



## BEX brings 25 startups to the open innovation district, with data processed in orbit, extreme materials and autonomous systems

- 25 startups selected through an international call, 22 Italian from ten regions and 3 international
- Three pitch sessions presented by ESA BIC Torino, the incubation program run by I3P with support from Politecnico di Torino and Fondazione LINKS
- The Open Innovation District is delivered with EY as Main Sponsor, alongside contributions from ASI, ESA BIC Turin, Plug and Play, Primo Space, I3P, IIT, Fondazione MAI, ANGI, ART-ER and Tecnopolo Forlì-Cesena
- Wednesday, September 23: awards ceremony for the projects with the highest innovation content, one per exhibition sector
- Friday, September 25: the Stati Generali della Space Economy session dedicated to startups, microenterprises and incubators

Rimini, September 21, 2026 - BEX, Beyond Exploration Expo, opens at Rimini Expo Centre. The expo-conference, organized by Italian Exhibition Group, is dedicated to the convergence between the space economy and terrestrial industries. Among the features defining this first edition is the Open Innovation District, the area bringing together startups, innovative SMEs and emerging technologies, with a focus on dual-use applications and solutions capable of generating value both in the space sector and in terrestrial supply chains.

EY serves as Main Sponsor of the Open Innovation District, joining BEX on its path toward innovation and the connection between new technologies, businesses and the market.

The project is also backed by a strong network of partners from the innovation and space economy ecosystem: Primo Space (Primo Ventures SGR), ASI (Agenzia Spaziale Italiana), Plug and Play, ESA BIC Turin, I3P (Politecnico di Torino's innovative business incubator), ART-ER, IIT (Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia), Fondazione MAI, ANGI (Associazione Nazionale Giovani Innovatori) and Tecnopolo Forlì-Cesena. It's a network of complementary skills that brings together incubation and acceleration, research, capital and representation of the business community.

The area brings together startups, innovative SMEs and emerging technologies, with a focus on dual-use applications and solutions capable of generating value both in the space sector and in terrestrial supply chains.

The companies taking part were identified through an international call that selected 25 startups, 22 of them Italian and 3 international, coming from Austria, Sweden and Portugal. The Italian companies come from ten regions: Emilia-Romagna, Puglia, Veneto, Campania, Lombardia, Lazio, Piemonte, Marche, Toscana and Calabria. Each has its own exhibition space within the area, spread across BEX's four exhibition sectors, with seven projects in new space economy and in-orbit operations, seven in applications and services built on satellite data, five in upstream industry and infrastructure, and six in autonomous multidomain systems.

## WHAT THEY'RE BRINGING TO RIMINI

The selected projects, chosen by a dedicated evaluation committee, reflect just how broad space-related innovation has become, from artificial intelligence processed directly in orbit to new propulsion systems, from advanced materials to space agriculture, all the way to Earth observation, autonomous robotics and air mobility.

On the computing and data side, **Astradyne** is working on computing infrastructure and data centers in orbit, aiming to move part of the computational capacity that AI requires into space by tapping into the availability of solar power. **LeoTrek AI** brings AI processing on board to handle Earth observation data close to the point where it's captured, cutting the lag between observation and decision in time-critical applications like fire monitoring. **Motus ml** develops lightweight AI models designed to run directly on satellites, while **Dymension Systems**, backed by ESA BIC Brindisi, offers a systems engineering platform that links requirements, architectures and verification in a single knowledge graph. Rounding out the group is **4OPT**, a spin-off of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, with decision-support systems for planning, logistics and mission operations.

In Earth observation and monitoring, **Green Urbansights** uses satellite data and geospatial analysis to measure vegetation, heat exposure and green infrastructure in support of urban planning. **Stratobotic** is developing a stratospheric platform designed to offer observation capabilities that complement satellites and drones. **SoundSat** combines underwater acoustic sensors, AIS, ground-based radar and satellite imagery to detect illegal maritime activity and vessels that are hard to pick up with traditional tracking systems. **Y Digital** applies sensor technology, edge computing and artificial intelligence to the continuous monitoring of assets and infrastructure.

On the components and materials side, **2NDSpace** develops platforms and hardware for CubeSats and nanosatellites, with more than fifty systems currently in orbit by its account. **SpaceGlass**, together with Martin Materials Solutions, manufactures coverglass to protect solar cells from radiation, as well as mirrors for thermal control of onboard electronics. **K3RX**, a CNR spin-off, works on ceramic matrix composites designed to withstand temperatures above 2,000 degrees, with applications in thermal protection and in hypersonic and reentry vehicles. **OhmSpace** develops electric propulsion systems for nano and microsatellites that use water as propellant. **Micro-Y** builds sensing capability directly into surfaces and structural components, turning micrometeoroid impacts and structural changes into data on the vehicle's

condition. **Theia Sense** monitors deformation and anomalies in spacecraft using fiber-optic sensors, while **SpaceMotionery**, a Politecnico di Torino spin-off, offers modular equipment for testing and validating CubeSats.

Among autonomous systems, **Rafla** integrates drones, ground vehicles and docking stations into a robotic ecosystem capable of running continuous inspections without human intervention. **ABzero** develops autonomous drone-based systems for transporting blood, blood products and biomedical material. **SUPAIR**, also a Politecnico di Torino spin-off, is working on a long-range autonomous VTOL aircraft for monitoring pipelines, railways and power grids. **Intuos** collects and analyzes aircraft data for fleet safety and predictive maintenance.

The area of human life in orbit is represented by **REA Space**, which develops wearable technology for astronauts, including an intravehicular suit for muscle monitoring and stimulation, tested in orbit during the 2024 Axiom-3 mission. On the food side, **PlantBit**, a spin-off of CNR research, has built a biosensor placed inside a plant's stem that tracks its physiological parameters through the sap; **SPROWER** offers a technology for producing stabilized sprouted seeds using very little water; and **Bruno Cell** specializes in cultivated meat, with proprietary processes aimed at making cell proliferation economically viable. **Atlas Carbon Neutral Solution** rounds out the group with digital tools that make companies' sustainability performance measurable and verifiable.

## THE PITCH SESSIONS

The Pitch Arena stage hosts three dedicated sessions, presented by ESA BIC Torino, the incubation program that supports startups working on technology-driven projects for both upstream and downstream applications. The program is run by I3P, Politecnico di Torino's innovative business incubator, with scientific and technological support from Politecnico di Torino and Fondazione LINKS, and offers financial incentives, strategic consulting and access to a network of industrial, financial and scientific partners.

The first session takes place Thursday, September 24, at 10:00 AM with 4OPT, Bruno Cell, LeoTrek AI, Micro-Y, REA Space, SPROWER and Theia Sense. The second runs Thursday at 2:00 PM with Atlas Carbon, Dymension Systems, Green Urbansights, OhmSpace, K3RX, Intuos, Motus ml and SoundSat. The third takes place Friday, September 25, at 9:45 AM with 2NDSpace, ABzero, Astradyne, PlantBit, Rafla Tech, SpaceMotionery, Stratobotic, SUPAIR and Y Digital. SpaceGlass opens the Pitch Arena on Wednesday, September 23, in the morning, presenting its patented architecture for habitable capsule windows.

Also within the Open Innovation District, the European Space Agency gives companies the opportunity to request direct meetings.

## THE AWARD

To recognize the projects with the highest innovation content in the area, Italian Exhibition Group, together with the initiative's partners, presents the Lorenzo Cagnoni Beyond Innovation Award to four startups, one for each BEX exhibition sector. Selection is handled by the Open Innovation District's evaluation committee. The ceremony takes place Wednesday, September 23, from 5:30 to 6:00 PM on the Main Stage.

The award is named after Lorenzo Cagnoni, chairman of Italian Exhibition Group since the group's founding in 2016 and head of the Rimini fair since 1995, who passed away in September 2023. Among his achievements was the creation, in 1997, of Ricicla, which later became Ecomondo, built around a theme that at the time had no recognized market. IEG established the award in his memory to recognize the companies with the highest innovation content taking part in its events, first presented at Ecomondo in 2023.

## THE STATES GENERAL

On Friday, September 25, BEX hosts the third edition of the Stati Generali della Space Economy, the initiative promoted by the parliamentary Space Intergroup across Italy's space industry districts. The session is dedicated specifically to startups, microenterprises and incubators, and looks at how these companies contribute to the development of satellite applications and new value chains, alongside the topics of targeted financial instruments, access to infrastructure and pathways for collaboration among universities, research centers and large companies.

"The Open Innovation District comes from the belief that innovation in space no longer comes only from large-scale programs. The 25 companies we selected are working on real problems, from computing in orbit to materials for extreme environments, to food and health, and nearly all of them already have a terrestrial application. Bringing them into the same space where industry, investors and institutions come together is the most direct way we know to shorten the distance between a technology and its market," says Alessandra Astolfi, Global Exhibition Director of IEG's Green & Technology Division.

**BEX – Beyond Exploration Expo** is the first Italian trade show entirely dedicated to the space economy. Held in Rimini from September 23 to 25, 2026, BEX aims to serve as an international reference hub connecting the traditional (upstream) space industry, downstream applications, and non-space sectors interested in the opportunities offered by space technologies. The event features exhibition areas, conferences, technical workshops, matchmaking sessions, and an area dedicated to startups, universities and research centers.

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## FOCUS ON

Italian Exhibition Group S.p.A., società con azioni quotate su Euronext Milan, mercato regolamentato organizzato e gestito da Borsa Italiana S.p.A., ha maturato negli anni, con le strutture di Rimini e Vicenza, una leadership domestica nell'organizzazione di eventi fieristici e congressuali e ha sviluppato attività estere - anche attraverso joint-ventures con organizzatori globali o locali, come ad esempio negli Stati Uniti, Emirati Arabi Uniti, Arabia Saudita, Cina, Messico, Germania, Singapore, Brasile - che l'hanno posizionata tra i principali operatori europei del settore.

This press release contains forward-looking statements and estimates that reflect management's current views, particularly regarding future operating performance, the execution of investments, cash flow trends and the evolution of the company's financial structure. By their nature, forward-looking statements carry an element of risk and uncertainty, since they depend on future events. Actual results may differ, even significantly, from those announced, due to a range of factors including, but not limited to: trends in Italy's out-of-home dining and tourism markets, trends in the jewelry and goldsmith market, trends in the green economy market, movements in raw material prices, general macroeconomic conditions, geopolitical factors, and regulatory developments. The information contained in this release is not intended to be exhaustive and has not been verified by independent third parties. The projections, estimates and targets presented here are based on information available to the company as of the date of this release.