



WMF 2026 International Startup Competition: Winners Recognized for Building the Future of Energy, AI, Industry, and Social Impact

TerraSpark, MaestroHub, Brainfood Intelligent Media Cloud, and WealthRyse receive the competition's top awards, with a special mention for Lishe360. From space-based clean energy technologies to AI applied to industry, media, and finance, WMF's Mainstage showcased the startups shaping the next frontiers of global innovation.

Bologna, Italy, June 25, 2026

TerraSpark, MaestroHub, Brainfood Intelligent Media Cloud, and WealthRyse have been named the winners of the **WMF International Startup Competition 2026**, one of the world's leading startup competitions, which each year brings the most innovative companies from the global ecosystem to the WMF Mainstage.

The final event, hosted within the **World Startup & VC Fest**—WMF's dedicated area for startups, scaleups, investors, corporations, and open innovation stakeholders—brought together startups from different countries and regions, competing in front of an audience of investors, companies, institutions, and innovation professionals.

The **Jury Award** was presented to **TerraSpark**, a Luxembourg-based startup developing **commercial space-based solar energy solutions** designed to provide clean, continuous energy independent from terrestrial conditions. The project aims to leverage space infrastructure to improve energy resilience, with the launch of its orbital technology demonstrator planned for 2027 and the first space-to-Earth energy transmission expected in 2028.

The **Audience Award**, selected by the WMF community, went to **MaestroHub**, a German startup addressing one of the key challenges facing modern industry: transforming factory data into a strategic asset for AI, automation, and real-time decision-making. Through a **Data Infrastructure as a Service** platform based on the Unified Namespace model, MaestroHub connects industrial machinery, MES systems, ERP platforms, and sensors, creating a more integrated and scalable data infrastructure for manufacturing.

The **Global Impact Challenge Award** was awarded to **Brainfood Intelligent Media Cloud**, a Greek company developing an **AI-native infrastructure for digital publishing**, designed to unify content creation, distribution, and monetization within a single operational environment.

The **Saudi Makes Future Award** was presented to **WealthRyse**, a Hong Kong-based startup developing **Genisys**, an AI-powered investment engine designed to automate portfolio construction, risk management, compliance, and financial reporting. The solution aims to transform wealth management through real-time analytics and more scalable, personalized investment processes.

The **Global Impact Challenge Special Mention** was awarded to **Lishe360**, a Tanzanian startup focused on producing healthy and accessible nutrition solutions for children under five and mothers, while integrating caregiver digital education and local supply chains. The company's



model has already generated a positive impact on more than **150,000 lives**, combining entrepreneurial innovation with social development.

A Showcase of the Technologies Transforming the Future

The finalist startups of the **WMF International Startup Competition 2026** represent some of the most relevant trajectories shaping global innovation: from the integration of AI into industrial infrastructures and decision-making processes to the new frontier of space-based energy, from the transformation of digital media to algorithmic finance, and from social impact models applied to health and nutrition. The Competition has established itself not only as a startup challenge, but also as a strategic observatory on the industries set to redefine the relationship between technology, economy, and society. The selected startups represent a bridge between technological innovation, market opportunities, and sustainable development, demonstrating how deep tech, artificial intelligence, sustainability, and impact-driven approaches can converge to create new entrepreneurial models.

Startups, Capital, and Innovation: WMF's Role in the Global Ecosystem

The **WMF International Startup Competition** is one of the key initiatives within the **World Startup & VC Fest**, WMF's program dedicated to connecting startups, investors, corporations, research organizations, and industry leaders.

In 2026, **140 startups were selected** to participate in pitching sessions, networking activities, and meetings with an international network of investors and innovation stakeholders active across Europe, North America, and Asia. This ecosystem provides a pipeline of opportunities supporting startups throughout their entire growth journey, from **pre-seed to scale-up**.

The final event further confirmed WMF's role as a global meeting point where ideas, technologies, and capital come together to accelerate the solutions that will help shape the future.

WMF – We Make Future is conceived, produced, and organized by Search On Media Group. The event is held under the patronage of the European Commission, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the Emilia-Romagna Region, and the City of Bologna. WMF is supported by MAECI, the Italian Trade Agency (ITA), and the Emilia-Romagna Region, in partnership with Visit Emilia-Romagna, and in collaboration with BolognaFiere, CINECA, and the European Space Agency (ESA). The 2026 Main Sponsors are Philip Morris, Dell Technologies, and Intel.

WMF - We Make Future, is the largest International Trade Fair and Festival dedicated to Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Digital Innovation.

From June 24 to 26, 2026, 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 73,000 attendees from 90 countries in 2025, more than 700 exhibitors, 1,000+ speakers and guests from around the world, 2,800+ 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 December 14–16, 2026, in Riyadh at the Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Center. 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

#WMF2026 | International Trade Fair and Festival on Innovation: AI, Tech and Digital.

POWERED BY



WITH THE SUPPORT OF



UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF



SCIENTIFIC PARTNERS

