Innovation House, Italy’s talent and innovation on show in Dubai

Connecting Minds, Creating the Future is the theme of Expo 2020 Dubai, the first global exhibition held in an Arab country. Creativity, Experience, Talent, Skills and Innovation, the distinctive core values of Italian excellence, are the inspiration behind Innovation House. For 180 days, Italian businesses and international players will lay the foundations to play a centre part in the near future on an international stage.

"About a year ago, Prof. Resta and Prof. Sianesi put forward the suggestion that we should take part in Expo Dubai with a totally unconventional project, thinking outside the box", said Attilio Fontana, the governor of Lombardy. "The objective was to exhibit and promote the organisations we represent. I didn’t think twice, and accepted with enthusiasm. We then thought of ‘Innovation House’, as a showcase where companies could introduce themselves to the world. This was the occasion to promote the excellence of our economic and productive system on the international market”. This pact is the outcome of shared projects, the synergy created when Universities, Companies and Institutions form an alliance.

"Expo 2020 Dubai is a great occasion to present the uniqueness of Italian regions to the world. In this spirit, Innovation House is where the production world of Lombardy can display its many faces, its thoroughly unique companies, its tradition and its drive towards innovation", said Ferruccio Resta, Rector of Politecnico di Milano. "Innovation House is thus a meeting place, a forum for exchanging ideas and much more. Politecnico di Milano, as a great test laboratory for ideas, has joined its Foundation in this initiative to strengthen the international outlook and image of our region abroad. Working through a solid partnership with the regional government of Lombardy, it is able to gather the great potential for development and growth flowing between Milan and the Arab Emirates”.

“It is a totally unconventional project, thinking outside the box", said Attilio Fontana, President of Regione Lombardia, who reminded listeners of the legacy of Expo Milano 2015 and that, six years ago, it was the driving force for our country and today can re-launch its image.

On the 7th of October, during the Climate & Diversity Week, we cut the ribbon and opened Innovation House. Over the next six months, this event space at the Hotel InterContinental Dubai Marina will showcase the best ideas and innovations ‘made in Lombardy’ to a global audience gathered at Expo 2020 Dubai. The inauguration ceremony started with a welcome from Andrea Sianesi, President of Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, who greeted the guests present and everyone connected from Italy via the Cisco Webex platform.

"For six months, Dubai will be transformed into a world stage for our best ideas and innovations", said Prof. Sianesi. "Fondazione Politecnico di Milano is taking a big step forward and looking at foreign markets”. His comments were taken up by Alan Christian Rizzi, Undersecretary for relations with international delegations at Regione Lombardia, who reminded listeners of the legacy of Expo Milano 2015 and that, six years ago, it was the driving force for our country and today can re-launch its image.

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Attending the ceremony was also Abdulla Al Saleh, Undersecretary for foreign trade at the UAE Ministry of Economy, who spoke about his country as a modern, advanced and dynamic nation, a young country, which in less than 50 years has been able to transform itself into one of the most developed economies of the Middle East. Focus of the day was the panel discussion on circular economy and climate change. Raffaele Cattaneo, councillor for the environment and climate at Regione Lombardia, started the proceedings by underlining the need for a radical change in perspective on the climate, saying that change must come first from people, and then from their behaviour. The roadmap must combine policies of innovation and R&I, reach businesses from Lombardy and stakeholders, so that we all can work together to protect the environment.

The perfect setting to develop new synergy and international relationships

Set against the international backdrop of great worldwide uncertainty, it is a clear fact that SMEs were the segment hit hardest by the pandemic. Companies face a stark choice. Do they try to recover while remaining faithful to their long-established business models or do they see the crises as an opportunity to embrace change?

Innovation House was also created for the small and medium-sized companies of Lombardy and Italy; by showcasing their individuality and attractiveness, they can be the trail blazers for all companies and are the true leaders of our recovery. An ability to innovate and be international will be the primary drivers for business recovery and growth.

What does Innovation House offer? First of all, the opportunity for businesses to develop their international network. They can present themselves to an audience targeted by needs, and create a network of contacts crucial to entering the UAE market. Companies can choose between a Golden, Platinum or Subscription Experience, according to their business needs. We can organise events, conferences and seminars, with the right speakers, an international audience and the logistics of the day properly attended to, including the communication part. We can also organise B2B events, defining the criteria for inviting companies, providing assistance in logistics and managing the follow up. Lastly, the most complex topic is how to enter new markets. This part concentrates on the legal, tax and custom aspects, as well as on searching for and managing personnel and the promotional side of launching a company.

One venue: the InterContinental Hotel Dubai Marina

From 7 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, in the Conference Centre and Penthouse, Innovation House will be hosting a series of events, temporary exhibitions, and see the launching of innovative and experimental projects. Innovation House is inspired by the idea of a home, a physical and spiritual place, based upon relationships. The community is perceived as an extension to the concept of home, where everyone benefits from the interweaving of relationships. And the strength of Innovation House lies in relationships, especially the Penthouse. This 550 m2 venue on the 38th floor of the InterContinental Dubai Marina Hotel welcomes the world of research, industry and institutions. Made in Italy is on display in the furnishings sourced by Baituti Design, where Italian style meets Dubai culture.

All this is what companies and other interested parties will find, with everything geared to their business needs. The rooms can be used for conventions, round table discussions, meetings, B2B events and workshops. Companies will, above all, be able to arrange bilateral meetings in their search for potential partners to develop and internationalise their business, as well as meetings with financial backers.

Over the next six months, InterContinental Hotel Dubai Marina will become the symbol of Italian hospitality, its particular ability to forge relationships, to transform a meeting into a lasting commercial connection. Innovation House can fully embody the theme of Expo Dubai “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future”: people come together to generate innovation and so create the future.
In Lombardy, as in Dubai. A blended experience and six months full of events

Innovation House gives you an exclusive blended experience, allowing you to join live events either in Lombardy or in Dubai. Politecnico di Milano has been a leading light in distance teaching throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. On the strength of this experience, after living with the pandemic for more than a year, the first event on this scale is the backdrop for a project that interprets the theme of Connecting Minds and generating a blended experience to bring Dubai to Lombardy through a series of events held on site and at a distance. Two physical venues, in Milan and in Dubai, are connected through technology that overcomes the barrier of distance, giving the feeling of being a single location. You can join an event through the videoconference platform from any device, including your smart phone. Many events and workshops will enable Innovation House in the upcoming months, all purposed towards networking and promoting knowledge. The General Assembly of Women will provide one such occasion, giving voice to the many women mastering the various areas of knowledge and expertise. Women scientists, economists, writers, politicians and entrepreneurs will meet and debate, offering their perspective on how to make a better society. There are programmes to help Lombardy-based businesses strengthen their international outlook of Lombardy and social sustainability that underpin recovery of worldwide economy and competitiveness. The future lies in a technological tradition, continuous learning and evolution in production, market and lifestyles. Lombardy offers fine examples of culture meeting business. We are strongly committed to our partnership with Fondazione Politecnico, and this is certainly a flagship initiative to promote the excellence of our economic and productive system on the international market during Expo 2020. This virtual public-private partnership is a starting point to join forces and bring the world of work closer to the world of production, so that Italy can continue to nurture expertise and professionalism in productive sectors where there is an increasing demand and hunger for talent.

Antonio Calabrio, Head of International Affairs Pirelli

“Expo 2020 Dubai is stimulating the recovery of worldwide economy and culture. Innovation House brings the international outlook of Lombardy companies, among the engines driving our economy, providing a space where institutions and business can meet, helping to spread digital technology and develop the aspects of environmental and social sustainability that underpin competition. The future lies in a ‘multi-technical culture’, as the connection between science and industrial sectors is a technological tradition, continuous learning and evolution in production, market and lifestyles. Lombardy offers fine examples of culture meeting business.”

Andrea Sianesi, President

"Innovation House is a physical and virtual space where private and public sector can co-exist in win-win harmony, creating the landscape where companies, technologies and institutions can grow. Public-private interaction and intermingling is the right formula to ensure new markets, broader vision and deep and lasting alliances. We experienced this with Expo 2015, and we see it at work here in the setting of Expo Dubai, and in Innovation House, as a priceless accelerator of competition.”

Marco Belloli

“Academic research and support to technological development in Italian companies are two of the distinguishing features of the partnership between Fondazione Politecnico di Milano and Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center. This strategic synergy is reiterated in our dual role as Councillor of Fondazione and President of Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center. Taking charge of a physical and virtual space at Dubai Marinas to support companies and leading international startups underway the commitment of the IPS Group for Expo 2020 Dubai, and Innovation House is also an ideal occasion for Italian excellence to meet emerging technology.”

Maurizio Montagnese, President of Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center

Innovation House. A bridge taking Italian startups to Dubai

"The spaces in Innovation House and Fondazione Politecnico di Milano’s arrangements in Dubai are a wonderful opportunity”, said Enrico Deluchi, General Manager at PoliHub. “Startups in the PoliHub ecosystem will be able to introduce themselves to potential financial backers and companies that see Expo as a superb and highly efficient occasion to discover new investment opportunities. If we observe the recent trends in sectors of interest for venture capitalists operating in the UAE, there is a rapid growth and attention towards topics that relate to deep tech and innovation. We will help them learn about the innovation that is generated within the PoliHub ecosystem, and will present the most exciting innovative businesses to have emerged from under PoliHub’s wings in recent years. For our startups, this could lead to interesting exchanges of ideas and, through subsequent meetings, to potential opportunities for fundraising or commercial development.”

Alessandro Spada, President of Assolombarda

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Andrea Sianesi, President

"We believe very firmly in Innovation House, and are watching it with interest mixed with curiosity. We are strongly committed to our partnership with Fondazione Politecnico, and this is certainly a flagship initiative to promote the excellence of our economic and productive system on the international market during Expo 2020. This virtual public-private partnership is a starting point to join forces and bring the world of work closer to the world of production, so that Italy can continue to nurture expertise and professionalism in productive sectors where there is an increasing demand and hunger for talent.”

Roberto Crippa, Executive Vice President of Technoglobe

Innovation House is also an ideal occasion for Italian excellence to meet emerging technology. This principle inspired the world of work closer to the world of production, so that Italy can continue to nurture expertise and professionalism in productive sectors where there is an increasing demand and hunger for talent.”

Igor De Blasio, Chief Executive Officer at Arexpo

"The world is rapidly changing. Research and innovation can give us the tools we need to meet tomorrow’s challenges. In MIND, we are creating a district that brings together institutions, universities and centres of excellence, such as Human Technopole and IRCCS Galeazzi, as well as many private firms that see the wonderful opportunities in technology and innovation. This principle inspired Arexpo to join Innovation House with Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, and this is the roadmap we must follow.”

We joined Innovation House because...