

# MENA Startup Ecosystem News

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**MENA startups raise \$282M in May, a substantial 413% surge from April 2024**

According to [Wamda's report](#), a total of 40 startups raised funding in May 2024:

- Growth was driven primarily by debt financing of approximately \$140M.
- Despite the surge from April, YoY investment volume shows a decline of 58% from \$445M reported for the same period last year across 39 deals.
- Property Finder secured the largest ticket with \$90M debt round.
- PropTech was the top-funded sector even without Property Finder's deal, with \$167.2M across 7 deals. Fintech came second with \$32.7M across 12 startups, and SaaS in third place with \$27M across 3 transactions.
- UAE acquired majority of investments amassing \$189M across 23 deals, followed distantly by KSA with \$56M over 10 deals, and then Egypt with \$24.5M from 4 startups. For Egypt, \$16M of the funding went to OneOrder's Series A which is a combination of debt and equity.
- The month was also marked with the launch of several funds, mostly focused on KSA.

## INVESTMENTS (non-exhaustive)

STARTUP	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	AMOUNT & ROUND	INVESTORS
Growdash	F&B	UAE	\$1.8M, Seed	Oryx Fund, Oraseya Capital
Property Finder	Real estate	UAE	\$90M, Undisclosed round (Debt)	Francisco Partners
Keyper	Real estate	UAE	\$34M, Pre-Series A (Equity, Sukuk)	Led by BECO Capital, MEVP; from Vivium Holding, Jabbar Group, Signature Developers, Annex Investments, Pin Investment, and Al Qahtani Investment, angels
Abyan Capital	Finance	KSA	\$18M, Series A	Led by STV; from Wa'ed Ventures, RZM Investment
Iyris	Agriculture	KSA	\$16M, Series A	Led by Ecosystem Integrity Fund (EIF); from Global Ventures, Dubai Future District Fund (DFDF), Kanoo Ventures, Globinvest, Bonaventure Capital
OneOrder	Logistics	Egypt	\$16M, Series A (equity and debt)	Led by Delivery Hero Ventures; from Norrskan22, Nclude, A15
GrubTech	F&B	UAE	\$15M, Series B	Led by Jahez; from Addition, Hambro Perks Oryx Fund
MERIT	Enterprise SaaS	KSA	\$12M, Pre-Series B	Led by Alistithmar Capital i-Cap; from Tech Invest Com, Hambro Perks Oryx Fund
WheeKeep	Logistics	KSA	\$8M, Series A	Led by Fintech Collective
YoLa	Agriculture	Morocco	\$7M, Pre-Series A	Led by Al Mada Ventures; from Algebra Ventures, E3 Capital, Janngo Capital, FMO

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## INVESTMENTS (non-exhaustive)

STARTUP	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	AMOUNT & ROUND	INVESTORS
Swypex	Finance	Egypt	\$4M, Seed	Led by Accel; from Foundation Ventures, The Raba Partnership, angels
MNZL	Finance	Egypt	\$3.5M, Seed	Led by P1 Ventures, Localglobe, Ingressive Capital; from 500 Startups, Flat6Labs, First Circle Capital, ENZA Capital, Beenok, angels
Lune	Finance	UAE	\$1.5M, Seed	Dubai Future District Fund (DFDF), Plus Venture Capital, Reach International, and Judah Ventures, family offices, angels
Revent	Consumer services	UAE	\$900K, Pre-Seed	Techstars, angels
SecureMyScholarship	Education	UAE	\$550K, Bridge	Led by Kaustubh Wagle, Ramit Harisinghani, and Sabban Corp Investments
Aanaab	Education	KSA	Undisclosed	VC Rethink Education
Airwater Co.	Environment	UAE	Undisclosed	Tau Capital
Birdnest	Real estate	Egypt	Undisclosed, Pre-Series A	Led by Beltone Venture Capital, CI Venture Capital
Eyewa	Consumer services	UAE	Undisclosed	General Atlantic
Huspy	Real Estate	UAE	Undisclosed	Balderton Capital, Fifth Wall among others
Holo	Real Estate	UAE	Undisclosed, Pre-Series A	Led by DFDF, Oryx Fund; from Aditum Investment Management Limited
MDD	Logistics	KSA	Undisclosed, Series A	Undisclosed
Plain Tiger	Hospitality	UAE	Undisclosed	AngelSpark

## ACQUISITIONS

COMPANY	SECTOR / INDUSTRY	LOCATION	ACQUIRER, LOCATION	DETAILS
Al Ahly Momken	Finance	Egypt	e-finance	Undisclosed amount
Drive Arabia	Automotive	UAE	Dubizzle, UAE	Undisclosed amount
EasyCash	Finance	Egypt	e-finance	Undisclosed amount
Rekt Studios	Gaming, Web3	UAE	Phoenix Group, UAE	Undisclosed amount

### STARTUPS

#### Growdash closes Seed round at \$1.8M

The UAE-based martech startup enables restaurant marketing and operational teams to build, execute and manage profitable growth strategies across digital sales channels. The round was led by Oryx Fund and Oraseya Capital, and will be used to accelerate its expansion plans into Saudi Arabia later this year.

#### MoneyHash, Visa team up to enhance digital payment experience

The partnership enables the Egypt-based fintech to gain access to Visa's extensive suite of digital payment solutions, as well as, to leverage Visa's global reach, capabilities, and security - key elements in Visa's mission to connect the world through an innovative, reliable, and secure payment network across MENA

#### Thndr expands to UAE following ADGM approval

The Egypt-based fintech Thndr, a mobile-first investment platform enters the UAE market following the acquisition of a Category 3A license with retail endorsement from ADGM's Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA). Thndr will initially provide direct access to US-listed securities, including stocks, Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and fractional shares, with no minimum investment requirements.

#### STEP Conference to land in San Francisco in August

STEP Group, which has established itself as a leading force and catalyst of startup ecosystems in the MENA, and host of Dubai and Riyadh's most impactful tech and startup festivals, expands its footprint to San Francisco with their first Step\_San Francisco Conference on 15 August 2024. The event aims to serve as a bridge between MENA, Emerging Markets and Silicon Valley, and to build a local community of SF founders and investors, especially global and multicultural ones in the US.

#### Sheikh Hamdan inaugurates Dubai AI Campus as city eyes \$27bn digital economy boost

As part of boosting the objectives of the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33), the AI hub is expected to attract 500 companies and create more than 3,000 jobs by 2028. The Dubai AI Campus cluster will be part of the DIFC Innovation Hub, the phase 1 of which is already complete with more than 75 businesses registered on a 10,000sq ft campus. Phase two of the campus will extend over 100,000 sq ft

#### UAE's Property Finder raises \$90M debt financing

PropTech Property Finder has raised \$90M in debt from Francisco Partners as it focuses on increasing its market share in KSA and Turkey. The proceeds were used by Property Finder to complete the buyback of the entire stake held by BECO Capital, the first institutional investor in the company.

#### KSA HR-tech Qsalary partners with Itaqan Capital to launch \$80M fund (SAR 300M)

The fund aims to providing innovative financial solutions for companies to accelerate salary payments and manage scattered expenses, offering distinctive investment opportunities for investors seeking financial growth with security and transparency.

#### Oman's Mamun partners with Jordan's Numa to provide freelancers access to finance

Mamun, a crowd-financing platform providing embedded financial services and wealth-building solutions partners with fintech Numa which provides professional banking solutions for freelancers. The partnership aims to provide a suite of financial products and services to meet the needs of freelancers and creators, including access to flexible financing options, wealth management tools, and opportunities for community engagement and collaboration.

#### Cash, Microfinanza launch \$2.4 million project to support Egyptian entrepreneurs

Egypt's Cash for Microfinance, a subsidiary of Beltone Holding, partners with Microfinanza to launch a project for economic support and empowerment of Egyptian entrepreneurs worth \$2.4M. This partnership aims to expand the scope of financial services, enabling robust support for entrepreneurial ventures through the provision of or enhancing access to financial resources and technical expertise to entrepreneurs.

## VENTURE CAPITAL

### Glint Fund II completes its first close

Egypt-based boutique consulting and investment firm Glint has completed the first close of its second venture fund at \$3M, supported by Wadi Degla Group. The fund will support tech-based Egyptian companies between the Seed and Series A stages with tickets ranging from \$250K to \$500K. Glint's portfolio includes Darwinz.ai, Iqraaly, Wasla, Kashier and Filkhedma

### Singapore's Golden Gate Ventures launches \$100M MENA Fund

\$20M of the fund value are commitments from Qatari investors, including Al Khor Holding, Al Attiya Group and Sheikh Jassim Bin Jabor Al Thani. The firm plans to break into MENA, focusing on startups in cleantech, fintech, healthtech, B2B AI, deeptech and edtech. This is the first international VC to be established and managed within Qatar.

### BIM Ventures, SBI Holdings launch \$100M investment fund for Saudi startups

Saudi-based Venture Studio BIM Ventures partners with Japan's SBI Holdings to launch the fund designed to assist startups by offering crucial funding during their establishment and growth phases, along with expert guidance and mentoring. The fund also aims to attract foreign investments into the Saudi market, creating a supportive and innovative investment environment.

### TVM Capital Healthcare launches \$250M Saudi-focused Afayah Fund

Led by JADA, PIF's Fund of Funds Company, Afayah fund aims to support domestic healthtech startups, and international ones entering the market, with a focus on the key medical priorities of Saudi's Vision 2030. Previous investments include Baraya Extended Care, DEBx Medical, and neurocare Group. TVM Capital aims to mobilize \$400–500 million in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector.

### Bahrain's Investcorp closes ITP V fund at \$570M

The figure surpasses the initial target of \$500M with contributions from existing LPs across Europe, North America, Asia and GCC. It aims to invest globally across software, data and analytics, cybersecurity, and fintech companies with revenues approx. \$10M or more and a positive EBITDA. It aims to secure a controlling stake through equity investments ranging from \$30M to \$75M as primary institutional investor.

### Riyad Capital launches "1957 Ventures" investment fund

The fund, which is a closed-end investment fund backed by Riyad Bank, aims to drive transformative growth in KSA's fintech sector in line with the objectives of Saudi's Vision 2030 and the Financial Sector Development Programme

### Shorooq announces first close of \$100M second private credit fund

Korea's IMM Investment Global (IMMG) joins as minority partner. The fund will assist MENA-based startups with an average ticket size of \$10 million in fields such as manufacturing, industrials, financing and software services. Shorooq's first credit fund, now fully deployed, has invested in companies such as Pure Harvest and Tamara.

### KSA's Kingdom Holding participates in Musk's xAI \$6B Series B round

Owned by Saudi billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, Kingdom Holding has taken part in xAI's Series B round at a valuation of \$24B. The round, which saw investments from Valor Equity Partners, Vy Capital, Andreessen Horowitz, Sequoia Capital and Fidelity Management & Research Company, will support the market launch of xAI's products to challenge rival OpenAI.

## STARTUP PROGRAMS

### Oraseya's Sandbox prepares to welcome its fifth cohort



Startup accelerator Sandbox opens submissions for its fifth cohort. The founder-centric program spans five months and is designed for pre-Seed to Seed-stage tech startups to accelerate their journey. Sandbox offers a \$150,000 investment, access to over \$1M in-kind credits, and personalized mentoring from industry experts, along with exposure to VCs and investors across MENA. [Apply Now](#)

### The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Dubai launches 5<sup>th</sup> TiE Women MENA Programme 2024

This programme will expand to include 5 categories across UAE, Emirati, KSA, Egypt, and the rest of the Middle East and will include mentorship sessions, financial advisory services, strategy coaching, workshops and tips to nail the perfect investor pitch. The competition will conclude with the Global Finals in December 2024.

## WORTH THE READ

### Wamda

- [Tawaref Series: Understanding annual operating cost in Saudi Arabia](#)
- [Tawaref series: Types of foreign investment licences in Saudi Arabia](#)
- [Cybersecurity in the era of remote work](#)