



## WMF at CES Las Vegas: from AI to startups, bridging three continents

*From CES Las Vegas, WMF announces new international initiatives spanning the United States, the Middle East, and Italy, unlocking new business and investment opportunities. The focus now moves to Bologna, where WMF - We Make Future will take place June 24-26, 2026, in Bologna, Italy.*

**Bologna, January 16, 2025**

New business opportunities and a strengthened strategic presence in global markets are at the core of **WMF - We Make Future's** participation in **CES Las Vegas**, the world's leading event for emerging technologies. Hosted within the **Italy Pavilion**, WMF took part in the institutional mission coordinated by the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)** and the **ITA - Italian Trade Agency**, reinforcing its international positioning and its role as a **B2B platform connecting companies, founders, and investors across global innovation ecosystems**.

### WMF's presence at CES: three key moments

WMF - We Make Future led three flagship moments during CES:

- the presentation of the **next edition of WMF**, scheduled for **June 24-26, 2026, at BolognaFiere**;
- the **international preview of Saudi Makes Future**, the new AI-focused exhibition marking WMF's expansion into the Middle East;
- the **award ceremony for the winning startups** of WMF's international competitions, with total prizes exceeding **€20,000**.

During a roundtable discussion, **Cosmano Lombardo**, Founder and CEO of **Search On Media Group** and creator of WMF, **Alicia Hanf**, Head of Institutional Ecosystem Partnerships at **LG NOVA** and WMF Brand Ambassador, and **Stefano Natali**, Co-Founder of **MEEO srl** and representative of **Clust-ER Innovate - Emilia-Romagna Region**, confirmed the **14 strategic sectors** that will once again shape WMF 2026.

These sectors—ranging from **artificial intelligence and robotics** to the **space economy, digital business, smart cities, sustainability, and open innovation**—reaffirm WMF's long-standing architecture as a **platform for dialogue, business, and collaboration** involving companies, startups, investors, institutions, and research organizations from around the world.

### First confirmations for WMF 2026

The CES stage also offered a first preview of what to expect in Bologna this June. Early confirmations include sponsors and exhibitors such as **Credem, Alten, Openapi, Dell**



Technologies, Intel, and the European Space Agency (ESA), as well as international delegations from Albania, Greece, and Belgium.

Also confirmed is the first official **WMF 2026 side event**: the **Institutional Dinner at the Bologna Technopole**, home to **CINECA** and the **Leonardo supercomputer**. Following the success of last year's edition, the dinner will once again bring together international venture capital firms and investment funds, including past participants such as **NVIDIA, SoftBank, and Yamaha**.

*"Today, innovation is a strategic driver of global competitiveness,"* said **Cosmano Lombardo**, Founder and CEO of Search On Media Group and creator of WMF. *"With WMF, we work to build an ecosystem that connects research, companies, and capital, fostering the development of sustainable technologies and long-term business models. CES was the ideal international stage to highlight excellence stories like that of **Daniele Pucci**, founder of Generative Bionics and long-time WMF speaker, who embodies how advanced research can translate into concrete, socially valuable applications. His contribution will continue at WMF 2026, where he will once again take the stage."*

## From CES to a global startup program

CES Las Vegas also served as the launchpad for a broader **international growth pathway** designed to support startups and companies as they move toward upcoming WMF initiatives.

The startup award ceremony—recognizing **Ginga, Rea Space, Aida Innovazione, IntelligEarth, Volumio, Myndoor, Prodigy Products, Audioboost, and Beep**—marked the start of a structured **Startup Program** aimed at facilitating access to strategic markets and creating new opportunities for engagement with investors, corporates, and institutions.

The program will continue with the **second edition of "AI For Future"**, scheduled for **March 18 in San Francisco**, a key milestone focused on the U.S. ecosystem, venture capital, and deep-tech innovation. Selected startups will then take part in **WMF - We Make Future in Bologna (June 24-26, 2026)**, before concluding the journey with **Saudi Makes Future**, the new AI-oriented exhibition organized in partnership with **PNG Saudi**, taking place in **Riyadh from December 14-16, 2026**.

## A three-continent innovation pathway

Starting from CES Las Vegas, this international roadmap unfolds across **three strategic regions - North America, Europe, and the Middle East**—offering participating companies and startups a concrete support program focused on **business development, investment opportunities, and global collaboration**.

**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](mailto:press@wemakefuture.it)  
Tel: +39 051 0951294  
[en.wemakefuture.it](http://en.wemakefuture.it)

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

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