

PRESS NOTE

WEBUILD CEO SALINI: “INNOVATION MUST BE CONVERTED INTO AN INDUSTRIAL ASSET AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY TO AVOID CEDING RESEARCH TO COMPETITORS”

MILAN, April 20, 2026 – “We must bridge the gap between an Italy that excels in research and a system that is too slow to transform it into an industrial asset. Speed is a strategic choice. Although it boasts world-class scientific research, Italy struggles to put this excellence to use. It faces the real risk that this intelligence gets exported and then returns to the country in the form of technology, having been developed abroad based on our own discoveries,” stated Pietro Salini, Chief Executive Officer of Webuild, speaking at the 10th anniversary of Materias, an Early Stage Combined Accelerator for innovative start-ups.

“The challenge is political one, as well as one of scale. Speed is not a mere technical detail but a determining factor for industrial sovereignty. Markets like China, which revolutionised its transport network with 47,000 kilometres of high-speed rail in less than 20 years shows how our ability to bridge that gap depends on our capacity to plan.” According to Salini, “Italy must equip itself with a regulatory framework that enables innovation and creates platforms capable of acting as an immediate bridge between the laboratory and the construction site.”

If you adopt this vision, the construction site ceases to be a place of mere physical labour and becomes a true technology factory. “Webuild now operates as a large-scale tech company, where every project is conceived as an intelligent organism. Thanks to the use of Digital Twins and Artificial Intelligence, infrastructures are digitally tested before they are even built. This evolution is visible in the use of green TBMs—mechanised excavation shields that function as mobile production plants, reducing energy and water consumption and transforming excavated soil into a resource. It is also seen in our Roboplants: automated factories that produce precast tunnel segments, such as those supplying the Naples-Bari high-speed rail line or the Palermo–Catania–Messina high-capacity line. They guarantee unprecedented standards of safety and precision.”

Technology, however, remains a tool guided by people. “With approximately 95,000 employees globally and a hiring rate of about 13,000 people per year, the Group is investing in generational renewal through its own training schools. The goal is to offer young talents the opportunity to realise major projects in Italy, ensuring the country has the competitiveness necessary to sustain its welfare. Only a systemic synergy between industry and academia can transform the excellence of Italian research into a lasting engine for growth and a global competitive advantage,” Salini concluded.

Webuild is a global leader in the construction of large, complex infrastructure, with a focus on sustainable mobility, hydropower, water treatment and supply, and green buildings. It has long been recognised as the world’s top contractor in the water infrastructure sector. Active in approximately 50 countries, the Group employs some 95,000 people directly and indirectly of over 125 nationalities. With 120 years of history and over 3,700 completed projects, Webuild boasts a track record that includes 13,686 kilometres of railways, 895 kilometres of metros, 82,708 kilometres of roads and highways, 1,023 kilometres of bridges and viaducts, 3,466 kilometres of tunnels, and 320 dams and hydropower plants. Among its most iconic delivered projects are the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the expansion of the Panama Canal, the Long Beach International Gateway in the United States, the Second Bosphorus Bridge in Turkey, the Riachuelo environmental restoration system in Argentina, and new metro lines in cities such as Copenhagen, Paris, Rome, Milan, Naples, Doha, Thessaloniki, and Riyadh. Among those under construction are strategic public works in Italy, such as the New Genoa Breakwater, the Brenner Base Tunnel, the Pedemontana Lombarda Highway, Rome Metro’s Line C, sections of high-speed and/or high-capacity railways between Genoa and Milan, Verona and Padua, Naples and Bari, and Palermo, Catania and Messina.



Abroad, there is the Snowy 2.0 hydropower scheme in Australia and key sections of the Grand Paris Express in France. As of December 31, 2025, the Group reported total revenues of €13.6 billion and a total order backlog of €58.4 billion, with over 95% of the construction backlog aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Webuild is headquartered in Italy and subject to the direction and coordination of Salini Costruttori S.p.A. Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (WBD; WBD.MI; WBD:IM), its stock is included in the MIB ESG index of Italy's leading blue-chip companies for ESG practices.

[More information at www.wbuildgroup.com](http://www.wbuildgroup.com)



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