



UAE's 'Secret Sauce' for Global Philanthropy



At the UN General Assembly in New York, H.E. Badr Jafar, the Special Envoy of the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs for Business and Philanthropy, set out the country's vision to become a trusted global hub for strategic giving. He emphasized that with its traditions of generosity, advanced technology investments, and convening power, the UAE is uniquely placed to redefine philanthropy for the 21st century.

H.E. highlighted the urgent need to improve transparency and efficiency in charitable giving, pointing to the billions donated annually through Zakat and Sadaqah. By deploying digital platforms, blockchain, and AI, these contributions can be tracked and channelled into projects that deliver measurable, lasting impact.

"Our secret sauce is translating ideas into initiatives that deliver real impact at home and with partners worldwide," H.E. Badr Jafar noted. He stressed the growing importance of private philanthropy, observing that in the United States alone, private donors disbursed more than \$600 billion last year – ten times the scale of government aid. This illustrates the potential of philanthropic capital as "risk capital" for bold ideas that governments and markets may be unable to support alone.

H.E. Badr Jafar also underscored the shift from traditional one-to-many giving models to more inclusive many-to-one approaches, where communities of donors can collectively support targeted causes. This evolution, he argued, requires trusted partners to unite geographies and sectors while sharing best practices through education and research.

With the UAE's legacy of giving, commitment to innovation, and ability to connect East and West, North and South, the nation is positioned to help shape a new era of philanthropy: entrepreneurial, collaborative, and designed to empower people as co-creators of change.

Source: [The National](#)

Global Philanthropy Leaders Highlight Strategic Philanthropy as Catalyst for International Aid



The International Peace Institute (IPI), together with the Special Envoy of the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs for Business and Philanthropy, convened global leaders on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly and Climate Week in New York for IPI's *Global Leader Series: Insights from The Business of Philanthropy*, calling for urgent, collaborative action to catalyse international aid.

Hosted at IPI's Trygve Lie Center opposite UN Headquarters and livestreamed worldwide, the event featured insights from H.E. Badr Jafar, Special Envoy of the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs for Business and Philanthropy, in conversation with IPI President Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and leading philanthropists Tsitsi Masiyiwa (Higherlife Foundation; Delta Philanthropies) and Jacqueline Novogratz (Acumen).

H.E. Badr Jafar drew on lessons from his book, *The Business of Philanthropy: Perspectives and Insights from Global Thought Leaders on How to Change the World*, and emphasised strategic philanthropy's unique capability to unlock catalytic funding while bridging complex relationships between government, civil society, and business.

At a time when traditional funding for humanitarian aid and development is under strain, the event highlighted how philanthropic capital is already at a scale to drive transformative social change. Global philanthropic flows now surpass \$1 trillion annually, more than three times the world's combined humanitarian and development aid, and more than

ten times the total climate finance provided by developed countries to developing economies in recent years. In the United States alone, private philanthropy was estimated at \$600 billion in 2024, nearly ten times peak United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding levels.

Panellists showcased opportunities for more strategic distribution of private aid and how, when paired with business capital, philanthropy can derisk follow-on investments and open access to wider networks and deeper pools of capital. The discussion also reflected on the importance of connecting across geographies and sectors to provide sustainable solutions, and how the UAE has emerged as a leading hub for both business and philanthropy, serving as a trusted partner, convener, and implementer.

New models of giving, of collaborating, and of measuring impact were highlighted as essential for unlocking innovation and scaling solutions. Examples included how technology is being leveraged to enable co-creation with impacted indigenous communities, to champion many-to-one models of giving, and to strengthen trust networks. There was clear consensus on the importance of investing in philanthropic infrastructure, advancing research through academic partnerships, convening cross-sector collaboration through institutions such as IPI, and empowering the next generation of social innovators through training and mentorship to help build a more inclusive and resilient future.

Source: [IPI](#)

Why Ties With Italy Matter to the UAE



During a recent visit to Rome and Milan, H.E. Badr Jafar, Special Envoy of the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs for Business and Philanthropy, emphasized the strategic importance of strengthening economic and philanthropic links between the UAE and Italy. The visit followed UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's state visit earlier this year, which underscored a \$40 billion investment commitment across key sectors.

Over several days, H.E. Badr Jafar led discussions with Italian leaders (including with H.E. Giancarlo Giorgetti, Italy's Minister of Economy and Finance, as above) across advanced industry, finance, digital infrastructure, health sciences, and technical training, while also convening a roundtable of foundations and corporate philanthropies to shape a pilot initiative in youth and skills development.

The outcomes of the visit include scoping measurable philanthropic programmes within 90 days, mapping joint technology and energy projects, such as grid modernization, clean power integration, and AI-enabled industry, and progressing cultural and educational collaborations from university exchanges to joint exhibitions.

The UAE's private sector, civil society, and academic institutions will also benefit directly. SMEs and mid-cap companies can connect to new supply chains and co-innovation opportunities, universities will explore translational research, and arts and cultural platforms will build stronger people-to-people ties to anchor commercial partnerships.

H.E. emphasised that such engagements directly support the UAE's national agenda of diversification and innovation, with non-oil sectors now accounting for three-quarters of GDP, led by logistics, finance, technology, tourism, life sciences, and creative industries.

"Ambition matters; so do discipline and follow through," he added, citing the Arab proverb, 'Trust in God, but tie your camel.'

The UAE's approach, he explained, is to act as a reliable and constructive partner, ensuring useful conversations lead to practical workplans, focal points, and milestones – delivering value both at home and abroad.

Sources: [The National](#)
[UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

A Defining New Era for Philanthropy and Strategic Giving in the UAE: Insights from ‘The Business of Philanthropy’

Philanthropy in the UAE is entering a transformative phase, evolving from traditional charitable practices into a strategic force for systemic change. Rooted in traditions like Zakat and Sadaqah, which collectively generate billions annually, giving is now driven by purpose, innovation, and measurable impact.

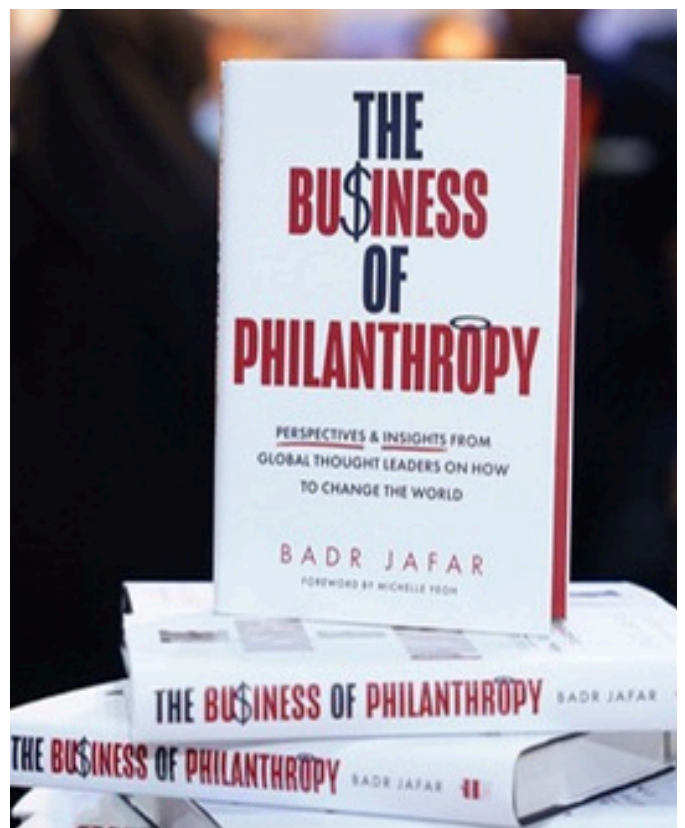
Today’s philanthropists are bringing business principles to their giving, setting clear goals, measuring outcomes, and fostering collaboration. As H.E. Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair emphasizes, philanthropy should be approached with the same discipline as business. This shift positions giving as “risk capital” capable of funding bold ideas and addressing challenges that governments or businesses alone may not tackle.

A new generation of leaders is reshaping this legacy. Fadi Ghandour highlights the importance of long-term thinking, while Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani underscores the central role of youth in driving social change. Technology is further accelerating this evolution. Digital platforms, big data, blockchain, and artificial intelligence are making philanthropy more transparent, efficient, and inclusive. With the UAE investing heavily in AI through initiatives such as MBZUAI and the UAE-US AI Campus, the country is well positioned to lead the convergence of technology and strategic giving. The key lies in using these tools to empower communities rather than overwhelm them.

Globally, an estimated \$70 trillion in wealth will transfer to younger generations in the coming decades, with \$26 trillion across Asia and Africa. Positioned at this crossroads, the UAE has a unique opportunity to shape the future of global philanthropy. As H.E. Razan Al Mubarak reminds us, funding alone is insufficient; true impact comes from empowering people whose lives and livelihoods are tied to the causes we support.

The moment calls for a new model of “better giving,” one that invests in research, regulation, talent development, and inclusive platforms, while engaging women, youth, and marginalized groups as co-creators. As H.E. Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo explains, philanthropists should act as bridges, helping communities move from challenges to solutions. The UAE is now poised to define what philanthropy in the 21st century can look like: entrepreneurial, collaborative, inclusive, and built to endure.

businessofphilanthropy.org/book



Milken Institute: Bridging Asia and Middle East Corridors of Capital, Energy, and Innovation

At the Milken Institute Asia Summit 2025 in Singapore, held under the theme 'Progress with Purpose: Collaboration Amid Complexity', Crescent Enterprises' Deputy CEO and Head of Investments, Tushar Singhvi, joined regional investment leaders for a panel discussion on 'Bridging Asia and the Middle East: Corridors of Capital, Energy, and Innovation.'

The session explored how cross-border investment and collaboration between the Gulf and emerging Asia are driving a new era of growth, diversification, and sustainable development. Singhvi underscored how these regions are becoming deeply interconnected through trade, technology, and talent flows, with Gulf–Emerging Asia trade projected to surpass US\$680 billion annually by 2030, more than double 2020 levels.

He noted that the GCC is reshaping its position from a hub for traditional energy to a catalyst for smart, sustainable growth and highlighted the UAE's role as a launchpad for innovation and capital deployment. With non-oil GDP now accounting for over 75% of total output and outward investment reaching US\$95 billion in 2024, the UAE is increasingly serving as both investor and innovation partner across Asia.

Drawing on Crescent Enterprises' experience through CE-Invests and CE-Ventures, Singhvi emphasised the group's role in scaling high-growth, impact-driven businesses across the GCC–Asia corridor, from logistics and advanced manufacturing to fintech and health tech.

He cited portfolio companies such as Flipspaces, Distil, and FreshToHome as examples of technology-enabled enterprises bridging geographies, while affirming Crescent Enterprises' long-term commitment to fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and sustainable value creation between Asia and the Middle East.



Family Offices Take the Long View: FO Summit Insights on Private Equity and Direct Deals

With its focus on “Unlocking the \$1 Trillion Wealth Transfer,” the Family Office Summit Dubai brought together an array of investment leaders including CE-Invests’ SVP Ghada Abdelkader who featured on the opening plenary panel “From Patience to Payoff: Family Offices in PE & Direct Deals.”

The discussion explored how family offices are redefining private markets with a focus on long-term value creation and intergenerational wealth preservation. Abdelkader noted that family offices globally now manage over US \$4.6 trillion, with 92% including private equity in their portfolios. Nearly 20% of global family office capital is allocated to private equity, rising to 25% in the MENA region, the second-highest globally.

She highlighted how more than \$80 trillion in wealth is expected to change hands over the next two decades, with India (28%) and the GCC (12%) emerging as leading destinations for family office investment. As family offices are deploying patient, disciplined capital into productive, purpose-led opportunities that align with long-term legacy goals, Abdelkader noted that this is not about quarterly cycles, it’s about building businesses that endure.

Abdelkader explained that CE-Invests combines direct deals and fund commitments, co-investing alongside trusted partners to drive growth across consumer, healthcare, manufacturing, and financial services sectors. She emphasized CE-Invests’ focus on the GCC–Asia corridor, where demographic momentum, regulatory reform, and digital adoption are unlocking new opportunities for disciplined, partnership-led capital.

By aligning strategic investments with regional growth trends and strong governance frameworks, she emphasised how family offices can play a pivotal role in shaping resilient, globally competitive businesses that create lasting value across generations.



Gulftainer: Strengthening Supply Chain Resilience Through Strategic Infrastructure

As global supply chains face increasing disruption, resilience has become a defining benchmark for success. Geopolitical volatility, energy constraints, and reliance on vulnerable chokepoints are reshaping the logistics landscape, driving demand for solutions that ensure foresight and continuity.

Gulftainer continues to play a vital role in enhancing regional and global trade resilience. Established in Sharjah in 1976, Gulftainer has grown into a trusted supply chain partner and a leading operator of regional ports and terminals. Its operations exemplify strategic foresight, enabling uninterrupted trade and efficient logistics even amid global challenges.

Khorfakkan Container Terminal: Strategic Location for Efficient Trade

The Khorfakkan Container Terminal (KCT) exemplifies Gulftainer's long-term vision. Positioned entirely outside the Straits of Hormuz, KCT offers vessels an alternative route that saves twelve hours of sailing, reduces fuel consumption and emissions, and accelerates deliveries, sometimes by a full day at port and up to five days at final destination. This results in cost savings of 10–12% for carriers. Multimodal connectivity via Momentum Logistics ensures seamless access to inland UAE and Gulf markets, with future integration into the GCC rail network further strengthening supply chain resilience.

New Barge Service Strengthens Regional Connectivity

GT USA, a subsidiary of Gulftainer, has partnered with Great Lakes East LLC – a subsidiary of The Great Lakes Towing Company / Great Lakes Shipyard – to launch a monthly barge service between Port Canaveral in Florida and San Juan in Puerto Rico.

The service facilitates the export of construction materials such as lumber, steel, and rebar from the Canaveral Cargo Terminal, leveraging its strong infrastructure and warehouse capacity. This initiative expands Gulftainer's reach into new markets while enhancing regional connectivity.



Upgrading Iraq Container Terminal

Gulftainer has also enhanced efficiency at Iraq Container Terminal in the Port of Umm Qasr with new Kalmar reach stackers. These advanced machines, featuring 360° rotating cabins, adjustable spreaders for 20ft and 40ft units, and energy-efficient engines, improve container handling, reduce turnaround times, and handle growing cargo volumes efficiently – all while prioritizing safety and sustainability.

Through these strategic initiatives, Gulftainer, alongside CE-Operates, continues to deliver world-class ports and logistics solutions, strengthening supply chain resilience and supporting long-term economic growth across emerging and strategic markets.

Farid Belbouab, Group CEO at Gulftainer, emphasized: “Resilience isn’t just about weathering disruption; it’s about designing with disruption in mind. Our strategic foresight continues to redefine regional supply chain strength.”

Gulftainer Attends Breakfast Meeting with Arkansas Governor Organised by the US-UAE Business Council



Gulftainer participated in a breakfast meeting hosted by the US-UAE Business Council with Governor of Arkansas Sarah Huckabee Sanders during her first official visit to the UAE. Attended by its Chief Financial Officer, Arvind Giri, the discussion explored opportunities for two-way trade and investment, highlighting Arkansas' competitive business environment, growing industries, and potential areas for collaboration in logistics, advanced manufacturing, and technology.

Gulftainer is committed to fostering international partnerships with U.S. state leaders and business representatives that drive growth and innovation. The company's global footprint lies in the United States of America with Canaveral Cargo Terminal as the first Middle Eastern port operator to establish operations on American soil. Through strategic investments in infrastructure, technology, and operational excellence, Gulftainer is not just keeping trade flowing smoothly, it is moving the industry forward.

Momentum Logistics Enhances Strategic Capabilities



Momentum Logistics has expanded its fleet with 17 new MAN TGX trucks, bringing the regional fleet size to 270, including a range of fuel-efficient flatbeds, curtain-siders, reefer and box trailers. This addition will significantly enhance the company's first and last mile delivery capabilities across the GCC and the Middle East region; and reaffirms its commitment to operational excellence and sustainable logistics solutions for regional and global customers to support their supply chain growth.

Established in 2008 to complement Gulftainer's service portfolio, Momentum has developed into a fully integrated third-party logistics (3PL) provider. Operating from its headquarters at the Sharjah Inland Container Depot (SICD), the company delivers end-to-end supply chain solutions covering freight forwarding, inland transportation, warehousing, container services, logistics cities, and contract logistics.

Momentum's strategy is built on diversification and innovation. By moving beyond a port-centric model, it has strengthened customer relationships and opened new growth pathways. Bespoke solutions such as the Sharjah Air Bridge and Sharjah Land Bridge illustrate the value of combining its five business divisions into comprehensive, tailored offerings.

The region's logistics sector is undergoing rapid transformation, with enhanced connectivity and reduced trade barriers positioning the UAE and KSA as growing strategic hubs for regional and global operators. In this evolving landscape, having an experienced logistics partner on the ground is critical, and Momentum continues to play an integral role.

Momentum has continued to expand its fleet to serve regional demand. Its warehousing facilities, including 300,000 sq. ft. of covered space and one million sq. ft. of bonded open storage at SICD, operate at full occupancy. The company also leverages technology such as GPS tracking, online booking, and Electronic Data Interchange platforms to enhance customer connectivity. In addition, Momentum has expanded into specialised services, including refrigerated spare parts sales and warranty repairs through partnerships with global manufacturers.

Handling 3.2 million tons of cargo annually and facilitating more than 100,000 container movements, Momentum Logistics continues to support the growth of regional supply chains. With its strong asset base and commitment to innovation, the company is well positioned to capitalise on growth opportunities driven by rising consumer demand, industrialisation, and government-led logistics reforms across the region.

CE-Invests Backs \$50 Million Funding Round for Flipspaces

CE-Invests, the strategic investments platform of Crescent Enterprises, has participated in the \$50 million Series C funding round for Flipspaces, a leading tech-first interior design and build company operating across India and the USA.

Founded in 2015, Flipspaces has delivered over 1,000 projects spanning 8 million sq. ft., integrating AI-led design, VR walkthroughs, procurement, and turnkey execution into a seamless platform. The company has become a trusted partner for efficiency, transparency, and timely delivery in a traditionally fragmented sector.

“At CE-Invests we build enduring partnerships with ambitious businesses that harness transformative global trends,” said Ghada Abdelkader, Senior Vice President of CE-Invests.

“Flipspaces’ profitable scale across India and the USA, combined with its AI and VR-driven model, exemplifies the opportunities we are committed to backing. With the UAE as its launchpad for MENA expansion, Flipspaces is uniquely positioned to bridge the Asia-UAE-USA innovation corridor.”

Kunal Sharma, Founder & CEO of Flipspaces, added: “This investment is a strategic endorsement of our technology-led model. We are committed to scaling sustainably, balancing innovation with operational discipline.”

The investment highlights CE-Invests’ role in supporting capital-efficient, technology-driven businesses that align with Crescent Enterprises’ ESG pillars and global transformative trends.



Gama Aviation Joins International Business Aviation Council as Industry Partner



Gama Aviation has joined the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) as an Industry Partner. This strategic move underscores the company's commitment to contributing to the development of international standards that reflect the needs of the business aviation services sector.

With operations spanning aircraft management, charter, maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO), and fixed-base operations (FBO), Gama Aviation supports clients across the full lifecycle of business aviation services. The company also delivers specialised capabilities through its Special Mission teams and Technology & Outsourcing division.

"As a multinational aviation services business, we have a responsibility to help shape the environment in which we operate on behalf of our clients, whether

they are high net worth individuals or government agencies," stated Marwan Khalek, Founder and Group CEO of Gama Aviation. "To achieve this aim, we must contribute to and support the strategic direction of various industry trade bodies in the local, regional and international domains. Our association with IBAC provides a valuable platform to achieve just that, ensuring business aviation has a strong, credible voice at the highest level of international aviation governance."

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Gama Aviation's Sharjah FBO Achieves Regional First IS-BAH Stage 3 Accreditation



In a regional first, Gama Aviation has achieved Stage 3 accreditation under the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) at its Sharjah International Airport FBO for the second time, while also celebrating 10 years of continuous participation in the programme.

Stage 3 is the highest level of IS-BAH certification and reflects sustained performance, continuous improvement, and a deeply embedded safety culture. Since becoming the first Middle East facility to enroll in 2015, Gama Aviation's Sharjah team has consistently invested in training, safety management systems, and client service excellence, earning successive accreditations over the past decade.

"Achieving Stage 3 IS-BAH for the second time reflects our team's consistency, professionalism, and unwavering focus on client needs," said Tom Murphy, Managing Director, FBO Services at Gama Aviation. "Reaching 10 years in the programme—and being the first in the region to do so—is a testament to the strength of our safety culture."

The recognition underscores the Sharjah FBO's role as a regional leader in business aviation handling, offering operators and passengers an experience that meets the highest international standards.

Khurram Bhatti, SMS & Quality Manager, added: "IS-BAH standards are about more than compliance, they embed safety and operational quality into everything we do. This renewal is the result of our team's dedication, and I am proud to see our efforts recognised globally."

Looking ahead, Gama Aviation remains committed to further enhancing its Sharjah operations. With a decade of IS-BAH experience behind it, the company plans continued investment in people, processes, and facilities to meet the evolving needs of business aviation clients in the UAE and wider region.

Biometrics for Inclusion: Reimagining Salary Payments for Unbanked Workers



IrisGuard UK Ltd has introduced a groundbreaking initiative in Jordan that allows thousands of unbanked workers to securely receive their wages without the need for a bank account or physical identification.

In partnership with Cairo Amman Bank and United Creations, IrisGuard has launched the first national-scale biometric cash salary payment network in Jordan. Powered by the company's EyePay® Network and trusted iris recognition technology, the system enables real-time, secure, and transparent salary payments for blue-collar workers across the country.

For workers, the process is simple yet empowering: during onboarding, employees are registered biometrically, and from that moment, their iris becomes the only credential needed to collect wages. Salaries can be withdrawn at licensed money exchangers nationwide, eliminating the risks of ID theft, wage misdirection, and cash-handling inefficiencies.

“This is about transforming financial access at the source,” said Imad Malhas, Managing Director & Founder of IrisGuard.

“By eliminating the need for bank accounts and physical IDs, our EyePay® Network protects vulnerable workers while redefining payroll security and efficiency at scale.”

The deployment also ensures compliance with International Labour Organization (ILO) and Better Work standards, giving employers and regulators real-time visibility into wage payment practices. For United Creations, one of Jordan's leading garment manufacturers, the innovation reduces administrative overhead, streamlines disbursement, and strengthens its reputation as a responsible employer.

Money exchangers—many of whom also serve as remittance agents—benefit as well, with real-time settlement into their bank accounts and no need to hold large cash reserves. This improves scalability, efficiency, and transparency across the ecosystem.

This pioneering deployment sets a new national benchmark for inclusive, tech-driven financial access, reaffirming IrisGuard's leadership in shaping a more dignified, transparent, and worker-centric financial future.

CE-Ventures Backs the Future of Financial Infrastructure with Investments in Plaid and Mesh



CE-Ventures announced landmark investments in Plaid and Mesh, two Silicon Valley startups developing critical infrastructure for the next generation of financial services. The combined funding rounds totaled USD 657 million, and are a major step toward a more open, programmable, and crypto-native financial ecosystem.

Plaid secured USD 575 million in a round led by Franklin Templeton, with participation from CE-Ventures, Fidelity, BlackRock, NEA, Ribbit Capital, and others. Plaid's global fintech data network serves as the connective tissue of open finance, enabling thousands of applications and institutions to securely link bank accounts, verify identities, and power use cases across lending, payments, wealth management, and personal finance. As open finance adoption accelerates worldwide, Plaid's infrastructure has become indispensable to modern fintech ecosystems.

Mesh raised USD 82 million in a round led by Paradigm, with CE-Ventures, Consensys, Quantum Light Capital, and Yolo Investments, among others.

As digital assets evolve beyond speculation toward utility, Mesh is positioning itself as the middleware powering interoperability between the crypto and fiat economies.

Commenting on the announcement, Sudarshan Pareek, Senior Vice President at CE-Ventures, said: "We are at the beginning of a systemic shift in global finance—from closed systems to open networks, from batch-based processing to real-time programmability, and from siloed fiat rails to interoperable digital assets. Plaid and Mesh are laying the technical foundations for that future."

These strategic investments reflect CE-Ventures' commitment to long-term value creation by backing platforms that enable broad financial ecosystems rather than single verticals. Positioned at the forefront of this generational transformation, CE-Ventures is actively shaping the evolution of financial infrastructure toward greater interoperability, programmability, and user-centricity.



Plaid is a data network that powers the tools millions of people rely on to live a healthier financial life: plaid.com



Mesh founded in 2020, Mesh is the first global payment network for crypto, connecting hundreds of exchanges, wallets, and payment service providers to enable seamless digital asset payments and conversions: meshpayments.com

CE-Ventures Backs the Future of Nuclear



CE-Ventures, the corporate venture capital platform of Crescent Enterprises, participated in the USD 100 million Series B funding round of Aalo Atomic, a leading US nuclear technology company. The round was led by Valor Equity Partners with participation from Fine Structure Ventures, Hitachi Ventures, Crosscut Ventures, and others.

Aalo Atomic is developing mass-manufactured modular nuclear reactors designed to power AI-optimised data centres, addressing the four-fold rise in global electricity demand expected by 2030. The company has been selected by the US Department of Energy for fast-tracked testing and aims to reach zero-power criticality by July 2026.

“We view Aalo Atomic as a true leader in this new atomic age,” said Sudarshan Pareek, Senior Vice President at CE-Ventures. “The surge in AI adoption is driving unprecedented energy demand, and nuclear power can meet it with clean, scalable solutions.”

This investment reinforces CE-Ventures’ commitment to frontier technologies and builds on Crescent Enterprises’ long-standing record of responsible growth and innovation across energy and infrastructure sectors.

CE-Ventures Backs Distil to Redefine India's Specialty Chemicals Industry



CE-Ventures has co-led the \$7.7 million Series A funding round for Distil, an India-based specialty chemicals company combining research, development, and an asset-light model to modernize a fragmented industry.

Founded by Atanu Agarrwal and Viraj Shah, Distil addresses inefficiencies across India's chemicals sector, where thousands of plants operate at partial capacity with limited R&D capabilities. By partnering with underutilized facilities, the company introduces application expertise and technical sales, producing chemicals that meet global standards while remaining cost competitive. Its portfolio spans binders, wetting agents, titanium dioxide, and emulsions used across paints, plastics, and construction materials.

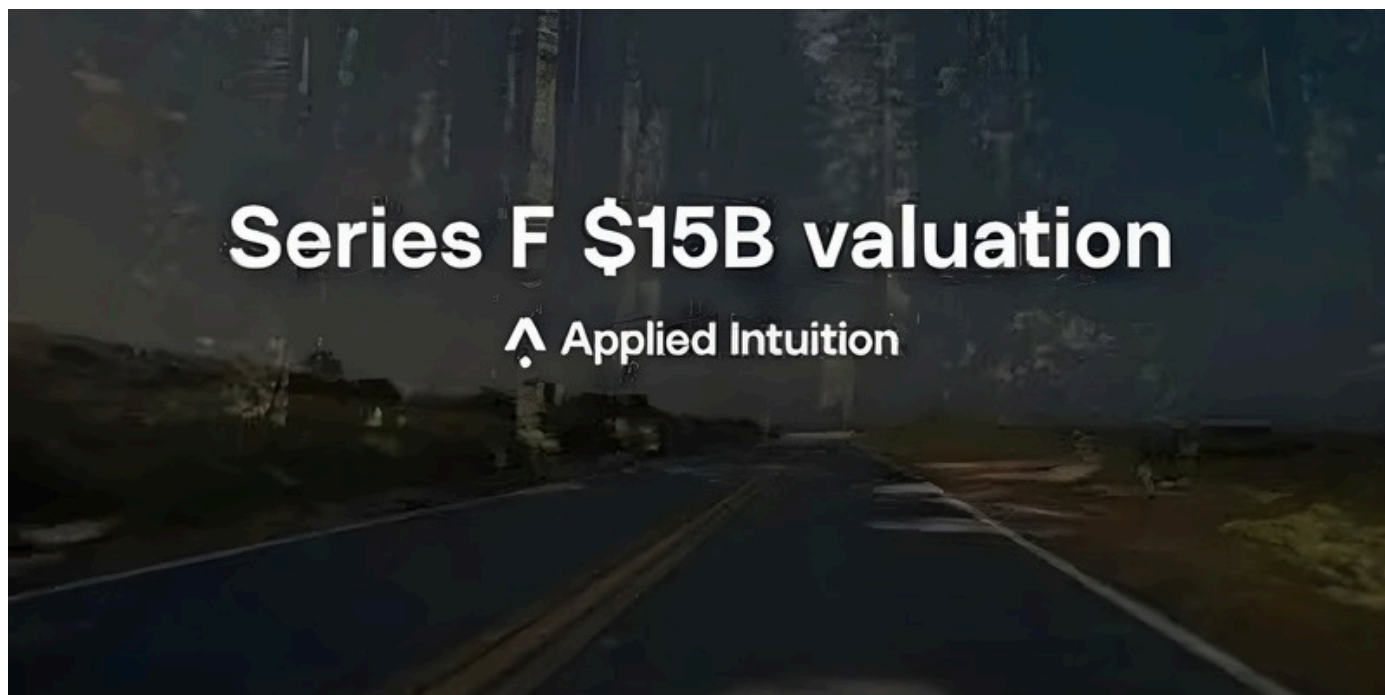
"From our very first meeting, we were impressed by Atanu and Viraj's clarity of vision and pace of execution," said Sudarshan Pareek, Senior Vice President at CE-Ventures. "Their R&D-led, asset-light model positions Distil to compete globally and set a new benchmark for Indian innovators."

The investment reflects the compelling growth trajectory of India's \$80B+ specialty chemicals sector, which is expanding at 18% CAGR as global supply chains shift from China to India. Distil has already scaled to over 100 enterprise customers, reached \$7M in annual sales, and built a 19-member scientific team since its \$3.1M Seed round just over a year ago.

The company aims to reach \$25–30M in revenue and profitability within 12 months, while laying foundations for longer-term growth. Expansion plans include acquiring additional underutilized plants, scaling production, and establishing operations across the Middle East, Africa, and North America.

"Our ambition is to build a global institution in specialty chemicals from India," said Atanu Agarrwal, Co-founder & CEO of Distil. "With CE-Ventures and our partners, we can accelerate innovation and compete head-to-head with global majors."

Applied Intuition Secures \$600 Million Series F at \$15 Billion Valuation



CE-Ventures has invested in Applied Intuition as part of its \$600 million Series F round, valuing the vehicle intelligence company at \$15 billion. The round was co-led by BlackRock-managed funds and Kleiner Perkins, with participation from leading global investors including Franklin Templeton, Qatar Investment Authority, Abu Dhabi Investment Council, Premji Invest, and others.

Applied Intuition is at the forefront of vehicle intelligence, developing software platforms that power autonomous systems across automotive, defense, construction, mining, agriculture, and other sectors. Its tools, including autonomy stacks, simulation platforms, and Vehicle OS, enable clients to accelerate the development of intelligent, software-defined machines.

Co-founder and CEO Qasar Younis stated that the company is entering its “next era,” scaling operations to bring intelligence into every moving machine, from cars and trucks to drones and factories. Co-founder and CTO Peter Ludwig added that Applied Intuition will focus on accelerating the global rollout of intelligent systems across industries.

In the past year, Applied Intuition has expanded its off-road autonomy stack, acquired defense technology firm EpiSci, launched new defense products Axion and Acuity, and opened new offices in the UK. Strategic partnerships with OpenAI, TRATON, Isuzu, Porsche, and Audi further strengthened its position as a leader in AI-driven mobility.

Trusted by 18 of the top 20 global automakers and key U.S. Department of Defense programs, Applied Intuition continues to cement its leadership at the forefront of intelligent vehicle development, shaping the future of autonomous systems worldwide.

EndoQuest Robotics Secures Series D-2 Funding to Advance Robotic Surgery



CE-Ventures co-led the successful Series D-2 financing round for EndoQuest Robotics, alongside surgical robotics pioneer Dr. Frederic Moll, marking a key step in the company's mission to transform endoluminal robotic surgery.

The funding will accelerate development of EndoQuest's Endoluminal Surgical (ELS) System, support the pivotal PARADIGM clinical trial, advance early feasibility studies in upper GI procedures, and drive innovation in next-generation visualization technologies.

Dr. Moll highlighted the system's potential to "revolutionize how procedures are performed in robotic endoscopic surgery," with early clinical cases demonstrating impressive results in complex colorectal procedures.

Neeraj Agrawal, Executive Director at Crescent Enterprises, emphasized that EndoQuest reflects CE-Ventures' strategy of investing in high-growth surgical robotics platforms addressing underpenetrated markets.

Interim CEO Eduardo Fonseca outlined the company's execution strategy, focused on strong clinical data, a clear FDA pathway, enhanced visualization systems, and pioneering upper GI procedures.

The PARADIGM Trial is underway, with successful endoscopic submucosal dissection (ESD) procedures performed for complex colorectal lesions. The IDE-approved study will enroll 50 patients across leading U.S. hospitals, including Brigham and Women's, Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, AdventHealth, and HCA Healthcare.

With strategic backing, pioneering technology, and early clinical success, EndoQuest is positioned to transform robotic endoscopic surgery, expand access to minimally invasive care, and deliver sustainable value to investors.

CE-Creates Portfolio Company ION Launches Regional-First Unified EV Charging Platform



ION, the sustainable mobility venture by BEEAH and Crescent Enterprises, announced the launch of its EV ecosystem, consisting of the ION app and a Charge Point Management System, addressing end-to-end requirements for electric vehicle charging in the UAE. The fully integrated EV ecosystem – a regional first – is being utilized for EV chargers across the UAE, including a network of over 100 ultra-fast EV chargers being deployed by ION in partnership with Sharjah Roads and Transport Authority (SRTA).

“The GCC is rapidly transitioning from being known as a hub for traditional energy to becoming recognised as a catalyst for smart, sustainable mobility,” commented Tushar Singhvi, Deputy CEO and Head of Investments at Crescent Enterprises.

“Through ION, we are proud to support this shift by building the infrastructure and platforms that make electrification practical, scalable, and accessible. This launch marks an important step toward regional leadership in clean transport and the creation of long-term value for users, operators, and partners alike.”

“ION’s success reflects exactly what CE-Creates is designed for - to build home-grown ventures with global potential,” said Rakhil Fernando, Head of CE-Creates. “From concept to commercialization, we aim to turn bold ideas into scalable businesses that advance the UAE’s innovation economy. This milestone also highlights the UAE’s growing position as a launchpad for world-class technology and sustainable solutions and supports its ambition to be known as the startup capital of the world.”

BreakBread's Matcha Workshop Promotes Workplace Wellness at Dubai Government Conference



BreakBread curated a Matcha Workshop for The Department of Government Enablement (DGE) hosted a Matcha Workshop in collaboration with Hadil T. AlKhatib and Catcha Matcha. The workshop event focused on enhancing workplace wellness and provided participants with a practical, hands-on session that combined mindfulness, health, and learning.

Attendees explored the benefits of matcha in boosting energy, focus, and overall well-being, while highlighting the value of mindful practices in professional environments. The session aimed to encourage healthier workplace habits, strengthen team connections, and improve productivity.

BreakBread is a digital platform, a marketplace, and a hub for curated home-cooked food experiences and bespoke events with a mission to unite and connect people, chefs and food lovers around a central idea, 'food is best experienced home-cooked and shared'.

The platform is home to 200+ hosts promoting their culinary talent and enabling its users to experience diverse food cultures from around the world.

Crescent Enterprises Awards \$100,000 MIT Solve AI for Social Innovation Prize



Crescent Enterprises and MIT Solve announced the inaugural AI for Social Innovation Prize, awarding \$100,000 in equity-free funding to four pioneering teams using artificial intelligence to address urgent global challenges.

Unveiled during UN General Assembly and Climate Week in New York, the prize backs innovators working on literacy, women's health, climate resilience, and eye care.

"Technology is only as powerful as the impact it creates," said H.E. Badr Jafar, CEO of Crescent Enterprises.

"With these AI-enabled solutions we have a tangible opportunity to tackle challenges once thought intractable. Our partnership with MIT Solve connects visionary entrepreneurs to the resources they need to scale real-world impact."

The inaugural recipients of the Crescent Enterprises AI for Social Innovation Prize are:

- I Read Arabic – scaling Arabic literacy through engaging digital learning.
- Smart Scope® CX – delivering low-cost, AI-assisted cervical cancer screening at the point of care.
- Littoral – transforming coastal data into early warning tools for climate-resilient shores.
- Visilant – expanding affordable eye screening for underserved communities.

The announcement also marked the launch of the first MIT Challenge Clinic in Arabic, co-hosted by Crescent Enterprises, expanding access for regional entrepreneurs to global networks and mentorship.

Crescent Enterprises Renews Partnership with Sharjah International Film Festival for Children & Youth (SIFF)



Crescent Enterprises renewed its Platinum Partnership with the Sharjah International Film Festival for Children & Youth (SIFF). Now in its 12th consecutive year, the partnership reflects Crescent Enterprises' enduring commitment to youth development, artistic expression, and intercultural dialogue.

Organised by FANN – Sharjah Media Arts for Youth and Children, SIFF has grown year on year to be recognised as the region's leading film festival for emerging young creatives. The 2025 edition featured a compelling programme of films by both established and emerging Arab filmmakers, while bringing together a global community of creatives, educators, and young audiences.

Sheikha Jawaher bint Abdullah Al Qasimi, General Director of FANN and SIFF, commented: "SIFF has grown into a truly global platform that not only inspires young filmmakers, but also reinforces Sharjah's commitment to cultural dialogue and creative innovation. Our long-standing partnership with Crescent Enterprises ensures that we continue to create meaningful opportunities for children and youth to share their stories, explore diverse narratives, and connect with the world around them."

The partnership with SIFF aligns with Crescent Enterprises' broader commitment to cross-cultural collaboration, including its ongoing support of the Arabian Sights Film Festival in Washington DC, USA – now in its 11th consecutive year. Together, these enduring initiatives reflect the company's vision of harnessing education, creativity, and social responsibility to foster inclusive and resilient communities.

"At Crescent Enterprises we believe in the transformative power of cross-cultural exchange and community connection," said Tushar Singhvi, Deputy CEO of Crescent Enterprises. "We are proud to continue supporting SIFF as a platform that empowers the next generation of storytellers. Film is a universal language, one that connects people across borders and perspectives. Through our partnerships, we aim to foster an environment where young people can express themselves, explore diverse cultures, and shape a more empathetic, connected world."

Corporate Citizenship: Celebrating Excellence and Inspiring the Next Generation



We are proud to celebrate Ola Al Haj Hussin, our Corporate Citizenship Manager, who has been recognized among the first 100 individuals on the Syrian Capacities platform published by Majarra, honoring exceptional professionals across sectors.

Ola is one of only 25 women in this distinguished inaugural group. Selection was based on pillars of experience, entrepreneurship, leadership, achievement, and managerial competence. At Crescent Enterprises, we value her dedication, talent, and impact.

In a hands-on workshop led by the Sharjah International Children's Film Festival, children from the Crescent community explored the magic of stop-motion animation. From crafting clay characters to animating everyday objects, participants discovered how creativity and imagination bring stories to life.

As part of our 11-year partnership with the festival, this workshop underscores our commitment to nurturing youth innovation and creative expression. Today's young storytellers are tomorrow's potential changemakers.



About Crescent Enterprises: Crescent Enterprises is a leading multinational company, growing diversified global businesses that are sustainable, scalable, and profitable.

Headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, with business operations in 15 countries, it operates under four enterprise platforms:

- CE-Operates, an operating business platform, focusing on smart infrastructure as the main driver of economic development and growth.
- CE-Invests, a strategic investment platform investing in late-stage businesses and private equity funds
- CE-Ventures, a corporate venture capital platform targeting early-stage technology enabled high-growth businesses and venture capital funds globally
- CE-Creates, an internal business incubator, building start-ups that are socially and environmentally conscious

Crescent Enterprises operates with a value system and culture that embraces corporate governance, inclusive growth, and responsible business practices.



crescententerprises.com



ce@crescent.ae



crescententerp



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+971 6 554 7222