

PRESS RELEASE

**CALL4INNOVATION FOR DEEPTech AND NEW MATERIALS:
PHONONIC VIBES AND ORA GRAPHENE WIN
THE OPEN INNOVATION PROGRAMME
BY IDEOFARM (POWERSOFT GROUP) AND INTESA SANPAOLO**

- **At the Demo Day hosted by K-array in Scarperia (Florence), the 10 finalists, selected by a panel of experts from around 50 startups and scale-ups, presented projects in electroacoustics, metamaterials and wireless power transfer.**
- **Ideofarm will enter into a partnership with Phononic Vibes and will explore a potential collaboration with Ora Graphene, the first steps towards new industrial pathways.**

Florence, 26 October 2026 – Italy's **Phononic Vibes** and Canada's **Ora Graphene** are the winners of the **Call4Innovation for Deeptech and New Materials**, the open innovation programme promoted by **Ideofarm** (Powersoft Group's Innovation Garage) and **Intesa Sanpaolo**, through its **Banca dei Territori** division headed by Stefano Barrese, and delivered by **Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center**, headed by Viviana Bacigalupo, through the **Circular Economy Lab**, a joint initiative with **Factory Plus**.

Of the 10 finalists, selected by a panel of experts from around 50 startups and scale-ups specialising in three strategic areas – electroacoustics, metamaterials and wireless power transfer – **Phononic Vibes** and **Ora Graphene** were named joint winners by **Ideofarm** for their significant innovations in acoustics: the former for eliminating noise through metamaterials, the latter for enhancing sound quality through a new application of graphene.

Phononic Vibes is an innovative Italian SME and a spin-off of the Politecnico di Milano, specialising in noise and vibration cancellation through its metamaterials: engineered structures whose effectiveness stems not from the type of material used but from the design of their internal shape – their geometry. Phononic Vibes designs sound-absorbing panels featuring a geometrically perfect internal “maze pattern”: when a sound wave or vibration enters it, it becomes trapped, bounces around and cancels itself out. Panels made with the metamaterials designed by Phononic Vibes can reduce a wider range of noise and vibrations, even at low frequencies; they are sustainable, being produced at low cost from recycled materials, and extremely versatile.

Ora Graphene is a Canadian technology company based in Montréal that uses graphene to revolutionise the world of audio: it builds speaker and headphone membranes that deliver markedly better sound while consuming far less energy. To make a speaker or a pair of headphones produce sound, a cone-shaped “membrane” moves back and forth to displace air and generate sound waves; traditionally, it is made of paper, plastic or metal. Ora Graphene produces these membranes from a special patented material called GrapheneQ™, made of over 95% graphene. As the thinnest, stiffest and lightest material known, graphene applied to music delivers

flawless, distortion-free sound, extends battery life and enables smaller yet more powerful devices.

The winners were announced today at the end of the **Demo Day** hosted by **K-array**, a **Powersoft Group** company, at its premises in Scarperia (Florence). The awards will be followed by two concrete initiatives: **Ideofarm** plans to establish a partnership with **Phononic Vibes** and with **Ora Graphene**, the first steps towards an industrial pathway.

Viviana Bacigalupo, General Manager of Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, said: *“Open innovation is a strategic lever for accelerating technological development and enhancing business competitiveness. Our collaboration with Ideofarm is a clear example of how Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, through its specialist expertise and its innovation network, can support the Group’s clients in identifying new solutions to their industrial challenges. The startups recognised today demonstrate the value of this approach, which brings business needs and emerging technologies together, helping to turn innovation into practical applications and new growth opportunities.”*

Luca Lastrucci, CEO of Powersoft, the company that controls Ideofarm, said: *“The calibre of the finalists made the choice anything but easy. It confirmed that there is a deeptech ecosystem ready to take on real industrial challenges, to scale up and to compete in the market. We were particularly impressed by the projects of Phononic Vibes and Ora Graphene, and the former’s technology can contribute to the development of our future products. That is why we wanted the award to be a tangible commitment: we are making our engineers, our laboratories and our market knowledge available to support the development of the idea all the way to industrial application. This project shows that our decision ten years ago to invest in research through Ideofarm, our idea accelerator, was the right one to keep innovating and maintain our technological leadership worldwide. I would like to thank all the finalists, as well as Intesa Sanpaolo, Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, Factory Plus and Fideuram. Together, we have built a format that brings research, business and capital together, and which we hope can be replicated over time, including in other sectors.”*

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Intesa Sanpaolo

With €425 billion in loans and more than €1.5 trillion in customer financial assets as of the end of December 2025, Intesa Sanpaolo is Italy’s largest banking group and has a significant international presence. It is a European leader in wealth management and operates through an integrated Wealth Management, Protection, and Advisory platform built on fully controlled product factories and distribution networks managed under full strategic control.

In the ESG sphere, the Group ranks among the global leaders for social impact and continues its commitment to decarbonization and supporting clients in their sustainable transition. The Bank’s museum network, Gallerie d’Italia, showcases its artistic heritage and hosts cultural projects of recognized value.

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Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center

Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center is the Intesa Sanpaolo Group company dedicated to frontier innovation. It explores future scenarios and trends, develops multidisciplinary applied research projects, supports startups, accelerates corporate business transformation according to the principles of Open Innovation and the Circular Economy, promotes the development of innovative ecosystems, and spreads a culture of innovation, helping make Intesa Sanpaolo a driving force for a more conscious, inclusive, and sustainable economy.

Headquartered on the 31st floor of Intesa Sanpaolo’s skyscraper and supported by a national and international network of hubs and laboratories, the Innovation Center enables relationships with stakeholders across the innovation ecosystem—including companies, startups, incubators, research centers, universities, and national and international institutions—and promotes new forms of entrepreneurship and access to venture capital, also through the support of its subsidiary Neva SGR.

ABOUT IDEOFARM E POWERSOFT

Ideofarm, the Innovation Garage and a company of the Powersoft Group, enables engineers, designers, and potential new employees to develop innovative and disruptive ideas. Established in 2016 as an Idea Accelerator, it helps transform innovative projects into concrete actions whenever possible. Its activities include the research and potential development of innovative technologies, primarily for Digital Audio/Video Entertainment applications involving mechatronics, electroacoustics, innovative materials, and software for complex systems. It also serves as a point of contact between Research Centers, Universities, and the world of work, with activities ranging from school-to-work programs to guidance in choosing future career paths.

Powersoft S.p.A., is a group operating in the professional audio industry, specializing in high-efficiency amplification, signal processing, and transducer technologies. Founded in 1995 in Scandicci (Florence), the Group has recently strengthened its position in the sector with the acquisition of K-array, an Italian leader in innovative loudspeaker systems. This move highlights Powersoft's commitment to innovation, proprietary technological know-how, and excellence in Made in Italy. With a total workforce of over 280 employees worldwide, the Powersoft Group operates across major international markets through its U.S. subsidiary, representative offices in Asia, and an extensive network of multi-brand distributors. All Research and Development activities are carried out in Italy, ensuring continuous innovation, helping define new sound standards, and meeting the needs of a constantly evolving global market.