

MENA Startup Ecosystem News

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 4

MENA startups raised \$88.7M in funding in February 2024 – a modest growth of 2% MoM in deal value

According to [Wamda's report](#), February funding was raised across 37 deals.

- The UAE continues to lead the Mena ecosystem securing \$65.6M through 22 deals.
- Saudi Arabia's startups secured the second-highest funding, totaling \$16.3M from 7 transactions, while 2 Egyptian startups raised \$4.6M.
- This month, Web3 providers emerged as the market's notable newcomers, gathering \$39M in funding in 3 rounds, led by Flare Network's \$35M.
- Foodtech performed well securing \$21M, followed by Fintech which raised \$6.9M, and Logistics at \$5.4M.
- About \$55M went to B2C sector and \$18.4M for B2B domain.

INVESTMENTS (non-exhaustive)

STARTUP	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	AMOUNT & ROUND	INVESTORS
Flare Network	Web3	UAE	\$35M, Undisclosed	Led by Kenetic and Aves Lair
The Cloud	F&B	UAE	\$12 M, Series B	Mena Moonshots, Aluna Partners
Money Hash	Fintech	Egypt	\$4.5M, Seed	co-led by COTU Ventures & Sukna Ventures, participated by RZM Investment, DDFD, VentureFriends, Tom Preston-Werner, and a group of strategic investors and operators
CAMB.AI	Media / AI	UAE	\$4M, Seed	Led by Courtside Ventures; from TRTL Ventures, Blue Star Innovation Partners, Ikemori Ventures, and Eisaburo Maeda
Exverse	Web3	UAE	\$3 M, Undisclosed	Led by Cogitent Ventures, Cointelligence, and Moonrock Capital. Participated by KuCoin Labs, Epic Games, Seedify, and ChainGPT.
Rize	Real Estate	KSA	\$2.9M, Seed	Seedra Ventures, Hala Ventures, JOA Capital, RZM Investments, Bonat Investments, and Nama Ventures, Angels
Kema	Finance	UAE	\$2M, Pre-Seed	Led by Speedinvest, DDFD
Logidoo	Logistics	Morocco	\$1.55M, Undisclosed	Led by Maroc Numeric Fund II, 216 Capital (Tunisia), Gullit VC (Ethiopia), Founders Factory Africa (Nigeria), Sunny Side Venture Partners (Egypt/Japan), and Kalys Ventures (Morocco)
Tappi	Ecommerce	Kenya	\$1.5M, Pre-Seed	Egypt-based VC firm, Acasia Ventures
GameCentric	Web3	UAE	\$1.5M, Undisclosed	Angel investor, Bilal Merchant
The Digital Hotelier	Travel	UAE	\$1M, Seed	Plug and Play, Hope Funds, angels
Glamera	B2B	KSA	\$350K, Undisclosed	Hope Ventures, Fahad AlRajhi, Dr. Khalid Altawil

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STARTUP	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	AMOUNT & ROUND	INVESTORS
Right Calories	F&B	Bahrain	\$347K, undisclosed	Hope Ventures
Motolines	Automotive	Bahrain	\$347K, undisclosed	Hope Ventures
Thiqa Tutoring	Education	UAE	\$300K, Undisclosed	Hope Ventures, Mashael Fairouz, Dr. Lamya Mahmood
Wayl	Finance	Iraq	\$150K, Pre-Seed	EQIQ Ventures
Bookr	Beauty	Kuwait	Undisclosed, Bridge	Plus VC
CAI Concierge AI	AI	UAE	Undisclosed	Led by Enlightened Minds and VC SILA
Hayi	Social	UAE	Undisclosed, Seed	Plus VC
Physiohome	Health	KSA	Undisclosed, Seed	Angel Investors
Pieship	Logistics	KSA	Undisclosed, Pre-Seed	SEEDRA Ventures, Nama Ventures, and other angel investors

ACQUISITIONS

COMPANY	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	ACQUIRER, LOCATION	DETAILS
Rising Giants Network	Media / Entertainment	UAE	Sowt, Jordan	Undisclosed amount
VeFund	AI	MENA	CoreVision, KSA	Undisclosed amount

STARTUPS

Sowt acquires Rising Giants Network

Jordan-based Arabic audio content network, Sowt Media has acquired the UAE-based podcast producer Rising Giants Network (RGN), for undisclosed value. With this merger, Sowt aims to grow its reach and continue delivering diverse and engaging Arabic and English audio content.

UAE launches \$300M Falcon Foundation to develop open-source AI

Founded by Abu Dhabi's research centre, The Technology Innovation Institute (TII) announce the launch of the Falcon Foundation, a non-profit initiative aimed to advancing the development of open-source generative AI models and building sustainable ecosystems around open-source projects that accelerate technology development.

Dubai-Based Podcast Platform Podeo Partners With Messaging Giant imo

Leading podcast platform in the MENA region based in Dubai, Podeo, has formed a partnership with imo, a global messaging giant, expanding its reach to 170 countries and in 62 languages. This collaboration marks a milestone in regional podcast distribution as Podeo's hosted podcasts are integrated into imo's popular Voice section, providing podcasters with access to an engaged audience of 200M active users.

Nybl, Basserah merge to expand their regional reach

Saudi data automation firm Basserah and UAE-based AI startup nybl have united to increase their presence in the region. The merger is expected to enhance the rapid acceleration of the companies' regional and global growth ambitions by creating a vertically integrated data-ai pipeline.

STARTUP PROGRAMS

Oraseya's Sandbox welcome its fourth cohort



Having received 500+ applications, SANDBOX Accelerator welcomes 23 high-caliber startups to the Phase 1 of the Accelerator program, hosted by Oraseya Capital. The founder-centric program spans five months with an introduction of a two-phased structure whereby, startups shortlisted into Phase Two of the program will receive a US\$150K investment from Oraseya Capital.

WORTH THE READ

Magnitt

- [2023 Qatar Venture Investment Report](#)
- [How FinTech is Transforming Emerging Venture Markets Amid Economic Uncertainty](#)
- [The Challenge of Retaining Startup Talent After an Acquisition](#)
- [VC Global Forecast Report 2024 - What CEOs are Talking About Going into 2024](#)
- [AI As Startup Catalyst: What It Can And Cannot Deliver](#)

VENTURE CAPITAL

Hub71 partners with Stride Ventures to support startups

Stride Ventures will act as a capital partner for Abu Dhabi tech ecosystem Hub71, offering alternative financial solutions and support through venture debt to complement traditional equity funding, besides mentorship program for entrepreneurs. Stride Ventures is an India-based venture debt fund that supports innovative startups by providing timely and flexible debt financing solutions.

ISSF invests \$5M in MSA Novo Fund

The investment aims to unlock new opportunities for Jordanian startups, providing them with the financing needed to scale and thrive in the competitive global market. MSA Novo is a China-based global venture capital firm that invests in emerging technology markets, with a portfolio of 50+ companies across the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and South Asia.

COTU Ventures launches \$54 million fund to back early-stage startups

UAE-based early-stage VC firm, COTU Ventures launched a \$54 million inaugural fund, which aims to support startups in the Middle East from pre-seed to seed stages. The fund will back startups from inception to post-production launch with up to \$2M in investment, while reserving capital for follow-on investments.

Sawari Ventures to Launch \$150 Million Fund to Back Egyptian Startups

Egypt-based venture capital (VC) firm, Sawari Ventures has announced plans to launch a \$150M fund designed to support homegrown Egyptian startups. The fund aims to back a variety of sectors, including fintech, edtech and healthtech, in anticipation of their sustained growth within the country, as well as their potential for regional expansion.

Globinvest completes first close of first fund

The Lebanon-based, women-led VC has managed to secure two-thirds of the \$25–30 million target fund. Having started as a family office, it has since evolved into an institutional VC, with 50 startups in its portfolio spanning sectors such as social inclusion, education, health, and the environment.

Qatar announces \$1B fund to fuel tech innovation

At the recent Web Summit 2024, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani unveiled a \$1B fund to support local and regional entrepreneurs. This venture capital fund, the first of its kind in the nation, marks Qatar's commitment to fostering innovation and building a sustainable, technology-driven future.