

Türkiye bridges startup ecosystems across continents as innovators converge in Istanbul

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Rising startups, investors and technology powerhouses will come together for the launch edition of GITEK Ai Türkiye to pursue new markets, forge partnerships and access capital

Startups from across Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Middle East will gather in Istanbul for the inaugural GITEK Ai Türkiye 2026 on 9–10 September at Istanbul Expo Centre, as Türkiye's fast-growing innovation ecosystem strengthens its connections with global technology, capital and markets.

Türkiye's most international tech and AI event will feature 300-plus enterprise and startup exhibitors, along with investors, policymakers, expert speakers, and technology executives from around the world.

The two-day event arrives as Istanbul rises through the global startup ranks. The city ranked number three among Emerging Startup Ecosystems in the 2025 Global Startup Ecosystem

Report, climbing 13 places over five years. Türkiye has already produced eight home-grown unicorns, while its AI pipeline includes 1,188 active startups, according to the 2025 Turkish Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem and Global Impact Report.



Ismail Qasim, Co-Founder & CEO of Nosmai

International startups showcase innovation across industries

Participating startups will showcase technologies addressing challenges spanning sustainable agriculture, AI education, enterprise technology, health, infrastructure, and more.

Malaysia's AgroPV Integrated SB, a Universiti Putra Malaysia spin-off, will showcase commercial agrivoltaics solutions that combine solar energy and agriculture, while Pakistan-based Nosmai will bring augmented reality and camera AI technology for e-commerce, retail, and consumer platforms.

"Pakistan has considerable engineering depth, a large and young technical workforce, and a

maturing base of companies building for global markets,” said Ismail Qasim, Co-Founder & CEO of Nosmai. “Türkiye has strong consumer and commerce businesses, a substantial domestic market, an active investor community and established routes into Europe, the Gulf and Central Asia. Both countries have talent that is ahead of its visibility.”

The international lineup also includes Nigeria’s Zenafri, whose AI-integrated multimedia education frameworks reached more than 130,000 learners; Poland’s AI Tech Matrix, developing enterprise intelligence for IT troubleshooting; Peru’s Ourabyte, helping organisations move emerging technologies from prototype to implementation; and Jordan’s SOLVillion, providing engineering solutions across construction, water and sanitation, and renewable energy.

Turcorn 100 Program on the global stage

Alongside international innovators, Türkiye will showcase its growing pipeline of high-potential companies. The Turcorn 100 Program, the country’s flagship initiative to accelerate startups and scale-ups towards international expansion and unicorn status, had admitted 39 companies as of 30 April 2026, with 24 exhibiting at GITEK Ai Türkiye.

Among them are fintech company Colendi, which raised \$104 million in its most recent funding round; retail image recognition company Vispera, with \$15 million; Saha Robotics (\$4 million); AI-powered advertising SaaS platform WASK (\$3.1 million); and digital identity and signature technology company TechSign, (\$ 1.7 million),



Cem Şanap, Co-Founder of Lavren



Halil İbrahim Can, Co-Founder and CEO of Syntina AI

according to a Turcorn 100 report. Beyond the Turcorn cohort, emerging Turkish AI companies will showcase technologies targeting specific industries and business challenges. Lavren, part of the İTÜ ARI Teknokit ecosystem, is developing sophisticated AI tools for legal and professional services. "For us, the important question is shifting from 'What can this model do?' to 'How should this organisation work differently now that this capability exists?'" said Cem Şanap, Co-Founder of Lavren.

Türkiye-based Syntina AI is applying generative AI to architecture and design. "We hope the industry moves past 'will AI replace architects' to a better question: what does AI purpose-built for a discipline actually look like?" said Halil İbrahim Can, Co-Founder and CEO of Syntina AI.

AI-first work management platform Workiom is targeting international expansion at the event. "Our ambition is to prove an AI-first company can be built in Türkiye and compete globally," said Nurettin Şendoğan, Co-founder and COO of Workiom.

US\$100B+ investor pool eyes Türkiye's next scalable success stories
Funding into Turkish startups has grown tenfold over the past five years, reaching \$700 million in 2025, while in the first quarter of 2026, Turkish startups raised \$559 million, more than seven times the same period in 2025. Yet access to capital remains a barrier, with 71% of Türkiye's entrepreneurs citing financing as a key challenge, according to an Ernst & Young report. The good news is more than 100 investors from 20 countries with over US\$100 billion in assets



Nurettin Şendoğan, Co-founder and COO of Workiom



Emre Dilbe, Director at ÜNLÜ & Co

under management (AUM) will descend upon GITEK Ai Türkiye, eager to unearth the next big scalable AI startup. The lineup includes investors from Manhattan Ventures (US\$3B+, USA), Molten Ventures (US\$2B+, UK), Gobi Partners (US\$2B+, Malaysia), Jasoor VC (US\$200M+, UAE) and Utopia Capital (US\$200M+, Qatar), alongside dozens of corporate venture capital funds, state-backed funds, banks and strategic investors.

Among the international investors scouting companies that can scale across borders is WaVe-X, an Austria-based early-stage venture capital investor backed by the €3.5 billion WALTER GROUP. WaVe-X recently marked its first portfolio unicorn after agentic AI company HappyRobot raised \$150 million at a \$1.2 billion valuation.

“What differentiates a startup with global potential is its ability to build a product that addresses a real industry pain point, paired with a business model that can scale seamlessly across borders,” said Thomas Muscher, Managing Director of WaVe-X.

Türkiye’s investment community will also play a key role. ÜNLÜ & Co. will participate through its venture capital arm ÜNLÜ Ventures. Since 2010, the Istanbul-founded asset management group ranked second among private financial institutions in Türkiye for targeted equity capital markets transactions, excluding privatisations, with a 23% market share across 37 transactions valued at US\$3.4 billion, according to Bloomberg data covering 2010–2026.

“Türkiye has already demonstrated that it has the talent and entrepreneurial capability to create globally successful technology companies,” said Emre Dilbe, Director at ÜNLÜ & Co. “For the next generation of unicorns to emerge, we need larger and more institutional venture funds, greater participation from domestic institutional investors and stronger connectivity with international capital.”

Connecting innovation across markets

GITEK Ai Türkiye is hosted by the Investment and Finance Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye (Invest in Türkiye) in strategic partnership with Türkiye’s Ministry of Industry and Technology, and organised by inD, the joint venture between Dubai World Trade Centre and Informa that organises GITEK events globally.

Tech powerhouses including Google Cloud, HPE & NVIDIA, AWS, Schneider Electric, Huawei, ASUS, Dell Technologies, SAP and TrendAI will join regional leaders including Trendyol, Andevos and Halkbank, creating opportunities for startups to engage industry leaders, forge commercial partnerships, access new markets and connect with potential sources of capital.

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