

INTESA SANPAOLO
MORE THAN €8 BILLION DISBURSED FOR TOURISM OVER THREE YEARS.
NEW COMMITMENT WITH FEDERALBERGHI
FOR ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES AND THEIR
INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

- **The goal is to support the development of tourism businesses through investments, advanced tools and public initiatives**
- **Additional opportunities thanks to the Tourism Thematic Fund and the partnership with Equiter, in which Intesa Sanpaolo holds a stake**
- **New financing on favourable terms for the green projects of sector companies**
- **Tourism continues to show excellent potential and remains central to Italy's economy. Italy among the world's top ten destinations by tourist flows**

Florence, 30 January 2024 – Intesa Sanpaolo is further strengthening its commitment to tourism, for which it has disbursed **more than €8 billion** over the last three years, focusing on revitalising and developing the supply of accommodation facilities together with Federalberghi. The strategic importance of tourism to Italy's economy is clear: tourism – among the great accelerators of Italy's post-Covid recovery – has continued to grow in 2023 and remains central to Italy's economy. According to Intesa Sanpaolo's estimates for all of 2023, **turnover exceeded the 2019 level by 38.8% in the accommodation services sector and by 23.8% in the food services sector**, with growth in incoming tourism being one of the factors behind these brilliant results, above all from August to November, when there was a +7.6% increase in non-resident presences compared to 2019. **Italy remained among the world's top ten destinations by tourist inflows**, thanks to the return of long-distance tourists, and dominated the 2023 must-see rankings (survey conducted by the Globus Group). In light of these trends, the degree of internationalisation of presences rose to 52.2% overall in the first eleven months of 2023, exceeding the 50.5% of 2019 – a year that had until now stood out for its record inflows of non-resident tourists. The **outlook for 2024 remains positive for the sector**, which is likely to see consolidation of the brilliant sales results achieved in the last two years, albeit within a macroeconomic environment of modest global growth, due mainly to advanced economies.

The Missione Turismo event

The competitiveness game is decided by the quality of services, sustainability issues, including energy, and increasingly digital business and corporate welfare models, through investments in innovation and sustainable projects. These topics were discussed today in Florence, at the Fondazione CR Firenze Innovation Center, during the session "***Missione Turismo. How to invest in innovation and sustainable projects for a key sector to the country***", which highlighted trends in the sector and new approaches to investing in support for tourism businesses that integrate financial instruments and government initiatives.

Speeches by **Stefano Barrese**, Head of Banca dei Territori Intesa Sanpaolo, and **Bernabò Bocca**, Chairman of Federalberghi and Fondazione CR Firenze, were followed by contributions by **Gregorio De Felice**, Chief Economist of Intesa Sanpaolo, **Anna Roscio**, Executive Director Sales & Marketing SMEs at Intesa Sanpaolo, and **Alberto Barberis**, NRRP Funds Advisory Team at Equiter.

The Thematic Tourism Fund and Equiter's role

Italian tourism is in an excellent state of health, yet it is not realising its full potential and needs new ways to grow, develop and innovate, including the resources and tools available through the public-private dynamic. These include the **Thematic Tourism Fund**, administered and controlled by Italy's Ministry of Tourism: Equiter, an Intesa Sanpaolo investee, has been awarded the maximum amount that can be allocated by the Fund – currently **€189.2 million of the €350 million available** – to support investments in the tourism sector to be made exclusively in Italy.

The Fund's projects include:

- investments in **creating, renovating, modernising and improving tourist accommodation and infrastructure**, as well as **investments** in sustainable tourism, related to the green transition or in mobility for environmentally sustainable tourism.
- financing for **investment activities** for **working capital** needs, as well as for the acquisition of **qualified minority interests** with a predefined exit strategy projected within a maximum period of 20 years.

From Intesa Sanpaolo, credit and services for the tourism sector

The Intesa Sanpaolo Group's support for the investments of tourism and hospitality businesses – amounting to €8 billion in disbursements over the past three years – has sustained the sector during various phases from the pandemic to the present and has recently been expanded with **€10 billion in new credit** for more extensive upgrades of hospitality facilities, the digital transition and sustainability. This is part of the Group's broader plan of medium-to-long-term disbursements of more than €410 billion by 2026, of which €120 billion earmarked for SMEs, to accompany NRRP investments.

Within this framework, Intesa Sanpaolo's offerings for the tourism sector include:

- **S-Loan Progetti Green**, a new financing solution that now offers terms of up to 20 years, on favourable conditions, for all environmental and energy-related business needs.
- **Suite Loan**, a loan that rewards companies that invest in improving accommodation facilities, along with equipment rental solutions through its own company, **RentforYou**. More than 1,000 of the bank's customers have already activated loans of over €1 billion.
- In **digitalisation** efforts, the focus is on data management and cyber security solutions, in light of their importance in terms of customer service and protection of sensitive information.
- **Specialist desk dedicated to tourism**, through which Intesa Sanpaolo provides dedicated advice concerning access to NRRP measures. In particular, the Tourism Revolving Fund, for which Intesa Sanpaolo has covered about 25% of the applications submitted.
- **IncentNow**, a free platform that provides information to customers on the publication of NRRP calls for applications: more than 15,000 Intesa Sanpaolo customers have received government aid under the NRRP.

Bernabò Bocca, Chairman of Federalberghi and Fondazione CR Firenze, commented: *"Intesa Sanpaolo's focus on the tourism sector translates into effective, strategic actions for our companies. The institution has always shown great sensitivity to the sector's needs, making more than €8 billion available for tourism over a three-year period. Today, thanks to the partnership with Intesa Sanpaolo, we can say that a virtuous cycle has been set in motion, capable of revitalising Italian hospitality facilities through investments in innovative and sustainable projects. Our sector is thus situated at the centre of future development, with new instruments, financing on favourable terms and public initiatives. In my opinion, all this is a great incentive for our companies to feel able to be bold again."*

Stefano Barrese, Head of Intesa Sanpaolo's Banca dei Territori Division, commented: *"Italy has enormous potential owing to its biodiversity and artistic and cultural heritage. Yet this is not enough to maintain a leading position in the tourism market. It is imperative that we accelerate structured investment plans to raise the quality of accommodation and service businesses in the green and sustainability sphere – viewed favourably by international customers in particular, who are increasingly sensitive to these aspects. The continuing partnership with Federalberghi is based on this same common aim of rethinking a future with high added value for the hotel and tourism sector through credit and new advanced instruments complementary to public measures."*

FOCUS ON TOURISM - By the Intesa Sanpaolo Research Department

Tourism – among the great accelerators of Italy's post-Covid recovery – continued to grow in 2023, remaining central to Italy's economy.

Intesa Sanpaolo's estimates for all of 2023 call for turnover to exceed the 2019 level by 38.8% in accommodation services and by 23.8% in food services. Growth in incoming tourism is among the factors behind these brilliant results, above all in the second half of the year (four-month period from August to November), when there was a +7.6% increase in non-resident presences compared to 2019 (+0.1% for resident tourism).

Italy remained among the world's top ten destinations by tourist inflows, owing in part to the return of long-distance tourists, including Chinese tourists (whose absence was strongly felt in 2022 due to Covid restrictions in force in their home country) and dominated the 2023 must-see rankings (survey conducted by the Globus Group). In light of these dynamics, the degree of internationalisation of presences rose to 52.2% overall in the first eleven months of 2023, exceeding the 50.5% of 2019, a year that had until now stood out for its record inflows of non-resident tourists. In addition, the presence of high-spending international tourists drove up hotel rates, thus offsetting much of the increase in operating costs, particularly in the area of energy.

The growth drivers of tourism businesses in 2023 also included the spread of digital platforms, the activation of events on a national and local scale and the promotion of local areas. These are the findings of the 18th Intesa Sanpaolo periodic survey conducted in November-December 2023 through its network of customer relationship managers. However, factors that held back activity and that represent areas for improvement include competition

from other foreign destinations (with Sardinia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Liguria among the areas most sensitive to the phenomenon) and high transport costs, especially for air travel, which may have encouraged the choice of alternative destinations. Geopolitical tensions have favoured itineraries that put the Western Mediterranean back at the centre, e.g. cruise routes. In some areas of the country, however, the downturn in Russian tourist flows continued to weigh on the final balance for the year.

The outlook for 2024 remains positive for the sector, which is likely to see consolidation of the brilliant sales results achieved in the last two years, albeit within a macroeconomic environment of modest global growth, due mainly to advanced economies.

Investment remains key to preserving competitiveness. The latest Intesa Sanpaolo survey shows a largely positive balance of views on the investments to be made by tourism companies in 2024, above all in the case of large and medium-sized companies, though expectations are also favourable for small and micro enterprises.

The focus on **digitalisation**, aimed at capturing increasingly connected tourists who demand advanced services, remains a priority. In 2023, 30.9% of Italian companies in the accommodation and food services sector had e-commerce turnover of at least 1% of their total turnover, not far from the European average of 35.5% but well below Spain's 64.4%¹). The use of data analytics and artificial intelligence tools could also facilitate the analysis of consumption behaviour. Strengthening these aspects would also allow further opportunities to be seized in the digital tourism sphere, such as the emerging trends of never-ending tourism (which aims to extend the tourism experience in time and space) and holiday working (which allows smart workers to work from a location other than where they usually live).

The **training of new professional figures** will also be important, including with a view to bridging the gap between the supply and demand for workers, which is currently very wide in tourism. According to the periodic Anpal-Excelsior survey, the sector is among those with the greatest difficulties in finding personnel, due above all to the inadequate preparation of candidates.

Not least, the **development of sustainable tourism** emerges as a fundamental requirement for inclusive economic growth focusing on local communities. Through the 2030 Agenda, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) emphasises how this sector can contribute, directly and indirectly, to the achievement of all 17 goals if it is managed sustainably and practised responsibly.

¹ Eurostat information and communication technology survey of companies with ten or more employees operating in all sectors of the economy.