









## FEEDING THE CITY ACCELERATE 2022 PROGRAMME REVIEW

**Feeding the City Accelerate (FTCA)** is the third iteration of a transformative series of business support programmes for sustainable and ethical food & drinks businesses who are ready to scale their operations and tap into larger contracts. FTCA brings together thought leaders in food sustainability, large scale buyers, enterprise support providers and investors with the shared goal of supporting social or environmental impact-driven food enterprises with B2B revenue streams to grow and flourish whilst embedding circular economy principles and sustainability into their business model.



**FTCA this year is a Circular Food Pioneer Project - Delivered in collaboration with ReLondon**, the CFPP is a joint project also supported by the Greater London Authority and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, with the aim of making a circular economy for food a reality in London.

Through workshops, 1:1 consultancy, peer to peer group sessions and 1:1 programme coaching, a group of 7 London based food and drink enterprises were selected, who were looking to embed a healthy, positive working culture, with social and environmental impact built into their business models. Drawing on insights across the food and drink sector, policy and corporate procurement organisations, entrepreneurs were supported to overcome key challenges faced by sustainable businesses when scaling. Topics covered included:

-  **Investment Readiness**
-  **Procurement - buyer insight**
-  **Contract review & Negotiation**
-  **Market research - trends**
-  **Pitching - Perfecting the deck & pitch**
-  **Sales, Marketing and branding**
-  **Circular Economy**
-  **Leadership, resilience**

For the 2022 cohort the main challenges were access to finance and stronger financial modelling with improved narrative and pitch. Although having traded on average 2 years, most were from mature business environments and have tested and pivoted from initial iterations of their current business model.

## GOOD FOOD BOX



**Affordable veg box scheme, sourced from local growers/organic** offering a size range of culturally appropriate veggie bags to families. Starting as a low-cost community scheme, GFB seek to develop their commercial business. Profit generated will feed back into their proposed market garden and support further social benefits of gardening, access to high nutritionally dense food and cooking skills.

[granvillecommunitykitchen.org.uk](http://granvillecommunitykitchen.org.uk)

## KAY TEAS

**Organic, low sugar, sustainably sourced, cold-brew iced tea**

Ice tea with a herbal twist started from the university brews created by founder, Kevin, from his cultural roots in Asia and North America. With globally inspired flavours, the tea carries a twist on conventional ice tea using unconventional ingredient pairings.

[kaytea.co.uk](http://kaytea.co.uk)



## ANGRY MONK



**Fast response wholesaler of surplus/waste vegetables to the corporate kitchens.** Developed to combat food waste from unsold goods at London's vegetable markets, Angry Monk have developed a logistics platform to take fast perishing items to commercial kitchens in London.

[angrymonk.co.uk](http://angrymonk.co.uk)

## HEMPRESS RISING

**Luxury CBD treats and edibles, organic, vegan and refined sugar free.**

Organic wellbeing products infused with CBD, Hempress Rising is a grassroots cannabis collective that aims to supplement diet and boost health through nutrition and natural plant based ingredients.

<https://www.hempressrising.com/home-copy>



## HERBY BOX



### **Natural herbal tea blends for women's health & wellbeing**

A blend of herbal teas developed by Yemi following a period of recovery after illness. Now blended into a range of ethically sourced herbal teas sold in premium spas. Herby Box have received some small angel investment and have the ambition to build and scale their business through wholesale and increase their market beyond London.

[Herbybox.com](https://herbybox.com)

## WE ARE SPIRITS

### **A range of spirits and cocktails supplied in zero waste packaging.**

We Are Spirits is the wholesale arm of Meetini, a mobile cocktail/spirit service for events and parties. The founders have the ambition to develop the business into the first global, carbon neutral spirit supplier and are invested in developing gaps in their supply chain to overcome challenges.

[wearespirits.com](https://wearespirits.com)



## WELL FRUITED



### **A bottled, blended smoothie from whole waste fruit**

Bare Fruit was developed to create a fibre and nutrient rich bottled juice, blended rather than pressed to capture the goodness from the whole fruit.

[wellfruted.com](https://wellfruted.com)

## PROGRAMME DELIVERY

**FTCA exceeded the goals we set out to achieve.** Following intensive recruitment and selection, the IHL panel conducted a 3 hour in depth diagnostic interview to assess the business’ weakness and key development areas for growth. This proved to be invaluable both to feed the programme content but also to focus the participants’ minds on what their challenges really were and all reported that they felt considerable benefit from taking this time to reflect on their current business model.

Development objectives were shared with the participant and mentors to steer consultancy. Diverse mentors were selected according to their expertise rather than allocating a single mentor per enterprise for the duration of the programme. **Participants received a minimum of 12 hours 1:1 mentorship** along with tailored workshops and peer discussion in order to work towards their goals. The mentorship was an invaluable element of the programme with practical and achievable targets set for each enterprise. The relationship between mentor and mentee often develops over the course of the programme and evidenced by the enduring relationship between consultants and alumni from earlier years.

**To recruit to the programme, a targeted campaign was sent to 400+ food sector partners, funders, experts and entrepreneur support providers based, or with connections to London and across the Impact Hub London (IHL) ecosystem.** This also served to strengthen the relationship between IHL and related social, food and policy organisations with potential to develop future shared activity and knowledge thereby increasing the impact and reach of the IHL ecosystem. In alignment with IHL mission to promote inclusion and climate positivity through ethical business strategy, recruitment prioritised inclusion of a diverse pool of participants including non-binary, women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with full commitment to improving circularity within their enterprises.



In the first phase of the programme, delivered in collaboration with ReLondon, participants worked together across 4 hours of practical workshops to explore practical methods of embedding circularity into their commercial strategy whilst maintaining a lean and efficient business model. Using the mechanisms in place, **42% of participants were subsequently invited to showcase their services and products on the ReLondon Matchmaker circular business finder website.**

Financial marketplace awareness was delivered through tailored workshops by Bank of America experts covering pitching skills, contract review and investment knowledge. Following the workshops, participant enterprises each received a volunteer investment banker to review their pitch and refine their proposition with a view to increasing their ability to attract potential investors or apply for commercial funding.

Corporate procurement was addressed by reviewing key impediments such as accreditation and shelf-life testing of food and drink products. IHL facilitated consultancy with experts at London South Bank University where participants benefited from services such as onsite guidance to support applications for required processing accreditations and shelf-life testing required by larger scale corporate buyers. This was reported as highly valuable as often these services are a financial stretch beyond reasonable limits for small businesses.

Founder resilience was revealed as a key factor with participants reporting a lack of confidence in their entrepreneurial skills. The bespoke workshop with Q&A was delivered as a peer session with the support of experienced alumni who have experienced scale and adversity. Participants reported that listening to established peers revealing their own vulnerabilities was helpful to them in their own journey.

A second peer workshop was delivered in conjunction with IH Berlin and hosted 15 entrepreneurs. All participants were at different stages and separated logistically by country and region, but nevertheless found many commonalities and shared ideas to brainstorm possible solutions to their key challenges.



#### We Are Spirits

Our selection of spirits are mindfully distilled, infused with ingenuity. Each bottle is brimming with passion and diligence which can't be found in large brands.



#### Angry Monk

Fight climate change and become a more sustainable business by rescuing surplus and irregular produce to use in your kitchens!





Further support was garnered by attending The City of Amsterdam trade delegation with the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with SME's from The Netherlands. This provided a platform to share challenges experienced across the import/export sector and opened introductions to trade experts who could provide useful insight into manufacturing and logistics systems, shining a light on touch points and solutions. Developing a deeper understanding of manufacturing processing in the Netherlands, has opened opportunities for participants to explore larger scale European processing and export.

Leading from the initial introduction to import/export was a subsequent **workshop delivered by logistics experts Maersk Copenhagen**. As an industry leader with the ambition to decarbonise global logistics, Maersk ran a bespoke session to provide practical advice to help participants solve their supply chain challenges and navigate what is a complex introduction to shipping for new entrants to the international marketplace with time for a deeper Q&A into specific challenges to each enterprise.

**Participants received 19 hours of workshops** - Qualitative data gathered from participant self-reporting demonstrated that all felt their skills and commercial competencies had improved along with entrepreneurial confidence following the workshops and interaction with expert mentors. Topics included:

 **Branding & marketing**

 **Export & logistics**

 **Contract review**

 **Pitching & partnerships**

 **Funding awareness**

 **Circularity**

## **PROGRAMME OUTCOMES**

Although 28% of participants have sold their products in corporate retailers, all reported that they felt disadvantaged in their ability to seek and develop relationships with procurement teams - a bespoke workshop was held with the Corporate Procurement team for the Cooperative Group. This afforded the cohort the opportunity to improve their understanding of the procurement process and to make themselves known and later pitch their business to the Cooperative Apiary programme which supports new entrants to large scale retail procurement.

**FTCA also promotes alumni connection.** Better Nature Food, alumnus of 2020 delivered a peer workshop and invaluable advice based on their own fundraising experience raising over £3million of investment and how they achieved this.



## PROGRAMME IMPACT

The 2022 iteration of FTCA has enabled IHL to strengthen our position within the ethical food space and increase our visibility. This has led to strengthened existing connections across our network with new partnerships which in turn has supported programme recruitment across the organisation as a whole. The mission statement of IHL is to promote inclusion, diversity and climate positivity within all programmes and strong branding supports not only programmes, but educational activity such as panel discussions, hackathons and public speaking to promote positive change across business and industry.

**A key benefit to FTCA 2022 was partnering with ReLondon and insight from Ellen MacArthur Foundation** to deliver practical circularity workshops which has translated into practical roadmaps both for participants and new ideas for future workshops across IHL organisation. Benefits included:

**Access to 1:1 mentoring from sector and topic specific consultants.** This has enabled participants to focus on their challenges with greater precision and reap more benefit from the process. Participants are time-poor and 100% self-reported the benefits of a flexible and tailored programme to help build depth of knowledge, notably sales and branding. Alongside mentoring, partners were able to supply useful consumer behaviour data to support learning.

**Circularity practices:** Deeper understanding of their business challenges and clarity around the steps that are needed to strengthen enterprise value proposition and embed greater sustainability. All participants reported that they had not considered many practical aspects of circular economy practices that could strengthen their business model in lockstep with cost-efficiencies. Workshops and peer sessions afforded the opportunity to increase awareness and learn practical strategies.

**Access to network partners:** 5/7 enterprises benefited directly from collaboration with LAFIC to provide expertise that prior to FTCA would have been beyond their financial resources. For example, Angry Monk were able to access SALSA certification guidance from London Agri-Food Innovation Clinic (LAFIC) which enabled them to seek the required accreditation to bid for larger scale corporate catering contracts. Herby Box (specialist teas) were able to access a student team conducting supervised testing to test product claims through gut biome testing.

**Access to markets:** one enterprise, Kay Tea, had pitched Co-Op group, but had not had traction. Through participation in FTCA and attending the procurement workshop, they were able to establish routes for connection and later re-invited to apply for the Co-Op Apiary Programme to support emerging brands in a national retail rollout.



**Peer and Alumni connection:** when asked if the programme enabled them to make useful contacts, participants self-reported that they had benefited from the peer sessions and alumni connection. Notably, a peer session with [Better Nature Tempeh](#), provided valuable insight into their fundraising and investment experience.. 5/7 participants reported that the workshop supported greater understanding.

## KEY LEARNINGS

**Feeding the City has delivered 5 UK iterations since 2017** and this has enabled longitudinal evaluation of the programme impact year on year to feed greater insight.

**Partner collaboration for recruitment and outreach:** Establishing and working with partners across the ecosystem from third sector, corporate, private and local government, has increased the programme reach to attract a diverse pool of London based ethical food and drink entrepreneurs and strengthened network connections.

**Focus on entrepreneur resilience:** Scaling a business during unpredictable economic conditions is challenging for entrepreneurs both personally and professionally, so we provided space to develop the building blocks of resilience and confidence through the programme. These skills are not frequently thought of as a priority, but participants self-reported that the workshop was invaluable in understanding that there are shared commonalities across all businesses.

**Create opportunities for peer learning and alumni connection:** Participants with established businesses come from diverse professional backgrounds and are at different stages in their journey to scale. Peer workshops supported the group to bond and forge deeper connections with alumni, enabling them to develop their network and tap into guidance from more established peers.

**Stronger alumni community:** Alumni involvement provides invaluable insights/feedback into the programme, and enables us to strengthen our alumni community and continue to develop the relationship and continue to provide value to enterprises once they have completed the programme.

**Flexibility:** Entrepreneurs are typically time-poor and find it difficult to juggle programme requirements with the needs of their businesses and families. Allocating practical time for personal Q&A or activities within the workshop structure has proved an important element of delivery along with flexible consultancy hours to maximise support.



**Geolocation:** Mentors reported that it was beneficial to visit their mentee's site and gain a better understanding of their challenges. FTCA was delivered to London based businesses so this provided excellent opportunities to maximise connection in-person workshops, peer sessions and for participants to attend other programme events, including the Christmas market.

**Reinforcement of goals and objectives as key programme milestones:** The diagnostics were self-reported to be extremely valuable opportunities for participants to reflect and evaluate their enterprise challenges. The objectives incentivised the participants to take a more structured and analytical approach to their development goals and provided measurable outcomes.

The most pertinent evaluation from FTCA 2022 was that embedding flexibility into consultancy and scheduling enhanced the programme, enabling participants and mentors to take a more holistic approach to their relationship and maximise opportunities to improve participant outcomes.