



PRESS RELEASE

THE GEMINI-GENESI PROJECT KICKS OFF: A NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM DISEASES BORN IN SOUTHERN ITALY

- The project is coordinated by the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia center in Lecce and involves 18 partners.
- With €18 million in funding over 2 years, it represents a follow-up to the projects funded by PNRR funds with an impact on Southern Italy.
- The main headquarters of the new Innovation Hub will be located in the province of Lecce, with additional branches across various southern cities (Bari, Naples, Cagliari, Caserta, Pozzilli, Palermo) and in Genoa.

Lecce, June 10, 2026 – The GEMINI-GENESI project was presented today, funded by the Ministry of University and Research under the National Programme for Research, Innovation, and Competitiveness for the Green and Digital Transition 2021-2027. The project entails the creation of an Innovation Hub named GENESI, alongside the execution of a scientific program, GEMINI. Both are focused on new patient-oriented digital and experimental technologies for developing personalized therapies for central nervous system diseases.

The project is coordinated by the Center for Biomolecular Nanotechnologies of the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia in Lecce and involves 18 partners, representing a total investment of over €18 million over 2 years.

The presentation took place this morning in the prestigious Council Chamber of Palazzo dei Celestini, headquarters of the Province of Lecce. Speakers included the President of the Province Fabio Tarantino, the Deputy Mayor of Lecce Roberto Giordano Anguilla, the Vice-Rector for Research at the University of Salento Prof. Giuseppe Ciccarella, and the Scientific Director of the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, Giorgio Metta.

The GEMINI-GENESI project was outlined by its two co-coordinators: Ferruccio Pisanello, director of the Center for Biomolecular Nanotechnologies of the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia and scientific coordinator of the GEMINI project, and Cristina Battaglia, Programme Manager of the RAISE Innovation Ecosystem (funded by the Ministry of University and Research under Mission 4 of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan).

Indeed, the GEMINI-GENESI initiative stems from capitalizing on and systematizing the scientific and technological results developed within two projects funded under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR): RAISE (Robotics and AI for Socio-economic Empowerment), dedicated to developing robotic and AI technologies in the health sector for predictive and personalized medicine; and Mnesys, focused on the study of new approaches for experimental and clinical neurosciences.

The GEMINI scientific program will focus on one of the primary challenges in the health tech sector, aiming to develop digital twins as tools to understand, monitor, and predict an individual's health status, thereby supporting early diagnosis, personalized therapies, and preventative interventions.

The project aims to introduce patient-oriented digital and experimental twins for developing personalized treatments for central nervous system conditions: acquired brain injuries (stroke, traumatic brain injury, anoxia) and neurodegenerative diseases (Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Alzheimer's).

The research activity will be supported by the creation and consolidation of the GENESI Innovation Hub, with its main headquarters in the province of Lecce and branches in various southern cities (Bari, Naples, Cagliari, Caserta,

Pozzilli, Palermo) and in Genoa. The Hub will enable businesses to experiment with, test, and industrialize these technologies to support their development and competitiveness.

Through the dual GEMINI - GENESI program, Southern Italy will benefit from new skills and infrastructures, thanks to an investment in a scientific and industrial partnership entirely localized in the South of Italy.

In this sense, GEMINI - GENESI represents a true development model, networking research institutions, Universities, IRCCS (Scientific Institutes for Research, Hospitalization and Healthcare), and businesses located across the Puglia, Campania, Molise, Sicily, and Sardinia regions. The goal is to encourage the attraction of new investments, the birth of startups, the creation and strengthening of skills, and the development of a technological infrastructure of international standing.

Furthermore, the project will allocate approximately €1,5 million to consolidate the positions of young female and male researchers hired through the PNRR, thereby preventing the brain drain of essential expertise required for the competitiveness of Southern Italy in a strategic supply chain such as health technologies.

During the meeting, activities were planned to allow for an immediate launch of GEMINI's research tracks and to define the services of the GENESI Innovation Hub. In the afternoon, proceedings continued at the Rectorate of the University of Salento, where a technical session was held to share work plans and implementation strategies for the research and development program with the project partners.

"GEMINI-GENESI represents an extraordinary opportunity," explains Ferruccio Pisanello, scientific coordinator of the project and head of the IIT Center for Biomolecular Nanotechnologies, "to build a truly cutting-edge ecosystem for health technologies in Southern Italy, networking the excellence of the respective territories and capitalizing on what has been achieved in recent years through the PNRR, with a view to expanding the provision of research, innovation, and technology transfer services."