

**PRESS RELEASE**

**INTESA SANPAOLO - MEDIOCREDITO ITALIANO OBSERVATORY  
ON THE ENTERPRISE NETWORKS  
389 NEW CONTRACTS IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2013**

- In the second half of 2013 389 new enterprise networks were started involving 1,555 entrepreneurial organisations. At the end of December the network contracts in Italy went up to 1,353 for a total of 6,435 member firms.
- There are a growing number of networks made up of parties that are complementary and ally themselves so as to share their different skills and of enterprises that are less structured as far as foreign markets are concerned and are seeking new commercial partners.
- The advantages are a better strategic positioning and more resilient earnings but the culture of setting up and using networks is still not very widespread among companies.

*Milan, 10 March 2014* – The fourth Intesa Sanpaolo – Mediocredito Italiano Observatory on Enterprise Networks describes the second half year of 2013 as the turning point, with a **record number of 389 new contracts and 1,555 enterprises involved**. The push comes from Lombardy, Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna and Lazio, the regions that were particularly active in this area during the final six months of last year. At the end of December the networks registered in Chambers of Commerce were **1,353 for a total of 6,435 member enterprises**.

The short history of the network contract, founded in 2009 to give companies the possibility of increasing their critical mass without losing their autonomy, is beginning to give some interesting cues for analysis and reflection. In spite of the current financial crisis, the companies in a network have, for example, shown a **greater ability to maintain** their gross operating margins, a **better strategic positioning** and, specifically in the manufacturing sector, a **greater competitive ability**. It is still too early to quantify the growth benefits, considering that, on average; the network projects have a medium/long term timeframe.

Among the companies that are in networks some trends are emerging. The Observatory has recorded a growth in the **alliances between complementary parties** who, in this way, can access skills that they could not develop on their own. In fact, the production diversity within the networks is 82.5%. We are also seeing a greater use of networks by **less structured companies** to access foreign markets on their own. Often they are very small enterprises that have never tried any form of grouping (4 out of 5 enterprises in networks are

microenterprises), with no foreign subsidiaries or activities: thanks to the network contract, they have found new commercial outlets for their business.

Regarding the **segment breakdown of the networks**, the fourth observatory confirms the prevalence of services enterprises (44.3%) and manufacturing ones (32.5%), followed by construction and real estate (14.4%) and agri-food enterprises (8.9%).

The classification of the **most active regions** is still headed by Lombardy with 1,564 enterprises in a network. There follow Emilia Romagna (907), Tuscany (689), Abruzzo and Veneto (about 500 each), while the provinces that stand out are those of Milan, Brescia, Rome, Chieti, Modena, Florence, Bologna and Verona .

Among the **reasons for entering a network** the main ones are being able to access foreign markets and increasing the range of their offer with new products. Therefore, internationalization and innovation are the big development and growth levers that the Intesa Sanpaolo Group is ready to support. **Andrea Bressani**, the Director General of **Mediocredito Italiano** confirmed this when he stated: *“We have set up a specialized hub in enterprise financing that has a full and integrated product offer to support the strategic investments of enterprises. In this context, we firmly believe that the network is an important tool for stimulating growth and development and creating synergies. We have a dedicated coverage of the enterprise networks that is constantly updated for the legislative and regulatory changes and committed to finding solutions and tools that can facilitate the access to credit of the enterprises in networks. Mediocredito stands beside the entrepreneurs along the whole life cycle of the network, from the pre-setup, through the start-up and the development, also through appropriate consultancy and advisory services”*.

In order to **promote the usage of the network as a tool**, which at the end of 2013 only involved 0.15% of Italian enterprises, **Gregorio De Felice**, the head of the Research Department of Intesa Sanpaolo, cites the importance of the regional tender competitions: *“They can play a decisive role, as the case of Abruzzo shows. Training and divulgation initiatives are proliferating. Intesa Sanpaolo has activated Workshops for Enterprise Networks in a number of regions, in cooperation with the employers’ associations and the research bodies. Overall we find that in Italy there is a legislative, regulatory and institutional context that is increasingly favourable to the networks”*.

Enterprises that wish to setup a network can contact Intesa Sanpaolo, also to seek potential partners, through the Group branches on the territory.

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