

Day 1

Innovation and technological advancements – Inspirational panel

■ Introduction

Technology and innovation are critical drivers of growth and transformation for Arab small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), enabling them to compete on a global scale. This 30-minute inspirational panel on day 1 of the Arab SMEs Summit 2024 will feature three trailblazing entrepreneurs who have successfully harnessed technology to navigate challenges, scale their businesses, and lead innovation within their industries.

■ Moderator and speakers

Moderator

Omaima Elidrissi, TV Presenter and Journalist, Morocco

Speakers

- **Walid Hassouna**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ValU, Egypt
- **Nisrine El Makkouk**, Co-Founder and Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) of KamKalima, Lebanon
- **Nayef Al Ibrahim**, Founding Partner and CEO of Ibtechar, Qatar

▪ Thematic focus

This panel will focus on how technology and innovation have enabled Arab SMEs to thrive in an increasingly competitive and digitalized world. It will cover the following key areas:

- **Harnessing digital tools for business transformation:** The speakers will discuss how they leveraged specific technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud solutions, digital platforms, or automation to revolutionize their businesses. This includes optimizing internal processes, enhancing customer experiences, and unlocking new revenue streams.
- **Innovation in products and services:** Panelists will share examples of how innovation has driven the development of unique, tech-enabled products or services that set them apart in the marketplace. They will highlight the role of research and development (R&D) and design thinking in staying at the forefront of their industries.
- **Technology as a catalyst for scaling and global expansion:** The panel will explore how embracing innovative technologies has helped businesses scale, streamline operations, and enter new markets faster, especially within the Arab region's unique business environment.