

PRESS RELEASE

INTESA SANPAOLO AND B HEROES ANNOUNCE THE 16 STARTUP FINALISTS

- **Fourth edition of the growth support programmes for startups is now underway**
- **The final selection event in June with a special guest**
- **Startups will have exclusive access to the ELITE Lounge of the Borsa Italiana Group and will be featured in a documentary film to be broadcast on Sky Uno and NOW**

Milan, 11 May 2021 - Intesa Sanpaolo confirms its continued interest and support strategy for Italian startups. For the fourth year running, the programme has been renewed in collaboration with **B Heroes**, whose team of specialists identified the **16 startups admitted to the acceleration programme** following a selection and assessment process. Intesa Sanpaolo thus continues to support innovative entrepreneurship by providing dedicated financial instruments as well as growth support programmes, together with partners B Heroes and ELITE, the private market that connects companies to various sources of capital to accelerate their development.

The selection of companies for the fourth edition was a journey through the world of innovative entrepreneurship ranging from the North to the South of Italy. Nearly a thousand companies responded to the call to participate, and 183 of these were met during the long 26-stop digital roadshow. The acceleration programme ends **in June with the final event during which the startups** that will have access to the B Heroes investment programmes will be announced. **Paralympic athlete Bebe Vio will be the main guest at the event**, a perfect opportunity to reflect on the **resilience** of the business world in facing the unprecedented situations caused by the pandemic crisis on the Italian economy.

B Heroes will air in September on Sky and NOW. The project was carried out in collaboration with Brand Solutions, Sky Media's internal division.

From a matching platform for industrial machinery to the use of augmented reality in medicine; from *Made in Italy* barbers to food waste processing; from the use of artificial intelligence to drones for the transport of heavy loads and a kit for star-rated home cooking; from the creation of precious jewels and solutions for sports club management, from bone health screening and smart alarms for motorcycles and e-bikes. These are just some of the themes of the 16 startup finalists that will be showing their mettle in pitching and investor assessments, in the Italian programme for innovation and promotion of new businesses, created by the entrepreneur and investor Fabio Cannavale, in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo.

McKinsey & Company participated as *knowledge partner* in the selection and acceleration stage.

The 16 selected startups are:

Aircnc (Milan), a platform for selling, buying and sharing hours of industrial machine processing (www.aircnc.it);

Artiness (Milan), dedicated to the use of augmented reality in medicine (www.artinessreality.com);

Barberino's (Milan), a chain of Italian-style barbers with products and treatments that focus on the importance of self-care (www.barberinosworld.com);

Biova (Turin), processes food waste, especially bread, into a new product with added value that is both economic and social (www.biovaproyect.com);

Contents.com (Milan), a tech company that produces information using artificial intelligence (www.contents.com);

FlyingBasket (Bolzano), produces drones for logistics and the transport of heavy loads (www.flyingbasket.com);

Fratelli Desideri (Cuneo), produces and distributes luxury meal kits for cooking iconic dishes of Italian star-rated chefs at home (www.fratellidesideri.com);

Italian Jewellery (Savona), B2B services in the precious jewellery industry (www.gioielleriaitaliana.com);

Golee (Milan), a platform for the digital management and promotion of sports clubs (www.golee.it);

M2Test (Trieste), offering a technique for screening bone quality with a virtual biopsy of the trabecular structure starting from low radiation x-rays (www.bestest.it);

Meeters (Verona), a community of shared experiences (www.meeters.org);

Nterilizer (Bologna), a company that has developed a method to sterilise liquid nitrogen from contaminants such as spores, bacteria and viruses (www.nterilizer.com);

Out Of (Brescia), design and production of high-tech ski masks and goggles (www.out-of.com);

PatchAi (Padua), digital healthcare solutions focused on patient involvement (www.ai-patch.com);

Prometheus (Modena), manufactures and sells solutions for veterinary and human regenerative medicine, based on the use of blood derivatives, such as plasma, creating a patch that halves wound healing times (www.prometheus3d.com); and

Trackting (Pesaro and Urbino), designs and produces connected smart alarms for motorcycles and e-bikes (www.trackting.com);

The startups selected will have the opportunity to grow in an acceleration programme with partners who are leaders in their fields: Amazon Web Services, BonelliErede, Cariplo Factory + Tech Italy Advocates, Doorway, Energy in Organization, Google, Gruppo Galgano, Gummy Industries, Invitalia, Nativa, Pirola Pezzuto Zei & Associati and Scuola Holden.

*“This year's edition of B Heroes was perhaps the most difficult to organize”, says **Fabio Cannavale**, creator of the programme, “But for this very reason it is also one of the richest. Between September and November 2020, we listened to the stories, ideas and projects of the best Italian startups during a long roadshow, which was split into 10 sectors that express the desire for innovation that characterizes this world. We first selected 77 startups, narrowing this to 32, and from these the 16 that were admitted to the acceleration programme”.*

Cannavale added: “There is a great deal of medtech, and it could not be otherwise in a year of the pandemic, but there are also services, sustainability, and products for personal well-being. We need

all these ingredients to come out of the pandemic more successfully. The fourth edition of B Heroes confirms that there can be no social and economic development in the country without a strong startup ecosystem, which is the true driving force and energy for the Italy of tomorrow”.

Intesa Sanpaolo, which has always played a leading role in research and innovation initiatives, together with the Innovation Center, the Group company involved in developing startups, **is supporting the B Heroes programme for the fourth consecutive year**, facilitating networking between innovative SMEs and mature companies, and exchanges between the supply and demand of innovation and new technologies. In this new season, the partnership between the leading Italian banking group and ELITE will be further strengthened to support SMEs with training and expansion programmes, as well as access to capital markets, thanks to the launch **in September of the second ELITE Lounge dedicated to the startups in the programme, some of which will also be featured in a documentary film broadcast on Sky Uno and NOW.**

*“The initiative of entrepreneurs will play an enormous role in the recovery of our economy and we, the ideal partner to work with startups and SMEs, will continue to support their projects with investments, new credit and non-financial consulting tools”, says **Anna Roscio**, Executive Director of Enterprise Sales and Marketing at Intesa Sanpaolo. “The collaboration with B Heroes for the fourth consecutive year bears witness to the Group's commitment to launching innovation programmes and sharing projects of the highest value and potential. We cover 26% of the innovative startup market and, in line with the Recovery Plan, we will devote even more energy to supporting new businesses. In a period like the one we are currently experiencing, we are proud to offer selected young companies our collaboration so as to include them, together with our partner Elite - Borsa Italiana Group, in the second Lounge dedicated to B Heroes startups in order to support them with training and expansion programmes, generational transitions and access to capital markets”.*

*“Our role as driver and connector of the Italian startup ecosystem, once again sees us supporting B Heroes in offering new business models, examples to inspire tomorrow's startupper and innovation catalysts for mature companies that wish to take up the challenge and introduce new projects with dynamic partners”, explains **Guido De Vecchi**, Executive Director of the Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center. “We guarantee to all these startups our advice, support and shared relationships and opportunities on leading world financial markets, thanks to Intesa Sanpaolo's international network”.*

Supporting startups to relaunch business activities on new markets also helps to implement one of the pillars of "**Motore Italia**", the programme recently launched by Intesa Sanpaolo, which places at the disposal of businesses 50 billion Euro of new credit for liquidity and investments in the sustainable and digital transition.

Marta Testi, Chief Executive Officer of ELITE: *“ELITE's mission has always been to support the entrepreneurial excellence of our country, especially in a difficult and complex moment like the one we are currently experiencing. By renewing the collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo and B Heroes it will this year again be possible to support the sustainable development of some of the startups of the programme by sharing expertise, resources, technologies and a network of professionals, institutional investors and above all successful entrepreneurs through mentorship and open innovation activities. We are happy to contribute to the networking of startups and companies that will encourage new business opportunities and facilitate the interaction between the world of innovation and that of companies”.*

Main partners of the project

Intesa Sanpaolo is the leading Bank in Italy and one of the soundest and most profitable banks in Europe. It offers commercial, corporate investment banking, asset management and insurance services. The Intesa Sanpaolo Group has approximately 14.6 million customers in Italy who are assisted through both digital and traditional channels and 7.2 million customers abroad with subsidiaries operating in commercial banking in 12 countries in Central Eastern Europe and Middle Eastern and North African areas and an international network of specialists in support of corporate customers across 26 countries. Intesa Sanpaolo is recognized as one of the most sustainable banks in the world. For the Group, creating value means being a driver for growth, for the benefit of both society and the economy. As regards the environment, the Group has set up a 6-billion-euro fund for the circular economy. Intesa Sanpaolo supports major economic inclusion and poverty reduction projects, including an impact fund of 1.5 billion euro for loans available to social groups who struggle to access credit. Intesa Sanpaolo has a high level of involvement in cultural initiatives, organised by the Bank or in collaboration with other entities in Italy and further afield. These include permanent and temporary exhibitions showcasing the Bank's impressive artistic heritage at the Gallerie d'Italia, the Group's museums located in Milan, Naples, Vicenza and soon Turin.

The mission of the Intesa Sanpaolo's Innovation Center is to explore and analyse new business models to encourage the competitiveness of the Group and its customers. With a central office on the 31st floor of the Turin skyscraper and a network that leverages on the national network and international presence of Intesa Sanpaolo, the Innovation Center enables relationships with other stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem - such as companies that focus strongly on the use of new technologies, startups, incubators, research centres and universities - and supports new forms of entrepreneurship to access venture capital thanks to its subsidiary Neva Sgr. Innovation underlies the company's evolution and for Intesa Sanpaolo Group is a lever to compete on increasingly complex and globalized markets.

Selection and investment partner

B Holding is an investment vehicle that by leveraging on the successful experiences of B Heroes, Boost Heroes and the founding partners (Fabio Cannavale, Ferrante Enriques and Andrea Perin) intends to create an ecosystem of the best startups and scaleups, Italian corporations most dedicated to innovation, sponsors and partners of primary standing, and a network of unrivalled mentors and important institutional investors.

As investment partner, B Holding provides equity investments or convertible instruments in the selected startups: all the co-investors in the B Heroes network are able to invest at the same conditions as B Holding.

Fabio Cannavale, graduated in Engineering from Milan Polytechnic University, he has a Masters Degree in Business Administration from INSEAD Business School in France, and began his career as a consultant, working firstly with ATKearney and then McKinsey & Company. In the last 15 years, thanks to his passion for travel and his great interest in the online world, he co-founded firstly eDreams Italia and then volagratis.com, whose success led to rapid development, internationalization and acquisitions, to build the current lastminute.com group, which today offers services to over 10 million travellers each year and is listed on the Zurich stock exchange. In 2017, in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo, through his non-profit organization Lastminute foundation, Fabio Cannavale supported the first edition of B Heroes whose purpose was to encourage the growth and development of new businesses while drawing attention to the social impact of new businesses. Fabio Cannavale is also co-founder of Boost Heroes and B Holding and a shareholder of the leading Italian seed capitals Dpixel, H-farm, Club Italia and Digital Magic.

B Heroes is an ecosystem of initiatives that supports the development of the most innovative Italian startups in order to help them successfully face the market and create a new entrepreneurial fabric in Italy, above all with the collaboration of mature companies. B Heros addresses above all young companies to provide financial support, entrepreneurial culture and visibility, in addition to opening the world of traditional businesses to open innovation, and encouraging exchanges between "new" and "old" entrepreneurs. This is the fourth edition of the programme.

Press information:

Ufficio stampa B Heroes

Marco Mazzei
press@bheroes.it
con Antonio Pirozzi

Intesa Sanpaolo

Media Relations Banca dei Territori e Media locali
stampa@intesasnpaolo.com
<https://group.intesasnpaolo.com/it/sala-stampa/news>

Intesa Sanpaolo

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