

PRESS RELEASE

**FROM RESEARCH TO BUSINESS:
INTESA SANPAOLO AND THE NATIONAL RNA & GENE THERAPY CENTRE
AWARD 8 START-UPS**

THE GENERNATION AWARDS TANGIBLY IMPLEMENT THE PNRR'S DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS

- **The Banca dei Territori Division, together with Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, the National RNA & Gene Therapy Centre and Neva SGR, awards start-ups that have distinguished themselves in developing healthcare-focused solutions**
- **8 winning start-ups: PoliRNA, T-One Therapeutics, Alia Therapeutics, Resalis Therapeutics, MicThera, Navita, Isinnova, and Cellex.**
- **3 winning projects: RATAR: RNA FOR TAU 4R, University of Trento; MitoRNA Therapeutics, University of Padua; Imaging Sensors for Next-Gen RNA Therapeutics, University of Padua.**

Milan, 2 March 2026 – Intesa Sanpaolo, Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center and the National RNA & Gene Therapy Centre today awarded in Milan eight start-ups that have stood out for developing innovative solutions in the field of personalised treatment pathways. Through the establishment of National Research Centres, the PNRR has marked an important milestone in the modernisation of Italy's research system, fostering cross-fertilisation with the business community and the development of innovative enterprises.

The Intesa Sanpaolo Group is a co-founder of four National Research Centres. This decision stems from its commitment to contributing to the modernisation of Italy's research system and to supporting the growth of high-tech companies by encouraging collaboration between research centres and the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The event “GeneRNAtion Awards: dalla Ricerca all’Impresa - Il PNRR come leva per lo sviluppo” (“GeneRNAtion Awards: From Research to Enterprise – The PNRR as a Driver for Development”) represents the culmination of a journey undertaken by Intesa Sanpaolo and Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center to make a tangible contribution to the mission of the National Centre for the Development of Gene Therapy and RNA-based Medicines, by identifying and selecting the best start-ups and research projects capable of turning scientific advances into real impact on people's health and lives.

This initiative is aligned with the Bank's strategy to foster the growth of new technology-driven enterprises, which act as engines of research and innovation, also benefiting established companies. Overall, Intesa Sanpaolo serves approximately 32% of the start-ups listed in the National Register of Innovative Start-ups and 54% of Innovative SMEs, with over €1 billion in financing granted. To support business innovation, the Group offers a dedicated financing line (Nova+), a specialist desk that assesses research projects – with more than €3 billion in funding provided – as well as advisory services and activities delivered by Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center and the venture capital funds managed by its subsidiary Neva SGR.

Following opening remarks by **Anna Roscio**, Executive Director Sales & Marketing Enterprises, Banca dei Territori Division, Intesa Sanpaolo, contributions were delivered by **Rosario Rizzuto**, President of the National RNA & Gene Therapy Centre, and **Luca Pagetti**, Head of Start-up Growth & Innovation Ecosystems, Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center. The event continued with the presentation of the eight

winning start-ups and the three winning projects, followed by a round table on technology transfer in Italian biotech after the PNRR. Participants included **Stefania Ascione**, Head of R&D Advisory and European Funding, Banca dei Territori Division, Intesa Sanpaolo; **Elisabetta Borello**, Co-founder and VP Strategy & External Relations, Bio4Dreams; **Fabrizio Cobis**, Director, Office II, Directorate-General for Research, Ministry of University and Research; and **Monica Volpin**, Principal Life Science, Neva SGR. The event concluded with the awards ceremony led by **Elena Quagliato**, Director of the National RNA & Gene Therapy Centre, honouring the eight winning start-ups and the three winning projects of the GeneRNation Challenge.

Rosario Rizzuto, President of the National RNA & Gene Therapy Centre, commented: *“These initiatives demonstrate how the PNRR is concretely helping to transform Italian scientific excellence into innovation and new entrepreneurial opportunities. The awarded start-ups and projects represent tangible examples of how research can translate into advanced therapeutic solutions, with a direct impact on people’s health. Collaboration between the research system, the financial sector and businesses is essential to accelerate technology transfer and strengthen our country’s competitiveness in a strategic field such as gene and RNA-based therapies.”*

Anna Roscio, Executive Director Sales & Marketing Enterprises, Banca dei Territori Division, Intesa Sanpaolo, stated: *“Intesa Sanpaolo is the only bank to have participated as a Founder in four National Research Centres, making a tangible contribution to the country’s development. Our involvement, together with Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, reflects our commitment to supporting Italy’s growth through technology transfer and the adoption of new technologies. We participate as an industrial partner, connecting the research world with the business community, convinced that the National Research Centres represent a major opportunity both for the university system and for enterprises. The idea behind this award was conceived to accelerate the path of the selected entities towards testing, validation and project development, all the way to clinical trials.”*

The Awarded Start-ups

- **PoliRNA** (Turin) develops RNA-based therapies for post-infarction cardiac regeneration, aiming to repair damaged tissue. It uses hybrid polymer-lipid nanosystems for targeted, stable and safe RNA delivery to the heart, with the objective of translating this technology into more effective clinical solutions for conditions that are currently difficult to treat.
- **T-One Therapeutics** (Milan) develops innovative RNA-based medicines to reprogramme immune cells in the treatment of cancer and immune-mediated diseases. The technology is based on a recently discovered molecular mechanism that enables the reactivation of the antitumour function of T lymphocytes.
- **Alia Therapeutics** (Milan) develops gene therapies based on ATN122, a novel CRISPR effector designed to overcome the limitations of current technologies. Its “plug-and-play” platform enables the treatment of multiple rare genetic forms of retinitis pigmentosa using a single AAV architecture, supported by robust preclinical data. The modular model accelerates development and regulatory processes, promoting a more sustainable and patient-centred approach.
- **Resalis Therapeutics** (Turin) develops an innovative anti-miR-22 antisense oligonucleotide (ASO) therapy for the treatment of chronic pain. The approach acts upstream of the molecular pathways responsible for chronicisation, aiming to overcome the limitations of current symptomatic therapies.
- **MicThera** (Lodi) develops an innovative biological therapy for metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC), based on a protein that selectively binds to tumour receptors and induces apoptosis in cancer cells. The solution combines strong preclinical proof-of-concept

with advanced mRNA delivery strategies to optimise exposure, efficacy and clinical scalability.

- **Navita** (Padua) develops an RNA interference-based anticancer therapy targeting TRIM28, a key protein involved in DNA repair in tumour cells. By inhibiting TRIM28 synthesis, the treatment impairs the survival, proliferation and spread of cancer cells.
- **Isinnova** (Brescia) has developed DIANA, a modular ecosystem of non-invasive medical devices that rapidly and automatically collects advanced health and performance parameters. It integrates multimodal sensors and intelligent data analysis to support prevention, early diagnosis and continuous monitoring across various settings.
- **Cellex** (Rome) has developed BioAxFlow, a perfused 3D platform that enables the cultivation of patient-derived tumour samples in a controlled and physiologically relevant environment. Compared with traditional models, it ensures greater reliability, preserves tumour phenotype and allows for more accurate and standardisable testing of personalised gene therapies.

The Awarded Projects:

- **RATAR: RNA FOR TAU 4R, University of Trento:** RATAR is a first-in-class platform of isoform-selective siRNAs that specifically reduce tau 4R protein, directly targeting the underlying alteration in 4R tauopathies, neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, for which no disease-modifying therapies currently exist.
- **MitoRNA Therapeutics, University of Padua:** MitoRNA develops precision RNA-based therapies to treat mitochondrial dysfunction, focusing on two novel targets, OPA1 and MCU, for which no approved therapies are currently available. The platform aims to address unmet clinical needs in both rare and widespread diseases.
- **Imaging Sensors for Next-Gen RNA Therapeutics, University of Padua:** this platform provides an integrated system for screening therapeutic RNAs in terms of delivery, efficacy and safety, enabling the assessment of their transport and distribution across different tissues, as well as the activation of associated inflammatory responses.

Informazioni per la stampa

Intesa Sanpaolo

Media Banca dei Territori e Media locali
stampa@intesasampaolo.com

Intesa Sanpaolo

Intesa Sanpaolo, with €425 billion in loans and more than €1.5 trillion in customer financial assets at the end of December 2025, is the largest banking group in Italy, with a significant international presence.

It is a European leader in wealth management, and operates an integrated Wealth Management, Protection and Advisory platform, built on fully owned product factories and distribution networks working under full strategic control.

With a world-class position in social impact, Intesa Sanpaolo is also committed to decarbonization and to supporting clients in the sustainable transition.

The Bank's network of museums, the Gallerie d'Italia, hosts its owned artistic heritage and cultural projects of recognized value.

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