

PRESS RELEASE

The first Italian platform dedicated to Start-ups and their key investors ends its second edition dedicated to Nanotechnologies, Polymers, Composite materials and Structures

INTESA SANPAOLO START-UP INITIATIVE CELEBRATED ITS 14TH ITALIAN EDITION IN PADUA, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE “NANOCHALLENGE & POLYMERCHALLENGE 2011”

- **Nanochallenge & Polymerchallenge 2001** was organised by Veneto Nanotech and IMAST, with the support of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo
- **10 Start-Ups** from the Nanotech & Polymer sector were selected to participate in the event, about **100 potential investors** were present in the Arena di Padova, **45 expressions of interest** were gathered
- **Gaetano Micciché: “To date, 1,000 new businesses were contacted, over 200 were selected for training activities and over 160 were presented during the Investor Arena Meetings to key investors”**

Milan, Padua 11 November 2011 – Today saw the conclusion in Padua of the fourteenth edition of **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative** organised in conjunction with the “**Nanochallenge and Polymerchallenge 2011**”, the international business competition created and launched by Veneto Nanotech (the Italian nanotechnology district) in 2005, organised since 2007 in partnership with IMAST (the technological district for the engineering of polymeric and composite materials and structures), and with the support of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo, for the purpose of financing and launching the development of new businesses.

The aim of the event is to discover highly innovative new businesses, prepare them for the market challenge and give them the opportunity to present their ideas to potential investors and industrial partners, with the objective of **bringing the world of finance increasingly closer to the sector of technological innovation and research.**

The 10 start-ups selected for today’s challenge in Padua, coming from Italy, Israel and the United States, were presented to around 100 potential investors. 45 expressions of interest were gathered at the end of the Investor Arena Meetings.

Starting from October 2009, date of the first event, there have been **14 editions organised in Italy**, with the addition of an **international roadshow** in **November 2010**. This year as well, Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative has accompanied the new businesses which have stood out in the Italian editions to **London, Frankfurt, Paris, San Francisco** and **New York**, for a total of 12 meetings abroad.

The participating companies have gathered over **1,300 expressions of interest** overall. Some cases have been completed successfully, for many others talks are in progress to finalise investments.

*“Innovation, coupled with adequate competitive dimensions and the need to grow and develop also in international markets, is one of the main objectives which our entrepreneurial system must pursue with all its endeavours, especially at times like these, when Italy must prove its ability to regain trust and consensus. Intesa Sanpaolo has acted as promoter of an initiative aimed at seeking out young and technologically innovative Italian excellences, with the objective of putting them in a position to be able to grow and compete – stated **Gaetano Micciché**, General Manager of Intesa Sanpaolo –. “Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative”, two years on from the start of its journey, has been in contact with and analysed over 1,000 new businesses, over 200 were able to access the training programmes organised by the Bank and over 160 of these met with potential key investors during 26 meetings held in Italy, London, Paris, Frankfurt, the Silicon Valley and New York. This was aimed at bringing together innovators and lenders. Innovation, dimension and internationalisation are the 3 magic words that will enable the business community of our country on the one hand to seize the major opportunities that arise during complex periods such as the current one, and on the other hand to contribute towards reversing a trend which sees Italy not being able to express its potential to the full”.*

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The **Start-Up Initiative project extends the offering** of products and services which the Intesa Sanpaolo Group makes **available to Italian businesses**, especially those intending to follow a growth path through innovation and research, from **university spin-offs** to **start-ups**, from **high-tech SMEs** to **technology groups**.

The Bank provides assistance, consultancy, financing and equity through dedicated structures, including:

- **Intesa Sanpaolo Eurodesk**, a European Desk to facilitate companies’ access to EU financing schemes;
- **MedioCredito Italiano**, which manages various credit facilities for innovation, including **Nova+**;
- the **Corporate and Investment Banking Division**, through its **Merchant Banking** and **Innovation Team**;
- **Atlante Venture** and **Atlante Venture Mezzogiorno**, two Venture Capital funds for businesses aiming to grow through innovation and research;
- **Banca IMI** through its advisory services on stock market quotation and/or other growth strategies;
- the **Fondazione Filarete** partnership, along with University of Milan and Fondazione Cariplo;
- participation in the **SME Development Fund**, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance;
- partnership in the **Research & Entrepreneurship Foundation (*Fondazione Ricerca & Imprenditorialità*)**, promoted by the Bank along with the Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, which also includes the participation of leading academic organisations and businesses, such as Telecom Italia, Finmeccanica, Enel, the Fondazione Politecnico di Milano and the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia.

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