

The call for the International Startup Competition of WMF is now open: startups from around the world will arrive in Bologna

The Startup Competition of WMF - We Make Future, one of the largest globally, is back. For its 12th edition, it will bring the best projects from around the world to the Mainstage of the International Trade Fair on Tech and Digital Innovation, for a discussion on the 12 challenges of the future and a prize pool that reached a value of over 2 million euros in previous editions. The competition is the centerpiece of the World Startup Fest, an internationally recognized event for startups, scaleups, and investors organized within WMF, featuring a rich program of business and networking events dedicated to the world of innovative entrepreneurship.

Bologna, January 23, 2024

The call to participate in the **12th edition of the [Startup Competition of WMF - We Make Future](#)**, International Trade Fair and Festival on Tech and Digital Innovation scheduled for **June 13, 14, and 15** at the new location **BolognaFiere**, is **officially open**. The Startup Competition, among the largest international startup competitions, has awarded a total prize pool of over 2 million euros in previous edition, receiving startup **applications from 5 continents**.

The call is open to Italian and foreign startups and companies composed of teams with innovative projects or ideas in the technological and digital sector. A particular **focus** will be on projects capable of generating a **positive impact on society and the environment**, with attention to **Artificial Intelligence applications**. The applying startups have the opportunity to indicate how their business idea can contribute to addressing one or more of the **12 future challenges identified by WMF**, ranging from the future of *Cities & Communities to Learning & Education*, including themes such as *Health, Work, Culture & Travel, Food & Agriculture, Retail & Customer Experience, Marketing, Media & Entertainment, Sport & Events, Finance & Insurance*, and finally, *Life On Planet Earth*. In the application, startups can also specify their contribution to one or more of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals from the UN's 2030 Agenda**.

*"The Startup Competition, which has been a launchpad for projects that have later achieved scaleup status over these 12 years, continues to be an aggregator of excellence in the international innovative entrepreneurship landscape," says **Cosmano Lombardo**, Founder and CEO of Search On Media Group and creator of WMF. "Our goal has always been to provide a tool for visibility, connection, and growth for innovative projects capable of positively impacting the construction of a sustainable and inclusive future through digital technologies," he continues. "Through the Competition, startups access our international network, creating connections with Open Innovation stakeholders from around the world, investors, investment funds, incubators, and accelerators, making WMF an essential event, year after year, to connect with new innovative entrepreneurial entities and establish fruitful business synergies."*

The WMF network is continuously expanding, with the active work of the **WMF International Roadshow**, a global digital cooperation project that, since 2021, connects innovative ecosystems from countries such as **Germany, Greece, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Egypt**,

Albania, Spain, China, Hong Kong, and the United States with the Italian ecosystem, creating a rich flow of business opportunities.

The jury of the Startup Competition in previous editions included Pegasus Tech Venture, Unicredit Startlab, Seraphim Space Ventures, CRIF, Hubspot for Startups, Amazon for Startups, Digital Magics, LVenture, P101, United Venture, EuraTechnologies, UnipoSAI, Poste Italiane, Würth Elektronik, Alior Bank, NTT Global, Google, Accenture, Engineering, GSD Venture Studio, Wayra by Telefonica, Invitalia, and many others.

The call for the 12th edition of the Startup Competition is open until April 11, 2024.

Opportunities and prizes

The final phase of the Startup Competition will take place during the three-day event, featuring the **pitch competition on the Mainstage of WMF** where the 6 selected finalist startups will compete in front of a **jury consisting of venture capitalists, investors, investment funds, innovation ecosystem players**, as well as the audience of WMF and those connected via live streaming worldwide. The previous edition of WMF saw over **60.000 attendees from 89 countries**, with **more than 3.000 startups, investors, incubators, VCs, Business Angels, corporations, and international accelerators**.

At the end of the voting, the winning startups of the **Jury Prize** and the **Audience Prize** offered by the competition partners. By applying to the Startup Competition, startups gain access to other opportunities reserved for the **WMF network**, including the possibility of accompanying WMF on its **international Roadshow**, organizing **B2B meetings** with international companies and investors, creating strategic connections globally, and benefiting from advantages to present with a dedicated desk in the **Startup District**, the expo district that welcomes startups from around the world. An integral part of this experience is the chance to present their project on the Startup Stage, the dedicated stage for presenting innovative projects that featured over 36 international startups in the previous edition.

The first edition of WMF in Bologna

WMF confirms its international outlook with the new feature of the 12th edition of the event: its **first edition in the city of Bologna in 2024**, which will take place at the **BolognaFiere**. This choice, strongly supported by WMF partners, aims to promote international exchanges, making the event, already a **Certified International Fair**, along with the city of Bologna, a key hub for the world of innovation and a meeting point for numerous countries. The Emilian capital offers not only a privileged geographical position but also fertile ground for the growth of the WMF ecosystem and all the players moving within its network. Thanks to the presence of established entities such as **CINECA** and **Tecnopolo**, startups, and players active in the field of digital tech, such as automotive, supercomputing, and artificial intelligence, **Bologna is the ideal enabler of innovation**. WMF in Bologna reflects the **global vision of the event** and the desire to create increasingly meaningful connections on the international stage, positioning itself as a global platform for building the future through innovative entrepreneurship and international collaborations, fostering a stimulating and conducive environment for

collaboration in the field of innovative entrepreneurship in terms of ideas, network, and business.

Useful links:

[WMF - We Make Future](#)

[Startup Competition](#)

[World Startup Fest](#)

WMF - International Fair and Festival on Technological and Digital Innovation

On June 13 - 14 - 15, 2024, at BolognaFiere, WMF - We Make Future, a certified international fair entirely dedicated to the world of innovation, returns. A globally recognized event, it annually brings together the best in digital and social innovation, key international players, startups, scaleups, investors, institutions, universities, and non-profit organizations. With over 60,000 attendees from 89 countries, over 1.000 speakers and guests from around the world, 3.000 startups and investors, and over 100 stages in 2023, now in its 12th edition, WMF is the international reference fair for the world of innovation. The event is conceived and produced by Search On Media Group.

Search On Media Group

Established in 2004, has been dedicated to promoting digital culture by managing communities, supporting sharing activities, and providing strategic and operational consulting through its Search On Consulting department in the Digital Marketing and Digital Transformation sector for large enterprises. Building on the experience and professionalism of Search On Media Group, the company has expanded to include the Business Unit Education, which organizes events such as WMF and other educational programs, and the ibrida.io platform. Ibrida.io specializes in managing customizable and flexible online, hybrid, and offline events.

For further information and materials

You can contact the WMF Press Office at press@wemakefuture.it or by phone at 0039 051 0951294.

