

MENA Startup Ecosystem News

OCTOBER 2024

MENA startups raised \$134 million in October 2024, a 52% MoM decline. Proptech sector attracted most funding.

According to [Wamda's report](#), the amount was raised from 56 deals:

- Debt financing accounted for \$28.4M or 21% of the total funds raised.
- UAE startups ranked first with \$61.8M across 15 deals, followed by Saudi entrepreneurs with \$50M over 21 deals.
- This month, Proptech ranked first among the sectors with \$38M investments, followed by Fintech with \$26.4M, and E-commerce with \$14.6M.
- Seed stage startups accounted for \$40M or 30% of the total funding, followed by Series A with \$20M.
- Business-to-Consumer (B2C) model attracted \$83.8M across 19 startups, compared to \$42.4M in 27 Business-to-Business (B2B) startups. Meanwhile, 10 startups operating both models obtained \$8M.

INVESTMENTS (non-exhaustive)

STARTUP	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	AMOUNT & ROUND	INVESTORS
Abhi	Finance	UAE	\$15M (Debt)	Led by Shorooq Partners, Amplify Growth Partnership.
Ejari	Real Estate	KSA	\$14.65, Seed (Debt & Equity)	Led by Partners for Growth (PFG), BECO Capital, anb seed, Rua Ventures, Alinma Bank (Alinma Pay), Vision Ventures, Aqar platform; from Salica Orxy Fund
Sakan	Real Estate	Kuwait	\$12M, Undisclosed	Undisclosed
Al Menu	F&B	KSA	\$10.12M, Undisclosed	Led by Al Majdiah Investment
Northladder	Consumer services, circular commerce	UAE	\$10M, Series B	Led by tali Ventures (by stc Group), Dutch Founders Fund, Crescent Ventures
PIP	Education, Gaming	UAE	\$10M, Seed	Exinity
Prypco	Real estate	UAE	\$10M, Seed	Led by Shorooq Partners; from Apparel Group
Invygo	Transportation	KSA	\$8M, Series A extension	STV (via NICE fund), Al Rajhi Partners, Arab Bank Ventures, SPV, MEVP, and C5
Mala	Finance	KSA	\$7M, Pre-Seed	Led by VentureSouq, Shorooq Partners, M Capital, BECO Capital, Access Bridge Ventures, Waad Investment, Palm Ventures, D Global Ventures
Quantum	Advertising	KSA	\$7M, Pre-Series A	HearstLab
Podeo	Media	UAE	\$5.4M, Series A	Led by Oraseya Capital; from Ibtikar Fund, Cedar Mundi Ventures, Samarium, iSME, Razor Capital
UMX	Gaming	KSA	\$4.5M, Undisclosed	Jetapult (India)
4Partners	Logistics	UAE	\$3.6M, Undisclosed	Undisclosed

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Pass	Logistics	Qatar	\$2.7M, Pre-Series A	Undisclosed
OCTA	Finance	UAE	\$2.25M, Pre-Seed	Led by Quona Capital, Sadu Capital; from Sukna Ventures, Plus VC, 500 Global, angels (Pawel Iwanow, Dom Monhardt)
Krti	Finance	Kuwait	\$1.5M, Pre-Seed	Core Vision Investment
Nabt	F&B	KSA	\$1.5M, Seed	Led by Merak Capital; from angels
Rabbit Mobility	Transportation	Egypt	\$1.3M, Undisclosed	led by 500 Global and Untapped Global
AILA	Education	KSA	\$1.15M, Pre-Seed	Led by Sabah Hub; from White Hill Capital, angels
ARK	Real estate	KSA	\$1M, pre-Seed	Led by Core Vision Investment
Cathedis	Logistics	Morocco	\$713K, Undisclosed	Fond Capital Venture (FCV), Beltone Venture Capital
JARAS Hospitality	Hospitality	KSA	\$660K, Pre-Seed	Angels
Tharawat Green Exchange	Web3	KSA	\$450K, Undisclosed	Adaverse
Colis.ma	Logistics	Morocco	\$300K, Pre-Seed	Witamax
Agenz	Real estate	Morocco	Undisclosed	Renew Capital
Qpay	Finance	Oman	Undisclosed, Seed	Led by Cyfr Capital
WellPal	Health	KSA	Undisclosed	Undisclosed
Yamm	Logistics	KSA	Undisclosed, Pre-Seed	Led by Flat6Labs; from Judah Ventures, angels

ACQUISITIONS

COMPANY	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	ACQUIRER, LOCATION	DETAILS
Bazaara	Fashion	UAE	Best Kept Shared, UAE	Undisclosed value
Elmawkaa	Construction	Egypt	Ayen, KSA	Undisclosed value
Rasheed App	IoT, Advertising	KSA	Nana, KSA	Undisclosed value

STARTUPS

Edtech Tadarab expands to KSA

The Kuwait-based startup announced its expansion to KSA as part of its strategic plan to meet the growing demand for online education solutions in the region. Tadarab currently serves over 300,000 learners on its platform, providing more than 1,000 training courses in various fields, including health, self-development, and family counselling, in collaboration with over 550 trainers from among the experts in the Gulf and Arab world.

SWVL launches its HQ in Riyadh

Mobility giant Swvl has joined Saudi Arabia's Regional Headquarters (RHQ) Program, a move to support the company's long-term growth and profitability plans in the GCC by leveraging the program's benefits and participating in government contract opportunities. SWVL secured \$2.6 million in new contracts in Saudi Arabia during the third quarter of 2024, a six-fold increase in gross profit compared to Q1 2023 and accounting for 10% of the company's total revenue in 2023.

G42's Inception launches AI model to empower 400 million Arabic speakers

Inception, a subsidiary of UAE-based G42, has launched Jais, the world's most advanced Arabic-language AI model. With 13 billion parameters, Jais aims to revolutionize AI accessibility for over 400 million Arabic speakers, supporting applications across media, enterprise as well as managing complex mathematical problems while maintaining the nuances of Arabic language.

Dubai launches \$100M Ignyte platform to empower 100,000 startups

Announced by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, Crown Prince of Dubai, and curated by the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Ignyte offers startups with more than \$100M worth of perks, connecting founders to a global network of investors, mentors, and corporate partners. It also introduces Ignyte Challenges, offering data scientists and AI enthusiasts the chance to compete in cutting-edge sectors like AI and machine learning

HALA Payments joins Saudi Unicorns Program

Through the Saudi Unicorns Program, the Riyadh-based fintech will benefit from opportunities to attract top talent, access new markets, and build strategic partnerships with government entities and global leaders in the fintech space. The program is run by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in collaboration with Mohammed bin Salman Foundation 'Misk', supporting Saudi Vision 2030.

Tarjama launches Pronoia for Arabic translations

The UAE based Arabic language tech company's Pronoia is an advanced large language model (LLM) designed for Arabic enterprise applications to provide unparalleled accuracy and contextual understanding in sectors including legal, medical, and business. It is designed to handle high-stakes use cases with the precision that enterprises demand, backed by specialised infrastructure and cutting-edge GPU nodes to optimise performance and cost efficiency.

UAE approves AI policy

The UAE Cabinet has approved the country's official stance on artificial intelligence (AI) policy internationally. The policy is built on 6 core principles: Advancement, Cooperation, Community, Ethics, Sustainability and Security. The policy seeks to utilize AI to drive economic diversification and innovation, while encouraging the development of high-impact technological solutions.

Dubai Future Foundation launches Gig Economy and PropTech Sandboxes

The Sandbox platform offers a structured approach to regulatory modernization, enabling companies to test their products, services and business models under adaptive regulatory supervision. Emirates Airline, Amazon, Careem, and GEMS Education have joined forces for the Gig Economy Sandbox to develop regulations that enable the development of the gig economy. While PropTech Sandbox aims to foster a regulatory environment that accelerates the adoption of emerging technologies in the real estate space.

VENTURE CAPITAL

Agility Global commits investment in Global Ventures's third fund

Singapore-based multi-business operator and long-term investor Agility Global will invest via its corporate venture capital arm an undisclosed amount into Global Ventures' third fund, which would provide capital to early-stage MENA companies in the areas of supply chain technology, energy technology, and agri-tech.

Amplify Growth launches \$100M debt fund

A partnership between Ajeej Capital and Nuwa Capital, the fund seeks to provide debt capital to tech-focused companies in Series A to Series C stages across the MENA region, with a focus on the GCC. It closed its first transaction with a fintech company active in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Moonbase Capital launches \$15M SME investment vehicle

The fund is Moonbase's second investment vehicle, aimed at backing talented entrepreneurs in acquiring and growing small to medium-sized businesses globally. It will invest in 15 SMEs within three-four years in emerging markets, including Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Expected first close is in Q1 2025, sourced from family offices and HNWI in Europe, Egypt and GCC.

SVC invests in Vision Ventures' Saqr Fund II

Saudi Venture Capital (SVC) has invested \$15 million in Saqr Fund II, which has a \$90M target. The fund will invest in Saudi Arabia and the MENA region's early-stage firms ranging from pre-Seed to pre-Series B, with a sector-agnostic approach.

Wa'ed Ventures allocates \$100M for early-stage AI investments

The fund is aimed to support the positioning of the Kingdom as a global AI hub, with an advisory board composed of global experts and investors in AI having worked at Meta, MIT, Oxford, and Amazon. In recent months, Wa'ed Ventures invested in Korea AI chip company Rebellions, and Aixplain, a provider of essential infrastructure for accelerated AI development

Jordan's ISSF invests \$5M in Rua Growth Fund

KSA-based Rua Growth Fund aims to support early-stage startups in fields including e-commerce, fintech, enterprise solutions, and SaaS. This partnership aims foster innovation and enhance the competitive positioning of Jordanian startups in regional markets.

\$300M Beta Lab Fund aims to support deep tech startups

Beta Lab, a fund and studio specializing in deep tech, launched with a capital of \$300M on the first day of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) 2024. It seeks to finance MENA and South East Asia startups whether in early or advanced stages, across sectors such as fintech, digital health, artificial intelligence, and smart mobility.

STARTUP PROGRAMS

Sandbox by Oraseya Capital welcomed its fifth Cohort



Having received 1,100 applications, SANDBOX Accelerator welcomed 19 high-caliber startups to the Phase 1 of the Accelerator program, hosted by Oraseya Capital. The founder-centric program spans five months with a two-phased structure whereby, startups shortlisted into Phase Two of the program will receive a US\$150K investment from Oraseya Capital

Entlaq partners with Savannah on incubation program

Entlaq, an Egypt-based entrepreneurial think tank, has partnered with Savannah, a Sudanese incubator, to support Sudanese migrants and refugee entrepreneurs in Egypt. The partnership will offer an incubation program that includes workshops, training sessions, and mentorship to provide Sudanese entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge of the Egyptian market

Google launches AI First Accelerator in MENA

The 10-week accelerator program from tech-giant Google featured an inaugural cohort of 15 startups from MENA and Turkey representing a variety of AI applications, including healthcare, agriculture, sustainability, finance, and accessibility. The initiative is designed to help startups that are leveraging AI to solve pressing challenges with access to Google's cutting-edge technology and connect them with industry experts and a vibrant network of fellow entrepreneurs.

WORTH THE READ

Wamda

- [Checkout.com: The State of Digital Commerce in MENA 2024](#)
- [Tawaref series: Company formation in Saudi from A to Z](#)

Entlaq

- [The Untapped Potential of The Egyptian Agri-Tech Sector: Driving Innovation and Growth](#)

STV:

- [AI Agents: A Regional Opportunity with Global Potential](#)