



Call for Enterprises, Startups and Projects in the Circular Bioeconomy

SPRING (the Italian Cluster of Circular Bioeconomy) together with the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund and Bio4Dreams is delighted to invite companies and researchers in the Circular Bioeconomy fields to participate to the second edition of BioInvestIT, Bioeconomy Investment Forum, which will be held in Milano on May (date tbd).

1. Initiative Overview

BioInvestIT is a newly launched yearly investment forum dedicated to Circular Bioeconomy and open to established companies, start-ups and research projects from Italy and other European countries. In a unique end-to-end program, the applicants will benefit from networking and direct contact with international investors through a series of focused events. The initiative is ultimately aimed at providing applicants with the connections and access to potential investors they need to go to market and scale.

2. Competition Structure

BioInvestIT is designed as a three-phase investment arena:

- PHASE 1 – PROJECTS, SMEs SCOUTING AND SCREENING

Participants are invited to submit their ideas and proposals. The BioInvestIT selection committee will select a maximum of 10 projects/SMEs who will proceed to Phase 2.

BioInvestIT National Roadshow: in addition to the general project/SMEs collection, to further spur the collection of applications from each territory, a National Roadshow will be organized by SPRING and local partners to introduce BioInvestIT to enterprises and researchers. Within each leg of this Roadshow, the most interesting applications will be given the opportunity to pitch their project in front of local investors and innovation ecosystem. The projects considered to be the most interesting from a local jury will be admitted directly to the Investor Arena Meeting.

For those interested in presenting their project/company/ business plan in the different legs of the national roadshow, please refer to the contacts with each of the local partner.

- PHASE 2 – INVESTOR ARENA MEETING

National event where the most promising participants (maximum 10) will pitch to a panel of investors, technology experts and industry representatives, who will select up to 3 finalists to present at the European Investment Forum.

- PHASE 3 – EUROPEAN INVESTMENT FORUM (BIOINVEST EUROPE)

Following the Investor Arena Meeting, the most promising finalists with global ambitions will be given the opportunity to pitch at international arenas throughout Europe, organized by Cluster SPRING and its network of partners. These unique networking events will provide contestants with the opportunity to pitch to an audience of top investors and receive detailed feedback after each meeting.

3. Eligibility

Applicants wishing to take part in this initiative must meet the following requirements:

- Contestants must present a company or project that fits within the target Circular Bioeconomy (biobased chemicals, bioenergies, biomaterials, nutraceuticals, cosmeceutics, functional food, industrial biotechnology, agro-food, sustainable agriculture, etc.)
- Have a preliminary tested prototype (from TRL 3-4).
- It is not required for the applicants' project to refer to an incorporated company.
- International applications are welcome – please be aware that at least 50% of the projects admitted to Phase 2 must be Italian or planning to open up a Branch/plant office in Italy within the end of the year.
- Contestants must indicate their fundraising objectives and financial needs (the typical equity ask range for our investment forums is between € 200K and € 5M). ECBF initial ticket is between 2.5 to 5 million.

4. Key dates and activities

- February 15, 2025 – March 31, 2025: BioInvestIT National Roadshow. Full calendar at www.clusterspring.it
- By March 31, 2025 (midnight GMT+1): Interested startups/projects can apply by submitting a business plan or executive summary of their project via email info@clusterspring.it.
- By April 15, 2025: the committees announce which applicants are selected for the Investor Arena Meeting.
- Milan, May, 2025: Investor Arena Meeting. Finalists pitch to a broad audience of investors, corporations and players of the innovation ecosystem. Please note that skipping any of the previous steps prevents participation to the Arena Meeting.
- Sept-Dec, 2025: European Investment Forum. The winners of the final Investor Arena Meeting will be given the opportunity to pitch in front of an international investor committee aimed at supporting projects and startups in their internationalization processes.

5. Selection Criteria

The proposals submitted by contestants will be judged by the Circular Bioeconomy selection committee along the following criteria:

- 1) **Strength of Product / Technology.** What are the strengths of the product and its technical standards? Is there a need for the proposed technology and does it offer an effective solution to a problem in the field? Is the product/technology original and disruptive?
- 2) **Business Model.** Is the business model clear and sustainable? What is its capacity to monetize and what is the estimated time to market?
- 3) **Market Size and Scalability.** What are the size and attractiveness of the target market? Can the proposed technology or solution be deployed at a scale?
- 4) **Barriers to Entry and Competitive Advantage.** Is there a clear and sustainable competitive advantage in the proposed solution and are the barriers to entry strong enough to prevent competitors from penetrating the market?
- 5) **Team.** What is the composition of the team? Is there a balance in terms of knowledge and expertise? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How strong is their overall commitment to the business?
- 6) **Financials.** Is the team's business plan robust? What is their strategy for growing and financing the company in the medium term (3-5 years)?

The Selection Panel will be composed by experienced and qualified professionals with biotech research, industry and finance backgrounds.

6. Confidentiality

The staff of the organizing entities as well the members of the Selection Panel will have access to entry materials.

Entering teams must recognize that any information submitted through entries is at risk of 'public disclosure'.

The organizers, judges and other affiliates of the event will NOT enter into non-disclosure agreements with applicants.

For more information, do not hesitate to contact us at info@clusterspring.it

In partnership with:

