

Dear colleagues,
welcome to a new appointment with Kairos Life

Today we meet a colleague who has an academic and professional path that is not so common in the financial field and which, lent to this world, can be an important added value. So let's get to know **Matteo Bonfanti**, Key Partner of the Venture Capital team.

Q: You arrived in Kairos last July, can you tell us briefly your story?

A: I have a scientific background, I have a degree in solid state physics and subsequently I obtained a PhD in nanotechnology. At the end of my PhD I entered the world of finance and venture capital. I entered almost by chance because in that period, we are talking about 2008 2009, the world of VC in Italy was in fact in the emerging phase. I spent about ten years in the world of finance following start-ups ranging from the aerospace sector to the nanotechnology and semiconductor sector.

It may seem strange that a physicist has entered the world of finance, but I make two general considerations. It is not that unusual in the world of venture capital to see figures with a scientific background being part of a venture fund investment and the latter obviously personal. I mean, I felt that I wanted to do something different in addition to the pure research that was the environment where I was. After about ten years, I returned in part to the world of research and in particular to the Italian Institute of Technology where I worked with Roberto Cingolani as head of the Technology Transfer Department, that is the direction that deals, between other, also to support companies, and therefore the start-ups created by the institute and its researchers. After a few years in this context, let's say that the results were particularly satisfactory and therefore I also felt the need to face a new challenge. In a certain sense, returning to the first working world that was and is that of venture capital.

Q: In fact, you left the Italian Institute of Technology in Genoa, where you were director for technology transfer. How did you find the world of venture capital at your return?

A: Certainly a much more developed context than just five or six years before. I would say starting from 2012, when the start-up act was introduced, the sector of VC has experienced continuous growth. So especially for those who, like me, have had the luck and fortune to live in an almost pioneering context of venture capital, seeing the current situation allows us to see a glass that in my opinion is much more than half full.

The deal flow, or rather the start-up proposals that are seen today in Italy, are certainly of high quality and number. We are now very distant from the situation of a few years ago. And this also leads us to consider that there can be important return on investment opportunities in this sector in Italy

Q: So let's talk about the fund. A new investment in medicine was recently finalized. Can you tell us briefly? What companies are you now looking at?

A: Materia Medica fully responds to the two basic postulates for a VC investment, namely market and entrepreneurial issues. As regards the medical market, the development of industrial production of the active ingredients extracted from cannabis for pharmaceutical use is arising. This market is currently in a rising phase, but with excellent growth prospects, also due to a regulatory framework.

Therefore, a start-up as a Materia Medica, thanks to this investment, will be able to have all the necessary resources to play a role as a first mover in this nascent market, with all the benefits that this can bring. To do this, however, we arrive at the second postulate of investments in research, the entrepreneurial team that, as in this case, has a long experience in the sector and therefore has technical, industrial and market skills to fully develop the company and to seize the opportunities for growth. With regard to deal-flow, we have several initiatives in the due diligence phase that span various sectors which are then thematic for the fund. We have initiatives both in the field of medical devices and of Fintech. In particular, the most advanced initiative operates precisely in this sector in Fintech and is a start-up that has developed a new platform substantially for investments in cryptocurrencies, with a particular focus for institutional investors. We expect this company to become the Fund's 5th investment by the end of the year if the ongoing negotiations are successful.