

31st edition of the Marisa Bellisario Award “Donne ad alta quota”

PRESS RELEASE

**“WOMEN VALUE COMPANY 2019 - INTESA SANPAOLO” AWARD
THE THIRD EDITION OF THE INITIATIVE SPONSORED
BY THE MARISA BELLISARIO FOUNDATION AND INTESA SANPAOLO
TAKES OFF TO PROMOTE FEMALE TALENT AND GENDER EQUALITY**

Turin, 14 November 2018. Approximately **1,000 participating businesses** based throughout Italy, **221 finalist businesses**, **eight meetings** held in major Italian cities and **four businesses** awarded for the excellence of policies implemented in favour of gender equality. Following the remarkable success and participation recorded by the first two editions, **the “Women Value Company - Intesa Sanpaolo Award”**, jointly conceived and organised by the **Marisa Bellisario Foundation** and **Intesa Sanpaolo Group**, **is held in 2019 too**. The goal is to **invite businesses to gain an insight into female empowerment** and to **put the spotlight on the best and most innovative practices** implemented by them to guarantee equal opportunities and career paths. The previous editions awarded the acknowledgement to **Vetrya**, in Orvieto, which specialises in developing solutions for communication and digital media channels; **Pegaso**, in Verona, which, headed by two women, produces natural supplements for psychophysical wellbeing; **Zeta Service**, with headquarters in Milan, which offers personnel administration, employment consultancy and human capital development services; and **Arterra Bioscience**, in Naples, a small biotech business that develops innovative technology that identifies active dermo-cosmetic molecules.

The **3rd edition of the “Women Value Company - Intesa Sanpaolo Award”** is launched today by issuing a call for **small and medium-sized public and private enterprises** (based on criteria set out in European Commission Recommendation 2003 361/EC) that have a majority Italian capital, are not part of a group, and have a strong financial performance track record. They are also to stand out for their application of **policies that value women’s work and gender diversity management**, including services that maintain a family/work life balance; initiatives designed to guarantee male and female employees a stress-free management of their time within the company (benefits, vouchers, in-house nurseries etc.); flexible organisation of work policies; non-discriminatory merit-based remuneration policies; development and promotion of skills and careers for women, with a strong presence of women in managerial or top-level positions.

Businesses that meet these criteria may **apply by 15 February 2019** by completing the **online questionnaire** published on the websites www.intesasanpaolo.com and www.fondazionebellisario.org. In addition, Intesa Sanpaolo will choose from its own customer companies a panel of small and medium-sized enterprises that excel in the required criteria, inviting them to participate in the screening process.

The **two enterprises, one small and the other medium-sized**, which have distinguished themselves for their investment in overcoming the gender gap and in promoting female growth, will be awarded in Rome in June 2019, during the **31st edition of the Marisa Bellisario “Donne ad alta quota” Award**. The other businesses that pass the screening phase based on requirements established in the call will be given an additional acknowledgement during a series of events promoted throughout Italy.

The roadshow was a crucial successful element for the first two editions of the award. **An extraordinary opportunity for the finalist businesses to make acquaintance and share experiences.** They have very different stories, and come from entirely dissimilar sectors and areas, but they all have in common the enthusiasm and the intention to convey a basic message, precisely that **increasing the participation of women** in the employment and business framework will be a **strategic factor for Italy's development and economic and social growth.**

Lella Golfo, President of the Marisa Bellisario Foundation: *“I am very happy and proud to pursue the process launched with Intesa Sanpaolo, which has met with resounding success to date. Never before has it been so important to make the most of the role of women in businesses and to promote welfare initiatives that make the work of women sustainable for both families and society overall. The Women Value Company Award was conceived through awareness of this need, and as a result of the intention to join forces and energy with the largest Italian bank to make our production framework increasingly “women friendly”, modern and competitive. During these two editions we have discovered, awarded and brought into the public eye over one thousand small and medium-sized enterprises that have made female empowerment a factor of growth and development. With the 2019 edition we will go on spotlighting these examples of Italian excellence, firmly believing that we will thus 'contaminate' and involve an increasing number of businesses along the path to modernity, which passes through women, for their inclusion in all corporate levels and the construction of a path towards work-life balance.”*

Stefano Barrese, Head of the Banca dei Territori Division of Intesa Sanpaolo and mentor for the Women Value Company Award: *“Voice the needs of territories, support excellent businesses and those that invest in growth, and build acceleration paths for highly innovative startup businesses: our plan to make the most of Italian small and medium-sized enterprises is extensive, and the Women Value Company Award is an essential part of it. Women, gender equality and welfare are a resource in which we must invest. They are crucial to develop Italy's employment rates and economy. The Bellisario Foundation gives visibility to small and medium-sized enterprises in which women play a central role in the corporate development process. By telling their stories, we plan on contributing to the dissemination of an inclusive corporate culture that is free of gender bias, built on talent and ideas, a culture that promotes welfare designed to support women workers. At Intesa Sanpaolo, where women make up approximately 54% of employees and 40% of executives and middle managers, we daily commit to make the most of merit and diversity. We are a benchmark as a result of a corporate welfare system that has developed over the years, and we would like to share this success with our customer companies too.”*

As well as the well-established collaboration with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation, the Intesa Sanpaolo Group has put several initiatives into action that promote gender equality, so much so that it is the **only Italian company included on the 2018 Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index (GEI)**, that assesses the commitment and actions taken by major globally listed companies in the field of gender equality. Furthermore, it has **risen from 64th to 33rd in the 2018 Equileap Top 200 Gender Equality Ranking**, that ranks the top 200 companies in terms of gender equality, compiled by assessing over 3,200 listed companies from 23 countries.

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