

A Circular Economy Manifesto

for the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of
Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective.



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with guidance from Arup and input from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation

- Our goal is to demonstrate that architecture and the built environment can coexist harmoniously with our planet, by eliminating waste, circulating materials and regenerating natural systems
- We call on designers, planners, cities, and participants of the Biennale Architettura 2025 to rethink our approach to design and embrace circular and nature-positive principles
- We commit to creating pavilions and spaces that are not just temporary showcases but offer examples of bold circular thinking and create lasting legacies

In an era defined by environmental urgency, the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia offers an exploratory arena for sustainable, transformative design. As a collective of architects, designers, and innovators, we are called to radically rethink our approach to our built environment, embracing the principles of a circular economy and leveraging all forms of *intelligence* to do so.

Our sector, the built environment, is critical as we are responsible for 40% of global energy related carbon emissions and the consumption of 40% of all raw materials. Moving away from a 'take, make, dispose' model, governments including the European Union are pushing to accelerate the transition towards circularity, but the current pace of change is still inadequate.

This Manifesto calls on designers, planners, cities, and participants of the Biennale Architettura 2025 to tackle the core challenges and collaborate to create a truly circular exhibition. We commit to creating pavilions and spaces that are not just temporary showcases but bold examples of circular design that offer a lasting sustainability legacy. Our goal is to eliminate waste, circulate materials and regenerate natural systems proving that architecture and our built environment can coexist harmoniously with our planet.

This Manifesto asks you to draw on our wealth of intelligence, from our ever-growing artificial computing power to our collective wisdom, to rethink your approach towards a circular and nature-positive design practice. Harnessing nature's intelligence, where nothing is wasted, this Circular Manifesto is a radical call for courageous ideas, ingenious experimentation and candid collaboration, to propose scalable, achievable solutions for a more sustainable built environment. Long after the Biennale Architettura 2025 itself has finished, we wish to create and catalyse real-world impact.

Impact at scale requires fundamental transformation.

We want you, as the Participants in the 19th International Architecture Exhibition and as innovators in the fields of design and architecture, to demonstrate leadership.

We aspire for this Manifesto to activate you as the most influential organisations, committed to action, demonstrating leadership in the transition to a circular economy by articulating comprehensive strategies in response to this Manifesto; setting ambitious targets and tracking progress; leveraging your organisation to deliver on your ambitions, working with stakeholders to catalyse circular solutions; and demonstrating impact on business, climate and nature.

These are the seven guiding circular design principles which will guide us:

1. Design, construct, operate and deconstruct with a Whole-Life Carbon approach in mind. (e.g. CO₂kg/functional unit (e.g. visitor), Conduct LCAs, Provide BoQs)
2. Design to maximise the use of reclaimed, recycled or renewable materials or existing exhibitions/assets, ideally locally sourced – aim for not less than 50% per weight.
3. Design out any construction waste – aim for zero waste to landfill.
4. Design for modularity and prefabricated designs with lightweight materials and simple connection systems, avoid unnecessary components.
5. Design for easy deconstruction – aim for a 100% recycling or reuse of materials. Work closely with the supply chain end-to-end.
6. Design out hazardous and polluting materials that have a negative impact on the health of people as well as nature.
7. Design for nature – enhance the ecological value of the site and promote the efficient use of water – aim for buildings to provide the same ecosystem services as the local environment.