

STARTUP PANORAMA

EDITION 3.0

دبي للمشاريع الناشئة

DUBAI STARTUP HUB

AN INITIATIVE OF DUBAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

ACCELERATORS AND INCUBATORS

5

The number of new accelerators and incubators that have emerged in the emirate over the past 12 months.

FUNDING

\$61.5 million

The total amount in Series A funding received by startups in Dubai in 2018. This amount was spread across 10 Dubai-headquartered startups.

DUBAI STARTUP HUB

2,003

The number of startups Dubai Startup Hub worked with this year.

EXPO 2020

50%

of the 4,500 contracts that Expo has awarded so far more than half have been won by SMEs.

1,100

The number of applicants - from 107 different countries - that have applied to be part of Expo Live, an innovation and partnership programme launched by Expo 2020 Dubai to fund, accelerate and promote creative solutions that improve lives while preserving the world.

NEW LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- › Residency visas of up to 10 years to investors and specialists in scientific, technical, medical and research fields.
- › 100 percent ownership of UAE-based businesses by foreign investors.
- › Five-year visas for students and visas for exceptional graduates.
- › Launch of new, affordable freelance permit for education and media professionals with 50 activities, including acting, animation and software development.
- › Earmarking 20 percent of government tenders to small and medium-sized enterprises.
- › Entrepreneurs owning an established project with a value of AED500,000 or having the approval of an accredited business incubator in the UAE will be granted a 5-year visa with a possibility for upgrading to an investor's visa provided they meet the requirements.



It's an unfortunate fact: the larger you become, the harder it is to innovate and transform. This irony is not lost on well-established organizations – both public and private – in the forward-thinking Emirate of Dubai and the wider United Arab Emirates.



Today, as sluggish business-science cooperation remains a worrying challenge across the globe, both Dubai's public and private sectors are fueling innovation by welcoming disruption. The nation's willingness to acknowledge change and transform to help address global challenges has spread contagiously across the city. Dubai sees innovation as a crucial determinant of competitiveness and progress. For this, both government and corporates show an unprecedented willingness to throw out the old and quickly hop on board with the new.

From issuing entrepreneur-friendly regulations at breakneck speed, to the number of startups receiving funding as the region continues to attract growing interest from venture capitalists and

angel investors – the emirate is geared towards fostering innovation, disruption and ultimately a better world for future generations. As hard as it is for giant organizations to innovate and change, even the largest ones are doing so by creating powerful platforms and supportive environments to encourage the startup ecosystem. Lending their corporate muscle and experience with execution, they are incorporating entrepreneurs into their initiatives to create game-changing synergies. Here are two examples: **du and Emaar**.

The days of *build and they will come* have passed. The message now is clear: **come, build, disrupt.**

“Startups embody the spirit of innovation and moving forward the UAE will greatly benefit from establishing itself as a hub for thinkers, creators, and innovators to launch from.”

BUILDING A HUB FOR THINKERS, CREATORS, INNOVATORS: DU

Jointly owned by the Emirates Investment Authority, Mubadala Investment Company PJSC, Emirates Communications and Technology LLC and public shareholders, du has established itself as an award-winning telecommunications service provider since its launch in 2006. As the company marks its 10th year of commercial operations, Abdulwahed Juma, du’s Executive Vice President



- Brand & Communication, says the telecom provider’s attitudes towards entrepreneurship are deeply aligned with the UAE’s national agenda. It’s why, in addition to developing tailored telecommunications solutions for SMEs, the company continues to spearhead and support various startup-focused initiatives such as **du’s Emirati Startup Challenge**. Launched in April 2018, the nationwide competition invites Emirati university students to submit innovative technology or social entrepreneurial startup ideas. The competition is designed to bridge the gap between youth and entrepreneurship, as well as empower youth to continue developing the UAE as an innovation hub. Mabany, an integrated online system that eases communication between tenants and facility management



Abdulwahed Juma, Executive Vice President - Brand & Communication, du

companies developed by 22-year-old Khalid Al Awar, won first place earning Dh25,000. Emit, a pickup and delivery service app created by Amna Al Ghaithi, came in second also receiving Dh25,000. And Fursah and Drive Less shared the third spot, both receiving Dh10,000 each. Maryam Belhouli’s Fursah is a social enterprise to connect people interested in volunteering with non-governmental



du Emirati Startup Challenge

du launched the Emirati Startup Challenge to bridge the gap between Emirati youth and entrepreneurship in an effort to continue building the UAE as an innovation hub and prepare youth of tomorrow to successfully contribute to the UAE's startup ecosystem.

organisations, while Faisal Al Hawi's Drive Less app enables individuals to plan their day based on traffic for a safer and less stressful commute.

While another edition of the Emirati Startup Challenge can be expected in 2019, du has also been supporting events such as the Young Entrepreneur Competition for three consecutive years, and has provided advice and opportunities to SMEs on procurement and contracting procedures. du previously aired the region's first reality

TV show dedicated to SMEs titled 'The Entrepreneur', which saw Loulou Khazen Baz win Dh1 million to set her idea for Nabesh - the first freelance and skill-seeking portal in the Middle East – on track.

du is also involved with Dubai Future Accelerators, collaborating with global start-ups and entrepreneurs to invest in the knowledge economy in the UAE through actionable innovations. In 2017, as part of du's third cycle challenge to develop an innovative loyalty platform that can improve customer service and retention by ten, du announced a partnership with Viafone Technologies – a tech provider in loyalty solutions. "Amidst the immense technological transformation taking place around the region, a key area where we can serve startups is through cloud-based digital infrastructure that promotes digital

innovation and fuels entrepreneurship by acting as an idea incubator," Juma says. He adds: "We are no longer confining ourselves to just looking at telecommunications, but we are considering connectivity as a whole. For future startups, it is imperative that their future roadmaps are agile and succinct in regards to the strategic goals they wish to achieve. Constant reevaluation is also a vital step in recognizing present and future market opportunities."

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SHAPING THE FUTURE: EMAAR

It's not everyday you see a multi-billion dollar company interested in giving a bunch of 20-something-olds the time of day. But that's exactly what e25, Emaar's disruptive in-house innovation lab is doing.

Established in 1997, the Emaar Group is a leading global property developer and provider of premium lifestyles, and e25 is an initiative envisioned and driven by Emaar's Chairman Mohamed Alabbar.

With the rise of technology and the ever-changing business landscape, Emaar recognized that there is a need to adapt in order to stay relevant in the face of cutting edge disruptions. A team of young people were given autonomy to pursue their passions with a goal to establish and manage multiple ventures that shape the future of Emaar. The first startup to launch out of the e25



Mohamed Alabbar, Chairman, Emaar

programme is letswork - a community of popup co-working spaces across the UAE to create workplaces for freelancers, SMEs and corporates. "letswork is an offshoot of e25." Hamza Khan, Partner at e25 and co-founder of letswork, explains. "It's incubated through the e25 programme. Mr. Alabbar wanted young people under the age of 25 to

work on their own business ideas, and they (Emaar) would provide the funding and support to start those businesses." letswork received an undisclosed seed funding to get the business started, he says. But more importantly, Khan and his co-founder Omar AlMheiri received tremendous support through leveraging Emaar's significant network of relationships, developments and expertise. "If you look at our letswork locations, about nine of the 18 that we have on board right now are Emaar venues," Khan says.





e25 programme

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“So it’s the relationships from that. It’s the business insights and the mentorship that we received from Emaar’s Chief Strategy Officer Hadi Badri as well, which has been invaluable, and from other senior management members in Emaar.” Without support from the innovation lab, Khan says launching the idea for letswork would have taken significantly longer.

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“The mentality in Emaar is amazing,” he adds. “As a company they’re always about being fast - whether it’s building the world’s tallest tower in a very small amount of time, or launching communities and building them at a very high quality in a very short amount of time. So, for us, it was taking that leap of faith and receiving that sort of kick where it’s like ‘Hey guys, if you think it’s a good idea, just go for it.’” And that’s exactly the kind of mindset Dubai wants to instill in everyone that’s part of the Emirate’s business arena-- after all, as H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, said: “One cannot discover new oceans if you lack the courage to lose sight of the shore.”



Omar AlMheiri and Hamza Khan, co-founders, letswork