

CDP Venture Capital SGR sole investor alongside Hevolus: Mixed Reality drives innovation in the South of Italy and contributes to the country's competitiveness

Fondo Nazionale Innovazione focuses on the development of the Molfetta-based company, leader in disruptive technologies and Microsoft's international partner.

Objective: increase digital transformation opportunities for the country, leveraging smart solutions and omnichannel and interactive customer experiences.

Rome, 15 September 2020 – **CDP Venture Capital SGR signed the agreement with Hevolus Srl**, an Apulian company leader in disruptive technologies and innovative customer experiences, **for a 4 million euro capital increase**.

The investment was made through the Fondo Italia Venture II dedicated to innovative startups and SMEs in the South of Italy and aimed at accelerating their competitiveness and development.

Hevolus is an innovative SME with exponential growth, specialised in solutions, projects and services aimed at the Digital Transformation of business processes and customer journeys for any industrial sector.

Founded in 2000 as a hardware shop for wood artisans, after a few years the company launched entrepreneurial diversification initiatives, opened new business lines and became a recognised innovation laboratory with very high digital skills, a next-generation software house that analyses and develops innovative business models based on disruptive technologies - augmented reality, mixed reality, Artificial Intelligence, IOT, Cloud services, cognitive services - with the ultimate goal of helping to sell better by involving the customer more.

In 2018 Hevolus became Microsoft's international partner for Mixed Reality, shortly afterwards it was chosen by the giant Redmond as the international testimonial of the holographic computer HoloLens2 and, moreover, it was among the partner companies of the new Ambizione Italia #DigitalRestart plan with which Microsoft intends to support the country's growth through 1.5 billion dollar investments in advanced digital technologies and skills.

In 2020, it won the "Retail Week Awards" in the Game Changer category with the custom project developed for Natuzzi and was named Microsoft Italia's "Best ISV Partner 2020", a prestigious award dedicated to partners who, with their solutions, have had a significant impact on customers' digital transformation.

Today, Hevolus boasts internationally renowned customers with numerous success stories in the furniture, fashion, telecommunications, civil and industrial systems sectors.

Since 2015 Hevolus has been a Corporate Open Innovation Partner of the German multinational Würth with the projects Wudesto (2016), WOE (2017), JIT (2018), Holo Warehouse (2019), Holo Maintenance (2019), HoloLink (2020).

Innovative and social distancing friendly solutions

Hevolus stands out on the global scene thanks to the high level of flexibility and scalability of its platforms and for the highly innovative content of the implemented technologies with which it guarantees the transformation of the customer experience in an omnichannel and interactive perspective.

In 2020 the company launched new digital platforms on the market in response to the needs generated by the health emergency: **Augmented Store At Home** and **HoloLink**, aimed at allowing business continuity and lead generation with remote services without having to sacrifice eye contact and the digital relationship with the customer.

Augmented Store at Home is a web application used to remotely control the retail sector in an innovative way: it supports store virtualisation and an augmented reality view of the items on display through their 3D digital counterparts, using any desktop or portable device.

HoloLink is smart working for artisans: the solution allows artisans and small businesses to provide remote assistance to their customers, leveraging Cloud Computing and Augmented/Mixed Reality.

Both platforms support Microsoft HoloLens 2 and make it possible to run instant collaboration sessions by taking advantage of the power of Mixed Reality.

With important benefits for the production chains: reduction in physical store spaces, omnichannel integration of the online and in-store customer journey, reduction in online purchase times, increase in conversion rate, increase in reach rate, enhancement of customer service initiatives, optimisation of business times and costs, reduction in on-site inspections, reduction in polluting emissions.

CDP Venture Capital SGR, through the **Fondo Italia Venture II**, will support, as a sole investor, the evolutionary process of Hevolus, through a **4 million euro** capital increase, with the aim of helping a technological excellence in the South of Italy expand its business, including at the international level, not only in the retail sector, but also in the healthcare, industrial, telecommunications sectors, etc.

The Apulian company has shown very high adaptability to market needs, so much so that it has intensified the implementation of augmented reality services to compensate for the current regulations that limit the regular conduct of sales and business activities, thereby promoting the digitisation of companies that have been significantly penalised by the COVID-19 crisis.

The transaction will also allow the possible acquisition of smaller businesses with extensive technological expertise (AI and CRM technologies) and the strengthening of the organisational structure, through the inclusion of key R&D and sales roles, to support the business development phase.

“The mixed reality market is expanding tremendously”, comments **Enrico Resmini, Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of CDP Venture Capital SGR**. *“We are talking about an estimated global value of 1.8 billion dollars in 2024. Our investment in a highly innovative company in the South of Italy, with strong technological know-how such as Hevolus, will allow us to accelerate the development of new business and employment opportunities. The impact of this transaction will benefit all those Italian companies that need a boost in digital transformation processes in the retail, oil & gas, construction, healthcare and fashion sectors, an area to which the new virtual reality technologies could bring considerable benefits, both in terms of turnover development and in terms of cost optimisation.”*

“We are honoured to be part of such a solid and prestigious Italian group that will allow us to grow further at the global level, whilst still maintaining our Italian character and allowing us to fuel our drive on cutting-edge technologies and advanced skills. Over the years, thanks to the synergies with the Microsoft ecosystem and with an innovation-driven vision, we have developed technological solutions that have guided Italian companies along the digital transformation process and that are now enabling many companies to leverage Mixed Reality to overcome the many constraints brought about by the health emergency in innovative ways. With this important milestone in our development plans we will not only be able to expand the application scenarios for the benefit of strategic sectors for Italy, but also export this model of Italian excellence abroad, contributing to the country’s competitiveness, all starting from Southern Italy”, comments **Antonella La Notte, CEO of Hevolus Innovation**.

“We are excited about the growth path undertaken by Hevolus, an important recognition of the excellent work done so far. Our partners are the country’s true innovation champions, alongside companies in their digitisation projects through vertical skills and solutions. We are proud to work together with an innovative company such as Hevolus, with which in recent months Microsoft has developed some truly innovative projects in a cutting-edge area such as that of Mixed Reality to help companies find new channels to connect with customers, including during the health emergency. Thanks to the participation of CDP Venture Capital,

*it will be able to develop increasingly advanced solutions to guide companies in thinking about technologies as levers for innovation, competitiveness and economic growth”, said **Barbara Cominelli, Marketing & Operations Director of Microsoft Italia.***

CDP Venture Capital SGR – Fondo Nazionale Innovazione

CDP Venture Capital is an asset management company (70% owned by CDP Equity and 30% owned by Invitalia) with approximately 1 billion euro of assets under management. It aims to make Venture Capital a strategic pillar to Italy’s economic development and innovation, creating the conditions for a comprehensive and sustainable growth of the Venture Capital ecosystem. It operates through a series of funds that aim to support startups in all their life cycle stages, making both direct and indirect investments.

Hevolus Innovation

Hevolus Innovation specialises in research and development of innovative business models for the creation of phygital customer experiences. Microsoft’s international partner for Mixed Reality, winner of the SMAU Innovation Award 2018 and 2019, Best ISV Partner 2020 of Microsoft Italia, winner of the Retail Week Awards 2020 in the Game Changer category, and included in the list of the top ten European providers of AR/VR platforms, Hevolus Innovation is a leader in the world of disruptive technologies (Mixed Reality, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Microsoft Dynamics and cognitive services) that it uses to innovate the shopping experience and business strategies in the reference markets. It targets the entire retail industry and deals with Corporate Open Innovation for the multinational Würth, with successful projects for some of the group’s key sectors, including carpentry, construction of cruise ships and yachts, the wood industry and the manufacturing industry.

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