



Press Release

## INTESA SANPAOLO LAUNCHES "Up2Stars" A NEW STARTUP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### IN FEBRUARY THE FIRST CALL DEDICATED TO THE DIGITAL AND INDUSTRY 4.0 SECTOR

- The project benefits from the expertise of the Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center and the grassroots coverage of the Banca dei Territori network
- About 30% of the 14,000 Italian innovative startups are customers of the banking group
- Programme dedicated to the growth, acceleration and networking of innovative startups, also fundamental to the digital transition outlined in the NRRP
- Four calls per sector of development: Digital and Industry 4.0; Bioeconomy with a focus on Agritech and Foodtech; Medtech and Healthcare; and Aerospace
- Acceleration programme run by the partner Gellify and development networking with ELITE-Group Euronext, Microsoft Italia, Cisco and Opening Future, an initiative in partnership with Google Cloud and Noovle, the TIM Group's cloud company
- Barrese: *"It has always been our calling to discover new business ideas, thanks to the Group's deep-rooted culture in this field and its long history of collaboration with top international partners. This new project aims to develop 40 innovative startups by selecting and identifying top talent, offering them access to a process of acceleration and networking with excellent partners, the growth solutions offered by the Group and, above all, the opportunity to present their projects to a wide audience of investors and our 200,000 business customers."*

Milan, 17 February 2022 – In collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, Intesa Sanpaolo is launching "Up2Stars", a new development programme dedicated to startups that harnesses the importance of this segment of companies as an essential driver of Italy's entire economy.

**The goal is to stimulate the innovation potential that startups can generate to support the transformation of national supply chains as part of the digital and ecological transition.**

The entire Italian economy is currently in a process of revitalisation, with innovation playing a crucial, role in NRRP tenders. **Through Up2Stars, Intesa Sanpaolo seeks to identify and encourage the acceleration of the best startups active in innovative industrial** and develop those with the best prospects for competitive positioning and growth. These are high-tech companies, including small and young firms, hotbeds of ideas and projects, capable of grasping stimuli to create new business opportunities and generate new jobs.

**To achieve this goal – essential to Italy's digital transition – startups need to grow from both a management and financial standpoint** through acceleration programmes and the proposal of the best companies and projects to investors and structured companies, such as those that are already customers of Intesa Sanpaolo.

## **THE UP2STARS PROGRAMME'S CALL AND ACTIVITIES**

Launched in February, the **Up2Stars** programme envisages the launch of four consecutive calls for selection, on a bimonthly basis – February, April, June and September – for applications by startups active in sectors identified as strategic: **Digital and Industry 4.0; Bioeconomy with a focus on Agritech and Food Tech; Medtech and Healthcare; and Aerospace**. A **maximum of ten startups** will be selected for each call, for a **total number of 40** to access the 2022 programme.

**The first call is dedicated to the selection of startups active in the Digital and Industry 4.0 sector** specialising in:

- **Analytics and AI:** solutions for exploiting big and open data, enhanced forecasting, nowcasting, decision support systems, deep learning and hyper-automation;
- **Human-Machine Interaction:** development technologies, digital interfaces, wearable smart equipment, augmented reality software (remote assistance, pick and place and complex assembly);
- **Digital Manufacturing:** advanced and additive manufacturing, 3D printing, robotics, 5th generation mobile networks, IoT sensors and infrastructure, machine-to-machine interaction, computer vision and digital twin technologies (prototyping, maintenance), energy storage and consumption optimisation technologies;
- **Cybersecurity:** cyber assessment and simulation, cryptography info protection, passwordless, Operational Technology (OT) security, zero trust security and Software-Defined Security (SDS).

Candidates that apply by accessing the dedicated page at [www.intesasanpaolo.com/it/business.html](http://www.intesasanpaolo.com/it/business.html) will be evaluated on the basis of five points: **Team** (complementary skills, own commitment and resources, ability to engage appropriate advisors); **Market opportunity** (size and growth forecast of target market, go-to-market, competitive landscape); **Product** (need targeted, design and innovation, competitive advantages, stage of development); **Defensibility** (barriers to entry such as intellectual property, if applicable, otherwise time-to-market and traction or other factors); **Business plan** (five-year plan with solid assumptions, use of funds raised and ROI strategy).

At the end of each acceleration process, every two months, there will be a **Demo Day** to present the accelerated startups to an audience of investors and companies. **Up2Stars** will conclude the cycle with a **final event designed to present and celebrate** the 40 startups selected and supported in their growth, allowing them to meet with coaches, mentors and investors, network and build bridges to mature companies.

## **THE ROLE OF THE INTESA SANPAOLO INNOVATION CENTER**

The **acceleration process** involves the **Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center**, Intesa Sanpaolo Group's competence centre, in a key role in the implementation of the programme, supervising the acceleration process and participating in the selection phase, in addition providing the digital application platform for startups. A role consistent with what has been achieved since 2014 in supporting the growth of startups in a very competitive market, benefiting from the strong international network that the Innovation Center has consolidated over the years.

## **THE ACCELERATOR GELLIFY AND THE NETWORK OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

The process for each startup selected by Up2Stars will be delivered **by acceleration partner Gellify** and will include a customised content plan and mentorship by industry experts.

The partners **Microsoft Italia, Cisco and Opening Future** – an initiative aimed at supporting and developing digital technology in Italy in partnership with Google Cloud and Noovle, a cloud company belonging to the TIM Group – will provide startups with services and tools useful for acceleration (e.g. the cloud, SW licenses, tech training and indexing services).

**ELITE – Euronext Group** will offer the opportunity to participate in the exclusive Lounge in partnership with Intesa Sanpaolo at the headquarters of the Italian Stock Exchange, to support startups with a process of training, size growth and opening to capital markets. With the Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center, it will also provide training support and organise meetings with the **active participation of startups** in the events and in the support and development process.

## **THE GROUP'S COMMITMENT TO STARTUPS**

Intesa Sanpaolo and the Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center have been dedicating initiatives and resources to the development of the potential of startups for years. **Through Up2Stars, the Group harnesses its cumulative experience, strategic partnerships and all the tools at its disposal to support the growth of startups by facilitating their access to investors, client firms and the banking products and services available.** Up2Stars is part of the broader framework of interventions and projects promoted by the Group to support SMEs and enhance those that invest more in sustainability, digitalisation and innovation, as also envisaged by '**Motore Italia**', the strategic program launched last year by Intesa Sanpaolo to revitalise small and medium-sized enterprises, in line with the objectives outlined in the NRRP.

Also available to startups are dedicated financing products such as **Convertibile Impresa** for all programmes and types of investment linked to startup and business development plans, up to 80% of the documented amounts. *Convertibile Impresa* is also aimed at startups that already operate in a venture capital context – such as venture capital funds or business angels that already hold equity interests in the company – and that are considering increasing their capital, including via investments by new partners.

**Stefano Barrese**, Head of Intesa Sanpaolo's Banca dei Territori Division, commented: "*We are facing a process of transformation that will thoroughly affect the Italian economy and society, extending to all sectors of the country's economy. The transition to an economy based on sustainability will have to be gradual and accompanied by the best possible level of innovation at the industrial level. With this in mind, Intesa Sanpaolo intends to support new projects and, above all, those with a high innovation content. It has always been our calling to discover new business ideas, thanks to the Group's deep-rooted culture in this field and its long history of collaboration with top international partners. Already 30% of the country's startups have taken advantage of the opportunities, including those of a non-financial nature, that have to offer. This new project aims to develop 40 innovative startups by selecting and identifying top talent, offering them access to a process of acceleration and networking with excellent partners, the growth solutions offered by the Group and, above all, the opportunity to present their projects to a wide audience of investors and our 200,000 business customers.*"