

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **“INTESA SANPAOLO START-UP INITIATIVE” RECEIVES THE ABI AWARD FOR INNOVATION 2012**

**The first Italian platform dedicated to start-ups and their investors recognised in the category “Innovation for Corporate and PA customers”**

*Milan, 28 March 2012* – Today, **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative** received the “**ABI award for innovation in banking services**” within the framework of the ABI Lab Forum opening day.

The Intesa Sanpaolo platform dedicated to start-ups and their reference investors was assigned an award for “**Innovation for Corporate and PA customers**” relating to the category “**The bank at the service of customers**”.

Now at its second edition, the ABI award recognises the banks’ growing interest in the promotion and development of service and technology innovation to the benefit of customers.

The awards are assigned to innovative initiatives and projects, which have resulted in significant improvements to the services offered, the management models implemented as well as customer interaction methods.

Established in 2009, **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative** sets out to bring the world of finance increasingly closer to the sector of technological innovation and research, with a view to shaping new enterprises and new entrepreneurs.

The first Italian platform of its kind, it pursues the aim of discovering highly innovative new businesses, prepare them for the market challenge and give them the opportunity to present their ideas to potential investors and industrial partners (Business Angels, Venture Capitalists, Seed Capital Funds, Foundations, private and corporate investors). The meetings are set out according to the usual schedule for these types of events: presentation of the company and of the business plan – following completion of a selection and training stage - and *Q&A sessions* between investors and the company on economic, financial and technical issues.

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*“We are proud to receive the prestigious ABI award in the field of innovation”, remarked **Andrea Faragalli, Director of Strategies and Resources - Corporate and Investment Banking Division, Intesa Sanpaolo.** “The award bears witness to the validity of our choice to set up a platform in support of innovation such as Start-Up Initiative. Our efforts are focused on helping customers deal with the big challenges of change. Innovation is indeed a key factor for company growth and internationalisation”, Faragalli goes on to say, “This award gives us even more of an incentive for the continuous growth of our platform, which in 2012 will develop through 25 appointments in 5 international markets with a focus on different technologies and industrial sectors and the ability to involve thousands of people”.*

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### **Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative**

Established in October **2009** with the objective to bring the world of finance increasingly closer to the sector of technological innovation and research, with a view to shaping new enterprises and new entrepreneurs.

**In November 2010**, the start of the **International Roadshow** marked a first defining moment in the growth of Intesa Sanpaolo Start-Up Initiative which took the best enterprises selected during the Italian editions to London, Frankfurt, San Francisco, New York and Paris for a series of meetings which saw the participation of over **1300 international investors**.

**Since October 2011**, a new phase of the growth process has got underway, leading the initiative to deal not only with Early Stage but also with Growth Stage Start-Ups, i.e. start-ups that have already obtained financing and are looking for more funding to consolidate their growth even further. This additional development was organised in collaboration with the IVC (International Venture Club).

Overall, two years on from the launch, there have been **18 editions in Italy** (including 3 Vertical Open Innovation Days dedicated to the “made in Italy” sectors) and **13 international appointments** whereby over **1,000 Start-Ups and Early Stage enterprises went through the selection process, with over 250 accessing the training phase (*Boot Camp*), and over 160 were presented to the Arena where they met with over 2,700 potential investors and industrial partners, for a total of around 1,400 expressions of interest gathered.**