

Visions of the future on display at GITEX

Maddyness reflects on GITEX 2022, an event that, according to Trixie LohMirmand, Executive Vice President Dubai World Trade Centre set “Record scale across all measures for an event in a desert”. From flying cars to launching in new markets, GITEX has the startup world enthralled

Temps de lecture : minute

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The launch of GITEX AFRICA

GITEX GLOBAL has announced that it will be embarking on a *new journey into Africa* - the world's next biggest digital economy - leveraging its ability to forge connections between tech innovators, governments, startups, investors and global innovation hubs, to accelerate, collaborate, and explore new ventures in the world's rising tech continent. *GITEX AFRICA* has been launched in partnership with the Digital Development Agency (ADD), a strategic public entity leading the Moroccan government's digital transformation agenda under the authority of the Moroccan Ministry of Digital Transition and Administration Reform. KAOUN International, the overseas events organising company of Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), will lead the partnership for this much awaited business endeavour in the highly sought after tech region.

Following the North Star

North Star - the startup focussed centre piece of GITEX grows from year to year and encapsulates all the chaos and promise of an agile startup in

hypergrowth with more networking, investor meetings and competitions than ever before.

Desolenator, a Dutch startup developing solar powered water purification technology, was announced the winner of the Supernova Challenge, securing \$100,000, with 13 other category winners each taking home \$8,000 in prize money.

The Supernova Challenge is the biggest startup pitch competition in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia - attracting over 600 applications from startups spread over 41 countries. 26 finalists from countries including Brazil, Bahrain, USA, Romania South Korea, Canada, Latvia, France, Vietnam, Nigeria, Kenya and Oman pitched in front of a judging panel of experts, including David Cohen (cofounder of Techstars), Mike Butcher (Editor-at-large at Techcrunch), Karim Konsowa (Associate, Dubai Future District Fund), O.G. Arabian Prince (co-founder of N.W.A.), Natalie Colby (Managing Partner of Norrsken22), and Susan Marie (EVP of Strategy, Arizona Commerce Authority).

Female-led funding

GITEX put the spotlight on innovative female tech entrepreneurs. Throughout the week, female-led startups were raising new funding and business leaders were able to explore how emerging technologies can close the female startup funding gap.

Alizar Tawil, the founder of online hijab clothing company, Ruuq, received US\$25,000 in equity-free cash from e& capital and runner-up Hafsa Qadeer, the founder of ImInclusive, a digital hub designed to connect people of determination to inclusive jobs, received \$10,000 from NB Ventures. This year's MENA regional competitions saw over 200 applications from women-led businesses from 15 countries.

All five MENA finalists had the opportunity to participate in investor meetings with e& capital and Wamda as well as access to the GITEX Investor Lounge at North Star and will receive subsidized business license setup at Dubai-based tech hub in5. Ashish Panjabi, President of TiE Dubai, said she hoped that the competition set a precedent for more events to highlight the outstanding women-led enterprises in the region.

Robotics are transforming surgery in the UAE

A total of 230 operations have been carried out in the UAE using Da Vinci surgical robotics since 2019, the first Emirati surgeon licensed to use the technology told the GITEX GLOBAL audience. Dr Muna Kashwani, specialist at the gynecology department of Al Qassimi Women and Children Hospital in Sharjah, said that operating the Da Vinci technology enabled her to carry out highly precise and effective bloodless operations using just a single-entry point. Robotics can play an important role in the future of surgery, she said, with a transatlantic operation already having been carried out in France using Da Vinci technology operated remotely from the US. She added that autonomous robotic operations are already possible for hard tissue such as bone.

Debut public flight of the XPENG X2 Electric Flying Car

A select group of visitors were also able to witness the first public flight demo of the XPENG X2 electric flying car at the Dubai Marina. The two-seater XPENG successfully made its short demonstration flight having completing the specific operations risk assessment and achieving a special flying permit from the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA). The vehicle does not produce any carbon dioxide emissions during flight and clearly shows what the future of urban green transportation will look like. It will be suitable for short-distance low-altitude city journeys such as

sightseeing and medical transportation and would also be a practical alternative for navigating the traffic in Dubai.



The French connection

A global startup event wouldn't be the same without the presence of a well curated selection of French startups, and GITEX was no different with over 60 French startups showcasing their products and services to an eager audience of visitors, investors and key-decision makers. Given the extreme climate and environment of Dubai and the Middle East it was refreshing to see so many greentech and sustainable solutions on display. Of the startups represented around 20 were attending for their second time a clear sign that the opportunities are there and that the traction is real.

Of particular note were Popmii, who fresh from €1M investment from Paris Business angels, INSEAD business angels, GL Event and others scooped a \$5,000 award as the winners of the Creative Innovation Challenge by Dubai Culture.

We are really satisfied to have participated in GITEX! It was an opportunity to meet prospects really interested in our platform and our 3D technology. We also had the chance to win two awards: the creative economy and the supernova creative economy. We are looking forward to participating in GITEX Africa and coming back next year. Geoffrey Costilhes, cofounder of Popmii

Aglaé were present with their concept that from the intersection of science, design and biotech. A unique natural nutritive serum is used to make plants and foliage glow to provide light and beauty in a variety of situations. Another greentech solution on display responds to the critical issues around battery technology. BeFC are creating batteries made of paper and enzymes to deliver a biodegradable solution to allow for the green digitisation of devices in a world that will become increasingly dependant on batteries.

Continuing the theme seen with XPENG that the future of mobility is in the air, Maca, displayed their hydrogen powered racing car S11. Is it a car, is it a plane? It is certainly made with sustainable materials, and powered by hydrogen with the support of Red Bull Advanced Technologies. Luxury and design are synonymous with France, and this was certainly true with Umbra, an object of beauty and practicality that stores smart phones and

devices during meetings ensuring complete acoustic isolation so that all recordings and transmissions are neutralised.

Metaverse with X-VERSE

Despite the scepticism levelled at much of the industry, generally focusing on the shockingly low user figures in Decentraland or the vast investment made by Meta for ‘fake legs’, the enthusiasm at GITEX GLOBAL was palpable.

To help propel the Web 3.0 economy, *GITEX GLOBAL featured X-VERSE*, an immersive metaverse journey featuring 28 experiential brands; and Global DevSlam, the Middle East’s largest ever coder and developer meetup. Global DevSlam is an important initiative that supports the National Program for Coders, which aims to make the UAE a global hub for the development of coders.



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