

PRESS NOTE

WEBUILD: A ONE-OF-A-KIND PROJECT, CANAL CAFÈ, SUPPORTED BY THE GROUP WINS GOLDEN LION FOR BEST PARTICIPATION AT THE "BIENNALE DI VENEZIA"

THE LAGOON'S WATERS, MADE DRINKABLE, BECOME A SYMBOL OF DESALINATION'S POTENTIAL TO TACKLE WATER SCARCITY

PRO BONO PROPOSAL PRESENTED BY THE GROUP TO HELP ADDRESS WATER EMERGENCY IN SICILY WITH NEARLY €900 MILLION IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT

Milan, May 10, 2025 – “Canal Café shows how Venice can become a testing ground for reimagining new ways of living on water, while also making a meaningful contribution to the city’s public space.” With this statement, the international jury of the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia awarded the special project Canal Café the Golden Lion for Best Participation. The initiative was made possible thanks to the expertise of Webuild Group and its subsidiary Fisia Italmimpianti.

“Canal Café is a symbol of how we can provide citizens with access to drinking water through innovative technologies that protect the world’s most precious resource,” said Pietro Salini, Chief Executive Officer of Webuild. “The desalination plants built by the Webuild Group currently serve 20 million people a day, demonstrating our commitment to addressing the global water crisis. We are ready to do the same in Sicily, where we have just submitted a proposal under a public-private partnership (PPP), as provided for by law. The proposal, developed pro bono by Webuild and presented to the Region of Sicily, outlines a comprehensive plan of interventions entirely financed by private capital, aimed at permanently resolving the island’s drought problem. Within two years, it would be possible to provide unlimited water directly to households across Sicily, with an investment of nearly 900 million euros fully funded by the private sector. This proposal offers a practical solution to the water emergency. Now, the choice between the available options lies with policymakers, but a concrete solution is finally on the table,” Salini concluded.

The project aims to clearly and simply illustrate the potential of desalination and water purification technologies to address the global water crisis. Developed in the Arsenale area, it shows how saltwater from Venice’s canals can be filtered and purified to the point of even being used to make a cup of coffee. It offers a powerful example of how environmental challenges like water scarcity can be transformed into opportunities for daily life. Supported by the Webuild Group, the project was curated by Carlo Ratti and developed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro in collaboration with Natural Systems Utilities, SODAI, Aaron Betsky and Davide Oldani, with additional support from Lavazza and Kartell.

The sustainable management of water is one of the main global challenges that must be met in a moment where the world has 40% of its global population living in areas with a water scarcity risk, while over 2 billion people cannot access drinking water. Webuild Group has dominated the global ENR rankings for the water sector for over a decade. With Fisia Italmimpianti, a company with nearly a century of experience in desalination and water treatment, the Group positions itself as a strategic player in water-stressed regions, particularly in the Middle East.

Thanks to its desalination plants, Fisia Italmimpianti is currently able to meet the water needs of over 20 million people worldwide, providing access to water even in the most arid regions of the planet. The Group, through Fisia Italmimpianti, has built some of the main desalination plants in the Middle East, like the Shoaiba-3 plant in Saudi Arabia, which covers the demand of over 1 million people of the cities of Jeddah, La Mecca

and Taif; and the Jebel Ali M one in the United Arab Emirates, to produce drinking water and for other domestic uses for the population of Dubai.

Webuild is a global leader in the design and construction of large, complex infrastructure projects in sustainable mobility, hydropower, water treatment, and green buildings. A recognized leader in the water sector, it works in approximately 50 countries with over 92,000 people of 125 different nationalities. The Group boasts nearly 120 years of applied engineering on more than 3,700 completed projects, with a track record of 13,648 kilometres of railways, 891 kilometres of metro lines, 82,577 kilometres of roads and highways, 1,022 kilometres of bridges and viaducts, 3,462 kilometres of tunnels, and 318 dams and hydropower plants. Among its most famous projects: the expansion of the Panama Canal, the Long Beach International Gateway bridge in California, the Third Bosphorus Bridge in Turkey, the Sydney Metro Northwest skytrain viaduct and bridge, the Kingdom Centre skyscraper in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and numerous metro lines in Copenhagen, Paris, Rome, Milan, Naples, Doha, Thessaloniki, and Riyadh. Among the main ongoing projects, the following stand out: the New Genoa Breakwater, the Brenner Base Tunnel, the Pedemontana Lombarda Highway, Line C of Rome's metro network, the high-capacity railways between Genoa and Milan, the high-speed railway between Naples and Bari, the Palermo-Catania-Messina high-capacity railway, the Snowy 2.0 hydropower scheme in Australia, and the Trojena dam network in Saudi Arabia. As of December 31, 2024, the Webuild Group registered total revenues for €12 billion and a total backlog of €63 billion, with more than 90% of its construction backlog related to projects linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Webuild, subject to the direction and coordination of Salini Costruttori S.p.A., is headquartered in Italy, is listed on the Milan Stock Exchange, Borsa Italiana (WBD; WBD.MI; WBD.IM), and since 2021, it is included in the MIB ESG index of the Italian blue-chip companies with the best ESG practices.

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