

# Rocket Fuel 2025 Set to Ignite Innovation at LEAP with \$1 Million Prize-Pool

RIYADH, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, January 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The fourth edition of LEAP, Saudi Arabia's global award-winning tech event, is on the horizon and anticipation is growing for its annual high-stakes Rocket Fuel Startup Pitch Competition.

LEAP 2025 will take place at the Riyadh Convention and Exhibition Centre Malham from 9-12 February, with the fiercely contested startup contest pitting embryonic companies against each other for a share of a US\$1 million prize pool. The Rocket Fuel Startup Pitch Competition will again be a key showpiece to highlight KSA's burgeoning Saudi startup ecosystem, as well as acting as a launchpad for the best young Saudi technology companies to see their ideas take flight in front of a global audience.

The Competition's semi finalists will be made up of 120 leading startups from across 40 sectors and 31 countries.

Each will have met specific criteria for development stage, industry focus, funding, and location and will pitch to an independent panel of venture capitalists and industry leaders. Competing across six categories, only 12 will advance to the Grand Finale on 12 February, where the winners will be crowned.

The LEAP 2025 Rocket Fuel Startup Pitch Competition sees six awards available across the categories of innovation, market potential, team strength, business model, and societal impact.



The overall 'LEAP Award', with a prize of US\$250,000, will go to the standout startup across all sectors, with all other award winners taking home prizes of US\$150,000. The 'Shooting Star' Award will go to a booming early-stage startup with the highest potential. The 'Scaling Star' Award will recognise a unicorn-ready, growth-stage venture, while the Tech for Humanity Award will acknowledge the startup with the most transformative, solution-driving social good. The startup judged to best revolutionise life as we know it will land the 'Into New Worlds Award', while a non-KSA startup with high-growth potential will claim the newest award, coined 'LEAP Landing' and have the lucrative opportunity to get started in the Kingdom.

In addition to Rocket Fuel, leading international and Saudi based investment firms have been confirmed as LEAP attendees this year. Saudi investment firms include STV, Wa'ed Ventures, Jada Investments and international investment firms in attendance include heavyweights UBS, Morgan Stanley, SC Ventures and The Carlyle Group. There will also be an array of speakers from both the global and Saudi based investment communities taking to the stage, including representatives from: General Atlantic, PIF, Scrum Ventures, Mantis, Mindvalley and LeapFrog Investments. Each day, the Investor Stage will cover a separate theme related to investing within technology - ranging from best practices in sustainable finance, through to global synergies and championing women leadership.



This year's Rocket Fuel Pitch Competition is sponsored by Saudi Arabia's National Technology Development Program (NTDP).

The four judges confirmed for the finale of the Rocket Fuel Pitch Competition include: Ahmed El Alfi, Founder & Chairman at Sawari Ventures; Vusi Thembekwayo, CEO of MyGrowthFund Venture Partners; Lateefa Alwaalan, Managing Director of Endeavour Saudi and Connie Chan, Board Partner of Andreessen Horowitz.

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), highlighted the competition's transformative impact on startups and the broader industry.

"Successful startups are essential for the global tech ecosystem. By driving innovation, creating jobs, and fostering entrepreneurship, they set the stage for economic growth and societal progress. Rocket Fuel demonstrates Saudi Arabia's stance as a globally dynamic accelerator for startups and investors. As past editions prove, Rocket Fuel is more than just a competition – it is a platform for global exposure and growth. Last year's winner, Reme-D, secured the LEAP Award for its revolutionary diagnostic kits while other category winners, such as South Korea's Angelswing, India's Newtrace and Saudi Arabia's Playbook, have since leveraged their wins to amplify their impact globally," said Champion.

### The Launch Pad Beyond Rocket Fuel

The Rocket Fuel contest is one of a range of LEAP 2025 features that will offer startups unparalleled mentorship and heightened visibility. It aims to generate leads as well as funding and growth opportunities. LEAP's intensive pre-conference Founders Bootcamp, which is led by pitch and startup growth experts, will enable tech entrepreneurs to gain insightful training to refine their pitches and business strategies to best prepare for successful investor meetings.

The anticipated 680 startups attending the show will be able to connect with more than 2,000 investors through LEAP 2025's AI-powered matchmaking service. This includes mentorship "Bonfire" sessions, and the newly launched Ecosystem Xchange, which is set to host private investor and founder deep dives, and on-site networking events by partners such as Carta, Angel School, Google Cloud and more.

"A multitude of possibilities await startups at LEAP 2025, where Saudi Arabia will look to further advance its Vision 2030 goals and redefine tech adoption and innovation," added Champion.

Pragati Malik  
MCS Action FZ LLC  
+971 545315575  
[email us here](#)

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