

# 60 MINUTES

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MINUTES

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DAY 4

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## The Tide Turns: Embracing Digital Innovation for Water Sustainability and Security AI-Powered Smart Utility Management

Abdullah Mohammad Khorami, Chief Business Officer at Etihad Salam Telecom Company, discusses how their digital commitments align with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objective for water management.



Abdullah Mohammad Khorami

Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a global leader in environmental innovation, committing \$180 billion to sustainability and green initiatives, with nearly 45% (\$80 billion) specifically allocated for water projects in the coming years. While water scarcity presents challenges in the region due to its arid geography, rapid urbanization and economic growth have catalysed innovative solutions in water management. This substantial investment, aligned with Vision 2030 objectives, demonstrates Saudi Arabia's commitment to safeguarding its vital water resources through digital transformation. The integration of smart utility management solutions, powered by artificial intelligence and

the Internet of Things, is reshaping how water resources are monitored, managed, and conserved across the Kingdom.

Under the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI), launched in 2021, the Kingdom is transforming its infrastructure and business landscape through sustainable innovation. With 44.2 GW of renewable energy capacity developed - enough to power 7 million homes - this transformation is enabling businesses, particularly in rapidly growing industrial and population centres like Jeddah and Mecca, to adopt smart water management solutions that reduce operational costs and improve efficiency. Advanced monitoring tools enable companies to track water usage, identify inefficiencies, and implement targeted conservation strategies. These solutions, supported by robust telecom infrastructure, provide businesses with the ability to maintain optimal performance while contributing to broader sustainability initiatives.

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## Zoom Uses Oracle Cloud Infrastructure to Power its AI-first Work Platform in Saudi Arabia

Zoom AI Companion uses OCI for inferencing, data, and AI sovereignty capabilities.

Zoom Communications, Inc., an AI-first work platform for human connection, is using Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) to support its next-generation AI assistant, Zoom AI Companion, in Saudi Arabia. OCI is helping Zoom keep customer data in-region and deliver AI-first solutions. This provides users with AI personal assistants that help prioritize their work and deliver context-driven responses to help prepare for, execute, and follow up after meetings.



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**Ahmad Halabi**  
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Resecurity Inc.



**Mohammed Sharif**  
Regional Manager - KSA  
Logitech for Business



**Tahir Latif**  
Expert AI Regulatory Advisor  
Dubai International Financial Centre



**Mandar Patil**  
Senior Vice President - International Market & Customer Success  
Cyble



**Mayuresh Kothari**  
Technical Director  
Secureworks, a Sophos company



**Eng. Naveed Ahmed**  
Cybersecurity Risk Expert  
Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA)



**Wolfgang Kroj**  
General Manager of Sales - Middle East and Africa  
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Cybersecurity Expert

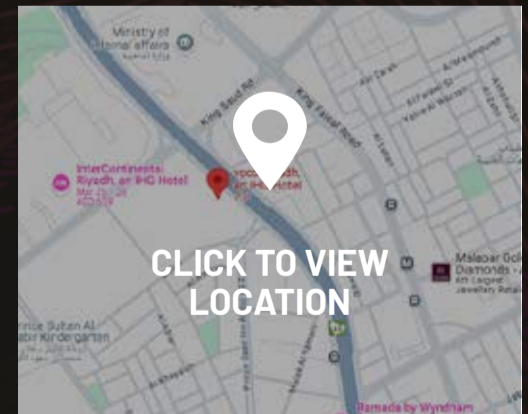
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## Etihad Salam...

Connected building management systems are transforming energy and water consumption in commercial and industrial facilities. These systems provide real-time insights into resource use, allowing operators to make data-driven decisions that enhance sustainability. By integrating AI-powered analytics, they identify inefficiencies, optimize energy consumption, monitor real-time energy and water usage to drive sustainable operations, reduce costs by optimizing resource use during peak periods, and provide actionable insights to support sustainability targets. As a result, businesses can implement proactive conservation

measures, minimize waste, and align with national sustainability goals.

The foundation of this digital transformation rests on a sophisticated telecommunications infrastructure, engineered specifically for IoT-enabled water solutions. With the Kingdom's strategic push toward generating 50% of its power from renewable sources by 2030, these smart systems are becoming increasingly efficient and environmentally sustainable in their operation. Smart meters operating on this connected infrastructure detect usage patterns, identify leaks, and optimize distribution networks. This technology proves especially crucial in rapidly expanding urban areas, where industrial growth and population density place escalating demands on water infrastructure..



## Saudi Arabia is paving the way for a future where water security is guaranteed, aligning with its Vision 2030 objectives and ensuring long-term sustainability for generations to come”.

Saudi Arabia's smart city initiatives highlight the impact of digital innovation on water sustainability. Cities across the Kingdom are leveraging IoT and AI-driven solutions to enhance water quality and environment monitoring, and predictive maintenance. These solutions enable municipalities to optimize

resources and improve sustainability outcomes. AI-powered predictive maintenance ensures that infrastructure remains operational by detecting issues before they lead to major system failures. The Kingdom has launched new waste management initiatives that will process 3 million tonnes of municipal solid

waste annually into refuse-derived fuels across six governorates. The project incorporates blockchain technology for transparent waste tracking and includes a plastic credits system to incentivize recycling. Under the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture's ambitious plan to recycle 95% of the country's waste, these initiatives aim to process 100 million tonnes annually.

As Saudi Arabia moves forward with its sustainability agenda, the collaboration among technology developers and utility operators has already yielded impressive results, with more than 80 initiatives launched representing over SAR 705 billion in investments. This commitment, combined with the Kingdom's target to generate 50% of its power from renewable sources by 2030,

demonstrates how the successful deployment of smart utility management systems stems from the coordinated efforts of both public and private sectors. By embracing digital transformation, the Kingdom is positioning itself at the forefront of sustainable resource management. The integration of AI-powered water management solutions with renewable energy infrastructure not only ensures efficient resource use but also advances the Kingdom's position as a global leader in environmental innovation. With strategic investments and continued innovation, Saudi Arabia is paving the way for a future where water security is guaranteed, aligning with its Vision 2030 objectives and ensuring long-term sustainability for generations to come.

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## Zoom...

Zoom AI Companion helps users streamline their workdays by helping with a range of different tasks, including summarizing meetings, chat threads, and phone conversations, drafting chat messages, creating searchable smart recordings, answering meeting questions, and more, within the Zoom Workplace app. To support compliance with Saudi Arabian regulations while maintaining top-tier performance, Zoom

optimized its AI models to run on efficient OCI GPU shapes. The launch of AI Companion in Saudi Arabia builds on the successful market entry of Zoom in Saudi Arabia and aligns with Zoom's broader goal of supporting Saudi Arabia's digital transformation as outlined in Vision 2030.

“Saudi Arabia is a key market for Zoom, and we continue to invest in Zoom Workplace and AI Companion to provide solutions that meet the unique needs of businesses here,” said Velchamy Sankarlingam, president of product and engineering, Zoom. “By

optimizing AI Companion to operate efficiently with GPU shapes in a local OCI region, we're enabling Saudi companies to take full advantage of AI without facing constraints.”

“Oracle and Zoom have a longstanding partnership, and we are pleased to be able to help local businesses in Saudi Arabia leverage AI-first solutions like Zoom AI Companion in their daily operations,” said Karan Batta, senior vice president, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. “The successful introduction of AI Companion in Saudi Arabia demonstrates how OCI's powerful sovereignty capabilities and AI



## We're enabling Saudi companies to take full advantage of AI without facing constraints.”

infrastructure are helping the world's most innovative organizations deploy enhanced AI solutions while meeting regulatory

and compliance standards around the globe.”

Zoom selected OCI for its advantages in performance, scalability, reliability, and superior cloud security, which helped Zoom increase its service capacity for concurrent users. Now, OCI is enabling inferencing of Zoom AI Companion in the Oracle Cloud Riyadh Region and the Oracle Cloud Jeddah Region to serve Zoom's customers in Saudi Arabia.

### OCI AI infrastructure accelerates AI inferencing

AI innovators like Zoom are leveraging OCI's purpose-

built AI capabilities to run the most demanding AI workloads faster and more reliably. OCI bare metal GPU instances can power applications that include natural language processing, computer vision, and recommendation systems. Oracle's dedicated engineering support team works with customers from planning to launch to help ensure success. Compared to other hyperscalers, OCI offers superior technical and economical flexibility including lower pricing, flexible deployments with compute and bare metal, and easier migration of on-premises applications.

# Aster DM Healthcare launches myAster in Saudi Arabia, alongside AI and Generative AI-enabled Arabic voice response with Google Cloud

Launched at LEAP 2025 – myAster has a proven track record as UAE's No.1 wellbeing and healthcare app with over 2 million downloads.

Aster DM Healthcare, a leading integrated healthcare provider in the GCC, marks a significant milestone with the launch of its flagship digital health platform, myAster, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This launch aligns with Aster's ambitious plans to expand its footprint in the

Kingdom and transform the healthcare experience for the people of the country.

With a proven track record as the UAE's No.1 wellbeing and healthcare app and over 2 million downloads, myAster is set to redefine digital healthcare in Saudi

Arabia. The app offers an all-encompassing suite of services, including online pharmacy, prescription home delivery, appointment management, video consultation, and home care services.

As part of its launch at the prestigious LEAP

2025 event, myAster unveiled a groundbreaking feature: AI and gen AI voice integration in collaboration with Google Cloud. This advanced capability introduces Arabic voice response, allowing users to describe their symptoms in their native dialect for personalized

and culturally relevant interactions. The AI-driven symptom analysis guides users to the most appropriate specialists or healthcare services within Aster's network. By bridging language barriers and enhancing accessibility, this innovation underscores

Aster's dedication to delivering inclusive and patient-centric healthcare solutions in Saudi Arabia.

Designed to meet the diverse needs of users, myAster empowers individuals to track their health vitals, access lab

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Founder, CPIMEDIA GROUP **Dominic De Sousa** (1959-2015), Group Publishing Director **Kausar Syed**, Sales Director **Sabita Miranda**, Editors **Mark Forker**, **Sandhya D'Mello**, **Daniel Shepherd**, Designer **Froilan Cosgafa IV**, Web Developer **Adarsh Snehanjan**

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**Aster DM...**

reports and health records, and benefit from chronic disease management programs tailored to address lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. With these features, myAster provides a comprehensive solution for users to proactively manage their wellness journey.

Commenting on the launch of myAster in Saudi Arabia, Alisha Moopen, Managing Director & Group CEO, Aster DM Healthcare said "The launch of myAster in Saudi Arabia is a pivotal moment in our journey to bring integrated and accessible healthcare solutions to the Kingdom. With the introduction of myAster, we continue to lead the digital revolution in the GCC, reaffirming our commitment to building

a future-ready healthcare ecosystem that prioritizes convenience, accessibility, and innovation." Nalla Karunanithy, CEO of Digital Health and E-Commerce, Aster DM Healthcare added "myAster not only empowers individuals to take charge of their health but also bridges the gap between patients and specialists by guiding them to the right care based on real-time symptom

analysis. By leveraging AI and collaborating with Google Cloud, we're setting a new standard for digital healthcare innovation. As we continue to innovate, our vision is to build a future where healthcare is not only smarter and more efficient but also deeply human-centered, meeting the unique needs of every individual we serve." "Unlocking solutions that empower customers

**As we continue to innovate, our vision is to build a future where healthcare is not only smarter and more efficient but also deeply human-centered, meeting the unique needs of every individual we serve."**

models, makes healthcare more accessible and personalized for the people of Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the potential of AI to revolutionize how healthcare is delivered".

Aster DM Healthcare has pledged an investment of SAR 1 billion (USD 250 million) in Saudi Arabia over the next 2-3 years, demonstrating its unwavering commitment to enhancing healthcare in the region. This investment will support the expansion of Aster Pharmacy to 180 stores across the Kingdom, while also scaling bed capacity to 1,000 through the establishment of five new hospitals in major cities alongside the existing Aster Sanad Hospital.

Additionally, Aster plans to launch 30 medical centers to reinforce its integrated healthcare model and provide employment opportunities to approximately 4,900 people in the Kingdom over the next five years. The introduction of myAster is a pivotal component of this strategy, designed to deliver a seamless connected care experience for the residents of Saudi Arabia.

remains the most critical component of every enterprise's digital transformation strategy," said Bader Almadi, Google Cloud GM in Saudi Arabia at Google Cloud. "Using Google Cloud's AI and generative AI technologies, Aster DM Healthcare aims to transform the patient experience with myAster. The introduction of Arabic voice response, powered by our advanced AI



## Upsource by Solutions and Cognizant join forces to elevate Business Process Outsourcing in Saudi Arabia

*Alliance will focus on providing advanced AI and automation technologies to enhance efficiency for enterprises building out their operations in the region.*

Cognizant announced recently a three-year strategic partnership with Upsource by Solutions, a distinguished business process outsourcing (BPO) company in Saudi Arabia. This collaboration brings Upsource by Solutions local expertise alongside Cognizant's global reach to enhance operational efficiencies and strive for exceptional customer satisfaction for clients in the area. The agreement was signed at LEAP 2025.

Through this alliance, businesses across the region will gain access to Cognizant's advanced Intuitive Operations & Automation (IOA) solutions, including a

Gen AI-powered financial suite, automation frameworks, and enhanced operational controls. These technologies are designed to assist businesses in meeting modern business demands, ensuring compliance with national and global standards, and delivering services that drive efficiency, scalability, and long-term success.

"Cognizant's commitment to investing in the region and supporting capability transfer was a key factor in our decision to partner with them," said Eng. Naif AlMogbel, CEO at Upsource by Solutions. "By aligning our vision



**This agreement represents the beginning of a journey to create future-ready solutions that redefine value for our clients."**

with Cognizant's expertise, we're reshaping what excellence in BPO means. This agreement represents the beginning of a journey to create future-ready solutions that redefine value for our clients."

The BPO industry is undergoing a pivotal transformation as companies increasingly

outsource essential processes such as finance, human resources, and customer management. This shift requires a strategic blend of local insights and global innovation to enhance efficiency and drive growth through next-generation solutions.

"We are excited to collaborate with Upsource

by Solutions and continue to bring our expertise in digital transformation to the Saudi Arabian market," said Gagan Syal, Head of Southern Europe & Middle East at Cognizant. "Saudi and this region is buzzing with innovation and progress. With Upsource by Solutions local experience and forward-thinking

vision and our leadership in advanced technologies, we are building a foundation for the future of business operations. This collaboration reflects our deep commitment to supporting the region's long-term success by enabling organisations to embrace cutting-edge innovation and achieve operational excellence."

# Huawei Cloud Enables Saudi Arabia's Path to AI Leadership at LEAP 2025

*Riyadh Region emerges as strategic hub for Middle East's AI development, serving over 1,000 customers and 300 partners across government, finance, media, and e-commerce sectors.*

As artificial intelligence reshapes the global economy, Huawei Cloud today showcased how its Riyadh Region is enabling Saudi Arabia to chart its own path to AI leadership while maintaining data sovereignty. At LEAP 2025, the company highlighted how its sophisticated infrastructure and AI capabilities empower the Kingdom to build locally relevant AI solutions that address unique regional needs.

The Huawei Cloud Riyadh Region, launched in September 2023, has rapidly evolved into a pivotal hub for AI development in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. Its sophisticated 3AZ

(Availability Zone) architecture delivers industry-leading latency rates of 25ms within Saudi Arabia and 100ms across the broader region. Following its receipt of the prestigious Class C license from Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space, and Technology Commission (CST) in 2023, Huawei Cloud has strengthened its position by entering the Saudi government's National Framework Agreement (NFA V2.0) in December 2024, enabling direct cloud service procurement by government entities.

Alan Qi, President of Huawei Cloud Middle East and Central Asia, said, "As a pioneer in AI

industrial applications, Huawei Cloud is transforming how enterprises harness intelligence. Our Riyadh Region is the foundation for Saudi Arabia to develop locally relevant AI solutions that reflect its unique needs and values. The remarkable growth we have witnessed, serving over 1,000 customers across critical sectors, reinforces our leadership in delivering cutting-edge AI capabilities that are reshaping this dynamic market. The ability to process data locally while accessing world-class AI capabilities is today a strategic advantage for Saudi businesses in an increasingly global marketplace."

## Huawei Cloud Enables Intelligence Across Industries as AI Pioneer

At LEAP, Huawei demonstrated a comprehensive suite of technological innovations representing the convergence of AI and cloud computing. Huawei Cloud adheres to the concept of AI for industries through its flagship Pangu model series. Dedicated to

providing each industry, enterprise, and individual with their own expert assistants, Pangu Model 5.0 represents a significant advancement with its "5+N+X" three-layer architecture. This complete hierarchical decoupling design enables quick adaptation to changing industry requirements, while its multi-modal and multi-size characteristics optimize the match between scenarios and models, meeting enterprise demands for both economic efficiency and professional capability.

Visitors explored Huawei Cloud DataArts, a one-stop intelligent data governance production line. It includes distributed database GaussDB, cloud-native data lake service (MRS), fully managed serverless data lake exploration service (DLI), all-scenario one-stop data warehouse service GaussDB (DWS), and data governance center service DataArts Studio based on Huawei's digital transformation experience.

The newly released Huawei Cloud Stack 8.5 further strengthens

this architecture with more than 120 locally deployable cloud services. This enhanced version improves reliability and security while significantly advancing database and AI engineering capabilities. It includes 50 scenario-based solutions across six industries, supporting initiatives from host cloudification to national cloud 2.0 and telecom cloud implementations.

## Pioneering "Cloud for AI, AI for Cloud" Innovation

Huawei has built comprehensive cloud infrastructure and specialized solutions tailored to regional needs. This infrastructure supports the development of smart cities and enables the integration of AI across various sectors, from government services to private enterprise applications. The company's focus on Arabic language models and localized AI solutions demonstrates its commitment to making AI technology accessible and relevant to the Saudi market.

Huawei Cloud's AI approach is built on a dual innovation strategy. Cloud for AI leverages cloud architecture innovation to build powerful AI model capabilities and efficient data mining capabilities. Meanwhile, AI for Cloud combines these capabilities to enhance Huawei Cloud's own development processes across AI, media, and software production lines,

making these advances available as external services that accelerate enterprise development.

This strategy is realized through a comprehensive three-layer cloud service architecture. At its foundation, Infrastructure-as-a-Service is delivered through KooVerse, a distributed cloud infrastructure with a unified architecture spanning 96 availability zones across 33 geographic regions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. The infrastructure supports flexible deployment across public, private, and edge clouds to meet diverse application scenarios.

The second layer, Technology-as-a-Service, opens Huawei's accumulated technologies and tools to the broader community. Through AI development production lines such as ModelArts, enterprises can accelerate their application modernization journey. The third layer, Experience-as-a-Service (aPaaS), provides ready-to-use industry solutions, allowing developers to leverage accumulated expertise across government, finance, manufacturing, transportation, and meteorology sectors.

Lawrence Liu, CEO of Huawei Cloud Saudi Arabia, said, "Through our ambitious five-year plan to develop 200,000 developers, building solutions with 1,000 local partners, and supporting 2,000 startups in Saudi Arabia, we're investing in the future of the region's digital economy. This aligns perfectly with Saudi Vision 2030 and demonstrates our dedication to fostering a robust digital ecosystem that maintains sovereignty while advancing AI capabilities."

## Transformative Impact Across Key Sectors

The transformative impact of Huawei Cloud's solutions is demonstrated through notable success stories across key sectors. StarzPlay, the region's second-largest streaming platform, leveraged Huawei Cloud's full-stack serverless architecture to seamlessly serve over 3.2 million paid users during the Cricket World Cup. In e-commerce, Saudi Arabia's Zode achieved exceptional performance with 25ms local latency. Cashin, a pioneering fintech enterprise, improved response times by 35% and operational efficiency by 40% while reducing total ownership costs by 30%.

**The ability to process data locally while accessing world-class AI capabilities is today a strategic advantage for Saudi businesses in an increasingly global marketplace."**



Alan Qi

# IFS Strategic Agreement with SBM Highlights Commitment to Growth in Saudi Arabia

With SBM's market experience and IFS's expertise in Industrial AI and enterprise software, the new partnership commits to delivering exceptional customer experiences and driving proven returns on investment.



**This will enable us to leverage their local talent and strengths to accelerate growth in the region and gain a competitive edge."**

Simon Niesler, Chief Revenue Officer at IFS, said, "We see tremendous opportunity in Saudi Arabia and are focused on delivering our Industrial AI and enterprise cloud solutions to align with the Saudi Vision 2030. The country is making rapid progress in modernization and diversifying the economy through world leading digital transformation, infrastructure development and innovation. It is only fitting that we partner with the Kingdom's leading technology solutions provider, Saudi Business Machines, to establish a dedicated Saudi-based IFS practice. This will enable us to leverage their local talent and strengths to accelerate growth in the region and gain a competitive edge."

Fadhel Al-Shaikh, Vice President-Business Tech. Solutions at SBM, said, "This strategic partnership between Saudi Business Machines and IFS leverages SBM's 40+ years of IT technology expertise in the Saudi market alongside IFS's cutting-edge enterprise solutions.

We are fully aligned with the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 goals, particularly in driving digital transformation and promoting innovation across all sectors. Together, we will empower Saudi organisations to reach unprecedented levels of operational efficiency and excellence."

to IFS customers including business consulting and customized technical support offerings.

At the heart of the partnership is a joint investment in local Saudi talent covering areas such as sales upskilling training and IFS certification program for young graduates. This talent pool will help in contributing to the Kingdom's digital modernization efforts and add value to the skilled workforce.

IFS, the leading technology provider of enterprise cloud and Industrial AI software, recently announced a strategic partnership with Saudi Business Machines (SBM), a leading provider of end-to-end enterprise information technology solutions in Saudi Arabia. Together, IFS and SBM

are making significant investments into expanding the already existing market footprint of IFS solutions in the kingdom that will create jobs and opportunities for local talent and enable Saudi enterprises to compete on a global scale using the latest and most advanced Industrial AI

technology. IFS.ai. With SBM's market experience in technology solutions across four decades and IFS's industry depth and expertise in Industrial AI and enterprise software, the new partnership commits to uphold their shared values and commitment to delivering exceptional

customer experiences and driving proven returns on investment. SBM will expand their IFS practice into Aerospace & Defense, Energy Utilities & Resources, Manufacturing, Construction & Engineering, Telecommunications and Service industries and offer an array of services

# LAHINT Secures SAR 4 Million Pre-Seed Funding During LEAP 2025

LAHINT aims to strengthen its partnerships with government entities to align with its strategic objectives and support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 for economic and digital transformation.



impact in the tech and innovation sector.

The LAHINT Board of Directors comprises experienced leaders from both the public and private sectors, including:

- Mohamed Ibrahim** – CEO
- Khaled Alsulami** – Chief Strategy Officer
- Ahmed Saber** – Chief Technology Officer
- Tariq AlJabr** – Chief Business Development Officer
- Ziyad Alsulais** – Chief Commercial Officer

With a diverse team of experts across government and private sectors, LAHINT is positioned to redefine the government services experience using AI-driven automation and advanced digital technologies.

The company has also graduated from Misk (Mohammed bin Salman Foundation) in October 2023 and successfully completed the Sanabil Startup Unlocked by the 500 Global program in December 2024, further strengthening its position as a key player in the region's digital transformation.

LAHINT's platform features an advanced verification system based on Saudi legal and regulatory databases, allowing users to receive instant, AI-powered eligibility consultations for free, without the complexities of navigating government services. Furthermore, the platform enables fully automated service execution for end-users through integration with various government portals, ensuring faster and more efficient digital public services.

LAHINT has gained both local and international recognition, having been featured in the 2024 annual report of Saudi Venture Capital (SVC) as one of the most promising startups in the Kingdom. It was also named Saudi Arabia's Best Startup of 2024, reflecting its growing

LAHINT, a leading company specializing in government services automation, has successfully closed its SAR 4 million Pre-Seed funding round on the second

day of its participation in the LEAP 2025 global conference in Riyadh. The company reaffirmed its strategic goal of automating 50 government services by

2027, positioning LAHINT as the go-to platform for individuals and businesses seeking seamless government transactions. Additionally, LAHINT aims to strengthen

its partnerships with government entities to align with its strategic objectives and support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 for economic and digital transformation.



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# Etihad Salam Telecom Company and National Water Company Seal Partnership to Drive Nationwide Digital Transformation in Water Management

Collaboration will see the deployment of advanced nationwide connectivity and ICT solutions to enhance operational efficiency and innovate water management services in Saudi Arabia, aligning with broader economic and digital transformation objectives.



**We look forward to the efficiency and innovation that this collaboration will bring to our operations nationwide.**

Etihad Salam Telecom Company, a leading provider of telecommunications services in Saudi Arabia, and the National Water Company (NWC) recently formalized a partnership at LEAP 2025, paving the way for nationwide deployment of cutting-edge connectivity services

and ICT solutions. Under the agreement, Salam's will provide core business internet services, licensed infrastructure, and innovative smart solutions.

The strategic partnership will leverage Etihad Salam Telecom Company's connectivity solutions to improve

operational efficiencies for more efficient water distribution and predictive maintenance, enhance cybersecurity measures and response protocols, improve customer service through AI assistants and self-service portals, and optimize resource management including water and waste systems.

Both partners will build the foundation for digital transformation across the kingdom by enabling cost efficiencies and advanced smart technologies in the water management sector in line with Saudi Arabia's national vision.

Majid Al-Juraib, Vice President of IT at NWC, said: "We are at

a critical moment in our journey towards digital transformation. Our partnership with Etihad Salam Telecom Company is a major step forward, offering us the technological edge needed to enhance our services and meet our sustainability objectives. We look forward to the efficiency and innovation that this collaboration will bring to our operations nationwide."

This agreement is one of several major projects illustrating the synergy between the sectors, aiming to deliver comprehensive benefits across the kingdom. As both entities explore the potential of AI, IoT, and other emerging technologies, today's partnership a testament to their joint commitment to excellence and innovation in the digital domain.

Abdullah Mohammed Khorami, Etihad Salam Telecom Company Chief Business Officer, said: "Our partnership with NWC embodies our commitment to fostering a digitally inclusive society. By leveraging our comprehensive ICT solutions, we are not just supporting NWC's vision but also contributing to the kingdom's utilities sector by integrating digital advances to enhance operational efficiencies extensively."

Collectively, Salam and NWC's initiatives are expected to digitize and streamline the utilities sector, offering better resource management and customer service while simultaneously bolstering the infrastructure against cyber threats and integrating cutting-edge energy management technologies.

# Salesforce Announces \$500M Investment in Saudi Arabia to Drive AI Innovation and Growth

Investment will support enterprises as they build limitless digital workforces with Agentforce and Hyperforce in Saudi Arabia.

Salesforce recently announced plans to invest \$500 million in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, building on its commitment to innovation and economic growth in the region. The investment also aims to spur workforce development through AI skilling and expand Salesforce's local partner ecosystem to support local businesses.

The announcement, made today at LEAP 2025, follows the company's Davos pledge to expand its presence in Saudi Arabia with new regional headquarters in Riyadh. The increasing adoption of Agentforce, Salesforce's digital labor platform, by businesses in the region underscores the growing demand for AI-driven solutions and reinforces Salesforce's commitment to this technology in the Kingdom.

As part of this expansion, Salesforce will bring Hyperforce,



Marc Benioff

its next-generation platform architecture, to Saudi Arabia. Delivered through a strategic partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS), Hyperforce in K.S.A.

enables Salesforce's global customer base to run workloads locally through a distributed public cloud infrastructure. This expansion also allows local businesses and talent to

leverage Salesforce and its most innovative products while ensuring trust by remaining compliant with local regulations.

"We are entering a new era where autonomous

AI agents working with humans are transforming workforces and businesses across the globe," said Marc Benioff, Chair and CEO, Salesforce. "With Agentforce, Hyperforce, and our global partner ecosystem, we are empowering Saudi organizations to deliver unprecedented levels of productivity, growth, and customer success."

Advancing AI skills and innovation through regional partnerships

Agentforce, a complete AI solution for augmenting teams with autonomous AI agents in the flow of work, is helping businesses around the world scale their operations with agentic AI. Ecosystem partnerships with Capgemini, Deloitte, Globant, IBM, and PwC will further extend the capabilities of this technology in Saudi Arabia by providing tailored solutions and specialized expertise, empowering enterprises to unlock new capacity for growth.

Additionally, Salesforce remains committed to upskilling 30,000 Saudi citizens in AI, with a strong focus on increasing women's workforce participation to foster inclusivity. As part of this pledge, the company is partnering with Riyadh-based Princess Nourah

University (PNU), the largest women's university in the world, to bring AI-focused learning and workforce development opportunities to female students. By leveraging Trailhead, the partnership will equip the next generation of women leaders in K.S.A. with the skills needed to excel in the digital economy, supporting the Kingdom's Vision 2030 for inclusive growth.

"We are thrilled with our cooperation with Salesforce. This investment not only underscores their confidence in our vision and capabilities but also paves the way for groundbreaking advancements in education," said Dr. Ala Alluhaidan, Dean of Development and Quality Deanship at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. "Together, we are committed to fostering innovation, empowering our students, and making a lasting impact on society."

Commitment to Arabic language support

Salesforce is also continuing its commitment and expansion to AI-driven transformation and workforce development across the Kingdom, with an expanded focus on advancing Arabic language support.



# LEAP 2025: NEOM, DataVolt Announce US\$5 Billion Deal to Establish First Sustainable AI Data Centre in Saudi

Partnership will lead to creation of first fully sustainable AI data centre, located at Oxagon floating city in Red Sea, complete with 1.5 gigawatt capacity.



The second day of LEAP 2025, Saudi Arabia's award-winning global tech event, produced further announcements totalling US\$6.13 billion of investments in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Leading the roll call of mega investments to continue the evolution of the Kingdom's technology ecosystem, DataVolt and Saudi Arabian giga-project NEOM announced a US\$5 billion partnership to establish the first fully sustainable AI data centre with a capacity of 1.5 gigawatts in Oxagon – the floating industrial city being developed in the Red Sea.

Meanwhile, Mobily, the Saudi Arabian telecommunications services company, announced an investment of US\$911 million in strategic projects to develop digital infrastructure, including submarine cable projects and the development of data centres across the Kingdom.

Elsewhere, Zoom announced a US\$75m investment to boost AI and innovation, and establish new data centres to support technology companies and government entities; Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) announced a US\$51m investment in private fibre-optic networks; while SKYFive, the leading telecommunications and internet services

provider for aircraft, revealed a US\$100m investment in non-terrestrial communications services focused on championing the advanced air mobility sector.

"As we enter the halfway mark of LEAP 2025, we have already surpassed confirmed investments of previous editions and have surpassed US\$40 billion in total confirmed investments since we launched LEAP four years ago," said Michael Champion, CEO of Tahaluf, which co-organises LEAP with the Saudi Ministry for Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming, and Drones (SAFCSP).

"What we're seeing this year is commitments being made across sectors, with AI and data centres taking the lead and larger collaborations between local and international businesses, which is at the heart of what LEAP is offering as a platform."

## Smart Contact Lens Advances Offer Unique Vision of Future

At LEAP'S all-new Tech Arena, a dedicated space for advanced multi-sector technology demonstrations, Dr Valenty Volkov, Co-Founder of XPANCEO, explained how an evolution in technology, materials,

**What we're seeing this year is commitments being made across sectors, with AI and data centres taking the lead and larger collaborations between local and international businesses".**

and AI-based machine-learning is fast-tracking rapid advances in smart contact lenses.

"At LEAP, we see the future happening in front of our eyes; today, we see that future literally on our eyes with revolutionary technology that will completely evolve the way we interact with real and digital worlds," Dr Volkov told enthralled spectators during a packed session entitled Beyond Silicon: How Smart Contact Lenses Are Shaping the Next Generation of Computing.

With XPANCEO planning to deliver the first working prototype by the end of 2026, Dr Volkov said the company is developing soft and rigid contact lens versions with a goal of producing a final product no more than one millimetre in thickness despite housing an ultra-compact integrated projector, biosensors, camera, adaptive prescription lens, batteries,

smart contact lens users will be able to control their ophthalmic devices through advanced neural interfacing. He added: "They say the eyes are the mirror of the soul, which is very true, but from a genetic point of view, the eyes are part of the brain. Therefore, if we can connect our neural interfaces onto the lens, users will be able to communicate with the device via their brain," concluded Dr Volkov.

## Saudi Gaming Ecosystem Witnessing Unprecedented Growth

In an opening keynote session on LEAP'S CODE Stage, which is highlighting speakers and companies empowering digital national capacities to accelerate the process of digital transformation, Mohammed Robayan, Deputy Minister for Technology at MCIT, reiterated Saudi Arabia's aim to leverage the US\$220bn global gaming market to drive job creation and GDP growth.

"As the Kingdom tries to diversify from oil as part of Vision 2030, gaming and esports hold massive potential and are being driven through projects and initiatives such as the Ignite Digital Content Programme, and the Saudi Digital Academy, which has so far trained more than 1,500 people in the field," said Deputy Minister Robayan.

When it comes to investment, Robayan also highlighted Ignite's 'Gaming Sector Financing Programme', which is seeking to support growth in the private sector through gaming and esports with an investment budget of SAR300 million, increasing the amount of funding and options available to small and medium enterprises operating in the digital content sector.

## Accenture Technology Vision 2025 Report Predicts AI Will Unleash Unprecedented Business Autonomy in Future Workplaces

New research from Accenture, announced on the second day of LEAP 2025, has pointed to a new era of digitisation -- where AI continuously learns and drives new levels of autonomy across organisations. The Accenture study suggests trust in AI's performance is the single most important measure organisations need for the technology to achieve its promise.

The Accenture Technology Vision 2025 report explores how the future is being shaped by AI-powered autonomy. As diffusion of AI accelerates across the enterprise sphere and wider society faster than any prior technology, 65 per cent of Saudi-based executives believe it brings new urgency to reinvention and how technology systems and the processes they enable are designed, built, and operated. The research also predicts the technology will increasingly act as a development partner, power robotic bodies in the physical world, and foster a new symbiotic relationship with people to bring out the best in each other.

"The Accenture Technology Vision 2025 gives leaders a look into what's ahead when AI continuously learns, acts autonomously with, and on behalf of, people, and pushes enterprises and people into new and exciting ways to continuously reinvent," said Julie Sweet, chair and CEO, Accenture. "But unlocking the benefits of AI will only be possible if leaders seize the opportunity to inject and develop trust in its performance and outcomes in a systematic manner, so businesses and people can unlock AI's incredible possibilities."

More than 1,800 tech brands and 680 start-ups are exhibiting at LEAP 2025 this week, alongside a stellar lineup of 1,000-plus expert speakers across 15 stages, highlighting the tech that is shaping tomorrow. For more information on the event and ticket options, visit [onegiantleap.com](http://onegiantleap.com)



# Tech To Make Riyadh Epicentre of MENA Music by 2030, Grammy Awards President Tells DeepFest 2025

*Chief of Data and AI at United Nations dismisses dystopian notions and hails AI's ability to help humans focus on 'unique' qualities such as creativity and entrepreneurship.*

Just a week after watching superstars including Kendrick Lamar and Beyonce make global headlines at the 67th GRAMMY Awards, the head of the organisation behind the annual music awards jetted into Saudi Arabia to speak on the second day of DeepFest 2025, the world's leading artificial intelligence (AI) conference, and left no doubt about his expectations regarding Riyadh's role in the future of the music industry.

Week and the growth of MDLBEAST, the Saudi-based entertainment company rooted in music culture, Panay made a bold prediction at DeepFest, the four-day show co-located with LEAP, the Kingdom's award-winning global tech event running until 12 February at Riyadh International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Malham.

"Just seeing this massive explosion of the music scene, I have

Grammys 25 years ago, and Panay – who was born and raised in Cyprus – says one of his missions as president is to help music and its creators in the Middle East and North Africa gain traction globally.

"Frankly, and maybe it's because I am from the region, I don't think there is an area on the planet that is richer in heritage and in musicality than the broader Middle East and North Africa," he said. "There's 400 million people that speak Arabic, so it's only a matter of time before you see an Arabic star become what K Pop is – a global idiom embraced by everybody."

Panay added the likelihood is being accelerated by the development of AI and streaming platforms, which enable more creativity, wider connections, and enhanced visibility – despite 400,000 new songs being added to Spotify daily.

"That's an overwhelming amount of content, but I remember when there was no way as an artist to reach an audience unless you went through traditional routes, so

technology is undoubtedly an enabler," he added. "And I'm sure there's entrepreneurs – hopefully at this very conference – that are working on better ways for emerging artists to better target audiences."

## UN Chief Says AI Enables Us To Focus On Our 'Unique' Human Qualities

Bringing together AI innovators and transformation leaders, DeepFest 2025 is featuring more than 150 speakers and 120 exhibitors, attracting an attendance exceeding 50,000 participants from around the world. The second of four days lasered in on the pros, cons, benefits, and pitfalls of AI on life and society.

Lambert Hogenhout, Chief Data and AI at the United Nations, assessed the dystopian and utopian beliefs of the technology in a session focused on the near- and long-term societal impact of emerging technologies. Acknowledging that AI had allowed humans to "become knowledgeable about any topic, in minutes", he also addressed the belief that a

reliance on AI will change the way we behave, think, and feel.

While admitting it is hard to predict how AI will impact society in 20-plus years, it is the impact over the next decade that will make a difference to the way we work and live. "Don't forget we've already had tech that has changed who we are," he said. "Think smartphones: They changed how we work, how we communicate, how we navigate cities."

Hogenhout challenged those with a dystopian belief of AI, and those who think it will take away our autonomy, identity and purpose: "Think of a calendar app, for example. Think of an AI tool to help with letter writing or emails. We are getting assistance in our productivity, which frees up time. If everyone starts to do that, can you afford not to? Can you afford to be the only non-augmented human?"

Tackling the belief that AI will remove our abilities to think and feel, taking away identity and purpose, the AI expert added the use of AI will allow society to instead focus on things

that matter, including fulfilment, connection and inclusion. "It will give us time to look at our unique qualities as humans – cooperation, creativity, and entrepreneurship," he concluded.

Dr Yaser Al Onaizan, CEO of the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA), which powers the Tahaluf-organised DeepFest 2025, opened the second day of sessions, with a reassurance that AI can have real-time, real-life benefits. After years of talking about the technology, actions will speak louder than words, he said.

"To be really effective, AI should be invisible," Al Onaizan said. "It should allow us to take a back seat and do things on our behalf."

Annabelle Mander, Executive Vice President of Tahaluf, reiterated the importance of attracting regional and global talent to the event and how AI is transforming every corner of the industry: "The keynote sessions at DeepFest are testament to the positive impact AI is having on the tech industry, but also how transformative applications are shaping entertainment, the arts, and even humanitarian efforts. As we move into the final two days, visitors can look forward to more engaging discussions around quantum computing, how women are breaking industry barriers, and real-life case studies on how AI is revolutionising healthcare."

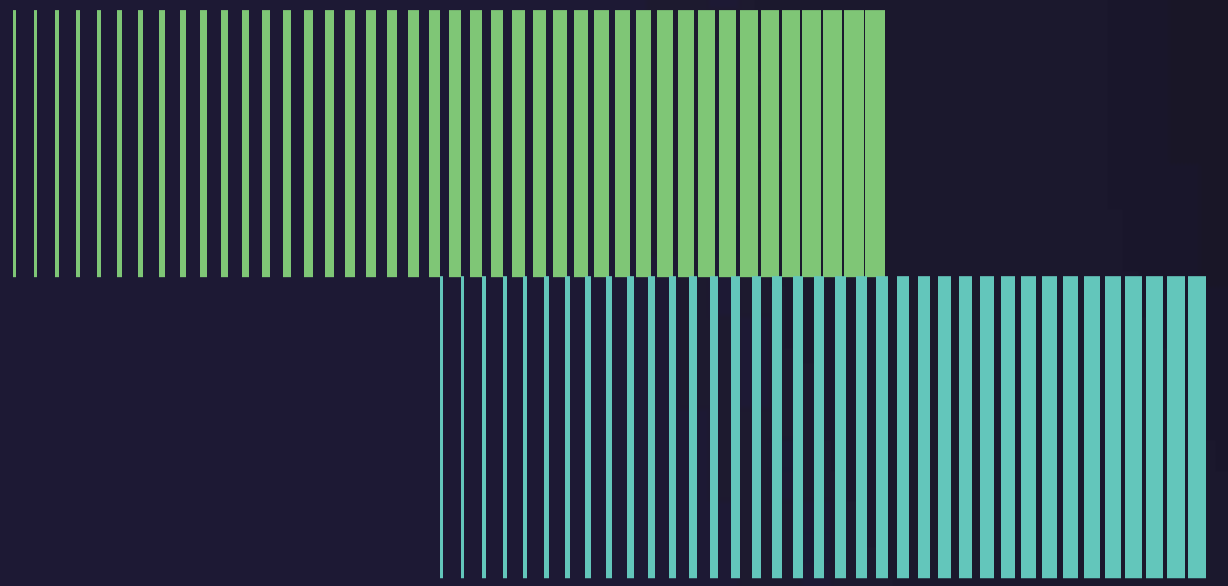
For more information, visit [www.DeepFest.com](http://www.DeepFest.com)

**AI will give us time to look at our unique qualities as humans – cooperation, creativity, and entrepreneurship”.**

Panos Panay, President of the Recording Academy, has been visiting the Kingdom for several years yet still finds it "incredible" to note the transformation of the country and its capital each time he returns. Citing Riyadh Music

absolutely no doubt that within the next five years, Riyadh will become the music epicentre of the entire region," Panay said. "It will be the Los Angeles of the Middle East, undoubtedly."

The Recording Academy launched the Latin



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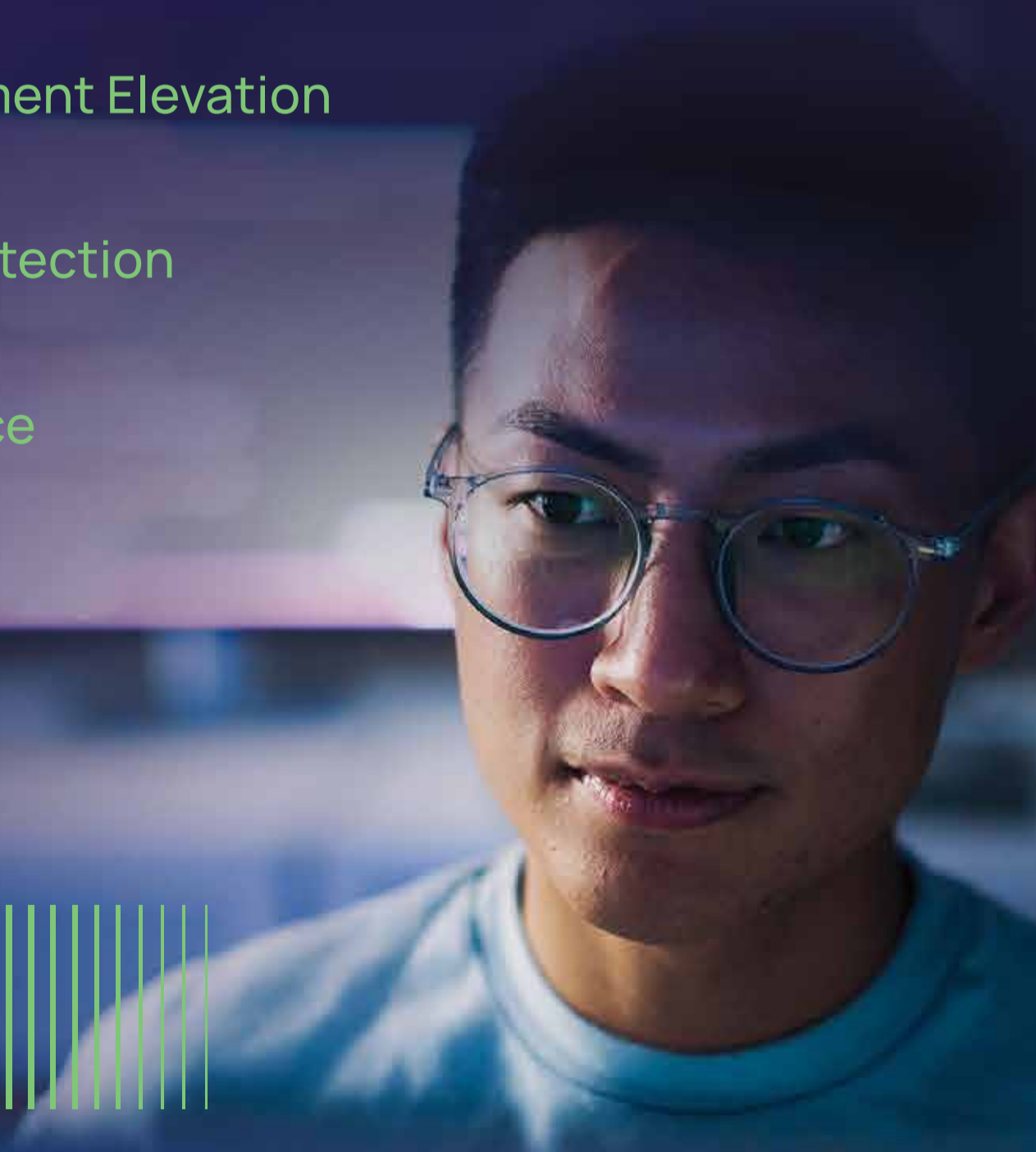
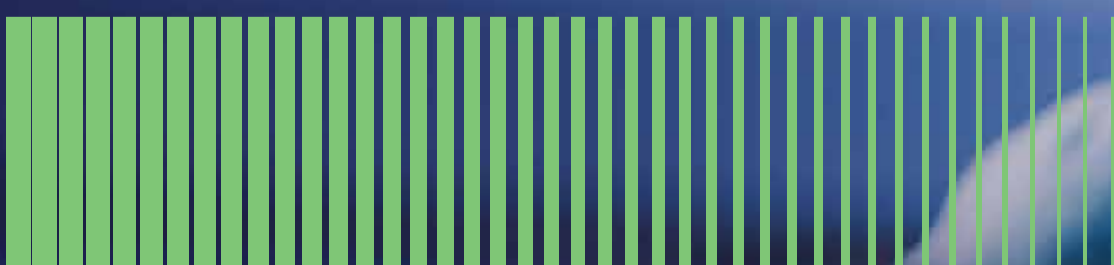
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# ZainTECH at LEAP 2025: Driving Digitalization with AI and Sustainability

By transitioning IT workloads to energy-efficient, low-carbon data centers, businesses can significantly reduce their emissions while maintaining high-performance computing environments.



Andrew Hanna

As digitalization accelerates across industries, organizations must ensure that technology investments translate into tangible business value. At LEAP 2025, ZainTECH is demonstrating how AI and sustainability are not just enablers of digital transformation but essential pillars in achieving Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and broader regional economic goals.

## AI-Powered Digitalization: Enabling Business Innovation

AI is no longer an emerging technology, it is transforming industries today. From predictive analytics and automation to cybersecurity resilience and operational efficiency, AI is redefining how businesses operate. ZainTECH integrates AI across its entire portfolio, including cloud, cybersecurity, data analytics, drones, and robotics, enabling

**At LEAP 2025, ZainTECH is showcasing AI-driven solutions that help organizations in finance, energy, telecommunications, and government sectors harness real-time intelligence, optimize costs, and future-proof their operations”.**

enterprises to implement AI solutions securely and effectively. Through an advisory-first approach, ZainTECH ensures that AI adoption is strategic, measurable, and aligned with business objectives, improving decision-making and enhancing overall efficiency.

Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH, emphasizes that AI is the foundation of future-ready enterprises, enabling organizations to move beyond traditional models and leverage data-driven insights at an unprecedented scale. At LEAP 2025, ZainTECH is showcasing

AI-driven solutions that help organizations in finance, energy, telecommunications, and government sectors harness real-time intelligence, optimize costs, and future-proof their operations.

## Sustainability as a Business Priority

Sustainability has evolved from a regulatory requirement to a business imperative, influencing investment decisions and corporate strategies. ZainTECH integrates sustainability into every layer of digital transformation, helping organizations reduce their carbon footprint, improve energy efficiency, and implement responsible AI and cloud computing models. By leveraging AI-driven sustainability platforms, organizations can track real-time energy consumption, enhance air quality monitoring, and

utilize predictive analytics to optimize resource allocation.

ZainTECH's approach to cloud migration also aligns with sustainability objectives. By transitioning IT workloads to energy-efficient, low-carbon data centers, businesses can significantly reduce their emissions while maintaining high-performance computing environments. In parallel, cybersecurity frameworks are designed to support carbon reduction goals by ensuring digital infrastructure remains resilient and energy efficient. Additionally, ZainTECH is advancing the use of drones and robotics for environmental monitoring and ESG compliance, offering non-invasive solutions that improve industrial safety while minimizing emissions.

Hanna highlights that sustainability is at the core of ZainTECH's digital transformation

strategy. The company not only delivers dedicated sustainability solutions but also ensures that every service contributes to a more responsible, technology-driven future.

## Enabling Saudi Vision 2030 Through Technology

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is reshaping the region's economic landscape through digital transformation and technological innovation. ZainTECH plays a key role in advancing these objectives by delivering AI-powered solutions that drive automation and efficiency across industries. In the financial sector, collaborations with FICO, Lean Technologies, and Tamam are enabling AI-driven banking and risk management solutions.

Cybersecurity remains a national priority, and ZainTECH is actively strengthening digital resilience by ensuring compliance with Saudi NCA regulations and achieving Class C certification for cloud security. The company is also supporting the development of smart infrastructure, working with UL Solutions and regional governments to implement certified sustainable buildings and smart city technologies that align with Vision 2030's sustainability goals.

At LEAP 2025, ZainTECH is demonstrating how AI-driven digital transformation and sustainability can deliver measurable business outcomes while supporting national economic and environmental objectives. Hanna underscores that the company's mission is to help organizations accelerate the time-to-value from their technology investments.

Whether through AI-driven automation, secure cloud adoption, or sustainability-led digital transformation, ZainTECH is committed to ensuring that enterprises achieve operational efficiency and long-term growth.

## A Future Built on Innovation and Impact

As businesses navigate an increasingly complex digital landscape, ZainTECH is enabling them to move beyond technology adoption toward true digital transformation. By integrating AI and sustainability into every aspect of its portfolio, ZainTECH is not just a technology provider but a strategic partner in shaping the future of business in the MENA region.

At LEAP 2025, ZainTECH is reinforcing its position as a leader in AI, cloud, and sustainable digitalization, ensuring that enterprises are equipped for the future and ready to drive real business impact in an evolving digital economy.



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