
ZEST ANNOUNCES THE EXIT FROM THE STARTUP FUTURA

- The exit generated a 15x return on investment and was finalised within a €14 million Series A round raised by the startup;
- Futura, accelerated in 2021 by LUISS EnLabs, quickly established itself as one of the fastest-growing EdTech startups in the European ecosystem;
- The startup has tripled its revenues year-on-year, and now boasts an international team of over 40 people.

Rome, May 7, 2024 – **Zest**, the **leading pre-seed and seed Venture Capital investor in Italy** has announced its exit from Futura, one of the fastest-growing Italian EdTech startups.

The first exit for Zest generated a 15x return on investment and was completed within the €14 million Series A round raised by the startup. The round was led by the French venture capital fund Eurazeo, with the participation of Axon Partners Group, and the previous investor United Ventures.

Futura was accelerated in 2021 by LUISS EnLabs, an acceleration program of Zest in partnership with Luiss University. The startup closed a €1.8 million seed round in 2022 with leading Venture Capital funds, including Ithaca Ventures, Exor Seeds, and United Ventures, in addition to Zest. Futura quickly established itself as one of the fastest-growing EdTech companies in the European landscape, tripling its revenue year over year, with an international team of 40 people set to expand further.

Futura aims to make higher education accessible to everyone by personalizing the learning process **through its advanced artificial intelligence algorithms**. By providing top-notch educational content at an affordable price and adapting it in real-time to the individual needs of each student, Futura creates a learning experience tailored to each student's unique requirements, just like having a highly qualified private teacher.

Luigi Capello, CEO of Zest, said, "*This exit is a true representation of our business model. We have supported talented individuals who possess strong entrepreneurial spirit and determination through our acceleration program, smart capital, and our network. This has resulted in a rapid increase in the startup value, attracting top international investors and leading to our exit. With over 250 startups in our portfolio, active on strategic tech trends, Zest was created to launch a new generation of innovative Italian companies. We aim to support their scale-up and provide great value for our shareholders and the entire ecosystem*".

Gabriele Ronchini, CEO of Zest Investments, added, "*Futura is an example of how a new generation of tech founders is ready to redesign the entrepreneurial fabric of our country: our role, thanks to the work and skills of an incredible team of professionals, is to bring out talents with the ambition to change people's lives through technology.*"

Giulio Montoli, Investments & Portfolio Management at Zest Investments, said, "*We are proud to have supported Futura from its early stages to this significant milestone. We have successfully nurtured and developed a company that adds great value to the entire Italian innovation ecosystem. Congratulations to the Futura team for this remarkable achievement, and we are confident that they will brilliantly score their next goals*".

Andrea Chirolli, CEO of Futura, said, "Our journey with Zest has given us the tools to validate our idea and turn it into a fast-growing company. The people we have met have made the difference, starting from the acceleration program, where we went from 60 initial clients to 460 in just a few months. The Zest team believed in us from the beginning and supported us in every phase of our journey, always aligning their investor interests with ours as entrepreneurs. The relationships, the network activated, and the skills made available were essentials for our entrepreneurial growth".

Zest is one of the leading players in Europe dedicated to fostering growth in the Innovation Ecosystem. Zest is the market leader in Italy for early-stage venture capital investments, startup acceleration and scale-up support. It offers a wide range of high-tech and entrepreneurial value services, providing a complete 360-degree experience. Zest is the strategic partner for enabling Italian companies and institutions to transition to the 5.0 era, through Open Innovation & Corporate Venturing projects. With offices in Rome, Milan and Turin, Zest is born from the merger between Digital Magics and LVenture Group, the Italian Venture Capital pioneers with over 20 years of experience in the market.

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