



Chasing "Unicorns" from Valtellina to Silicon Valley: introducing Liquid Factory, the Startup Factory aiming to attract the best talents from Italy and across Europe, in Partnership with Banca Popolare di Sondrio

Liquid Factory is a new Startup Studio designed to attract top talent, founded by a group of "serial entrepreneurs" with a proven track record in Silicon Valley, returning to their home country with the goal of discovering European "unicorns."

Based in Valtellina, Liquid Factory merges a passion for the mountains and quality of life with ambitious and courageous dreams of disruptive global innovation.

Applications for the first batch are open until October 31st.
(<https://www.theliquidfactory.com/apply>)

Each selected startup will receive an initial investment of €200,000 and will be supported step-by-step with the goal of achieving global growth by a team of qualified professionals experienced in scaling businesses.

Milan and Sondrio, September 17, 2024 - The **application process for the first selection of startups by Liquid Factory**, the new Startup Studio dedicated to creating a strong link between technological innovation in Valtellina and Silicon Valley, **is officially open**. This new initiative, built in partnership with **Banca Popolare di Sondrio**, aims to **attract and support the best talents from Generation Z** (and beyond) **from Italy and across Europe**. It offers a unique opportunity to develop entrepreneurial ideas in a setting that combines the high quality of life of the Alpine region with direct connections to the leading accelerators in California.

The concept of founding a Startup Studio—a "factory for startups" capable of providing qualified support to young entrepreneurs from ideation to fundraising—originated from **Fabrizio Capobianco**, a "serial entrepreneur" with over twenty years of experience in Silicon Valley and four startups founded between Italy and the U.S. (Internet Graffiti, Stigma Online, Funambol, TOK.tv). He is **joined by industry professionals and university professors** with extensive experience on both sides of the Atlantic, including **Alberto Onetti and Matteo Daste**, partners at **Mind The Bridge**.

Liquid Factory aims to provide a living and working environment that blends unspoiled nature with cutting-edge technological know-how to build a path to success that can scale the most brilliant ideas to international funding rounds.

Currently, **over half of the “Generation Z” workforce—57%¹**—is seeking a work environment that offers the flexibility to cultivate personal interests and projects. **Liquid Factory** meets this need with a "liquid company" model, where work adapts to people's lives through daily interactions regardless of physical presence.

Each year, four young talents will be selected to bring their startup ideas to life in a **"Entrepreneurship in Residence"** program, allowing new entrepreneurs to develop their projects and grow them in Silicon Valley. No previous work experience or completion of studies is required before applying, and each selected startup will receive an **initial investment of €200,000** with full spending autonomy and no repayment obligations in the form of acceleration or mentorship services.

*"Our goal, thanks to our Partner Banca Popolare di Sondrio, is to create a center of technological excellence in Italy, especially targeting graduates and young professionals from all over Europe, as well as anyone looking to develop a project aimed at crossing national boundaries. Our mission is simple: help the best talents develop their entrepreneurial ideas without sacrificing quality of life. In Valtellina, our young entrepreneurs can take a break from calls to immerse themselves in nature and recharge, while maintaining daily contact with the world of major international investors," says **Fabrizio Capobianco, Partner at Liquid Factory**. "There are many points of contact between those who love the mountains and those who dream of changing the world with an innovative tech idea. It's no coincidence that the natural progression of a startup is referred to as scalability—a term commonly associated with the mountains. The values shared by these worlds are numerous: perseverance, tenacity, resilience, teamwork, leadership, courage, passion, innovation, vision, and ambition. These are precisely the traits we seek because we are confident that many of the world's next unicorns will come to Silicon Valley from Europe, and we will help them scale, starting from Italy, in beautiful landscapes where nature is still pristine and creativity can be expressed to its fullest."*

*"Our bank has always been close to businesses and entrepreneurs and is particularly sensitive to new entrepreneurial ideas and young talents, who represent the strength of our economic system, rich in excellences. We are strongly committed to supporting the venture capital project focused on digital technology. We chose to stand by Liquid Factory, which has a team of highly experienced and skilled professionals, including engineer Fabrizio Capobianco, who, as a young talent, made his mark in Silicon Valley and now returns to our valley with the strength of experience and a long track record of international success. I would call him a serial entrepreneur. Our shared goal is to create, starting from Valtellina, our chosen territory, a virtuous ecosystem that involves the community, universities, and investors, breaking geographical boundaries with the power of ideas through the arrival of emerging tech startups in Silicon Valley," commented **Mario Alberto Pedranzini, General Manager of Banca Popolare di Sondrio**.*

¹ Fonte EY, 2023 https://www.ey.com/it_it/beyond-la-nuova-serie-tv-di-ey/la-generazione-z-protagonista-del-cambiamento

Alongside Fabrizio Capobianco, the Liquid Factory team includes **Board Members Alberto Onetti and Giuseppe Recchi**, and **partners Matteo Daste, Michele Zonca, Villy Wang, Luca Penati, Franco Folini, Emanuela Zaccone, Francesco Di Cataldo, Stefano Angelinis, and Luisa Ferrandini**.

Applications are officially open (the application form is available at this link <https://www.theliquidfactory.com/apply>) **from today until October 31, 2024**, for getting into Silicon Valley's renowned incubators.

For more information on Liquid Factory, visit www.theliquidfactory.com

Liquid Factory

Liquid Factory is a Startup Studio founded in 2024 in Valtellina to support European technological innovation and connect it directly with Silicon Valley. Founded by Fabrizio Capobianco and developed in partnership with Banca Popolare di Sondrio, Liquid Factory is dedicated to Generation Z individuals aspiring to develop new global products or services in a setting that combines the pristine nature of the Alps with top-level sector expertise. Each year, four talents will be selected to launch their startup in a "Entrepreneurship in Residence" program in Valtellina, receiving an initial investment of €200,000 with full spending autonomy. Liquid Factory aims to create a hub of technological excellence in Italy, providing qualified support to young entrepreneurs through the entire process from ideation to fundraising. The challenge is to nurture new ventures and guide them towards entry into the most prestigious accelerators and incubators in Silicon Valley, enhancing their growth path on an international scale within the world's most famous innovation ecosystem.

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Banca Popolare di Sondrio

Founded in 1871 in Valtellina, Banca Popolare di Sondrio was one of the first popular banks inspired by Luigi Luzzatti's cooperative model. Over the years, the bank's activities have expanded nationwide and now employs over 3,600 people. Banca Popolare di Sondrio, with its long history of growth, values, and culture, heads a banking group with more than 500 branches, over 1 million customers, and over 145,000 shareholders. Building on the solid foundational principles that inspired a balanced and profitable business model, the bank operates with determination and a strong inclination towards innovation, continually adapting to new scenarios to continue its effective operations for the benefit of clients and all stakeholders.

For more information on Banca Popolare di Sondrio:

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