

# W.IN.

## Women INnovation Speed Dating Forum

Tuesday, December 10th



REGIONE PUGLIA



Future4Puglia

a.r.t.i.

Agenzia regionale  
per la tecnologia  
e l'innovazione



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# INTRODUCTION

**Regione Puglia and ARTI** (Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation) in coordination with the **U.S. Mission** to Italy, the **National Foundation for Technological Innovation COTEC, Materias**, and the **Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)** proudly announce the launch of the 2024 **W.IN. Women Innovation Speed Dating Forum**.

The W.IN. Women Innovation Speed Dating Forum is a project created and led by **Valentina Battista**, the only Italian recipient of the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program (**IVLP**) Impact Award 2024 conferred by the **U.S. Department of State's** Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented by the Meridian International Center. **Valentina Battista** participated in the IVLP Project Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development organized by the U.S. Department of State and the **Institute for International Education**.

Structured around a unique speed dating format, the event will provide invaluable networking opportunities to participants by facilitating connections among **women entrepreneurs, students, industry leaders, and investors**. Driven by a profound belief that women possess **immense untapped potential** to drive sustainable and impactful entrepreneurship, this project seeks to foster **sustainable female-led businesses** while encouraging young students to actively engage with innovation.

An annual “matchmaking” forum will be organized, each year dedicated to a different innovative sector based on sustainable development goals and trends.




# INTRODUCTION

This first edition will highlight the transformative potential of the **aerospace sector**, showcasing technological advancements that foster sustainability within the industry. **The W.IN. Women Innovation Speed Dating Forum** will take place in Bari on December 10 and will feature the presence of **Tracy Roberts Pounds**, the **Consul General** of the United States in Naples, Italy, who will award the winning startups of the competition.

In summary, this project has the potential to drive meaningful and lasting impact on the local community of the south of Italy unlocking the **economic potential of women entrepreneurs**, fostering innovation, and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.

The scalable and replicable nature of the project's approach, coupled with its ability to shift mindsets and influence policy, makes it a worthy investment for **sustainable, equitable growth**.

The forum aims to become a nationally significant event and strengthen the innovation ecosystem in Southern Italy, **creating a strong bridge between Italy and the U.S.**



# W.IN. VENUES

## **Spazio Murat**

Piazza del  
Ferrarese, 1, Bari

**09:00 AM to 03:30  
PM**



## **Teatro Kursaal Santa Lucia**

Largo Adua, 5,  
Bari

**3:30 to 7:30 PM**

# EVENT FORMAT AND KEY TOPICS

As part of the **W.IN. Women Innovation Speed Dating Forum**, an open call for startups in the aerospace sector has been published, emphasizing innovative solutions, processes, or products that address industry challenges.

One of the eligibility requirements is the representation of women within the startup team, with preference given to those with **women founders** or **women in leadership** roles.


This call is now available on **ARTI Puglia** website (<https://forms.gle/nAGMbtScQSDYmPvn9>)

The **ten best startups** will be selected based on the established criteria and will be invited to participate in the **W.IN. Women Innovation Speed Dating Forum**. This event is scheduled to take place in Bari on December 10, and **U.S. Consul General in Naples, Tracy Roberts Pound**, will be attending.

The forum will start with two **impactful opening speeches**.

Following, the event will showcase **10 innovative startups**, each **pitching their projects on stage**.

Afterwards, the **speed dating tables** will open, offering a structured networking format designed to facilitate meaningful connections and collaborations.



# EVENT FORMAT AND KEY TOPICS

The event will be crafted to simulate the phases of a missile launch during a space mission, with each session representing a specific phase and divided into three engaging segments: **pre-launch phase, launch phase and boost phase**. Inspired by aerospace missions, this format aims to deliver a **dynamic and enriching experience** for attendees, reflecting the excitement and complexity of space exploration.

**The first speed dating table**, symbolizing the pre-launch phase, will bring together women startupper and girls students. This strategic pairing aims to **foster synergies between startup founders and aspiring female entrepreneurs**, nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset among students.

**The second speed dating session**, representing the launch phase, will **connect women startupper with women leaders**. This interaction is geared towards enhancing business strategies, fostering collaborations, and receiving valuable insights and advice from **successful/high-profile women business leaders** and managers.

**The final table**, aptly named boost phase, will facilitate interactions between **entrepreneurs and investors**, like venture capitals, corporates and institutions. In the context of the aerospace sector, this phase is essential for achieving the required speed for ballistic flight, as the missile undergoes rapid acceleration during this stage. This segment provides a great opportunity for startups to **explore potential funding opportunities**, pitch their ideas to investors, and forge crucial partnerships for **business growth and development**.

# EVENT FORMAT AND KEY TOPICS

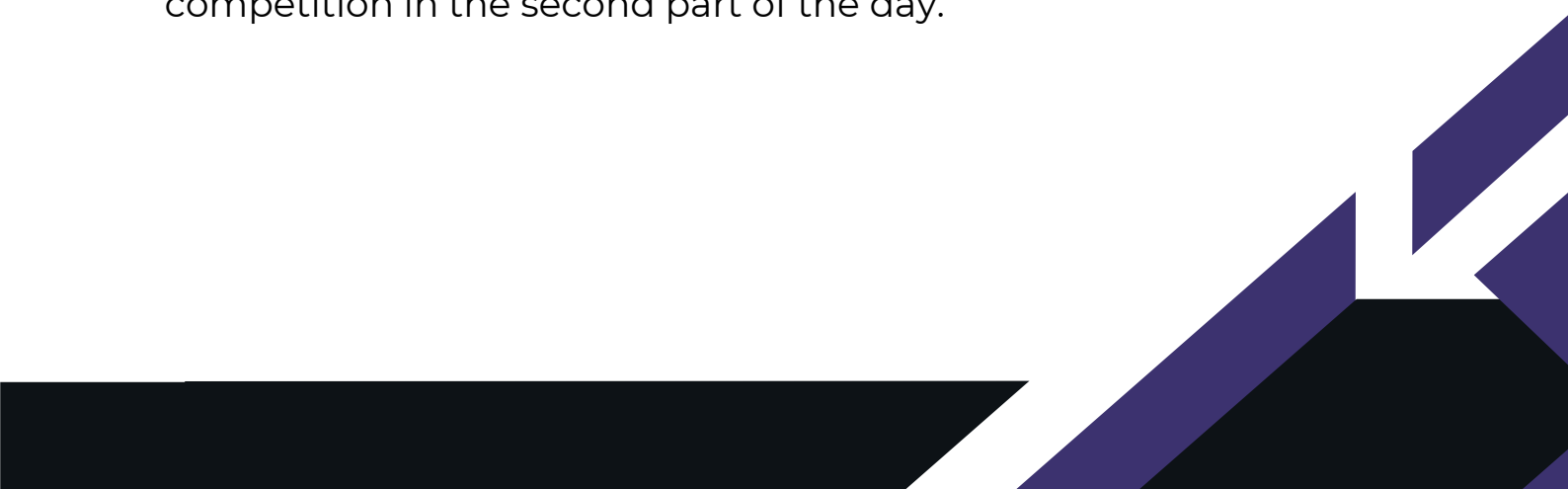
At the end of each speed dating session, students, women leaders, and investors will **cast their votes to identify the top five participants**. This selection process will be coordinated by the **President of the Scientific Committee**.

The speed dating sessions will be framed as an aerospace mission, using the metaphor of a missile launch as a **powerful symbol of transformation**—representing the moment when ideas take flight and nothing is more valuable than expert advice, at the right time! During each session, founders will provide details on their company and ask mentors for advice. Founders will have the opportunity to get **expert feedback** from a variety of sources and backgrounds.

This event aims to foster a **dynamic environment** that encourages knowledge sharing, mentorship, collaboration, and investment within the vibrant **ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship**.

Following the speed dating sessions, there will be a brief round table discussion featuring women from associations and successful entrepreneurs. This discussion will provide an opportunity to **explore insights, share experiences, and discuss strategies for empowering women** in business and innovation.

In conclusion, the **top five innovative startups** will be announced on the LED screen, marking the beginning of an exciting competition in the second part of the day.



# EVENT FORMAT AND KEY TOPICS

The **second part** of the event will take place in a theater and will begin with a **plenary session** featuring two influential speeches by **prominent leaders** from Italy and the United States.

By sharing their unique perspectives and experiences, these leaders will challenge conventional thinking and inspire attendees to envision a **future where innovation drives not only advancements in technologies but also broader societal change.**

After the impactful speeches, the first roundtable titled "**The Overview Effect: From STEM to STARTups**" will commence. This session will explore how the Overview Effect—the cognitive shift experienced by astronauts when viewing Earth from space—can **inspire innovation and entrepreneurship.** The discussion will focus on the transition from STEM education to successful startups, emphasizing how this unique perspective can lead to transformative ideas and solutions.

Participants will engage in dialogue about leveraging this mindset to **drive economic growth and address contemporary challenges.**

After the first roundtable, the five selected startups will take the stage for a **elevator pitch session.**

After the presentations of the finalist startups, there will be a roundtable discussion titled "**USA-Italy Bridge: A Pathway for Growth.**" This session will provide an opportunity to explore investment opportunities and foster collaboration between public and private sectors.



# EVENT FORMAT AND KEY TOPICS

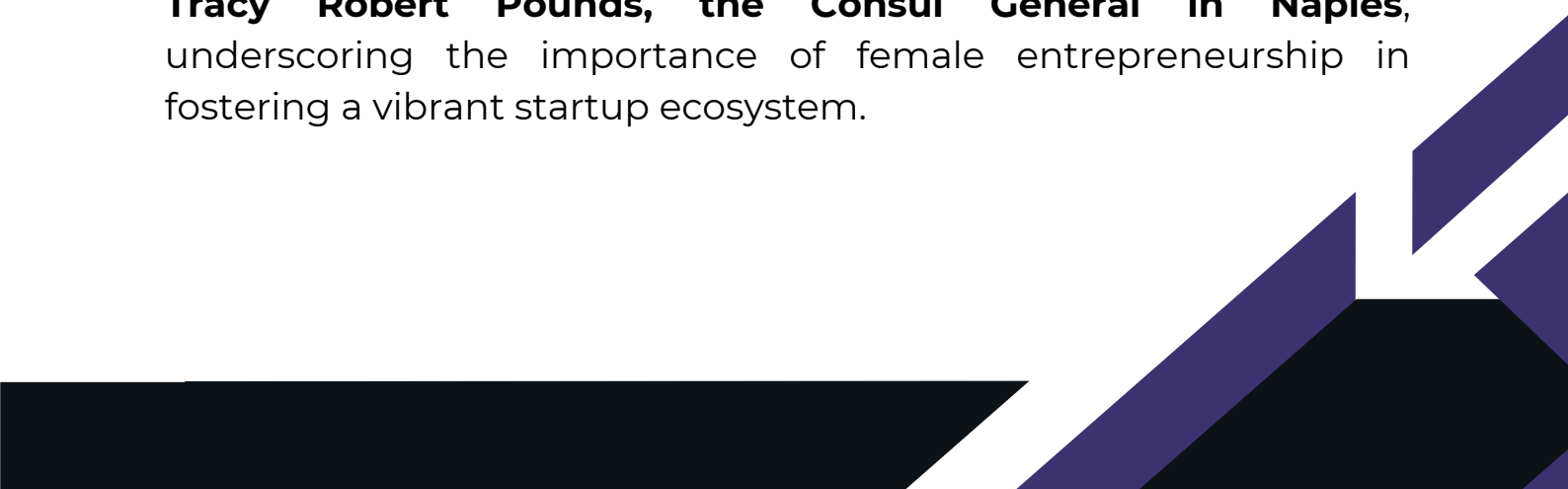
Participants will engage in discussions about key strategies for leveraging resources, navigating regulatory environments, and identifying high-growth sectors. The goal is to **strengthen economic ties and promote innovative partnerships** that can drive mutual growth, ultimately enhancing the transatlantic relationship between the USA and Italy.

**In conclusion**, there will be a final awards ceremony where the **top three startups will be recognized**. These awards and recognitions will be determined by a jury of experts from both countries, coordinated by the **President of the Scientific Committee of the U.S. Consulate General in Naples**.

Among the ten participating startups in the program, special mentions will also be awarded, including recognition from the **Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)**, part of the **U.S. Department of State**. Startups receiving the AWE mention will have the opportunity to participate in the second edition of the Academy, further enhancing their entrepreneurial journey.

The top three winner startups will also win dedicated mentorship sessions with **leading women entrepreneurs and investors from both Italy and the United States**. This invaluable opportunity aims to foster collaboration and growth, providing insights and guidance to help these startups thrive in their respective markets.

The winner will be announced and presented with their award by **Tracy Robert Pounds, the Consul General in Naples**, underscoring the importance of female entrepreneurship in fostering a vibrant startup ecosystem.





# Program.

**09:00 - 14:30**

**Registration and Welcome Kit**

**Institutional Greetings**

**W.IN. Talks: speakers share innovative and impactful ideas in a 15-minute format**

**Rules of the Game & Startup Showcase**

**10 Innovative Startups Presenting their projects on stage.**

Each startup will pitch their project in 4 minutes, highlighting their innovative solutions and business models.

**Speed Dating Session 1 (Pre-Launch Phase)**

**Networking between Women Startupperts and W.IN. Students.**

This session aims to foster synergies between startup women innovators and aspiring female entrepreneurs, nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset among students.

09:00 - 14:30

## Speed Dating Session 2 (Launch Phase)

### Networking between Women Startups and W.IN. Leaders.

This interaction focuses on enhancing business strategies, fostering collaborations, and receiving valuable insights from successful women leaders and managers.

## Speed Dating Session 3 (Boost Phase)

### Networking between Women Startups and W.IN. Investors.

This session allows startups to pitch their ideas to potential investors, including venture capitalists and corporate representatives.

## W.IN. Round Table

## Finalist Selection and Announcement

The jury, coordinated by the President of the Scientific Committee, selects the **top five startups** based on the speed dating sessions.

**Announcement of the finalists on the LED screen.**



# LIGHT LUNCH

14:30





# Program.

**14:30 - 19:00**

**Institutional Greetings**

**Introductory Remarks**

**W.IN Talks: speakers share innovative and impactful ideas in a 15-minute format.**

**Roundtable 1**

**The Overview Effect: From STEM to STARtups**

This session will explore how the cognitive shift experienced by astronauts can inspire innovation and entrepreneurship, discussing the transition from STEM education to successful startups.

**Elevator Pitch Session**

**Finalists Present Their Four-Minute Pitches.**

The five selected startups will take the stage to pitch their ideas.

**W.IN MEETS: A 15-Minute Interview**

14:30 - 19:00

## Roundtable 2

### **USA-Italy Bridge: A Pathway for Growth.**

This session will explore investment opportunities and foster international collaborations.

## **Awards Ceremony**

Recognition of the top three startups by a jury of experts from both countries, coordinated by the **President of the Scientific Committee** of the **U.S. Consulate General in Naples.**

Special mentions awarded, including recognition from the Academy for **Women Entrepreneurs (AWE).**

Announcement of the winner presented by **Tracy Robert Pounds, the Consul General in Naples.**

**The top three startups will also receive dedicated mentorship sessions with leading women entrepreneurs and investors from Italy and the United States.**

A group of four people, three men and one woman, are gathered around a round table covered with a white tablecloth. They are all holding champagne glasses and appear to be in the middle of a toast. The woman in the center has blonde, curly hair and is smiling broadly. The man to her right is also smiling and holding his glass up. The man to her left is partially visible, and the woman on the far left is seen from the side. On the table, there are several more champagne glasses, some filled with a golden liquid. In the foreground, there are two trays of appetizers: one with small round pastries and another with a rectangular cake decorated with raspberries. The background consists of large windows with a grid pattern, letting in bright light. The overall atmosphere is professional yet celebratory.

# **NETWORKING COCKTAIL**

**19:15**