

# Ethara Champions Sports Innovation and Investment with Landmark E1H Pitch in Abu Dhabi

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, June 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On 3 June 2025, Ethara reinforced its position as a leader in global sports innovation with the launch of the inaugural E1H Pitch, held at the Yas Conference Centre. The event brought together more than 100 key stakeholders from sport, entertainment, government, and investment sectors to witness the unveiling of startups shaping the region's sports and entertainment economy.

As the UAE's first dedicated sports ecosystem and incubator, the Ethara 1TW Innovation Hub (E1H) aims to accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship in Abu Dhabi, the UAE, and the wider region. By providing startups with unique access to expertise, commerce, and capital, E1H is nurturing a vibrant ecosystem aligned with Abu Dhabi's long-term vision for innovation-driven growth.

The E1H Pitch marked the culmination of a six-week programme in which eight early-stage ventures received expert mentorship, strategic guidance, and venture capital support to fast-track their development.

The event opened with keynote addresses from Mike Shapiro, Head of Ventures at City Football Group, and Mohamed Berrada, Partner at Portas. Their insights into global sports investment and the future of digital fan engagement highlighted the UAE's rising prominence as a strategic base for sports tech and entertainment ventures. The session was hosted by sports broadcaster Chris McHardy.

Saif Rashid Al Noaimi, Chief Executive Officer of Ethara, stated:

"Innovation is at the heart of everything we do at Ethara. That's why we created E1H with our



Saif Rashid Al Noaimi, Chief Executive Officer of Ethara

partners at OneToWatch. We want to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs to build new ventures that add value not just to Ethara but to Abu Dhabi's global vision for sport and entertainment."

The heart of the event featured eight fantastic founders, the E1H's inaugural cohort, covering a wide spectrum of technology, content, services, and sustainability. Each presentation attracted immediate interest from investors and highlighted strong potential for UAE-based growth.

E1H Cohort 1 startups:

- ArabsMMA – Zahi Ephrem

A marketer and martial artist, Zahi founded ArabsMMA, the first media platform dedicated to combat sports in the Middle East.

- Athlyn – Ahmed Cheikh Omar

With over 15 years of experience in the UAE sports and corporate sectors, Ahmed's platform bridges sport and corporate engagement.

- Esportian – Ivan Kerkoc

A Spanish university professor and former NCAA recruiter, Ivan founded Esportian to merge traditional sports and esports education.

- Icosium Technologies – Billel Boudouma & Mohamed Ali

This venture blends robotics, AI, and human experience to deliver real-world micro-automation solutions.

- MyParkBuddy – Daniel Hachem

Daniel aims to revolutionize urban mobility through smart parking solutions, drawing on his engineering and entrepreneurship expertise.

- Neoma – Francois Chabaudie

With a background in private equity and consulting, Francois created Neoma to improve human interactions through smart environments.

- The MettleSet – Dawn Barnable

A seasoned communicator and endurance athlete, Dawn founded The MettleSet to tell meaningful stories through the lens of sport.

- E1H Venture Studio, Greenlight Abu Dhabi Branding (GADB) – Robert Angelieri

An event operations expert, Robert drives innovation in sustainable events through branding, logistics, and venue strategy.

Strategic Perspective

Jamie Cunningham, Founder of OneToWatch, added:

"The UAE is no longer just hosting world-class events it's now building the companies that will power them. E1H is unlocking entrepreneurial potential and connecting it directly to capital and opportunity. We're proud to partner with Ethara and Abu Dhabi to help shape the next generation of global sports and entertainment ventures."

The Ethara 1TW Innovation Hub continues to establish Abu Dhabi as a dynamic launchpad for high-growth startups in sports and entertainment. By bridging ideas with investors and corporations, E1H offers a fast-track for entrepreneurs looking to scale regionally and globally driving forward the UAE's ambitions for a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

[Learn more at www.ethara.com.](http://www.ethara.com)

[Learn more at www.onetowatch.co.](http://www.onetowatch.co)

Hannah Hall

Grassports

+ +971 52 549 3067

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

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