

From pilot project to scaled experiences in the city:  
the Local Hub against food waste in Cuccagna



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As part of its Food Policy, since 2018 the Municipality of Milan has established several local Food Waste Hubs in collaboration with local, private, institutional, and third-sector actors.

The objective is to recover edible food from large retailers in the city, Milan wholesale market Foody-Sogemi, selected open street markets, and private company canteens, and redistribute it to vulnerable families.

The first seven Hubs launched were:

- **Hub Isola**, launched in 2019, in District 9
- **Hub Lambrate**, launched in 2020, in District 3
- **Hub Gallaratese**, launched in 2021, in District 8
- **Hub Foody Zero Sprechi**, launched in 2021, in the wholesale market of fruit and vegetables (Foody-Sogemi)
- **Hub del Centro**, launched in 2022, in District 1
- **Hub Selinunte**, launched in 2024, in District 7
- **Hub Loreto**, launched in 2024, in District 2



Hub Isola



Hub Lambrate



Hub Gallaratese



Hub Foody



Hub Centro



Hub Selinunte



Hub Loreto

## The Local Food Waste Hub System is expanding

The **Local Food Waste Hub system**, which facilitates the recovery and redistribution of surplus food through a vast network of partners, was selected as the winner of **the 2021 Earthshot Prize**, the global environmental prize established by Prince William and awarded annually to five winners for their contribution to environmentalism.

THE  
EARTHSHOT  
PRIZE

This recognition allowed the Municipality of Milan to invest additional resources in enhancing and strengthening its network of Local Food Waste Hubs and promoting the international spread of this model.

## New actions against food waste

Thanks to the award's contribution, the Food Policy team was able to experiment with a co-planning methodology for involving third-sector organizations, structured into the following phases:

### **Co-programming workshop** (March 2023).

The Municipality issued a public notice to select Third Sector Bodies to co-analyze the context and evaluate the best options for investing resources in solutions that effectively address emerging needs. The first workshop saw over 36 third-sector organizations as participants and 15 partners already involved in actions against waste.

### **Co-design notice** (August/September 2023)

During this phase, based on the outcomes of the workshop, the Municipality issued a public notice inviting Third Sector Bodies to submit project proposals.

### **Co-planning tables** (October 2023)

The Municipality and its partners convened the entities deemed eligible to evaluate the project ideas and define the individual action plans in detail.



# Renewal and expansion of the partnership



fondazione



In 2023, the stakeholders involved in creating the hubs signed a new **memorandum of understanding** titled **'Neighbourhood Hubs Against Food Waste'**.

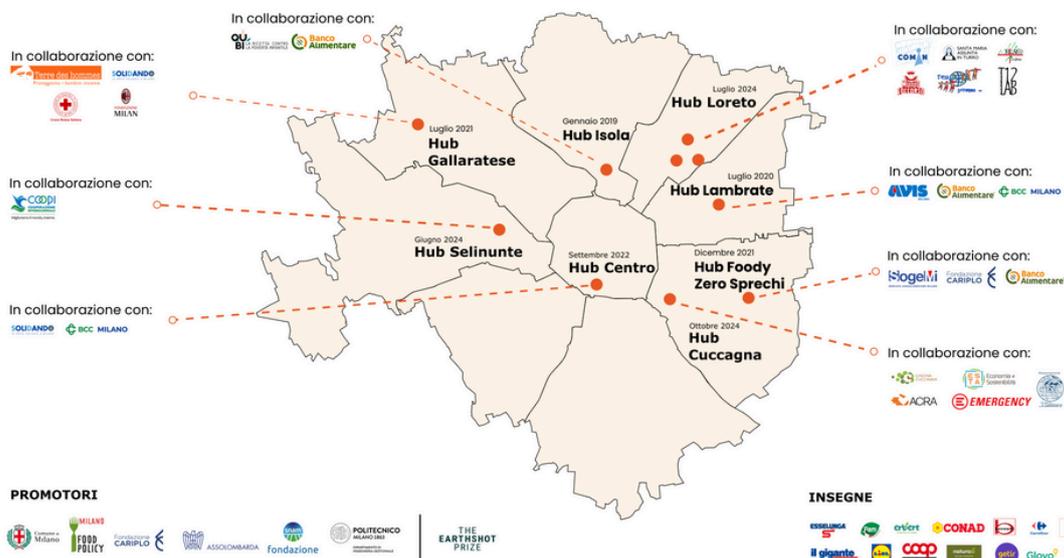
**The Municipality of Milan, Politecnico di Milano, Assolombarda, and Fondazione Cariplo**, on the basis of their common objectives, have also strengthened their mutual collaboration through specific operational agreements, envisaging the entry of new parties interested in supporting the activities. These include the **Snam Foundation**, which supports the Milan Polytechnic in monitoring and conducting scientific activities related to the co-design process for strengthening the Neighbourhood Hubs against food waste in 2024.

This contribution is intended for the optimisation of logistical processes, the integration of new flows, the sharing of good practices among stakeholders involved in the process and the measurement of surplus flows in and out of the Hubs, also monitoring performance and results. The project partners also discussed granting members the right to use a dedicated collective brand, 'Zerosprechi Hub,' designed by the Armando Testa Group.

# Proposals and projects

The co-planning phase resulted in a collective project and in an agreement signed in January 2024, by a large network of operational partners on three specific actions. The three actions identified are:

- **Action A.** Strengthening of existing Hubs
- **Action B.** Launch of new Hubs
- **Action C.** Integration of municipal markets



Local Hub against food waste (September 2024)

## ACTION B - Lunch of new Hubs: Hub Cuccagna

The aim of this action is to expand the project by opening new Local Hubs in areas not previously covered by similar initiatives, involving the rental, setup, and maintenance of spaces.

The **Cuccagna Hub**, in District 4, has as its main objective to respond to the food needs of vulnerable families, while promoting their autonomy and focusing on sociality, food quality and a balanced diet

Several partners are involved in the project, including **Associazione Consorzio Cantiere Cuccagna Impresa Sociale**, **Associazione RECUP APS**, **Associazione Economia e Sostenibilità**, **Associazione Comunità Il Gabbiano ODV**, **Fondazione ACRA** and **Emergency**.

The Hub is based on a **'self-service and/or assisted sales'** model, where people, following pre-established criteria, can choose the products that constitute their groceries. **Emergency** supplies 1350 kg/week of dry food and personal care products, while **RECUP** supplies (through electric cargo bikes) about 450 kg/week of fresh food recovered at the vegetable market, in addition to a variable number of stocks from supermarkets and local retailers.

Situated in Via Privata Cuccagna, the Hub is easily reachable by public transports and its management will be under the supervision of a Hub Manager (Emergency's operator) supported by dedicated volunteers belonging to the several third-sector bodies with specific training, provided by Emergency, on the protocols of conservation and sanitary management of goods. Some of the beneficiaries with fragility taken over by **Il Gabbiano** will support the Hub's management team.

The project also includes **workshops**, **interviews** and **questionnaires** for beneficiaries, partners and other actors in order to propose activities in accordance with the targets.

In addition, thanks to the EU Food Security Hub (ACRA) project, a **knowledge exchange visit** was organized at La Botiga in Barcelona in July 2024.

Thanks to the contribution of the **Fondazione Azimut**, a further project financier engaged by Cuccagna with a view to the project's long-term sustainability, the Hub Cuccagna was completed with the furnishings, equipped with a new machinery dedicated to the recovery and redistribution of fresh foods and improved logistic services.

The support also made it possible to expand the external area, making the Hub more accessible and welcoming for beneficiaries.

Fondazione Azimut, committed for years in the fight against economic poverty, finances projects that help vulnerable people to overcome emergency situations, and contributed to the enhancement and positive impact of the Hub Cuccagna. Other partners: **Aton SpA Società Benefit**, **Coop Lombardia**, **Supporto Popolare** and **Carpentry Cuccagna**.

