AI For Future 2026: WMF Connects Investors, Founders and AI Experts from Europe, the U.S. and Asia in San Francisco

The second edition of AI For Future, WMF's Silicon Valley event, brought together 250 attendees, including institutional representatives, investors, corporations, founders and startups from Europe, the United States and Asia. "Beyond the Game," the new WMF Sports Innovation Track set to debut at WMF 2027, was also announced. TerraSpark, Salute360 and MON5 took the top three spots in the AI 4 Future Startup Competition, gaining access to new international opportunities across the WMF global network.

November 13th, Bologna, Italy

The second edition of AI For Future – **The WMF Event in Silicon Valley** concluded in San Francisco, marking another international milestone for WMF – **We Make Future** and **Search On Media Group** in their work to connect innovation ecosystems, capital, companies, startups and institutions across different markets and continents.

Held on November 5 at **Mind The Bridge**, the event brought together **250 founders, investors, venture capitalists, corporate leaders, AI experts and institutional representatives** for an evening focused on Artificial Intelligence, its applications and emerging opportunities across global markets. The international audience included startups, companies and organizations from the **United States, South Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Luxembourg, San Marino and Italy**, further establishing AI For Future as a meeting point for U.S., European and Asian innovation ecosystems.

Alongside the on-stage content, the event placed a strong emphasis on **business networking and B2B meetings** among startups, corporations, investors and institutions. As part of this effort, sponsor **Five Degrees** provided AI agents designed to match participants' needs and opportunities, extending potential connections beyond the event itself.

AI For Future was held with the support of **ITA – Italian Trade Agency** and the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)**. Event partners included **San Marino Innovation, POLIMI School of Management and the Digital Innovation Observatories of Politecnico di Milano**, while **Five Degrees** and **Durana Tech Park** served as sponsors.

Connecting Italy and Silicon Valley

Opening the event, hosted by journalist and presenter **Veronica Maffei**, were institutional remarks from **Leonardo Nasi, Vice Consul – Economic Attaché at the Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco**, and an address by **Giosafat Riganò, Trade Commissioner, Italian Trade Agency – Los Angeles**.

> *"Silicon Valley is the natural place for this conversation,"* said **Leonardo Nasi**. *"But today, the real challenge is no longer simply developing new technologies. It is turning innovation into real-world applications, scaling solutions and attracting investment."*

Addressing WMF's role as a global platform connecting innovation ecosystems, **Cosmano Lombardo, Founder and CEO of Search On Media Group and creator of WMF – We Make Future**, said: *"What we are building is a large ecosystem of startups and open innovation players. These are bridges that start in Italy and connect to the global market: this event is an opportunity to bring together startups, people and entrepreneurs who are using AI to build a different future."*

The discussion on the evolution of Artificial Intelligence also featured a conversation between **Cosmano Lombardo and Jerry Kaplan**, Silicon Valley entrepreneur and AI expert.

> *"I'm not prone to hyperbole, but I believe generative artificial intelligence may turn out to be the single most important innovation in human history,"* said **Jerry Kaplan**. Addressing the founders in the room, he also shared a message about the opportunities created by the current technology landscape: *"There is always opportunity. Don't be discouraged: today, starting a company doesn't require the kind of capital I needed."*

Representing **Mind The Bridge**, **Andrea Sguazzi, Managing Director North America**, also joined the discussion, while **Alberto Acito, Managing Director of INNOVIT**, addressed the relationship between the Italian innovation system and Silicon Valley and the importance of creating a two-way exchange between the two ecosystems. Areas where Italy and Europe can contribute to the U.S. market include **Physical AI, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and dual-use technologies**; for European startups entering the U.S., validating the market before raising capital remains a critical step.

AI, Investment and New Markets

A key part of the program was the panel ***"Beyond the AI Hype: Who Will Build, Fund, and Own the Future?"***, featuring **Alicia Hanf, LG NOVA – LG Electronics; Angelo Del Priore, HP Tech Ventures; Jeffrey Abbott, Founder of AI Salon and co-author of *AI and the Art of Being Human*; and Jazz Samra, Nium**.

The discussion examined the forces reshaping the **development, financing and competitiveness of emerging AI companies**, the continuing importance of human oversight in technology adoption, and what investors and corporations are looking for in projects capable of turning innovation into real-world market applications.

The European AI ecosystem and adoption trends were also addressed by **Alessandro Piva, Director of the European Digital Tech Watch (EDTW) at Politecnico di Milano**.

"Beyond the Game": WMF Sports Innovation Track Announced

Among the announcements made in San Francisco was **"Beyond the Game,"** the new **WMF Sports Innovation Track**, introduced by **Alicia Hanf** together with Cosmano Lombardo. The new initiative will debut at **WMF – We Make Future 2027**, taking place **June 10–12 at BolognaFiere in Bologna, Italy**, bringing together **sports, Artificial Intelligence, technology and entrepreneurship** across areas ranging from health and longevity to SportsTech and the business of sports.

The event also featured a focus on Albania through sponsor **Durana Tech Park**. **Chloe Jones, Business Development Expert at Durana Tech Park**, presented the country's first science and technology park: a **126-hectare campus located between Tirana and Durrës**, developed as a special economic zone and already home to **more than 85 resident companies, 52% of them international**.

AI 4 Future Startup Competition: TerraSpark, Salute360 and MON5 Take the Podium

The **AI 4 Future Startup Competition** brought **9 startups** to the San Francisco stage: **Daidalos, Mulan AI, Salute360, Prodigy, Handy Signs, MON5, TerraSpark, Nuhpro and Vertalis**.

TerraSpark took **first place**. The Luxembourg-based company develops commercial space-based solar power systems and had already won the WMF 2026 Startup Competition, as well as being selected for the final stage of the Startup World Cup.

Salute360 placed **second**. The digital health platform integrates the full patient care journey and already serves 200,000 users and 8,000 healthcare professionals. **MON5**, a cybersecurity platform focused on industrial environments and critical infrastructure, took **third place**.

The three winners will gain access to **exhibition opportunities across WMF's major international events in 2027**, including **AI Festival in Milan, Italy; WMF – We Make Future in Bologna, Italy; and Saudi Makes Future in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**, along with dedicated meetings with venture capital funds from the WMF network.

All nine selected startups will also have the opportunity to pitch at **WMF – We Make Future 2027**, taking place **June 10–12 at BolognaFiere in Bologna, Italy**, while the other finalists will gain additional opportunities to participate in the Startup District.

The WMF International Roadshow Continues from San Francisco

The second edition of AI For Future marks another stop on the WMF International Roadshow, the initiative that since 2021 has taken the WMF network to leading international innovation ecosystems to connect markets, expertise, companies, startups, capital and institutions.

Following San Francisco, the Roadshow continues on **November 17 in Bengaluru, India**, during the **Bengaluru Tech Summit**, and on **November 19 in Thessaloniki, Greece**, for the sixth edition of the Greek stop.

In 2027, the Roadshow returns to the United States for **CES in Las Vegas, January 6–9**, before continuing to **Barcelona on April 9** and **Tallinn on May 20**. These international stops lead toward **WMF – We Make Future 2027**, taking place **June 10–12 at BolognaFiere in Bologna, Italy**, where ecosystems and projects developed across the international Roadshow come together at WMF's Main Event. The network is also expanding further into the Middle East with **Saudi Makes Future**, scheduled for **November 14–16, 2027, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**, further strengthening connections across Europe, the United States, Asia and the Gulf markets.

The second edition of **AI For Future** further consolidates WMF's presence in Silicon Valley and strengthens the international path developed through the **WMF International Roadshow**, which continues across Europe, Asia, the United States and the Middle East toward **WMF – We Make Future 2027**, taking place **June 10–12 at BolognaFiere in Bologna, Italy**.

The initiative continues to connect **institutions, companies, startups, investors and international expertise**, creating new opportunities for collaboration and development across global innovation ecosystems.

Useful Links

- AI For Future San Francisco
- WMF – We Make Future

WMF - We Make Future,is the largest International Trade Fair and Festival dedicated to Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Digital Innovation.
From June 10 to 12, 2027, WMF returns to BolognaFiere (Italy) as a certified international event fully focused on the future of innovation. A global hub for the AI and tech ecosystem, WMF brings together each year the most advanced developments in artificial intelligence, digital and social innovation, alongside leading international companies, startups, scaleups, investors, institutions, universities, and non-profit organizations. With over 75,000 attendees from 90 countries in 2026, more than 800 exhibitors, 1,000+ speakers and guests from around the world, 3,000+ organized B2B meetings, and 3,000 startups and investors involved, WMF represents a unique convergence point for innovation-driven business and policy dialogue.
Its partner network includes organizations managing a combined €1.5 trillion investment portfolio, €304+ billion in assets under management (AUM), $72.8+ billion in funded transactions, and over 17,000 investment rounds, positioning WMF as a global benchmark event for the innovation economy.

Saudi Makes Future – The Largest AI Exhibition in the Middle East
Saudi Makes Future is the Saudi edition of WMF – We Make Future, a certified international trade fair and global platform for innovation, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies. Developed through the collaboration between Search On Media Group, WMF – We Make Future, and PNG Saudi, the event will take place in 2027, in Riyadh. Building on WMF's vision, experience, and thematic architecture, Saudi Makes Future adapts the format to a strong AI-driven focus, structured across 14 strategic sectors exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on business, industry, society, and institutions. Aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, the event positions itself as an international platform for dialogue, cooperation, and development, designed for companies, startups, investors, and stakeholders seeking new opportunities for growth, training, and innovation in the Middle East and on a global scale.

Search On Media Group - Humans Leading Innovation Founded in 2004, Search On Media Group works to advance digital culture and innovation by managing professional communities, supporting knowledge-sharing initiatives, and delivering strategic and operational consulting through its Search On Consulting division, specializing in Digital Marketing and Digital Transformation for large organizations. From the expertise of Search On Media Group stem both the Event Agency Business Unit—responsible for organizing WMF and other proprietary and client events—and Hybrid.io, a flexible and customizable platform designed to manage online, hybrid, and on-site events.

Per informazioni e materiale
Search On Media Group SRL
Via Ugo Bassi 7, 40121 Bologna (BO), Italy
Press Office: press@wemakefuture.it
Tel: +39 051 0951294
en.wemakefuture.it