



Fondazione  
Compagnia  
di San Paolo



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Memorandum of understanding signed in Turin between the Ministry of University and Research and Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo (FCSP) to promote innovation, training and international cooperation as part of the Mattei Plan**

*Turin, 8 September 2025-* A memorandum of understanding was signed today at the FCSP's headquarters between the **Ministry of University and Research**, represented by **Minister Sen. Prof. Anna Maria Bernini**, and **Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo**, represented by its **Chair Prof. Marco Gilli**.

There is an Italy that looks to Africa as a strategic partner in shaping the future. This is the spirit in which the collaboration between the Ministry of University and Research and Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo has taken shape, formalised today through a Memorandum of Understanding centred on the *Mattei Plan*. The goal is to turn vision into action, with concrete initiatives already in motion and new ones on the horizon.

The Mattei Plan, a strategic initiative of the Italian government, sets out a **new vision for relations with the African continent**, built on equal partnerships, shared development and knowledge diplomacy. Within this framework, philanthropy has a vital role to play: activating synergies, mobilising resources and scaling up high-impact solutions.

True to its international outlook and long-standing commitment to global engagement, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo aims to **contribute to this plan by drawing on its experience** and launching **new projects in key areas** such as **maternal and child health**, the **agroecological transition** and **technology transfer**.

Aligned with both European and national priorities, the protocol sets the stage for **joint initiatives to improve access to European funding, promote the Third Mission of universities** (activities that go beyond traditional teaching and research to engage directly with society) **and develop strategic infrastructure** for education and research.

*"Today, we are not just signing a memorandum. We are fuelling the engine of innovation, internationalisation, and cooperation, an engine that brings together the public and private sectors, local communities and global networks, and the worlds of research and philanthropy. This signature marks a strategic alliance. A true joint venture. A concrete platform for sharing knowledge, combining resources and launching projects with strong social, scientific and economic impact. Because good ideas alone aren't enough, you need the right partners, a shared vision and the determination to act. That's what Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo brings to the table. And today, we are bringing all of this into play, with a clear and united commitment: to give new momentum to the goals of the Mattei Plan for Africa. A plan that isn't about exporting ready-made models, but about building solid and inclusive partnerships" - said Minister Anna Maria Bernini.*

*Philanthropic foundations are playing an increasingly important role in supporting research and innovation, thanks to a careful balance of direct contributions, long-term investments and targeted training and capacity-building initiatives. In this context, a four-part collaboration model – the Public-Private-Philanthropic Partnership (4P) – is emerging as particularly effective in promoting international cooperation, with a special focus on developing countries. This approach forms the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Ministry of University and Research. The memorandum aims to achieve two key objectives: first, to scale up to the national level the cooperation initiatives with the African continent already launched by Compagnia di San Paolo, in line with the priorities of the Mattei Plan, and second, to launch joint pilot projects with the Ministry that can be evaluated and, if successful, expanded more widely.. The aim is to contribute to the development of international cooperation grounded in knowledge, sustainability and innovation. To this end, we aim to support studies and pilot projects that demonstrate the strategic role of philanthropic foundations within the Mattei Plan as well as to promote experimental collaborations with universities to enhance the global competitiveness of Italian research and attract top talent from around the world. At the same time, we are committed to reinforcing the relationship between universities and local communities, helping to create strategic infrastructure in the fields of science and technology, starting in our own territories, but with the potential to generate significant benefits nationwide.” — **said Marco Gilli**, Chair of Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo.*

Compagnia di San Paolo is already actively engaged in a range of initiatives that provide a concrete response to the priorities outlined in the Mattei Plan.

In eight African countries, it supports CUAMM - Doctors with Africa in improving maternal and child health and nutrition services, helping to expand access to healthcare and ensure better living conditions for mothers and children. In West Africa, FCSP is involved in JAFOWA – Joint Action for Farmers’ Organisations in West Africa, which promotes sustainable agroecological practices and strengthens the food sovereignty of local communities.

Innovation is another key area of focus. In partnership with Fondazione Cariplo, FCSP is working to build skills in international cooperation through open innovation and capacity-building initiatives, with the goal of supporting sustainable development at the local level.

In the field of education, the experience gained through the “Città dell’Educazione” (City of Education) project – which promotes education as a driver of social transformation and a tool for reducing inequality – naturally connects with the “Empowering Through Education” initiative launched in Côte d’Ivoire.

The Renewable Energy Communities supported in Italy by FCSP can also engage in dialogue with the pan-African renewable energy hub “From Zero to Green”, based in Morocco, fostering exchanges and collaborations across borders, and connecting diverse experiences and expertise.

FCSP is also aligned with the Mattei Plan’s priorities in the fields of artificial intelligence and digital healthcare. Through its partnership with the AI4Industry centre, FCSP promotes ethical, transparent and responsible AI as a tool for sustainable development, creating valuable synergies with the AI Hub for Sustainable Development, a flagship initiative of the Mattei Plan.

In the area of healthcare, established projects such as Hospeedal, NeoGen and the digital transition initiative with the Cottolengo Hospital offer potential models for strengthening the accessibility and effectiveness of healthcare systems across Africa.

These efforts are part of FCSP’s broader and ongoing commitment to advancing the university system and innovation ecosystem. With over €213 million mobilised in recent years, the Foundation remains committed to boosting research competitiveness, attracting top talent, and turning scientific breakthroughs into real-world innovations.

Through the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator programme, we are exploring the challenges of global governance. At the same time, our mission-driven investments are contributing to Italy's strategic approach to Africa as outlined in the Mattei Plan.

In the field of research, our goal is to strengthen scientific expertise and infrastructure, promote new innovation policies and support the participation of universities and research centres in leading European initiatives, such as the vEIColo project.

Finally, we are partners in an agreement with the United Nations to establish a Scientific Advisory Council, and through the Next Generation We call for proposals, we are helping local authorities effectively access both European and national funding opportunities.

Through these initiatives, Compagnia di San Paolo reaffirms its role as a committed actor in building strong, equitable partnerships between Europe and Africa, mobilising resources, expertise and vision to tackle major global challenges together. The Memorandum signed today is not a starting point, but rather a point of convergence, bringing together two aligned visions already in motion.

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