

# WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

## What Design Can Do urges creatives to build a circular society – one great idea at a time

*Starting 11 October 2022, the Make it Circular Challenge invites designers and creative entrepreneurs globally to submit design-driven innovations*

Amsterdam, 11 October 2022 – **When it comes to the climate crisis, there's no time for cynicism. With millions of people already experiencing the effects of a warming planet firsthand, we need to move forward with optimism and momentum. This is the driving force behind What Design Can Do (WDCD)'s fourth challenge in partnership with the IKEA Foundation: the Make it Circular Challenge. From 11 October 2022 - 11 January 2023, this global design competition calls on all innovators – from designers to entrepreneurs – to submit their boldest climate solutions using circular design. Winning proposals will be made into reality with an impact-driven development programme. The end goal? To create products, services and systems that are both user-centred *and* earth-centred, showing that a circular future is not only imaginable – but actionable.**

### THE HIDDEN POWER OF CREATIVITY

Most economies today are based on a linear model, where value is created by producing and selling as many products as possible. The problem is, it operates on the assumption that infinite growth is possible on a finite planet. Today, we are seeing just how wrong this assumption was, as we face an accelerating climate crisis.

Yet when looking ahead at the route to a circular society, many people only see obstacles that they would rather not or cannot take on. One of the most important challenges is to convince them that we can create a new world which makes our lives not less but *even more* fulfilling.

"Many people become lost in the face of so much outrage, fatigue and disinterest – but not creatives," says **Richard van der Laken**, co-founder and creative director of WDCD. "The ability to imagine is the creative community's ideal domain: seeing what does not yet exist, taking on a challenge, forging ahead with optimism."

### MAKE IT CIRCULAR

We have an opportunity to shape a radically different future: one that's restorative and regenerative by design. A **circular society** takes the circular economy one step further and considers the social and ethical dimensions of how people live their lives, from sun-up to sun-down.

"At the IKEA Foundation, we believe designers and creatives using circular principles can deliver tangible solutions that tackle climate change, waste and pollution," says **Liz McKeon, Director - Planet at IKEA Foundation**. "We believe design can help create a brighter future on a liveable planet. Just as importantly, design can also motivate the public to want to belong to that world."

That's why the Make it Circular Challenge asks designers to deliver new materials or technologies – and create new possibilities. Participants are invited to submit their project proposals online for free from **11 October 2022 to 11 January 2023** via the Challenge website: [makeitcircular.whatdesigncando.com](https://makeitcircular.whatdesigncando.com)

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## HOW TO APPLY

The Make it Circular Challenge provides in-depth design briefs presenting original research on circularity and highlighting opportunities for designers and entrepreneurs alike. Participants will submit projects across themes: what we eat, what we wear, what we buy, how we package and how we build. Check the Challenge website and follow What Design Can Do on social media for future updates about events in the open call, such as workshops, webinars and tutorials with tips on applying.

At the beginning of 2023, a jury of leading experts in design, social impact and climate action will select a minimum of 10 winners. Winning ideas are turned into reality with €10.000 in funding and a global development programme co-created with Impact Hub Amsterdam, which includes online training, mentoring sessions and a bootcamp. This programme will support the winning teams in further strengthening their projects, and propelling them through 2023 and beyond.

## FOR THE EDITORS

For photos, graphics, copy, and background research on circular design, view our [press kit](#). More information about past Challenges and What Design Can Do is available at our [press webpage](#). For any press enquiries or more information regarding the Make it Circular Challenge, please contact [louise@whatdesigncando.com](mailto:louise@whatdesigncando.com)

## ABOUT WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

What Design Can Do (WDCD) is an international platform that advocates for design as a tool for social change. Since 2011, we have undertaken numerous activities to promote the role of designers in addressing the world's most pressing societal and environmental issues. To date, WDCD has hosted 15 successful conferences in Amsterdam, São Paulo, and México City. In 2016 WDCD launched an ambitious design challenge programme that engages the creative community with urgent societal issues such as the wellbeing of refugees and climate change. So far, the programme has resulted in €10m in funds raised by initiatives post programme.

The Make it Circular Challenge is active in six cities around the world: Nairobi (with partner **Kenya Climate Innovation Center**), Tokyo (with partner **Shibaura House**), São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (with partner **Mandacaru Design**), Delhi (with partner **Quicksand**), Mexico City, and Amsterdam.

To see previous Challenge winners, visit <https://www.whatdesigncando.com/projects/>

For more information, visit [www.whatdesigncando.com](http://www.whatdesigncando.com)

## ABOUT THE IKEA FOUNDATION

The IKEA Foundation is a strategic philanthropy that focuses its grant making efforts on tackling the two biggest threats to children's futures: poverty and climate change. It currently grants more than €200 million per year to help improve family incomes and protect the planet from climate change. Since 2009, the IKEA Foundation has granted more than €1.5 billion to create a better future for children and their families.

In 2021 the Foundation decided to make an additional €1 billion over the next five years to accelerate the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions. Learn more at: [www.ikeafoundation.org](http://www.ikeafoundation.org)