

CUBE LABS OPERATES AS A VENTURE BUILDER IN THE FIELD OF LIFE SCIENCE. A DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO THAT COMPRISES 12 STARTUPS, 30 TECHNOLOGIES, 40 SCIENTISTS, 20 INTERNATIONAL PATENTS. INTERNATIONAL SCENARIOS ARE NOW ENVISIONED. “OUR MISSION IS TO VALORIZE ITALIAN SCIENCE”

“We look forward to closing a round of funding by the first half of the year. The next target? To be listed on the stock exchange.”

Entrepreneurial success stories start from afar and only when favourable conditions arise do they manifest their potential and assert their competitive advantage. ” This is how entrepreneur Dr. Filippo Surace responds to the question of from where the idea of Cube Labs came. Cube Labs is an industrial holding company, founded by Dr. Filippo Surace, which operates as a venture builder in the field of life sciences.

Dr. Filippo Surace’s medical background along with business experience in this sector have led him to live his passion of science that begins as an idea ramping up to the market, in a journey that starts from the laboratories and moves through technology transfer to be validated and developed into future market solutions.

“I drew inspiration for the Cube Labs model from what I learned in the early 2000s, when I started my American experience at Temple University College of Bioscience and Technology in Philadelphia, where I have a position as Associate Professor.”

The choice to focus on startups in the field of healthcare reflects both his medical background and business vision, and has brought together important partners from a broad range of fields. The partnership comprises co-founder Renato Del Grosso from the biomedical industry, Neil Thomas, Chief Business Officer, from the venture capital world, and Chris Hentschel, Chief Scientific Officer, and Isil Guney, External Scientific Communication Director, from the scientific world.

“The healthcare market in general is growing unceasingly with regards to both demographic trends and technological innovations. This is also true for the local market Italy”, explains Dr. Surace, who then describes the evolution of the company. “Our current model took full shape in 2018, starting with enhancing research projects and infrastructures in Southern Italy but with a strong presence throughout the country.

Bringing together science and investment as an entrepreneur is different from managing a fund. Both activities contribute to the growth of the innovation ecosystem but require different skills. As venture builders, we have a strong propensity for early stage risk when we select research projects and create a startup, coupled with a clear vision of the industry and financial return. Our team is cohesive and synergistic in terms of experience and skill sets, with cultural diversity and passion for innovation. ”

Society has also been confronted with the coronavirus emergency- a complicated context that has presented an opportunity to further entwine the position of being an incubator of ideas with the medical field: “Covid has consolidated focus on the health sector and pushed companies towards new organizational models. In our case, we continued working synergistically through remote modalities and used our expertise to develop a new disruptive Covid prophylactic and treatment against pulmonary fibrosis. ”

But what are the essential elements that a company like Cube Labs looks for in an entrepreneurial project in order to invest? Dr. Surace has a clear idea: “First of all, we don’t aim to turn our scientists into entrepreneurs, which is feasible in Anglo-Saxon countries but less in Italy.

We operate as venture builders, a trend that is now strongly growing, exercising corporate and organizational control over the project.

We support the development of the team of researchers, whose proven experience remains a “core” element in the valuation of the individual project, and combine this with an analysis of market and financial needs, patentability, regulatory pathways and market access. ”

Dr. Surace’s project saw draw qualified investors, such as business angels, at the level of the holding company, and the main Italian venture capital fund (CDP Venture Capital Sgr) upon four of the companies in its portfolio.

“Sometimes we are mistaken for a fund but the model of Cube Labs is that of an industrial holding company specializing in life sciences. We are characterized by the early stage phase (pre-seed/seed) and by the permanent capital approach of the startups. The advancement of the portfolio is pursued through trade sales when the appropriate development stage has been reached, as well as licensing activities with the corporate world. ”

Identifying a potential business venture is therefore a delicate task, but one that is also fulfilling in many ways: “We feel proud every time we listen to the scientific projects of our research teams that attest to the vast scientific potential that rests in develop in Italy. ”

The figures, from 2018 to today: 12 portfolio companies, 40 scientists and researchers involved, 15 members of the holding team, 20 international patents, five exclusive licenses, 30 technologies in the portfolio, 10 million euros of capital for development, numerous partners in strategic areas and active discussions with corporates in various medical areas.

These significant numbers give good hope for the coming years. “I prefer, as an entrepreneur, to build our near future, and then talk about the distant future”, he adds.

“We expect to close round A of funding by the first half of this year, with important institutional investors. We had announced in the past listing the Holding, which remains the next objective after the closing of the current round. ”

Cube Labs also plans to have a direct presence in four European markets (United Kingdom, Spain, Switzerland, Poland) by 2021, independent from each other but linked by a strong drive for innovation. “Our mission to enhance Italian science remains unchanged and we will do so with the same passion in Italy and abroad, bringing new technologies to the market for the benefit of patients. To act upon what I have explained is where I imagine we will be tomorrow”, concludes Dr. Surace. And if the future, as Nietzsche reminds us, influences the present as much as the past, then the intentions of Cube Labs already have the contours of certainty.