

**PRESS RELEASE**

**THE GLOBAL SOCIAL VENTURE COMPETITION (GSVC) ENDS TODAY IN MILAN WITH THE 15<sup>TH</sup> ITALIAN EDITION OF THE “INTESA SANPAOLO START-UP INITIATIVE”**

- **Three stages from October 2011 to January 2012 for singling out the best business ideas of the sector in our country**
- **The finalists will participate in the European GSVC, to take place in London in March, and will be eligible to be selected for April’s world competition in Berkeley**
- **In the two years of activity of the Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative – launched in October 2009 – over 1,000 in all between Start-ups and Early Stage Projects contacted, over 250 selected for the formative activities and about 150 presented in the arena to over 2,200 potential investors of reference, with about 1,400 displays of interest received**

*Milan, 27 January 2012* – The **Global Social Venture Competition (GSVC)** – the international award competition devised by the University of California at Berkeley to foster and to develop entrepreneurial ideas with marked social relevance and positive environmental impact –returns. In Italy the leader of the competition is **ALTIS**, the **Advanced School of Business and Society** of Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, a partner of the initiative since 2008 that, as already last year, avails itself of the collaboration of the **Intesa Sanpaolo Group** (through the **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative**), of the **San Michele Valore Impresa Association** and of the **ProSpera Association**.

The competition is organized in three stages:

- **21 December 2011: submission of the Business Plan** by the 25 teams selected from among the over 40 international participants;
- **25 January 2012: evaluation of 16 best entrepreneurial ideas** by a panel made up of investors, sector experts and academicians;
- **27 January 2012: presentation of the selected projects** (10 at most) to a group of about 100 Italian and international investors and stakeholders.

The Social Venture competitors placing in the top three will be awarded full and partial *tuition* for the ALTIS Master’s programme focusing on the world of small and medium-sized businesses. All project finalists will receive a free annual membership in U-Start (the multimedia platform that puts talented young people in touch with potential investors) and, in addition, will be eligible to take part in the European

GSVA, which will take place in London in March; if selected, they will gain admittance to the April finals in Berkeley.

The **Global Social Venture Competition (GSVC)** came into being in 1999 due to the will of the HAASS School of Business of Berkeley. The objective of the initiative – realized in partnership with the London Business School, the Columbia Business School, the Indiana School of Business, the ESSEC Business School and Thammasat University – is to favour the development of new business ideas and start-ups with significant positive social and environmental impact. From its first edition to today, GSVC has established itself as the sole global-level competition aimed at focusing attention on field of social entrepreneurship.

The **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative** got underway in September 2009, with the **objective of bringing the world of finance even closer to that of technological innovation and research.**

The first Italian platform of this type – devised and promoted by the Innovation Team of the Corporate & Investment Banking Division of Intesa Sanpaolo headed by **Gaetano Micciché**, CEO of the banking group – aims to discover new, highly innovative entrepreneurial realities, to prepare them to confront the market and to give them the opportunity to present themselves to potential investors and industrial partners (business angels, venture capitalists, seed capital funds, foundations, and private and corporate investors). The meetings develop according to the customary schemes for this type of event: presentation, after successful completion of the selection and training phase, of the firm and its business plan, followed by a *Q & A session* between it and investors dealing with economic, financial and technical themes.

**In November of 2010** – after the first six editions organized in our country – **the International Road Show** of the Intesa Sanpaolo Start-up Initiative kicked off, which has brought the best realities selected during the Italian editions to London, Frankfurt, San Francisco, New York and Paris for a series of meetings that have seen the participation of over **700 international investors.**

Two years after the launching, **14 editions in Italy** have been held and **11 international appointments** have been kept, which have seen over **1,000 altogether between Start-ups and Early-stage realities** be contacted for the selection process, **in addition to over 250 admitted to the training phase (*Boot Camp*)**, and **about 150 presented in the Arena**, where they **confronted over 2,200 in all between potential investors and industrial partners**, for a total of about **1,400 displays of interest.**

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The day's work was opened by a **roundtable**, moderated by journalist and innovologist Emil Abirascid, with the title **“Social Ventures: A Concrete Step toward Sustainable Entrepreneurship,”** with statements by Marco Ratti (Banca Prossima), Frank Cinque (ALTIS, Catholic University), Sergio Barbonetti (San Michele Valore Imprese Association), Adriano Azzaretti (ProSpera) and Cristina Piai (Intesa Sanpaolo Eurodesk).

The **Intesa Sanpaolo Group** operates with about 5,900 branches in Italy, through a consolidated leadership in all business segments. Abroad the Bank boasts a strategic selective presence in over 40 countries: in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa area (MENA) through its own retail banks (1,700 branches) and – throughout the world – through corporate banks and branches and agency offices. The Intesa Sanpaolo Group puts at the disposal of Italian businesses that intend to undertake a process of growth through innovation and research a very wide range of products, in addition to assistance and consulting services, loans and equity through its own dedicated structures.

The **Advanced School of Business and Society (ALTIS)**, directed by Mario Molteni, Professor of Business Management and Corporate Strategy at Catholic University, has the aim of favouring – through research, an MBA programme and executive courses, meetings and workshops, business projects, observers and awards – entrepreneurship and management for sustainable development. The Advanced School has eight departments to which the ALTIS mission is assigned: Strategy and Sustainability, Globalization and New Markets, Impact Entrepreneurship, Company Welfare and Social Innovation, Small and Medium-sized Businesses and Production Districts, Finance and Development, Public Management, and Non-profit Organizations. The following must be mentioned among the different initiatives promoted by the Advanced School: the network of managers committed to social responsibility (CSR Manager Network Italia), the Borsa Progetti Sociali or social projects exchange, the Network Conciliazione Famiglia Lavoro for family/work conciliation, and the first Italian MBA programme to be located on African soil (Kenya) for the development of social entrepreneurship.

The **Associazione San Michele Valore Impresa**, an association founded in 2008, is formed by businessmen, entrepreneurs who believe in a society founded on the values of work and family, indispensable incubator of new entrepreneurial activities.

The purpose of this group of entrepreneurs is to recall the values of enterprise inasmuch as fundamental for the relaunching of society and the civil cohesion thereof, reproposing the theme of work, family and personal responsibility. The Association's mission has always been aimed at the promotion and concrete support of new business ventures and at giving confidence to young entrepreneurs.

The **Associazione ProSpera** (a non-profit organization whose name comes from “PROgetto SPERAnza” or Project Hope) was founded in September 2009 with the aim of moulding a leadership class with the values of responsible commitment, transparency and intellectual honesty, pursued through the promotion and the realization of operative projects inspired by the founding values of ProSpera – development, innovation, support for the new generations, merit and ethics – and able to pass on concrete skills and experiences to deserving young people who are setting out in the world of work and business. The members of ProSpera include managers, university teachers, entrepreneurs and professionals coming from over 500 different company realities, personally committed on a voluntary basis to sustaining the hope and the ambitions of the new generations. The projects, originated and promoted directly by ProSpera – which also takes care of the possible financing with private contributors and partners – are realized in collaboration with universities, research centres and professional associations. ProSpera is present throughout Italy with over 1,300 members.

*For further information contact:*

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| <p><b>ALTIS – Università Cattolica</b><br/>         Katia Biondi<br/>         Tel. +39 02 72342307<br/>         Cell. +39 335 1376604<br/> <a href="mailto:katia.biondi@unicatt.it">katia.biondi@unicatt.it</a></p>   | <p><b>INTESA SANPAOLO</b><br/>         Corporate &amp; Investment Banking Media Office<br/>         Tel. +39 02 87962489/3531<br/> <a href="mailto:stampa@intesasanpaolo.com">stampa@intesasanpaolo.com</a></p>   |
| <p><b>ASSOCIAZIONE SAN MICHELE VALORE IMPRESA</b><br/>         Weber Shadwick<br/>         Marisa Santospirito<br/>         Tel. +39 011 8193151<br/>         Cell. +39 335 7698071<br/> <a href="mailto:msantospirito@webershadwick.com">msantospirito@webershadwick.com</a></p> | <p><b>ASSOCIAZIONE PROSPERA</b><br/>         Project ProSpera Lombardy District<br/> <a href="mailto:distretto.lombardia@prospera.it">distretto.lombardia@prospera.it</a><br/> <a href="mailto:comunicazione@prospera.it">comunicazione@prospera.it</a></p> |