



THE OVS GROUP IS INVESTING IN PUGLIA TO CREATE A TECH INNOVATION HUB AND AN EVOLVED CENTRE TO REUSE FASHIONS AS PART OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

THE PROJECT, WHICH IS BEING DEVELOPED OVER THREE YEARS, WILL BE CONCENTRATING 19 MILLION EUROS OF RESOURCES DESTINED TO THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT AND ANOTHER 14 MILLION EURO TO IMPLEMENT CUTTING-EDGE SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE GROUP'S CONSTANT DEVELOPMENT. THERE ARE PLANS TO CREATE 125 NEW JOBS.

Bari, 17 January 2023 - Today, the OVS Group presented an investment project for the creation of a tech innovation hub and a multi-purpose centre to serve sustainability and the circular economy.

The project will create 125 new jobs, including positions for graduates with skills in the digital world, AI, and cyber security, as well as specialised figures who will be working to recycle clothing and in activities linked to the multi-purpose centre. This new technological innovation is where the OVS Group will focus a vast part of its high digital content development programme (approx. €19mIn dedicated resources for the three-year period 2023-2025) and a cutting-edge system to support Group development in areas concerning clothes re-cycling with a view to the circular economy (investments for approx. €14MIn in the three-year period 2023-2025).

This initiative has been put in place through the Puglia Region Investment Plan for large companies, a strategic tool that allows the company to increase its investments and at the same time, boost the innovation rate in projects, through collaboration with the technological districts in the area. It also makes the most of the synergies between innovative companies and the local area, thanks also to the use of European funding to support total investment.

"The Puglia investment project is part of our group's development plan within the sphere of digital innovation, with the creation of a technology hub and a multi-purpose centre to recycle clothing in view of the circular economy. We chose to invest in this region", says **Stefano Beraldo, CEO of the OVS Group**, "because it has an ecosystem of industrial hubs and businesses with important specialisations in the clothing-fashion industry. Our partnership with the Polytechnic University of Bari means we also have

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the opportunity to use the different skills in the area. We will be working with young graduates who meet the necessary requirements to develop new technological innovation projects. I am sure that this important initiative will be able to have a positive impact, both in production and social terms, allowing us to create further growth opportunities for the future.”

“Puglia is a developing area, able to offer employment opportunities for young people, together with solid prospects for professional growth, says **Michele Emiliano, President of the Puglia Region**. If large companies like OVS choose to invest here, it is also thanks to the support measures that we put in place as the Puglia Region and to synergy with Municipalities, University, Polytechnic Universities, and research centres. OVS’s planned project for Puglia includes a multi-purpose logistics centre to manage clothing recycling processes, closely linked to the areas of eco sustainability and the circular economy. A total investment of approximately 33 million euros including intelligent automation intervention and the use of AI techniques, which will create 125 new jobs. I would like to thank the OVS Group for this commitment to innovation, with its hopes and good will.”

“One after another, investments are coming in from large national and international companies that have chosen to come to our area, and in this case, our industrial development area”, says **Antonio Decaro, Mayor of Bari**. In this case, as well as a technological innovation hub, which will be working with the Polytechnic University of Bari, OVS will be creating a multi-purpose centre to recycle clothes in view of the circular economy, involving greater investment and boosting the company’s presence in the area. I would like to thank the company and its entire management for choosing our city for this significant investment, and I am sure that it will find our institutions to be present and reliable, as well as being able to count on a pool of resources that can guarantee value to the development of new activities.”

“What has been happening in Puglia over the last few years is extraordinary but definitely no coincidence”, says **Alessandro Delli Noci, Councillor for Economic Development for the Puglia Region**. “And this significant investment from OVS, which I thank, is yet more proof, in just a few days, of how attractive Puglia has become as a region worth investing in. This is thanks to the incentives made available to companies, but also to the excellent synergy with the world of education and research which allows us to become, more and more a point of reference for new technologies and a genuine innovation hub. This project, in particular, has an added value because it also integrates

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clothes management and recycling activities, thanks to the logistic capacity of the city of Bari.”

“OVS’s choice to invest in Bari, aside from the significant size in economic terms as well as in terms of the new jobs it creates”, says Eugenio Di Sciascio, Deputy Mayor of Bari, “is also important because it reveals how the new paradigms of digital transformation and the sustainable, circular economy has an excellent breeding ground for a new development model. It encourages us to continue in our strategy to place the city as a centre for innovation, able to attract more and more large businesses.”

“OVS is making a significant investment in Puglia, with new headquarters dedicated to technological innovation at the Polytechnic University of Bari”, says **Rector, Francesco Cupertino**, “This collaboration model between the public and private sectors, which is bringing big businesses into the university,” he adds, “has allowed us to set up many research and development laboratories, skills centres, co-working spaces and training on extremely current subjects of great economic and social importance. Digitalisation, in particular concerns all manufacturing sectors across the board and as a result, it needs increasingly hybridised professional profiles. This is also the best way to direct study courses”, concludes Cupertino, “and to guarantee qualified jobs for our young talents.”

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