

**PUGLIA**  
L'Italia levante



**ITALIA**  
2025 年大阪・関西万博  
EXPO 2025 OSAKA

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

# SPACEPORTS FOR THE FUTURE SPACE ECONOMY

**Monday 12th May 2025**

11.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

Italy Pavillion - Auditorium

Expo 2025 Osaka



Project co-financed by the European Union in accordance with the Operational Programme Puglia 2014-2020  
Action 3.5 - Initiatives for strengthening international business development



# Overview

In today's rapidly expanding global space economy, every spaceport has the potential to become a driver of economic development in the regions they serve. There are over 40 active spaceports worldwide, with a significant number of new spaceports under construction or due for completion by 2030. Whereas the U.S. is the global leader for spaceports, Europe and Japan are developing multiple commercial spaceports, looking to gain a competitive edge.

In Italy, the Italian government has designated Grottaglie airport, in the province of Taranto (Puglia), as Italy's first spaceport and the Italian Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC) has already approved the Regulation for the construction and operation of spaceports, taking a fundamental step towards launching a new strategic segment of civil aviation which will allow commercial suborbital flights to be carried out in Italy in the near future. Based on the new regulations, Aeroporti di Puglia (AdP), the regional airport management company, is in the process of adapting Grottaglie airport's flight infrastructures to accommodate a new generation space vehicles and has presented the blueprint for

Grottaglie's futuristic spaceport, to be built over the next 3 to 4 years, which includes not only a hangar but also a multifunctional building, intended to host a museum, a research centre and a start-up incubator.

The international Forum "**Spaceports for the future space economy**" at EXPO 2025 Osaka, promoted by Regione Puglia and DTA - Technological Aerospace Cluster, aims to present the strategic role of Puglia in the development of Italy and Europe's autonomous access to space, based on the potential of the Grottaglie spaceport, by creating an opportunity for discussion on the growing importance of spaceports to the global space economy and the best models for the development of sustainable spaceports.

George C. Nield, Chairman of the Global Spaceport Alliance, will lead the discussion and, with the contribution of industry experts and institutions from Italy, Japan and the US, help analyse industry trends and delve into the experience of operational spaceports to outline the future of spaceports and commercial space transportation.



# Agenda

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| <b>10.30 – 11.00</b> | <b>REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>11.00 – 11.15</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION AND OPENING REMARKS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>George C. Nield</b>, Chairman, Global Spaceport Alliance (Event Chair)</li><li>• <b>Giuseppe Acierno</b>, President &amp; Managing Director, DTA – Technological Aerospace Cluster</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>11.15 – 11.30</b> | <b>INSTITUTIONAL GREETINGS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Elena Sgarbi</b>, Deputy Commissioner General for Italy at EXPO 2025 Osaka</li><li>• <b>Alessandro Delli Noci</b>, Regional Minister for Economic Development, Regione Puglia</li><li>• <b>Francesco Paolo Cannito</b>, First Counsellor, Embassy of Italy in Japan</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>11.20 – 11.45</b> | <b>KEYNOTE SPEECH: HARNESSING GROWTH IN THE GLOBAL SPACE ECONOMY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>George C. Nield</b>, Chairman, Global Spaceport Alliance</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>11.45 – 12.00</b> | <b>INSPIRATIONAL SPEECH: THE FUTURE SPACE ECONOMY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Naoko Yamazaki</b>, Representative Director, Japan Spaceport Association &amp; Former JAXA Astronaut</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>12.00 – 12.50</b> | <b>PANEL: THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF SPACEPORTS FOR INNOVATION AND GROWTH IN THE NEW SPACE ECONOMY</b> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>George C. Nield</b>, Chairman, Global Spaceport Alliance</li></ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Giovanni Di Antonio</b>, Director, Technological Innovation Division, ENAC – Italian Civil Aviation Authority</li><li>• <b>Scott McLaughlin</b>, Executive Director, Spaceport America (in remote)</li><li>• <b>Yoshinori Odagiri</b>, President &amp; CEO, Space Cotan – Hokkaido Spaceport</li><li>• <b>Patrizio Summa</b>, Director of Special Projects and Performance Control, Aeroporti di Puglia S.p.A.</li><li>• <b>Shigeru Shimose</b>, Corporate Officer, Space One &amp; Director, Spaceport Kii</li></ul> |
| <b>12.50 – 13.00</b> | <b>CONCLUSIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>George C. Nield</b>, Chairman, Global Spaceport Alliance</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |





## George C. Nield

**Chairman, Global Spaceport Alliance**

Dr. George C. Nield is the President of Commercial Space Technologies, LLC, which he founded to encourage, facilitate, and promote commercial space activities. He also serves as the Chairman of the Global Spaceport Alliance. In March of 2022 he flew to space on the fourth human flight of Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket. From 2008-2018, he was the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation at the Federal Aviation Administration. Earlier in his career, Dr. Nield held engineering roles at the Air Force

Flight Test Center, the NASA Johnson Space Center, and the Orbital Sciences Corporation. A graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, he received an M.S. and Ph.D. in Aeronautics and Astronautics from Stanford University, and an MBA from George Washington University. He is also a Flight Test Engineering graduate of the USAF Test Pilot School. Dr. Nield is a registered Professional Engineer and a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.



## Giuseppe Acierno

**President & Managing Director, DTA  
Technological Aerospace Cluster**

Giuseppe Acierno, married with three children, has held numerous roles and carried out various functions in Italian public and private companies as well as in public bodies, gaining various experiences in the aerospace field. He is today President and General Director of the Aerospace Technological District (DTA) scarl, member of the governing body of the National Aerospace Technological Cluster, of which he was the first President and founder, member of the board of directors of the ITS aerospace Puglia foundation of which he was the founder, manager of the BIC incubator of the European network of ESA BIC of which he was the founder, responsible of the Italian research infrastructure Grottaglie Airport test bed. He has held various roles such as Ceo of the Apulian airports network, member of the board of directors of ENAV Italian Air Navigation Service Provider, carrying out functions of President of sustainability committee and President of remuneration and appointments committee.



## Elena Sgarbi

**Deputy Commissioner General for Italy at EXPO 2025 Osaka**

Born in Mantua (Italy), Elena Sgarbi graduated in Diplomatic and International Science at the University of Trieste in 1997. She entered the Italian Diplomatic Service in 1998. Her first assignment was at the Diplomatic Protocol Department and then at the Minister's Office. Her first post abroad was as Consul of Italy at the Consulate General in Barcelona, Spain, from 2002 to 2006. From 2006 to 2010 Elena Sgarbi was First Secretary and then Counselor for Commercial Affairs at the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo, Japan.

In 2010 she returned to Rome at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, first at the Directorate General for European Integration, where she held the position of Chief of Staff, and then at the Directorate General for European Union as Chief of the Department for the bilateral relations with the Central-Eastern European Countries.

She served as Consul General of Italy in Houston, U.S.A., from 2014 to 2018 and then as Consul General of Italy in Istanbul, Turkey, from 2018 to 2022.

Elena Sgarbi was appointed Deputy Commissioner General for Italy at EXPO 2025 Osaka on June 15 th 2022.





## Alessandro Delli Noci

### Regional Minister for Economic Development, Regione Puglia

Alessandro Delli Noci graduated in Management Engineering at the University of Salento and subsequently received his Ph.D. in Governance and Political Culture, as well as a Master in Management and Territorial Governance.

At the age of just 29, he was appointed Councillor for Technological innovation, Community, Youth and Labour policies at the City of Lecce, as well as coordinator for the Italian Digital Agenda for ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) and vice-president of CIDAC – Association of the Cities of Art and Culture.

Re-elected, he became Deputy Mayor of the City of Lecce and Councillor for Public works, Strategic planning, Digital agenda, Technological innovation, Europe and Cooperation. Today, he is regional Minister for Economic development and Competitiveness, International and trade policies, Energy, Industrial research and Innovation, Youth policies and EU Funding Programming at Puglia Regional Government.



## Francesco Paolo Cannito

### First Counsellor, Embassy of Italy in Japan

Francesco P. Cannito is a career diplomat with almost 20 years' experience in international relations, currently serving as First Counsellor at the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo. He oversees the Economic and Commercial Office coordinating initiatives in science and technology, mobility, energy and infrastructure. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs serving as Desk Officer in the Directorate General for Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Affairs, then as Deputy Chief of Staff and Deputy Director for strategic planning and budget management at the Development Cooperation Department. In this capacity, he lectured a course at LUISS University in Rome. Lately, he served as Head of the Political Affairs and Press Office at the Embassy of Italy in Seoul, Republic of Korea, and as Deputy Head of the Trade, Science & Space Affairs Office at the Embassy of Italy in Washington, USA. Back to Rome, he acted as Chief of Staff to the Head of Legal Affairs' Department before his current assignment in Japan.

## Naoko Yamazaki

### Representative Director, Japan Spaceport Association & Former JAXA Astronaut

Naoko Yamazaki earned a Master of Engineering degree from University of Tokyo in 1996, then started working for Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). In April 2010, Yamazaki was onboard Space Shuttle Discovery on the crew of STS-131, an assembly & resupply mission to the International Space Station.

After retiring from JAXA in 2011, Yamazaki served as a member of National Space Policy Committee of Japan Cabinet Office (2012 - 2022) and currently as a member of its subcommittees on basic policies.

Yamazaki co-founded Space Port Japan Association in 2018 and has been serving as its representative director. Yamazaki also has been devoting herself to educate the next generations as a president of Young Astronaut Club Japan since 2021. Yamazaki also joined in Council of The Earthshot Prize, which was launched by The Prince of Wales and The Royal Foundation in 2020, to inspire a decade of action to repair our home planet.





## Giovanni Di Antonio

**Director, Technological Innovation Division, ENAC – Italian Civil Aviation Authority**



Giovanni Di Antonio is an Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineer with over 25 years of experience in defense and aerospace. He has developed extensive expertise in airworthiness and emerging aerospace domains, including Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), Higher Airspace Operations (HAO), and Commercial Space Transportation (CST).

In his current role as Director of Technological Innovation at ENAC, the Italian Civil Aviation Authority, Giovanni leads the development of national regulations for spaceports and suborbital flights, while supporting the establishment of the Italian National Spaceport at Taranto-Grottaglie Airport in southern Italy. Moreover he contributed to developing ENAC's Sandbox Regulation.

As part of the SESAR ECHO 2 Project, he oversees the work package dedicated to integrating supersonic, hypersonic, and suborbital flights into the European ATM system. His prior contributions to the SESAR ECHO Project included the development of the European HAO Concept of Operations. He also chaired the EASA HAO Task Force, which explored principles that may lay the groundwork for future European regulations.

In the field of UAS and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), Giovanni has contributed to Italy's National Strategic Plan for AAM and currently serves as Chair of JARUS (Joint Authorities for Rulemaking on Unmanned Systems), advancing global collaboration in unmanned aviation.

## Scott McLaughlin

**Executive Director, Spaceport America**



Scott A. McLaughlin is an experienced executive and engineer with extensive experience in the private and government sectors. His career includes roles as a technician, production manager, researcher, design engineer, sales lead, and executive, which gives him a unique ability to lead while understanding a diversity of perspectives.

Born and raised in New Mexico, Mr. McLaughlin earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from New Mexico State University. He later became a founder and principal in a radar design and manufacturing company in Colorado, where his innovative designs supported space launch, aviation, atmospheric monitoring, and range operations worldwide. After an acquisition, he returned to New Mexico to pursue his passion for aerospace.

He joined Spaceport America in 2019 and became Executive Director in 2021. Under his leadership, the spaceport continues to grow as an international hub for spaceflight and aerospace innovation.

## Yoshinori Odagiri

**President & CEO, Space Cotan – Hokkaido Spaceport**

Yoshinori Odagiri started his career at All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. (ANA) in 1987, focusing on flight operations management. After leading operational teams at Narita and Haneda Airports, he became Deputy Director of the Asia Strategy Office in 2011 and joined AirAsia Japan as a founding member, serving as CEO from 2012. In 2016, he joined ANA Strategic Research Institute, conducting studies on the revitalization of domestic airports for local governments and airport managers. He has served as President & CEO of SPACE COTAN Co., Ltd. since April 2021.





## Patrizio Summa

**Director of Special Projects and Performance Control,  
Aeroporti di Puglia S.p.A.**

Born in Bari in 1967, Patrizio Summa graduated in Economics in 1990 and is enrolled in the Register of Auditors. He is currently Director of Special Projects and Performance Monitoring, Commercial Coordinator of Aeroporti di Puglia S.p.A. – Chairman of the Board of Statutory Auditors of the PREVAER Fund (Pension Fund of Air Transport Sector in Italy). Previously he held the position of Chief Financial Officer of Aeroporti di Puglia S.p.A. and companies in the ICT and technological innovation sector, Member of the Small Medium Airport Group of Airport Council International – Europe (Europe Airports Association), Coordinator of the Assaeroporti Airport Charges Group (Italian Airports Association), Member of the South-Continental Territorial Committee of Unicredit, Auditor of Assaeroporti (Italian Airports Association).



## Shigeru Shimose

**Corporate Officer, Space One & Director, Spaceport Kii**

Shigeru SHIMOSE Corporate Officer of SPACE ONE, Director of Spaceport Kii  
As a former Research and Development Staff at JAXA, Shigeru was involved in the structural development of launch vehicles and satellites, as well as the development, operation, and maintenance of launch vehicle systems. During his 26-year tenure at JAXA, he participated in the launch of approximately 50 rockets, including those for satellites and sub-orbital missions.

Currently, as the General Manager of Space Programs in the Emerging Frontiers Division at Shimizu Corporation, he is seconded to SPACE ONE where he is involved in the construction of Spaceport Kii. He is engaged in launch site operations as a Corporate Officer of SPACE ONE and serves as the Director of Spaceport Kii.

