



**To Italy Group is born,
the first Italian Experiential Tourism Group
Up to 5.5 million euros initial investment led by CDP Venture Capital and
SMP Holding**

The project frames and combines the experiences of ItalyXP.com, FlorenceTown, and Arno Travel

The business segment in which the new company will operate has reached a global market share ranging from 15 to 20% of the entire Travel sector

Rome, 26th May 2022 - **To Italy Group - The Italian Experience** is born, the first group dedicated to experiential tourism in Italy with an initial investment of up to **5.5 million euros, led by CDP Venture Capital Amc, through Fondo Italia Venture II - Fondo Imprese Sud and SMP Holding.**

Globally, the demand for experiential tourism services continues to grow, and the so-called **TAA (tours, activities, and attractions)** is now the third-largest market (after flights and hotels, respectively) and about **15-20% of the global travel spending**: according to Phocuswright, Skift and Eyes for Travel, it was worth between \$150 and \$200 billion in 2019, with a 9% growth on an annual basis¹.

To Italy Group takes shape from the union of **ItalyXp.com**, a marketplace of experiences, innovative SME *Traveltech*, and the technological soul of the nascent project; with **FlorenceTown**, one of the largest and first realities ever to produce and offer experiential services to a global audience in Florence and Tuscany area since 2006; and **Arno Travel**, an operator specialized in the *planning of luxury travel on-site*.

*“The tourism sector was one of the hardest hit by the effects of the pandemic. After two years of great difficulty, we have brought together different and complementary skills by merging our realities with the aim of becoming the benchmark of experiential tourism in Italy. Today's tourists are increasingly 'digital' and thanks to the web, they have access to a great deal of information about places to visit when planning their itinerary; the challenge has therefore shifted to introducing visitors to the culture and experiences typical of our country,” says **Saverio Castilletti, President of To Italy Group**. “Experiential tourism is the answer to the details search that the new visitor of a city recognizes from a film or from the lyrics of a song: the modern tourist leaves home already with a set of ideas, mostly unconscious, associated with that place that belongs to third-party experiences, but which often becomes the real reason behind the trip”.*

¹ <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/consumer-trends/travel-experience-marketing/>

*"We are very proud to contribute to the creation of To Italy Group, the result of the union of different realities operating in the high-quality incoming experiential tourism sector, with a recognized know-how and a solid business model, which they now intend to replicate in Southern Italy", comments **Francesca Ottier, Head of Fondo Italia Venture II - Fondo Imprese Sud of CDP Venture Capital Amc.** "Tourism in our country is a huge resource that can generate, in terms of employment and territorial development, an even greater impact during this delicate post-pandemic phase".*

To Italy Group - The Italian Experience will deal with incoming tourism, with a specific focus on the production of quality experiential services - such as excursions aboard typical vehicles, visits to exclusive sites, cooking schools with a territorial imprint - and their marketing through digital channels. The Group aims to invest in the development of innovative technological tools which enable end-to-end management of the entire process of creating, planning, managing, and selling a complete travel itinerary, facilitating the customer's purchasing experience and, at the same time, optimizing the work of the operators. The name chosen sums up its mission: to offer tourists the chance to experience their stay in Italy by immersing themselves in the local culture, through deeply involving and memorable experiences, professionally created and managed with the highest level of customer care.

To Italy Group's objective is to become the national champion of experiential tourism, which is the sector's leading player in the provision of tourist experiences, guaranteeing a full-range offer with high-quality standards and a strong brand presence. Simultaneously, it will maintain a local soul and experience through a direct presence across Italy and specialized staff ready to enhance the peculiarities and diversity of the opportunities present in all areas of the country.

Particularly, the expansion of tours and activities offered will largely take place in southern Italy, in those areas with high tourist potential but still with a very fragmented offer. It is undeniable how, in recent years, both the development of social media, such as Instagram, and the growing number of digital nomads (in search of remote yet connected places) have rekindled interest in some of the lesser-known areas of the South. Therefore, To Italy intends to make its business experience and market knowledge available for the enhancement of the culture and beauty of these territories, through the acquisition, development, and enrichment of local businesses and the training of new professionals.

*"This project focuses on the concept of quality, which means a professional but authentic offer, and, above all, a 'sustainable' one. In other words, an offer that is aware of all the repercussions of tourism on the territory and therefore aimed at enhancing, and not exploiting, our culture and socio-cultural tissue," adds **Luca Perfetto, CEO of To Italy.** "We are facing a new age in which it is crucial to generate less impactful tourism that allows our historic centres to remain alive and inhabited while they are visited and admired, transmitting our culture without undermining it or adapting it to the demands of the visitor. Our aim is to develop a new type of tourism, 'Gentle tourism', thanks to our work, training, a quality offer, and professionalism. All this working alongside the institutions that can and must implement those policies of management, protection, and control of the offer. The purpose is better planning of flows, working in terms of the wellbeing of destinations, quality, and respect for local cultures, to encourage a model of tourism that brings positive effects to all parties involved."*

The experiential market is growing strongly, as confirmed by recent US tourism data from Arival, according to which 71% of so-called active US travellers plan to book at least one tour or experience

on their next trip in 2022, a figure that stood at just 47% in 2019². Today, the international tourist begins to plan a trip no longer only by 'where to go' and 'where to sleep', but above all by 'what to do', and from that point builds, in a flexible manner, the duration and means of travel: a trend that puts the experiential element at the centre, which has already been going on for years in the rest of the world and that is becoming more and more consolidated in Italy as well.

*"This project also represents an important step for the group's luxury division, a sector that is currently in a phase of strong growth", adds **Urbano Brini, Head of the Luxury Division of To Italy.** "From day one, projects will be implemented to enhance the organization's technological development processes and, at the same time, the human resources investment plan will be strengthened to support the enlargement of new areas such as Villas and Events. We will also implement products and different service delivery techniques and expand our presence in international markets and business activities".*

On behalf of CDP Venture Capital Amc, the transaction was overseen by Francesca Ottier, and Federico Lanciano, Head and Senior investment manager of the Fondo Italia Venture II – Fondo Imprese Sud, respectively.

To Italy Group - The Italian Experience

To Italy Group - The Italian Experience is the first group dedicated to experiential tourism in Italy, born in 2022 from the union of ItalyXP.com, Florencetown and Arno Travel.

The Mission of To Italy Group is to guarantee a full-range offer with high-quality standards and a strong brand presence. Simultaneously, it will maintain a local soul and experience through a direct presence across Italy and specialized staff ready to enhance the peculiarities and diversity of the opportunities present in all areas of the country.

The objective, to become the national champion in the experiential tourism sector.

Press Office

Mirandola Comunicazione

Daniele Gatti

daniele@mirandola.net

(+39) 393 8108869

² Source: Arival Traveler Path to Purchase Series 2021: Today's Tour Taker - September 2021 - sample of 1,000 active US travellers on their travel intentions for the next 12 months.- 1,000 U.S. active travellers on their travel intentions for the next 12 months