

Google Backs STV's \$100 Million AI Fund to Enable AI-Native Startups in the Middle East & North Africa



Riyadh, May 2025 – STV announced that Google has backed its new AI Fund. The fund is established to enable the growth of AI-native startups across the Middle East and North Africa. This commitment signals a transformative step towards enabling AI startups at their early stage, and accelerates their growth beyond the region.

The global momentum around artificial intelligence continues to accelerate, with state-of-the-art models and the infrastructure to train them improving at a fast pace. Regional governments and technology companies are actively embracing the opportunity, as efforts to localize AI models and infrastructure have picked up significantly recently.

According to [STV research](#), 1.5% of the region's VC funding went to AI in 2024 – a stark contrast to 38% in the U.S. and 13% in India. This discrepancy represents a substantial untapped opportunity for innovation, economic growth, and efficiency gains, with immediate AI-driven cost savings in the GCC estimated at \$23b+, with the long-term opportunity being orders of magnitude higher.

Ahmad AlNaimi, General Partner at STV, mentions, “We believe that most of the AI value will accrue at the application layer. As such, our AI Fund will focus on investing in ventures that specialize in application-layer AI, localized AI models, and the necessary supporting infrastructure. By combining our regional expertise with Google's global AI leadership, we will be able to scale regional startups that can compete on a global level.”

Najeeb Jarrar, Regional Marketing Director for Google in the Middle East & Africa, adds, “At Google, we have always been committed to providing access to the AI opportunity for everyone. This includes work like the MENA AI Opportunity Initiative, announced last year, alongside valuable programs such as our flagship Google for Startups programs. Our commitment to the STV AI Fund allows us to continue supporting entrepreneurs, who are building the future of AI in the region.”