pages summarise their business models, highlighting transferable lessons for future initiatives.



Fig.1: Locations of the pilot Circular Food Hubs in the Alpine Space



SALZBURG - BAVARIA CIRCULAR FOOD HUB

Piloting Collaboration for a Circular Agri-Food Future in the Border Region



Focus Topic: Grain, bread, fruit & vegetables

Website: [Salzburg – Bavaria Circular Food Hub](http://Salzburg-Bavaria Circular Food Hub)



1. Regional Context & Challenges

The Salzburg-Bavaria region brings together diverse food system actors across national borders. While interest in sustainability is growing, circular practices remain limited. Key challenges include low stakeholder awareness, fragmented support structures,

limited infrastructure for by-product reuse, especially among SMEs, and insufficient policy incentives. Cross-border knowledge exchange is also still underdeveloped.

2. Business Model Overview

KEY PARTNERS	KEY ACTIVITIES	VALUE PROPOSITION	BENEFICIARIES' RELATIONSHIPS	BENEFICIARIES
Local farmers and food entrepreneurs.	Awareness and visibility campaigns.	Knowledge transfer regarding food waste reduction and sustainable production and consumption patterns.	A virtual Circular Food Hub hosted on FH Salzburg's website, regularly updated with news, calls to action, and results.	SMEs in the agri-food and gastronomy sectors.
Educational and research institutions.	Hackathons and workshops.	Enhance transparency and traceability along the food chain.	Tailored newsletters providing updates, best practices, and event invitations.	Local farmers and, food & beverage entrepreneurs.
Municipal authorities and policy stakeholders.	Educational material development & Trainings.	Strengthen regional economies via circular partnerships.	Social media (LinkedIn, Instagram) to share award announcements, pilot stories, and research findings.	Educational and research institutions.
Ministries and National Institutions / Chambers of Commerce.	Stakeholder interviews and research.	Empower SMEs through AI-based decision support tool (FoodCycle.ai).	Direct outreach through workshops, interviews, and small-scale action events like the "Circular Food Award."	NGOs innovation-driven platforms
	Virtual Circular Food Hub website & newsletter.	Enable closed-loop systems in food value chains by reintegrating by-products.		Students (working part-time students and full time of bachelors' and masters' programmes)
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE		KEY RESOURCES		
A collaborative academic-public partnership: Umweltcluster Bayern (UCB), University of Applied Sciences Munich (HM), Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (FH Salzburg), Paris Lodron University of Salzburg (PLUS).		Human Resources: Academic staff, project managers, students, and communication officers across four institutions. Technological Resources: FoodCycle.ai tool as decision support tool to match companies. Online presences including institutional websites, the newsletter and the Virtual Circular Food Hub Physical Infrastructure: Event spaces in universities for workshops and hackathons. Financial Resources: Primarily from the Interreg Alpine Space programme, with institutional contributions covering operational needs.		

3. Key Insights & Learnings

From Awareness to Action

Cross-border collaboration as a driver of innovation. The hub demonstrated how transnational cooperation between Austria and Germany can catalyse systemic change. Regular communication and shared governance created trust and alignment between partners. University anchoring ensured continuity, credibility, and neutral coordination.

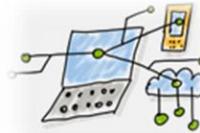
Academic-public partnership as a foundation for resilience. The hub's hybrid governance model leveraged academic expertise and public-sector engagement to mobilise diverse stakeholders — from SMEs and municipalities to farmers and NGOs.

Digitalisation enable circular matchmaking. The use of [FoodCycle.ai](#) proved central identifying solutions for food waste identifying and connecting producers with potential users of by-products. Data-driven insights supported more efficient resource use, transparent decision-making, and the creation of new circular business opportunities.

From awareness to action: visibility matters. Public-facing initiatives such as the CEFoodCycle Award 2024, hackathons, and awareness campaigns made circularity visible and tangible, engaging more than 700 stakeholders through direct engagement (events, media, and social channels).

Education as multiplier effect. Student involvement through both full-time and part-time study programmes bridged theory and practice. Students acted as change agents within their companies, integrating circular practices into real business settings and amplifying the hub's long-term impact.

Pilot actions validating circular potential. The implemented pilot action with the company Resch&Frisch saved over 800 kg of



surplus bread that was redistributed to social institutions. This pilot action delivered both measurable results and valuable insights demonstrating circular practices in action.

What Worked Particularly Well

Trust-based networks leveraging existing partnerships.

Virtual Hub as digital anchor hosted by FH Salzburg provided continuity, visibility, and a one-stop knowledge platform for the region.

Combining visibility with substance through and B2B support built both trust and results.

Shared governance: Each partner institution led specific work areas, balancing workload and ownership.

Integration of circular topics into curricula ensures long-term knowledge transfer and capacity building.

Key Barriers Identified

Limited awareness and time capacity among SMEs to adopt circular practices.

Logistical constraints and short shelf-life of food and food by-products (e.g. brewer's grains).

Regulatory and hygiene barriers for cross-border by-product transport.

Lack of long-term funding and regional coordination structures.

Main Success Drivers

Strong academic-public cooperation across borders.

Financial support from the Interreg Alpine Space Programme.

Visibility through media coverage and awards.

Institutional credibility ensuring stakeholder trust.

SOUTH TYROL CIRCULAR FOOD HUB

Connecting Local Knowledge and Circular Innovation

Focus Topic: Fruit & Vegetables, Egg, Black soldier fly

Website: South Tyrol Circular Food Hub



1. Regional Context & Challenges

South Tyrol's food system is diverse and small-scale, shaped by Alpine agriculture that connects food production with landscape, biodiversity, and cultural identity. Family-run farms and SMEs dominate, many using organic or sustainable methods.

The system's fragmentation, weak collaboration structures, and regulatory

barriers complicate circular practices such as by-product reuse or shared composting. Limited awareness and a strong dependence on seasonal tourism further hinder the development of stable circular value chains.

2. Business Model Overview

KEY PARTNERS	KEY ACTIVITIES	VALUE PROPOSITION	BENEFICIARIES' RELATIONSHIPS	BENEFICIARIES
Local farmers, producers, and SMEs.	Facilitating collaboration between SMEs, researchers, and public institutions.	Connecting regional stakeholders and sharing knowledge to make circular economy principles tangible and practical.	Circular Food Hub online platform – central access point for news, training materials, and partner networking.	SMEs and producers
Designers and innovation experts.	Raising awareness and building knowledge on circular economy principles through events, trainings, and workshops.	Facilitating co-creation and innovation through workshops, training, and pilot actions.	Workshops and innovation labs – direct interaction formats linking stakeholders and enabling practical learning.	Farmers and processors
Research and education institutions.	Supporting co-creation and innovation by guiding companies in developing and testing circular business models and pilot projects.	Empowering SMEs and local actors to adopt circular solutions and strengthen South Tyrol's sustainable food identity.	Digital communication tools – LinkedIn, newsletters, and targeted media outreach to expand visibility.	Research and education institutions
Trade and professional associations	Strengthening communication and visibility through good-practice campaigns.		Events and fairs – showcasing best practices, pilot outcomes, and regional collaboration.	Local and regional public authorities and agencies
Provincial authorities and policy stakeholders.				Designers and innovators
Consumer and sustainability networks.				Associations and NGOs
NGOs				

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	KEY RESOURCES
Led and implemented by IDM Südtirol / Alto Adige, the in-house agency of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. IDM acts as lead partner responsible for building the regional network for the closed food cycle.	<p>Human resources: Interdisciplinary IDM Südtirol team combining expertise in sustainability, circular economy, business development, and communication. Academic partners (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano) contributing research insights, mentoring, and student involvement.</p> <p>Technological resources: Circular Food Hub online platform for knowledge sharing, matchmaking, and stakeholder networking. Digital tools (newsletters, LinkedIn, media outreach) supporting visibility and engagement.</p> <p>Physical resources: Access to IDM Südtirol's facilities and event spaces for meetings, trainings, and workshops. Use of regional pilot sites and demonstration areas to showcase circular food solutions.</p> <p>Financial resources: Funding from the Interreg Alpine Space Programme and regional co-financing.</p>

3. Key Insights & Learnings

From Awareness to Co-Creation

Awareness as a first step. Many SMEs initially saw circularity as a distant concept. Through targeted communication, IDM Südtirol translated it into practical examples relevant to local businesses.

Co-creation and networking drive engagement. By hosting workshops and interactive sessions, the hub enabled direct exchange between producers, researchers, and designers, creating a community of practice.

Design and research collaboration adds value. Partnerships with universities and design faculties generated new approaches for by-product reuse and sustainable materials.

Integration into existing institutions ensures continuity. The hub's anchoring in IDM Südtirol guarantees long-term coordination and trust across sectors.

Personal communication builds trust. Regular direct contact, even simple phone calls, proved the most effective way to maintain relationships and identify stakeholder needs.

What Worked Particularly Well

Launching the Circular Food Hub South Tyrol under IDM's coordination as a cross-sector platform connecting food, tourism, and innovation.

Cooperation with the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Faculty of Design and Art) and agricultural researchers leading to the [Caroma pilot](#), turning coffee grounds and silver skin into new material applications.

Hands-on workshops with farmers, SMEs, and designers fostering awareness, creativity, and cross-sector dialogue.



Targeted communication and visibility through newsletters, media, and the online platform to broaden engagement beyond initial networks.

Key Barriers Identified

Fragmented regional food system with many small-scale actors complicating coordination and logistics for circular practices.

Limited time and capacity among SMEs to participate in circular initiatives and implement new models.

Strict food-safety and hygiene regulations restricting by-product reuse and experimentation.

Weak collaboration structures and lack of established platforms for cross-sector cooperation.

Dependence on seasonal tourism affecting the stability of year-round circular supply chains.

Main Success Drivers

Strong institutional anchoring within IDM Südtirol ensuring continuity, coordination, and stakeholder trust.

Active collaboration between researchers, designers, and SMEs fostering innovation and co-creation.

Hands-on workshops and pilot projects translating awareness into tangible circular actions.

Effective communication and visibility campaigns expanding outreach and engagement.

Integration of circular activities into existing networks and regional development structures ensuring long-term impact and sustainability beyond the project lifetime.

PIEMONTE CIRCULAR FOOD HUB

Aligning Circular Innovation with Regional Policy



Focus Topic: bread, black soldier fly, eggs, fruits & vegetables

Website: [Piemonte Circular Food Hub](#)



1. Regional Context & Challenges

Piemonte combines a rich agri-food tradition—renowned for quality wines, dairy, and traditional food products—with strong regional strategies promoting sustainability and circular innovation. Policies such as the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) and the Sustainable Development Strategy position the agri-food sector as a driver of ecological transition and competitiveness. Initiatives like the Circular Economy for Food HUB (CEFF

HUB) foster collaboration between research, policy, and enterprises to reduce waste and preserve biodiversity. Despite this favourable framework, challenges persist limited SME awareness, fragmented cooperation, low consumer demand, and logistical barriers to closing circular food loops.

2. Business Model Overview

KEY PARTNERS	KEY ACTIVITIES	VALUE PROPOSITION	BENEFICIARIES' RELATIONSHIPS	BENEFICIARIES
Piemonte Region and public authorities Knowledge and research actors: University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo (UNISG), Pollenzo FoodLab, the AGRIFOOD and CGREEN Innovation Hubs.	Facilitating collaboration among SMEs, research actors, and institutions to co-develop circular solutions. Organising workshops, training sessions, and awareness events to promote circular food practices.	Facilitating co-creation and collaboration among SMEs, institutions, and research actors to develop circular food solutions.	Workshops and co-creation. Targeted stakeholder interviews and surveys.	SMEs and entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector.
Business and technical partners: SMEs, start-ups, large-scale distributors, Food Districts, and operational actors such as GAIA S.p.A. – consortium managing food and organic waste, and the Food Wine Logistic Center, supporting logistics and coordination across the agri-food network.	Supporting pilot projects and co-creation initiatives addressing food waste and by-product valorisation.	Promoting sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation across agri-food value chains to prevent waste and valorise by-products.	Digital communication through the hub's website, newsletters, and social media (LinkedIn).	Farmers and producer cooperatives.
CEFF HUB partner network	Enhancing communication and visibility to connect regional networks and share good practices.	Raising awareness and sharing knowledge to inspire behavioural change and scale circular practices regionally.	Public events, exhibitions, and awareness campaigns engaging local communities.	Educational and vocational institutions.
Civil society organisations and NGOs.			Formal cooperation agreements and partnerships with schools, chambers, and institutions.	Municipalities and regional authorities.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE Coordinated by LAMORO Development Agency through a hybrid, non-formal governance model based on project working groups and collaboration agreements. Decision-making shared among thematic coordinators and strategic partners to ensure inclusive participation. Operations supported by cross-sector cooperation between public, research, and business actors. Governance focused on transparency, flexibility, and knowledge exchange to sustain long-term collaboration.		KEY RESOURCES Human resources: Multidisciplinary team of LAMORO coordinators, university experts, and external advisors skilled in communication, training, and innovation. Technological resources: CEFoodCycle digital tools, websites, and mailing lists support coordination, data exchange, and partner communication. Physical resources: Offices, meeting spaces, and educational venues provided by LAMORO and partners. Financial resources: Interreg Alpine Space and regional co-funding, complemented by in-kind partner support and development programme synergies.		

3. Key Insights & Learnings



From Policy Alignment to Practical Action

Bridging policy and practice. The hub showed how aligning with regional strategies such as the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) and the Sustainable Development Strategy anchors circular innovation in policy frameworks, strengthening institutional credibility and long-term impact.

Collaboration as an innovation driver. Through LAMORO's leadership and cooperation with research and innovation hubs (UNISG, Pollenzo FoodLab, AGRIFOOD, CGREEN), the hub connected SMEs, public authorities, and academia to co-create solutions for food waste prevention and by-product valorisation.

Knowledge sharing for behavioural change. Workshops, events, and digital tools turned circular concepts into practical action, enabling SMEs and local authorities to apply circular practices in daily operations.

Policy integration and stakeholder trust. Early engagement of regional authorities fostered institutional support, improving knowledge transfer and alignment between governance, innovation, and business.

Local pilots as proof of concept. Small-scale demonstrations in Food Districts—linking waste managers (e.g., GAIA S.p.A.) with producers—proved how collaboration can close circular loops and create new business opportunities.

What Worked Particularly Well

Anchoring circular food actions within existing regional strategies and innovation networks strengthened policy coherence and institutional ownership.

Multi-actor collaboration connecting SMEs, researchers, and institutions fostered mutual learning and experimentation.

Engaging policy actors early ensured legitimacy, trust, and alignment with sustainability goals.

Using established communication channels increased outreach and stakeholder participation.

Pilot projects linking waste management with agri-food innovation demonstrated practical opportunities to close loops and valorise by-products.

Key Barriers Identified

Limited awareness and technical skills among SMEs slowed the uptake of circular practices.

Fragmented cooperation hindered coordination and resource sharing.

Insufficient long-term funding restricted scaling of initiatives.

Low consumer demand reduced incentives for circular products.

Operational and logistical barriers complicated closing material loops.

Main Success Drivers

High-level institutional support from the Piemonte Region's Agriculture and Environment Directorates provided legitimacy, strengthened continuity, and opened access to policy dialogue and cross-departmental cooperation.

LAMORO's facilitation-built trust and effective coordination.

Collaboration with universities and innovation hubs stimulated research-driven solutions and cross-sector learning.

Pilot testing and small-scale demonstrations validated circular approaches and inspired replication.

Targeted communication and outreach activities increased awareness, stakeholder engagement, and regional visibility.

ALPES-MARITIMES CIRCULAR FOOD HUB

Turning Regulation into Circular Action in the HoReCa Sector



Focus Topic: Biowaste and food leftovers from the hospitality sector

Website: Alpes-Maritimes Circular Food Hub



1. Regional Context & Challenges

The Alpes-Maritimes region combines a tourism-driven economy with a vibrant agri-food and hospitality sector, where gastronomy is both an asset and a major source of organic waste. The 2024 Loi AGEC on mandatory bio-waste separation imposes new obligations on households and businesses, requiring significant operational adjustments. Regional plans such as Plan

Climat-Air-
Énergie
Territorial

support this transition, yet implementation is complex. Limited technical capacity among small hospitality enterprises, logistical barriers in waste collection, and fragmented cooperation between public and private actors slow the shift toward a circular food system.

2. Business Model Overview

KEY PARTNERS	KEY ACTIVITIES	VALUE PROPOSITION	BENEFICIARIES' RELATIONSHIPS	BENEFICIARIES
Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nice Côte d'Azur (CCI).	Carrying out one-on-one interviews and circularity assessments for HoReCa enterprises.	Supporting HoReCa enterprises in transitioning to circular food management through tools, training, and diagnostics for Loi AGEC compliance.	One-on-one tailored consultations.	HoReCa enterprises (hotels, restaurants, catering services)
Regional and local authorities, including Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur.	Delivering workshops, training sessions, and peer-learning events on circular food management.	Fostering collaboration among hospitality actors, waste operators, and authorities to co-create efficient bio-waste valorisation models.	Workshops, peer-learning sessions, and webinars.	Institutional food providers (schools, hospitals, and canteens)
HoReCa actors (hotels, restaurants, caterers).	Two days of collecting organic waste from Nice restaurants using electric cargo bikes.	Raising awareness and capacity through campaigns, workshops, and pilots that showcase circularity's benefits for sustainability.	Circular Food Award and visibility campaigns.	Public authorities and municipalities
Waste management companies and bio-waste experts.	Supporting HoReCa in applying the Loi AGEC bio-waste regulation.		Continuous feedback through surveys and interviews.	Waste management companies and circular solution providers
Environmental NGOs and food sustainability networks.	Facilitating cooperation between hospitality actors, waste operators, and local authorities.		Digital platforms, social media, and printed toolkits.	Consumers and local communities
Universities, research institutions, and technical experts.	Collecting data and monitoring results from pilot initiatives.		Participation in trade fairs and public events.	
Event organizers and media partners supporting outreach.	Promoting circular success stories through communication campaigns and the Circular Food Award.			
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE		KEY RESOURCES		
Public-private partnership model coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nice Côte d'Azur (CCI NCA). Involves municipalities, food businesses, academic and technical actors, with AVINTEM providing methodological and innovation support. Lean, participatory, and adaptable structure based on stakeholder working groups. Roles distributed across coordination, technical development, and pilot implementation. Supported by expert advisors in food waste management, innovation, and sustainability.		Human resources: CCI team coordinating diagnostics, engagement, and communication; AVINTEM experts providing technical and innovation support. External trainers and facilitators for workshops and awareness activities. Technological resources: CEFoodCycle digital tools for diagnostics, monitoring, and data sharing. CCI online platforms and mailing systems supporting information exchange. Physical resources: Meeting spaces and event venues provided by CCI and local partners. Printed and digital materials for training, visibility, and communication. Financial resources: Interreg Alpine Space and regional co-funding. In-kind contributions from local authorities, companies, and partner organizations.		

3. Key Insights & Learnings

From obligation to opportunity

Turning compliance into capacity. The hub turned the 2024 Loi AGEC on bio-waste separation into a driver of innovation by translating regulatory requirements into practical guidance for hospitality businesses.

Evidence-based understanding. A comprehensive survey of 541 HoReCa establishments and SIRIUS datavisualisations provided data to identify needs, design interventions, and measure impact.

Collaboration and co-learning. Joint action between CCI Nice Côte d'Azur, AVINTEM, municipalities, and waste operators-built trust and coordination along the circular value chain.

Empowerment through communication. Awareness campaigns and digital learning formats strengthened local engagement and motivated behavioural change among food service operators.

What Worked Particularly Well

Microlearning videos and visual tools made compliance simple, practical, and scalable across HoReCa operators.

Data-driven interviews guided tailored support and improved decision-making for food service SMEs.

Close cooperation between CCI Nice Côte d'Azur, AVITEM, and municipalities ensured smooth implementation of Loi AGEC requirements.

The Circular Food Award and communication campaigns gave visibility to successful local practices and strengthened regional engagement.

Networking events, such as the one held on 22 September 2025 with over 70 participants, from large companies, bio-waste specialists, local producers, SMEs, and HoReCa operators, fostered collaboration, knowledge exchange,



and new partnerships among circular food actors.

Visibility actions, such as two days of collecting organic waste from Nice restaurants using electric cargo bikes, together with clear and user-friendly resources, showcased practical circular solutions, raised public awareness, and encouraged replication beyond the pilot area.

Key Barriers Identified

Limited awareness and technical capacity among small HoReCa enterprises slowed early adoption of Loi AGEC requirements.

Operational costs and lack of infrastructure made bio-waste sorting and collection challenging for SMEs.

Fragmented coordination between public authorities and private operators hindered efficient implementation.

Short project duration restricted large-scale testing and follow-up of pilot activities.

Behavioural change required sustained communication beyond the project timeframe.

Main Success Drivers

Strong institutional leadership from CCI Nice Côte d'Azur ensured coordination, credibility, and trust among stakeholders.

Technical expertise provided by AVINTEM supported data analysis, diagnostics, and innovation in circular solutions.

Engagement of municipalities and waste operators enabled coherent implementation of Loi AGEC obligations.

Practical tools, microlearning videos, and clear communication materials facilitated behavioural change and compliance.

Visibility actions such as the Circular Food Award strengthened recognition and motivated replication across the region.

GORENJSKA CIRCULAR FOOD HUB

From Hospitality to Circularity

Focus Topic: milk, fruits & vegetables

Website: Gorenjska Circular Food Hub

1. Regional Context & Challenges

The Gorenjska region in north-western Slovenia combines a strong tourism and hospitality economy with rich culinary and farming traditions. Hotels, restaurants, and caterers are key to the regional identity but also generate high amounts of food waste. With destinations like Bled leading in sustainable tourism, food waste prevention



has become a regional priority. Yet, fragmented cooperation between hospitality providers, farmers, and municipalities, along with limited awareness and infrastructure, still hampers circular practices and reuse of surplus food.

2. Business Model Overview

KEY PARTNERS	KEY ACTIVITIES	VALUE PROPOSITION	BENEFICIARIES' RELATIONSHIPS	BENEFICIARIES
BSC Kranj – Regional Development Agency.	Conducting surveys and data collection on food waste in hospitality enterprises.	Supporting the hospitality and tourism sector in adopting circular and zero-waste practices.	Workshops, hackathons, and zero-waste events.	Hospitality and tourism SMEs (hotels, restaurants, caterers).
Vocational College for Hospitality, Wellness and Tourism Bled (VSŠ Bled).	Organising hackathons, workshops, and zero-waste culinary events connecting students and professionals.	Connecting education and business to build circular food skills.	Awareness campaigns linking education, tourism, and the food sector.	Educational and training institutions.
E-zavod.	Facilitating cooperation between schools, businesses, and municipalities for circular innovation.	Reducing food waste and improving resource efficiency in kitchens and supply chains.	Dissemination through websites and social media of BSC Kranj, E-zavod, VSŠ Bled.	Municipalities and local authorities.
Municipalities and local authorities.	Providing training and awareness on sustainable food management.	Fostering collaboration between hospitality enterprises, municipalities, and local producers.	Public visibility and recognition through the Circular Food Award and local media.	Local food producers and farmers.
Hospitality and food service enterprises.	Showcasing best practices and promoting excellence through the Circular Food Award.	Promoting circular solutions supporting sustainable tourism.	Feedback gathered through surveys and stakeholder meetings.	Consumers and visitors.
Local producers and farmers.	Supporting pilot initiatives and circular business model development.			
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE		KEY RESOURCES		
Coordinated by BSC Kranj, Regional Development Agency, ensuring networking, communication, and stakeholder engagement.		Human resources: Experts and coordinators from BSC Kranj, educators and students from the Vocational College Bled, and specialists from E-zavod providing technical and innovation support.		
Operatively implemented by the VSŠ Bled, linking education with practical training and awareness activities.		Technological resources CEFoodCycle digital tools for diagnostics, monitoring, and data sharing. Digital tools for data collection, communication, and event organisation, including online survey platforms and CEFoodCycle materials for awareness and training.		
Supported by E-zavod as innovation and pilot partner for developing and testing circular solutions.		Physical resources: Training kitchens, hospitality facilities, and event spaces provided by the Vocational College Bled and partner enterprises for workshops and demonstrations.		
Collaborative governance model connecting public authorities, educational actors, and food businesses.		Financial resources: Interreg Alpine Space and regional co-funding. In-kind contributions from partners.		
Roles distributed across coordination, training, innovation, and local pilot implementation.				

3. Key Insights & Learnings

From Education to Circular Action

Bridging education and business. The hub connected students, educators, and hospitality enterprises, turning practical training and zero-waste events into real-world learning for circular food management. Two small pilot actions at the VSŠ Bled tested how vegetable residues can be creatively reused, linking innovation with education.

Local cooperation for system change. Collaboration between BSC Kranj, VSŠ Bled, municipalities, and SMEs strengthened regional dialogue on food waste reduction.

Hands-on awareness raising. Hackathons, workshops, and public events effectively translated circular concepts into everyday hospitality practices, building motivation and community engagement.

Innovation through pilot action. The FlyUpCycle pilot by E-zavod demonstrated how food residues can be transformed into new resources through insect bioconversion, inspiring replication. The UpCycle initiative creatively reused coffee grounds for cosmetic products and apple peels to develop innovative materials such as apple leather, raising awareness of circular opportunities in hospitality and education.

What Worked Particularly Well

Practical measures in hospitality. Small changes in the training Hotel Astoria, such as smaller plates, guest notices, and trained staff, significantly reduced food waste.

Collaboration across sectors. Strong cooperation between education, business, and innovation partners fostered shared understanding and turned pilot activities into replicable good practices.

Student-driven innovation. Pilot actions at the VSŠ Bled encouraged creative reuse of vegetable residues, linking theory with practice in circular food design.



Awareness through experience. Zero-waste culinary events and hackathons effectively raised awareness among SMEs and hospitality professionals.

Key Barriers Identified

Limited resources and funding reduced the capacity to maintain continuous stakeholder engagement and long-term activities.

Fragmented cooperation between tourism, education, and agri-food sectors hindered the development of coordinated circular initiatives.

Low awareness among SMEs slowed the adoption of circular and food waste prevention measures.

Insufficient local food production restricted the creation of short supply chains and the implementation of regional circular solutions.

Main Success Drivers

Integrating circular economy principles into hospitality education built lasting knowledge and practical skills among students.

Close cooperation between BSC Kranj, VSŠ Bled and E-zavod ensured efficient coordination and implementation of pilot actions.

Practical workshops and real-life demonstrations connected theory with application and motivated stakeholders to adopt circular practices.

Visible results from initiatives such as food waste reduction in Hotel Astoria increased awareness and credibility among hospitality operators.

Targeted communication and participation in CEFoodCycle events strengthened stakeholder engagement and regional visibility.

**Project**

Interreg Alpine Space [CEFoodCycle](#):

Circular Economy: Mapping Food Streams and
Identifying Potentials to Close the Food Cycle

**SCAN ME**