

VENTURE CAPITAL

Investing in the
future economy



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What is Venture Capital and How Does It Work?

Simply put, **investment** is the purchase of assets with the aim of producing greater financial returns than the purchasing value. Through any type of investment, the aim is to reap future profits. However, this cannot always be accurately determined, which is why making investments is almost synonymous with risk-taking. While the main focus is on investments in financial markets—such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds—other types of investments can be made, such as investing in real estate, artwork, and collectibles. This leads up to Venture Capital (VC) investment in fast-growing companies, and particularly in tech companies. Due to their diversity, investments constitute a vital part of the global and local economies and are the main drive behind large businesses. Even some global technology companies such as **Amazon, Google, Facebook** and **Apple** began as startup companies, and were then able to grow and expand thanks to the VC investment they obtained even before they had achieved any profits in the US market, and then later in the world.



VC is a form of financing and hands-on experience for emerging entrepreneurs and startups. Startups seek VC firms to achieve higher growth rates through:



Product development



Expansion into new markets



Improvement of operations



Increased employment

How does venture investing work?

“ Startups go through several stages during their growth. Investors or companies may focus on individual stages, which affects the way they invest in a startup.

■ **Seed Stage**

When a venture capitalist secures a small capital for a startup in its early stages, it can carry out development operations, study the market, or develop a business plan. Usually, this stage is the first official funding that the startup gets. The VCs get a percentage of the company or shares in return for their investment.

■ **Initial Stage (Series A, Series B, Series C, etc.)**

Targets growth companies. In this stage, the investment value is greater than seed financing because new companies need greater capital to start with their operations.

■ **Late Stage**

This is for mature companies that have completed their growth and started generating income.



What distinguishes venture capital from traditional investment?

Venture Capital is distinguished from traditional investment in several ways. VC tends to target companies that make a major breakthrough in the market, in the way services, products and business models are provided, and which tend to confuse traditional competitors. In addition, VC involves much greater investment returns. The key differences between the two are:



The type of company that will be funded:

When a venture capitalist secures a small capital for a startup in its early stages, it can carry out development operations, study the market, or develop a business plan. Usually, this stage is the first official funding that the startup gets. The VCs get a percentage of the company or shares in return for their investment.



Investor's share in the company:

The investor, whether they are traditional or VC, gets a stake in the company. However, in the case of a VC, investors require only a small portion of the shares, between **20% and 30%**, especially in the early stages of the startup. This is to allow the possibility of continuing to invest in the advanced stages, where this percentage may rise as the company grows.



Company valuation:

Traditional investing assesses companies based on their physical assets, current revenues, and intellectual property. Whereas VC firms assess companies according to their potential and future value.



Investment portfolio:

Where traditional investment focuses on specific and few companies, VC diversifies its investment portfolio in emerging companies in order to reduce the potential risks.



The margin of profit and risk:

In contrast to the traditional investment that focuses on well-established companies and well-known challenges, the margin of risk is greater in VC investments. However, the potential profit margin that can be achieved as the startup grows is much larger. Therefore, VCs provide startups with experience and knowledge that helps reduce the risks and mistakes some companies are likely to make during their early stages.



Exit strategy:

In traditional investment, investors seek to improve and develop the company, with the aim of selling it for profit, without any intention of staying involved in the company's work for an extended period of time. As for VC, investors pay more attention to the company's long-term growth, with the hope of greater financial compensation when exiting through listing in the financial markets, or by the acquisition of the emerging company through a major one.



Return on investment:

While the return on investment in a traditional investment can range between **15% and 20%**¹. However, a VC investor diversifies their investment portfolio in order to reduce the risk, given that the proportion of startup companies that can generate returns on investment within the portfolio is up to **25%**³.



the return on investment in a startup can reach

100% - 700%²

and much more for some startups

A Brief History of Venture Capital in the MENA Region

The concept of funding startups through venture capital spread all over the world after the success that was first witnessed in the US. Naturally, it reached the MENA region, which has become a growing and very promising market for VC investment worldwide. The region's governmental support, as well as its administrative and legal facilities, have contributed to the entry of a number of startups and VC investors.

Before that, the founders of startups were suffering from a lack of access to funding and were unable to make money at an advanced stage. Even with

the launch of a few VCs in the early **2000s** with **six venture funds**⁵ in the region, VCs were still quite wary and hesitant when investing large sums in startups.

However, this started to change after **2010**, as the region witnessed the launch of VC firms, accelerators, business incubators, and angel investors that led **80%** of investments in the region, which then witnessed a **47%** growth in financing deals.

Initiatives and Funds in the Region and the Kingdom

+2.87\$ Billion⁴



startups in the Middle East region have in 2021 in 639 deals attracted

led by



UAE



Saudi Arabia




Egypt

Among the most prominent factors that contributed to this growth is the combination of the young population in the region, and the work of governments, institutions and entrepreneurs toward enhancing the entrepreneurship ecosystem. This includes improving laws, supporting entrepreneurs with loans, funds, tax facilities, etc., and stimulating investments in emerging companies, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has done, especially after the launching of **Vision 2030**⁶.

Key stages in the growth of venture investment and the most prominent achievements

 **270%**⁷
The Saudi VC ecosystem in 2021 grew compared to 2020

54%⁸ 
The number of deals grew

 achieving a number of deals considered the best for Saudi Arabia in VC

548 Million Dollars⁹ 
Startup companies collected investments

2021 also witnessed the signing of the first huge VC deal between the Saudi startup Unifonic, which serves customers using cloud technologies, and was led by the SoftBank International Vision Fund through financing amounting to **\$125 million**¹⁰.

The year **2020** recorded a growth in venture investment deals, reaching **\$148 million**¹¹ in **88** deals. **Vision 2030** was one of the most prominent growth drivers in this sector, where the growth rate of VC did not exceed **7.9%** before. Through Vision 2030, the Saudi government sought to promote entrepreneurship in the Kingdom and improve the legal framework for investments. The Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority - Monsha'at¹² launched the Saudi Venture Investment Company (SVC) in **2018** with

the aim of stimulating and supporting investment in investment funds, through various types of angel investors and investment companies. The investments of the SVC increased by **433%**¹³, from **1.2 billion riyals to 6.4 billion riyals** by February 2022.

In **2019**, the Saudi Public Investment Fund launched the Fund of Funds Company known as **Jada**¹⁴ with an investment capital of **4 billion riyals** (about \$1 billion), in order to "stimulate investment in private equity funds and venture capital." This came with the aim of "financing the growth of the small and medium enterprises sector in the Kingdom through these funds in a sustainable manner." Jada invests in venture capital and private equity funds targeting the Saudi market.

In **2018**, the **Venture Capital and Private Equity Association**¹⁵ was launched in cooperation with Monsha'at with the aim¹⁶ of “raising the level of professionalism and professionalism in the venture capital and private equity sector,” in addition to “bridging the gaps in the current capital financing of enterprises, supporting and stimulating the spread of private equity funds, and stimulating The Capital Finance Environment for Entrepreneurs.” The association includes more than **50 members**¹⁷ that actively manages more than **20 Billion Riyals**. A number of private VC funds have emerged in the Kingdom, such as **Raed Ventures**¹⁸, that provides seed funding to startup companies, **Impact46**¹⁹ to invest in technology startup companies in their initial stages to listing, **Sukna Ventures** Fund to invest in early stage startups, and **STV**²⁰, the largest VC fund in the Middle East.

Until the beginning of 2022, Jada invested in more than 20 venture capital and private equity funds in the Kingdom, with an investment size of more than **2 Billion Riyals (\$533.3 million)**.



In the year **2021**, the Association, in cooperation with the **STV** Venture Capital Fund, the international law firm, **Latham and Watkins**, and the **Salman Al-Sudairy** Law Firm, issued a form of **the Model Term Sheet**²¹. It is an essential document based on funding negotiations, which includes the most common items in various legislative environments in the MENA region.

Why is Venture Capital so important?

Many governments of the world are focusing their attention today on VC investment, especially in terms of its positive impact on the economy and society. Some of the world's largest companies, in terms of market capitalization, such as Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook, Tesla, and others, were established with the help of VC firms. This allowed for the creation of a large number of jobs. For example, UK companies backed by a VC firm in 2018 contributed **£19.78 billion** into the economy and supported more than **570,000 jobs**. The VC sector also allows private companies to invest in new innovative ideas and technologies.

The fate of a startup changes completely when VC firms get involved and decide to take it in a new direction. The startup will benefit greatly from the past experiences of the firm, the network of knowledge, and the relationships of its owners. Furthermore, VC firms or funds provide the capital that a startup needs to move into the second stage of its growth and development, without the need to borrow from banks and carry the burden of their loans.

Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia gave great importance to investment for its role in **diversifying the economy**²². As a result, the Public Investment Fund had an important role within venture capital and private equity sector to be the effective driver behind the diversification of the economy in the Kingdom. The country witnessed a great growth in VC investment, after working towards strengthening its entrepreneurship ecosystem, and it now includes about **67 VC funds**²³. Five years after the implementation of the **Vision 2030** programs, a **record number of deals**²⁴ are witnessing tremendous growth, which adds to the fact that one of the great drivers behind VC investment is job creation. An example of this is the goal of creating more than **6,000 private sector jobs** in the Kingdom, set by the SVC and **Flat6labs**, which launched a fund to finance startups in Saudi Arabia in April 2022.

The economic value of venture capital as an asset class

What are the different investment assets? Why should assets be diversified?

Investors are usually keen on diversifying investment assets that are designed to generate profit. These assets include financial bonds and all debt, stocks, and insurance. Many analysts and financial experts divide investment assets into a group of categories, the most important of which are: stocks, bonds, cash, real estate or commodities. By combining and diversifying between different investment asset classes, the investor reduces exposure to financial risks, thereby preventing major losses, as well as increasing the likelihood of achieving returns.

VCs carefully study different investment asset classes to see how they are distributed in order to mitigate financial risks and losses and achieve higher financial returns than traditional investment markets. Therefore, investors resort to diversifying their investment portfolio in view of the market, local and global economic conditions and trends, and also distribute investment ratios over different investment assets through an asset allocation process.



The role of venture capital portfolio in reducing risk

Higher risks refer to greater returns from projects and startups that have great potential for growth. Therefore, VC portfolios diversify their investments in startups in order to reduce risks and identify investments with future high-expected returns. This is somewhat similar to diversifying investments into traditional investing, such as buying shares in energy companies and food manufacturing companies at the same time, or even buying shares in local and international companies.

Since early-stage startups have more risks, portfolio diversification reduces them so that the expected high-returns from successful companies can offset all losses from other companies, in addition to achieving returns between **100% and 700%**²⁵. Thus, VCs multiply the number of startups they invest in within the portfolio, in order to boost the chances of one of these companies gaining access to a unicorn (**a company valued at more than \$1 billion**).

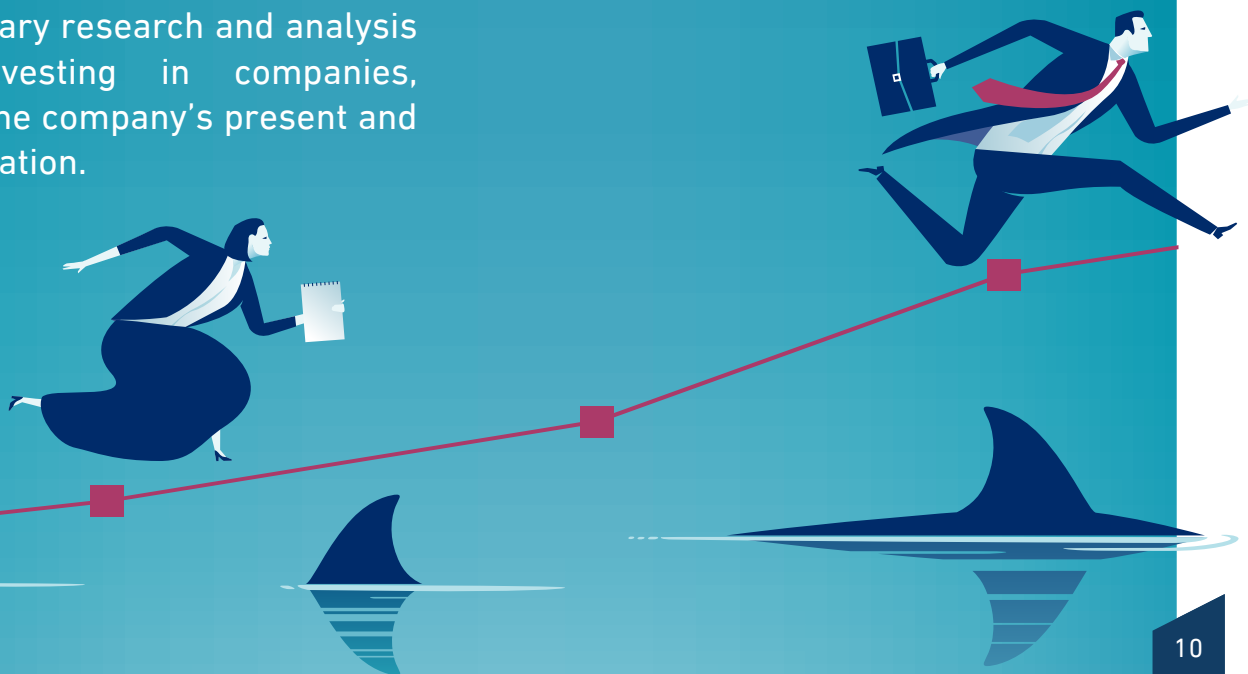
Challenges of Venture Capital

■ Appropriately analyze and evaluate startups:

VCs seek to maximize returns from startups, but it should be noted that not all companies grow at the same pace or may necessarily grow to generate high-returns. Actually, only a small percentage of them grow exponentially to be able to do that. Therefore, it is essential to carry out the necessary research and analysis before investing in companies, including the company's present and future valuation.

■ Finding the best deal flow:

Successful founders are often attracted to VC firms with the most expertise and value add that will help their startups see an accelerated growth. In the midst of this competitive VC landscape, the biggest challenge for VC firms become finding the best deal flow and investing in them.



■ Realizing non-material values:

When VCs invest in a startup, its aim is to oversee its growth. The increasing pressure on the founders of these startups may **lead**²⁶ them to make premature decisions, and may cause investors to overlook some important issues and put them aside for the time being. Therefore, in addition to the tangible material value that the startup entails—the numbers that it achieves at present and is required to achieve in the future—the investor must also take into account intangible values. These include the entrepreneur's sense of leadership and team cohesion, and providing the investor with the necessary experience and support when needed.

■ Exit strategy difficulty:

VCs focus on the growth of the company in order to achieve returns on their investment, especially when the company is listed in the financial markets, or through its acquisition by another company. Realizing this challenge, Saudi Arabia established a parallel market **Nomu**²⁷ that allows startups to offer their shares for public subscription.

Why does venture capital happen through funds and not single deals?

VC investment is characterized by high risks in return for the possibility of achieving large returns. Within a single investment portfolio, **5% to 10%**²⁸ of them can achieve large returns, while **30% to 40%** of them can return the capital. There is a losing chance in **50%** of them. Therefore, diversification and analyzation of the amounts to be allocated for investment in this field are very important. That is why it is necessary for those involved in VCs to have the necessary experience, especially since many investors do not.

In addition, startups need an average of **5 to 10 years**²⁹ before they reach the exit stage, in order to achieve returns, through either acquisition of the startup by a larger company, or taking the startup to through a public offering (IPO), merging the company with another company, or raising additional funding rounds at increasing valuations.

For all this, startup companies seek VC funds run by investors with the experience necessary to establish the fund, set its strategy, conduct market research and competition, keep up with changes in laws and trends, evaluate and invest in them, follow up on investments, and prepare reports for limited and general partners.

The added value that venture capital provides startups

The experience that a VC can bring to startups in its portfolio is a highlighting factor. Many of the investors were once entrepreneurs, and in one way or another have been through the challenges that startups face. Therefore, their presence will be essential when obstacles arise.

The network of relationships that a VC firm has will help startups in many ways. For example, an investor can help a startup find qualified employees or partners to help the company grow, and who may be part of the investment portfolio. In addition, it can allow companies to attend important local and global networking events.

Moreover, investors will assist their startups in exit deals by providing the necessary advice, guidance, and expertise to ensure the smooth completion of their endeavors.

The VC firm can connect the startups with other investors who can inject more funding into these companies, or even fund subsequent rounds.

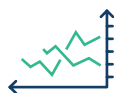
In order to define the investment portfolio strategy, the VC fund focuses on identifying some priorities³⁰, some of which are:



Sector: Deciding which sector to focus on, such as fintech, healthcare, or transportation and mobility. Sometimes the fund chooses to funnel money into companies from different sectors, but they focus on things like the work team, or their target clients.



The geographic location: Many VCs prefer to invest in startup companies close to their own location so that they can provide support and assistance in their time of need and avoid a lot of travel. Also because most likely the area they have targeted has great growth potential.



The stage of a startup: A VC fund can specialize in one of the stages of startup companies, such as the first stages in which they provide seed funding, or growth stages where they provide more funding for subsequent rounds known as Series A, Series B, etc.



Investment volume: The VC fund allocates specific amounts to invest in companies within its portfolio, either on an annual or quarterly basis, or according to the amounts set aside. The amount is divided between operation and administrative fees, as well as taxes and legal costs, down to the size of investments in startup companies.

Investment returns as an asset class

Venture capital ranks among the riskiest asset classes, especially since some investments in the portfolio may not yield any returns. VCs get a share in the company, and can later sell their shares in order to monetize them through exit deals, such as an acquisition or an IPO.

Unlike other asset classes, such as real estate, or stocks, the value of a VC is that its future returns can be significant compared to the risks presented. Therefore, a VC investment requires some patience and anticipation before realizing returns from future assets.

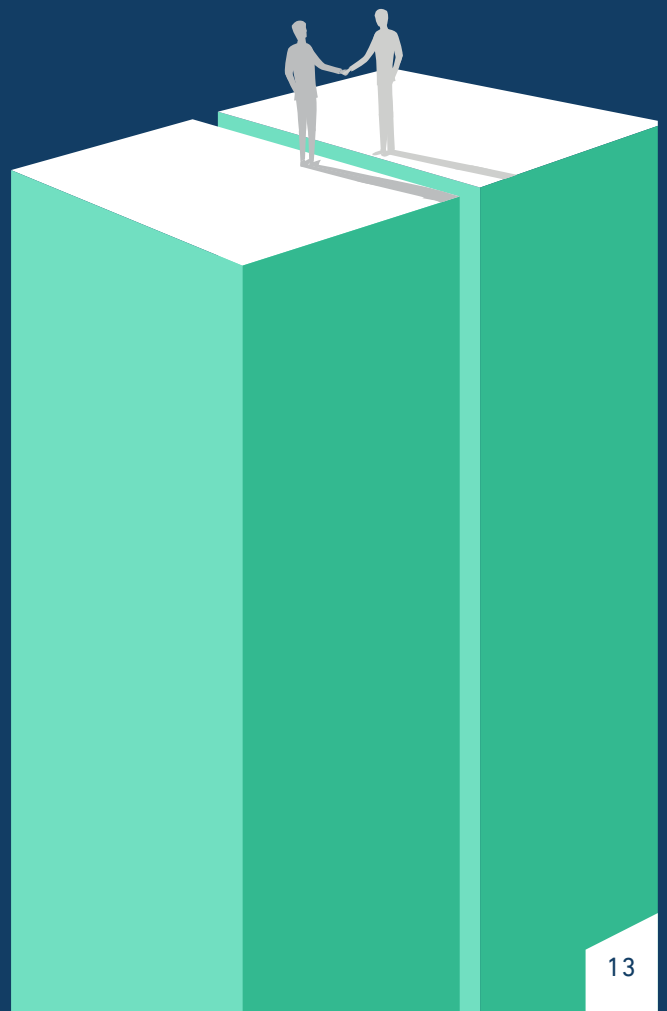
Who invests in venture capital?

A VC fund gets its money from the general partners (GP) who manage the fund's day-to-day operations and make and take responsibility for investment decisions (usually investment firms), as well as from limited partners who are usually sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, endowment funds, family offices, and high networth individuals. Venture capital deals happen through companies or funds, so **what is the difference between them?**

VCs fund and mentor promising startups using capital they have raised from limited partners, who are not involved in any decision making, however are responsible for debts and businesses beyond their investment. It is the general partners who hold administrative and financial responsibilities. VC funds own minority stakes in the companies they invest in, usually at **40%** or less. This is because fast-growing companies aim to receive financing in the form of multiple investment rounds and stages. Usually, these investments are associated with risk-taking, and they often occur in the early stages of a company's growth.

■ **Limited partners** do not bear any responsibility for the debts of the fund, their liability is limited to the amounts they invest only, especially since their participation in the decision-making process is limited. On the other hand, general partners bear full responsibility, especially since they participate in detail in the decision-making process and in managing the fund's operations.

■ **General Partners** is large VC firms that strategically invest—on behalf of other companies—in startups in order to gain a competitive advantage, or to increase income, and their role is based on analyzing deals and making decisions about the investments undertaken by the VC fund. Unlike other VC firms, these are funded by their own capital and not by limited partners.



CASE STUDIES

of venture capital investments

Yale Fund's investment in VC funds and its returns

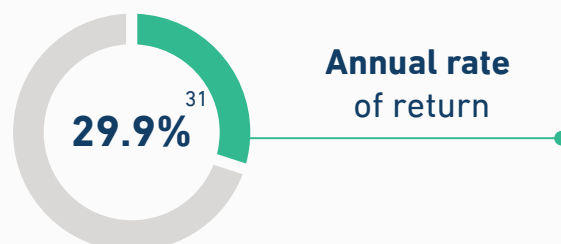
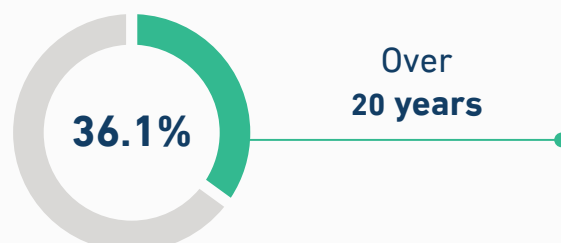
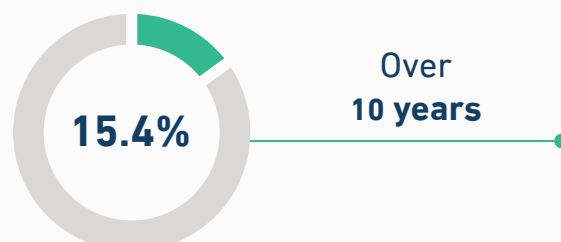


Yale University's endowment fund is the second biggest endowment fund after Harvard University's fund and is one of the highest performance funds. It has built a long-term investment strategy and was the first universities to invest in private equity, with its first buyout partnership deal in **1973**, and its first venture capital partnership in **1976**. As the pace of investment grew.

In **1985**³², the university hired **David Frederick Swanson** as a Chief Investment Officer. David holds a PhD degree in Economics and had had an extended experience with Lehman Brothers and Salomon Brothers. David was keen on transforming the roles within the university structure to fit the fund's needed functions and has started focusing on attracting top talents.

Swanson and his team chose the higher-risk path to achieve greater returns. Swanson's team put so much effort into sourcing major investors that the Yale model performed better than the US stock and bond model.

The Yale Portfolio Generated



The annual returns of Yale until 2014 were at **11%**, which exceeded the returns of domestic stocks, which amounted to **8.4%**, and bonds, which amounted to **4.9%**. For Yale as a university, its **8.4%** performance outperformed that of other universities, with an average of **7.8%**.

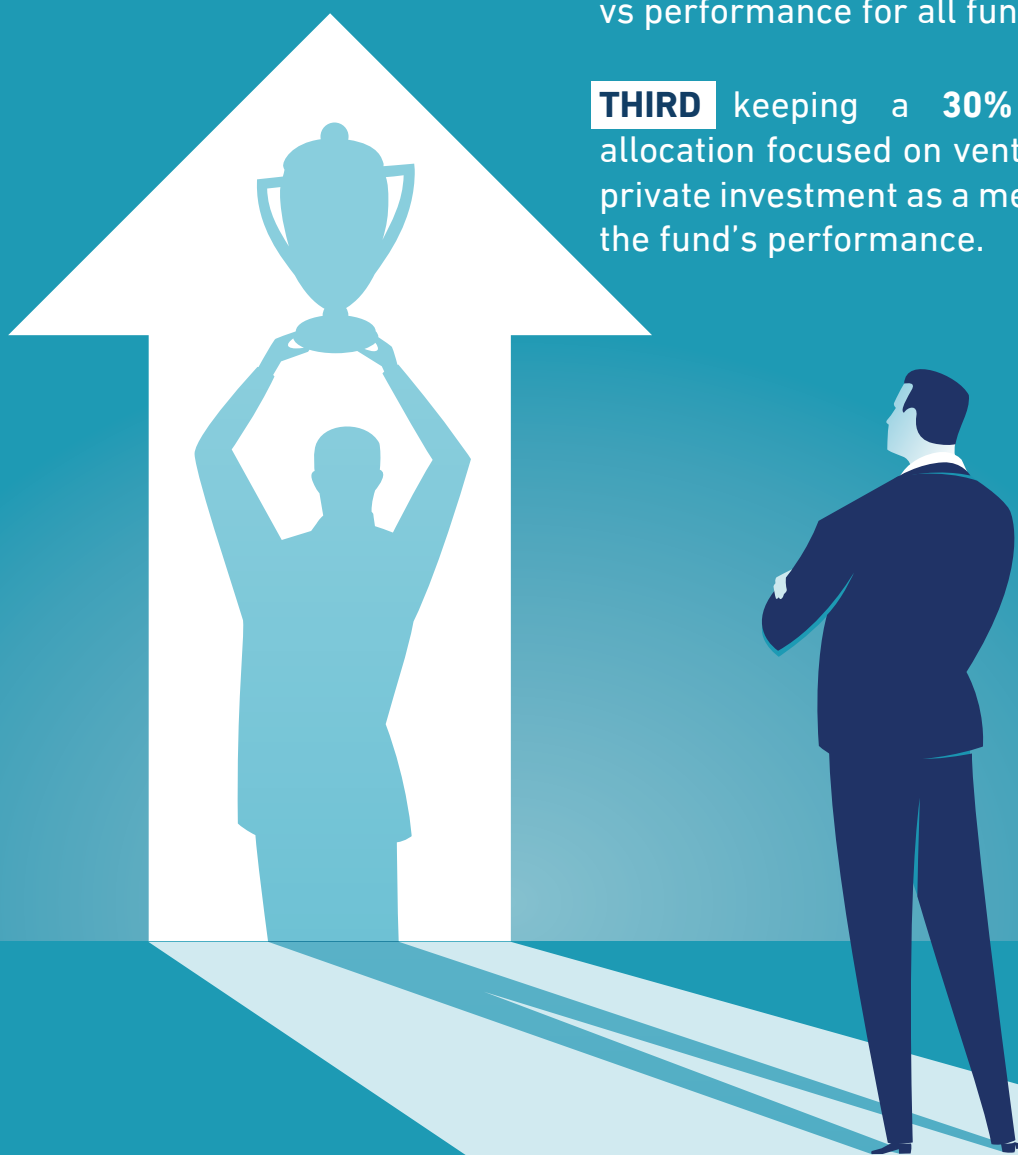
In **2021**, the Yale University Investment Office announced that the university's hedge fund would rise to **\$42.3 billion** during the fiscal year of 2021, achieving growth of **\$11.1 billion** from **2020** and returns of **40.2%**—the highest in **two decades**.

The main reasons Yale outperformed expectations were

FIRST the fund's strategy of long-term and diversified investment theses.

SECOND the advisory board's focus on investing in the top performing fund managers in each sector with a diversified strategy in addition to maintaining a studied balance of financial compensation vs performance for all fund managers.

THIRD keeping a **30%** of its asset allocation focused on venture capital and private investment as a means to improve the fund's performance.



Examples from the region of VC returns

Careem from seed to the stars

Investors achieve returns on investing in companies within their investment portfolio in two ways, the first is the acquisition by a company of the emerging company that falls within their portfolio, and the second is by offering the company's shares to the IPO.

An example of the first method is the acquisition by the American company Uber in **2020** of the regional company Careem for ordering taxis through a mobile application for **\$3.1 billion**. Careem launched in Dubai with **\$500,000 in 2012**, currently operates in more than 100 cities in 14 countries, and has created **more than 1 million job opportunities** in the region.

In a short period of time, Careem succeeded in attracting large investors from the region and the world, such as the Saudi STC Ventures Fund, BECO Capital, Endure Capital and Wamda Capital, Kuwait Investment Authority and **others**³³.

Careem secured the money from about **22 investors**³⁴ through multiple funding rounds. The most prominent of which was a seed investment worth **\$1.7 million** in 2013 led by the Saudi STC Ventures fund, along with the participation of a group of angel investors, as part of its expansion to Riyadh.

The STC Ventures fund acquired **7.5%** of a stake in the company, up to Series C, where Careem launched in Egypt and obtained an investment of up to **70 million dollars** in Series B and C, with the participation of STC Ventures.

In total, Careem raised about **\$771 million** in financing from **22 investors** along its path before being acquired by Uber for **\$3.1 billion**, after the company was valued at **more than \$2 billion** prior to the acquisition. As a result of this deal, all investors achieved significant returns on their investment in **Careem**³⁵, hundreds of employees who own shares in the company have benefited and dozens of them have become **millionaires**³⁶.

16.62 x



A return of STC Ventures earned on its investment in Careem

21.38 x



A return of STC Ventures earned over the investment period of less than 6 years

Exit growth in the Arab region

The second way to achieve returns on investment is to offer companies for public subscription in startups. The region is witnessing a boom in the light of the huge growth of companies, and the strengthening of markets with parallel financial markets for emerging technology companies, and even thanks to global partnerships that help connect emerging companies to global stock exchanges.

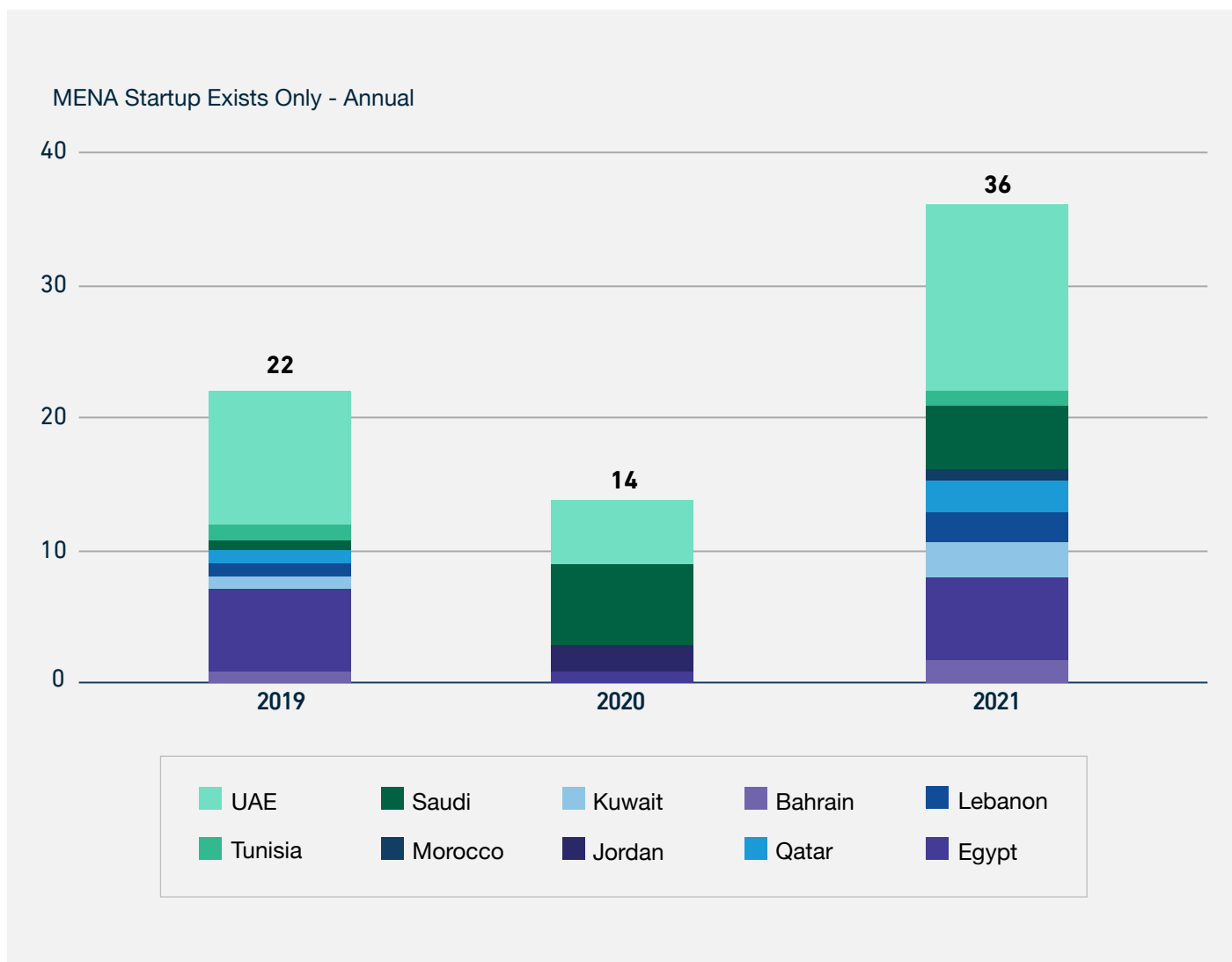
Some of the most notable recent IPO deals in the region:

- **In 2019**, the electronic payment company Fawry announced its public offering on the Egyptian Stock Exchange, where its shares rose by **31%** upon offering, bringing its market value close to **6 billion Egyptian pounds** (\$366 million³⁷).
- **In March 2022**, the Egyptian company Swvl, worth about **\$1.6 billion**, began trading its shares on Nasdaq, it became the second Arab technology company listed on this global stock exchange after Anghami. The listing revenue was estimated at \$640 million, of which **\$160 million** was returned on **capital**³⁹.

November 2021

the Jahez Group, which operates the online food ordering and delivery application in the Kingdom, announced the listing of its ordinary shares in Nomu - Parallel Market, becoming **the first Saudi startup** to be listed on a public stock market. The company offered a total of **18%** of its shares, and the share price rose to a market value of **8.9 billion riyals** (\$2.4 billion) **upon listing**³⁸.

Exit deals as an investment vehicle in the region



	2015	2015	2016	2017	2017	2019	2021
Latest exit deals in the region	\$170 million	\$100 million	\$100 million	\$580 million	\$151 million	\$3.1 billion	\$2.4 billion
Company	Talabat	Fawry	Carriage	Souk.com	Namshi	Careem	Jazeh
Acquiring company	Rocket Internet	Egyptian American Enterprise Fund (EAEF) Helios And others	Delivery Hero	Amazon	Emaar	Uber	IPO listing

A promising future for VC investment

In Italy, in the same year, the average amount of VC investment reached **€2.9 billion**⁴² (about \$3.1 billion), which is equivalent to **0.13%** compared to the country's GDP of **\$2.12 trillion**⁴³.

In India, which had a GDP of **\$2.95 trillion in 2021**, that same year saw record growth in the value of VC investment into startups, reaching **\$35.5 billion**⁴⁴. That is **1.2%** compared to the total output—a very high percentage.

This huge volume of VC investment in India amounted to **3.8 times more in 2021** than it was in 2020, and, in the same year, it constituted more than **50% of private investments**, with the emergence of **44 billion** companies in India in 2021, ahead of China, which witnessed the emergence of **42 billion** companies.

India has reached this number in just a few years, in **2014** the volume of VC investment was about **\$2.1 billion**⁴⁵, which is close to the region's figure in **2021**. Now, India has deals that alone exceed the sum of what was previously achieved by the country, where in **2021**, three major deals in India contributed **60%** of the total value of VC investment, the largest of which was BillDesk's **\$4.7 billion** acquisition of PayU, and then Paytm's IPO at **\$2.5 billion**, and the **\$1.3 billion** IPO of our region's famous food delivery aggregator, Zomato.



Despite the convergence of the ratios, the MENA region will witness an accelerated growth in the number of billion (**unicorn**) companies during the next few years, according to the STV. The region has the potential to produce about **40 billion companies** over the next **10 years**, ahead of close economies in terms of GDP, such as South Korea, and the UK.

These opportunities are preparing limited partners in the region to invest in them. Family businesses in the region see VC and investment in private equity, at **70% and 62%**⁴⁶, respectively, among the asset classes that provide the best opportunities in the region over the next year, according to the Perkin report.



58%⁴⁷ of companies surveyed by PwC in the region are willing to expand into new markets and sectors. About **75%** of them said that digital and technology projects are among their main priorities.



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