

PRESS RELEASE

INTESA SANPAOLO AND RETIMPRESA TOGETHER TO DEVELOP NETWORKS

- **Focus of the agreement: dedicated offer, specialist support and targeted training programmes**
- **A series of joint meetings across the country to promote the development and dissemination of “value” networks**
- **Growing trend: 680 networks already registered in Italy with over 3,500 businesses involved**

Brescia, 19 March 2013. Support and promote the development of “quality” networks as a way to increase the competitiveness of Italian businesses on the domestic and international markets.

This is the aim of the agreement signed today by **Aldo Bonomi**, Chairman of RetImpresa, the Confindustria Confederal Agency for business networks, and **Giuseppe Castagna**, General Manager and Head of Banca dei Territori (Intesa Sanpaolo Group).

The agreement will allow to bring together the expertise and experience of two entities that have been promoting for some time networks as a useful tool for SMEs to overcome their limitations in terms of size, obtain greater influence on the market and improve their ability to access credit.

The main areas of cooperation include: **a dedicated offer, specialist services and *ad hoc* training programmes**.

Offer

The agreement provides businesses cooperating within the network with a dedicated offer that consists in a set of financial instruments and specialist assistance services.

Intesa Sanpaolo has devised **specific support schemes for business networks** that plan to develop strategic innovation and internationalisation projects. The offer also includes support for the ordinary management of the network with infra-network credit disinvestment

solutions and products simplifying the management of business relations. In this context, the bank will provide instruments to make credit access easier and more beneficial: apart from the use of the Guarantee Fund, which is free for SMEs subscribing to a network contract, the Intesa Sanpaolo Group has a special **30-million-euro credit line** which was assigned by the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Specialist support

Through Mediocredito Italiano, the Group bank dedicated to supporting the development of Italian businesses, Intesa Sanpaolo provides networks with a **specialist Desk** that guarantees the constant monitoring of evolutions in regulations and makes sure that the offer model is adjusted accordingly. At a local level, meanwhile, there are **community offices** of professionals that are able to analyse the industrial project of the network and evaluate its prospective benefits for each of the participating businesses.

Training

To raise the awareness of the business world as regards business networks and to promote partnerships between companies, Intesa Sanpaolo and RetImpresa will hold seminars and meetings across the country as well as **targeted training initiatives** that will tap into the specialist skills of the respective Training departments.

The agreement forms part of, and further strengthens, the memorandum of understanding that the Intesa Sanpaolo Group renewed on 1 March with Piccola Industria of Confindustria and which extensively deals with the issue of business networks.

In Italy there are 680 networks involving over 3,500 businesses, which point to an ongoing positive trend (Intesa Sanpaolo and Mediocredito Italiano projections as of February on the basis of Cerved-Databank data).

*“We are delighted with this additional agreement for the development of networks. Indeed, we want to see businesses and banks move together in the same direction – comments **Aldo Bonomi**, vice chairman of Confindustria and chairman of RetImpresa – Banks, and particularly our partners in agreements such as this one, can finally focus more closely on networks because, by adopting the industrial programmes established by the contracts, their competitiveness and transparency will improve. This is the goal of our important partnership with Intesa Sanpaolo, which will also be of great help to businesses on the network that meet with difficulties in financing relaunch investments. This agreement looks to the future, intends to support the projects with the best potential and, with the desire expressed by the Bank, responds in full to all business requirements: greater liquidity with better conditions and expert consultancy. The network – concludes Bonomi – is asserting itself as an ideal tool for Italian businesses and it is important to keep supporting them through a systemic action”.*

*“Our Bank – explains **Giuseppe Castagna**, General Manager and Head of Banca dei Territori (Intesa Sanpaolo Group) – was the first in Italy to equip its commercial department with a complete range of financial and specialist consultancy services to support the development of business networks, finance the best aggregation projects and foster internationalisation and innovation processes, particularly in less structured firms. The possibility of sharing development experiences and initiatives enables companies on the network to make investments that they would not be able to pursue on their own and, therefore, to obtain structural improvements for their businesses that can positively influence their credit ratings. In order to understand if, and to what degree, business networks offer concrete competitive advantages to participating businesses, Intesa Sanpaolo has set up a National Observatory and Regional Workshops that will constantly supervise and monitor their evolution”.*

For more information

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