

**XXXIII edition of the Marisa Bellisario “Women who make the difference” Award
V edition of the Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo Award**

PRESS RELEASE

**SARGOMMA AND QUID WIN THE SPECIAL “GOLDEN APPLE”
WOMEN VALUE COMPANY 2021 INTESA SANPAOLO**

**TODAY, THE EVENT STREAMED LIVE ON THE SUBJECT:
“INCLUSION, FEMALE TALENT AND GENDER EQUALITY: STRATEGIC
RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS GROWTH AND INNOVATION” DEDICATED TO ALL
100 COMPANIES NOMINATED FOR THE AWARD OF THE MARISA BELLISARIO
FOUNDATION AND INTESA SANPAOLO**

- **Sargomma**, based in Turin, and **Quid**, a social enterprise from Verona, are the two winners of the fifth edition of the *Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo* award, run by the Marisa Bellisario Foundation and the banking group to give visibility to SMEs choosing to invest in women, gender equality and welfare
- The special “Golden Apple” *Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo* was awarded during the ceremony of the XXXIII edition of the Marisa Bellisario Prize “Women who make the difference”, which will be broadcast on 17 July on Raiuno
- The two winners were chosen from a short-list of 100 SMEs, selected from the 800 that applied from 22 March to 2 May throughout Italy: today, dedicated to them, the event that celebrates them as examples of excellence for inclusive corporate culture is streamed live
- The talk will involve an address by Elena Bonetti, Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family and others by three successful businesswomen - Lara Botta, Stefania Brancaccio and Maria Cristina Piovesana - who will offer insights and reflections on the new challenges of business strategies, starting from sustainability, digitalisation and technological innovation. The closing monologue by the author and theatre actress Alessandra Faiella precedes the virtual prize-giving ceremony of all enterprises that have reached the final stage

Turin, 7 July 2021 - The Marisa Bellisario Foundation has awarded the “Golden Apples” of the XXXIII edition of the Marisa Bellisario Award “Women who make the difference”, first created in 1989 and inspired by the memory of the first woman to be appointed top manager in Italy.

For the fifth year, a **special award has been given to two enterprises**, one small and one medium-sized, which have really stood out for their **innovative and inclusive development policies**, for their ability to **enhance female talent and merit** and for the development of **effective corporate welfare solutions**: this is the *Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo Award*, set up by the Foundation in collaboration with the banking group with the aim of **involving companies in a process of female empowerment** and giving visibility to the most virtuous and innovative practices.

The winners were **Sargomma** from Turin (in the small enterprises category), which boasts 40 years of experience in the design, development and production of rubber and plastic components for complex systems in the automotive, agricultural, industrial and nautical sectors and exports one third of its production to Europe, the USA and Latin America; **Quid**, from Verona (in the medium enterprises category), a social enterprise involved in “Made in Italy” ethical and sustainable fashion, with its own brand and co-branding with

international fashion and lifestyle companies, producing garments and accessories made with surplus and end-of-series fabrics, recovered thanks to a network of 52 producers and brand partners.

The special “**Golden Apple**” *Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo* award was presented to **Brigitte Sardo**, General Manager of Sargomma and **Anna Fiscale**, Chairwoman of Quid, by **Anna Roscio**, Head of Enterprise Sales & Marketing of Intesa Sanpaolo during the Marisa Bellisario Award ceremony held in Rome on 1 July, which will be broadcast on Raiuno on 17 July.

The success of the *Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo* initiative is borne out, once again this year, by the numbers: **800** companies applied for the award from 22 March to 2 May all over Italy, **100** of which passed the selection. **Today's event is dedicated to them in live streaming**, also transmitted on the Intesa Sanpaolo Group website (www.group.intesasanpaolo.com/it/), entitled “*Inclusion, female talent and gender equality: strategic resources for corporate growth and innovation*”, during which all the companies that have reached the final stages of the award will be celebrated as examples of excellence in inclusive corporate culture. The talk hosts addresses by **Elena Bonetti**, Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family and by Hon. **Lella Golfo**, Chairwoman of the Marisa Bellisario Foundation.

Anna Roscio, Head of Enterprise Sales & Marketing Intesa Sanpaolo will develop the theme of diversity, not only in terms of gender but also in terms of experience, providing space for ideas and reflections on the **new challenges of corporate strategies**, starting with **sustainability, digitalisation and technological innovation**, with the support of three successful businesswomen: **Lara Botta**, Deputy Chairwoman of Botta Packaging, the family business where she is responsible for business development, personally committed to the reduction of gender stereotypes and the enhancement of diversity in the company; **Stefania Brancaccio**, Deputy Chairwoman of Coelmo, a manufacturer of industrial and marine generators, Chairwoman of the Committee of Female Entrepreneurship of Naples Chamber of Commerce, Chairwoman of the regional group UCID and UCID national Deputy Chairwoman, since 2007 Chairwoman of the Plural Women Group of Confindustria Caserta, which aims to express the positioning of the association of industrialists on the issues of equal opportunities and reconciliation of life and work times; **Maria Cristina Piovesana**, Chairwoman of ALF UNO, a leading international furniture company, since May 2020 Deputy Chairwoman of Confindustria in charge of the Environment, Sustainability and Culture, recently appointed *Cavaliere Ufficiale al Merito* of the Italian Republic and just awarded the “Golden Apple” for Entrepreneurship 2021.

The closing monologue by the author and theatre actress **Alessandra Faiella** will precede the **virtual prize-giving ceremony for the 100 companies** selected for the *Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo*.

The 100 finalists of the Women Value Company 2021 Intesa Sanpaolo Award: the distinctive traits

61% of the **100 SMEs selected as finalists** are Small Enterprises and 39% are Medium Enterprises, 53% of which are located in Northern Italy, 31% in Central Italy and 16% in the South; 70% operate in the services, manufacturing and trade sectors. Once again in this edition, despite the continued difficult context, they have shown that **investing in women and welfare is a winning strategy**, also revealing a greater sensitivity towards their employees. Some figures:

- **72%** show a **positive trend in turnover**
- **92%** have activated or implemented **smart working** systems
- **74%** offer employees **healthcare solutions and coverage**

During the Covid period, these companies took **action to mitigate the negative effects on employment** (redundancy payments, flexible work, household utility contributions) **and business**, taking a long-term view and investing in innovation (50%), digital (33%), social impact (28%), internationalisation (26%), ESG and sustainability (22%), supply chains and territory (20%): in practice, on all the main themes of the Italian national recovery and resilience plan (PNRR).

“Digitalisation and sustainability: challenges for the future of business. The results of a specific survey” by the Intesa Sanpaolo Research Department

In 2020, the female employment rate in Italy dropped significantly to **54.7%** (-2 p.p. on the previous year); as a result of this decline, Italy ranks last in the European Union in terms of female employment. Encouraging

signs, however, were seen in the first quarter of 2021 with a **growth in women's enterprises that exceeds 1.3 million** and represents **22% of the national total**, driven mainly by young women's enterprises (+8.1% in the first quarter). The pandemic and the resulting crisis have had a more significant impact on the world of women: it will be crucial, including through the PNRR, to succeed in bridging the structural and dimensional gaps that exist.

In order to assess the effects of the health emergency and analyse the main strategies implemented to tackle and manage the economic crisis, the **Intesa Sanpaolo Research Department** involved the 100 companies selected for the Women Value Company award in an **ad hoc survey**, from which some insights emerged that were today presented in the webinar by **Stefania Trenti**, Head of Industry Research.

A first element that emerged clearly is the greater ability of the companies interviewed to address the crisis: overall, the sample analysed showed a substantial holding of turnover in 2020

(-0.3%) and even those companies that have declared a decline in revenues, expect to recover their losses as early as 2021 (44%) or 2022 (33%).

The greatest difficulties faced by enterprises relate to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, felt particularly by smaller enterprises (68%), while more structured enterprises report greater tension in managing commodity prices (73%). In response to these critical issues, enterprises are rethinking and innovating the services and products they offer, thanks to the impetus of investment plans that despite uncertainty and the crisis are being boosted by enterprises: in 2021, 68% of the sample surveyed are planning to invest more than they did in 2019. Of all the main areas of investment, ICT is the most important, followed by plant and machinery and then patents and R&D in third place. Digital is therefore a priority for the companies interviewed, which already use technologies such as 4G/5G and the cloud extensively and reveal a growing attention towards cybersecurity issues. Interconnected machinery and e-commerce follow in terms of adoption. The most digitised enterprises were able to address the crisis better: half of them, in fact, recorded an increase in turnover, compared to 34% of the rest of the sample. The greatest obstacle to investment in ICT consists of the difficulty in finding adequate professional figures to support this transformation (51% of the sample), a phenomenon that is reported more seriously (65%) by enterprises with a more evolved digitalisation profile.

Enterprises are increasingly focussed on issues of environmental sustainability, with a greater propensity to invest than found at the national level in the permanent census; the most widespread action is separate waste collection, practised by all enterprises, while the actions that will be most strengthened concern the limitation of atmospheric emissions, noise and light pollution and the progressive use of secondary raw materials. The survey showed how the implementation of more sustainable models requires the involvement of all stakeholders in the business process: more than half of the enterprises claim to have involved their suppliers in initiatives aimed at reducing environmental impact (56%).

Lella Golfo, Chairwoman of the Marisa Bellisario Foundation: *“The success of the fifth edition of Women Value Company is a real victory for our SMEs: solid realities, often women-led, which have shown resilience and an extraordinary capacity for innovation. When we first thought of this award five years ago with Intesa Sanpaolo, we could not imagine that there would be over 3000 companies nominated and 500 awarded with a plaque. The extraordinary participation - even more so in these last two editions put to the test by the pandemic - tells of a production system that has understood the fundamental importance of the female contribution to growth. Giving space and visibility, recognising the merits and commitment of these small and medium-sized enterprises has always been our priority and it is even more so today. The PNRR will invest at least €7 billion by 2026 to promote gender equality and €400 million for female entrepreneurship: an opportunity for rebirth that puts women and enterprises at the centre and that will certainly have to start from these positive and successful models. This is why my thanks go particularly to the companies involved in this edition and to Intesa Sanpaolo for continuing to believe and invest in an idea of the future that speaks the language of equality and sustainability”.*

Anna Roscio, Head of Enterprise Sales & Marketing Intesa Sanpaolo: *“The initiative that we have the privilege of sharing for the fifth year with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation is now more topical and significant than ever before: gender equality is in fact a strategic axis of the plan that will design the near future of the country. All the stories of our “Women Value Companies” - true role models of inclusive and successful entrepreneurship - are a source of inspiration, helping us to look forward to a society that puts talent and merit at the heart of recovery. The pandemic has further exacerbated the gap between men and women in terms of participation in the world of work and entrepreneurship, but it is also providing us with an extraordinary opportunity to rethink the structural factors underlying this gap: working time, access to*

education, lifelong learning, equal pay and precarious employment. On the strength of its human resources and professionalism, Intesa Sanpaolo considers gender equity and inclusion among its essential objectives: we tenaciously support women's work and entrepreneurship in Italy, with particular attention to the work-family balance and the rewarding of merit, with results that prove our contribution to the growth of the real economy”.

SARGOMMA, the winning company in the “small enterprises” category

Sargomma was established in Turin in the 1980s, when the car industry was booming. Giuseppe Sardo, the owner, collaborated with the most important body shops in Turin and with manufacturing engineers, providing solutions that led to the creation of components for the interiors of the most famous cars of the time, earth moving machines and agricultural machinery. Towards the end of the 1980s, Mr Sardo, together with his customers' technical offices, saw the possibility of inserting the comfort elements typical of a car in the closed cabins of agricultural machinery. This intuition, thanks to the quality of Sargomma components, guaranteed immediate success. Starting 1985, when his daughter Brigitte joined the company - a novelty in what was up until then an exclusively male sector - Sargomma made important choices that led to the consolidation of the company on the domestic market and expansion abroad through joint ventures and partnerships.

Today, Sargomma boasts 15 million products sold per year, more than 150 customers worldwide and a new generation of young collaborators and employees: a dynamic and largely female team, including in the positions of greatest responsibility. The work carried out by Brigitte Sardo, General Manager of Sargomma, aspires to sharing, respect for all diversity, which is considered an asset, fruitful collaboration and internal dialogue, because “*just as we communicate within a company system, we also communicate externally, and this uniquely qualifies the company's character and creates value*”.

In 2020 Sargomma launched *Welfare per durare*, the first company welfare project carried out with funding from the European Social Fund following a call for tenders from the Piedmont region: despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, employees experienced a range of welfare services, such as training and coaching, therapeutic listening desk, advice on civil law, personal trainer in the company, company butler service, reorganisation of the work environment in collaboration with IAAD for the development of sustainable solutions and functional to psychological and physical well-being. Brigitte Sardo is involved in UNI working tables for the definition of the gender business certification process, she is Chairwoman of APID Turin (Ass. women entrepreneurs owners of SMEs), Deputy Chairwoman of CAFID (Coordination Ass. Women Entrepreneurs and Managers), CONFAPID (National Group of Women Entrepreneurs) and the Female Entrepreneurship Committee of the Turin Chamber of Commerce. She also plays an active part in several projects, including SAFE (fund-raising project for education against gender-based violence) and Greenfield (all-female corporate team for innovation in Industry 4.0).

For information: www.sargomma.it

QUID, the winning social enterprise in the “medium enterprises” category

Quid is a **social enterprise** that offers secure employment opportunities to vulnerable people - especially women - who have battled and overcome difficult personal or social situations (69% of employees were unemployed, vulnerable people 63% including young neets, unemployed women aged over 50 and young men and women seeking international protection). It was established in 2013 by five friends sharing a passion for fashion and with a natural vocation for social work. Since then, it has been committed to creating an inclusive work environment, cultivating the untapped talent of enterprising and resilient people, involved in the production of ethical fashion garments under the “Progetto Quid” label and, through collaborations with fashion and lifestyle brands, the creation of capsule collections in co-branding and accessories for companies. In 2014, Quid had 17 employees; today it has 133, 77% of whom are hired on permanent contracts. 83% of the staff are women, 67% of whom are on the Board of Directors and 78% in management positions. The Chairwoman, Anna Fiscale, who was appointed *Cavaliere dell'Ordine al Merito* of the Italian Republic in December last year, is also a woman.

Following the Covid-19 emergency, to allow its employees to continue working, Quid has converted part of its production to make fabric masks, even achieving the creation of a model authorised by the Italian national health authority (ISS) and the subsequent upgrade of the Cover-up masks, washable surgical masks type IIR.

Since 2018, Quid has activated *Liberamente*, a welfare programme that supports employees in three key areas - psychological and emotional well-being, digitalisation, assistance with the completion of bureaucratic procedures -

and also for the construction of a support network in the territory. It periodically monitors the work-life balance of employees, which shows that satisfaction is higher than the national average.

Other initiatives activated to maximise inclusion include: two tailoring workshops in prisons, offering apprenticeships and contracts to female inmates; a job placement project for women victims of trafficking; the *She Will* project, development of leadership skills for female staff in coordination roles; while 16 employees took part in *#IamRemarkable*, training by Team Google on female empowerment.

The Quid Stores operate out of Verona, Milan, Bassano del Grappa, Mestre, Genoa, Bussolengo, Cadriano dell'Emilia and Vallese; the Cooperative Company's products are distributed throughout Italy, in authorised stores and sold online on its website www.progettoquid.it.

For information: www.quidorg.it/

The Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo award

The **Women Value Company Intesa Sanpaolo** award is aimed at small and medium-sized public and private enterprises, excluding sole proprietorships, with a majority of Italian capital and not belonging to groups, which have recorded good performance in view of the particular economic and social situation and which can boast one or more of the following requirements: they have adopted family/work reconciliation actions and services; they promote innovative initiatives aimed at guaranteeing employees a serene management of their time in the company (benefits, vouchers, in-house nurseries, etc.); they implement flexible work organisation policies; they implement non-discriminatory merit-based remuneration policies; they promote plans for the development and enhancement of women's skills and careers and stand out for the presence of women in managerial or top positions; they foster a culture of gender diversity.

The initiative is confirmed as an important event for the **attraction and enhancement of Italian entrepreneurial excellence**: in the five editions, the stories of **over 3,300 companies** have been collected, distributed throughout Italy, of which approximately **500** reached the final stage. With the 2021 edition, **10 companies** will be **rewarded** for the excellence of the policies implemented in favour of gender equality.

Intesa Sanpaolo and the offer dedicated to female entrepreneurship

Intesa Sanpaolo's commitment to contributing to the diffusion of a meritocratic and inclusive culture and to enhancing the role of women in the socio-economic context is also expressed through a series of new initiatives aimed at strengthening the **range of services offered to female entrepreneurs**: a range of services, products and facilities aimed at accompanying “female” businesses in their growth paths, enhancing their intangible assets and the factors that allow for a prospective sustainability recognised and “rewarded” by the Group in its assessment of creditworthiness.

The following already stand out: **Business Gemma**, the medium to long term loan dedicated to women's enterprises and self-employed women, which benefits from the Guarantee Fund for SMEs and from the suspension of the principal portion of the instalments for up to one year; **mamma@work**, the loan with advantageous conditions for working mothers, including self-employed women, which supplements the funds available to help reconcile professional life and family commitments; and **Welfare Hub**, the service with which enterprises can increase the personal and family well-being of their employees, thanks to access to a digital platform where you can spend your “welfare credit” choosing from goods and services in the areas of greatest interest (home and family, health and well-being, savings and leisure).

Support for gender equality is **now enriched by a dedicated line of the S-Loan (Sustainability Loan)**, successfully launched a few months ago and dedicated to the achievement of improvement objectives on environmental, social and governance (ESG) sustainability issues. The mechanism of the new line of financing provides for a **rate discount** for enterprises that make sustainable investments, with a particular focus on initiatives aimed at **promoting equal gender opportunities** and, in particular: the promotion and activation of initiatives, programmes and good practices dedicated to facilitating and **improving women's participation in the community**; the activation of initiatives aimed at **promoting the female employment rate** in the company; the definition and implementation of internal policies aimed at **guaranteeing gender equality in the company context**; and the introduction of **company welfare programmes for female employees**.

The Intesa Sanpaolo Group also provides, in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo Formazione and the University of Turin, the **“Women Skills Academy. Women in Leadership”**: an **advanced training course** focused on **female leadership** and specifically **dedicated to enterprises led by women** - in particular those operating in contexts with predominantly male interlocutors - in order to support them in the process of structural reinforcement and orient them towards sectors with an increasingly more innovative content. The goal is to build knowledge on financial education

and strengthen leadership, skills, networking, communication and negotiation skills. **The course was offered to 35 female entrepreneurs, selected from the finalists of the Women Value Company award.**

This initiative stems from the consideration that the health and economic crisis caused by Covid-19 has put women-owned businesses in particular in crisis. After six years of steady growth, the **Observatory on Women's Entrepreneurship of Unioncamere and InfoCamere** recorded the first setback in 2020: just a -0.29%, equal to almost 4,000 fewer activities compared to 2019, and yet a sign that goes against the trend.

The reasons lie in the fact that the sectors in which women are traditionally more present remain commerce, tourism, personal assistance and, among the manufacturing activities, textiles: precisely the activities most affected by the pandemic, which seems to have brought to light a sort of **structural weakness of female entrepreneurship**, not so much in terms of terminations as in terms of gross birth rate.

Inclusion and the development of female talent in Intesa Sanpaolo

Intesa Sanpaolo's collaboration with the Bellisario Foundation in the Women Value Company project is entirely in line with the attention traditionally paid by the banking group to the issue of gender equality and inclusion, both as a company and in its institutional activities.

In terms of **equal opportunities and inclusion**, Intesa Sanpaolo, which has created a **dedicated internal structure reporting to the Chief Operating Officer**, over the years has equipped itself with concrete and effective tools that have enabled the Bank to have today a **larger number of women (54%) than men** and to be well positioned as female Executives (27% compared to the Italian female executive average of 17.6%), as Managers (40%, including Executives and Middle Managers) and as Branch Managers (40%). In order to enhance female talent and encourage the creation of inclusive working environments, a specific **KPI** (management objective) has been introduced to reward managers who pay attention to gender equity and a number of **development initiatives for female professionals and managers** (job rotation, shadowing courses, training for female empowerment, career acceleration programmes, etc.). A section of the document "**Principles for Diversity & Inclusion**" - the policy approved in 2020, which sets out policies and actions for inclusion towards all forms of diversity and is based on respect for all people, meritocracy and equal opportunities, identifying concrete commitments and behaviours - is given over to **gender equity commitments** in the area of **recruitment, promotions to manager, appointments to senior management and the succession plan** for top management. The integrated **welfare** system has evolved over the years, with a wide range of solutions - e.g. the time bank, company crèches, extended maternity/paternity leave, smart working, flexible entry/exit times, part-time work - that concretely address the issue of time management and the balance between the business and personal needs of employees.

In addition to the well-established initiatives with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation, Intesa Sanpaolo also stands out for its numerous **collaborations** that promote gender equality, so much so that it is the **first bank in Italy and one of the first in Europe to have received the Gender Equality European & International Standard (GEEIS-Diversity)**, an international certification issued by the Arborus association through Bureau Veritas and aimed at assessing the commitment of organisations to diversity and inclusion. The evaluation process examined data, staff processes, policies and action plans with a focus on the consequentiality between listening activities, initiatives and projects carried out and the monitoring of results.

Intesa Sanpaolo is included on the **Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index 2021 (GEI)** with a score well above the global financial sector average and in the **Diversity & Inclusion Index of Refinitiv**, an international index that selects the 100 most inclusive and diversity-conscious companies in the world listed on the stock exchange; it has also been recognised by **Equileap Research** in the top 5 of the FTSE MIB 40, in the **2020 Gender Equality in Spain, Italy and Greece** ranking. The Bank has also adhered to the **Women's Empowerment Principles - WEPs** promoted by the UN and subscribes to the **ABI (Italian Banking Association) Charter "Women in banking"**.

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