

NATIONAL  
BIODIVERSITY  
FUTURE CENTER



Italian Chamber of Commerce  
In Canada



Canada 

# ROOTS & ROUTES

THE ITALY-CANADA BIODIVERSITY EXCHANGE  
SCIENCE, EDUCATION & INNOVATION STRATEGIES

*AN NBFC FOLLOW-UP TO THE CANADA-ITALY FORUM ON AI*

17 / 18  
MARCH 2026

University of  
Milano-Bicocca



*Last November, the Canada-Italy Forum on AI laid the roots.*

*On March 17–18, it is time to set the routes:  
two days of collaboration and exchange between  
the two countries, transforming early results  
into concrete initiatives - across three strategic pillars:  
education, science, and innovation for impact.*

# PROGRAM

Room "Luisella Sironi" (U4 - 08) Floor -1  
U4 Building (Scienze Geologiche e Geotecnologiche)  
P.za della Scienza, 4 20126 Milano

**Tuesday, March 17**

**Morning : Opening**

**10:30 - Restricted Session: The Education Pillar**

Focus: Joint co-operation and exchange options for PhD programs

CAN :

- Prof. Mehrdad Hajibabaei, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph; Founder and Chief Scientific Officer, eDNAtec
- Dr. Francesco Tordini, Technology Transfer Manager, McGill University
- Prof. Geneviève Lajoie, Professor of Microbiology, Centre Armand-Frappier Santé Biotechnologies · INRS

ITA :

- Prof. Paola Branduardi, President of the Doctoral School, University of Milano-Bicocca
- Prof. Gianluca Sarà, Coordinator of the National Doctoral Programme in Biodiversity founded by NBFC, University of Palermo - remote

**11:45 – Institutional Opening**

- Prof. Marco Orlandi, Magnificent Rector, University of Milano-Bicocca
- Pres. Luigi Fiorentino, President, National Biodiversity Future Center (NBFC) - remote
- H.E. Elissa Golberg, Ambassador of Canada to Italy - remote

**12:30 – Networking Buffet Lunch**



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# PROGRAM

**Tuesday, March 17**

## Afternoon : Knowledge & Impact

**Co-presenters :** Pietro Leo, Executive Architect & CTO, IBM Italia  
Ilaria Bortone, Co-founder, APS PLANET

### 14:00 – Introduction: Why Canada?

- Simone Grassi, Senior Trade & Investment Officer, Embassy of Canada to Italy
- Ruggiera Sarcina, Director – Italy, Italian Chamber of Commerce in Canada

### 14:15 – Pillars of Bilateral Collaboration

Key alignment points and results from the Montreal Mission

- Prof. Andrea Galimberti, Professor, University of Milano-Bicocca and Spoke 5 Leader (Urban Biodiversity), NBFC
- Prof. Rachele De Giuseppe, Professor, Dietetics and Clinical Nutrition, University of Pavia and NBFC
- Prof. Mehrdad Hajibabaei, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph; Founder and Chief Scientific Officer, eDNAtec

### 14:30 – Pillar 1: Science

CAN :

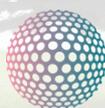
- Prof. Geneviève Lajoie, Professor of Microbiology, Centre Armand-Frappier Santé Biotechnologies · INRS
- Prof. Fanie Pelletier, Co-director, Québec Biodiversity Science (QCBS) - remote

NBFC Testimonials and Best-fit synergy cases :

- Urban Green Development sector: Prof. Maria Chiara Pastore, Professor, Politecnico di Milano and Spoke 5 (Urban Biodiversity) leader of NBFC
- Phytotechnology: Dr. Emily Rose Palm, Assistant Professor, University of Milano-Bicocca and NBFC
- Sea Research and Innovation: Prof. Gianluca Sarà, Professor, University of Palermo and Spoke 1 (Marine Biodiversity) leader of NBFC - remote

### 15:15 – Pillar 2: Innovation and Impact

- From Lab to Market: The McGill Model – Dr. Francesco Tordini, Technology Transfer Manager, McGill University
- Attracting Talent & Investment: The NBFC strategy – Prof. Alberto Di Minin, Professor, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna and Innovation Director of NBFC
- From Lab to International Market: eDNAtec - Prof. Mehrdad Hajibabaei, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph; Founder and Chief Scientific Officer, eDNAtec
- Examples from the NBFC network:
  - Dr. Marco Vitale, Blockchain Expert, Trusticert
  - Dr. Emiliano Pioltelli, CEO, Nemoris



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**Tuesday, March 17**

**Afternoon : Knowledge & Impact (continued)**

**Co-presenters :** Pietro Leo, Executive Architect & CTO, IBM Italia  
Ilaria Bortone, Co-founder, APS PLANET

**16:00 – Bridging Ecosystems in Practice**

**Round Table**

**CAN :**

- Nicole Jauvin, Director, Business Development, Europe - Foreign Investments, Montréal International - remote
- Dr. Francesco Tordini, Technology Transfer Manager, McGill University
- Dr. Naveed Aziz, Vice-President, Research and Innovation, Genome Canada - remote

**ITA :**

- Dr. Antonio Carbone, Open Innovation and EU Affairs, NBFC Hub
- Prof. Hellas Cena, Professor, Department of Public Health, Experimental and Forensic Medicine, University of Pavia
- Prof. Paola Branduardi, Professor, Department of Biotechnology and Biosciences, University of Milano-Bicocca

**Moderator:** Prof. Massimo Labra, Professor, Department of Biotechnology and Biosciences, University of Milano-Bicocca and Scientific Director of NBFC

**17:00 – New Frontiers**

- Jakub Skrzypczyk, Director of Engagement, Ocean Tech - remote

**17:15 – Day 1 Conclusion**

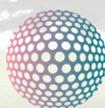
**Wednesday, March 18**

**Morning**

**09:30 – Wrap-up & Roadmap – restricted session**

**10:30 – Laboratory Visits**

**13:00 – Light Farewell Lunch**



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