

URBAN FOOD & DESIGN 2026

Biofabrique Vienna Challenge: Applied Colours

Who can apply?

Individuals or interdisciplinary teams, creative practitioners from all fields with expertise in design, material innovation, dyeing processes, colors and pigments, and research.

Which further applications are conceivable for the “Wiener Farben”?

The Vienna Business Agency and the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK are calling for a design competition to create an installation at the Biofabrique Vienna on the site of the Nordwestbahnhof. The installation is intended to demonstrate how the colourants or dyes developed as part of the “Wiener Farben” (“*Vienna colours*”) project can be used beyond the textile field. The design process should be preceded by experiments exploring the application of the “Wiener Farben” on a range of materials commonly used in design.

Application deadline: 14 April 2026, 23:59

Completion by: 21 September 2026

Fee and production budget: up to EUR 5,000 (excluding VAT)

Biofabrique Vienna

Biofabrique Vienna is a project of the Vienna Business Agency that brings bioregional design into practice: Vienna's residual materials and "waste" are used as the raw material basis for new materials. The development of circular materials for architecture, design, and the creative industries succeeds only through close collaboration among research, industry, and the creative sector.

The goal of Biofabrique Vienna is to develop alternatives to conventional, often unsustainable materials that are both aesthetically and ecologically convincing.

The current edition focuses on the topic of "Wiener Farben" ("*Vienna colours*"). They aim to create alternatives to synthetic dyes and globally standardized colour concepts. "Wiener Farben" are obtained from unavoidable food waste and invasive plants. They stand for regionality, resource conservation, and creative innovation, reflecting the unique character of the city and its surroundings. In addition to textile applications, new perspectives are emerging for use in many other materials.

Strong partnerships form the backbone of the Biofabrique Vienna initiative: the renowned dyeing studio Färberei Fritsch, specialized in natural dyes, and the Vienna design label Rudolf Vienna play key roles in implementation. The project is supported scientifically by experts and students from the University of Applied Arts Vienna, TU Wien, and the University of Art and Design Linz.

Challenge Content

With 'Applied Colours', the Vienna Business Agency and VIENNA DESIGN WEEK are creating a framework for further developing and reapplying the colours developed by Biofabrique Vienna.

At its core lies the question: How can these colours be used not only for textiles but also on other materials? Possible applications include wall paint, varnish, 3D-printing filament, screen printing, or other design and craft-based uses.

The challenge invites designers, architects, craftspeople, and material developers to experiment with the dyes and their formulations, exploring new fields of application. Through experiments and prototypes, participants investigate how the colours behave on different surfaces and materials, what aesthetic and functional qualities emerge, and what potential they may hold for sustainable, bioregional circular systems.

The results will be presented as a sensory installation during VIENNA DESIGN WEEK at Biofabrique Vienna, located at the Nordwestbahnhof. The installation will make the research and its future application possibilities visible and tangible.

Selected participants become part of the Biofabrique Vienna network, work closely with the research team, and have the opportunity to exchange ideas with an international network of experts and thought leaders in material innovation, design, and circular economy. They may also receive selected materials from the Biofabrique Vienna network for testing. In addition, they can use the facilities and workspaces of Biofabrique Vienna in the Papageienhalle at the Nordwestbahnhof district during the implementation phase.

Process and Timeline of the Biofabrique Vienna Challenge

03 March

– 14 April, 2026: Application period

20–24 April 2026: Jury meeting

Mid-May, 2026: Submission of first drafts, followed by ongoing exchange with the teams

July, 2026: Interim presentation

15 September, 2026: Completion and final refinements; start of installation setup at Nordwestbahnhof

16–23 September, 2026: Setup of a small, informative “outpost” in the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK festival headquarters

24 September, 2026: Festival opening with press tour and preview

25 September

– 04 October, 2026: VIENNA DESIGN WEEK festival period

05–07 October, 2026: Dismantling and removal of the presentation

Info & FAQ

Who can apply?

Individuals or interdisciplinary teams, creative practitioners from all fields with expertise in design, dyeing processes, colors and pigments, science, and related disciplines.

What materials will be used?

Dyeing agents (primarily extracts), information, and—if applicable—materials will be provided by the Biofabrique Vienna team.

What is expected to be created?

An independent installation that offers a visible and tangible translation of the research work.

Organizational and Legal Information

All experiments must be carried out, designed, and produced by the submitting individual or team. Rights to the specific design remain with the submitting individual or team. One sample piece must be provided to Biofabrique Vienna.

For all work results created during the project, the Vienna Business Agency and the selected participants grant each other a spatially and temporally unrestricted, royalty-free right of use for non-commercial purposes.

Any commercial use or transfer to third parties requires a separate written agreement between all parties.

Project communication will reference the design team with the addition “©Biofabrique Vienna”.

All parties will coordinate regularly regarding the use of the project results.

Presentation

The installation will be prominently exhibited at Biofabrique Vienna at the Nordwestbahnhof during the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK. A substantial area of the hall may be used in consultation with the Biofabrique Vienna team.

A reference to the installation in the Papageienhalle will be displayed continuously in the festival headquarters during the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK as part of the format “Urban Food & Design”. A small area will be available for this purpose and must be designed by the selected individual or team.

Implementation / Fee

The individual or team selected by the jury will receive up to €5,000 (excl. VAT) as fee and production budget.

Fee: EUR 2,500

Production budget: up to EUR 2,500 (in agreement with Biofabrique Vienna)

Q&A Session:

16 March 2026 at 2:00 PM, online via Microsoft Teams. Please [register here](#).

Terms & Conditions

Selection

A jury of independent experts as well as representatives of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK and the Vienna Business Agency will select one person (or project team) according to the criteria listed below. The decision is made by majority vote.

Evaluation Criteria

- Experience in the field of design
- Strong implementation skills
- Conceptual and design quality of previous work
- Experience with natural dyes and dyeing processes is an advantage, but not a requirement

Application

All applications must be submitted via the [website](#) by 14 April 2026, 23:59, and must include the following information:

- Full contact details of the applicants (first name, last name, company name if applicable, email address, phone number, address)
- Short motivation letter (max. 3,000 characters including spaces)
- Portfolio
- Initial sketches and ideas related to the assignment

The following documents may be uploaded via the designated [cloud link](#) using the password „WienerFarben2026“:

- CVs of the applicants, including an overview of previous, thematically relevant activities
- Portfolio
- Initial sketches and ideas related to the assignment

Please label all files with your name or project title in the file name; otherwise, the documents cannot be considered during the evaluation process.