

Workshop track on

Digital and emerging technologies – Day two

19 November 2024

1.00–4.00 p.m. | Zekreet Room

Introduction

Digital and emerging technologies are revolutionizing industries and reshaping societies across the Arab region, unlocking new possibilities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Innovations in artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, financial technology (fintech) and the Internet of Things (IoT) offer SMEs the opportunity to boost operational efficiency, access new markets and accelerate innovation. These advancements are pivotal not only for enhancing productivity and competitiveness but also for fostering economic diversification and resilience across the region.

Despite the dynamic growth of digital solutions, many SMEs in the Arab region face considerable barriers, ranging from limited access to funding and gaps in digital skills to complex regulatory landscapes. With targeted support, such as training, innovation hubs and funding initiatives, SMEs can successfully leverage these technologies to overcome challenges, scale operations and excel in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Governments and business support organizations in the region recognize this transformative potential and are prioritizing support for SMEs in their digital transformation journeys, aiming to position them as key players in the region's evolving digital economy.

Topics to be covered on day two

The workshop will provide a platform to explore and discuss the following topics:

- **Session 1: Technological essentials for SMEs – embracing digital transformation**

This session will explore foundational digital tools and platforms that help SMEs digitize core operations, covering cloud computing and digital payment solutions, data-driven decision making and more. Emphasis will be placed on affordable, scalable solutions tailored to SMEs' specific needs, with room to address unique insights on digital transformation challenges and opportunities across diverse markets.

- **Session 2: Success in action – scaling SMEs with digital innovation**

This session will delve into practical strategies for scaling SMEs through digital innovation. Key topics include capacity development through innovative solutions, automation of the sales journey, and the use of digital technologies for effective lead generation. Participants will gain insights into how these approaches can drive sustainable growth and streamline operations, providing a clear road map for leveraging digital tools to expand and succeed in competitive markets.

- **Session 3: Investment readiness and opportunities for digital transformation**

This session will focus on equipping SMEs for investment in digital transformation and exploring funding opportunities available to them. Insights will cover strategies for scaling up and attracting investment in the digital economy, as well as lessons from a prominent acquisition in the MENA region on achieving investment readiness. Additional topics will include opportunities for SMEs on the stock exchange, and essential steps to prepare for potential listings, along with an overview of funding initiatives and acceleration programmes aimed at supporting SMEs in their digital growth.



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Agenda: Day two

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Technological essentials for SMEs – embracing digital transformation

Presenters

Yousri Mhedheb, Senior Digital Advisor, Google Cloud

Mohammed Al Delaimi, Co-Founder and Managing Director, SkipCash

Denis Pay, Head of Product, Snoonu

Taufik Aboudia, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Emerging Business Factory

Moderator

Marcel Dridje, Board Member and GCC Ambassador, European Business Angels Network

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Success in action – scaling SMEs with digital innovation

Presenters

Nayef Al-Ibrahim, Founding Partner and CEO, Ibtechar

Zouheir Lakhdissi, Co-Founder, AI Crafters International

Moderator

Amr Shalaby, Chief Operating Officer, Commerce Ocean

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Investment readiness and opportunities for digital transformation

Presenters

Hamad Al-Hajri, Co-Founder and CEO, Snoonu

Humza Abid Khan, Chief Business and Strategy Officer, Snoonu

Sulaiman Alhaidar, Venture Market Manager, Qatar Stock Exchange

Mohammad Zebian, Programme Manager – Startup Acceleration, Qatar Science and Technology Park

Moderator

Milena Angelova, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Member, Rapporteur for SME