

THE DESIS FOOD CLUSTER

Dear DESIS Lab coordinators,

We are writing to announce the launch of the DESIS Food Cluster and to kindly invite you to participate in it.

The Food Cluster is an initiative of DESIS Network framed into the Thematic Clusters. It explores and promotes design knowledge for social innovation and sustainability in the food system. The cluster aims to highlight some transversal issues expressed in each project and, with this, propitiates further reflections and transversal knowledge. The Cluster has a website/blog that represents the work-in-progress of the knowledge and collects the various projects of the Network on which the reflection starts.
<http://desis-foodcluster.org>

The cluster showcases food related projects generated in different Labs of the DESIS Network and, through the open comparison and discussion of different transversal issues, provides the possibility to: generate knowledge; understand better opportunities and threats; build transversal design knowledge; highlight the various design strategies used in different contexts and the results obtained in the specific projects.

The final aim of the Cluster is to build a common understanding of how design for social innovation can contribute to the food systems, to collect the experience of the Network around this, and to open up a mature debate with external cases and stakeholders, with particular reference to the very hot topic of putting design creativity and expertise at the disposal of the definition of food policies for the cities.

The timing of the Food Cluster is focussed to the creation of a dissemination event during the next Cumulus Milan Conference (The Virtuous Circle) in June 2015: this event, titled "Design for Social Food", is scheduled for Friday, June the 5th, in the afternoon, within the framework of the Cumulus-Milan agenda. This will be the first public debate about the results of the Food Cluster with external experts and will be followed by the publication of a booklet collecting the results of the work done.

The Food Cluster, launched in January 2015 is now open for submissions, and invites all the DESIS Labs to participate, initially, by presenting projects and experiences.

We ask the following material to start feeding our repository of projects:

- Presentation of the project, adopting the DESIS showcase Ppt template, editable version available from the website;
- One or two sentences that define the project of maximum 400 characters (spaces included) that will be used as a caption for the first page presentation;

- A longer description of the case, to be put as an “abstract”.
- Further development/thoughts regarding the transversal issues: these can be put in the “notes” of the ppt template so to be posted then on the website. These texts will be the basis for further reflections and for the creation of the common knowledge.

As an example of the required information, you can look at the cases currently presented in the website. In particular “Nutrire Milano” (Feeding Milan) and “Coltivando” are developed in more details: <http://desis-foodcluster.org/>

Once a relatively good number of cases will be available, we can start together to work on the emerging knowledge and elaborate reflections. As promoters of the Cluster we will try to orchestrate this activity in the most collaborative and participative way, so as to add value to the individual projects, to foster the transversal reflections and to the open up the debate with the external world.

Timeline:

- 20th of January 2015: the process of collection of cases will start;
- end of February: a first collection of cases will be available. Meanwhile the reflection about the transversal issues will have started;
- March – May 2015: the elaboration of the common knowledge will start;
- end of May 2015: a draft report will be prepared together with the presentation for the event at Expo;
- June 5th: the food-cluster presentation event will be held at the Cumulus Milan Conference;
- June – July 2015: the report is integrated and finalised in a publication.

The group of promoters of the Food Cluster is composed by:

The Polimi DESIS Lab, Milano (Anna Meroni, María Ferreira Litowtschenko, Davide Fassi)

SDS, Brussels (François Jégou and Christophe Gouache)

Design Society Development DESIS Lab, Johannesburg (Angus Donald Campbell; Naudé Malan)

If you have some question, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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