

#### «Ideas 4 Italgas»

### Starting the third edition that introduces the permanent scouting formula: an ever-active 'radar' on open innovation

*Milan, 28 July 2022* – Reducing the time to introduce new technologies through interaction with an ecosystem that ensures a continuous flow of knowledge to support the achievement of the digitization, operational efficiency and the sustainability targets set in the Italgas 2022-2028 Strategic Plan. With this aim Italgas, the leading operator in Italy and the third in Europe in the natural gas distribution sector, is strengthening its collaboration with SkipsoLabs, a company that provides advisory services and technology platforms for innovation at an international level, through a new initiative dedicated to open innovation.

The initiative is part of the 'Ideas 4 Italgas' program launched by the Company in 2020 and addresses the best Startups and Scaleups from around the world with the aim of enhancing research activities and strengthening the contribution of innovation to the improvement of the Group's performance.

There are two main features of the project: the **Co-Innovation Hub** and the SkipsoLabs **ecosystem platform**. The Co-Innovation Hub (an international network of incubators, accelerators, start-ups and scale-ups) will allow Italgas to monitor the innovation ecosystem and activate an Outpost in Tel Aviv, a hybrid presence within the Innovation Hubs in Israel. This strategic approach will enable the company to validate evolutionary scenarios through the innovation and agility of start-ups, fostering and strengthening their growth in the market. The technology platform, on the other hand, will enable the creation and management of Italgas' innovation ecosystem by bringing together internal and external innovation in a single digital space capable of fostering the involvement of start-ups, employees and suppliers in innovation and digital transformation programs.

Compared to previous editions, the new research will be an ever-active 'radar' on technological and business innovations in the following areas: digitalization (cloud, edge computing and IoT devices), analytics and data management, operation & maintenance, network monitoring, metering, sustainability and circular economy, biomethane, hydrogen and synthetic gases.

In the digital transformation process, open innovation has been one of the main drivers of strategic development since the beginning. An approach focused on identifying solutions that can foster growth and sustainable development in daily operations, for the partners involved and the entire gas distribution sector. In many cases, collaboration with start-ups and SMEs has created the conditions for introducing innovation in other areas as well.

This is what is happening with Composite Research (CoRe), the young Italian start-up active in the sector of innovative materials, which presented 'MadFlex' at the 2020 call, a technology to create an ultra-light multilayer material capable of repairing gas grids quickly, durably and resiliently. After passing many stress tests at the Italgas laboratory in Asti, "MadFlex" is now being examined by the CIG (Italian Gas Committee) in order to obtain the necessary certifications for large-scale use by all companies in the sector and in the water distribution sector.

This is not the only case. With **I-Tes**, the large-scale application of special batteries capable of storing heat produced by other sources and reusing it in processes for feeding gas into the network is underway; software from the American company **Satelytics** will enable the monitoring of networks to be enhanced through the use of satellite images as well; With the Swiss company **Amex Sanivar**, a study is underway into the possible application of a special film inside gas grids that can make

them immediately hydrogen ready; finally, the application of the Norwegian company **Tunable** will improve the analysis of the composition of distributed gas blends.

**Pier Lorenzo Dell'Orco, CEO of Italgas Reti, commented:** *"Open innovation is a strategic approach that allows companies to grow faster, increase efficiency and, above all, think differently. In the journey of digital transformation that Italgas Group has undertaken in recent years, we have made extensive use of it. It is thanks to continuous scouting activities that we met companies such as Picarro, of which we also became shareholders, and its CRDS technology, the most advanced in the field of gas network monitoring. And this is how we have progressively created an open ecosystem capable of supporting the implementation of the Group's Strategic Plan and the growth of our partners, as well as the evolution of the entire gas distribution sector."*

**Carlo Soresina, co-founder and CEO of SkipsoLabs, added:** *"We are delighted to strengthen our partnership with Italgas through this innovation program dedicated to a key sector such as gas distribution. Today the ecosystem concept plays a central role in the innovation landscape. Our approach, which includes the involvement of the international network of the Co-Innovation Hub, the activation of a specific outpost in Tel Aviv and the technology platform, will facilitate the meeting of innovative start-ups from all over the world, connecting Italgas to a global innovation ecosystem. This is the right way to experience new evolutionary scenarios and to meet new market challenges"*.

The project addresses international Startups and Scaleups (with focus on Europe and Israel) that develop products and services based on sustainable and original business models in line with Italgas' strategy, and that will be able to offer solutions capable to meet the challenges posed by energy sustainability targets.

Interested startups will be able to register within the Italgas innovation ecosystem through the link <https://ideas4italgas.italgas.it/en/>. The start-ups will be assessed by a committee of experts and, following a further selection process, will have the opportunity to work in close collaboration with the company to start the Co-design phase and define an experiment applicable to the sector.

#### **Italgas**

Italgas is the leading operator in Italy in gas distribution sector and the third in Europe. It manages a distribution network that extends a total of around 75,000 kilometers through which, during the last year, it distributed approximately 9 billion cubic meters of gas to 7.8 million users. The Group holds 1,899 concessions, with a historical presence in the country's major cities including Turin, Venice, Florence, and Rome.

#### **SkipsoLabs**

Founded in 2008, SkipsoLabs is a company that provides software solutions and advisory services for innovation. Starting with the ambitious goal of creating a platform to support and accelerate sustainable innovation worldwide, over the years SkipsoLabs has become one of the leading international players in innovation management, offering cutting-edge programs to companies, universities, government agencies, accelerators and non-profit organizations worldwide. SkipsoLabs' advisory services help clients identify the best innovation sourcing channels globally, define the right approach to validate and scale products and solutions both within their organization and in the marketplace. SkipsoLabs has an established framework to help identify strategic acquisition or partnership opportunities, to rank innovation and to engage internal management.