Infrastructure Masons

Elea DATA CENTERS

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Elea Unveils Rio AI City, Poised to Become One of the Largest and Most Advanced AI Hubs Worldwide

The iMasons Legacy Podcast
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Photo courtesy of Elea - Elea's Rio AI City has a Concept design and master planning by Hyphen.

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Eight years ago, Alessandro Lombardi launched Elea Data Centers from his garage in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, because he believed Brazilians would embrace the opportunity to participate in the digital future.

The community reception proved his belief correct time and again.

"When we inaugurate a new data center, there is a line to arrive at the party," said Lombardi, President and Founder of Elea Data Centers, which today has nine data centers strategically located across Brazil. "The community views the data centers as a marvelous thing coming from the future."

When he launched Elea Data Centers, this future was internet connectivity, streaming services and cloud storage. Today, Lombardi is focused on bringing artificial intelligence (AI) to Brazil and Latin America.

The strategy centers on Rio AI City, an ecosystem of data centers with a capacity of 1.5 GW, scalable up to 3.2 GW, in Rio de Janeiro's Olympic Park region. The data centers will feature waterless cooling, high-density racks and be powered by 100% certified renewable energy. The first data center, RJO1, is operational and RJO2 is under construction with an initial capacity of 80 MW becoming available in 2026.

Elea Data Centers is also investing $300 million in the advanced power and cooling infrastructure needed to serve high-density AI workloads at a 50 MW data center under construction in São Paulo. This includes cooling distribution units (CDUs) from Vertiv for liquid cooling and transformers from WEG that are optimized to handle the demands of AI.

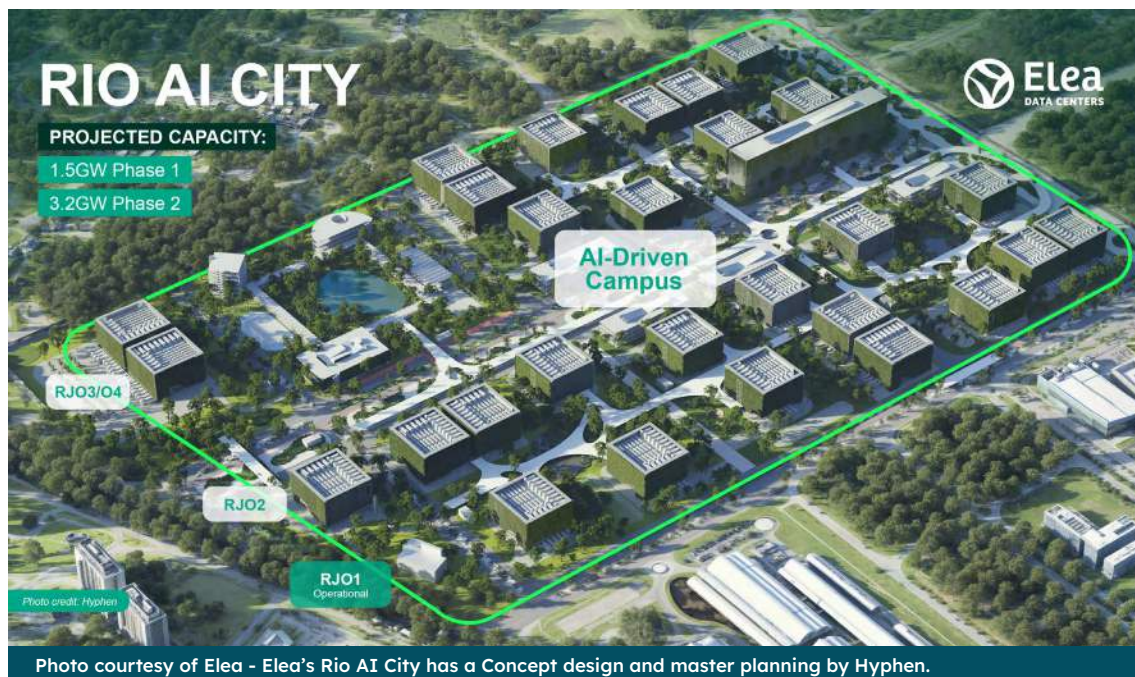"I'm positioning ourselves as the AI-ready platform," Lombardi said.

Photo courtesy of Elea - Elea's Rio AI City has a Concept design and master planning by Hyphen.

Digital Future for All

Lombardi's focus on serving the Brazilian market with AI-ready digital infrastructure will open this version of the digital future to more than 200 million people in one of the ten biggest economies in the world, noted Santiago Suinaga, Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure Masons (iMasons).

"Elea is forward thinking. They are getting their design and engineering adequate to receive traditional projects and new projects that require high power density," he said.

What's more, the Brazilian government and digital infrastructure companies across the country are vying to leverage Brazil's abundant and available renewable energy to become an international hub for AI.

At least 80% of Brazil's electric power generation comes from renewable sources, including hydro, wind, solar and biofuels. Access to this abundant green power enables data centers to run on 100% clean energy, noted Lombardi.

To support business growth in Brazil, the government overhauled the tax system in January and Brazil's Finance Minister Fernando Haddad announced a policy initiative during a trip in May to the United States that offers tax exemptions on non-domestically produced data center IT equipment.

"We are at the beginning of power shoring, which is basically exporting energy," Lombardi explained. "Brazil has 15 gigawatts of available green power today, and this could be used for international purposes. The workload needs to stay here, so you have operators locally."

Access to power is one of the biggest challenges highlighted in the iMasons 2025 State of the Digital Infrastructure Industry Report, noted Suinaga.

"Brazil's access to renewable energy is a strategic value proposition that aligns with our industry's approach to sustainable growth," he said.

Left to right: Gina Bonatti, Chief of Staff & Strategy, iMasons; Christian Belady, Senior Advisor DigitalBridge; Santiago Suinaga, Chief Executive Officer, iMasons; Denitza Arguirova, Director of Data Center Development, Provident; Alessandro Lombardi, President & Founder, Elea Data Centers.

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— Santiago Suinaga, CEO of iMasons

Local Community Focus

Lombardi is committed to ensuring local communities benefit from the build out of digital infrastructure in Brazil. Already, more than 450 people work for Elea Data Centers, and that number is expected to increase as the AI race accelerates. Rio AI City alone is expected to create 10,000 highly skilled construction jobs over the next decade.

Left to right: Alessandro Lombardi, President & Founder, Elea Data Centers; John Roach, Writer and Content Strategy, iMasons; Pedro Francisco Vormittag, Head of International Relations and Cooperation, Prefeitura.

Left to right: Santiago Suinaga, Chief Executive Officer, iMasons; Ana Franco, Regional Director, Americas iMasons Alessandro Lombardi, President & Founder, Elea Data Centers; Julia Dias Leite, Board Member, Elea Data Centers.

Today, the line up of people to celebrate the opening of new data centers in their communities is a testament to the appreciation people have for digital infrastructure and the digital services that digital infrastructure enables.

"In developing countries, data centers are enabling access to the world," Lombardi said.

President & Founder of Elea Data, Alessandro Lombardi.

"We're positioning ourselves as the AI-ready platform — building infrastructure that meets the power and cooling demands of next-generation workloads."

— Alessandro Lombardi,
President & Founder of Elea Data Centers

CONTRIBUTORS

Alessandro Lombardi
President & Founder
Elea Data Centers

John Roach
Writer and Content Strategy
Infrastructure Masons

Santiago Suinaga
Chief Executive Officer
Infrastructure Masons

Infrastructure
Masons

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