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BIT 2023'S EXCELLENT RESULTS MARK ALL-ROUND INDUSTRY REVIVAL

- *High levels of satisfaction among Italian and foreign exhibitors for the increasing number of international travelers and trade visitors, qualified and interested in business*
- *BIT is essential to introduce highly profiled buyers from all over the world to the customized experiences that today's traveler is looking for: from big players to small niche and excellence businesses*
- *Not only a demand-supply matching platform, but also a knowledge-sharing hub with a program of more than 40 high-profile conferences featuring universities, institutions, and international experts*
- *First carbon-neutral edition, with emissions offset by a certified environmental project in India*

Milan, February 16, 2023 – A younger, more international, better qualified, and increasingly business-oriented audience crowded the aisles at the 43rd edition of BIT - International Tourism Exchange: the exhibition ended on Tuesday at the Allianz MiCo in Milan, to the great satisfaction of **over 1,000 Italian and foreign exhibitors**, as well as **hundreds of hosted international buyers** from all over the world.

It's the result of an exhibition concept that has been able to constantly renew itself in recent years, and interpret demands from operators **to go beyond numbers and focus on high quality content**. Contributions from **high-profile experts, institutions, universities and major multimedia platforms** that set the pace of contemporary communication for the new generations underpinned this year's program.

A record BIT, even for private operators

*"The attendance reminded us of the best years of the tourism industry," remarks **Adriano Apicella, CEO of Welcome Travel Group**. There's a great deal of interest in our franchise formula, based on the negotiating power of a single purchasing center and the Group's communication support, and we have made a lot of contacts. In a nutshell, we are very satisfied with these three days of BIT."*

Alongside large organizations, at BIT **even smaller ones find an international visibility and publicity** they would unlikely get elsewhere, as Valentina Colleselli of Meraki S.r.l., who coordinates the **Slow Flow Veneto Waterways Experience** project, explains: *"Our operators network proposes 'slow' experiences on Veneto rivers. BIT 2023, with its sharp focus on new tourism, proved to be the perfect setting to make our offer known. Visits at our stand and contacts seemed to be very good. By combining our contact lists with the matching system, we were able to meet with many buyers, including foreign buyers. We are very pleased with the very lively mood of the exchanges."*

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The world's first marketplace for Italian products

While always focused on change, at the same time BIT always makes the most of its systemic mission of representing **the global marketplace of reference for Italian products**. A vocation strongly confirmed again in this year's edition, as they explain from the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region**: *"We used to see BIT mainly as an opportunity to consolidate existing relationships in the past. However, a great job has been done on hosted buyers in recent years and our operators also did a lot of new business in this edition. Visitors asked us mainly for 'minor' locations, active vacations but still suitable for everyone, and destinations that can be reached sustainably by train."*

Further confirmation of BIT's centrality to the Italian product came from the extensive presence of governmental entities. This is how the **Veneto Region Regional Councilor for Tourism, Federico Caner**, explained their decision to sport a massive presence at the 2023 edition: *"Veneto is an innovation lab among Italian and international destinations. Reflecting recent trends, our tourism offer focuses on the natural. Here, we are highlighting an increasingly popular way of traveling that guides tourists to discover hidden places, different cultures and local produce through 'slow' tourism products."*

The world finds new markets at BIT 2023

The 2023 edition was also a platform for many foreign destinations to relaunch. *"For Jordan, Italy is the largest market."* explains **Marco Biazzeiti, Italian Market Manager of Jordan Tourism Board**, *"Therefore, being at BIT is crucial for us, especially for our new strategy that aims at going beyond classic itineraries to offer adventure travel, wellbeing, and food and wine experiences. We received so many visits not only from travelers and buyers, including non-Italian ones, but also from journalists from important media."*

Such a platform isn't only for established destinations, but also for **'smaller' destinations** or those that have **only recently** appeared on tourism markets. *"Anguilla is one of the most beautiful islands in the Caribbean, but it is not one of the best known,"* says **Tiziana Gennari, Anguilla Tourist Board Italy**. *"Being at BIT is essential for us to be 'discovered' by travelers, but often also by buyers who do not know us. We want the beauty of the island to get straight to buyers and the public. I have come to BIT for many years, and this year's attendance is comparable to the busiest events I can remember. We are really very satisfied."*

Nicaragua chose BIT 2023 to make its unique features known to the European market, as **Ana Carolina Garcia, Marketing Director Istituto Nicaraguense de Turismo**, explains: *"We are here to introduce Nicaragua as an alternative destination in Central America to the Italian and European markets. The country's main strength is its pristine and very diverse nature, which allows many open-air tourism options, from beaches to rainforests. With its focus on these types of travel, we believe BIT 2023 is an excellent stage to introduce the entire European market to a destination that is not well known in Europe but has enormous potential for those who enjoy open-air tourism."*

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At BIT 2023, top buyers from around the world find what they're looking for Similar satisfaction emerges on the demand side. **Susanne Mozel, of Omega National Travel (Canada)**, explains: *"North American clients know Italy very well. They're very demanding and look for peculiar proposals in small villages or along off-the-beaten-track routes. At BIT, I found some very unique proposals, such as dining under a real vineyard or exploring the secret passages of a castle aristocrats used to move around without being noticed by their subjects. It is this kind of fascinating experiences that make the difference."*

"The Middle Eastern market is exploring active lifestyles, which were not of much interest to Middle Eastern clients until recently. As a result, people are also beginning to look for active vacations. We are here to look for experiences of this kind, not only in the Italian context, but in Europe in general. Italy is also a favorite destination for wedding tourism and honeymooners: besides the great classics such as Venice, travelers are also seeking southern destinations, like the Amalfi Coast, small towns and smaller islands," summarizes **Abdoul Azez of Highline Travel & Tourism, UAE**.

BIT 2023 confirms a steady trend towards **outdoor, active but not excessive vacations**, and the search for **lesser-known destinations and authentic experiences**. Moreover, **food and wine tourism** is a well-established fact that is part of almost every travel experience.

Taking advantage of restrictions being gradually removed --a long-awaited move-- 2023 will also be **the year of a comeback for long-haul journeys**: whether in search of new destinations, particularly **in Africa and the Middle East**, or of classic destinations **in the Indian Ocean or the Caribbean**.

BIT 2023 reaffirmed and strengthened its pivotal role not only for tourism **but for the economic system in general, with many Italian and foreign institutional participants and an important impact on the city**: in addition to being a platform for exchanges supply and demand, it also represented a knowledge-sharing hub **outlining the future of tourism. More than 40 conferences** were held in the Bringing Innovation into Travel format and dozens of events were organized by exhibitors, that brought together **authoritative academics, top institutional levels, experts and analysts of international standing** around the same table.

BIT 2023 also marked a milestone as the **first carbon-neutral edition**: the estimated 3,000 tons of CO₂ generated by the event will be fully offset by a certified environmental project of a photovoltaic plant in the Andhra Pradesh region of India, therefore also having a social value.

The 44th edition will be held, still at Allianz MiCo in Milan, **from Sunday, February 4 to Tuesday, February 6, 2024**.