

X-TEF: the annual meeting in Milan

October 16, 2025

The delegates involved in the Testing and Experimentation Facilities (TEFs) projects promoted by the European Commission, together with other stakeholders of the European Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem, met for the annual meeting, held for the first time in Italy on October 1. Together, they had the opportunity to discuss how the large-scale operation of TEFs accelerates the adoption of AI and robotics in Europe.

On October 1, 2025, the **third xTEF [event](#)** was held in Milan, bringing together the four **AI Testing and Experimentation Facilities (TEFs)** in the **Agriculture ([AgrifoodTEF](#))**, **Manufacturing ([AI-MATTERS](#))**, **Health ([TEF-Health](#))**, and **Smart Cities and Communities ([Citcom.AI](#))** sectors, as well as the **[CoordinaTEF](#)** project, which aims to coordinate and support the collaboration, communication, and strategic alignment of TEFs.

The event was organized by AgrifoodTEF and managed in particular by **Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK)** as project coordinator, in collaboration with MADE **Competence Center** and Trust-IT **Services**. It represented an important opportunity for exchange and reflection on the opportunities and future impacts that TEFs may generate in the European artificial intelligence landscape, and fostered dialogue between various public and private stakeholders of the AI ecosystem at national and European levels.

Following the institutional welcome messages, the conference opened with the talk by **Lucilla Sioli, Director of the European AI Office**, who presented the role and strategic objectives that Europe sets in the implementation of the AI Act and in supporting the European AI ecosystem.

“Today we know that the global competition for technology leadership is profoundly transformed by artificial intelligence. AI is not just an emerging technology, it is a strategic pillar: it will define our technological sovereignty, the security of our societies, and the vitality of our democracies. We are now at a pivotal moment, where the new AI race has just begun. TEFs have a very important role to play in helping the EU in this

challenge,” said Lucilla Sioli, in particular with reference to the implementation of the **AI Continent Action Plan** (launched in April 2025) and the **Apply AI Strategy** (launched in October 2025 by the European Commission), in coordination with other European initiatives (i.e., *AI Factories, Data Spaces, European Digital Innovation Hubs, AI on Demand Platform*) that will ensure the adoption of AI in strategic sectors and the competitiveness of the EU at a global level.

Fondazione Bruno Kessler positions itself as a key player in these initiatives, participating as **coordinator of the AgrifoodTEF project and as a partner in the AI-MATTERS, [TEF-Health](#), and CoordinaTEF projects**. Specifically, as part of the **AgrifoodTEF project, coordinated by Raffaele Giaffreda, FBK’s Center for Digital Industry** has already started several testing and validation services for solutions provided by Italian SMEs in areas such as remote monitoring of crops, management of vineyards and orchards, agricultural yield forecasting, precision spraying, benchmarking of robotics solutions, identification of pathogens, etc., collecting several success stories. Also, as part of the AI-MATTERS project, the first services were provided in the field of process optimization, data management, decision support systems, and predictive analysis for plant optimization. **More information on the services offered by the Center for Digital Industry** in AgrifoodTEF and AI-MATTERS, and the related **catalogs**, can be found [here](#).

The other sessions of the event, moderated by **FBK**, involved representatives of the **private and public** sector (the so-called **TEF-Multipliers**) to discuss the impact and opportunities of TEFs at national and European levels.

- The first session, led by **Francesco Matteucci (FBK)**, highlighted the role of TEFs as enabling tools for technology validation, useful for bringing innovations to market and reducing risk for companies and investors.
- The second session, moderated by **Raffaele Giaffreda (FBK)**, highlighted the role of TEFs as tools that transform public policies on AI into operational practices, requiring coordination between European and national funds to support their financial sustainability over time.
- In the third session, led by **Gian Mario Maggio (FBK)**, participants discussed how TEFs fit into the European innovation ecosystem that brings together initiatives such as *AI Factories, Data Spaces, European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs), and AI Factories* to implement the *AI Continent Action Plan* and strengthen EU’s digital and technological sovereignty.

Finally, the event ended with the presentation of some success stories by clients of the different TEFs, which showed how the services they had access to within the projects have really helped to validate their solutions with a significant impact.

Event registration is available [here](#).

For more information on FBK’s activities in TEF projects and to discover the services offered, visit the **dedicated page** [here](#).

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