



Press Release

Pearl Initiative and Letswork launch pilot series on corporate governance for tech startups in the Gulf region

- With over \$1 billion invested in MENA startups in 2020, there is a greater opportunity for startups to access more capital by strengthening their corporate governance.
- Nearly 30 CEOs, Founders & Board Members of tech startups and SMEs attended the session to learn how to improve their governance and accountability to be more attractive to investors.

October 6th 2021

The Pearl Initiative, a leading non-profit organization which fosters corporate governance transparency in the Gulf region, launched a pilot series for ‘Governance in Tech’, in collaboration with Letswork. This pilot project aims to empower tech companies to adopt robust corporate governance frameworks, identify and address upcoming challenges in data governance, as well as exchange knowledge about general policies on the use of technology across all companies.

MENA startups recorded a total investment amounting to over USD 1 billion in 2020, indicating a 13 per cent increase year-on-year. In September 2021 alone, startups in MENA raised nearly \$338 million across 37 deals, a 111 per cent rise month on month. Similarly, Saudi Arabia’s startup investment has increased from 14 percent in 2019 to 17 percent in 2020, despite the onset of the pandemic. This reform in the market, combined with the growing interest of entities to work with startups, intensifies the need to support them with strong corporate governance frameworks.

During the first webinar session, the panellists comprised of business leaders and subject matter experts, who provided valuable insights on key internal governance processes, discussed initiatives that can ensure organisational profitability and resilience during the pandemic, as well as focused on the various components of corporate governance challenges that tech startups face.



Omar AlMheiri, co-founder of Letswork stated: “As reflected in various studies, new businesses with good governance, fosters stability and trustworthiness, and are deemed more profitable. Potential investors are attracted to startups with well-established, strong corporate governance. Through this pilot with the Pearl Initiative, we hope that startups and SMEs across the country and the region will also be able to structure a resilient and credible corporate governance.”

Ranya Saadawi, Executive Director, Pearl Initiative added: “As the number of tech startups grows significantly in the region, we aim to raise awareness on the significance of governance frameworks to enhance their business competitiveness and resilience. Effective governance is achieved by establishing and maintaining a balance on innovation and growth, risk management, compliance, and social responsibilities. This collaboration with Letswork strives to empower our tech startups and drive them to create a flexible and balanced corporate structure.”

The joint project is a series of webinars, podcasts and a case study on building better businesses. The case study will showcase Letswork, a UAE-based tech startup that achieved sustainable growth over the past two years and demonstrated good governance and resilience amidst the pandemic. To register for and attend any upcoming webinars, click [here](#) or reach out directly on enquiries@pearlinitiative.org.

-ends-

About the Pearl Initiative

Business leaders from across the Gulf Region formed the Pearl Initiative in 2010 to create a non-profit organisation for the Private Sector to collectively embrace the business case in adopting higher standards in corporate governance, accountability, and transparency to enhance business innovation, opportunity and value creation.

With over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative brings together business, policy and social sector decision-makers to share best practice and help maximise sustainable and inclusive growth across the region. The Pearl Initiative also supports Gulf-based university students to identify and embrace strong ethics and integrity as they embark on their future careers.

Current programmes run by the Pearl Initiative include Anti-Corruption Best Practices, Diversity in Business Leadership, Governance in MSMEs, Governance in Family Firms, The Business Pledge, and Governance in Philanthropy.

For more information, please visit www.pearlinitiative.org or contact us at enquiries@pearlinitiative.org.



Follow us @PearlInitiative on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and @ThePearlInitiative on LinkedIn.

For further information, please contact:

Orient Planet Group (OPG)

Tel: +971 4 4562888

Email: media@orientplanet.com

Website: www.orientplanet.com