# Zendesk Launches Zendesk Ventures to Support AI-Driven Startups, Makes Initial Investments in PolyAI and unitQ



Zendesk has inaugurated Zendesk Ventures, its global fund designed to support AI-driven companies aiming to revolutionize customer and employee experiences. The venture fund also marked its initial investments in PolyAI, a company specializing in advanced conversational voice assistants, and unitQ, an AI-powered customer feedback platform.

The fund offers capital and expert resources in customer experience (CX) and artificial intelligence (AI), fostering strategic partnerships to promote innovation and growth. Ben Barclay, Senior Vice President of Strategy, Corporate Development, and Transformation at Zendesk, emphasized that the initiative aims to collaborate with organizations transitioning to AI-centric operations.

Zendesk's interest in AI extends to the burgeoning startup ecosystem in India, notably influenced by the "Make AI in India" initiative. Vasudeva Rao Munnaluri, Regional Vice President for India & SAARC at Zendesk, underscored the strategic importance of empowering AI-first startups in India to solve significant business challenges in CX and employee experiences (EX).

PolyAI and unitQ join Zendesk’s existing portfolio that includes Observe.AI and Zuper. PolyAI enhances customer interactions, providing voice solutions that manage complex queries like order tracking and delivery updates. UnitQ focuses on optimizing product quality by analyzing customer feedback from over 60 sources in real-time.

Concurrently, Alior Bank and Patria Bank announced a significant transaction on June 20, 2024, wherein Patria Bank will acquire a consumer loan portfolio worth RON 97 million (EUR 20 million) from Alior Romania. This transaction involves approximately 4,000 unsecured consumer loans and is expected to be finalized by September 2024. Valentin Vancea, Director General of Patria Bank, noted that this acquisition is a strategic step to enhance the bank's profitability and consumer lending portfolio.

Patria Bank, listed on the Bucharest Stock Exchange, aims to continue developing its service offerings to meet customer needs effectively. The bank, ranked 17th in Romania by assets, is majority-owned by the Emerging Europe Accession Fund. Alior Romania, ranked 30th by assets among Romanian banks, had RON 279 million assets at the end of 2023.