

Egyptian Tech Startups to Show off and Hang out with 10 Global VCs and Investors

The Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) has launched today the ‘Hangout with VCs’ conference. The virtual event is held in collaboration with ‘The Next Web’, a Financial Times company, focused on new technology and startups, with a well-established global network of investors and VCs.

The event is designed to match ready-to-fund Egyptian startups with global investors and venture capital funds. A total of 25 Egyptian pre-selected startups have the chance to pitch their ideas and business plans with 10 of the global investors, VCs, and business accelerators who are actively looking for the next investments.

In an efficient format and virtually designed backstages, a number of sideline meetings will follow between VCs and

selected innovative tech startups, availing an easy access and close unique opportunity for the startups founders to showcase their path of growth and success.

The VCs list includes Draper B1 from Spain, STV from KSA, Piton Capital from London, SOSV from China, Prosus Ventures and World Startup Factory from the Netherlands, Silicon Badia and Dash Ventures from Jordan, Global Ventures and Access Bridge Ventures from Dubai.

“We are excited to organize such an event for the first time in the MEA region with TNW to jointly help and support some of our local innovative startups at a time when there is a pressing global demand for innovative tech solutions to be able to thrive during the global pandemic”, ITIDA CEO, Amr Mahfouz said.

Mahfouz highlighted that Egypt is becoming the fastest-



growing startup ecosystem in the region with a new generation of entrepreneurs, offering globally competitive technological solutions.

Egypt has recently ranked high in reports from Gartner, Startup Genome and Deloitte; the country has recorded the largest number of investment deals in technology startups amounting to 24% of the total number of transactions in Africa in 2020.

“Egypt enjoys a large pool of skilled talent, where more than 500k university grads annually, out of which 50k information technology specialty”, Mahfouz added.

ITIDA is heavily investing in skilling up this huge talent pool through availing and funding dedicated and custom-tailored training programs on disruptive and high-demand technologies to upgrade the skills, in addition to its commitment towards promoting entrepreneurship among youth and nurturing their innovation.

The list of the Egyptian startups includes EYouth, BasharSoft / WUZZUF, GBarena, Mazboot, Ordera, Shezlong, Wasla Browser, iTrolley, Adzily, Amjaad Technology, Aqarmap, Dayra, Funnell, Mogassam, CyberTalents, PASS APP, Rology, Talents Arena, WideBot, ZVendo, Odiggo, Pravica, Brimore, DXwand, ElGameya.

The “Hangout with VCs” event is the first of its kind in the MEA region by TNW, and comes in collaboration with ITIDA and TIEC to unlock the Egyptian startups’ ecosystem potential and highlight the boom it is witnessing, in addition to availing a unique opportunity for Egyptian innovative technology startups to engage with a crowd of investors or the target VCs attending.

U.S. Africa Energy Forum 2021 Launches: Promotes U.S. Role as Primary Investor in African Energy

building up to the in-person U.S. Africa Energy Forum summit and gala dinner, to be hosted in Houston, Texas, on October 4, 2021. U.S. Africa Oil & Power and the African Energy Chamber invite all U.S.-based companies with an interest in engaging with African industry leaders and project developers to participate in the USAEF Houston summit.

This initiative comes at an important juncture in U.S.-Africa relations. The Biden Administration’s announcements of its intentions to proactively build a stronger U.S.-Africa partnership coincides with the fact that African projects are seeing rising interest from U.S. companies and lending institutions alike. The USAEF event is thus dedicated to enabling dialogue between its participants that advances these developments.

“Our mission has always been to showcase the resource potential that Africa has to offer while at the same time showing its growing preference for sustainable energy policies and technologies. Toward that end, we hope it becomes evident that Africa does not just want investment capital: it wants smart capital and an accompanying partnership with the investors,” says James Chester, Senior Director of Africa Oil & Power. “The U.S. Africa Energy Forum represents the first-of-its-kind opportunity to catalyze U.S. participation in Africa’s energy transformation – via



technology, policy support, capital injection and skills development – and turns a new page in the chapter on global energy investment.”

In partnership with the African Energy Chamber’s U.S.-Africa Committee, AOP will introduce American companies to African opportunities and advance an agenda of sustainable, long-term investment in African energy and other sectors by U.S. organizations.

“The rise in support from the U.S. to the continent is a credit to Africa itself, which is increasingly viewed as a favored destination for global investors, multilaterals and export credit agencies,” says Jude Kearney, President of Kearney Africa and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Service Industries and Finance at the U.S. Department of Commerce during the Clinton Administration. “Africa continues to command a

healthy share of global FDI in oil and gas industries. It has for decades shown that investment in those sectors is favorable compared to other jurisdictions and can be successful by many measures. Even as Africa and the rest of the world wrestles with a global pandemic, Africa’s energy sector shows vitality and resiliency – not only in hydrocarbons but in regard to new opportunities in mining, liquefied natural gas, and agriculture.”

Both African governments and private sector sponsors of African energy projects value highly the combination of investment and partnership that US investors famously convey. The USAEF seeks to enable successful partnerships between its participants such that the energy development goals of U.S. investors and strategic partners and their African counterparts can be achieved.

Egypt: The African Development Bank extends \$145 million loan to bolster railway safety and reliability

The Board of Directors of the African Development Bank has approved a loan of \$145 million to finance reliability and performance upgrades to the country’s rail system under the Egypt National Railways Modernization Project (ENRMP).

The funding will be used to enhance operational safety and to increase network capacity on national rail lines.

Dr. Rania A. Al-Mashat, Egypt’s Minister of International Cooperation said, “Safe, accessible, convenient and green transport systems will be crucial to achieving sustainable development. The improvement and expansion of Egypt’s rail system through the ENRMP allows for active mobility and enables the urban and rural development through an inter-modal linked system. Technology and innovation, and a robust commitment to public transport will all be vital components of building back better.”

Rail transport is central to Egypt’s economy and competitiveness. Rail passenger and freight traffic are expected to increase to 15% and 10% respectively by 2029 as a result of the Bank’s loan and other investments in the project. Currently, 8%



of passenger traffic and 6% of freight traffic respectively move by rail. The planned upgrades are expected to benefit low-income Egyptians, about 40% of the population, who rely on trains as an affordable mode of transport. Increasing train freight is projected to have a positive impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

The Government of Egypt has committed significant investment to upgrade the country’s railway infrastructure through rail renewals, modernization of signaling and the purchase of new rolling stock. Under the ENRMP a state-of-the-art, cost effective train protection system will be installed on 950

km of train line along the busy routes connecting Alexandria in the north to Negh Hammadi in the south, and Port Said in the east.

“The newly approved project will enhance the multimodal transportation environment in Egypt, and the efficient movement of people, services and goods,” said Malinne Blomberg, the Bank’s Deputy Director General for the North Africa region. “This operation is fully aligned with the Bank’s strategy for interventions in Egypt, contributing to sustained and inclusive economic growth, and more specifically, developing infrastructure that supports expansion of the private sector and job creation,” she added.

Verdant Capital raises USD 9.9 M Series A equity capital for Tugende, a leading technology enabled MSME lender in East Africa

The transaction is the most recent for the award winning fintech and financial inclusion investment banking franchise of Verdant Capital Partech Africa, a member of the Partech Group, a leading global technology venture capital fund, and Enza Capital invested in the USD 3.6 million extension round - agreed and structured in 2020 - bringing the total Series A volume to USD 9.9 million. This adds to the first close which was led by Mobility 54, the Africa-focused venture capital entity backed by the Toyota Group as well as USD 12 million of debt financing raised over the last

18 months, through institutional investors from the UK, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and South Africa. Verdant Capital serves as Tugende’s financial advisor and arranger for its equity and debt capital raises.

The MSME credit gap across sub-Saharan Africa amounts to more than USD 331 billion per year, with a gap of USD 37 billion in East Africa alone. The growth of innovative and technology enabled business models, such as Tugende’s, are helping fill the credit gap left by traditional banks. The capital raises for Tugende strengthen its balance

sheet and allow the expansion of its loan portfolio. Having built its leading position financing boda bodas (motorcycle taxis) in Uganda, Tugende launched its Kenyan operations in late 2019, kick-starting its regional expansion, while continuing to add new asset products for other types of informal sector clients. The equity investments and partnerships with leading equity firms will also accelerate Tugende’s technology development and organisational growth.

Tugende uses asset finance, technology, and a high touch customer support model to

help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) own income-generating assets. Tugende has served over 43,000 clients with more than 16,000 having achieved ownership of at least one asset. Its core asset finance packages include medical and life insurance, training, safety equipment and digital credit profiles in addition to affordable asset finance. Tugende has broadened the productive assets it finances to include fishing boat engines, cars, refrigerators and other income generating equipment and is also currently piloting financing for e-mobility

assets. All payments are digital and Tugende provides proprietary credit scores automatically to all clients to help them monitor their performance and unlock new opportunities like discounts and new products.

Verdant Capital won the award following a period of record deal volumes in Africa, with some USD 500 million of capital raising and M&A in the Fintech sector in 2020. Verdant Capital successfully completed transactions in the sector with a total value of USD 40 million in 2020. The capital raises included businesses such as Tugende, Retail Capital, a South

African SME-credit tech player, and Planet42, a South African car-subscription business. Based on the growth in its own pipeline, Verdant Capital expects sector-wide deal volumes in 2021 to exceed the levels set in 2020.

Verdant Capital’s ability to showcase its clients to a global audience is further enhanced by its proprietary annual global investor conference, Video Africa. The second edition hosted in March was attended by 45 leading specialist investors from 22 countries, showcasing 18 of the firm’s leading fintech and financial services clients from across Africa.