

COESIONE ITALIA 21-27

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LAZIO INNOVA & distributed FabLab of Lazio Region
in cooperation with **ETRA – European Tyre Recycling Association**
and the partners of the EU project **SMILE CITY** (Sustainable Materials for Innovative, Low Emissions Applications in the Circular City),
launch the call:

FABER SCHOOL URBAN LIVING LAB - “SMILE CITY”

Off-grid PV Panels e-Bike Charging Station DESIGN & PROTOTYPING



As part of the *"Active Space Network Strengthening Project - PR Lazio FESR 2021-2027 - Specific Objective 1.3: Strengthening the sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and the creation of jobs in SMEs, also thanks to productive investments"*, Lazio Innova, implementing body, in collaboration with ETRA – EUROPEAN TYRE RECYCLING ASSOCIATION, Coordinator of the SMILE CITY project, launches the call **FABER SCHOOL URBAN LIVING LAB - “SMILE CITY”**.

SMILE CITY – Sustainable Materials for Innovative, Low-Emissions Applications in the Circular City - (<https://smile-city.eu>) is a European project that aims to develop and demonstrate innovative systemic solutions for the transition towards circular and zero-emission cities. The project, coordinated by **ETRA** – the European Tyre Recycling Association (France), **involves 35 partners including research institutions, local authorities, companies, universities, and European organizations**. It involves the implementation of pilots in 10 different urban areas in 7 countries, promoting international cooperation on a European scale



between entities from Italy, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Poland, Serbia, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria Slovenia, France, Lithuania, and Cyprus.

The Faber School Urban Living Lab SMILE City is a collaboration between Lazio Innova, through its Spazio Attivo network and the Region's distributed FabLab, ETRA, and the European partners of the SMILE CITY project. The goal is to involve architects, designers, makers, students, researchers, and innovators **in a process of co-design, collaboration, and international networking. The goal is to generate and prototype concepts for an off-grid e-bike charging station**, responding to one of the innovation challenges launched in the SMILE City project and on which the collaboration between Lazio Innova and ETRA is based.

The charging station is made of prefabricated recycled concrete elements, powered by photovoltaic panels and equipped with second-life batteries for energy storage. **The Faber School's challenge** is to develop a functional architectural **Concept** that harmoniously integrates:

- the support system (concrete structure) for the roof-type photovoltaic panels;
- the secure housing for the second-life batteries;
- any street furniture or additional features (seating, lighting, information space).

The design must consider factors such as:

- aesthetics;
- functionality;
- durability;
- safety and compatibility between the various elements;
- in accordance with the values of sustainability, innovation, and the circular economy inherent in the SMILE CITY project.

1. Introductory Workshops

Preparatory workshops will be offered, with the aim of:

- introducing the network of skills and design capacity represented by the SMILE City partnership, which will be made available to participants;
- exploring the "Faber School Urban Living Lab SMILE City" call and related opportunities;
- exploring the technical characteristics of the materials and components used in the charging station, their potential and limitations;
- creating opportunities for discussion and exchange between participants and the partner network.



The first scheduled Workshop will be held on **December 3rd, 2025**, at the CNR headquarters in Rome. The same Workshop will be repeated between mid-December and January at Sapienza University of Rome, the Polytechnic University of Turin, and ISIA Faenza.

Participation in the introductory Workshops is open to all interested parties and is preparatory to applying for the program, but is not binding.

Below is a summary of the topics that will be covered during the workshops:

- **Eco-design criteria** applicable to the Concept;
- **Recycled materials from tires and polymers**: types and uses;
- **Concrete with recycled materials**: uses and performance;
- **Photovoltaic panels**: types, materials, design, and positioning;
- Clean energy storage systems with **second-life batteries**.

2. Faber School Urban Living Lab SMILE CITY

Those who submit their application by the deadline according to the methods specified in point 4 will be admitted to the Faber School.

The design process will have an international dimension. Participation will be partly digital and partly in-person, depending on the activities each working group is engaged in. This will allow for the broadest possible participation and cross-fertilization among the groups, including within an international context. The activities will take place between the end of January and the end of May 2026, with in-depth sessions and knowledge transfer on both digital modeling and prototyping and on specific content relevant to the challenge on which participants are asked to co-design. These sessions will alternate with hands-on workshops, meetings at trade fairs, project events, and partner events.

The hands-on prototyping sessions will be hosted by the Lazio Region's distributed FabLab.

Throughout the process, SMILE City Partners, along with the FabLab network's Technical Managers, will be available to the working groups both in workshops and training-demonstration sessions and in the proposal design and modeling activities.

The Faber School Kick-Off Workshop will be held on January 29th 2026, at the CNR headquarters in Rome. Participants will be divided into groups for an icebreaking and brainstorming session.

At the end of the workshop, each working group will produce a **final output** including:

- sketches and conceptual drawings;
- technical drawings (CAD drawings);



- scale model;
- PowerPoint presentation;
- illustrative video clip;

The process will conclude with a Demo Day where the proposals will be presented publicly and evaluated by a panel of international experts appointed by ETRA, based on the following criteria:

- consistency with the values and objectives of the SMILE CITY project;
- originality and quality of design;
- technical feasibility and sustainability of materials;
- modularity, durability, and ease of installation;
- visual impact, urban recognizability, and replicability in different European contexts.

Smile City will award the following to the project teams selected for the subsequent prototype development:

- involvement in project activities aimed at project execution;
- visibility of the authors' names in Smile City Project communications;
- the right to cite the selected Concept and the prototype developed to promote their portfolio of projects and collaborative works;
- reimbursement of travel expenses for meetings and project activities agreed upon with the Smile City coordinator.

3. Participants

- University and Technical Higher Education Students
- Recent Graduates, Scientists, Researchers
- Designers
- Makers, digital artisans, technicians, and local innovators
- Professionals and companies interested in sustainable design, renewable energy, and the circular economy.

4. Submission of applications and evaluation criteria

Interested parties may apply within **January 26th 2026 h.12.00 (CET)** through the following link www.lazioinnova.it/innovazione-aperta/iniziativa/faber-school-urban-living-lab-smile-city by accessing the dedicated form.

Candidates will be admitted based on the following evaluation criteria:



Evaluation criteria	Maximum score
Education/Background (university, professional, entrepreneurial)	40
Experience already achieved in open innovation and co-design projects/paths, in challenges, previous Faber Schools	30
Collaboration experiences in international contexts	10
Motivation and willingness to participate in the subsequent development of the proposals	20
TOTAL	100

The evaluation will be carried out by an evaluation panel composed of a representative from Lazio Innova, an ETRA representative, and an industry expert. Applications achieving a minimum score of 60 will be selected.

Starting February 2nd 2026, Lazio Innova will inform candidates admitted to the program via email through the account fablabcolleferro@azioinnova.it.

By February 10th 2026, participants must send confirmation of enrollment in the program and participation in the first Kick-Off Workshop which is scheduled for mid-February 2026.

5. Other general information

Participation in the program is free. The call text and the application form are available in both Italian and English.

6. For information and clarifications

For further information, clarifications, and more details, please write to fablabcolleferro@azioinnova.it or secretariat@etra-eu.org, or call +39 06 60516827.