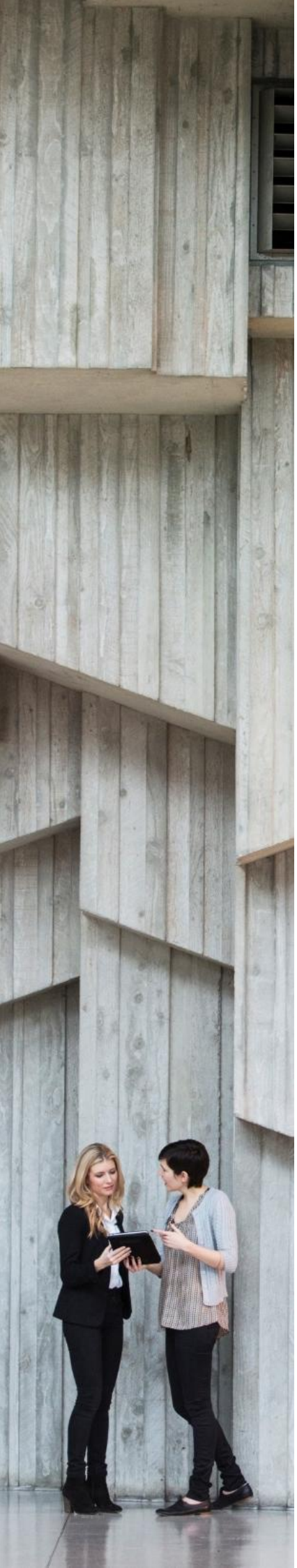
pwc

# GCC growth capital study 2026

**Latest developments in startup and SME equity financing—with operating model insights for corporate investment units and development funds**






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# Growth capital investment could become a strategic priority for GCC economies

# Growth capital investment could become a strategic priority for GCC economies

Growth capital is an increasingly important part of the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) economic diversification agenda, connecting startups and growing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the equity they need to scale. This report examines equity investment across that spectrum, including early-stage funding, corporate growth equity and investment in more established SMEs. It excludes other forms of financing, including bank lending, debt, grants and subsidies.




Innovation is a key driver of competitiveness across GCC economies, with startups and growing SMEs playing an important role in developing new technologies, business models and industries. Yet many of these companies cannot fund expansion through retained earnings alone. Growth equity can bridge that gap, providing capital for experimentation, product development and commercial expansion, while connecting companies with established investors, corporates and industry networks. As businesses mature, it can also provide the scale-up capital needed to expand regionally and internationally. Developing this financing pipeline is therefore important to the region’s long-term competitiveness, helping businesses to progress beyond company formation and build the scale needed to contribute to more knowledge-based economies.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates remain the region's largest growth capital markets, accounting for most capital deployed and deal activity. In parallel, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar continue to develop amid a more challenging funding environment, with selective investor activity and uneven market momentum. In H1 2026, the GCC growth capital market raised more than US$1.4bn across 171 transactions (see Figure 3). Having expanded at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 6.6% since H1 2021, the market continues to demonstrate depth and resilience, despite regional geopolitical developments and global capital-market volatility.

# Growth capital investment could become a strategic priority for GCC economies

Governments also play a decisive role alongside private capital. Across several GCC markets, government-backed investment vehicles deploy equity into startups and SMEs, helping to address financing gaps and mobilise additional investment.

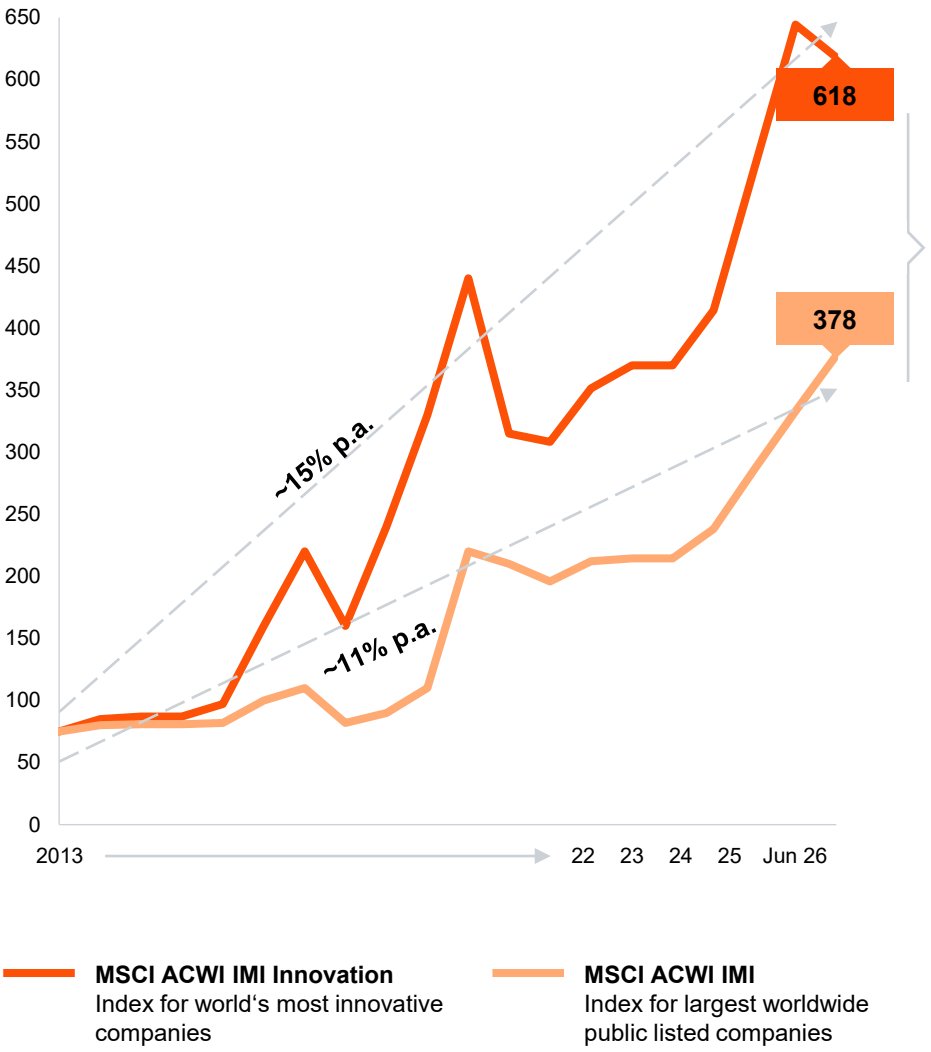
## Four areas can support the continued development of the market

- **Regulatory reform:**
  by simplifying market entry, licensing, and exit processes for founders and investors, including pathways to public markets.
- **Co-investment structures:**
  by expanding fund-of-funds and co-investment vehicles that de-risk private participation.
- **SME and startup equity access:**
  by broadening access to equity alongside traditional debt financing.
- **Talent, infrastructure and quality of life:**
  by facilitating competitive tax regimes, operating conditions and access to infrastructure, education, healthcare and housing that help attract and retain founders, employees and investors

For GCC corporates, engaging with startups and scaling SMEs provides access to emerging technologies, early visibility of disruptive business models, and optionality in adjacent markets—capabilities that internal Research and Development (R&D) rarely delivers at comparable speed. Partnering with disruptive challengers at an early stage can help incumbents strengthen their competitive position. For investors, development funds, and governments, the same engagement accelerates technology adoption and supports competitive, knowledge-based economies.



## **Figure 1:** Shareholder return of MSCI ACWI IMI Innovation vs. MSCI ACWI IMI, June 2026




**~+64%**

**Market outperformance since May 2013**

**MSCI ACWI IMI Innovation**
Index for world's most innovative companies

**MSCI ACWI IMI**
Index for largest worldwide public listed companies

**Source:** MSCI, June 2026[1]

As shown in **Figure 1**, the MSCI ACWI IMI Innovation Index delivered **approximately 64%** cumulative outperformance versus the broader MSCI ACWI IMI Index from **May 2013** to **June 2026**. While the index does not specifically measure corporate growth equity activity, the comparison provides a directional indication that companies with stronger exposure to innovation can achieve superior long-term performance. This reinforces the broader rationale for companies to invest systematically in innovation—including through growth equity—to access new technologies, business models and growth opportunities. However, the comparison is illustrative only and should not be interpreted as evidence of GCC private market returns or as establishing a causal relationship between innovation or growth equity investment and financial performance.

[1] MSCI, MSCI ACWI IMI Innovation Index (USD): Index Factsheet (June 2026) https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/255599/msciacwi-imi-innovation-index-usd-net.pdf accessed 6 October 2026

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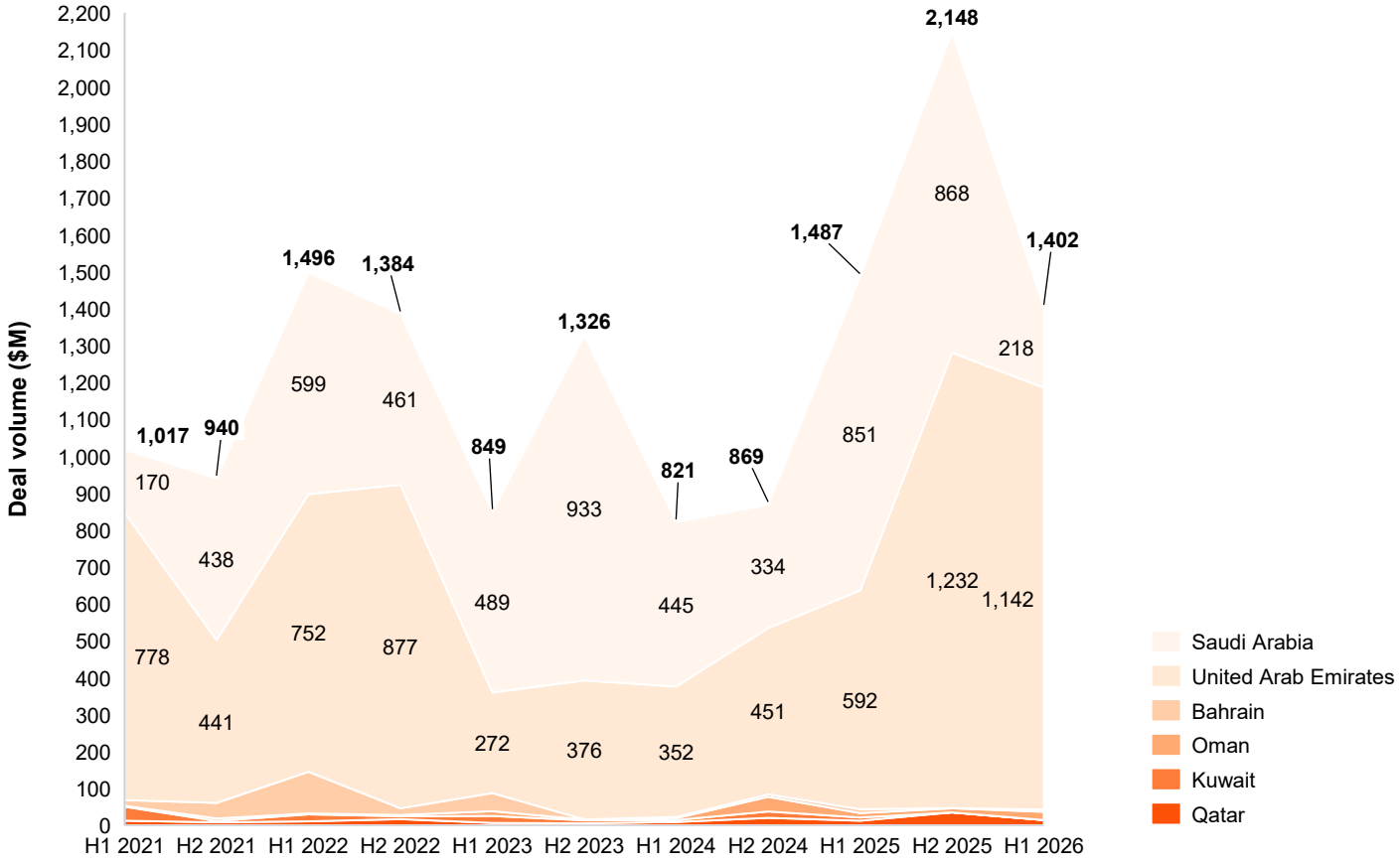
# The evolution of growth capital in the GCC



# 2.1

# Status quo of the GCC growth capital market

# **Figure 2:** VC and SME growth PE equity financing amounts in GCC countries, USD million, H1 2021–H1 2026




**Source:** MAGNiTT data, July 2026

In H1 2026, startup and SME equity financing in the GCC lost momentum against a backdrop of geopolitical uncertainty, disruption to regional trade and energy flows. Funding reached US$1.4bn across 171 transactions (Figure 2), declining from the strong levels recorded in H2 2025. Transaction activity also weakened, while capital became increasingly concentrated in fewer, larger transactions.

The regional aggregate masks considerable variations in investment activity across GCC markets. The United Arab Emirates accounted for the majority of capital deployed in H1 2026 via a small number of large transactions. Saudi Arabia remained one of the region's most active markets, although funding declined following its strong 2025 performance.

While total funding reached US$1.4bn, the concentration of capital in a limited number of large transactions suggests that the headline figure does not fully reflect the more challenging capital-raising environment for many early-stage and growth-stage companies.

## The largest H1 2026 rounds included:

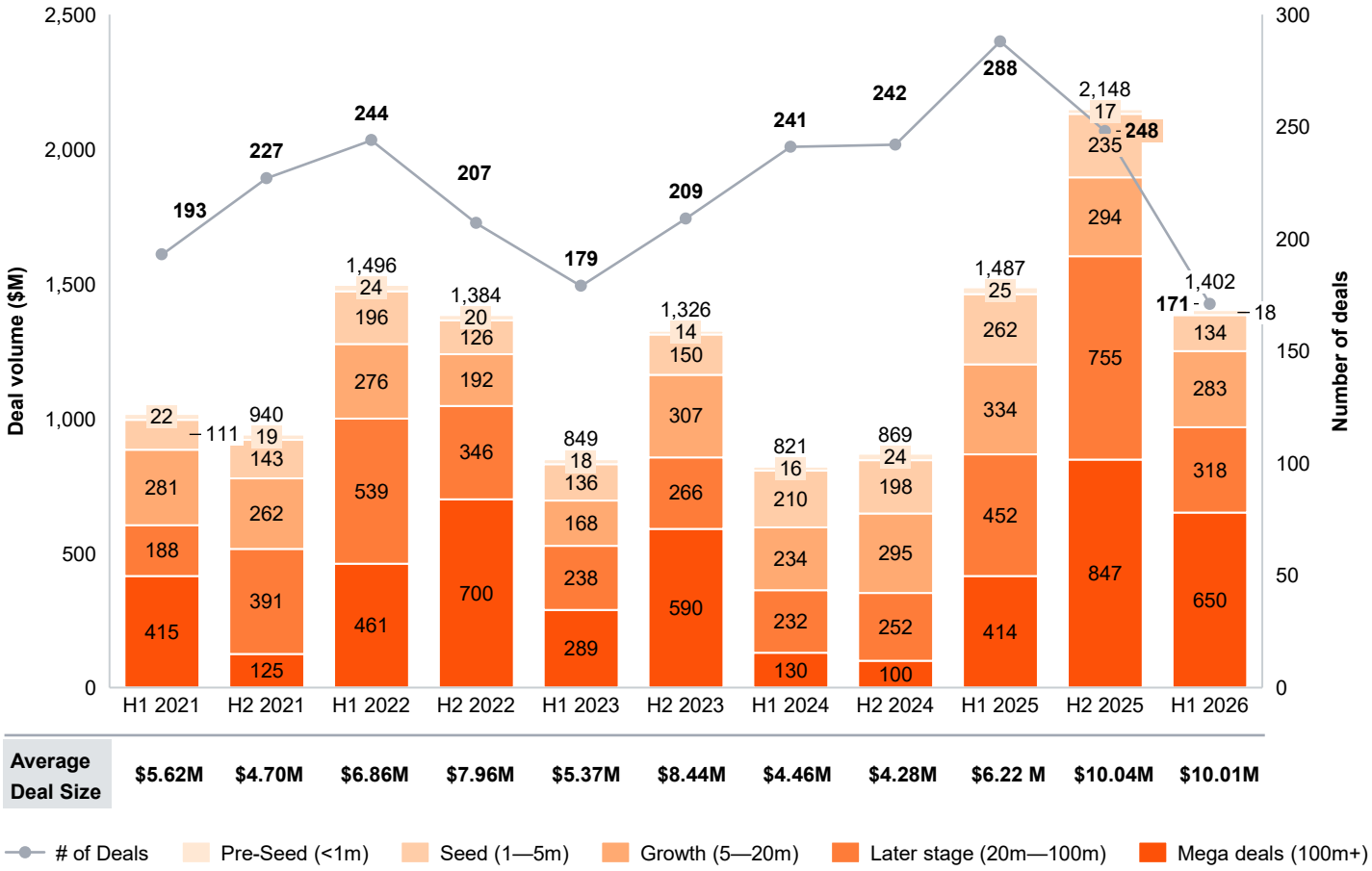
- An Abu Dhabi-based AI-native Islamic digital bank, led by BlueFive Capital, that raised a reported successful first round in January 2026 underscoring continued investor appetite for high-growth fintech and classified as a megadeal by ticket size. [2]
- A UAE-based autonomous delivery and logistics platform, led by BlueFive Capital, closed one of the largest logistics-sector transactions in the GCC in June 2026. [3]
- A Dubai-based real estate listings and property portal, led by Mubadala, secured a growth investment in January 2026, reinforcing investor confidence in proptech. [4]

[2] BlueFive Capital, 'Mal Raises $230 Million to Launch the World's First AI-Native Islamic Digital Bank' (16 January 2026) https://bluefivecapital.com/en/newsroom/mal-raises-230-million-to-launch-the-worlds-first-ai-native-islamic-digital-bank accessed 25 July 2026.

[3] BlueFive Capital, 'CargoX Raises $250 Million for Autonomous Delivery Platform; Appoints Tomaso Rodriguez as CEO' (2 June 2026) https://bluefivecapital.com/en/newsroom/cargox-raises-250-million-for-autonomous-delivery-platform-appoints-tomaso-rodriguez-as-ceo accessed 25 July 2026.

[4] Property Finder, 'Property Finder Announces $170 Million Investment Led by Mubadala, with Significant Participation from a UAE Sovereign Wealth Fund and BECO Capital' (27 January 2026) https://www.propertyfinder.com/news/property-finder-announces-170-million-investment-led-by-mubadala-with-significant-participation-from-a-uae-sovereign-wealth-fund-and-beco-capital/ accessed 25 July 2026.

# **Figure 3:** Division of funding rounds in GCC countries, USD million, H1 2021–H1 2026*




* Average Deal Size was calculated using an adjusted number of deals (denominator) that excludes deals valued at zero, which are treated as undisclosed. This accounts for the difference between the calculated and stated Average Deal Size figure

**Source:** MAGNiTT data, July 2026

## The H1 2026 funding composition (Figure 3) highlights several trends:

- **Mega deals remained the largest source of capital**, accounting for approximately **US$650m** [5] of total funding, driven by landmark transactions, especially in the UAE.
- **Growth-stage funding (US$5m–US$20m)** reached approximately **US$283m** [6], demonstrating continued support for startups and SMEs with proven models and clear scaling potential.
- **Later-stage rounds (US$20m–US$100m)** attracted approximately **US$318m** [7], reflecting sustained demand for mature, high-growth companies.
- **Seed-stage funding exceeded US$134m** [8], supplying critical capital to the next generation of startups despite a more selective environment.
- **Pre-seed investment remained stable at approximately US$18m** [9], reflecting continued support for the earliest stages of company formation.

[5] Transaction details sourced from MAGNiTT data, July 2026
[6] Transaction details sourced from MAGNiTT data, July 2026
[7] Transaction details sourced from MAGNiTT data, July 2026
[8] Transaction details sourced from MAGNiTT data, July 2026
[9] Transaction details sourced from MAGNiTT data, July 2026



# 2.2

# Shifting sources of capital:

## Domestic vs. international investors

**Figure 4:**
Sources of growth capital deployed in the GCC, H1 2021–H1 2026

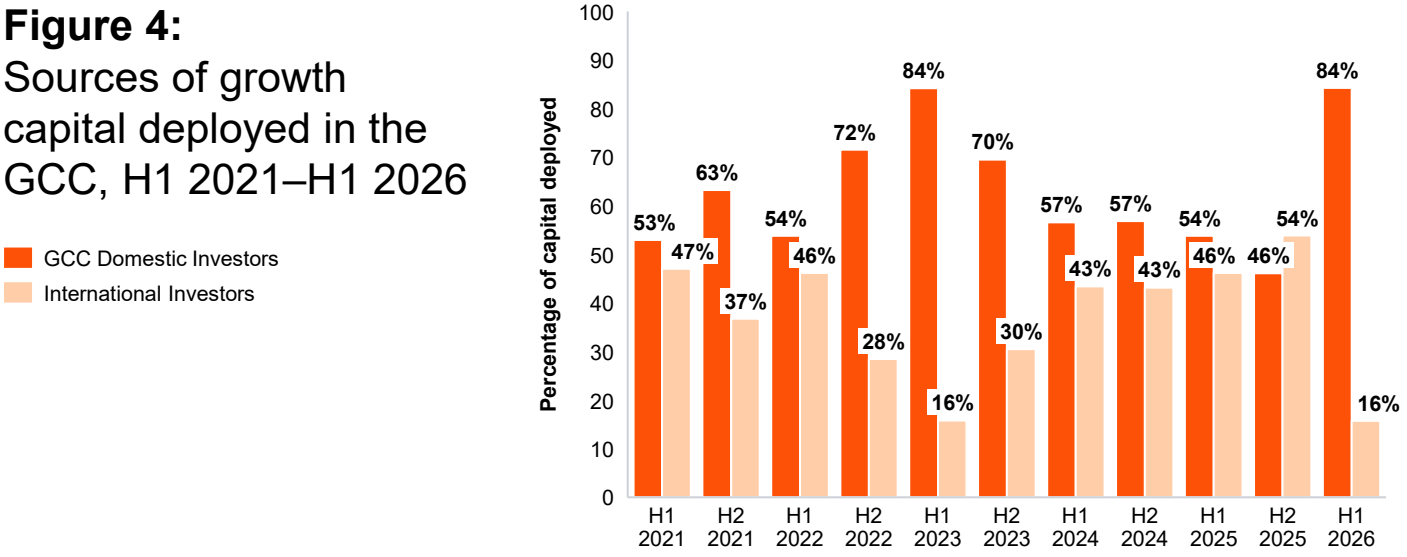
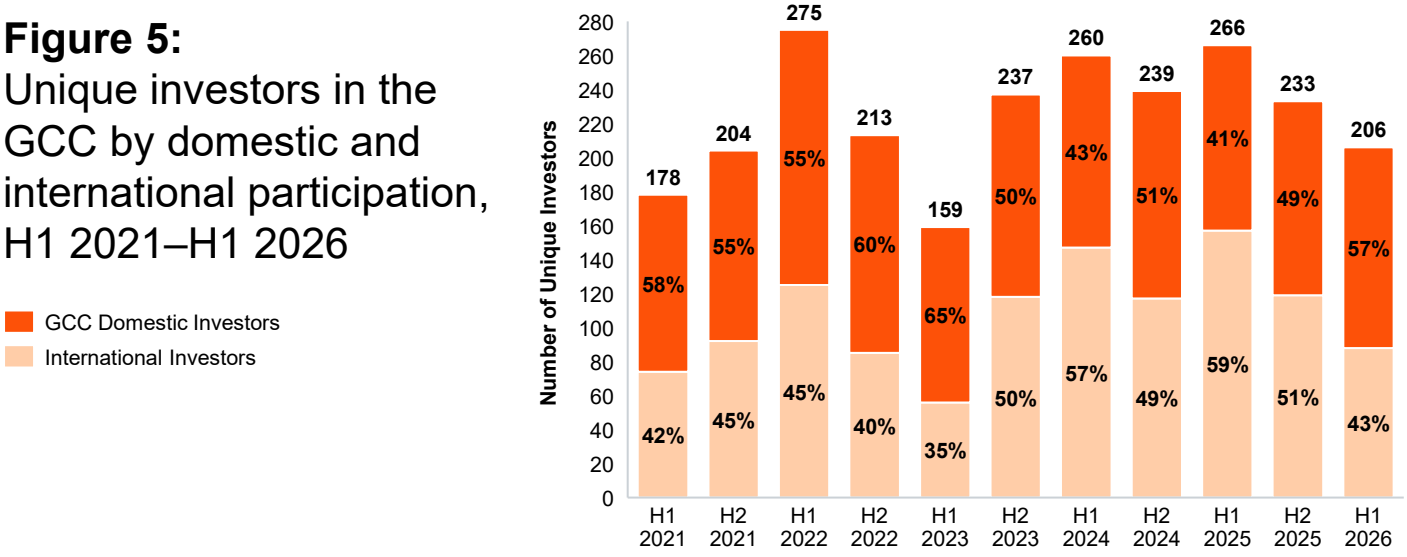



**Figure 5:**
Unique investors in the GCC by domestic and international participation, H1 2021–H1 2026




**Source:** MAGNiTT data, July 2026

H1 2026 marked a clear shift back towards domestic capital as the anchor of the GCC growth capital market. After international investors outnumbered GCC-based investors in H1 2024 and H1 2025, the balance reversed in H1 2026. The number of GCC-based investors reached 118, compared with 88 international investors, meaning domestic investors accounted for 57% of the unique investor base (Figure 4 and 5).

The shift was even more pronounced in capital deployment. GCC-based investors accounted for 84% of total growth capital deployed in H1 2026, well above their 57% share of unique investors. This gap suggests that domestic investors deployed more capital per investor on average than their international counterparts, although the data presented here does not establish whether this reflects larger individual investments, participation in more transactions or a combination of both.

These trends point to the increasingly central role of GCC-based investors in sustaining investment activity across the region. International investors remain part of the funding mix, but in H1 2026 domestic investors led both in number and, more decisively, in the share of capital deployed.

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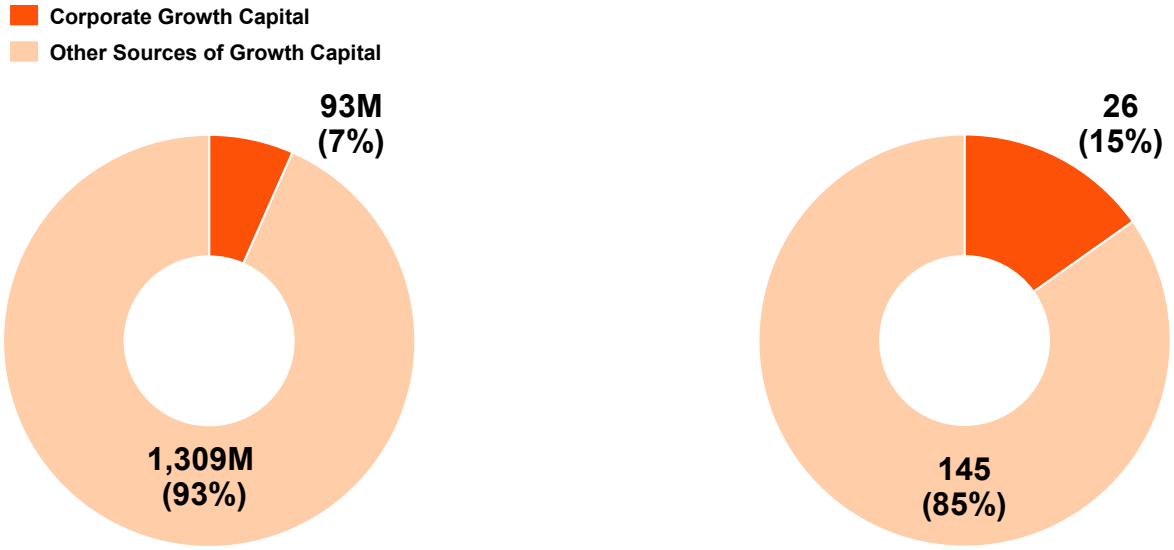
# 03

# Corporate growth capital

Corporate growth capital is one component of the GCC's broader equity finance mix rather than its centre of gravity. Alongside venture capital investors, accelerators and incubators, private growth equity investors, asset managers, family offices and government-backed development funds, corporate investors deployed approximately US$93m into startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in H1 2026 and participated in 26 transactions (Figure 6).

While corporate investors accounted for a relatively small share of overall growth capital, their potential contribution extends beyond funding. They can provide industry expertise, commercial relationships, customer networks and routes to market that complement financial investment. These benefits can be particularly relevant for startups and SMEs operating in regulated or enterprise-focused sectors, although their impact is not measured in the dataset.

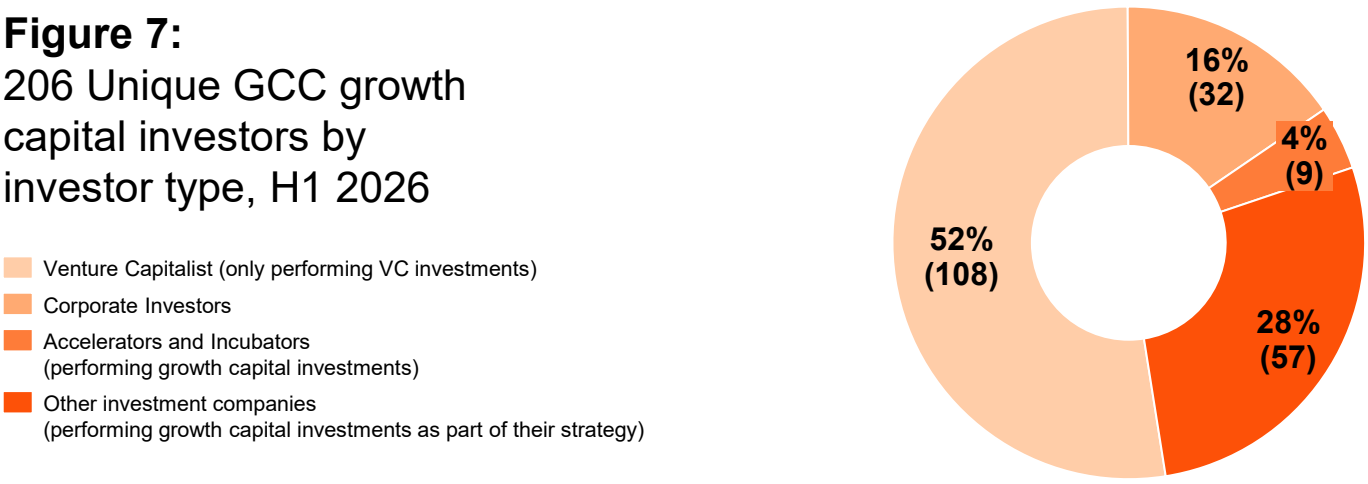
## Figure 6:
Capital deployed by corporate investors and number of deals with corporate growth capital involvement in the GCC, USD million, H1 2026




**Source:** MAGNiTT data, July 2026

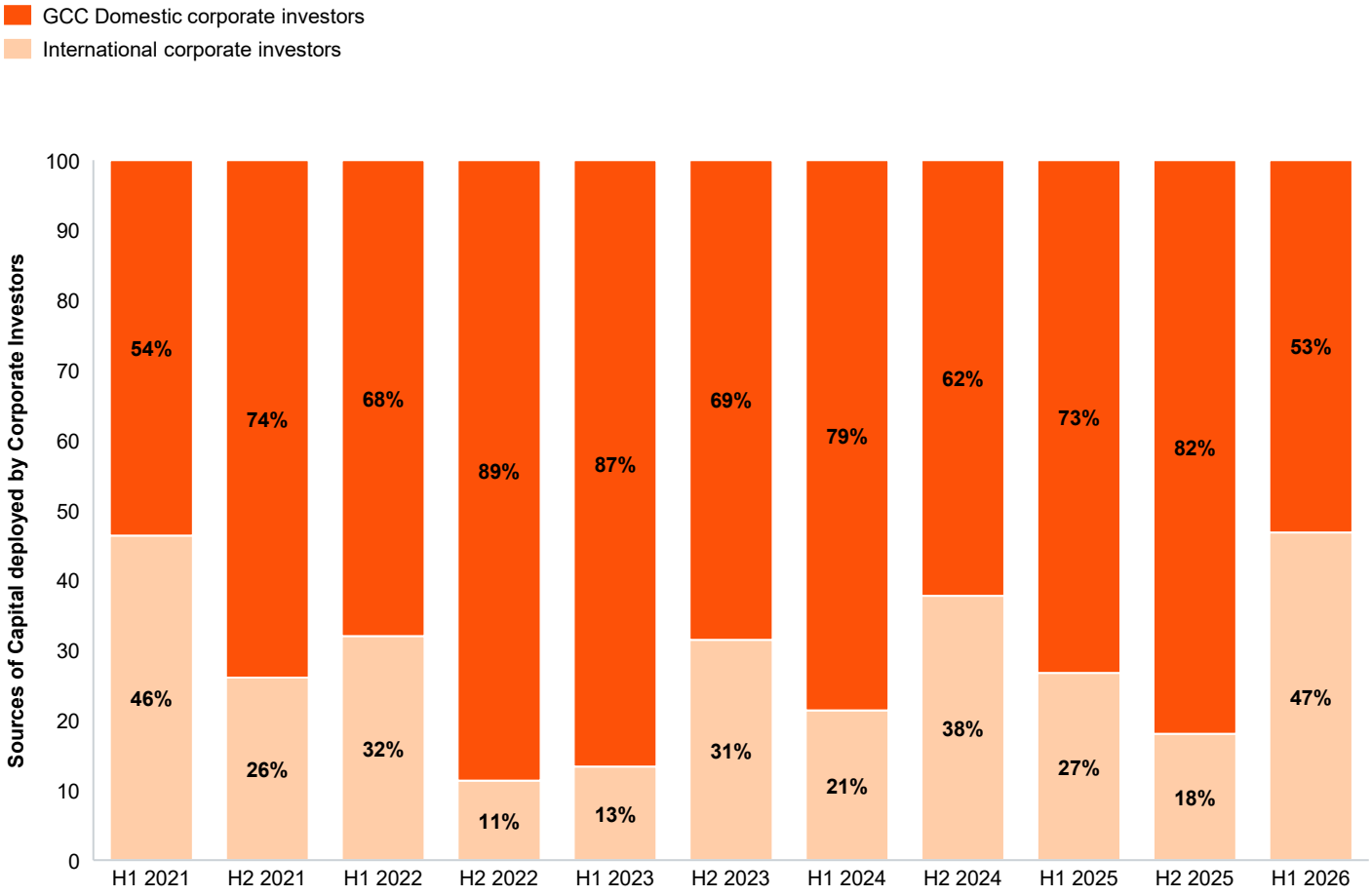
Corporate investors also represented a distinct, but smaller, part of the active investor base. Of the 206 unique investors active in the GCC in H1 2026, 32 were corporate investors, equivalent to approximately 16% of the total. Venture capital investors remained the largest category, with 108 active investors, while the number of corporate investors declined from 46 to 32 (figure 7).

## Figure 7:
206 Unique GCC growth capital investors by investor type, H1 2026




**Source:** MAGNiTT data, July 2026

## Figure 8:
Sources of growth equity deployed by corporate investors in the GCC, H1 2021–H1 2026




**Source:** MAGNiTT data, July 2026

Despite the decline in the number of active corporate investors, the sources of corporate capital became more internationally balanced. GCC-based corporates have accounted for the majority of corporate growth equity deployed over much of the period shown in Figure 8. In H1 2026, however, international corporates accounted for 47% of corporate capital deployed, creating the most balanced split between GCC-based and international corporate capital in several years.

Notable transactions illustrate the participation of both international and GCC-based corporates. Fasset, a UAE-based digital assets and fintech platform, raised US$51m in a Series B round with participation from SBI Group[10], while Stake, a UAE-based real estate investment platform, raised US$31m in a Series B round led by Emirates NBD.[11]

The data points to a smaller but more internationally balanced corporate investor landscape in H1 2026. Corporate growth capital remained a relatively modest component of the GCC's overall funding mix, but corporate investors can bring strategic capabilities alongside capital. At the same time, international corporates accounted for almost half of corporate capital deployed, broadening the sources of corporate investment across the GCC even as the number of active corporate investors declined.

[10] Fasset, 'Fasset Has Raised a $51 Million Series B Round!' (15 May 2026) https://fasset.com/blog/fasset-has-raised-a-51-million-series-b-round/ accessed 25 July 2026.
[11] Stake, 'Building the Future of Global Real Estate: Stake Secures USD 31M in Series B Funding' (17 February 2026) https://getstake.com/content-hub/blog/articles/series-b accessed 25 July 2026

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# Key archetypes of corporate and government development fund growth equity investors

Growth equity investors pursue fundamentally different objectives depending on their institutional mandate. Corporates typically invest to generate strategic and/or financial value for their own organisation, while government-backed development funds use equity capital to support company growth, develop priority sectors, address financing gaps and strengthen the broader ecosystem.

The following frameworks are not mutually exclusive: investors may combine several archetypes within one portfolio.

## Corporate growth equity investment archetypes

**For corporates, the investment model is determined by two dimensions:**

1. The investment objective, ranging from strategic value creation to financial returns
2. The strength of the link between the portfolio company and the corporation's core business and operational capabilities

These dimensions form a proposed approach for distinguishing four corporate growth equity investment archetypes (Figure 9). Adapted for the broader growth equity context, it considers corporate investment in both startups and more established SMEs.

## Figure 9:

PwC's approach for corporate growth equity investment archetypes[12]

### Framework for corporate investment archetypes

| | **Strategic**<br>Build competitive advantage and strengthen core business | **Financial**<br>Maximise financial returns and portfolio performance |
|---|---|---|
| **Strong**<br>High link to core business and operational capability | **Strategic Builder**<br>Invests in businesses that strengthen core capabilities, expand market position and drive long-term value | **Growth Explorer**<br>Invests in adjacencies and new growth avenues to unlock future opportunities and option value |
| **Weak**<br>Low link to core business and operational capability | **Capability Enabler**<br>Invests to access capabilities, technologies or assets that enhance efficiency and support core operations | **Financial Investor**<br>Invests for financial returns with limited strategic integration and minimal operational involvement |

Focuses on creating value for the corporation through strategy execution, growth and financial performance.

**Source:** PwC Middle East adaptation, with AI support, based on Henry W. Chesbrough, "Making Sense of Corporate Venture Capital", Harvard Business Review, March 2002: https://hbr.org/2002/03/making-sense-of-corporate-venture-capital

**Note:** This approach is a PwC Middle East adaptation of the corporate venture capital framework developed by Henry W. Chesbrough. The archetype names and descriptions are PwC Middle East's interpretation and do not represent Chesbrough's original terminology.

[12] PwC Middle East adaptation, with AI support, based on Henry Chesbrough, 'Making Sense of Corporate Venture Capital', Harvard Business Review (March 2002) https://hbr.org/2002/03/making-sense-of-corporate-venture-capital accessed 25 July 2026

Government development funds operate under a different investment logic from corporate investors. Rather than seeking strategic value for a core business, their mandates typically focus on economic development, supporting company growth and mobilising private capital.

## Government development fund growth equity investment archetypes

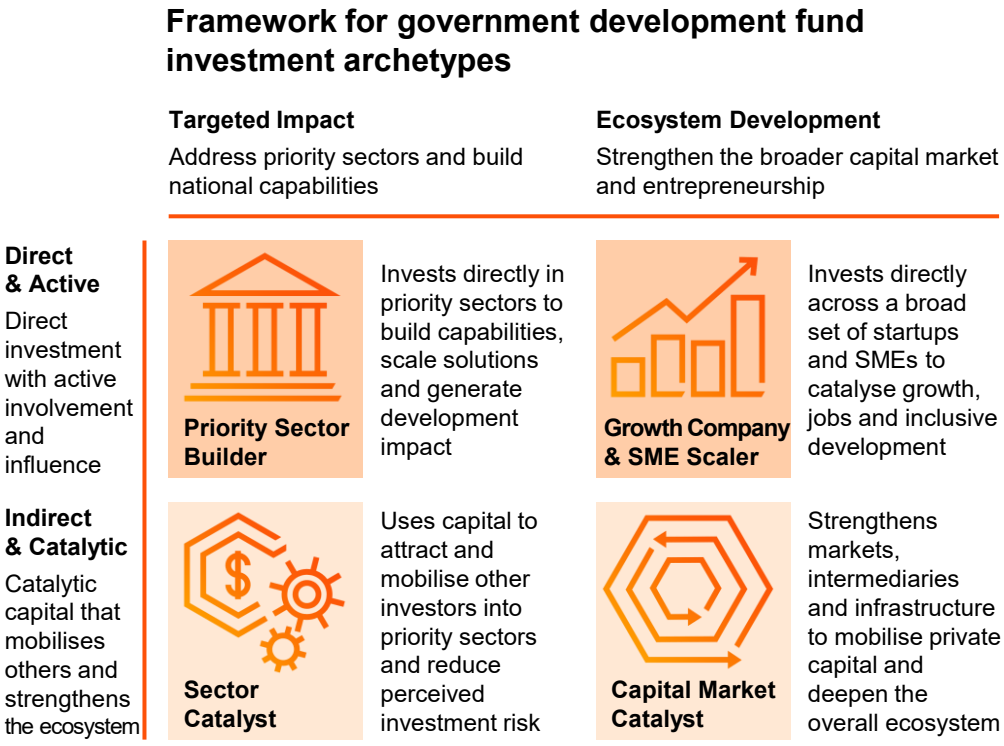
**The proposed PwC Middle East framework (Figure 10) distinguishes four investment archetypes across two dimensions:**

1. The development focus, ranging from targeted impact in priority sectors to broader ecosystem development
2. The role of capital, ranging from direct and active investment to indirect and catalytic deployment

These dimensions illustrate how government development funds can deploy growth equity to address specific development priorities or strengthen the wider investment ecosystem, either through direct investment or by mobilising private capital.

## Figure 10:

PwC's approach for government development fund investment archetypes[13]




**Source:** PwC Middle East adaptation, with AI support, based on Henry W. Chesbrough, "Making Sense of Corporate Venture Capital", Harvard Business Review, March 2002: https://hbr.org/2002/03/making-sense-of-corporate-venture-capital

**Note:** This framework was developed by PwC Middle East and draws on the two-dimensional archetype approach used in Henry W Chesbrough's corporate venture capital framework.

The appropriate archetype depends on the investor's mandate and the maturity of the market in which it operates. For corporates, the key consideration is the balance between strategic value creation and financial returns. For government development funds, it is where direct public investment can address specific market needs and where catalytic capital can achieve broader impact by mobilising private investment.

[13] PwC Middle East adaptation, with AI support, based on Henry Chesbrough, 'Making Sense of Corporate Venture Capital', Harvard Business Review (March 2002) https://hbr.org/2002/03/making-sense-of-corporate-venture-capital accessed 25 July 2026

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# Key pillars and success factors for setting up a growth equity investment unit from a corporate or government perspective

To establish a successful growth equity investment unit, both corporate and government-backed development funds should focus on three core pillars: strategy, structure and operations. The underlying operating model is broadly similar, but mandates differ. Corporates may prioritise strategic and financial value creation, while development funds may focus on economic development, closing financing gaps, scaling domestic startups and SMEs, developing priority sectors and mobilising private capital.

Defining these pillars is critical to building an effective target operating model.

1

# Strategy

### Goals and objectives:

The starting point is a clear understanding of the investor's mandate, position in the market and intended role within the ecosystem.
For corporates, objectives may include strengthening the core business, accessing new technologies, entering adjacent markets and generating financial returns. For development funds, objectives may include scaling domestic startups and SMEs, developing priority sectors, addressing identified equity-financing gaps, supporting economic diversification and crowding in private investment.
These objectives should translate into a clearly defined vision and mission.

### Investment mandate and strategy:

Derived from the unit's mission and benchmarked against regional and global peers, the mandate should target geographies and sectors, company maturity and growth stage, ticket sizes and ownership parameters, annual and multi-year capital allocation, return expectations and risk appetite and principles for follow-on investments and exits.
For corporates, this includes defining the balance between strategic and financial objectives. For development funds, it means balancing financial sustainability, development impact and the mobilisation of private capital.

### Investment fields:

Within defined sectors and markets, investors need a detailed understanding of relevant technologies, business models, competitive dynamics and financing gaps to identify attractive investment themes. The investment universe should extend beyond startups to established SMEs and other growth companies seeking equity capital.

2

# Structure

### Governance:

The governance, risk and compliance framework and organisational structure should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of investment authorities and decision-makers, along with sponsorship and accountability combining investment discipline with fast, pragmatic decision-making. Roles and responsibilities should be formalised through clear delegation-of-authority principles and, where appropriate, a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed (RACI) matrix.
For corporates, this should clarify the role of relevant business units; for development funds, it defines the interaction between the unit, government stakeholders and broader economic-development objectives while preserving commercial discipline.

### Investment process:

The end-to-end investment process should cover deal sourcing and screening, commercial, financial, legal and technical due diligence, valuation and investment structuring, investment committee approval, transaction execution, portfolio management, follow-on investment and exit.
For development funds, financial criteria may be complemented by transparent and clearly defined economic or market development criteria, integrated into the same disciplined investment process.

3

# Operations

### Team capability and setup:

Team structure should reflect the mandate, annual deployment ambition, portfolio size and desired level of involvement, and draw upon investment, sector, finance, legal, risk and value-creation expertise. Corporates may need stronger interfaces with business units and innovation functions. Development funds may require economic-development or impact-measurement capabilities.

### IT and CRM setup:

A fit-for-purpose technology environment should support the full investment lifecycle, including sourcing, pipeline management, due diligence, evaluation, portfolio monitoring, reporting and knowledge management. The setup should reflect the unit's scale, complexity and operating requirements.

### Internal and external interactions and linkages:

**Portfolio engagement and value creation:** A structured approach should define how investors support portfolio companies beyond capital. For corporates, this may include access to business units, customers, distribution channels, technology, infrastructure and operational expertise. For development funds, support may include connections to government entities, corporates, international markets, talent, capability-building programmes and follow-on investors. Clear responsibilities should ensure startups and SMEs can access the investor's relevant capabilities and networks.

**Reporting and monitoring:** Financial and qualitative KPIs must be defined, with corporates tracking strategic value and commercial synergies. Development funds may complement financial indicators with measures for growth, employment, localisation, exports, sector development and private capital mobilised.

**Budgeting and capital allocation:** Clear annual and multi-year budgets must be created covering investment capital, follow-on reserves, operating costs, external advisers, technology and portfolio-support activities with clear prioritisation across new and existing investments.

**Metrics and incentives:** KPIs and incentives should reflect the unit's mandate. For corporates, this includes balancing financial returns with strategic objectives and collaboration with relevant business units. For development funds, metrics should balance financial performance with clearly defined economic-development outcomes. Incentives should support disciplined investment decisions, active portfolio management and collaboration across the wider organisation.

**Ecosystem linkages:** Investors should build strong relationships across the broader ecosystem, including venture capital and private equity investors, corporates, banks, family offices, government entities, accelerators, universities and international investors. These relationships support deal sourcing, co-investment, portfolio development, follow-on funding and exits. For development funds, they are also critical to mobilising private capital alongside public investment.



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# Outlook

The GCC growth capital market has developed significantly in recent years, and the foundations for its next phase of growth continue to strengthen. Yet H1 2026 demonstrated that progress will not always be linear. Geopolitical uncertainty across the Middle East, including disruption to regional trade and energy flows, added to an already cautious global investment environment and contributed to greater selectivity among investors. The absence of large transactions also weighed heavily on funding in several GCC markets. At the same time, these conditions brought an important structural challenge into sharper focus: capital remains concentrated in a relatively small number of markets, investors and large transactions, leaving considerable scope to deepen and broaden the market.

The opportunity now extends beyond increasing the amount of capital available. A deeper growth capital market can broaden the investor base, improve access to follow-on equity and strengthen the investment capabilities needed to support companies through different stages of growth and changing market conditions. Different investors have distinct but complementary roles to play. Corporates can connect capital with customers, capabilities and routes to market. Government-backed development funds can address structural financing gaps, support priority sectors and use public capital to mobilise private investment. Domestic investors can continue to anchor the market, while greater international participation can bring additional capital, expertise and global connectivity.

## Three priorities can help accelerate this next phase:

01 First, deepen the pool of growth equity available to scaling SMEs, particularly those that sit between traditional venture capital and conventional private equity.

02 Second, mobilise more private and international capital through co-investment, partnerships and investment structures that complement private participation.

03 Third, strengthen investment capabilities themselves, with clear mandates, disciplined governance, experienced teams and operating models that enable investors to support companies beyond the initial investment.

The GCC has an opportunity to turn the growth of recent years into a deeper, more diversified growth capital market. Success will mean creating an environment in which promising companies can access equity at successive stages, investors can continue to deploy through changing market conditions and corporate and government-backed capital can bring capabilities and connections alongside funding. The next milestone should therefore be more than just another record funding round. It should be a market in which more GCC companies have the capital, capabilities and connections to scale, compete internationally and continue building their businesses in the region.



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# What is included

**The primary dataset is sourced from the data provider MAGNiTT and was retrieved in July 2026.**

Figures 2 to 8 provide a detailed analysis of growth capital trends, funding distribution, and investor dynamics in the GCC region. These exhibits offer insights into financing amounts, funding round divisions, shifts in sources of funds, average investments, and transaction counts, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the GCC's growth capital landscape. Different investment rounds, including pre-seed (≤US$1m), seed (US$1m–US$5m), Growth-stage (US$5m–US$20m), later stage (US$20m–US$100m), and mega deals (≥US$100m), have been examined. Round-stage values exclude transactions with undisclosed funding amounts, which are reported within the deal count but carry a nil value. These undisclosed transactions are excluded from the average deal size calculations where applicable.

To ensure the study captures the full spectrum of growth capital in the GCC, we also include equity investments in SMEs. In practice, the distinction between startups and SMEs is often blurred, particularly for younger companies without a long operating history. Many regional investors, especially development funds, address both segments within the same investment mandate, making a strict separation neither practical nor reflective of how the GCC market operates.

Based on a structured review conducted jointly with the data provider, the study therefore includes all available startup equity investment data from MAGNiTT, as well as selected private growth equity investments classified in the dataset as PE Growth. To maintain consistency with the study’s focus, PwC and MAGNiTT applied an additional screening process to exclude PE Growth transactions involving clearly mature, long-established companies operating in traditional, non-technology-intensive sectors. For example, a private equity investment in an established port operator was excluded from the dataset.

The corporate growth equity portion of this dataset includes all entities that PwC identified in an analysis as corporates investing in startups or SMEs. Examples of transactions involving corporate investors cited in the narrative may refer to the total size of funding rounds in which corporate investors participated. These figures should not be interpreted as equivalent to the corporate investor capital captured in the Corporate Growth Equity deployment figures in this individual round.

The overall equity transaction figures include all qualifying transactions captured in the primary dataset, including rounds in which one or more investors were classified as a corporate investor. The corporate growth equity analysis therefore represents a subset of the overall market. Funding stages in both the overall and corporate analyses are determined by the total round size, while corporate growth capital deployment reflects the amount attributed specifically to corporate investors.

For the investor-level analysis in section 3, each participating investor was assigned by PwC Middle East and the MAGNiTT working group to one of four mutually exclusive categories according to its primary organisational type and investment mandate. Venture Capital includes private and government-backed venture capital firms, venture builders, crowdfunders and angel groups. Corporate Investors includes corporates, Corporate Venture Capital vehicles, holding companies and government-backed corporates. Accelerators & Incubators includes private, corporate and government-backed accelerators and incubators that participate in equity investments as part of their mandate. Other Investors includes professional or institutional investors whose wider mandates encompass venture or growth equity, such as asset managers, family offices, fund-of-funds vehicles, investment companies and private equity firms, as well as government investment backed structures. The classification applies at investor level: each investor is assigned to one category, while a transaction may include investors from multiple categories.

## What is excluded

This analysis excludes loans, non-equity funds, and initial coin offerings, maintaining a focus on equity-based funding to provide a clear picture of growth capital equity financing in the GCC region. Where debt financing is referenced in the narrative for context, it is identified separately and is not treated as equity funding within the dataset. Late-stage deals do not include venture M&A transactions, as including these can significantly distort market size assessments; this report therefore excludes them from the analysis.

## About PwC Middle East Ventures

PwC Middle East Ventures advises governments, public institutions, corporates, investors and high-growth companies on building, investing in and scaling innovation across the GCC. As part of PwC's global venturing network, we combine regional market expertise with international venturing capabilities and PwC's broader strategy, deals, technology, tax, legal and regulatory expertise. We support our clients across three core areas:



### Corporate venturing & development fund advisory

We advise corporates, government authorities, development funds and other investors on how to invest in and collaborate with innovative companies. Our services include the design of tailored strategies and target operating models for Corporate Venture Capital funds, government-backed investment vehicles, venture studios, accelerators, venture client models and other innovation and growth-capital instruments. We support clients from strategy and design through activation and ongoing operations.



### Venture building

We design, build and scale new ventures and corporate innovation vehicles, from initial concept and business model design through activation and scaling. Working with our clients and leading startups and scale-ups, we create new businesses and solutions that address strategic priorities and generate sustainable commercial impact.



### Scan & scale

We connect the GCC with leading innovation ecosystems globally. Leveraging PwC's international network, we identify and engage high-potential startups and scale-ups that match the strategic and investment priorities of our clients. We support these companies in entering and scaling across GCC markets, while providing corporates, investors and government entities with access to international investment, partnership and innovation opportunities.



## AI disclosure

AI tools were used in limited parts of this report to support wording, language and editorial refinement. AI was not used as a factual or research source, and no data points, footnotes, references or external sources were generated or sourced through AI. All factual content and supporting evidence are based on MAGNiTT data, Prof. Chesbrough's framework, MSCI, all publicly available media sources and the author's own industry knowledge and analysis. As a result of this limited editorial use, some passages may nevertheless be identified by automated tools as AI-assisted.



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