

Global Health Exhibition 2025: Turning Healthcare Tech Startups into Global Industry Leaders

NextGen Pitch Competition returns to Global Health Exhibition 2025 with 100,000 SAR prize and over 200 investors confirmed

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Held under the patronage of the Ministry of Health and supported by Vision 2030 and the Health Sector Transformation Program, the Global Health Exhibition (GHE), organised by Tahaluf, has announced the return of the NextGen Pitch Competition. Taking place from 27 to 30 October on the Venture Forum

stage, this flagship initiative serves as a launchpad for the world's most promising health technology startups and scaleups. By connecting innovators with capital, mentorship, and market access, the competition empowers emerging ventures to evolve into globally recognised industry leaders.



Saudi Arabia is rapidly emerging as a powerhouse for startup investment in the region. In the first half of 2025 alone, the Kingdom deployed \$860 million in venture capital, marking a 116% increase compared to the same period in 2024 and surpassing the total VC funding for all of last year . This surge has solidified Saudi Arabia's position as the top VC destination in the MENA region, accounting for 56% of all capital deployed and 37% of total deals across the region . These figures underscore the Kingdom's growing influence in shaping the future of health innovation and entrepreneurship.

Transforming healthcare access across the Kingdom and beyond

Now in its second edition, NextGen plays a pivotal role in advancing GHE's mission to establish Saudi Arabia as a global leader in healthcare innovation and investment. Aligned with Vision 2030 and the Health Sector Transformation Program, NextGen accelerates the adoption of digital health solutions that enhance access, equity, and health outcomes across the Kingdom and

beyond.

Open to digital health, MedTech, biotech, life sciences, public health, and clinical innovation ventures, the competition particularly welcomes companies advancing health access, equity, and preventative care. Startups from Saudi Arabia and around the world are encouraged to apply, with last year's cohort representing countries from across MENA, Asia, Europe, and North America.

The competition will be evaluated by an esteemed panel of industry experts including, but not limited to, Dr. Jochen Hurlebaus, President & Owner of Aluna Healthcare Consulting (Switzerland); Jennifer Lum, Co-Founder & Managing Partner of Biospring Partners (USA); Rana Lonnen, Managing Director at Science Capital (Switzerland); Ibrahim Seksek, CEO of Startupbootcamp (UAE); Varun Turlapati, Managing Director of Chaanakya Capital (USA); and Pilar Fernandez Hermida, Managing Director of i-Expand (UAE), among others, who collectively bring decades of investment and healthcare innovation experience to identify the most promising ventures.

A launchpad for growth, investment, and regional scale

Participants in the competition will gain exclusive access to one-to-one investor matchmaking, expert mentorship from global industry leaders, and the opportunity to pitch live in front of over 300 investors, including venture capital firms, sovereign wealth funds and family offices. Early confirmed investment organisations include Deerfield, World Bank Group, PIF and ATEM Capital. The winning startup will receive a 100,000 SAR grand prize and a strategic platform to scale their solution across the region.

Twenty companies will be shortlisted across two tracks: startups (bootstrapped to seed, under 2 million US dollars raised) and scaleups (Series A and beyond). Each team will deliver a three-minute pitch followed by a five-minute Q&A with the judging panel. Semi-finals will take place on 28 and 29 October, with the final and winner announcement on 30 October.

In addition, the Global Health Exhibition is set to feature an Investment Forum (Days 2-4), offering startups and scaleups direct access to Saudi Arabia's dynamic healthcare investment landscape. The forum will provide clarity on regulatory frameworks, facilitate high-impact local partnerships, and connect investors with emerging opportunities. Day 4 will spotlight Procurement, featuring innovative purchasing models, supply chain solutions, and sustainable strategies aligned with Saudi Arabia's green initiatives.

Building a track record of success

The impact of the NextGen Pitch Competition is already becoming clear. Initially launched to spotlight emerging healthtech ventures, it has grown into a credible platform for early-stage companies to gain visibility, build networks, and accelerate their development. This year, the competition seeks to attract high-potential startups looking to engage with investors, partners, and the wider healthcare innovation ecosystem.

Among last year's winners was Xgenome Biotech, a Saudi-founded startup developing next-generation diagnostic kits. Reflecting on the programme's influence, CEO Burhan Fakhurji said: "Last October we had the honour of taking home first place in GHE's NextGen Pitch Competition. Since then, we have managed to progress that project from prototype stage. We are now in a position where we believe in 3-4 months - by the time of GHE 2025 - we will have our first kit ready. Without the advantage of winning the NextGen Pitch Competition and the trust we got from the onsite investors, we might not be in this exciting position."

Commenting on the competition's return, Rachel Sturgess, Senior Vice President at Tahaluf, said: "Saudi Arabia is rapidly becoming the launchpad for the next generation of healthcare innovation. Through the NextGen Pitch Competition, we are not only showcasing bold ideas but actively enabling their growth. By connecting startups with capital, expertise and access to one of the world's most ambitious healthcare markets, we are helping shape a future where innovation knows no borders."

Applications are now open and close on 15 September 2025. Startups and scaleups interested in applying can visit: <https://nextgen.untapinnovate.com/>. For more information on this year's programme, visit: <https://www.globalhealthsaudi.com/en/investors-and-startups/next-gen.html>

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About Global Health Exhibition

Established in 2018, Global Health Exhibition (GHE) is Saudi Arabia's premier platform for showcasing next-generation healthcare innovation. GHE is organised by Tahaluf, a strategic alliance between Informa PLC, the Saudi Arabian Federation for Cyber Security and Programming (SAFCSP), and the Events Investment Fund (EIF). The event brings together global leaders, investors, and innovators to shape the future of healthcare. Set against the backdrop of Vision 2030, it positions Riyadh as a driving force in global health transformation. GHE spans the entire health ecosystem and welcomed over 105,000 attendees during its 2024 edition.

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