

ANSA – ITALIANS PRESENT SMART CITY AT EXPO



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(by Ilaria Liberatore) (ANSA) – Milan, July 30 – The first smart city for low-cost housing will be built in Brazil by the Italian firm RECS Architects.

The 'format' of the city – to be named Croatà Laguna Ecopark and located in northeastern Brazil in the state of Ceará, about 33 kilometers from Fortaleza – was presented on Wednesday in Brazil's pavilion at Milan Expo 2015. Those in attendance included Planet Idea operations director Gianni Savio, SocialFare managing director Laura Orestano and several representatives of the Italian-Brazilian chambers of commerce of San Paolo and Fortaleza. "Croatà Laguna Ecopark is a new city with homes and services, places for socializing and shops, schools, an industrial hub and a lot of greenery," Savio said. "It is the exact opposite of 'dormitory' areas. By building outside of existing cities, we save on the land acquisition costs, which account for only 3-5% of the total costs, and we invest what we saved in 'smart' ideas."

Savio said that smart cities are urban nuclei "in which the smartest and most economically sustainable technologies are designed and integrated", and are also focused on social housing, "and therefore targeting mid and low-income levels, showing that the economical nature of a construction does not rule out its being of high quality". In this aspect the project differs from other smart cities, such as Masdar City near Abu Dhabi. Croatà Laguna Ecopark is under construction and the first part of the urbanization works is expected to be completed in May 2016. Once finished, it will cover a surface area of 330 hectares and will have about 21,000 inhabitants in a total of 6,000 homes and almost 6,800 lots, including crafts and industrial settlements. The cost of a home of about 50 square meters is expected to be about 100,000-120,000 reales, equivalent to about 30,000-35,000 euros. The project is "entirely Italian," Savio noted. "We found the resources through crowdfunding, by getting businessmen and firms with whom we collaborate involved, mainly from Piedmont or other areas of northern Italy. No state or investment funds have been used, though they may be when we replicate the project. "The true innovation is that there is not only technology at the center of this city; there is also a vision for social impact that aims to create positive results for the community," added Orestano. "Cities of the future will have to be inclusive and be able to pick up on the dreams and needs of people in a dynamic manner, getting them involved in the economic, cultural and social development process. 'Smart communities' will soon become 'spark communities': communities that spur change".

http://www.ansa.it/english/news/expo2015/2015/07/30/italians-present-smart-city-at-expo_a1bcb9f5-e298-4ebd-bb3c-62f1b4c85bbb.html

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