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International Telecommunication Union
Development Sector

Digital Innovation Profile: Jordan

Digital innovation ecosystem: Strategies and recommendations for accelerating digital transformation

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Acknowledgements

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Process Summary

Digital Innovation Capacity

15+ development and tech indicators reviewed

Desktop Research

250+ country-specific documents reviewed

Stakeholder Identification

121 ecosystem stakeholders' roles analysed

Stakeholder Engagement

42 stakeholders directly engaged in activities

Co-Creation Workshops

2,000+ ideas captured through 2 workshops

National Stakeholders' Event

37 strategies and recommendations presented

Execution of Recommendations

$56.1 billion present-day GDP boosted and diversified

Foreword

As the world accelerates towards a digital-first future, Jordan stands at a strategic crossroads – committed to harnessing innovation not only as a driver of economic competitiveness, but as a transformative force for inclusive, sustainable national development.

In line with the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV), the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE) is proud to lead the Kingdom's digital transformation journey. Our mission is to enable a thriving innovation ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship, enhances service delivery, and catalyses economic resilience – particularly for youth, women, and underserved communities.

This digital innovation profile – developed in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) – comes at a pivotal time. It offers a data-driven, stakeholder-informed assessment of the state of Jordan's ICT-centric innovation landscape. Based on over 30 consultations across government, private sector, academia, civil society, and international partners, this report identifies strengths, challenges, and priority areas for intervention. It is both a diagnostic tool and a strategic compass, designed to inform evidence-based policymaking and investment planning.

We are proud that Jordan has taken bold steps in recent years to lay the foundations for a more agile and future-ready innovation environment. These include:

- Managing and automating the Crown Prince Award for Best Government Applications, empowering university youth to co-create impactful digital services;
- Developing the National Innovation Strategy (2026-2028) to institutionalize sectoral innovation framework as a cross-government mandate and align sectoral frameworks with international best practices;
- Launching the National Entrepreneurship Policy (2021), the first of its kind in the region, to integrate entrepreneurship into national economic planning;
- Operationalizing the INNSAN innovation sandbox, a regulatory testbed enabling startups to safely pilot digital solutions that improve public services;
- Deploying the digital innovation profile in priority sectors (e.g., ICT, education, health, agriculture) as a maturity benchmarking framework;
- Advancing Jordan's position in green digital innovation by launching a national agenda focused on the Green Digital Economy and Sustainability, which includes establishing a dedicated work stream to embed environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations in digital entrepreneurship.

Importantly, this report also aligns with global benchmarks such as the Global Innovation Index (GII) and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). Jordan has consistently been recognized as an innovation over performer relative to its income level, and we are proud of our human capital, digital infrastructure, and startup potential. However, we also recognize the need to address structural barriers – including SME access to finance, fragmented support infrastructure, and policy enforcement gaps – to unlock the full potential of our innovation economy.

We extend our sincere thanks to the ITU team and all national stakeholders who contributed to this important milestone. The profile is not an endpoint – it is a call to action for all innovation champions: policy-makers, funders, researchers, developers, and entrepreneurs. Let us continue to work hand-in-hand to advance a green, inclusive, and innovation-powered digital future for Jordan.

H.E. Sami Issa Smeirat
Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Foreword

Innovation and entrepreneurship are the cornerstones of economic resilience and prosperity, vital for fostering job creation, enhancing global competitiveness, and building a future-ready society. In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, it is important that countries are able to harness these dynamic forces to drive sustainable development, empower their youth, and solidify their position as a regional hub for digital innovation.

This digital innovation profile, developed in close partnership with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, aims to support Jordan in leveraging emerging technologies to foster an innovation ecosystem. Its purpose is to provide a holistic and detailed assessment of the digital innovation landscape in Jordan, evaluating its strengths, opportunities, and maturity to guide stakeholders in their strategic decisions. The ultimate objective is to bolster the capacity of Jordan to build a competitive, sustainable, and technology-driven economy that achieves the goals the ambitious national digital agenda.

The development of this profile was the result of a comprehensive and collaborative process, incorporating desk research, in-depth interviews with national experts, and multi-stakeholder workshops engaging leaders from the public and private sectors, the financial community, academia, civil society, and the vibrant entrepreneurial networks present in Jordan. I extend my profound gratitude to all our Jordanian partners whose invaluable perspectives and active participation were instrumental in creating a relevant and actionable profile.

This document serves as a strategic roadmap for policy-makers, investors, innovators, and development partners. It offers critical insights into the digital ecosystem of Jordan, pinpoints key areas for strategic intervention and growth, and provides a clear set of recommendations to align our collective efforts. I am confident that this digital innovation profile will be a catalyst for advancing the national digital transformation journey, and the International Telecommunication Union will remain a dedicated partner as the Kingdom of Jordan translates its strategic vision into tangible social and economic impact.

Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava
Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau
International Telecommunication Union

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1 Introduction

Jordan has laid out a comprehensive national vision through Jordan Vision 2025[1], aimed at enhancing national competitiveness, promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, and strengthening resilience across all sectors. Building on this foundation, the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV)[2] provides a more recent and forward-looking framework that anchors sector priorities and sets out a pathway for accelerating growth, innovation, and digital transformation beyond 2025. Within the context of the EMV, digital transformation is positioned as a central enabler of national progress, and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE) plays a pivotal role in driving the digital agenda forward. The ambition of the Ministry to position Jordan as a regional digital hub has led to active engagement with the local ecosystem, regional stakeholders and international partners to better understand and strengthen the national innovation landscape. The performance of the ICT sector is shaped by multiple factors, and particularly by its capacity for digital innovation. To better understand this dimension, MoDEE in partnership with ITU commissioned this study to examine the state of digital innovation within the ICT sector. This report offers a snapshot of the current digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan, identifies key opportunities and challenges, and provides a forward-looking perspective grounded in global best practices and local realities. It is intended for policy-makers, entrepreneurs, support organizations, financial institutions, academia, and private sector actors, as well as international partners seeking to engage with or contribute to the digital innovation journey of Jordan.

Digital innovation profiles are an important element in the ITU series of snapshots of ICT-centric innovation ecosystems. A digital innovation profile provides a diagnostic overview of the digital innovation ecosystem of a country, examining its health and maturity, supporting strategy development, and informing national policy, programmes and initiatives for accelerating digital transformation.

Each DIP assesses the current state of the innovation ecosystem of a country, highlighting key opportunities and challenges within the national ICT ecosystem. The at-a-glance format of the DIP report provides an analysis that helps stakeholders navigate through the fast-moving innovation landscape to enhance the competitiveness of the ICT sector and unlock the potential for a sustainable digital transformation supporting the transition of the country toward a knowledge-based economy. Further collaboration with ITU may target specific engagements, including the implementation of priority, co-developed, and bankable high value projects aligned with the national context.

1 Government of Jordan. (2015). Jordan 2025: A national vision and strategy. Retrieved from https://gbd.gov.jo/Uploads/Files/jordan-2025/2025-en.pdf.

2 Government of Jordan. (2022). *Economic Modernisation Vision: Unleashing potential to build the future* [Vision document]. Retrieved from https://www.jordanvision.jo/img/vision-en.pdf.

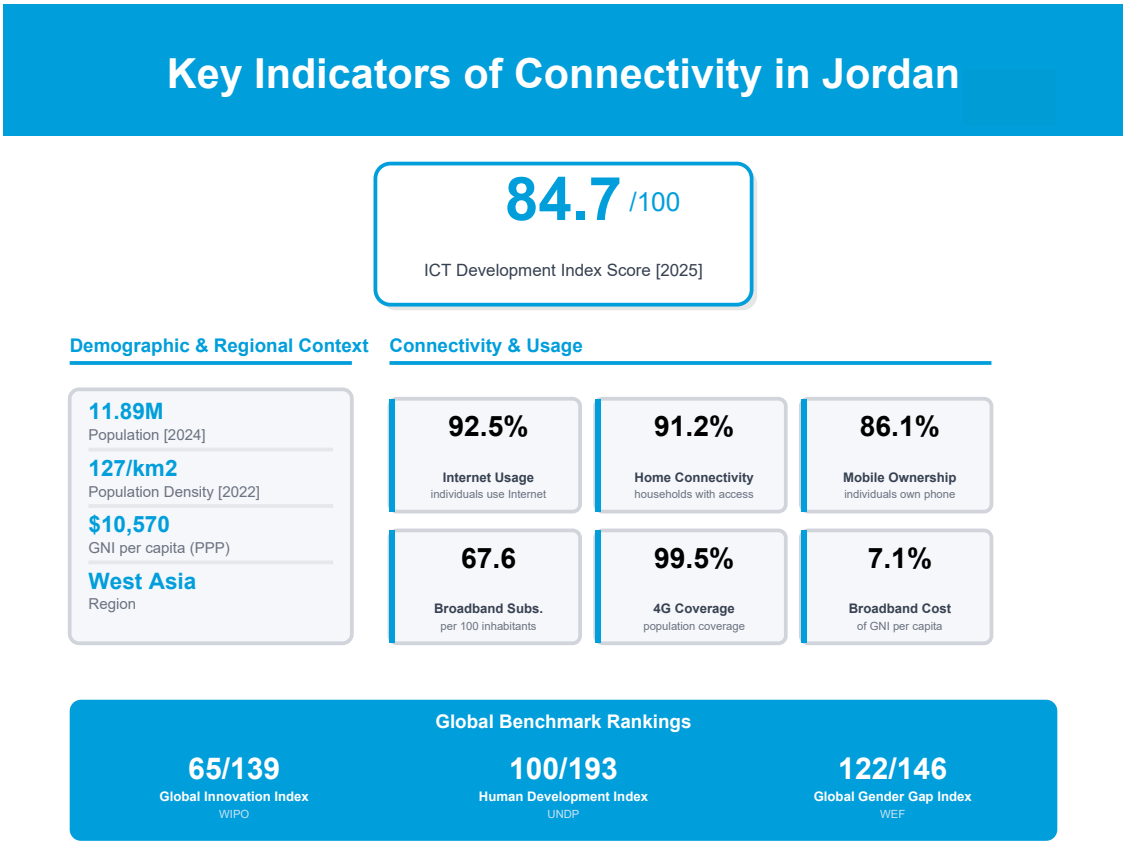
It must be noted that all digital innovation profiles are developed by experts specially trained to apply the ITU Digital Innovation Framework, which involves stakeholder engagement across various stages of the process of developing a DIP. This framework features highly structured workshops and facilitated assessments, designed to build national capacity, enhance on-the-ground skills, and collaboratively accelerate digital transformation. The framework process also equips ITU Member States with the tools to assess and monitor their ICT innovation ecosystems and produce evidence-based assessments and concrete recommendations to change ecosystem dynamics and propel the country towards digital transformation.

The analysis and findings of this DIP report are shaped by a defined methodology that emphasizes secondary research and a collaborative, ecosystem-driven approach. This methodology includes comprehensive secondary research and in-depth one-on-one interviews with over 30 local stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, financial institutions, academia, entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial support networks. Stakeholders were carefully selected in collaboration with the national partner agency to ensure a broad and relevant range of perspectives. This report also integrates insights gathered through group engagements and interactive sessions held throughout the process between 2024 and 2025, including a co-creation workshop to assess the ecosystem and develop recommendations, and a stakeholders' forum to gather feedback and validate the findings prior to the finalization of the report.

Source: MODEE

For further details on the methodology employed, please refer to Appendix 3.

2 Background and context



Source: ITU ICT Development Index 2025 | World Bank | UNDP | WEF

Known for its rich cultural heritage and historical sites, Jordan is classified as a lower-middle-income developing economy by the United Nations[3] and has long invested in education, human capital, and public service reform.

Arabic is the official language and is widely spoken, while English is commonly used in business, government, and higher education, contributing to the global orientation of the country. Jordan also has a high adult literacy rate, estimated at 95 per cent, reflecting its sustained investments in education[4]. Jordan has consistently prioritized education, and the long-term action plans and vision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research have played a significant role in reducing illiteracy rates across the country[5]. The education system is jointly governed by the Ministry of Education (MoE), which oversees pre-primary to secondary education, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), which is responsible for universities, post-secondary institutions, and national research priorities. Despite these educational advances, Jordan continues to face a number of labour market challenges. The national unemployment rate stood at 21.4 per cent in 2024, with disproportionately high youth and female unemployment levels[6]. This figure indicates a decrease of 0.6 percentage points from 22 per cent in 2023,

3 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2025, January). World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 (WESP 2025) [PDF]. United Nations. https://desapublications.un.org/file/21163/download.
4 World Bank. (n.d.). *Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above) – Jordan* [Data set]. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=JO.
5 Weldali, M. (2023, September 9). *Jordan sees further drop in illiteracy rates*. *The Jordan Times*. https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-sees-further-drop-illiteracy-rates%C2%A0.
6 Department of Statistics, Jordan. "21.4 Unemployment Rate for 2024." dosweb.dos.gov.jo, 19 March 2025.

reflecting the positive outcome of efforts underway to address this gap through several policy, programme and initiative measures. The structure of the education system in the country includes two years of pre-primary education, ten years of compulsory basic education, and two years of secondary education, followed by tertiary studies. The education system is governed by a national strategy outlined in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2025, developed by the Ministry of Education with support from international development partners[7]. The strategy includes clear national priorities such as early childhood development, equitable access, system strengthening (including teacher training and curriculum enhancement), educational quality improvement, professional development, and vocational learning pathways. Over the years, the country has embraced reforms to enhance quality and inclusion in education. ICT integration in education has progressively increased, particularly through the "Madrasati" initiative and digital learning platforms developed in response to COVID-19. Launched by Her Majesty Queen Rania, Madrasati aims to create safe and dynamic learning environments that can significantly contribute towards improving the quality of education. Through the Madrasati initiative the national curriculum has been integrated into platforms such as Noorspace and Kolibri, offering virtual classrooms, online resources aligned to Jordanian curriculum requirements, and remote assignment and assessment tools, and reaching over 830 public schools, 17 500 teachers and 360 000 students while significantly expanding digital access across Jordan[8]. These reforms are intended to modernize pedagogy practices, enhance digital skills, and support blended learning approaches in schools and universities.

The economy of Jordan is predominantly service-oriented, with sectors such as finance, tourism, education, ICT, and healthcare playing major roles. Despite resource scarcity, Jordan has demonstrated economic resilience, with a GDP growth of 2.5 per cent in 2025[9]. Nevertheless, structural vulnerabilities persist, including high public debt, energy dependency, and a growing refugee population that continues to strain public services. To address these issues, national development priorities target employment generation, fiscal consolidation, and enhancing competitiveness, particularly through digital transformation, knowledge economy expansion, and inclusive economic participation. Targeted reforms in vocational education and training, support for entrepreneurship, and local manufacturing aim to diversify economic pathways for youth and women, while fiscal sustainability efforts are supported by international aid programmes and public sector reform strategies. Meanwhile, non-ICT related challenges such as water scarcity, regional instability, and demographic pressures continue to demand long-term policy attention. Jordan has invested in adaptive measures such as water management partnerships, green growth strategies, and decentralized service delivery to enhance resilience, particularly in underserved and disproportionately burdened communities. These integrated efforts signal a national shift toward more equitable, innovation-driven, and environmentally conscious development.

Within this evolving development landscape, the role of private sector actors, and particularly of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), has become increasingly critical to achieving inclusive growth and economic diversification. SMEs form the backbone of the private sector in Jordan and are key drivers of employment and local economic activity. SMEs comprise

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7 **Ministry of Education, Jordan. (2018). Education strategic plan 2018–2022 [PDF]. UNESCO IIEP-Paris Repository.** http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/jordan_esp_2018-2022_0.pdf.

8 **Ministry of Education, Jordan. (n.d.). Madrasati Initiative. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from** https://www.madrasati.jo/.

9 World Bank. (n.d.). *GDP growth (annual %)* [Data set]. Retrieved September 4, 2025, from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG.

about 97 per cent of all active businesses and employ roughly 60 per cent of the workforce. SMEs make up approximately 99.5 per cent of all economic establishments in Jordan and employ nearly 60 per cent of the national workforce[10]. They are prevalent in trade, services, manufacturing, and increasingly in digital services. Government initiatives such as the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO), the National Entrepreneurship Policy, and targeted funding schemes support SME growth. Yet, the contribution of the SMEs to GDP remains below 30 per cent, and their share of national exports is estimated at under 10 per cent[11], indicating untapped potential for greater value-added output. Enhancing innovation capacity, digital integration, and value chain connectivity remains central to SME development in Jordan. In this context, as SMEs increasingly adopt digital tools to expand their reach and productivity, the development of robust and inclusive digital infrastructure has become an essential enabler of enterprise growth and innovation.

The telecommunication market in Jordan is competitive and liberalized, with three main mobile operators in Zain Jordan, Orange Jordan, and Umniah. Before the liberalization telecommunication sector in Jordan was managed by Jordan Telecom (formerly the Telecommunications Corporation), which held exclusive control over fixed-line and early mobile services. This structure persisted until the early 2000s, when Jordan began implementing World Trade Organization commitments, welcoming new entrants and laying the groundwork for a competitive market, resulting in improved services and reduced costs for consumers. By the end of 2024, Jordan had approximately 8.05 million mobile subscriptions, and a mobile broadband penetration rate of 68.6 per cent[12]. Up to 92.5 per cent of citizens are Internet users[13], indicating that the widespread availability of mobile Internet and the rollout of 4G and fibre-optic infrastructure have enhanced digital connectivity while efforts are ongoing to further reduce the rural-urban gaps.

These efforts over the years have been foundational to the strengthening of the innovation capacity of Jordan. Today, Jordan is ranked 65th in the Global Innovation Index 2025[14] compared with 86th in the 2019 rankings[15]. In fact, since 2019, Jordan has been among the fastest-rising countries in the Global Innovation Index rankings. The country scores relatively well in indicators related to institutions, knowledge and technology outputs and business sophistication, but lags slightly behind when it comes to human capital, research and infrastructure. According to a 2023 report in the national media, the overall ICT sector contributes approximately 12 per cent to the national GDP[16]. The Global Innovation Index 2025 reports that, within the ICT sector, high-tech exports and ICT services exports account for only 1.1 per cent and 0.1 per cent of total

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10 Jordan Chamber of Industry. (n.d.). Sector Services: Vocational Training and Employment. Jordan Chamber of Industry. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from https://jci.org.jo/Chamber/Services/Sectors/80095?l=en.

11 Jordan Chamber of Industry. (n.d.). Sector Services: Vocational Training and Employment. Jordan Chamber of Industry. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from https://jci.org.jo/Chamber/Services/Sectors/80095?l=en.

12 Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, Jordan. (2024, March). *Quarter 4 2023 telecommunications market indicators* [PDF]. Retrieved June 2025, from https://trc.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/suq_alatsalat/ac032674-005b-4ce5-a192-17cfe62867d2_Q4-2023-20-3-2024.pdf.

13 International Telecommunication Union. (2025). *ITU Development Index 2025*. https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/index.aspx.

14 World Intellectual Property Organization. (2025). Global Innovation Index 2025 (PDF). https://www.wipo.int/web-publications/global-innovation-index-2025/assets/80937/global-innovation-index-2025-en.pdf. https://www.wipo.int/web-publications/global-innovation-index-2024/assets/67729/2000%20Global%20Innovation%20Index%202024_WEB3lite.pdf.

15 World Intellectual Property Organization. (2019). *Global Innovation Index 2019: Creating healthy lives—the future of medical innovation* (12th ed.) [PDF]. https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2019.pdf.

16 The Jordan Times. (2023, March 12). *ICT sector contributes 12% to GDP*. https://jordantimes.com/news/local/ict-sector-contributes-12-gdp.

trade, respectively, while high-tech imports and ICT services imports constitute about 6.7 per cent and 0.2 per cent[17], respectively. These figures indicate a moderate yet expanding digital economy, supported by reliable infrastructure and a young, increasingly technology-literate population.

These developments are underpinned by a clear national modernization vision, anchored in Vision 2025[18] and the EMV[19], which emphasize digitalization, job creation, and public service modernization. In 2022, in line with these goals, the government articulated plans to boost the contribution of the ICT sector to GDP at the time from JOD 900 million to JOD 3.9 billion by 2033, and to expand ICT jobs from 24 700 to 101 000[20]. Sectoral exports have also been targeted since 2022 to increase to JOD 4.5 billion annually. Key levers include the creation of a virtual free zone, the establishment of technology centres across the country, and the activation of acceleration programmes under the Jordan Entrepreneurship Fund. Other measures involve public-private partnerships for digital service delivery, modernized procurement systems, a national R&D and IP fund, a dedicated public data authority, and labour law updates to prepare the workforce for the digital economy.

In support of this ambition, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE) was established in May 2019 (replacing the former MoICT) to lead the transformation agenda by shifting focus beyond communications infrastructure towards enabling a human-centred digital economy and inclusive entrepreneurship[21]. Guided by the National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025)[22], MoDEE articulated bold targets such as increasing GDP contribution from the digital economy to 7 per cent, generating 30 000 new jobs, including 15 000 for entrepreneurs, and saving USD 150 million through cost-optimized digital services[23]. To realize these goals, the Ministry has mobilized substantial public investment, backed by structured partnerships and funding frameworks, to expand broadband and 5G infrastructure, build shared data centres, digitize government services via platforms such as Sanad, and implement critical enablers such as digital ID, e-signature, and open-data policies.

In parallel, Jordan has also taken important steps to align its modernization agenda with environmental sustainability and green economy principles. In 2017, the Cabinet approved the National Green Growth Plan, establishing green growth as a national priority. This was followed by the Green Growth National Action Plan 2021-2025, which provides sector-specific roadmaps for sustainable development across energy, water, agriculture, tourism, transport, and

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17 World Intellectual Property Organization. Global Innovation Index 2025. WIPO, 2025. (Available at: https://www.wipo.int/web-publications/global-innovation-index-2025/assets/80937/global-innovation-index-2025-en.pdf).

18 Government of Jordan. (2015). Jordan 2025: A national vision and strategy. Retrieved from https://gbd.gov.jo/Uploads/Files/jordan-2025/2025-en.pdf.

19 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. (n.d.). *Economic Modernization Vision: Unleashing potential to build the future*. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from https://www.jordanvision.jo/en.

20 Jordan News. (2022, September 14). *Gov't plans to boost ICT sector*. https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Gov-t-plans-to-boost-ICT-sector-21825.

21 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Jordan. (n.d.). *About MoDEE*. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from https://www.modee.gov.jo/En/Pages/About_MoDEE.

22 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. (2021). The national digital transformation strategy and implementation plan 2021–2025. Retrieved from https://www.modee.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/dts-2021-eng.pdf.

23 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Jordan. (2021). *Strategic direction 2021–2025* [PDF]. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from https://www.modee.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/strategicdirection.pdf.

waste management[24]. These frameworks emphasize the need to build resilience by integrating climate action, sustainable investment, and transparent governance into national planning. Jordan's climate ambition, formalized in the National Climate Change Policy (2022–2050)[25], includes a target to reduce emissions by 31 per cent by 2030. This is intended to ensure that Jordan is better prepared and more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Complementary measures, such as the development of a Green Taxonomy, are also underway to guide public and private investments towards environmentally sustainable outcomes[26].

Together, these strategies reinforce the national vision for a green, inclusive, and future-ready economy, strengthening e-government delivery, catalysing youth-led startups, and advancing digital inclusion through skills development. Nevertheless, for digital transformation to be truly sustainable, emerging priorities include scaling inclusive access, bridging urban-rural divides, and ensuring coherent governance across ministries and between public and private stakeholders.

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24 Ministry of Environment. (2017). Green Growth National Action Plan 2021–2025: Energy Sector. https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/ggi-jordan-energy.pdf.

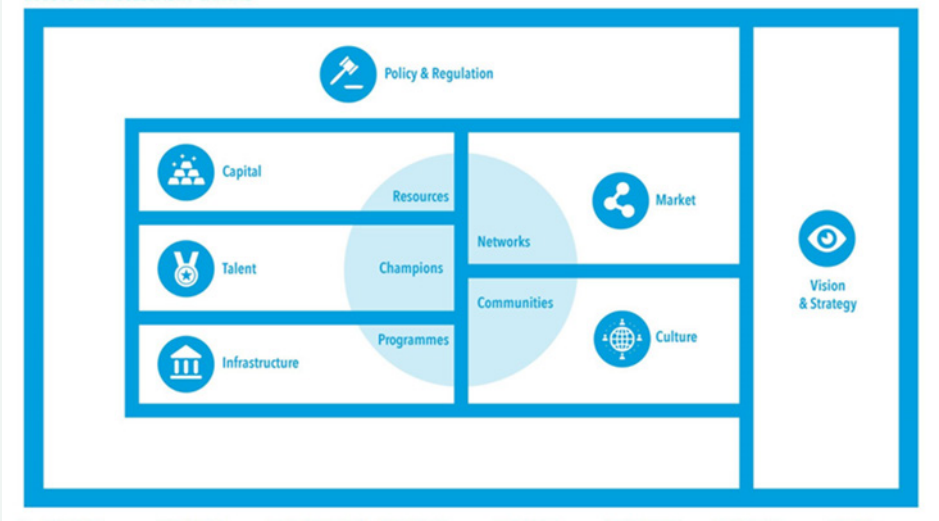
25 Government of Jordan. (2022). National Climate Change Policy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2022–2050. United Nations Development Programme. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-03/National%20Climate%20Change%20Policy%20of%20the%20Hashemite%20Kingdom%20of%20Jordan%202022-2050.pdf.

26 Climate & Company. (2023). Development of a green taxonomy for Jordan. https://climateandcompany.org/projects/green-taxonomy-jordan/.

3 Current landscape

Understanding the ecosystem assessment canvas

Figure 1: Ecosystem assessment canvas



Source: ITU

The ecosystem assessment canvas gives an overview of the seven components that make up the innovation ecosystem. It is used to help assess both the challenges and opportunities for the components essential to building a vibrant and innovative digital ecosystem.

Figure 2: Ecosystem assessment canvas and its related issues

Source: ITU

Building on the ecosystem assessment canvas, the figure above presents the main ingredients of an enabling environment that, if achieved, can accelerate digital transformation in the economy.

Innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems are shaped by a number of interdependent components that influence how effectively a country can pursue its digital transformation goals and accelerate innovation. The seven pillars, and their related ingredients, reflect key dimensions, ranging from infrastructure and talent to policy and culture, that collectively determine how innovation and entrepreneurship are nurtured, supported, and sustained. They provide a structured view of the ecosystem, helping to identify both enablers and gaps that affect its overall maturity and performance.

By understanding and assessing the ecosystem, the enablers needed to achieve the vision can be identified. Since each pillar is one part of a whole, and pillar function is needed for successful innovation activities, the combined efficiency of the pillars can be taken together to indicate a sense of the overall ecosystem efficiency.

The following section provides insights into the current landscape of the ecosystem across these pillars and key component, based on expert interviews and group discussions during the co-creation workshops with local stakeholders, and further validated by secondary research and literature reviews. Each pillar and its key components are initially summarized in bullet points, followed by a detailed explanatory passage.

3.1 Vision and strategy

- The national development of Jordan is guided by a clear and ambitious vision, but there is a need for more cohesive coordination and effective implementation of the strategy and roadmap.
- While stakeholders in Jordan largely agree on the key challenges facing the digital innovation ecosystem, there is a need for more tangible progress in collectively addressing these challenges.
- While the digital innovation ecosystem of Jordan demonstrates a positive level of collaboration, stakeholders emphasize the importance of more structured communication to reduce duplication of efforts and enhance the overall impact.
- While there is general alignment with the national vision, stakeholders note that the alignment with donor priorities sometimes influences the focus of efforts, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that harmonizes both.

Need for one vision

Over the past decade, Jordan has taken commendable strides in positioning innovation, digitalization, and entrepreneurship at the heart of its national development agenda. This commitment is reflected in two visionary frameworks – Jordan Vision 2025 and the EMV– which chart a bold, forward-looking pathway for inclusive growth, economic resilience, and improved quality of life.

While Jordan Vision 2025 laid the foundation for a unified long-term strategy, the EMV has built on this momentum with a more ambitious, data-driven blueprint that reflects both national priorities and global aspirations.

The EMV outlines strategic goals to enhance employment, boost private sector engagement, and advance digital readiness. It sets clear targets, such as integrating over one million young people into the labour market, increasing income per capita by 3 per cent annually, and doubling citizen satisfaction with quality of life to 80 per cent. It also seeks to elevate the performance of Jordan in global indices, aiming for the top 30 percentile in the Global Competitiveness Index and the Legatum Prosperity Index, the top 20 in the Global Environmental Performance Index, and the top 40 in the Global Sustainability Competitiveness Index, in addition to positioning at least one Jordanian city among the world top 100 cities.

Complementing these long-term visions, the National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025), provides a concrete pathway for embedding digitalization

across sectors and improving citizen-centred service delivery. Developed by MoDEE, the strategy aligns digital infrastructure and governance reforms with national priorities, reinforcing the objectives of both Vision 2025 and the EMV. Key targets include expanding fibre-optic and 5G coverage, enhancing digital public services through unified platforms, and generating over 30 000 jobs through the Youth, Technology and Jobs (YTJ) initiative. The strategy also advances digital identity, open data frameworks, and personal data protection while fostering public-private collaboration. Stakeholders view it as a practical instrument for translating high-level ambitions into measurable reforms, positioning Jordan as a digital leader in the region.

The existence of several interlinked national strategies, including the EMV, Jordan Vision 2025, the National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025), and the National Employment Strategy[27], with overlapping priorities and performance indicators, demonstrates growing policy coherence and represents significant gains in national alignment, institutional intent, and recognition of innovation as a driver of long-term growth.

However, gaps remain between the vision and its execution. Stakeholders frequently cited the absence of clear roadmaps, designated ownership structures, and clarity about the roles of different entities and follow-up mechanisms. Ministries often operate in silos, and cascading national priorities across sectors and regions remains a challenge. While a governance dashboard exists, the lack of publicly accessible performance tracking, adaptive timelines, and defined accountability frameworks has limited transparency and progress monitoring. Several initiatives are still in the early stages of development, and the role of innovation could be further elevated beyond digital sectors to reinforce its cross-cutting importance.

Looking ahead, there is consensus on the need for stronger inter-ministerial coordination, clearly identified implementation champions, and more robust performance monitoring systems. Anchoring innovation as a strategic pillar across all frameworks, supported by agile roadmaps and clear communication of national goals, will be vital to turning the national vision into sustainable and inclusive impact.

Agreement on issues

Stakeholders across the digital innovation ecosystem of Jordan widely acknowledge a common set of challenges affecting sector growth. Frequently cited issues include limited access to finance, particularly for startups and SMEs, difficulties in retaining skilled talent due to workforce migration, the constraints of a relatively small domestic market, and regulatory complexity that can deter innovation. This broad alignment across public, private, and entrepreneurial actors marks an important step toward identifying ecosystem bottlenecks and national development priorities. In particular, private sector and support organizations highlighted the need to simplify regulatory processes, while others stressed the importance of expanding market access through regional integration and international trade.

However, translating this consensus into coordinated action remains a challenge. Stakeholders noted that ecosystem actors often operate in silos, guided by institutional mandates or constrained by limited resources and misaligned timelines. Consequently, efforts to address shared challenges may proceed in parallel rather than in concert, reducing overall impact. Certain issues, such as talent retention and skills mismatches, are acknowledged but not

[27] Ministry of Labour.. National Employment Strategy. Retrieved from https://mol.gov.jo/EN/Pages/National_Employment_Strategy.

consistently prioritized across the ecosystem, suggesting a need for deeper awareness and strategic focus. Some stakeholders also observed that, despite broad agreement on challenges, institutional self-interests can hinder collaboration in the absence of formal mechanisms to align priorities.

Despite these constraints, there is growing openness to more collaborative problem-solving approaches. Stakeholders expressed a willingness to engage in regular dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint planning, particularly through neutral platforms that promote inclusive participation. Many called for the creation of coordinating mechanisms to strengthen public-private dialogue, facilitate cross-sector engagement, and inform policy-making with a wider range of ecosystem perspectives. Building on the foundation of shared understanding, the next step involves fostering a culture of collective responsibility and trust-based collaboration which is critical for unlocking greater coherence and achieving long-term impact in the innovation landscape of Jordan.

Ecosystem working together

The digital innovation ecosystem of Jordan reflects a growing culture of collaboration, grounded in a shared recognition that sustainable progress requires collective effort. Stakeholders across public, private, academic, and development sectors are increasingly engaging in joint initiatives, particularly in entrepreneurship support, talent development, innovation policy, and SME growth. These partnerships often take the form of complementary roles where for example, one actor may focus on upskilling youth, while others contribute through incubation, financing, or policy input. Multi-stakeholder platforms, innovation hubs, and coordination mechanisms have emerged to reinforce this collaborative environment. Enablers across education, finance, and business development are also jointly advancing national objectives to strengthen startup and SME resilience.

Despite this encouraging landscape, stakeholders highlighted several operational challenges that limit the effectiveness and scale of joint efforts. A commonly cited concern was duplication of efforts, with multiple programmes addressing similar issues without sufficient alignment, generally due to gaps in stakeholder mapping and limited communication channels. This has led to fragmented knowledge sharing and missed opportunities for synergy. The ICT sector, in particular, was noted as often operating in relative isolation from the broader entrepreneurship ecosystem, limiting its integration into innovation-driven initiatives. Additionally, while many initiatives are currently underway, stakeholders observed that some are either loosely structured or weakly coordinated, diminishing their contribution to a cohesive national agenda. Underlying reasons include institutional competition, lack of defined coordination frameworks, and mandates that do not sufficiently encourage cross-sector collaboration. In many cases, actors work independently not out of reluctance, but due to the absence of a central platform or a shared vision for alignment.

Nonetheless, there is strong momentum to strengthen collaborative structures. Stakeholders consistently called for a robust coordination mechanism to reduce overlaps, improve strategic planning, and increase the visibility of existing efforts. There is also growing interest in establishing shared infrastructure for knowledge exchange, enabling regular ecosystem dialogues, and fostering feedback loops between government, academia, and the private sector to support adaptive policy and programme design. Building on this foundation, Jordan is well positioned to enhance the connective tissue of its innovation ecosystem through more deliberate, structured, and inclusive collaboration.

Support for shared vision

Stakeholders across the national innovation ecosystem broadly express support for the country's overarching vision, and particularly the EMV. Public institutions, academia, development partners, and entrepreneurial support networks indicated that their programmes are generally aligned, at least in principle, with national priorities. Many reported actively reviewing and adjusting their initiatives in line with evolving government strategies, especially in areas such as private sector development, SME support, and youth employment. Development partners such as GIZ and the World Bank have also aligned several initiatives directly with EMV strategic goals, particularly those targeting employment generation and economic inclusion. Several respondents cited the EMV as a turning point, prompting the restructuring or reorientation of existing programmes to better contribute to shared national objectives. This reflects both a conscious institutional shift and increasing awareness of the value of contributing to a unified developmental agenda.

However, despite this strategic alignment, stakeholders identified gaps at the operational level, particularly where national strategies lack updated guidance on innovation. The disconnect between high-level vision and day-to-day implementation was described as a recurring challenge, especially in contexts where programme design is shaped more by donor frameworks than by national operational plans. Stakeholders noted that clearer coordination and guidance from the national side would strengthen coherence, reduce duplication, and enhance long-term impact.

Additionally, a lack of clarity among stakeholders regarding the roles of different entities, along with limited communication of actionable steps, sector-specific targets, and implementation timelines hinders deeper alignment.

Startups and founders offered a pragmatic lens. While they acknowledged the national vision, many highlighted that their immediate focus is on product development, customer acquisition, and business growth, which are priorities that may not require direct engagement with long-term policy agendas. This underscores the need to translate high-level strategies into tangible opportunities, incentives, and guidance that resonate with innovation actors at all levels. For instance, leveraging emerging green economy frameworks and the national green taxonomy could unlock targeted entrepreneurial opportunities, enabling founders to align their ventures with national sustainability goals while accessing new markets and financing instruments.

Nevertheless, there is strong willingness across the ecosystem to strengthen alignment. Stakeholders proposed practical steps such as improved government outreach, wider dissemination of updated strategy documents, and structured co-creation of implementation plans. Many also called for more regular engagement between ministries and ecosystem actors to clarify evolving priorities, share progress updates, and provide space for bottom-up feedback. In essence, the innovation ecosystem does not lack commitment to the national vision, but it needs stronger mechanisms to bridge strategy and practice, ensuring stakeholders are not only aware of broader goals, but also empowered to meaningfully contribute to their realization.

3.2 Infrastructure and programmes

- The ICT and physical infrastructure of Jordan are relatively well-established and continue to evolve, though challenges related to rural access, affordability, and readiness for emerging technologies remain areas that require further investment and coordination.

- Jordan has developed a diverse network of incubators, accelerators, and support programmes for innovators, particularly in Amman, however, there is a need for a stronger focus on growth-stage support and the showcasing of success stories.
- While the compact geography of Jordan facilitates connectivity, infrastructure, and particularly soft infrastructure, is unevenly distributed, with most resources concentrated in Amman, limiting equal access to digital innovation opportunities across governorates.
- ICT-related equipment and components are generally available in Jordan through imports and regional markets, however, affordability and limited awareness of import incentives present challenges for early-stage innovators and small-scale producers.
- Jordan benefits from a skilled workforce and a strategic location but faces challenges from rapidly advancing markets in the region, requiring more aggressive investment and better coordination to fully leverage its strengths.

Hard ICT infrastructure

Hard ICT infrastructure refers to the physical and technological backbone elements such as broadband networks, data centres, telecommunication towers, and reliable electricity grids, that enable digital connectivity, power ICT services, and support the growth of innovation across the country. Jordan has made steady progress in strengthening its ICT and physical infrastructure, laying a strong foundation for digital innovation. The country benefits from high mobile penetration and reliable Internet connectivity, with widespread 4G LTE coverage in urban and peri-urban areas. Private sector operators, such as Zain Jordan, Orange Jordan, and Umniah play a key role in maintaining the digital backbone, with mobile subscriptions reaching 7.72 million by the end of 2023[28]. While Internet pricing is generally affordable by regional standards, it can still present a barrier for lower-income households, particularly in rural areas.

The country began piloting 5G services in 2022, and by mid-2023, telecommunication providers Orange[29], Umniah[30] and Zain[31] had launched 5G services in several areas in Amman, Aqaba and Irbid, with phased expansion planned in the years ahead. This rollout forms part of a broader strategy to enhance digital connectivity and stimulate economic growth. These developments are complemented by improvements in the transport network, facilitated by regional investments in roads and highways, which support logistical access for startups and SMEs across governorates. The fibre-optic infrastructure continues to expand through initiatives such as the National Broadband Network, which has connected nearly 3 000 public institutions, including schools, hospitals, and government buildings, via 4 570 km of fibre-optic cable, extending access to less urbanized areas. Ensuring consistent performance and affordability across user groups will be critical to promoting inclusive digital participation[32]. As infrastructure

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28 Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, Jordan. (March 2024). *Quarter 4 2023 telecommunications market indicators* [PDF]. Retrieved June 2025, from https://trc.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/suq_alatsalat/ac032674-005b-4ce5-a192-17cfe62867d2_Q4-2023-20-3-2024.pdf.

29 Orange Jordan. (11 July 2023). *Orange Jordan officially launches 5G services in Amman and Irbid* [Press release]. Orange Newsroom. https://newsroom.orange.com/orange-jordan-officially-launches-5g-orange-5g-services-now-in-amman-and-irbid-with-continuous-expansion/.

30 Umniah Mobile Co. & Ericsson. (10 February 2023). *Umniah and Ericsson launch Jordan's first phase of 5G deployment* [Press release]. Light Reading. https://www.lightreading.com/5g/umniah-and-ericsson-launch-its-first-phase-of-5g-in-jordan.

31 **Pham, M.** (2022, September 12). *Jordan signs up Zain to 5G agreement. Developing Telecoms.* https://developingtelecoms.com/telecom-business/operator-news/13965-jordan-signs-up-zain-to-5g-agreement.html.

32 **Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Jordan. (n.d.). National Broadband Network Program. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from** https://www.modee.gov.jo/En/Pages/National_Broadband_Network_Program.

advances, ensuring performance consistency and affordability for all user groups will be key to promoting inclusive access. Ensuring consistent performance and affordability across user groups will be critical to promoting inclusive digital participation.

The data infrastructure landscape is also evolving. Local and global cloud services, including AWS, Google Cloud, Azure, and Alibaba Cloud, are increasingly used by startups, especially those offering software as a service (SaaS) products. However, limited local server capacity, high cloud service costs, and the absence of a national cloud facility were noted as barriers to scaling. While domestic hosting services are available, many function as basic server providers rather than full cloud platforms. The government is actively working to expand public sector cloud usage and enhance infrastructure localization, but continued investment will be needed to meet future demand. Recent planning efforts have also focused on establishing a more resilient digital backbone, with cybersecurity, data sovereignty, and interoperability emerging as new priority areas. The recently released GIZ National Report (2023/2024) for Jordan pointed out that access to physical infrastructure remains mostly sufficient, with high ratings for basic utilities, communication access, and availability of affordable office and production space for startups[33].

Beyond ICT-specific infrastructure, enabling systems have seen mixed progress. Electricity supply in urban areas is stable, and energy infrastructure has improved, but electricity prices remain high, posing challenges for startups with high processing or server needs. Stakeholders highlighted a disconnect between energy costs and the strong solar potential of Jordan, calling for better alignment between resource availability and affordable access. Water infrastructure remains a structural concern, given the status of Jordan as one of the world's most water-scarce countries. While these constraints do not currently hinder core ICT operations, they underline the importance of incorporating sustainability planning into future infrastructure strategies. Some stakeholders also emphasized the need for integrated approaches to water–energy–data systems to support long-term innovation.

Looking ahead, continued investment in digital infrastructure, including 5G, cloud capacity, and cybersecurity, will be vital for sustaining innovation momentum in Jordan. Equally important will be efforts to bridge digital divides and ensure that rural and underserved communities are not left behind.

Soft infrastructure and programmes to support innovators

Soft infrastructure refers to knowledge-sharing mechanisms and bodies such as the network of programmes, institutions, and collaborative platforms, including incubators, technology hubs, innovation parks, university initiatives, and mentorship schemes, that provide critical services, skills development, entrepreneurial support, and opportunities for collaboration[34]. Soft infrastructure for innovation has grown significantly in Jordan over the past decade, becoming a key component of its entrepreneurial ecosystem. The country now hosts a dynamic network of incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, fabrication labs, and innovation hubs that provide startups with access to physical space, mentorship, business development, and early-stage finance. These platforms are supported by a range of actors including public

[33] GIZ. (2024). *Jordan National Report 2023–2024: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Retrieved 15 June 2025, from https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2024_en_Jordan_National_Report_GEM.pdf.

[34] International Telecommunication Union. (2020). Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for developing sustainable ICT-centric ecosystem projects (D-INNO-TOOLKIT.2-2020-PDF-E). ITU. https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/inno/D-INNO-TOOLKIT.2-2020-PDF-E.pdf.

institutions, telecommunication companies, universities, and international development partners, demonstrating broad-based ownership of innovation capacity-building.

Notable programmes include the INJAZ mySTARTUP programme, which supports youth and women-led enterprises[35]; Flat6Labs, a regional accelerator with an increasingly strong presence in early-stage space[36] in Jordan; and the Youth, Technology, and Jobs (YTJ) programme, led by MoDEE to build digital skills and employment pathways for young Jordanians[37]. Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) offers inclusive programming for a wide age range (12 to 60)[38], while Shamal Start in Irbid includes a maker space and targeted support for underserved communities[39]. The first Fab Lab, launched by Luminus ShamalStart, offers advanced prototyping resources to entrepreneurs and students in Irbid. Platforms such as iPARK, Oasis500, and Orange's BIG have also played a key role in boosting startup visibility and pitch-readiness. However, some initiatives have faced operational sustainability challenges due to short-term funding, highlighting the need for long-term financial and institutional support.

Stakeholders describe the ecosystem as vibrant, particularly in Amman, where most support is concentrated. Local startups often attribute their early growth to these platforms, which offer networking, pre-seed grants, and global exposure. E-commerce, SaaS, and digital content startups tend to benefit most, while hardware-focused ventures are supported by facilities such as TechWorks. However, gaps in quality and equity persist. Many programmes offer repetitive or generic content, with limited focus on commercialization, investor readiness, or market entry. Founders frequently engage in multiple accelerators with similar technical offerings, while those outside Amman face reduced access to relevant support.

Academic institutions such as Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT), Hussain Technological University (HTU), and Al-Balqa Applied University (BAU) operate their own incubators, offering tailored programming, from business plan development to funding and graduation project incubation. University-based incubators, in particular, face structural bottlenecks, including under-resourced teams and limited staff time for dedicated startup support. The challenge of balancing academic workloads with innovation programming often results in limited continuity and follow-up. While the private sector has helped fill these gaps, via hackathons, bootcamps, mentorship, and in-kind support, stakeholders noted that coordination across initiatives remains inconsistent. In governorates such as Aqaba and southern Jordan, some new incubators have been established (including in the tourism sector), though evidence of long-term outcomes remains limited. There are also few dedicated support structures for deep tech or specialized verticals, such as firmware, advanced app development, or climate tech.

Meanwhile, new institutional efforts are emerging. The Central Bank of Jordan's Regulatory SandBox (JoRegBox)[40] and private shareholding company Jordan Payments and Clearing

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35 INJAZ. (n.d.). *mySTARTUP: Empowering Jordanian youth and women entrepreneurs*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://injaz.org.jo/mystartup/.

36 Flat6Labs. (n.d.). *Jordan Seed Fund and Amman Seed Program*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://flat6labs.com/Location/jordan/.

37 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Jordan. (n.d.). *Youth, Technology, & Jobs Project*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://www.modee.gov.jo/EN/Pages/Youth_Technology__Employment_Project.

38 Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC). (n.d.). *About ZINC*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://zinc.jo/.

39 PARK Jordan. (n.d.). *Luminus ShamalStart incubator*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://www.ipark.jo/what-we-do/entrepreneurship/luminus-shamalstart/.

40 Central Bank of Jordan. (n.d.). Regulatory Laboratory (JoRegBox). Retrieved 9 June 2025, from https://www.cbj.gov.jo/EN/Pages/Regulatory_laboratory.

Company's (JoPACC) JOIN Fincubator[41] are supporting financial innovation and structured experimentation. New accelerators and co-working spaces are also appearing in under-represented regions, with a growing emphasis on outcome-oriented programming and clearer founder pathways. Some universities are piloting more flexible incubation models, engaging alumni and industry partners for deeper support.

Moving forward, stakeholders recommend a more coordinated national approach, anchored in a renewed innovation strategy and supported by ecosystem-wide service mapping. Improved linkages between technical and business support, expanded access beyond Amman, and stronger programme evaluation will be essential to ensuring innovators across Jordan can access relevant, high-impact support throughout their journey.

Infrastructure distribution across the country

Jordan spans approximately 89 000 square kilometres and is home to a population of around 11.7 million[42]. Urban settlement is largely concentrated in the central region, with Amman alone accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the population. Other key urban centres include Irbid in the north, Zarqa to the northeast, and Aqaba in the south, together forming the main axis of economic and innovation activity.

In terms of hard infrastructure, Jordan is generally well-connected. Mobile networks, 4G coverage, and utility infrastructure, including electricity and road networks, are available across most of the country. Fibre-optic connectivity continues to expand, as do 5G services[43]. Stakeholders describe the overall Internet quality as reliable, although rural and remote areas continue to experience variable service speeds and occasional disruptions, though public and civil society efforts are addressing these. Road infrastructure is relatively robust across 90 per cent of the country, facilitating physical access to services and easing regional connectivity for innovation-related activities[44]. Initiatives such as Google's fibre-optic infrastructure in Aqaba have further improved local connectivity, with some stakeholders noting Internet speeds in the city now rival or exceed those in the capital.

A more uneven picture emerges when considering the distribution of soft infrastructure such as incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and entrepreneurship training programmes. These resources remain heavily concentrated in Amman, resulting in access disparities for innovators in other governorates. While Irbid, Zarqa, and Aqaba have begun to attract increased attention, many peripheral areas, particularly in the north and south, still lack consistent access to structured innovation support. Outside these major cities, startup ecosystems often lack specialized facilities. Although organizations such as INJAZ and IRADA are active, they typically offer general youth training or business advisory services, rather than tailored innovation programming. Stakeholders noted that large segments of the population, especially young people and women in rural communities, face limited or inconsistent access to digital entrepreneurship support. Despite rising digital adoption, access to mentorship, training, and physical infrastructure remains uneven beyond urban centres. The centralization of resources

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41 Jordan Payments & Clearing Company (JoPACC). (n.d.). *About JOIN Fincubator*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://www.jopacc.com/what-we-do/join-fincubator/about-join.

42 Department of Statistics. (2024). *Jordan Statistical 2024*. Retrieved from https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/.

43 Developing Telecoms. (2023). *Jordan signs up Zain to 5G agreement*. Retrieved from https://developingtelecoms.com/telecom-business/operator-news/13965-jordan-signs-up-zain-to-5g-agreement.html.

44 USAID. (2022). *Jordan Infrastructure Needs Assessment Report*. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/jordan.

in Amman limits participation from other regions, with high travel costs and inadequate public transport acting as key barriers.

In response, national and regional actors have started piloting decentralized models. Examples include the effort by the government to expand cloud and broadband services to underserved areas[45] and support network and civil society efforts for outreach to governorates beyond the capital[46]. However, several promising initiatives, especially in less urbanized areas, have faced sustainability challenges due to limited long-term funding or institutional support, underscoring the importance of embedding regional innovation into national planning frameworks.

Stakeholders emphasize the importance of building a more inclusive and distributed ecosystem. Priorities include expanding incubator presence across governorates, supporting mobility solutions for innovators, and harmonizing service quality between urban and rural areas. These efforts will be critical to unlocking underutilized talent and ensuring equitable participation in the growing digital economy of Jordan.

Access to equipment

The open market economy of Jordan and established trade relationships provide broad access to ICT equipment, components, and raw materials essential for innovation. Entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and businesses routinely procure tools either locally or via regional and international supply chains. Many startups, particularly those in hardware-related sectors, source equipment from regional hubs in the Gulf region, where prices can be 10-20 per cent lower and product variety is greater[47]. Telecommunication operators also play an enabling role by supporting the availability of hardware and software across the ecosystem.

Despite this access, significant cost barriers remain, especially for bootstrapped startups, student-led projects, and early-stage ventures. Most specialized components must be imported, often incurring additional shipping, customs, and handling fees, raising costs by 15-25 per cent compared to regional markets[48]. This is particularly challenging in hardware development, prototyping, and applied research, where high equipment costs can delay progress on minimum viable products (MVPs).

To mitigate these barriers, the Investment Promotion Law (2022) and Aqaba Special Economic Zone policies offer customs and tax exemptions on ICT and machinery imports[49], particularly for imports of equipment under designated thresholds. Imports of mechanical, office, and computing machinery are duty-exempt under WTO commitments. However, uptake remains limited, largely due to low stakeholder awareness, lack of legal guidance, and the absence of support mechanisms to navigate administrative procedures. Stakeholders also highlighted a need to strengthen the capacity of the Customs Department to handle specialized or dual-use technologies, such as drones or advanced sensors, which often face additional regulatory

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45 MoDEE. (2024). *Digital Transformation and Broadband Projects*. Retrieved from https://www.modee.gov.jo/En/Pages/National_Broadband_Network_Program.

46 Flat6Labs. (2024). *Jordan Programmes*. Retrieved from https://flat6labs.com/location/jordan/.

47 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). (2019). *ICT sector analysis and strategy for Jordan*. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2019-0122en-ict-sector-analysis-strategy-jordan.pdf.

48 Jordan's ICT Sector Analysis – GIZ. (2018). Imported specialized ICT components carry 15-25 per cent additional costs.

49 World Trade Organization. (2023). *Jordan: Tariff profiles* [PDF]. Retrieved 11 June 2025, from https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/daily_update_e/tariff_profiles/jo_e.pdf.

scrutiny. Targeted advisory services for SMEs and startups could help simplify compliance and improve access to these exemptions.

At the same time, Jordan is exploring local manufacturing potential, particularly in hardware assembly and component fabrication. While ambitions exist to localize parts of the value chain, international production, especially in China, remains more viable due to cost efficiencies and scale considerations. Nonetheless, some academic and industry actors are experimenting with shared infrastructure models to improve access to basic fabrication equipment. Fab Labs, university incubators, and co-working spaces with prototyping facilities have emerged in selected regions, although coverage remains uneven.

Academic and research institutions show varied equipment capacity. While some are well-resourced, many rely on external grants to procure tools. Equipment access is fragmented, not only between public and private institutions, but also within public universities, creating disparities in students' exposure to hands-on learning and innovation processes. Limited infrastructure slows research commercialization and product development, particularly in STEM and engineering disciplines.

It is clear that there is potential to ease access barriers through a number of pathways. Improving access to equipment will require action across multiple fronts. Increasing awareness and usability of fiscal incentives, fostering shared-use facilities, and promoting partnerships between universities and the private sector could enhance affordability and resource efficiency. Clarifying regulatory pathways for advanced equipment and strengthening institutional capacities, particularly within customs and education, will be essential. Linking startups with public sector labs and underutilized academic infrastructure could further democratize access, contributing to a more inclusive innovation ecosystem.

Competitiveness

The ICT sector in Jordan has long been recognized for its skilled human capital, particularly in engineering and healthcare. Jordanian professionals are highly regarded and sought after in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, contributing significantly to regional ICT sectors and enhancing the reputation of Jordan within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region[50]. Notably, Jordan accounts for 27 per cent of technology entrepreneurs in the region, despite representing just 3 per cent of the MENA population[51]. According to the United States Department of Commerce, the ICT sector generates over USD 3.3 billion annually, with more than 1 000 active companies employing approximately 25 000 professionals[52]. The strategic location of Jordan and free trade agreements with GCC countries and the United States of America further reinforce its competitiveness in trade and market access.

Despite these advantages, stakeholders expressed concern that the competitiveness of Jordan has weakened in recent years. While the country was once seen as a regional frontrunner, accelerated investments by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the State of Qatar have

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50 Bay Area Council Economic Institute. (2022). *Assessing Jordan's Potential as a Middle East Business and ICT Base*. Retrieved from https://www.bayareaeconomy.org/files/pdf/JordanReport-July2022-Web.pdf.

51 U.S. Department of Commerce. (2024, January 17). *Jordan—Information and Communication Technology*. Retrieved from https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/jordan-information-and-communication-technology.

52 U.S. Department of Commerce. (2024, January 17). *Jordan—Information and Communication Technology*. Retrieved from https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/jordan-information-and-communication-technology.

significantly strengthened their ICT ecosystems, particularly in infrastructure, funding, and scale. In contrast, Jordan continues to face constraints related to limited domestic market size, access to capital, and infrastructure gaps. Moreover, while Jordanian talent remains in high demand internationally, this outward migration contributes to a growing brain drain that impacts local sector development.

To address these issues, Jordan has introduced several strategic interventions. The National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025) aims to digitize public services and lay the foundation for ICT-led economic growth. Recent policy reforms, including the Investment Environment Law, offer tax and customs exemptions for ICT-related imports and startups, further improving the business environment[53]. However, structural challenges such as high unemployment, limited fiscal space, and resource constraints continue to affect the ability of the ecosystem to scale effectively. Stakeholders also pointed to the geopolitical environment of Jordan, situated as it is in a conflict-prone region, as a factor that complicates efforts to attract long-term investment and innovation[54].

Moving forward, strengthening competitiveness will require a coordinated approach across multiple fronts. Key priorities include deepening collaboration among ecosystem actors, increasing investment in ICT infrastructure, and building a more robust pipeline of innovation-driven enterprises. By combining its strategic location, internationally respected talent base, and growing policy focus on digital transformation, Jordan has the potential to move from being primarily a talent-exporting nation to becoming a regional ICT and innovation hub.

3.3 Talent and champions

- Jordan possesses a strong base of ICT technical talent, particularly in coding and software development, though skill gaps remain in some advanced emerging technologies, in practical readiness, and alignment with market needs.
- While soft skills such as creativity and communication are present in most parts of the talent pool, there is a need for stronger early intervention and institutional integration to encourage the development of other business-building related skills and competencies.
- The national education system produces a substantial number of ICT and related graduates each year, but limited local demand and fragmented support structures have slowed the transition of talent into entrepreneurship and research within the country.
- The innovation ecosystem in Jordan is supported by a growing number of recognized champions across academia, the private sector, development organizations, and support networks but increased celebration and visibility would amplify the recognition and replication of such success stories.

Technical skills

Jordan is widely recognized for producing highly skilled ICT professionals, with technical talent considered a core asset of its innovation ecosystem. Many software engineers, developers, and cybersecurity specialists trained in Jordan have gone on to work across the region, especially in the Gulf region, where Jordanian talent remains in high demand. Stakeholders frequently

[53] Al Tamimi & Company. (2025). *Insight into the New Jordanian Investment Environment Law*. Retrieved from https://www.tamimi.com/law-update-articles/insight-into-the-new-jordanian-investment-law/.

[54] Leape, J., Shaheen, S., Winton, S., & Faron, E. (February 2025). *Unlocking the Potential of Jordan's Labour Market*. Institute of Government and Change. Retrieved from https://www.theigc.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/Leape%20J.%20et%20al%20Synthesis%20paper%20February%202025%20(English).pdf.

described Jordan as a "testing ground" for early-stage talent before transitioning to resource-rich environments like Saudi Arabia, highlighting both the capabilities available in the country and the mobility of its workforce.

At the foundational level, public and private universities offer a range of ICT programmes covering coding, web development, and database management, with newer additions in AI, robotics, and cybersecurity. Institutions such as PSUT, GJU, and JU are incorporating more advanced topics, and the Dual Study model at GJU reflects a growing interest in applied education courses. Approximately 30 per cent of early-stage entrepreneurs have post-secondary education, with the 25-34 age group most active, underscoring the role of higher education in technical skill development[55]. However, the depth, practical orientation, and consistency of these programmes vary significantly across institutions, particularly in emerging areas such as immersive technologies, blockchain, and data analytics, where course offerings are still in early stages of development. Several universities have begun adopting applied education models. For instance, GJU, has implemented the Dual Study programme in an association with the Federal Republic of Germany, while Hussain Technological University (HTU) has introduced an apprenticeship model. AQAC has also recognized Dual Studies with institutionalized standards and accreditation requirements. However, a wider systemic shift across the education sector remains limited.

Despite advancements, a persistent disconnect remains between academic training and labour market demands. Many students graduate with strong theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills. This gap is especially pronounced in public universities, where limited faculty industry experience reduces students' exposure to real-world applications. Private institutions are making curricular updates in line with industry trends, but resource and policy constraints slow similar reforms in the public sector. As a result, startups and SMEs often report difficulty finding local talent with market-ready skills in areas such as full-stack development, system integration, and data science.

At the school level, technical education remains inconsistent. Some private schools introduce digital literacy and coding by Grade 10, but public schools often face infrastructure gaps, including outdated labs and limited access to trained instructors. Initiatives such as smart classrooms exist, but coverage remains limited, especially in rural areas, affecting preparedness for higher-level ICT education. While commendable steps have been taken, their full impact will only become evident over time, as students progress through successive grades and the benefits of the new curriculum and teaching approaches are gradually realized across the education system.

To address the public sector education gap, MoDEE and the Ministry of Education have initiated a three-year plan under the broader education transformation objectives of the National Digital Transformation Strategy & Implementation Plan 2026–2028 ,aimed at upgrading infrastructure across all public schools. This collaboration also includes the rollout of a new digital skills curriculum, developed by industry experts through the Youth, Technology and Jobs (YTJ) Project, which introduces programming, cloud computing, and six additional advanced digital skills domains. In parallel, advanced digital skills training for ICT teachers and pedagogical skills training to support project-based and student-centred learning are being delivered, further

[55] GIZ. (2024). *Jordan National Report 2023–2024: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Retrieved 15 June 2025, from https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2024_en_Jordan_National_Report_GEM.pdf.

strengthening the capacity of educators to prepare students for the demands of the digital economy.

Brain drain also presents a significant challenge. High-performing ICT graduates are frequently recruited by Gulf-based companies offering better pay and career prospects. While this affirms the quality of Jordanian education, it also underscores the need for improved local retention pathways, such as competitive compensation, career support, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

To address these issues, national initiatives such as the Youth, Technology, and Jobs (YTJ) programme, in partnership with global technology firms including Microsoft and AWS, are advancing digital skills development. Platforms such as the Orange Coding Academy, INJAZ, and HTU offer hands-on training, with six-credit modules developed by HTU enabling students to pitch ideas and pursue incubation. However, stakeholders noted that innovation and entrepreneurship education remains peripheral in many institutions. Broader concerns include the lack of structured career guidance, limited real-world exposure, and weak alignment between education and future labour market trends.

Deeper coordination between academia, government, and the private sector, alongside curriculum reform, faculty upskilling, and improved regional access, will be critical to building a future-ready, technically proficient workforce.

Soft skills

Soft skills are increasingly recognized as essential enablers of innovation and entrepreneurship in Jordan, shaping the abilities of individuals to collaborate, communicate, and lead effectively. Stakeholders across sectors expressed confidence in the presence of key soft skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and interpersonal communication, particularly among graduates from private and international schools or participants in accelerator programmes. English proficiency is also relatively strong compared to regional peers, especially among those with private education backgrounds, enhancing readiness for international engagement.

However, soft skill development is not yet consistent or widespread. Many individuals acquire these capabilities informally or later in life, often learning on the job or through non-formal education. This fragmented approach contributes to business readiness gaps, especially among youth from public school systems entering universities or launching ventures. Stakeholders noted that even students with strong technical ideas often struggle with communication, teamwork, and self-presentation, limiting their ability to commercialize innovations.

This gap is particularly visible among technical graduates. While engineering and ICT students are praised for their analytical and execution abilities, many face challenges in articulating ideas, leading teams, or engaging investors. This imbalance stems from limited emphasis on communication, leadership, and collaboration within formal education. Although some universities have introduced career guidance offices and extracurricular training, these initiatives are not yet fully integrated into academic programmes. In contrast, graduates of private universities and structured innovation programmes tend to demonstrate stronger business communication and leadership skills, highlighting the value of more holistic training environments.

Non-formal education providers have stepped in to address these gaps. Many incubators and accelerators now include coaching on storytelling, pitching, negotiation, and business etiquette. Programmes such as INJAZ, Orange Coding Academy, and others have embedded

collaboration and communication modules into their offerings. In some cases, incubators even assist in shaping and pitching startup ideas on behalf of technically strong but communication-limited founders.

Stakeholders agreed that earlier exposure to soft skills is essential. Many advocated for integrating communication, critical thinking, and teamwork into primary and secondary school curricula to build stronger foundations before students reach university. The impact of the recently initiated collaboration between MoDEE and the Ministry of Education to transform public sector education will be critical in encouraging society and parents to view public education with greater credibility, especially amid ongoing perceptions of its limited quality in fostering self-expression and entrepreneurial mindsets.

While some progress is being made, soft skill development in Jordan remains uneven and largely dependent on the type of institution and individual initiative. Private universities and accelerator programmes tend to deliver stronger outcomes, while public systems lag behind. Broader access to structured soft skills training, particularly for students in public schools and underserved regions, remains limited.

To ensure a more inclusive and innovation-ready talent pipeline, stakeholders recommended a system-wide approach to soft skills development. This includes mainstreaming these competencies across all education levels, promoting teacher training in participatory methods, and leveraging both formal and non-formal platforms to reinforce communication and collaboration skills for all learners.

Skills moving to innovation

The education system in Jordan, from primary to tertiary levels, continues to play a pivotal role in cultivating a technically capable youth population. Leading institutions such as PSUT, GJU, and JU offer specialized programmes in ICT, engineering, and digital disciplines. In recent years, many have introduced innovation labs, entrepreneurship competitions, and extracurricular initiatives to foster student creativity and problem-solving[56]. However, the transition from education into entrepreneurship or applied research remains limited in scale. According to recent GIZ reports, only 9 per cent of early-stage entrepreneurs in Jordan expect to create more than 10 jobs within five years, reflecting relatively modest growth expectations compared to regional peers[57].

Stakeholders noted that approximately 7 000 students graduate annually from ICT-related fields in Jordan, including software engineering and digital marketing[58], yet only half find employment within the local ICT sector. Many others enter ICT-adjacent roles, such as IT support in administrative sectors, or seek opportunities abroad, particularly in the Gulf region, where startup ecosystems are more mature and compensation is higher[59]. This talent migration

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56 Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT), German Jordanian University (GJU), and University of Jordan (JU). (n.d.). University entrepreneurship initiatives. Retrieved from https://www.psut.edu.jo/ https://www.gju.edu.jo/https://www.ju.edu.jo.

57 GIZ. (2024). *Jordan National Report 2023–2024: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Retrieved 15 June 2025, from https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2024_en_Jordan_National_Report_GEM.pdf.

58 **The Jordan Times. (2021, December 26). Number of ICT graduates in current academic year stands at 7 247 – int@j. The Jordan Times. Retrieved 11 June 2025, from** https://jordantimes.com/news/local/number-ict-graduates-current-academic-year-stands-7247-intj.

59 World Bank. (2021). *Jobs Diagnostic in Jordan*. Retrieved from https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/186231632986059790/jobs-diagnostic-jordan.

accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic and reflects both the strength of Jordanian training and the constraints of domestic absorption[60].

Several interrelated factors constrain the education-to-innovation pipeline. Entrepreneurship and innovation are often introduced late, as standalone or extracurricular topics, rather than integrated into core curricula[61]. Students frequently encounter these themes for the first time during undergraduate studies, with little early exposure in school. Stakeholders noted that students often prioritize stable employment in public sector or large private sector firms, influenced by cultural expectations, limited career guidance, and low visibility of innovation pathways[62].

While several initiatives running in the country aim to build real-world exposure, many internships remain observational, offering limited practical experience. Similarly, though entrepreneurship competitions are growing in popularity, they are rarely linked to follow-up support, incubation, or seed funding. Graduate tracking at GJU shows that only 8-10 per cent of students pursue entrepreneurial ventures, falling short of the national aspiration of 15 per cent[63]. The Venture Lab at PSUT, which transforms graduation projects into business models, offers a promising model, though its reach remains localized[64].

A further constraint is ecosystem fragmentation. Many students only access mentorship, prototyping, or finance opportunities through donor-funded initiatives or formal incubator networks[65]. This lack of integration leaves high-potential ideas underdeveloped or shifted abroad where support systems are stronger.

Despite these challenges, the well-educated and motivated youth of Jordan remain a promising national asset. Stakeholders shared cases of graduates returning from Gulf region markets to launch startups in engineering and services. Applications to startup competitions have increased, reflecting rising interest in entrepreneurship and innovation[66]. However, without more systemic pathways, connecting classroom learning to company creation, these successes are likely to remain isolated.

To strengthen the contribution of education to innovation, stakeholders recommend embedding entrepreneurship into formal curricula, improving the design of internships, and strengthening university-industry links. A consistent focus on applied research, innovation skills, and access to local finance will be essential to building a pipeline that moves talent from education into innovation-driven careers.

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60 Cafiero, G. (2021, October 6). *The brewing storm in Jordan's oasis of calm*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Retrieved 15 June 2025, from https://www.csis.org/analysis/brewing-storm-jordans-oasis-calm.

61 OECD. (2021). *Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Jordan*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/mena/competitiveness/Strengthening-Entrepreneurial-Ecosystem-Jordan.pdf.

62 UNDP Jordan. (2022). *Youth and Innovation in Jordan: Challenges and Opportunities*. Retrieved from https://www.undp.org/jordan.

63 German Jordanian University (GJU). (2023). *Graduate employability report*. Retrieved from https://www.gju.edu.jo.

64 Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT). (2023). *Venture Lab initiative*. Retrieved from https://www.psut.edu.jo/content/venture-lab.

65 INJAZ Jordan. (2023). *Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship*. Retrieved from https://www.injaz.org.jo.

66 Flat6Labs Jordan. (2023). *Annual Report on Startup Activities*. Retrieved from https://www.flat6labs.com/location/jordan/.

Champions leading and being recognized

The digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan is animated by a diverse constellation of champions across stakeholder groups such as universities, government bodies, private companies, development partners, and civil society, who are collectively driving talent development, startup support, and systemic change.

Universities including GJU, PSUT, and HTU are recognized for producing technically skilled graduates and promoting early-stage innovation through labs, competitions, and project-based learning, roles viewed as central to the digital future of the country. MoDEE and the Higher Council for Science and Technology are key public champions, leading initiatives to build skills, support entrepreneurship and enable partnerships. The private sector also plays a catalytic role, with Zain, Umniah and Orange offering youth-focused digital and entrepreneurship programmes. Startup enablers such as iPARK, Flat6Labs, and Oasis500 have nurtured cross-sectoral capacity, while institutions such as JoPACC, Ahli Bank, and Arab Bank's incubator support fintech and digital payments services. CliQ, MadfooatCom, and JOIN Incubator are also recognized as national ecosystem champions. Among the innovators, startups such as MaysAlWard, Tamatem Games, iFood (which achieved a notable exit), ShipDip, eStrata (which has now branched out to Greece), WebHelp (a French company with an office in Jordan) are also seen as symbolic of the entrepreneurial potential of Jordan and are frequently referenced as success stories that inspire new founders.

In parallel, international development partners such as GIZ, the World Bank, and USAID have invested consistently in skills building, digital employability, and entrepreneurship pipelines. Civil society organizations such as the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF) and Mercy Corps are also engaged in inclusion-focused innovation, working at the intersection of education, community outreach, and livelihood access, especially for marginalized populations.

Despite a rich constellation of actors, the celebration of innovation champions remains uneven and largely Amman-centric. Stakeholders noted that limited communication campaigns, fragmented platforms, and weak storytelling hinder the visibility of regional and emerging leaders.

Stakeholders called for more deliberate efforts to spotlight diverse champions, particularly from underrepresented areas, through awards, media, and peer mentorship. Stronger ecosystem-wide platforms could help amplify success stories, encourage replication, and empower champions to shape national innovation agendas.

3.4 Capital and resources

- Private sector investment in innovation in Jordan is growing, but mostly in the telecommunication and ICT sector, but it still remains unevenly distributed across the wider private sector, with limited investments in R&D, cybersecurity, and other critical areas.
- The startup ecosystem benefits from various investment initiatives across different stages, but persistent gaps remain in the funding landscape, compounded by investor risk-aversion, the small market size, and a limited pipeline of mature, investment-ready startups.
- The Government of Jordan provides several funding instruments and support schemes for the innovation ecosystem, but funding is often channelled through donor-backed projects and spread too thinly, limiting its broader impact.

- Jordan benefits from robust international funding, though the impact is occasionally hindered by fragmented coordination in addressing ecosystem-specific root causes.
- The country is focused on attracting foreign investment in the ICT sector, leveraging its talent, competitive costs, and strategic location. While there have been some successes, stakeholders feel more needs to be done to make a bigger impact across the entire ecosystem.
- While there are some provisions for research priorities and funding, actual investment levels remain modest, limiting both academic and applied research and resulting in minimal translation into innovation or commercialization.
- While incubators and accelerators have expanded significantly, many of them are overdependent on donor funding and small local entrepreneurial talent pool, affecting their long-term sustainability and systemic impact.

Availability of investment for the private sector

The private sector in Jordan is playing an increasingly visible role in advancing the digital innovation ecosystem, particularly through investments in startups, skills development, and digital service innovation. Investment flows originate from both domestic and international actors, including large corporations, development-backed funds, and public-private partnerships. However, the distribution of these investments remains uneven, with most activity concentrated in telecommunications, banking, and consumer-facing digital applications, leaving gaps in areas such as R&D, cybersecurity, and deep-tech innovation.

The telecommunication sector is a key driver of private innovation. Leading telecommunication operators such as Zain[67], Orange[68], and Umniah[69] have launched startup support platforms that provide capacity building, small grants, coding academies, and access to entrepreneurial networks. Industry-sponsored hackathons and university-linked innovation challenges further contribute to a skilled, innovation-minded talent base. While these programmes are impactful, some stakeholders note they are still perceived as corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives rather than integrated, long-term innovation strategies.

Banks and financial institutions are also increasing their engagement. JoPACC, Arab Bank, and Ahli Bank have invested in digital finance infrastructure, supported fintech startups, and experimented with innovation labs. JoPACC, in particular plays a pivotal role in advancing digital payments through platforms such as JoMoPay, contributing to financial inclusion[70]. Nonetheless, private investment remains largely geared toward improving service delivery, with limited focus on developing novel technologies or disruptive innovation.

Private sector R&D investment is sporadic and often outsourced. Some larger companies engage in research, but much of it occurs abroad. Locally, few firms have embedded R&D units or sustained innovation pipelines. Collaboration between businesses and universities remains

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67 Aqaba Economic Network. (n.d.). *Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC)*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://aen-aqaba.net/aen-members/zain-innovation-campus-zinc/.

68 Orange Jordan. (n.d.). *Orange Coding Academy*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://www.orange.jo/en/corporate/csr/coding-academy.

69 Telecom Review. (2023, February 15). *Umniah launches first StartupBootcamp MENA Challenge*. *Telecom Review*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://telecomreview.com/articles/telecom-operators/8104-umniah-launches-first-startupbootcamp-mena-challenge/.

70 Tay, L.-Y., Tai, H.-T., & Tan, G.-S. (2022). Digital financial inclusion: A gateway to sustainable development. Heliyon, 8, e09766. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09766.

limited, and while interest in frontier technologies such as AI is growing, few companies have dedicated resources or in-house expertise to explore these areas at scale.

To maximize impact, private capital should be more closely linked to strategic R&D, applied research, and inclusive innovation. A more collaborative, forward-looking approach, grounded in partnerships with academia and supported by targeted incentives, can help the private sector fulfil its growing role as both an innovation leader and economic driver in Jordan.

Availability of investment at all stages of the innovation journey for digital startups and SMEs

The startup ecosystem in Jordan benefits from a diverse mix of local, regional, and international funding sources including accelerators, venture capital funds, and donor-backed initiatives. At the ideation and early seed stages, actors such as Oasis500, Flat6Labs, and Orange Corners Jordan play a catalytic role. Oasis500 has invested over USD 10.9 million in 189 companies[71], while Flat6Labs supports pre-seed ventures and recently launched the Jordan Seed Fund (JSF) to invest in over 90 tech-enabled startups across Jordan, the State of Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon. JSF offers up to USD 115 000 in seed funding, with potential follow-on support of USD 170 000[72].

A standout intervention in the innovation finance landscape of Jordan is the Innovative Startups and SMEs Fund (ISSF). Launched in response to recommendations by the Jordanian Economic Policy Council, the ISSF was capitalized with USD 98 million, of which USD 50 million is from the World Bank and USD 48 million from the Central Bank of Jordan, and is managed by the private sector[73]. Initially designed to expand access to finance for startups and SMEs, the ISSF has since evolved into a cornerstone of the national startup ecosystem. Operating as a fund-of-funds today, the ISSF supports early and growth-stage ventures through equity financing, technical assistance, and co-investment facilitation. By 2024, it had mobilized over USD 240 million in co-investments and had supported more than 120 companies. Building on this momentum, a second phase, ISSF 2.0, is currently under development, aiming to catalyse an additional USD 150 million in investment, finance 100 startups, and to generate 1 500 jobs in strategic sectors such as ICT, greentech, and fintech.

Complementing these support network efforts in the ecosystem a number of private financial institutions, such as Arab Bank, Ahli Bank, and Etihad Bank, have initiated fintech accelerators and innovation programmes, though their reach remains comparatively modest. Despite this activity, structural gaps persist across the startup lifecycle. Bootstrapping and informal financing remain common at the ideation stage, and funding typically becomes available only once a minimum viable product (MVP) is developed. This delays growth and contributes to high attrition. The most acute challenges arise during the pre-revenue phase, particularly for innovation- or R&D-intensive startups. Local angel networks remain small, risk-averse, and unevenly distributed across regions, limiting access to bridging capital.

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71 **Oasis500. (2023, September 27).** *Oasis500 celebrates 10-year anniversary* [News article]. Retrieved June 2025, from https://oasis500.com/en/news/oasis500-celebrates-10-year-anniversary.

72 Flat6Labs. (n.d.). *Flat6Labs Amman*. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from https://flat6labs.com/program/flat6labs-amman/.

73 Innovative Startups and SMEs Fund (ISSF). (n.d.). *About us*. LinkedIn. Retrieved 11 June 2025, from https://www.linkedin.com/company/issfjo/.

Investor-side constraints also play a role. Venture capitalists and donors report a limited pipeline of investment-ready startups, making them hesitant to deploy larger ticket sizes. Regulatory factors, including complex business registration processes, a non-common law framework, and limited exit pathways, discourage both domestic and foreign investors. Some accelerators even encourage companies to register in jurisdictions such as Delaware or DIFC in Dubai to facilitate funding.

As a result, some high-potential startups choose to relocate abroad, and innovation activity remains largely concentrated in the capital. Initial public offerings (IPOs) remain rare, with few pathways for startups to scale through public markets. While cases like Tamatem Games and iFood have inspired local entrepreneurs, they have not yet catalysed systemic investment shifts.

To unlock the full startup potential of Jordan, stakeholders emphasize the need to strengthen early-stage financing, expand angel investment, reduce regulatory and collateral barriers, and establish a clearer path to scale. Without targeted reforms, many startups may continue to grow outside Jordan, limiting the long-term economic and innovation impact of the ecosystem.

Government funding

Government support for digital innovation in Jordan is evident through a range of programmes and strategic interventions. While direct budget allocations for innovation-specific projects remain limited, the country has some flagship initiatives aimed at talent development, entrepreneurship, and digital infrastructure. One prominent example is the Youth, Technology, and Jobs (YTJ) Project, funded by the World Bank and implemented through MoDEE, which promotes digital skills among youth and supports entrepreneurship through sub-programmes such as NashamaStart or subsidies to support talent costs[74].

Other public agencies, such as the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO)[75] and the King Abdullah II Fund for Development[76], provide financial and advisory support to MSMEs, though their programmes are often general in scope rather than innovation-focused.

In parallel, the Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) has emerged as a notable public champion of digital innovation and entrepreneurship[77]. Through initiatives such as TechWorks, a national makerspace, CPF promotes youth engagement with emerging technologies and entrepreneurship. The public commitment of the Crown Prince to digital transformation has helped elevate innovation as a national priority. Some recognition schemes, such as the Crown Prince Award for Best Government Service, have also incentivized innovation within public institutions and improved service delivery.

While there are initiatives making small but noticeable impacts, stakeholders consistently noted that most government funding is routed through donor-backed projects rather than national budget lines. Ministries often issue digital transformation mandates without dedicated financial resources, relying instead on general IT budgets or external funding. In sectors such as energy

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74 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE). (2023). *Annual Report 2022–2023*. Retrieved from https://modee.gov.jo.

75 Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO). (2023). SME Support Programmes. Retrieved from https://www.jedco.gov.jo/.

76 King Abdullah II Fund for Development. (2023). *Entrepreneurship and Innovation Support Initiatives*. Retrieved from https://www.kafd.jo/en.

77 Crown Prince Foundation. (2024). *TechWorks – Our Flagship Innovation Space*. Retrieved from https://cpf.jo/en/programs/techworks.

or manufacturing, public investment in R&D and innovation partnerships remains marginal. Structural barriers further limit the impact of available public funding. Stakeholders described existing mechanisms, such as the Scientific and Investment Fund, as bureaucratic and lacking transparency, deterring applicants. Many entrepreneurs, especially those outside Amman, are unaware of available funding streams or lack the technical capacity to apply. Even when funding is accessible, it often targets high volumes of small-ticket support rather than providing deeper investment in high-potential ventures with scalable impact.

As Jordan seeks to position itself as a regional digital innovation hub, the establishment of more flexible, accessible, and innovation-specific public funding instruments will be critical. Better integration across ministries, streamlined processes, and greater outreach, particularly in underserved areas, can ensure that public support for innovation translates into tangible ecosystem growth and national economic resilience.

International funding

International funding has played a pivotal role in advancing the digital innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Jordan, particularly in light of fiscal constraints and limited public investment. A wide range of development partners, including bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, and United Nations agencies, have supported efforts to strengthen infrastructure, build institutional capacity, and stimulate private sector growth. Their contributions have helped subsidize early-stage risk, promote digital transformation, and support national efforts around youth employability and innovation.

The World Bank has been a central player, co-financing two flagship programmes: the YTJ project and the ISSF. The German agency for international cooperation (GIZ) has made significant contributions through programmes such as the Innovation Private Sector Development (IPSD) project and GAIN, both of which advance green entrepreneurship, regulatory innovation, and public-private dialogue in partnership with the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ). GIZ also supported the national Digital Financial Literacy Campaign launched by the CBJ in 2019, aimed at enhancing responsible digital financial service usage across age groups[78].

Other long-standing partners include USAID, which has channelled over USD 20 million into innovation capacity-building within universities and supported entrepreneurship initiatives for youth and underserved communities, including INJAZ[79]. The European Union, through Horizon Europe and INTERREG, has committed significant funding, with INTERREG alone allocating EUR 93 million while focusing on digital transformation and commercialization of research[80]. Additional support has come from EBRD, KfW, DAAD, UNDP, and the governments of Canada, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through technical assistance, ecosystem building, and financial innovation tools.

However, the impact of international funding is occasionally constrained by fragmented coordination and limited local integration. While the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation serves as the central body for reviewing and aligning donor-funded initiatives

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78 Central Bank of Jordan. (2024, March 24). *CBJ and GIZ launch the Digital Financial Literacy Campaign*. Retrieved June 15, 2025, from https://www.cbj.gov.jo/En/newsdetails/CBJ_and_GIZ_Launch_the_Digital_Financial_Literacy_Campaign.

79 World Bank. (2022). *Youth, Technology, and Jobs Project (YTJ) – Jordan*. Retrieved from https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P170669.

80 European Commission. (2023). *EU Neighbours South – INTERREG NEXT MED Programme*. Retrieved from https://www.enicbcmed.eu/interreg-next-med-programme-allocates-eu93-million-jordan.

with national priorities, stakeholders noted that although alignment is strong at a strategic level, it does not always extend to the specific needs of the innovation ecosystem, resulting in overlapping initiatives and duplicated efforts. Some programmes were also viewed as overly focused on project management and consultancy costs with limited funds reaching startups, or as spreading a constrained pool of resources too thinly across too many targets.

Having said that, donor support has contributed to de-risking investments, expanding access to entrepreneurial pathways, and strengthening institutional capacity. Going forward, enhanced coordination among development partners, stronger alignment with local priorities, coalitions among partners and deeper engagement of ecosystem actors in programme design could amplify the strategic value and long-term effectiveness of international support.

Foreign direct investment

Jordan continues to position itself as a regional hub for ICT services and digital innovation, with foreign direct investment (FDI) forming a key pillar of its national economic development strategy. The comparative advantages of the country, including a highly educated, multilingual workforce, competitive operational costs, and geographic proximity to both Europe and the Gulf region, make it an attractive destination for ICT-enabled services and technology outsourcing. The alignment of Jordan with European time zones further enhances its value proposition for business process outsourcing (BPO) and regional operational hubs.

Recent years have seen increased interest from international firms establishing a presence in Jordan. Major technology companies, including Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft, have launched operations in the country, contributing to the development of local talent pools and generating employment in both technical and customer-facing roles.

Institutionally, the Government of Jordan has taken proactive steps to attract and facilitate foreign investment. The Ministry of Investment leads efforts to improve investor experience through initiatives such as a real-time investment dashboard, which tracks sectoral inflows and enhances transparency. The Jordan Investment Commission (JIC) also supports FDI attraction, particularly within designated special economic zones such as Aqaba, where companies benefit from fiscal incentives, regulatory facilitation, and tailored support services. These zones have proven instrumental in reducing administrative barriers and supporting the establishment of foreign enterprises.

According to INT@J, investment in ICT enterprises in Jordan is four times the Middle East region average, with entrepreneurship investment reaching USD 420 per million of GDP, compared to a regional average of just USD 120[81]. At the same time, they emphasize the importance of a clear, integrated sector vision to promote more balanced growth across all governorates. One of the most prominent initiatives targeting technology-driven FDI is Jordan Source, a national programme aimed at branding Jordan as a premier outsourcing and digital services destination. Functioning as a "soft landing" platform, Jordan Source connects international businesses with local ICT talent, startup enablers, and institutional partners. It offers matchmaking, investment facilitation, and communications support, positioning Jordan as an "operational kitchen" for regional innovation activities. The government has set an ambitious target of attracting JOD 1.8 billion in investment between 2023 and 2027, with Jordan Source playing a central

[81] The Jordan Times. (2023, March 12). *ICT sector contributes 12% to GDP*. https://jordantimes.com/news/local/ict-sector-contributes-12-gdp.

role. Supporting infrastructure, such as the King Hussein Business Park, provides high-speed connectivity and business support services to ICT firms, while the Aqaba Special Economic Zone offers tax incentives and streamlined regulations to promote exports and investment across services, manufacturing, and logistics sectors.

Despite strong policy direction and positive signals, some stakeholders observed that the tangible ecosystem-wide impact of these FDI efforts remains uneven. While job creation and sector visibility have improved, linkages between foreign investors and the domestic innovation ecosystem, such as startup collaboration, R&D investment, or local capacity-building, are not yet fully institutionalized. This points to an implementation gap between strategic ambition and operational outcomes. Nevertheless, the rising profile of Jordan in the regional investment landscape and growing interest from global technology players place it in a strong position to expand FDI flows in high-value sectors, provided mechanisms for integrating foreign firms into the local innovation ecosystem continue to evolve.

Availability of resources for investment in research

Research and development (R&D) plays a vital role in driving innovation and long-term economic growth. In Jordan, however, overall investment remains modest, limiting the ability of the research sector to support the digital innovation ecosystem. While national policies acknowledge the importance of research, stakeholders across academia, government, and industry agree that available resources are insufficient and coordination structures underdeveloped.

The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) leads public support for research, managing the Scientific Research and Innovation Support Fund. This facility, previously under the Ministry of Higher Education, now provides competitive grants ranging from JOD 10 000 to 100 000, with a focus on aligning with national priorities and introducing clearer impact metrics. An estimated USD 5 million is expected to be disbursed annually to prioritize applied research and innovation.

Public universities are also mandated to allocate 3-5 per cent of their annual budgets to research. However, implementation is inconsistent, and unused funds are often returned to the treasury, discouraging long-term planning. Budgetary deficits further limit universities' ability to invest in infrastructure, recruit research talent, or support industry collaboration. Much of the academic research remains theoretical and geared toward faculty promotion, with few incentives for commercialization. Current regulations also restrict faculty from launching spin-offs or holding equity in research-based startups, hindering technology transfer. Stakeholders have called for updated university and civil service regulations to enable entrepreneurship within academia.

Gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) is less than 0.5 per cent of GDP, well below the global average of 2.5 per cent and that of regional peers such as Tunisia and Egypt[1]. While institutions such as PSUT and the University of Jordan are recognized for their strong research cultures, they remain exceptions. Technology Transfer Offices exist but have had limited success in bringing research to market. Commercialization pathways are underdeveloped, and many patents remain unused.

Private sector investment in R&D is also limited, with few incentives such as tax credits, matching grants, or dedicated research funds. While some large firms in pharmaceuticals or ICT conduct in-house research, this often takes place in isolation or abroad. Past efforts to establish corporate research funds reportedly faltered due to weak governance and misalignment with business

needs. International development partners help fill some of these gaps. Programmes by USAID, GIZ, United Nations agencies, and Endeva have supported applied research and market intelligence, but often remain fragmented and project-based. Initiatives such as the Next Lab Project and partnerships with universities in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada offer models for applied innovation and collaboration, though these remain isolated.

Structural issues persist, including incentives that favour publication volume over relevance and the predominance of Arabic-language output, which limits global visibility. Cultural and institutional barriers continue to impede academia-industry collaboration, despite growing awareness of its importance.

The research ecosystem in Jordan is active and intellectually rich, but remains under-resourced and misaligned with national innovation goals. Strengthening investment, reforming regulatory frameworks, and deepening cross-sector partnerships will be essential to making research a foundational pillar of an innovation-driven future.

Resources to build ecosystem supports

The innovation ecosystem in Jordan is supported by a growing network of incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and startup hubs that play a vital role in nurturing early-stage entrepreneurs. These entities form the backbone of the entrepreneurship infrastructure, offering mentorship, training, prototyping, and market access. However, their long-term sustainability remains constrained by limited institutional capacity and a heavy reliance on donor-driven funding models.

Most support organizations operate on short-term, project-based grants provided by international donors. While such funding has facilitated the expansion of incubation and acceleration services over the past decade, it has also created structural vulnerabilities. Short funding cycles, shifting donor priorities, and intense competition for resources leave many support organizations aligning with externally defined programme agendas rather than local ecosystem needs. Stakeholders observed that despite substantial funding channelled into entrepreneurship development, systemic capacity gains and startup survival rates remain limited.

Some leading support network entities have demonstrated stronger programme delivery and donor engagement, occasionally attracting corporate or private investment. Nonetheless, even these more mature actors face challenges in achieving financial self-sufficiency. Outside of a few corporate-backed or university-hosted incubators, most lack access to long-term capital or equity-based revenue streams. Legal and operational barriers often prevent them from holding equity in the startups they support, reducing their potential to evolve into financially resilient institutions. As a result, many spend significant time and resources on securing grants, distracting from their core mission of supporting innovation.

University-based incubators face particularly stark constraints. Although most major public universities have established innovation centres, their annual operational budgets are often limited to between JOD 10 000 and 60 000. Several operate at reduced capacity or remain inactive pending new funding or partnerships. Many have shifted away from intensive incubation toward co-working spaces or short-term training, adjusting to both resource constraints and variable startup demand. This has led to significant disparities in the depth and quality of support services across institutions.

Stakeholders also noted that funding is frequently fragmented and dispersed across overlapping initiatives, diluting impact and limiting the accumulation of institutional knowledge or infrastructure. Instead of consolidating resources around proven, high-performing programmes, funders often prioritize new pilots, creating inefficiencies and impeding ecosystem-wide scaling. Dedicated support for incubators and accelerators as institutions remains limited, and community-led ecosystem builders are particularly under-resourced.

Despite these challenges, the value of these organizations is widely acknowledged. They play a pivotal role in developing entrepreneurial pipelines, de-risking early-stage ventures, and fostering innovation communities. Their continued relevance will depend on transitioning toward more resilient, performance-based models. This could involve hybrid funding approaches, deeper private sector partnerships, co-investment mechanisms, and policy reforms enabling equity participation. With stronger coordination and targeted support, incubators and accelerators in Jordan could evolve into robust institutional anchors, laying the groundwork for a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable innovation ecosystem.

3.5 Market and networks

- Jordan has a good mix of associations and formal and informal networks engaging with the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, but better coordination, more meaningful activities, and stronger integration between academia, industry, and policy-makers are needed.
- Although mapping and collaboration efforts are growing stronger, partnerships are still largely driven by personal connections rather than an institutionalized framework.
- While the ICT market in Jordan offers promising use cases and a testbed for innovation, limited market assessment and structural barriers in public procurement hinder the sustainability and growth of innovative products and services.
- The country has a high potential for ICT exports, given some favourable taxation benefits and trade agreements, but is constrained by market limitations, regional competition, low uptake of incentives, and regulatory challenges.

Formal associations

The digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan is underpinned by a growing constellation of formal associations and informal networks that promote entrepreneurship, digital skills, and ICT sector development. These platforms play a vital role in advocacy, coordination, and capacity building across stakeholder groups.

The Information and Communications Technology Association of Jordan (INT@J) is a key national voice for technology companies, advocating on issues such as 5G, workforce development, and digital business[82]. It supports startups through its Startups Working Group, ecosystem mapping, and the "Investor Voice" programme. INJAZ, a nationwide NGO, complements these efforts by delivering entrepreneurship, life skills, and financial literacy training across all 12 governorates. Since 2001, it has reached over one million students in 3 000+ schools and 40 universities, with its "Company Programme" enabling students to build and run real businesses[83].

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82 **Information and Communications Technology Association of Jordan (int@j). (n.d.).** *int@j: Advancing Jordan's ICT sector*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://intaj.net/.

83 **Reimers, F. M.** (2016, July). *INJAZ: Engaging the private sector for greater youth employability in Jordan* [Case study]. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FINAL-INJAZ-Case-Study.pdf.

The DigiSkills.jo initiative further strengthens the talent pipeline by offering free, employer-aligned digital training to youth aged 18-34[84]. In partnership with the private sector, it delivers curricula in areas such as cloud computing and cybersecurity and connects more than 2 000 graduates annually to job placements through training grants and employment incentives, helping bridge the skills mismatch and expand employability.

Jordanian entrepreneurs also benefit from participation in global networks such as Pando[85] and the Global Entrepreneurship Network[86], which connect local founders to diaspora communities, international investors, and cross-border collaboration opportunities. Locally, coordination platforms such as J-CORE convene key ecosystem actors, including INT@J, INJAZ, Endeavour, and academic institutions, on a quarterly basis to align efforts and share insights. University innovation centres also report periodic engagements with industry to connect research with entrepreneurship.

Informal networks play an equally important role in community-building. WhatsApp groups like the Aqaba Entrepreneurship Network and United Arab Emirates-based founder forums offer real-time peer support, while platforms such as ReachHub provide virtual mentorship. Mentor communities such as Blue Ocean, as well as support from diaspora Jordanians, contribute to ecosystem growth through knowledge-sharing, funding introductions, and career guidance.

Despite the diversity and reach of these networks, challenges persist. Many operate in silos, with limited coordination, irregular engagement, and varying levels of trust. Stakeholders noted a lack of onboarding mechanisms for new members, fragmented programming, and competition among platforms. Several associations are perceived as more visible than functionally active, and cross-sectoral collaboration, particularly with academia and regulatory bodies, is not yet institutionalized.

Clearly, the rich landscape of formal and informal networks in Jordan provides a strong foundation for deeper ecosystem integration. Enhancing convening capacity, building trust, clarifying mandates, and fostering sustained cross-sector dialogue will be key to strengthening their contribution to national digital transformation efforts.

Ecosystem mapping and collaborations

The digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan benefits from a relatively close-knit environment, where stakeholders are often familiar with each other's roles and activities. This interpersonal familiarity has fostered agile, peer-to-peer collaboration, particularly among ecosystem enablers, where startups frequently transition across support programmes. However, reliance on individual connections has limited the emergence of sustained, systemic collaboration frameworks.

To improve transparency and coordination, several mapping initiatives have been introduced in recent years. The most notable is the StartupJo platform, relaunched in March 2024 by INT@J as

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84 **DigiSkills Association. (n.d.).** *DigiSkills: National digital skills ecosystem in Jordan*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://digiskills.jo/.

85 Pando HR Inc. (n.d.). *Pando: A continuous performance and career progression platform*. Retrieved 11 June 2025, from https://www.pando.com/.

86 Global Entrepreneurship Network. (n.d.). *Global Entrepreneurship Network*. Retrieved 11 June 2025, from https://www.genglobal.org/.

an interactive map featuring over 400 actors, including startups, enablers, and investors[87]. The platform allows users to update their profiles and is refreshed quarterly, serving as a dynamic tool for ecosystem visibility. Mapping efforts by GIZ[88] and the European Union have offered valuable insights into regional and thematic dynamics, though these remain largely donor-driven, fragmented, and not always publicly accessible. Another significant initiative is the 2022 Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Mapping by Orange, ILearnJO, and INT@J, which identified more than 1 300 non-profit social impact entities, including 301 aligned to social enterprise practices[89]. While the mapping revealed strong contributions to sustainable development goals (SDGs) and regional clustering in Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa, it also underscored structural gaps, such as the absence of a legal framework for social enterprises, limited institutional visibility, and weak cross-actor coordination, challenges that resonate across the broader innovation ecosystem.

Despite the availability of mapping tools, coordination among ecosystem institutions remains mostly ad hoc and project-based. Many initiatives are developed in silos, shaped by the mandates of individual institutions or donor interests rather than a shared national strategy. Among entrepreneurs, a collaborative culture is still emerging; a scarcity mindset and limited trust often lead to guardedness and reluctance to pursue joint initiatives. This limits the potential for knowledge exchange and collective problem-solving. A growing recognition exists of the need for greater business to business (B2B) collaboration among Jordanian startups and SMEs, which could deepen domestic value chains, enable service bundling, and stimulate co-creation.

Industry–academia linkages are expanding, with technical universities signing MoUs with private ecosystem actors. However, most partnerships are still based on informal relationships rather than institutional frameworks. While some models, such as curriculum co-design, internship placements, and innovation-focused agreements, show promise, they remain limited in scale and consistency. The broader Triple Helix model, connecting academia, industry, and government, remains nascent.

Efforts are underway to formalize collaboration. GIZ has supported the formation of Entrepreneurship Support Networks across governorates to improve service referrals. INT@J is seeking funding to deepen academia–industry partnerships, while stakeholders have proposed establishing a national entrepreneurship roundtable to align ecosystem actors, reduce duplication, and build shared momentum.

As the ecosystem matures, greater emphasis on formal collaboration mechanisms, clear mandates, and accountability structures will be critical. Moving from interpersonal cooperation to institutional integration presents a key opportunity to enhance ecosystem resilience and position Jordan as a regional innovation leader.

Domestic markets

The domestic market offers a dynamic yet constrained environment for ICT innovation in Jordan. The country benefits from near-universal Internet and smartphone penetration, a digitally

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87 **StartupsJo. (n.d.).** *Ecosystem sectors map*. Retrieved June 2025, from https://www.startupsjo.com/en/Pages/CustomPages/EcoSectors.

88 Mainlevel Consulting AG. (2024). *Entrepreneurial ecosystem mapping of Aqaba and analysis of start-up economic sectors* (Final Report). Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2024-en-entrepreneurial-ecosystem-mapping-of-aqaba.pdf.

89 Orange Jordan, ILearnJO, & int@j. (2022). *Social entrepreneurship ecosystem mapping report*. https://intaj.net/wp-content/Studies/SE_Ecosystem_Mapping_Report_SEP2022.pdf.

literate and youthful population, and growing entrepreneurial interest in applying technology to national challenges. Startups are increasingly active in sectors such as food security, green technology, healthcare, and e-commerce, positioning Jordan as a viable testbed for digital innovation before regional scaling.

However, the small size of the market, coupled with modest consumer purchasing power and high unemployment, limits its ability to sustain high-growth digital ventures. With a population of just over 11 million and relatively low demand for high-value ICT products, many startups choose to validate their solutions locally and then expand into Gulf markets to access greater commercial potential. This dynamic reflects both the strengths of Jordan as an innovation sandbox and the structural limitations to domestic scalability.

Startups are primarily concentrated in Amman, Aqaba, and Irbid, which offer better infrastructure, investor access, and talent pools. Yet even in these hubs, most startups serve local markets, with limited expansion across governorates. For instance, ecosystem mapping in Aqaba indicates that the vast majority of startups cater only to their immediate region, reflecting broader national trends of limited scale and fragmented market access. Innovation is also hindered by gaps in market intelligence. Founders often have strong technical skills but limited access to demand-side data or tools to assess product–market fit. This makes it difficult to align solutions with local consumption patterns or design scalable, user-centric offerings.

Public procurement represents a significant but underutilized market opportunity. All government ICT tenders are centralized under MoDEE to ensure quality and standardization, but the procurement process is widely viewed as complex, lengthy, and administratively burdensome. Payment delays, lengthy evaluation timelines, and stringent requirements around liquidity and past performance often exclude startups from bidding. While a policy mandates that 20 per cent of public procurement be allocated to SMEs, enforcement, especially in high-value ICT contracts, remains limited.

Platforms such as GrowJo have been developed to support SME participation by centralizing access to government incentives and application procedures. While some improvements in registration have been noted, awareness remains low among early-stage companies, and the application process continues to pose barriers.

The Competition Law (2004) in Jordan offers a regulatory foundation to address market fairness by targeting anti-competitive behaviour across both public and private sectors[90]. The Competition Directorate under the Ministry of Industry and Trade leads enforcement, with growing efforts to promote fair competition in priority sectors. Nevertheless, capacity-building and greater ecosystem awareness are needed to make these protections more impactful for startups.

Several programmes have attempted to bridge market access gaps, such as the Public Procurement for Innovation (PPI) initiative and JEDCO's export readiness support. However, uptake by ICT ventures has been limited, and the impact remains nascent.

The domestic market holds significant potential as a platform for experimentation and inclusive innovation, particularly in social and green sectors. Realizing this potential will require structural

[90] Abbadi, L. (2006). *Jordan*. In CUTS International (Ed.), *Competition regimes in the world: A civil society report* (pp. 80–85). CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation. https://www.cuts-ccier.org/pdf/Chapter15.pdf.

reforms in procurement, strengthened market intelligence tools, and better enforcement of SME-friendly policies to unlock demand and catalyse sustainable growth.

Trade flows

The ICT sector in Jordan is becoming increasingly export-oriented, particularly in digital services, software development, and technical talent. While local manufacturing capacity remains limited, the country leverages favourable trade policies, including zero taxation on ICT exports and reduced sales tax rates for IT companies, to promote a service-based export model. Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Gulf, European, and North American markets further enhance access to international markets. Startups are often encouraged from the outset to target the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, given their larger market size and stronger purchasing power. Stakeholders also note growing interest in African markets, where digital solutions may be more scalable. However, the absence of dedicated regulatory instruments and streamlined support for SMEs limits the ease with which they can navigate compliance, logistics, and market entry processes.

The talent export model of Jordan is a distinctive feature of its trade flows. Many ICT professionals work abroad, contributing to household incomes through remittances and strengthening international networks. However, this dynamic also contributes to domestic skill shortages, limiting the ability of local startups to scale effectively. Meanwhile, the import of ICT hardware remains modest, shaped by the limited industrial base and small-scale demand of the country. Most startups depend on imported technology and cloud services, exposing them to global supply chain risks and foreign exchange fluctuations. While the stability of the Jordanian dinar, pegged to the United States dollar, reinforces investor confidence, it can raise the price of Jordanian exports in cost-sensitive markets.

Despite policy incentives and a technically skilled workforce, Jordan has yet to fully capitalize on its FTAs, geographic location, or human capital to boost digital exports. Export procedures are perceived as complex, and cross-border trade is inhibited by limited market intelligence, inconsistent intellectual property (IP) protection, and varying standards across target countries. Export-oriented initiatives remain fragmented, often shaped by donor priorities rather than an integrated national export strategy. Stakeholders highlighted that even promising efforts, such as the Public Procurement for Innovation (PPI) pilot, failed to progress beyond initial planning due to limited follow-through.

Nascent efforts are underway to explore niche export segments in digital health, fintech, and green technology, but these remain largely donor-driven and lack institutional continuity. Capacity-building for exporters, participation in international trade fairs, and bilateral collaboration are typically conducted on an ad hoc basis without systematic follow-up or integration into a broader trade development agenda. Coordination among trade promotion bodies, ecosystem enablers, and the private sector remains limited, reducing the uptake and impact of available export support.

Jordan holds strong potential to position itself as a regional digital innovation hub. Realizing this vision will require more cohesive efforts, including streamlined export procedures, better institutional alignment, and long-term strategic investments, particularly in emerging ICT subsectors, to unlock new markets and boost competitiveness in the global digital economy.

3.6 Culture and communities

- Jordan hosts a vibrant array of technology and entrepreneurship events throughout the year, but faces challenges in reducing duplication of efforts, increasing participation beyond Amman, and contributing to measurable impact.
- The entrepreneurial culture in the country is steadily growing, particularly among youth, but it struggles to sustain momentum due to economic pressures, traditional mindsets, and a lack of holistic, long-term support services.
- While risk-taking is slowly becoming more accepted among Jordanian entrepreneurs, there are still limited conversations about failures and a lack of interest in exploring unique market needs.
- The country and its stakeholders are making great strides in promoting diversity and inclusion, particularly in gender and refugee representation. However, there is still room for systemic changes to involve more women in leadership roles and to better include marginalized communities in rural and remote areas.

Communities and events

The digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan is supported by a vibrant calendar of entrepreneurship and technology events, anchored by an expanding network of support communities. Throughout the year, a wide array of actors, including government entities, private sector players, universities, and civil society, convene workshops, hackathons, pitch competitions, and networking forums that foster collaboration and visibility. High-profile gatherings such as the MENA ICT Forum, the Entrepreneurship World Cup, and Startup Village Arabia draw regional attention and provide platforms for peer learning and investment. Regular meet-ups such as Startup Grind and FinTech Days, alongside educational initiatives such as HTU's 6-credit pitch module, reflect the sustained energy of grassroots engagement.

Ecosystem enablers play a central role in maintaining this momentum. INT@J continues to organize sector-focused forums, while JoPACC and the Crown Prince Foundation host innovation-focused hackathons and bootcamps. Organizations such as INJAZ and iPark provide hands-on capacity building, and telecommunication companies such as Orange and Zain contribute consistently through startup competitions and innovation challenges. Academic institutions, including the Queen Rania Centre and HTU, strengthen linkages between entrepreneurial learning and practice. Additionally, international development partners regularly support local events, helping to showcase Jordanian talent and connect entrepreneurs to global opportunities.

Despite these strengths, the reach and inclusivity of events remain uneven. The majority are concentrated in Amman and its surrounding urban centres, with limited presence in other governorates. Stakeholders note that events outside the capital often face challenges related to funding, visibility, and follow-up support, reducing their ability to foster inclusive participation. While many programmes engage youth through school and university outreach, these efforts are frequently one-off and lack integration into structured pipelines that encourage long-term entrepreneurial engagement. Event participation is often limited to recurring attendees and established organizations, with few mechanisms to reach first-time founders or underserved communities.

Information dissemination also presents a challenge. In many regions, awareness of upcoming events depends on informal channels such as word-of-mouth, limiting access. Stakeholders highlighted the need to better leverage digital platforms and social media to expand visibility and promote broader participation. Additionally, some event formats are viewed as repetitive or

overly focused on awareness-raising, with fewer opportunities for sustained startup development or follow-on support.

A further gap lies in monitoring and evaluation. While hackathons and bootcamps generate strong initial engagement, their contribution to startup formation, partnerships, or scaling is rarely tracked. Similarly, while dialogue-driven events enable valuable knowledge exchange, mechanisms to translate discussions into action are often lacking.

Nonetheless, stakeholders see strong potential in the Jordanian culture of convening. With improved coordination, greater regional inclusion, and clearer mechanisms for feedback and impact tracking, events could evolve into powerful enablers of digital innovation. Strengthening the connective tissue between actors, and embedding events into a broader ecosystem strategy, will be essential to ensuring they contribute meaningfully to inclusive innovation and national development goals.

Spread of entrepreneurial culture

Entrepreneurial culture is gradually expanding in Jordan, with growing awareness and interest in digital innovation, particularly among youth. Several factors have contributed to this shift, including increased access to the Internet, greater visibility of entrepreneurial regional success stories, and the proliferation of national programmes that promote entrepreneurship as a viable pathway. Initiatives supported by the public sector, development organizations and academic institutions have played an instrumental role in fostering this culture, while platforms such as Flat6Labs and Oasis500 continue to provide early-stage support that validates entrepreneurship as a credible career option.

The national economy of Jordan is required to create 66 000 new jobs every year over the next decade in order to accommodate the growing workforce, which is expected to grow to 2.5 million people by 2025[91]. In this context, entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed not only as an innovation enabler but also as a crucial driver of employment generation and economic resilience.

However, entrepreneurship in Jordan is still not a dominant cultural norm. For many, particularly outside of Amman, traditional employment remains the first preference. In rural and smaller governorates, the business landscape is often characterized by low-risk, conventional ventures, with limited exposure to innovation-led thinking. Entrepreneurship is often perceived as a response to economic necessity rather than an opportunity-driven choice. High unemployment, low average salaries, and rising living costs have contributed to entrepreneurship becoming a fallback strategy for some, rather than a proactive pursuit of innovation.

Despite these constraints, young Jordanians increasingly express a desire to be independent, own their businesses, and participate in the digital economy. The emergence of the gig economy, freelance work, and digital platforms has also enabled more flexible pathways into entrepreneurship. However, success rates remain low, and a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial process, beyond hackathons and competitions, is still developing. Many aspiring entrepreneurs are driven more by trends or financial incentives than by a commitment to problem-solving or long-term enterprise development.

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[91] UNICEF Jordan. (2023). *Innovative solutions to bridge the digital divide*. https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/3261/file/Innovative%20Solution%20to%20Bridge%20the%20Digital%20Divide.pdf.

The substantial youth population, strong digital connectivity, and qualified talent pool in Jordan provide fertile ground for cultivating a more innovation-led entrepreneurial culture. Continued awareness campaigns, integration of entrepreneurship into education, and clearer access to role models and guidance can help transition entrepreneurship from a necessity-driven option to a more aspirational, structured pursuit.

Attitudes towards risk and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial risk-taking in Jordan is gradually gaining acceptance, particularly among youth and early-stage founders who increasingly view innovation as both a viable and necessary response to economic challenges. A growing number of entrepreneurs are experimenting with new business models, pivoting in response to feedback, and re-entering the market after initial setbacks. This evolving mindset reflects a gradual cultural shift towards accepting failure as a natural part of the entrepreneurial journey. Digital platforms, global success stories, and entrepreneurship-focused content have further contributed to this change, with more Jordanian founders sharing their experiences openly and embracing iteration over perfection.

Despite this progress, societal perceptions of risk remain cautious, especially among older generations and in more traditional households. Public sector jobs, perceived as secure and low-risk, and high-paying private sector roles with international exposure continue to be viewed as preferable, particularly for individuals with financial dependents. Failure still carries social stigma in certain circles, and even successful entrepreneurs note lingering discomfort in publicly acknowledging past mistakes. As a result, risk-taking is often personality-driven, with only a subset of individuals demonstrating the persistence required to navigate early-stage challenges and rebound from failure.

Institutional barriers further reinforce this caution. Banks and financial institutions rarely extend credit to startups without collateral, and there is limited access to second-chance financing. Equity-based investment is still nascent, and donor-funded programmes tend to favour structured, low-risk interventions. Although some incubators offer re-entry opportunities for previously unsuccessful founders, these remain inconsistent across the ecosystem. The lack of government safety nets or legal protections for failed startups also discourages risk-taking, particularly in underserved regions and among older demographics.

Interestingly, research suggests that successful entrepreneurship is not confined to youth. A Harvard study found that the average age of successful startup founders is closer to 45, highlighting the value of experience and industry insight. In Jordan, however, entrepreneurship is largely perceived as a youth-centric pursuit, with few older professionals encouraged to explore entrepreneurial pathways. Social expectations, income security concerns, and family responsibilities further limit the participation of experienced individuals, potentially constraining the capacity of the ecosystem to scale ventures with lasting impact.

Having said that, positive signals continue to emerge. Younger generations in Jordan show greater openness to uncertainty and non-linear career paths. Peer communities are fostering supportive environments where failure is discussed constructively, and emerging role models are helping to reframe entrepreneurship as a path of resilience and growth. Some stakeholders note that founders are becoming more strategic, placing early emphasis on product-market fit and business sustainability. This growing maturity, if coupled with greater institutional flexibility and public storytelling around entrepreneurial journeys, including failures, could strengthen the risk resilience of the innovation ecosystem.

With sustained efforts to normalize trial and error progress, expand second-chance mechanisms, and diversify the entrepreneurial demographic, Jordan has the potential to foster a more innovation-driven culture, one in which risk is viewed not as recklessness, but as an informed, strategic response to a changing economic landscape.

Diversity and equality

The ICT innovation ecosystem in Jordan has shown a growing commitment to diversity and inclusion, particularly across gender, geography, and vulnerable population groups. High levels of female participation in innovation events and university enrolment underscore this shift. Women account for 45 per cent of enrolment in computer science programmes (2022), and just under half of attendees at bootcamps and entrepreneurship events[92]. Yet, workforce inclusion remains limited: women comprise roughly 30 per cent of the ICT sector workforce, but only 16-17 per cent occupy technical roles and just 21 per cent hold leadership positions[93]. These figures mark progress but reveal enduring gaps in equity, particularly in terms of career advancement and formal enterprise participation.

Structural barriers persist for women-led ventures, many of which remain informal or home-based. Access to finance, safe working environments, inclusive mentorship, and childcare facilities are limited. Broader challenges such as sectoral segregation, inflexible work arrangements, and persistent gender stereotypes continue to hinder the advancement of women into decision-making roles. A joint study by the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford highlights the transformative potential of supports such as transport, childcare, and flexible work, estimating that equalizing the labour force participation of women could raise GDP per capita by up to 70 per cent[94].

At the same time, social expectations also influence male participation. Men often face cultural pressure to provide for families early, which can limit educational and career flexibility. These dynamics highlight the importance of addressing gender inclusion systemically, rather than solely through women-targeted interventions.

Efforts to promote regional inclusion are also increasing. Programmes supported by government and donors often require that at least 60 per cent of participants come from outside Amman. Outreach sessions are conducted in multiple governorates, and digital penetration is high. However, disparities remain in access to digital literacy, infrastructure, and soft skills training, particularly for women and youth in rural and low-income areas. Mobile access is nearly universal, yet digital use for productive purposes remains uneven across gender and geography.

Vulnerable groups, including young women, refugees, persons with disabilities, and out-of-school youth, face additional barriers. Despite the ICT sector contributing around 12 per cent to GDP, foundational digital skills are often lacking among these populations. In response, targeted initiatives such as UNICEF youth digital skills programmes[95] across five governorates

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92 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2021, August 7). *Jordanian women shine in science*. UNESCO. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/jordanian-women-shine-science.

93 Jordan Times. (8 March 2019). *Women occupy around 30% of ICT jobs in Jordan – int@j*. Jordan Times. https://jordantimes.com/news/local/women-occupy-around-30-ict-jobs-jordan-%E2%80%94-intj.

94 Leape, J., Shaheen, S., Winton, S., & Faron, E. (2025, February). *Unlocking the potential of Jordan's labour market* [Synthesis paper]. International Growth Centre. Retrieved 15 June 2025, from https://www.theigc.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/Leape%20J.%20et%20al%20Synthesis%20paper%20February%202025%20(English).pdf.

95 UNICEF Jordan. (2023). Innovative solutions to bridge the digital divide. https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/3261/file/Innovative%20Solution%20to%20Bridge%20the%20Digital%20Divide.pdf.

and Mercy Corps' digital inclusion work for women and refugees[96] have emerged to support inclusion. Amam Ventures' "Get on Board"[97] initiative prepares women for board roles, and MoDEE is supporting digital literacy and innovation opportunities across regions.

Jordan's humanitarian commitments as host to millions of refugees add further complexity. The country is home to over 654 000 registered Syrian refugees[98] and approximately 2.4 million Palestinian refugees (as of 2020), representing the largest Palestinian refugee population under the mandate of UNRWA[99]. In recent years, ongoing regional conflict has led to increased migration, with Jordan continuing to offer humanitarian support. However, this humanitarian support places pressure on national infrastructure, especially in education, healthcare, and social services. As unemployment reaches 21.4 per cent nationally and 40.8 per cent among youth (Q2 2024), both host and refugee communities face constrained opportunities and heightened competition[100]. Social cohesion and inclusive innovation pathways are thus essential priorities

Although momentum is building, reflected in university curricula, youth attitudes, and donor indicators, systemic change remains necessary. The absence of a unified national inclusion strategy, and limited focus on issues such as workplace harassment, leadership pipelines, and mental health, continue to limit progress. Nonetheless, the ecosystem is in transition, with growing recognition that sustainable innovation must be inclusive by design.

3.7 Policy and regulation

- There is strong political will and promising initiatives to support innovation in the country, but the ecosystem would benefit greatly from clear ownership of innovation, greater coordination within the government, and timely exchange of data and statistics to leverage ICT for innovation in key verticals.
- While a few ministries play a leading role in ecosystem engagement, broader public sector involvement with the ecosystem remains limited, affecting cross-sector innovation.
- The country has a strong institutional framework for intellectual property protection and reduced registration costs, but low public awareness and limited academic incentives hinder its full impact on innovation.
- The national research policy aims to develop a knowledge economy in key sectors, but limited funding, lack of incentives for applied research, and weak industry linkages affect desired impact.
- Jordan has strong measures in place and an ICT strategy driven by its Reach 2025 agenda with a focus on key verticals; a dedicated and agile innovation strategy can help it stay ahead of the curve and navigate fast-paced technological advancements.
- The country has taken positive steps to modernize education in recent years to meet the needs of 21st-century skills but is limited by talent migration and misalignment with practical industry needs.

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96 Mercy Corps. (2023). *Inclusive Digital Economies in Jordan*. https://www.mercycorps.org.

97 Association of Banks in Jordan. (n.d.). *Opening of the Get on Board program in its fourth edition at the Association of Banks in Jordan*. Retrieved 12 June 2025, from https://abj.org.jo/news/opening-of-the-get-on-board-program-in-its-fourth-edition-at-the-association-of-banks-in-jordan#:~:text=Manal%20Bankrian%2C%20Deputy%20Resident%20Representative,access%20to%20boards%20of%20directors.

98 UNHCR. (2024). *Operational Update: Jordan*. https://www.unhcr.org/jo.

99 UNRWA. (n.d.). Where we work: Jordan. United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Retrieved 12 June 2025, from https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan.

100 Department of Statistics–Jordan. (2024, September 4). Jordan unemployment rate reaches 21.4 per cent in Q2 2024 [Press release]. https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/unemployment-rate_q22024/.

- Jordan has a strong foundation for digital financial inclusion and a regulatory sandbox for FinTech innovation, but implementing innovation-friendly tax and investor protection laws could drive further investment and growth in the ecosystem.
- SMEs form the core of the national economy and are supported by some dedicated funds and frameworks, but a lack of unified policy, burdensome compliance requirements, and lack of capacity building programmes limit their potential.
- While the country envisions ambitious sectoral digitization, limited innovation incentives and weak academia–industry linkages hinder the acceleration of innovation across key sectors, restricting economic growth and competitiveness in regional and global markets.
- The trade policies of Jordan offer promising fiscal incentives for ICT and digital exports, but to fully capitalize on these measures, the country must enhance its product and service offerings and bridge the gap between policy and practical implementation.

Public sector engagement with innovation

A forward-looking and resilient public sector is fundamental to a thriving digital innovation ecosystem. In Jordan, strong political will, championed by His Majesty the King, the Royal Court, the Prime Minister, and key ministries, has driven a national commitment to innovation. This leadership has catalysed a range of flagship initiatives, including the National Entrepreneurship Policy (2021–2027), the USD 30 million Jordan Innovation, Tech and Entrepreneurship Fund (JITEF), and the broader digital transformation agenda[101]. These efforts aim to enhance economic resilience, job creation, and global digital competitiveness.

The National Entrepreneurship Policy reflects a comprehensive vision for transforming Jordan into a regional innovation and entrepreneurship hub. Its five pillars: culture and mindset, human capital, support services, access to finance, and enabling policies, emphasize subnational development, gender inclusion, and integration of the informal and displaced populations. At the same time, the National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025) promotes interoperability, open application programming interfaces (APIs), and citizen-centric digital service delivery. As of early 2025, over 1 530 government services (nearly 64 per cent of all services) have been digitized, and the Sanad platform now serves 1.4 million users. Digitization has expanded to areas such as justice, healthcare (e.g. Hakeem), and education (e.g. Darsak), with new digital service centres launched in Tafileh, Aqaba, Madaba, and Maan[102].

MoDEE has emerged as the central institution leading this transformation, with stakeholders widely acknowledging its increasingly visible role in operationalizing digital components across government. Other ministries, including Health, Labour, Education, and the Central Bank, are progressively incorporating innovation into their domains.

Further advancing this agenda, Jordan recently launched INNSAN, a national innovation sandbox led by MoDEE, which allows startups, individuals, and even government employees to test emerging technologies and services in a real-world policy environment[103]. INNSAN aims to strengthen the design and delivery of government services by enabling controlled

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101 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. (2025). *Jordanian immersive technology study 2025*. https://www.modee.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page/jordanian_immersive_technology_study_2025.pdf.

102 Jordan Times. (2025, February 23). Kingdom accelerates digital transformation with expanding e-government services. The Jordan Times. Retrieved June 2025, from https://jordantimes.com/news/local/kingdom-accelerates-digital-transformation-expanding-e-government-services.

103 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE). (n.d.). *INNSAN – The national innovation sandbox*. Retrieved 15 June 2025, from https://innsan.jo/index.

experimentation with new technologies in a live policy environment. In fact, stakeholders point out that insights and lessons from this sandbox can be used to later expand the scope of the sandbox to other priority sectors, such as healthcare, water, and agriculture, supporting cross-sectoral innovation within government.

KACE (King Abdullah II Centre for Excellence) has also contributed by embedding innovation leadership into civil service development, notably through its Certified Innovation Manager programme. These initiatives, while promising, still require a deeper cultural shift across public institutions. Innovation is sometimes equated narrowly with service automation, rather than as a systemic shift involving collaborative problem-solving, open data, and experimentation.

Implementation of innovation policies remains uneven. While entrepreneurship policy has improved, regulatory burdens (especially bureaucracy and taxation) remain a concern. Inter-ministerial coordination is still informal and personality-dependent. Legal limitations, such as on data sharing and digital signatures, impede seamless collaboration. Institutional inertia, frequent leadership turnover, and overlapping mandates between bodies further dilute efforts.

The rapid digital response to COVID-19 in Jordan showcased its ability to innovate under pressure. Sustaining this momentum requires more structured coordination, clearer institutional roles, and a shift from one-off projects to an embedded, system-wide innovation culture. Embedding innovation as a core value of public service, not just a digital tool, will be essential to realizing the national development vision of Jordan.

Public sector connections to the innovation ecosystem

Effective public sector connections to the innovation ecosystem are vital to ensure that digital transformation efforts deliver tangible public value and align with national development goals. In Jordan, the foundations for such connectivity are gradually taking shape, supported by a strong national vision for innovation and an increasingly active community of public and private actors.

Several government institutions have begun engaging more meaningfully with the innovation ecosystem. Ministries such as Health, Education, and Labour have participated in ecosystem dialogues, collaborated on pilot projects, and explored digital tools to enhance service delivery. Some donor-funded initiatives have helped catalyse these engagements, while others have stemmed from direct partnerships with local startups or civil society organizations. These experiences demonstrate the potential for innovation to address sector-specific priorities and unlock new pathways for service improvement.

However, such collaborations remain episodic and are often shaped by personal relationships or external funding, rather than embedded in formalized institutional mechanisms. Startups, SMEs, and support organizations are not yet consistently involved in identifying public sector challenges or co-developing solutions, resulting in missed opportunities for problem-solving and public service innovation. In many ministries, innovation is still seen as an external mandate rather than a core part of internal strategy.

Existing platforms for cross-government collaboration, such as joint task forces or inter-ministerial committees, can be better utilized to support structured engagement cycles. Some of the constraints include limited awareness of innovation methods, risk-averse institutional cultures, overlapping mandates between agencies, and unclear roles and responsibilities across public sector entities. Resource limitations and narrowly defined performance indicators further restrict the space to experiment with new approaches.

Within this landscape, MoDEE has played a notable leadership role. Its work in promoting digital transformation, operationalizing frameworks such as the national innovation sandbox (INNSAN), and advancing public sector innovation capacity has been widely recognized. The collaboration of MoDEE with peer ministries, support for digital upskilling, and policy coordination initiatives, such as the Certified Innovation Manager programme, have provided essential building blocks for fostering a more connected, innovation-ready public sector.

The success of the innovation and digital transformation agenda will depend on evolving from MoDEE-led efforts to a whole-of-government approach. This will require more ministries to proactively develop sector-specific innovation strategies and formalize partnerships with ecosystem actors. Strengthening public sector capabilities, encouraging internal champions, and embedding innovation into institutional mandates can help bridge the gap between government and the innovation ecosystem, ensuring that innovation becomes a shared, sustained national endeavour.

Intellectual property policy

A robust intellectual property (IP) framework is an essential enabler of innovation, allowing creators to protect and commercialize their ideas. In Jordan, the IP Directorate under the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply (MoITS) oversees the creation, protection, and enforcement of IP rights, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs, and trade secrets. The country is a signatory to key international treaties, including the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), enhancing access to international IP protection mechanisms.

Recent reforms have reduced the cost of patent registration, especially for individuals, with up to 90 per cent fee reductions available under the PCT framework. These improvements have contributed to an increase in registrations. According to official data, Jordan registered 20 patents and nearly 1 000 trademarks in the first quarter of this year, following 2024 totals of 111 patents and 5 687 trademarks[104]. However, the commercial application of IP at large in the country remains limited. Many patents are filed but not utilized, indicating a gap between innovation and market readiness. Innovators often lack technical, legal, or financial support to move beyond registration toward real-world deployment.

At the university level, innovators face additional challenges. Institutional IP policies often assign the majority ownership of patents to the university itself, which can discourage students from pursuing patentable work. Support for drafting and registering patents is also uneven, and awareness of IP rights remains low, particularly among youth and early-stage entrepreneurs. Stakeholders emphasized that exposure to IP concepts should begin earlier, ideally during secondary education, to foster a culture of innovation.

While Jordan has the legal frameworks and institutional mandates in place, the innovation ecosystem would benefit from greater coordination, simplified processes, targeted support services, and enhanced educational awareness among judiciary and enforcement bodies to effectively uphold and protect intellectual property rights. Strengthening IP advisory capacities in universities, improving awareness through formal education, and incentivizing the commercialization of IP could help bridge the gap between invention and impact, positioning intellectual property as a true driver of national innovation.

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[104] Hadchity, M. (2025, April 28). *Jordan reports 20 new patents in Q1, building on 2024's 111 filings*. Arab News. Retrieved 12 June 2025, from https://www.arabnews.com/node/2598758/business-economy.

Research and development policy

A robust research and development (R&D) ecosystem is essential to unlocking long-term innovation, fostering knowledge economies, and addressing national development challenges. In Jordan, foundational policy steps have been taken, with institutions such as the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), the Ministry of Higher Education, and the National Centre for Innovation (NCI) playing key roles in shaping the landscape. The national R&D policy and collaborative platforms, such as the NCI–Arab Amman University partnership, demonstrate a commitment to systematizing research efforts. However, these structures often operate in parallel rather than in synergy, reducing their cumulative impact.

R&D spending currently stands at an estimated 0.7 per cent of GDP, with Jordan ranked 51st globally in the R&D pillar of the Global Innovation Index[105]. Much of the research produced remains academically driven, oriented toward publication and institutional rankings. The limited focus on applied research, weak co-investment from industry, and the absence of dedicated private R&D centres all constrain the innovation potential of the system. These conditions also limit the emergence of spin-offs and the commercial application of research, with most multinational companies conducting R&D activities outside the country.

Technology transfer mechanisms remain nascent. Universities and research institutes typically lack structured technology licensing frameworks or dedicated transfer offices. There are few formal pathways for academic discoveries to translate into market-ready solutions, and intellectual property (IP) management is often underdeveloped. As a result, commercialization activities, including the creation of spin-off companies or public–private research ventures, are minimal. Although government incentives exist for research, they are not yet strongly linked to innovation outputs or business development objectives.

Barriers include procedural delays in importing specialized equipment, insufficient financial incentives for private R&D, and regulatory environments that deter investment in high-tech or emerging sectors. While promising initiatives, such as the Ministry of Tourism's National Tourism Research Platform, signal an increasing awareness of data-driven innovation, broader cross-sectoral uptake remains modest.

Moreover, the absence of a unified national vision for R&D that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, thematic clustering, and knowledge valorization continues to limit outcomes. While coordination mechanisms are in place, there are limited structured opportunities to co-design research agendas with industry, develop strategic research consortia, or support student participation in applied research and on-the-job training. The entrepreneurial pipeline also remains disconnected from academic research, with few programmes supporting startups that emerge from university labs or research centres.

The forthcoming national R&D survey by NCI, expected in late 2025, offers an opportunity to revisit these gaps and introduce targeted incentives that link research to economic potential. Strengthening technology transfer systems, fostering a culture of commercialization, and aligning research priorities with industrial needs will be vital to realizing the full value of R&D in Jordan's innovation journey.

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[105] World Intellectual Property Organization. (2024). Global Innovation Index 2024: Unlocking the promise of social entrepreneurship (17th ed.) [PDF]. World Intellectual Property Organization. https://www.wipo.int/web-publications/global-innovation-index-2024/assets/67729/2000%20Global%20Innovation%20Index%202024_WEB3lite.pdf.

ICT policy

Jordan has made significant strides in shaping its ICT policy environment in recent years. Strategic documents such as the National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025), the National Cybersecurity Strategy (2018-2023)[106], and the introduction of regulatory sandboxes signal the commitment of the government to leveraging digital technologies for improved public services, enhanced competitiveness, and a more vibrant innovation ecosystem. The DTS provides a whole-of-government framework to guide digital transition across key domains, including digital infrastructure, digital government, data, AI, and youth employment. It sets out strategic enablers and priority actions for ministries and stakeholders to coordinate, implement, and track progress in line with national development goals.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) leads the operationalization of the National Cyber Security Strategy (2018–2023), coordinating national efforts to strengthen resilience, manage risks, and respond to cyber threats. However, as noted in the strategy itself, the overall level of cybersecurity awareness and technical capacity among individuals and institutions remains limited, while the cost of access to public digital infrastructure, such as government APIs, remains expensive and complex

Another important policy lever is the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, which aims to harness AI for improved service delivery, job creation, and responsible innovation. The strategy outlines a phased approach to develop AI talent, integrate AI in priority sectors, and promote ethical frameworks for adoption. For entrepreneurs, this provides a structured avenue to explore AI-based business models, supported by public–private collaboration and pilot initiatives. Another key initiative has been INNSAN, which enables startups, entrepreneurs, and government entities to test emerging technologies in a real-world policy environment. By removing regulatory barriers in a controlled setting, INNSAN helps bridge the gap between experimentation and scaling, and allows insights to inform future regulation, particularly in high-potential sectors such as healthcare, water, and agriculture.

Additional innovation incentives are also emerging. The Crown Prince Award for Best Government Services Application promotes civic technology entrepreneurship by recognizing youth-led digital solutions to public service challenges. It offers financial awards, mentorship, and national recognition, raising awareness of innovation in public services. Meanwhile, the government has launched innovation support mechanisms such as the Jordan Innovation, Tech and Entrepreneurship Fund (JITEF), targeting early-stage startups with funding and ecosystem support.

Despite these efforts, fragmentation persists. Stakeholders note that digital transformation remains concentrated within a few institutions, with limited integration into sectoral policies in healthcare, education, energy, and transport. Regulatory silos, outdated public procurement and customs processes, and a lack of clarity on data governance continue to inhibit entrepreneurship.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) plays a foundational role in this landscape, overseeing spectrum allocation, market liberalization, and the regulation of Internet and telecommunication services. While TRC interventions have helped expand the sector,

[106] Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. (2018). *National Cyber Security Strategy 2018–2023*. Retrieved June 16, 2025, from https://modee.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/national_cyber_security_strategy_2018_2023.pdf.

several ecosystem actors note that alignment between telecommunication regulation and broader innovation goals remains limited. Increased coordination between TRC and MoDEE, especially under the shared guidance of the DTS, could help reduce operational bottlenecks and accelerate digital transformation across sectors.

As the DTS framework gains traction, it presents an opportunity to unify digital governance, clarify institutional responsibilities, and foster public–private collaboration. Moving forward, agile regulation, targeted incentives, and inclusive engagement will be key to ensuring that ICT policies of Jordan unlock their full potential for national innovation and entrepreneurship.

Education policy

Education policy in Jordan increasingly acknowledges the role of digital skills and entrepreneurship in building an innovation-ready workforce. MoE and MoHESR have introduced various initiatives to enhance curriculum relevance and promote future-oriented learning. Notable examples include the National ICT Curriculum, DigiSkills under the YTJ Project, and an upcoming digital literacy initiative.

Despite this progress, structural challenges persist. Stakeholders highlight a clear disconnect between education and labour market needs, particularly in ICT and entrepreneurship. While public universities have established innovation centres and are updating curricula, most learning remains theoretical and is often driven by academic advancement rather than practical skill development. Students face limited opportunities for hands-on learning, such as internships or apprenticeships, and industry collaboration in research or curriculum design remains minimal. There is a growing need to institutionalize blended learning approaches that combine online and in-person modalities, offering greater flexibility, accessibility, and alignment with real-world industry requirements. Rigid four-year degree models and limited recognition of vocational or experiential learning pathways further constrain flexibility. While private institutions in urban centres are expanding vocational training options, access remains uneven across rural and marginalized communities. Public education continues to face challenges around teaching quality, English proficiency, and technical training, often focused on basic tools rather than emerging technologies.

Moreover, restrictive visa and work permit policies limit exposure to international expertise, and awareness of emerging career pathways remains low among students and families. The efforts of the Ministry of Education to modernize assessments and infrastructure, including computerizing national exams, are steps forward, but broader reforms are needed to embed innovation and entrepreneurship across the education system. Expanding blended learning models, particularly those that incorporate micro-credentials, modular content, and interactive platforms, could bridge the gap between formal education and rapidly evolving job market needs. To transform education into a true driver of ICT innovation, stronger alignment with industry, expanded credit for practical learning, and cross-sector collaboration are essential. A future-ready education system must not only equip students with technical skills but also foster creativity, adaptability, and entrepreneurial thinking from school through to university.

Financial policy

A robust and inclusive financial policy environment is foundational to the growth of the digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan. In recent years, Jordan, guided by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), has introduced several strategic frameworks and instruments to strengthen financial

inclusion, improve access to capital, and promote digital financial services. Notable among these are the Financial Technology and Innovation Vision (2023)[107], the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2023-2028)[108], and the FinTech Regulatory Sandbox[109].

The sandbox offers a controlled environment for innovators including startups, financial institutions, and entrepreneurs, to test new digital financial services with CBJ oversight. It covers a wide range of solutions, including digital payments, blockchain-based systems, RegTech, digital identity, credit and savings tools, and cross-border remittances. By simplifying regulatory entry and supporting iterative testing, the sandbox helps reduce market barriers, enhance investor confidence, and support regional collaboration.

These efforts are yielding tangible results and digital payments now account for approximately 45 per cent of all financial services, up from just 3.5 per cent in 2013 and the value of digital transactions is estimated at nearly 250 per cent of GDP, reflecting strong momentum towards a cash-light, inclusive economy[110]. Complementary tools such as CliQ, digital onboarding, and API-based banking are enhancing financial service delivery, while tax incentives, such as 0 per cent tax on IT exports and a reduced 5 per cent sales tax, have supported sectoral growth[111].

In parallel, CBJ has taken steps to improve financial literacy and diversify financing pathways. Programmes such as the RISE Academy, guidelines for regulated crowdfunding, and joint campaigns such as the Digital Financial Literacy Campaign (co-led by CBJ and GIZ) have expanded access among youth, women, and refugees, including those in informal or vulnerable segments[112]. However, several challenges persist. Entrepreneurs continue to face complex regulatory compliance, high capital requirements, and restrictive exit laws, which limit ease of incorporation and reinvestment. These factors drive many startups to register offshore, not due to lack of national alignment, but in search of operational predictability and investor safeguards. Frameworks for venture capital, angel investment, and crowdfunding remain difficult to navigate, especially for early-stage or informal enterprises.

Access to banking also varies. Many startups rely on personal networks to open business accounts, while limited availability of digital lending, embedded finance, and supply chain financing restricts growth. Additionally, blockchain innovation remains constrained due to the lack of a clear regulatory framework, despite the CBJ allowing individual cryptocurrency ownership[113].

With over 60 per cent of Jordanians working in the informal sector, there is a growing need for accessible, flexible financial instruments that accommodate diverse economic realities[114].

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107 Central Bank of Jordan. (2023). *Financial Technology and Innovation Vision 2023*. Retrieved from https://www.cbj.gov.jo.

108 **Central Bank of Jordan. (2023).** *National financial inclusion strategy project*. Retrieved from https://www.cbj.gov.jo/En/List/The_Financial_Inclusion_National_Strategy_Project.

109 **Central Bank of Jordan. (n.d.).** *Regulatory laboratory*. Retrieved [Month Day, Year], from https://www.cbj.gov.jo/EN/Pages/Regulatory_laboratory.

110 Arab News. (12 December 2023). Jordan's digital financial transactions reach 250% of GDP. Retrieved from https://www.arabnews.com/node/2598758/business-economy.

111 Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. (2024). *Incentives for the ICT Sector*. Retrieved from https://www.modee.gov.jo.

112 **Central Bank of Jordan & GIZ. (n.d.).** *CBJ and GIZ launch the digital financial literacy campaign*. Retrieved 12 June 2025, from https://www.cbj.gov.jo/En/newsdetails/CBJ_and_GIZ_Launch_the_Digital_Financial_Literacy_Campaign.

113 Arab News. (12 December 2023). Jordan's stance on cryptocurrency. Retrieved from https://www.arabnews.com/node/2598758/business-economy.

114 UNRWA. (2024). *Jordan Country Profile*. Retrieved from https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan.

Hesitancy to engage with formal banking, due to tax or documentation concerns, remains a critical inclusion gap.

Looking ahead, the green economy ambitions of Jordan offer a strategic opening. The introduction of a national green taxonomy and emerging climate finance frameworks can unlock targeted entrepreneurial opportunities, allowing startups to align with sustainability goals and access new financing instruments. To fully realize these opportunities, stakeholders highlight the need for clearer legal protections, streamlined tax policies, and accessible early-stage financing mechanisms. Strengthening regional market integration can help reduce startup flight and position Jordan as a trusted, competitive, and inclusive hub for digital entrepreneurship.

SMEs policy

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of the economy in Jordan and play a vital role in driving innovation, job creation, and economic resilience. MSMEs account for approximately 98 per cent of all businesses and over 60 per cent of national employment, according to the Jordan Economic Forum[115]. Yet, despite their centrality, most MSMEs remain concentrated in traditional sectors, with limited representation in ICT and innovation-intensive domains.

Jordan has taken notable steps to support entrepreneurship, including the development of the National Entrepreneurship Policy (2021–2027) under the leadership of MoDEE, and in partnership with the World Bank and other stakeholders. The policy promotes enabling regulatory frameworks, improved access to finance, and inclusive ecosystem development. It aligns with the EMV, aiming to position entrepreneurship as a key pillar of socio-economic transformation in Jordan.

Company registration processes have improved significantly, with startups now able to formalize their businesses within 2-3 days through an online platform. However, the regulatory burden increases sharply post-registration. Entrepreneurs cite early-stage compliance costs, such as tax filings, legal audits, and social security contributions, as substantial, especially for pre-revenue startups. Inconsistencies in tax exemptions across sectors and lack of clarity in applying regulations to digital business models further complicate compliance. Conversely, business closure procedures remain lengthy and bureaucratic, often taking more than a year. This reinforces the perception that exiting the formal economy is far more difficult than entering it. In addition, the current regulatory framework does not adequately support alternative business models such as freelancing, self-employment, or home-based enterprises.

Outdated labour laws, customs procedures, and slow public procurement cycles present further constraints, despite measures initiated to address these. Entrepreneurs highlight the absence of startup-friendly mechanisms, such as performance-based contracting, flexible bankruptcy options, and accessible crowdfunding platforms. As a result, Startups often register abroad to access more predictable legal and financial environments.

Investor confidence is also affected by limited clarity on capital gains taxation, lengthy judicial procedures, and inconsistent legal enforcement. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed further vulnerabilities, particularly among informal and home-based businesses, many of which lacked access to emergency support due to their unregistered status. Since then, targeted

[115] Jordan Chamber of Industry. (n.d.). *Small and medium enterprises services*. Jordan Chamber of Industry. Retrieved June 2025, from https://jci.org.jo/Chamber/Services/Sectors/80095?l=en.

government efforts have begun to focus more deliberately on integrating the informal sector into the innovation economy.

At the regional level, entrepreneurial activity outside Amman, Irbid, and Aqaba remains largely low-tech and small-scale. In areas like Al-Karak, businesses often rely on manual processes and lack integration with digital tools. Despite efforts to digitize public services, startups frequently report difficulties navigating between paper-based and online systems across different agencies, increasing compliance costs and operational inefficiencies.

Looking forward, there is growing recognition that a comprehensive and consolidated SME policy is needed. Such a framework would integrate registration, compliance relief, formalization incentives, and flexible exit mechanisms to better support the full lifecycle of MSMEs. With the right reforms, MSMEs can evolve from passive beneficiaries to active drivers of inclusive, innovation-led growth in the digital economy of Jordan.

Industrial policy

The national vision seeks to position Jordan as a regional hub for industry and services, underpinned by sustainability, digital transformation, and inclusive economic growth. Industrial policy plays a pivotal role in this transition, helping guide sector development, foster innovation, and align domestic industries with emerging global trends. While there is encouraging momentum in select areas, current efforts remain fragmented and insufficiently aligned with long-term structural transformation goals.

Despite pockets of progress, digitization and innovation integration across the industrial landscape remain uneven. Many industrial firms operate reactively, with transformations often triggered by global disruptions, such as COVID-19, or compliance pressures tied to international markets. In key sectors such as tourism and healthcare, Jordan holds considerable potential. Medical tourism, for instance, is a long-standing strength, with the country recognized regionally for high-quality healthcare at competitive costs. However, realizing its full potential will require policies that integrate digital health solutions, improve cross-border data portability, and incentivize investment in health-tech and telemedicine. Similarly, tourism, both cultural tourism and eco-tourism, could benefit from digital service innovation, smart infrastructure, and coordinated branding strategies that extend beyond Amman and Petra to underutilized regions.

In the manufacturing sector, challenges remain acute. Although the government offers manufacturing incentives, businesses frequently encounter high input costs, inconsistent customs processes, and infrastructure gaps that reduce competitiveness. As a result, even Jordanian firms are increasingly turning to China and other countries for more cost-effective manufacturing, weakening domestic value chains. Interviews indicate that some manufacturers maintain a local presence primarily to comply with donor or procurement requirements, while sourcing production offshore to remain viable.

These structural limitations are compounded by a lack of sector-specific industrial policies that promote innovation. While Jordan's Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Implementation Plan 2023-2027[116] outlines concrete steps to integrate AI across sectors, including healthcare, education, and energy, other strategic sectors still lack similarly detailed frameworks. The AI

[116] Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. (2023). Jordan's artificial intelligence strategy and implementation plan 2023–2027. Retrieved from https://www.modee.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/40435648.pdf.

Strategy is an instructive example of how policy can be paired with targeted implementation plans, stakeholder coordination, and skills development to foster industrial transformation. Its emphasis on public-private collaboration, research incentives, and integration into sectoral service delivery offers a model that could be replicated across high-impact sectors such as smart agriculture and green manufacturing.

The Economic Modernization Vision has already identified a number of opportunistic sectors, which are expected to be further refined in coordination with the National Council for Future Technology. However, it is important that sector prioritization is informed not only by present-day needs but also by emerging signals and long-term trends that will shape the industrial future of Jordan.

The absence of strong academia-industry partnerships further limits innovation diffusion. Applied research remains underfunded and disconnected from industrial needs, leaving a sizeable pool of engineering and science graduates in Jordan without pathways into sector-specific innovation. The current industrial policy environment also lacks mechanisms such as industrial sandboxes, challenge-driven innovation funds, and outcome-based procurement models that could de-risk innovation and create market entry points for startups and SMEs.

To transition from general policy aspirations to industrial transformation, Jordan will need to operationalize cross-sectoral policies that embed innovation into sector priorities, expand research-to-industry pipelines, and strengthen industrial resilience through digital adoption. Sectoral blueprints that build on models like the AI Strategy and align with the Economic Modernization Vision can help channel limited public resources into targeted, high-value growth areas, making industry a true engine of sustainable development.

Trade policy

The trade landscape of Jordan is anchored in a series of bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements designed to boost export competitiveness and diversify markets. The country is party to over 50 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Framework Cooperation Agreements (FCAs), including the European Union-Jordan Association Agreement, the Jordan–United States FTA, and the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA). These agreements provide preferential access to key markets, yet their potential remains underutilized due to limited awareness, capacity gaps among SMEs, and inconsistencies in product standards, customs codes, and export procedures. Moreover, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) signed with countries in the Gulf, Africa, and Asia regions are yet to be operationalized through clear sectoral roadmaps that promote innovation-led exports. Stakeholders emphasize the need for targeted trade policies that support easier access to regional markets, particularly through mutual recognition agreements, simplified cross-border procedures, and export promotion tools adapted to the needs of startups and MSMEs.

Despite a strong network of trade partnerships, regulatory fragmentation remains a recurring concern. Startups and exporters of technology-enabled goods report challenges in navigating classification systems, particularly for hybrid or digital products that do not fit neatly within traditional customs categories. The absence of streamlined, technology-aware customs procedures increases transaction costs and delays, diminishing the attractiveness of Jordan for cross-border innovation trade. A consistent application of ISIC Rev. 4 and HS Codes tailored for digital services would improve regulatory clarity and strengthen trade facilitation for emerging sectors.

In light of shifting geopolitical dynamics, there has been a noticeable rise in domestic and regional support for Jordanian and Arab-made products. This shift offers a unique opportunity to enhance industrial self-reliance and re-orient trade strategies toward high-potential regional markets. However, this momentum can only be sustained through improved inter-institutional alignment and by embedding innovation ecosystem actors, such as technology startups, manufacturing SMEs, and logistics enablers, within trade policy dialogues.

Looking ahead, trade policy in Jordan must evolve beyond tax incentives and preferential access. A more strategic, innovation-sensitive trade framework is needed, one that actively promotes the export of knowledge-based services, integrates digital trade protocols, strengthens trade diplomacy, and leverages existing FTAs to develop innovation clusters and cross-border industrial value chains. Developing policy instruments that specifically ease and incentivize regional market entry, for example, through coordinated trade missions, B2B matchmaking, and joint ventures with firms in neighbouring countries, could help translate Jordan's trade agreements into tangible commercial outcomes. Unlocking the full potential of the trade apparatus of Jordan will require adaptive governance, capacity development, and structured dialogue between public institutions, the private sector, and regional partners.

4 Ecosystem challenges and opportunities

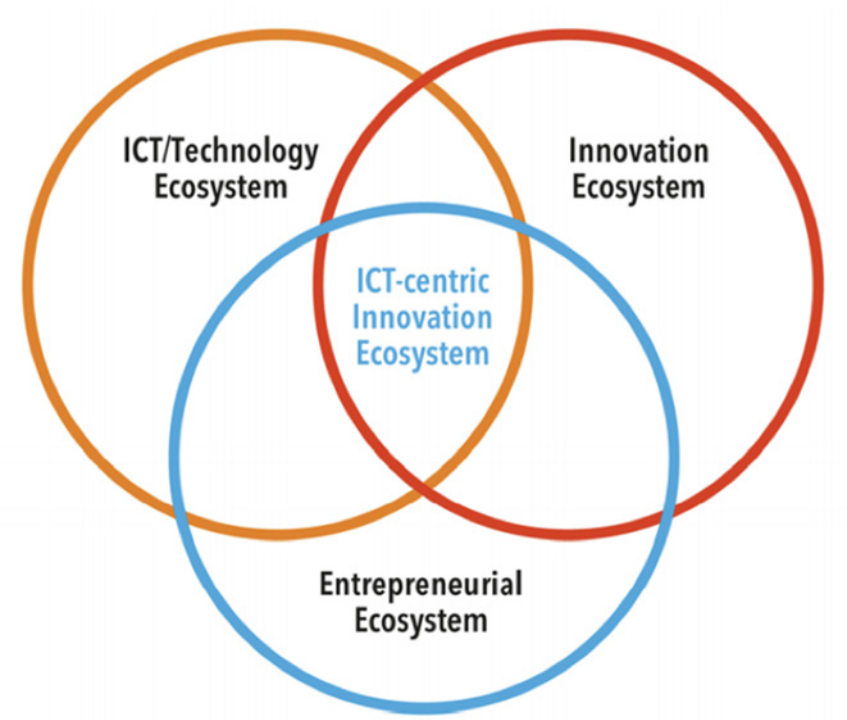
The three main ecosystems essential to the digital transformation of a country are:

- the innovation ecosystem (universities, research institutes, and the public sector);
- the entrepreneurial ecosystem (innovators and support organizations); and
- the technological ecosystem (high-tech, ICT, B2B, technology and manufacturing companies).

Understanding the ICT-centric (digital) innovation ecosystem

The three ecosystems, namely the innovation ecosystem, the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the technology ecosystem, are closely linked to developing the digital transformation landscape of a country. At the intersection of the three ecosystems lies the ICT-centric innovation ecosystem, also referred to as the digital innovation ecosystem.

Figure 3: Engines of growth



Source: ITU

The following sections provide a brief analysis of each of the three ecosystems and are followed by a macro level overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with each ecosystem, as gathered through interviews and group discussions during the co-creation workshops with local stakeholders. For each ecosystem, its current state, challenges and opportunities, are initially summarized in bullet points, followed by a detailed explanatory passage. A detailed analysis of the current landscape is presented in Chapter 3, while the recommendations are covered in Chapter 9 of this report.

4.1 Innovation ecosystem

The innovation ecosystem includes research institutes, universities, public sector entities such as national innovation agencies and public sector funding agencies, and often even the private sector and other actors involved in commercialization. It plays an invaluable role in the national journey of innovation, especially in the launch of an innovation.

- The innovation ecosystem in Jordan is gaining traction through political commitment, evolving policies, and growing engagement from stakeholders.
- Despite notable initiatives, the innovation ecosystem in Jordan faces coordination challenges, limited applied research, and insufficient integration across key sectors.
- Jordan can accelerate innovation-led development by building on existing momentum, fostering cross-sector linkages, and strengthening institutional capacity.

Overview of actions in the innovation ecosystem

The innovation ecosystem in Jordan, though still maturing, is progressing steadily with strong political commitment and alignment to national digital transformation goals. Innovation is increasingly recognized as a key enabler of socio-economic development, and this is reflected across several government strategies. Public sector entities have launched initiatives to embed innovation in public service delivery, develop digital infrastructure, and support regulatory experimentation. The establishment of a dedicated ministry focussed on digital economy has provided a focal point for policy and coordination, helping drive digital innovation initiatives across sectors. Meanwhile, universities and research institutes are gradually assuming a more active role through updated curricula, entrepreneurship training, and applied research projects. Innovation and entrepreneurship centres, often supported by donors, have emerged within academic institutions. Many public universities now host technology transfer offices (TTOs), and some run skills development initiatives in collaboration with industry or development partners. These efforts are reinforced by growing interest among students and young professionals in digital skills, startup culture, and applied problem-solving. While still emerging, this dynamic signals an expanding role for academia and the public sector in advancing the innovation agenda of Jordan.

Overview of challenges in the innovation ecosystem

Despite promising developments, the innovation ecosystem in Jordan continues to face structural and operational hurdles. A key challenge is the fragmentation of mandates across ministries and agencies, which leads to duplication, siloed efforts, and limited synergy. Coordination between government entities, academia, and industry is often inconsistent, impeding the creation of a unified national innovation agenda. Much of the innovation activity is externally funded, shaped more by donor priorities than by long-term national strategy. Applied research with commercial potential remains limited, partly due to underdeveloped mechanisms for intellectual property protection, R&D financing, and university-industry collaboration. Technology transfer offices, while present, vary widely in capability and integration with academic departments. Startups developing IP-intensive or research-based solutions often struggle to access capital during the pre-revenue phase, where risk is high and validation requirements are significant. The absence of tailored financing for early-stage R&D presents a critical barrier to converting academic and scientific research into commercially viable ventures. Moreover, public innovation programmes tend to be piloted in isolation without clear custodianship or sustainability mechanisms. As a result, the ecosystem lacks the coherence and capacity needed to scale innovation across sectors.

These challenges risk stalling momentum unless addressed through stronger governance, sustained investment, and greater alignment between innovation policy and ecosystem needs.

Overview of opportunities in the innovation ecosystem

Jordan is well-placed to build a stronger, more integrated innovation ecosystem by capitalizing on its youthful population, expanding university infrastructure, and policy momentum. Strengthening institutional coordination and clarifying mandates around innovation governance could significantly reduce fragmentation. With some ministries actively promoting digital transformation, there is an opportunity to embed innovation more deeply across government services and sectoral development plans. Universities can become more effective drivers of innovation by aligning research and entrepreneurship programmes with national priorities, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, and investing in faculty-industry linkages. Enhanced mechanisms for R&D funding, intellectual property support, and technology commercialization could accelerate applied innovation. Moreover, the increasing interest in digital entrepreneurship among youth presents a timely opportunity to foster a culture of problem-solving and experimentation. By reinforcing strategic intent with more robust implementation frameworks, Jordan can position itself as a regional hub for innovation-led development, capable of translating ideas into scalable solutions that contribute to national resilience and global competitiveness.

4.2 Entrepreneurial ecosystem

The entrepreneurial ecosystem includes the entrepreneurs, their support systems, and the organizations that nurture business creation through the "valley of death" and subsequently accompany their growth into sustainable SMEs.

- The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jordan is dynamic and growing, supported by a wide array of incubators, accelerators, and community initiatives.
- Despite this momentum, fragmentation coordination, limited early-stage funding, and weak market access issues constrain the ability of entrepreneurs to grow.
- With a young, tech-savvy population and growing holistic support, Jordan has the potential to transform its startups into scalable SMEs and regional success stories.

Overview of actions in the entrepreneur ecosystem

The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jordan is vibrant and steadily evolving, and is marked by a visible expansion in startup support organizations, community initiatives, and donor-backed programmes. A growing number of incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs provide services across the startup lifecycle, from ideation and validation stages to early growth. Entrepreneurs benefit from mentorship, business development support, access to co-working spaces, and technical upskilling opportunities, many of which are geared towards youth and women. Several initiatives help entrepreneurs develop investor-ready products, navigate regulatory procedures, and explore market opportunities across the region. Donors and development partners play a central role in financing many of these activities, often working through local organizations to strengthen ecosystem capacity. Notable startup activity has emerged in ICT, fintech, creative industries, e-commerce, and social entrepreneurship, reflecting the growing diversity of the ecosystem. Many founders display a strong sense of resilience and adaptability, with lean approaches to experimentation and innovation. Over time, these

efforts have fostered a dynamic culture of entrepreneurial energy and community engagement, increasingly seen as a critical driver of the digital economy and job creation in Jordan.

Overview of challenges in the entrepreneurial ecosystem

While momentum is evident in Jordan, the entrepreneurial ecosystem continues to face structural and operational challenges. Support efforts are often fragmented, with overlapping programmes, limited coordination, and few structured pathways for startup progression. Many support organizations operate on short funding cycles, raising concerns about long-term sustainability. Startups, especially in their early stages, face significant funding gaps, with limited access to angel investors, risk-tolerant capital, and tailored financial products. Complex administrative procedures, such as company registration, social security, and taxation, add to the burdens faced by new ventures. In addition, startups struggle with domestic market access, as the consumer base remains small and fragmented, making it difficult to validate solutions or scale locally. Procurement opportunities, both public and corporate, are limited and underutilized. A more robust feedback loop between startups, enablers, and policy-makers could help align ecosystem offerings with real startup needs, improve targeting of resources, and reduce duplication. Without more integrated planning and institutional support, many promising ventures risk stagnating before reaching viability.

Overview of opportunities in the entrepreneur ecosystem

A youthful, tech-savvy population and expanding support infrastructure in Jordan present strong foundations for a high-potential entrepreneurial ecosystem. Strengthening collaboration between support actors, through shared infrastructure, data platforms, and co-designed programmes, can improve efficiency and increase the number of successful ventures. Sector-specific innovation, particularly in emerging areas such as agritech, climate resilience, and digital health, can link entrepreneurship with national development goals and expand access to regional markets. Stronger connections to private sector actors, industry mentors, and investor networks could support startups in refining business models and accessing growth capital. Introducing adaptive policies, simplifying compliance, and promoting transparency would reduce friction in the startup journey. Moreover, embedding entrepreneurial learning in education and promoting role models can strengthen the culture of risk-taking and innovation. With continued investment in coordination, capabilities, and ecosystem trust, Jordan is well-positioned to transform its startup pipeline into a driver of inclusive economic growth and regional competitiveness.

4.3 Technology ecosystem

The technology ecosystem includes high-growth technology companies, equipment manufacturers, systems integrators, and companies in the ICT sector and B2B technology platforms supporting SMEs, among others. The development of the technology ecosystem is essential to the ability of a country to benefit from technological innovation and create high-growth industries and jobs.

- The technology ecosystem in Jordan comprises a mix of ICT companies, B2B platforms, and high-tech service providers, contributing to digital transformation and job creation.
- However, weak demand for local tech solutions, limited R&D investment, and slow regulatory responsiveness hinder the development of globally competitive technology industries.

- With strong digital infrastructure, a skilled talent base, and increasing regional demand, the technology sector in Jordan can scale innovation, deepen local value chains, and contribute significantly to economic growth.

Overview of actions in the technology ecosystem

The technology ecosystem in Jordan is composed of a wide array of players, including ICT firms, enterprise software companies, systems integrators, and digital service providers. These companies contribute to digitalization across public and private sectors, offering services in cloud computing, cybersecurity, e-commerce, and telecommunication infrastructure. The sector benefits from a cost-competitive, educated workforce and robust digital connectivity. Jordan has emerged as a regional hub for outsourced technology services, with multinational firms establishing operations to leverage the country's relative stability, linguistic capabilities, and strategic time zone. Local firms increasingly serve regional clients, particularly in the Gulf region, and often operate as backend partners to international technology providers. The proliferation of technical training, coding academies, and innovation programmes has supported workforce readiness. Government investments in digital infrastructure and private sector-led initiatives such as technology accelerators, have further contributed to sectoral momentum. While most technology companies are engaged in service delivery, there is a growing interest in transitioning toward product development and knowledge-based exports, reflecting a broader ambition to strengthen digital capabilities and drive regional competitiveness through home-grown innovation.

Overview of challenges in the technology ecosystem

Despite steady growth, the technology ecosystem in Jordan faces a range of structural constraints that limit its full potential. Domestic demand for locally developed technology solutions remains weak, as many sectors continue to favour imported platforms over local offerings. Regulatory adaptation to emerging technologies, such as AI, blockchain, and smart systems, has lagged, leading to uncertainty and market entry delays. The ecosystem is dominated by service-based models, with relatively few firms engaged in high-value hardware innovation or product development. Public-private collaboration in applied research and technological innovation remains underdeveloped, and the absence of large-scale R&D centres further limits local capability in frontier technologies. Additionally, a lack of financial incentives and procurement pipelines for local technology providers discourages investment in long-term innovation. While regional markets present expansion opportunities, scaling from service provision to proprietary solutions is rare. Many technology firms remain dependent on external demand and operate with limited integration into the broader industrial ecosystem. Addressing these challenges will require concerted efforts to modernize the regulatory framework, stimulate local procurement of technology solutions, and embed innovation as a core component of industrial and digital policies in Jordan.

Overview of opportunities in the technology ecosystem

The technology ecosystem in Jordan holds strong potential to drive national innovation, regional integration, and economic resilience. Expanding public investment in applied research, strengthening industry-university collaboration, and streamlining regulatory processes for emerging technologies could enable domestic firms to shift from service delivery to product innovation. Priority sectors such as healthcare, tourism, energy, logistics, and climate resilience offer compelling opportunities for digital solutions tailored to national and regional needs.

Enhanced local procurement policies, especially in government and large enterprises, can help validate local products and create stable demand. In parallel, stronger links between technology companies and the startup ecosystem could foster co-development and cross-sector innovation. Encouraging hardware R&D, supporting IP creation, and incentivizing participation in regional and global value chains would allow Jordan to emerge as a producer and not just a consumer, of digital technologies. Furthermore, focused support for green technology, smart systems, and scalable enterprise platforms can position the country as a knowledge-driven, export-ready innovation hub. With coordinated investment in infrastructure, regulation, and domestic talent, the technology ecosystem can become a central driver toward digital leadership and inclusive economic transformation in Jordan.

4.4 Macro challenges

At a macro level, the three ecosystems face some common challenges:

- Despite strong political will and numerous promising initiatives, lack of coordination and effective implementation continue to characterize the innovation ecosystem, leading to slow impact and missed opportunities.
- The national workforce, driven by a strong youth base and vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, often migrates to more attractive ecosystems due to market size constraints and more competitive opportunities abroad.
- Access to finance, particularly for the growth stage, remains limited in Jordan, constraining the ability of startups to scale, navigate the "valley of death," or attract meaningful investment without relocating.
- The potential for innovation in strategic sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, climate, and tourism remains underutilized, partly due to limited applied research, inconsistent policy support, and the absence of coordinated mechanisms to foster sector-specific innovation.

5 Stakeholders

Understanding the stakeholders

Collaboration between key actors in the innovation ecosystem is the foundation of the assessment process and drives the actions taken to build the ecosystem.

The stakeholders are mapped across six key stakeholder groups: academia, entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial support networks, finance, private sector, and public sector. These stakeholders are identified through close consultation with the national partner agency to ensure quality engagement at different milestones of the project.

An important part of the country review is thus finding ways of identifying and engaging with a pool of stakeholders across diverse groups.

Table 1 lists the many stakeholders who were mapped and/or have contributed to the development of the digital innovation profile across the six key stakeholder groups of the innovation ecosystem. Stakeholders who participated in the co-creation workshop and/or one-on-one qualitative interviews are marked as "(engaged)".

Table 1: Critical stakeholders in the ecosystem

Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)	
Academia	• Al Hussain Technical University (HTU) *(engaged)* • Amman Arab University *(engaged)* • Applied Science University *(engaged)* • Aqaba University of Technology *(engaged)* • Arab Open University • Association of Arab Universities • Balqa Applied University *(engaged)* • German Jordanian University (GJU) *(engaged)* • Jordan Academy for Technology and Careers • Jordan University of Science & Technology • Luminus Technical University College • Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) *(engaged)* • Queen Rania Teacher Academy • Royal Scientific Society (RSS) • Tafila Technical University • University of Jordan (JU)

Table 1: Critical stakeholders in the ecosystem (continued)

Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)	
Entrepreneurs	• Adam wa Mishmish • Alefredo Books (EdTech) *(engaged)* • Aoun • Arabia Weather • Aroundtown • CarMates • Crowd Labs • Dar Ali • DARBCO Solar Cleaning Solutions • Dinarak • Emma Systems • Instatoot • Jordilight *(engaged)* • MadfooatCom. • MSPharma • Quill • SagerDrone • ShipDip • Talabat • Tamatam Games • VIAVII *(engaged)* • WebTeb

Table 1: Critical stakeholders in the ecosystem (continued)

Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)	
Entrepreneurial and other support networks	• 42 Amman • Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation *(engaged)* • Arabian Business Consultants for Development *(engaged)* • Business and Professional Women Association - Amman • Code Circle • Flat6 Labs • GIZ *(engaged)* • Global Green Growth Institute *(engaged)* • INJAZ *(engaged)* • INT@J *(engaged)* • International Labour Organization (ILO) Jordan • iPark • JOIN Fincubator • Jordan Chamber of Commerce • Jordan Chamber of Industries • Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO) • Jordan River Foundation *(engaged)* • MENADevs • Mercy Corps *(engaged)* • Oasis500 *(engaged)* • Orange Jordan Coding Academy • Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship *(engaged)* • Shamal Start Jordan *(engaged)* • Startup Bootcamp • Startup Grind Jordan • UNICEF Jordan • United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *(engaged)* • USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Nutrition • WFP Jordan Innovation Hub • World Bank *(engaged)* • ZAIN ZINC *(engaged)*

Table 1: Critical stakeholders in the ecosystem (continued)

Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)	
Finance	• Ahli Bank • Amam Ventures • Arab Bank • Bank al Etihad *(engaged)* • Bank Of Jordan • Beyond Capital • Central Bank of Jordan *(engaged)* • Cities and Villages Development Bank *(engaged)* • DASH Ventures • EBRD Bank • Future Arab Investment Company • Innovative Startups & SMEs Fund (ISSF) *(engaged)* • JoAngel Network • JoPACC *(engaged)* • Jordan Commercial Bank • Jordan Kuwait Bank • Middle East Angel Investment Network • SME Investment Fund • VentureX
Private Sector	• CliQ • eSense • Integrated International *(engaged)* • Makane • Mawdoo3 • Mediterranean Tourism Investment Company (METICO) • Microsoft • Opensook • Orange Jordan *(engaged)* • ProgressSoft • TechMinds Consulting *(engaged)* • Umniah *(engaged)* • Zain Jordan *(engaged)*

Table 1: Critical stakeholders in the ecosystem (continued)

	Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)
Public sector	• Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) • Invest Jordan • Jordan Investment Commission • Jordan Source Programme • King Abdullah II Centre for Excellence (KACE) *(engaged)* • Ministry of Agriculture • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources *(engaged)* • Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship (MoDEE) *(engaged)* • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research • Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Supply *(engaged)* • Ministry of Investments *(engaged)* • Ministry of Labour • Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities *(engaged)* • Ministry of Youth • National Centre for Innovation *(engaged)* • National Council for Family Affairs • National Cyber Security Centre • Telecommunication Regulatory Commission *(engaged)*

6 Ecosystem maturity map

Understanding the ecosystem maturity map

The ecosystem maturity map, also referred to as the innovation journey map, highlights the work that needs to be done in the ecosystem to harness innovation on a transformative journey from pre-ideation to high growth. It describes stakeholder roles and actions in support of entrepreneurs and innovators at each stage of the start-up lifecycle. The colour coding identifies areas that are well-supported (green), inadequate (yellow) and missing or weak (red). In some cases, to arrive at a consensus with the group, orange has been used to indicate maturity between a red and a yellow; and light green has been used to indicate maturity between a yellow and a green.

The heatmap of stakeholders in the ecosystem and the current status of jobs-to-be-done is based on interviews and group discussions in co-creation workshops with local stakeholders and is further validated by secondary research and literature reviews.

It must be understood that the innovation lifecycle or entrepreneurial journey is not linear. Instead, it is made up of a series of jobs-to-be-done across different stages of the cycles. In the pre-ideation stage, key actors plant the seeds of support in the innovation ecosystem. In the ideation stage, innovations are developed but have not yet been incorporated as businesses. In the start-up stage, innovations evolve from concepts into businesses. The "valley of death" is a challenging stage of development where entrepreneurs need strong support to survive. In the SME stage, the velocity of start-up growth increases as they expand rapidly into established businesses, reach steady-state, or exit through buyouts or initial public offerings (IPOs).

There is a need for a comprehensive understanding of how ecosystem actors can work together to implement national development priorities within the maturity ecosystem of digital innovation. Initiatives that are constructed in silos might lead to duplication of efforts and wasted resources.

The ecosystem maturity map for Jordan shows a growing ecosystem. With several support mechanisms in place at the early stages, the ecosystem faces some maturity gaps as ideas transition into viable businesses and growth-stage enterprises.

Profiling key stakeholder actions is necessary to accelerate digital transformation.

Actors	Cycle Stage				
	PRE-IDEA	IDEATION	STARTUP	THE "VALLEY OF DEATH"	SME
Entrepreneurs	Entrepre-neurial Interest	Engage with Problems	Develop Business Models	Build Collabora-tion	Expand
Finance	Research Funding	Seed Funding	Angel Invest-ment	Venture Capital	Business Finance and Loans
Entrepreneur-ial Support Networks	Entrepre-neurial Events	Hackathons and compe-titions	Co-Working and Support	Incubators and Accel-erators	Business Association

(continued)

Actors	Cycle Stage				
	PRE-IDEA	IDEATION	STARTUP	THE "VALLEY OF DEATH"	SME
Private Sector	Success Stories	Research Programmes	Lab Programmes	B2B & Support Services	Skill Training Programmes
Academia	Community of Entrepre-neurs	Basic Research	Spin Offs	Soft Skill Trainings	Human Capital
Public Sector	Vision and Strategy	IP & R&D Support	Tax Support	Public Procure-ment	Trade Policy

Entrepreneurs

- There is strong entrepreneurial interest among youth in Jordan, driven both by a passion for building businesses and the limited availability of jobs in the market.
- While some innovators are actively seeking to address unique and relevant problems across economic sectors, many others continue to rely on globally popular and proven models, such as delivery services and e-commerce platforms.
- Entrepreneurs often lack the skills, experience, and structured support needed to develop strong business models capable of turning ideas into sustainable ventures.
- Peer-to-peer collaboration is growing, primarily for knowledge exchange; however, co-creation of products and services remains limited due to a competitive mindset.
- Most startups struggle to transition into high-growth SMEs within Jordan and often relocate to more attractive neighbouring ecosystems to pursue buy-outs, scale, or IPOs.

Finance

- Some research funding is available in the ecosystem, primarily from the public sector for academia; however, it is insufficient to meaningfully advance innovation.
- Seed funding is available at the ideation and early stages, but it is often spread too thin across an already under-resourced ecosystem.
- Angel investments at the early stage are largely absent, due to limited incentives and a relatively risk-averse investment culture.
- Some regional venture capital firms are present in the ecosystem and are willing to make high-risk investments once a startup has developed a minimum viable product (MVP) and demonstrated early signs of success.
- SMEs can access support through traditional investment channels and bank loans, but this financing typically comes with high interest rates and significant collateral requirements.

Entrepreneurial support networks

- Jordan hosts a large number of events and gatherings that promote and support the growth of an entrepreneurial culture across different education levels and geographic regions.

- Innovators have access to numerous hackathons and competitions at the school and university levels, providing ample opportunities to validate and develop their ideas.
- There are several co-working spaces and programmes that offer access to resources and knowledge, mainly in Amman, with limited reach in Irbid and Aqaba; however, many innovators lack access due to cost or awareness, often resorting to working from home or cafés.
- Incubators and accelerators are running well-structured programmes to support, guide, and scale startups but they face challenges such as limited resources and a recurring pool of talent, leading to duplication across initiatives.
- Jordan has several active business associations and networks, particularly in the traditional commerce sector, but the innovation ecosystem receives limited engagement or support from these platforms.

Private sector

- The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jordan has a small but growing pool of local and regional success stories.
- Beyond the telecommunication sector, private companies contribute minimally to research and innovation across industries.
- Some private sector-led initiatives, mainly by telecommunication companies, support innovators internally or externally, though their success is yet to be measured and determined.
- Business-to-business engagement with startups is limited, as large local firms prefer partnering with more established regional players over local startups and digital SMEs.
- There are quite a few incubators and CSR-driven initiatives from the private sector, particularly from firms in the ICT sector, that focus on skills development, marking a positive step towards ecosystem support.

Academia

- Academic institutions across education levels are increasingly fostering entrepreneurial thinking and community engagement through focused discussions, initiatives and events.
- Academic research in Jordan is predominantly centred on theoretical inquiry, often guided by faculty promotion requirements rather than aligned with practical problem-solving or market-oriented innovation.
- Despite some institutional guidelines, successful spin-offs and commercialization of research outputs from universities remain rare, resulting in very limited impact on industry or the broader innovation ecosystem.
- In recent years, universities have strengthened training in business and entrepreneurial skills through curriculum modules, seminars, and guest lectures.
- While graduates are generally well-trained by regional standards, there is still a gap between academic training and market needs.

Public sector

- The government has articulated a clear national vision and strategy for innovation, though implementation and monitoring need significant strengthening to achieve measurable impact.
- While IP protection laws are in place, enforcement through the judiciary remains weak. Similarly, regulatory frameworks, incentives, and funding mechanisms for research and innovation across key economic sectors require further development.

- Some favourable legal provisions and tax exemptions exist for new and small businesses, but more can be done to incentivize investment and strengthen the broader innovation ecosystem.
- Public procurement frameworks include some provisions to support local innovators; however, major contracts typically go to large, established firms, and the process remains complex and discouraging for smaller businesses.
- Several policies, trade agreements, and investment initiatives aim to support innovation-driven businesses, but their impact has yet to reach the desired level.

7 Relevant practices

During the assessment process, a combination of research and stakeholder engagements highlighted the following initiatives in Jordan as noteworthy practices within the ecosystem, recognized for their relevance and potential contribution to strengthening the innovation ecosystem.

Crown Prince Award for Best Government Service Application

Launched in 2019 under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, the Crown Prince Award for Best Government Service Application is a national initiative aimed at catalysing youth-led digital innovation in the public sector. The Award invites Jordanian university students to design mobile applications that improve access to and delivery of public services, turning real-life challenges into practical digital solutions. Organized in collaboration with the Crown Prince Foundation and supported by MoDEE, the Award encourages civic engagement, problem-solving, and entrepreneurship among youth. Submissions are evaluated based on creativity, usability, impact, and alignment with national priorities. Finalists receive monetary prizes, expert mentorship, and the opportunity to co-develop their prototypes with government entities. Since its launch, the Award has nurtured a culture of service-oriented innovation in higher education and showcased the role of youth in advancing e-government and digital transformation. It complements broader ecosystem-building efforts such as the INNSAN Sandbox and the National AI Strategy, positioning students not only as future professionals, but as active contributors to the modernization agenda. By connecting universities with public institutions, the Award demonstrates a scalable model for engaging youth talent in solving public problems and reimagining government services in the digital age.

Jordan Payments & Clearing Company

The Jordan Payments & Clearing Company, more popularly known as JoPACC, was established in 2017 as a private shareholding company jointly owned by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and domestic banks to manage and operate national payment systems. With a clear mandate to modernize the financial infrastructure and expand digital financial inclusion, JoPACC has grown into a pivotal institution of the fintech landscape in Jordan. It operates several flagship systems, including JoMoPay, CliQ, and eFAWATEERcom, and plays a central role in enabling secure, real-time, and inclusive transactions. Its CliQ system alone processes over five million monthly transactions and connects 19 major banks, significantly reducing cash dependency and advancing financial access, especially for SMEs, refugees, and underserved populations. Beyond payment infrastructure, JoPACC has actively invested in innovation through programmes such as the JOIN Fincubator, national hackathons, university capacity-building, and regulatory sandboxes. These initiatives have supported fintech experimentation, trained students in areas such as APIs and AI, and incubated startups, some of which have successfully entered the market. The JoPACC model also includes partnerships with humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR and UNICEF to promote digital financial literacy among vulnerable groups. Recognized internationally, it exemplifies institutional best practice in balancing public oversight and private innovation, and in positioning digital finance as a key enabler of the broader economic transformation of Jordan. With a long-term vision guided by the CBJ Financial Inclusion Strategy and Vision 2030, JoPACC is helping lay the foundations for the digital economy.

German Jordanian University

Established in 2005 by Royal Decree, the German Jordanian University (GJU) is a public university near Madaba designed to blend applied learning with strong industry-academia linkages. Its flagship innovation initiative is led by the Deanship of Innovation, Technology Transfer, and Entrepreneurship (DI-TECH), which fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and promotes entrepreneurship through curriculum integration, extra credit incentives for cloud service use, and strategic partnerships. Anchored in the German "Dual Study" model, all undergraduate students spend one academic year in Germany, including a compulsory internship, giving them real-world skills and international exposure. GJU actively contributes to national policy by co-leading the GEM Report and aligns with government and donor priorities, including support for women entrepreneurs, cloud technology certification (in collaboration with AWS, Microsoft, and Huawei), and investment in green startups and Industry 5.0. GJU has emphasized the need to reposition universities as long-term builders of entrepreneurial mindsets, while calling for clearer boundaries between the roles of incubators and academic institutions. With an estimated 8-10 per cent of GJU graduates pursuing entrepreneurship and ongoing efforts to raise this to 15 per cent, the university has prioritized employability, soft skills development, and real-world problem-solving. As a national best practice, GJU offers a scalable model for cultivating entrepreneurial graduates by embedding innovation into both pedagogy and institutional strategy.

iPARK

iPARK, a leading Amman-based innovation hub, has pioneered a social entrepreneurship space in collaboration with Mercy Corps through its "Generation Impact" incubator, the first social-impact business incubator (launched in 2018) in Jordan[117]. Funded in part by the European Union (EUR 7.8 million) and Mercy Corps, the incubator supports early-stage ventures, particularly those addressing youth unemployment, education, and green jobs. It offers co-working spaces, mentorship, coaching, peer-learning, and access to early investment; 20 job-tech SMEs have benefited from subsidized infrastructure and tailored support. Generation Impact has been instrumental in testing and scaling sustainable business models across sectors and partnerships with Beyond Capital for high-impact funding. The mission of iPARK is to embed innovation within underrepresented communities in Jordan and address social impact alongside commercial viability. The success of the initiative highlights European Union-supported multi-stakeholder collaboration and shows how social outcomes can align with entrepreneurial growth. While broad system-level impact is emerging, the programme remains a critical best practice for strengthening the orientation of the ecosystem toward inclusive and market-ready social innovation.

Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship

Founded in 2004 within the Princess Sumaya University for Technology and later elevated to a national-level initiative under the Royal Scientific Society, the Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship (QRCE) is one of the most longstanding and adaptive institutions supporting technology entrepreneurship in Jordan. Initially launched through a small university competition, QRCE has evolved into a countrywide pre-incubation and capacity-building engine, operating with a mandate to promote entrepreneurship awareness, build talent pipelines, and cultivate

[117] BEAM Exchange (2024) Social Business Incubator (iPark), BEAM Exchange. Available at: https://beamexchange.org/resources/msd4e/2037/.

community-wide networks. Its flagship Venture Lab programme provides business training, workspace, and mentorship for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly university students, offering grants of up to JOD 10 000 per project to transform graduation projects into viable ventures. Since 2009, QRCE has also served as the official host of Global Entrepreneurship Week in Jordan, bringing together over 200 local and international organizations under a common platform to promote ecosystem cohesion and visibility. Recognizing gaps in ecosystem alignment and resource duplication, QRCE strategically complements other national players such as iPARK and Oasis500, acting as an upstream feeder of investment-ready startups. In a context marked by donor dependency, regulatory fragmentation, and uneven geographic access, the QRCE model demonstrates the importance of structured pre-incubation and relationship-based continuity in strengthening national startup readiness. With a lean annual budget, the Centre continues to deliver targeted impact through mentorship, structured bootcamps, and cross-sector collaboration that connects ideas to viable market pathways.

ShipDip

Founded in Jordan, ShipDip is a logistics technology startup that simplifies merchant shipping by connecting them to freight forwarders via an easy-to-use platform. The platform launched following a seed investment and startup competition win, earning USD 7 000 during the 2024 MENA ICT Forum Pitch Competition. The goal of ShipDip is to reduce complexity and costs in cross-border shipping, enabling SMEs and e-commerce sellers to obtain competitive quotes and track shipments within a unified interface. The ShipDip platform addresses pain points in Jordan's fragmented shipping ecosystem, offering transparency through vetted freight partners. While revenue figures remain undisclosed, ShipDip is experiencing growing traction in local markets and partnerships such as its collaboration with AstraZeneca-sponsored Orange Corners Jordan. As a best-practice case, ShipDip illustrates how Jordanian startups can identify systemic bottlenecks, validate solutions, and scale regionally. Beyond the immediate practical and economic impact of the ShipDip platform, the value of startup competitions and corporate incubators in propelling homegrown technology ventures is also highlighted by this example. Though still in early growth stages, the example of ShipDip is also particularly notable for demonstrating rapid market uptake and for offering the potential for scalable logistics innovation.

Youth, Technology, and Jobs Programme

Launched in 2020 by MoDEE with USD 200 million in World Bank funding, the Youth, Technology and Jobs (YTJ) Programme is a seven-year initiative addressing youth unemployment and the digital skills gap in Jordan. Its multi-pronged strategy targets both supply and demand sides of the labour market, building digital capabilities among youth while fostering job creation and entrepreneurship across the ICT sector. YTJ aims to upskill 30 000 young people, embed digital curricula in public schools (reaching 300 000 students), support 250 startups, train 6 000 freelancers, digitize 80 per cent of government payments, and generate 10 000 jobs by 2025. Interventions include grants to training providers, startup salary subsidies, market expansion support, and entrepreneurship initiatives such as NashamaStart and DigiSkills, a national agency targeting youth aged 18-34. A national employment and training platform is also under development. The programme stands out for its sector-wide design and measurable targets, seamlessly integrating education, employment, and entrepreneurship support. It reflects the increasing capacity of MoDEE to coordinate ecosystem-wide funding, with alignment to the Economic Modernization Vision and partnerships spanning the Ministry of Education, private sector actors, and global investors. Early outcomes indicate rising digital literacy, startup activity,

and improved access to training outside Amman. As a government-led, donor-backed flagship initiative, YTJ demonstrates a systems-level approach to building a digital economy, linking national objectives with grassroots inclusion to strengthen the innovation and employment ecosystem in Jordan.

Zain Innovation Campus

Launched in 2014 by Zain Jordan, the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) has evolved into a flagship private-sector initiative supporting early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly during the ideation and validation phases. Initially created to fill a critical ecosystem gap, at a time when co-working spaces and accelerators were still nascent, ZINC now spans eight branches, including five within public universities, and supports individuals aged 12 to 60. Through its flagship Zain Al Mubadara programme, the campus offers grants, in-kind business support, UX consultancy, and technical mentoring. This is complemented by exposure to international markets via boot camps and conferences in the Republic of Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, helping startups shape scalable business models. ZINC is particularly notable for its provision of holistic support, ranging from soft skills training to minimum viable product (MVP) development, and for drawing high-quality mentors, coaches, and global success stories to inspire local talent. Alumni have gone on to commercialize products, although data on long-term success is limited. Notably, ZINC has invested in building local capacity through R&D collaborations with universities, problem-solving projects for students, and a growing digital community via the ZINC.jo platform. While ZINC exemplifies how corporate CSR can be institutionalized into ecosystem-building, challenges persist: the local startup market remains small; university curricula still lack entrepreneurial depth; and there is a shortage of visible local champions. However, continued investment by ZINC, multi-sector collaborations, and advocacy for cross-regional scaling, mark it as a cornerstone of the entrepreneurial infrastructure, and a strong model for sustainable private-sector engagement in national innovation.

8 Perspectives on national priorities

Understanding the national vision and key strategies

A clear vision for digital transformation, shared at a community or national level, results in synergizing the resources and efforts towards a single shared objective. It is important to understand that the digital economy is a product or outcome of digital transformation in a country. Stakeholder visions and strategies can be aligned with this goal, tearing down legacy silos and enabling a collective understanding of gaps and opportunities. This alignment will lead to the creation of a cohesive common agenda.

Most countries have established their national vision for a digital economy, drawing on national priorities as well as regional and global frameworks. The national vision is essential to ensure a common language among stakeholders and to avoid miscommunication or misleading information. Most countries are also enacting various strategies, including digital economy strategies, to achieve the vision. However, the enablers needed in many cases are not present to a sufficient degree, especially with regard to how ICT can drive this acceleration.

The Economic Modernization Vision, branded "A Better Future", is a national roadmap that was launched in 2022 and endorsed through to 2033[118]. Conceived at the direction of His Majesty King Abdullah II following a National Economic Workshop that engaged experts across government, the private sector, academia, civil society, and the media, the Vision seeks to ignite sustainable economic growth, improve quality of life, and embed resilience and sustainability at the heart of national development. Built around two strategic pillars, accelerating economic expansion and enhancing citizens' well-being, it is underpinned by eight growth drivers and more than 360 targeted initiatives spanning 35 sectors. These include high-value industries, sustainable resources, urban development, the green economy, foreign investment, education and innovation, advanced services, and tourism. As a comprehensive, cross-sector framework, the Vision articulates both digital and non-digital priorities to modernize public services, boost competitiveness, and position Jordan as a knowledge-based economy. By 2033, it aims to create over one million jobs, achieve 5.6 per cent annual GDP growth, and double citizens' satisfaction with quality of life to 80 per cent. Coordinated by a dedicated unit within the Prime Ministry and driven by multi-ministerial leadership, legislative reforms, and public-private partnerships, the Vision places digitalization and innovation at the core of its implementation.

Supporting this overarching national vision and aligned with the SDGs, the National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021–2025) acts as a foundational enabler[119]. The strategy focuses on inclusive service delivery, public-private collaboration, and human capital development. It directly reinforces the Economic Modernization Vision pillars, and particularly High Value Industries and Smart Jordan, by laying out the digital infrastructure and governance needed to accelerate modernization across sectors. Framed as a whole-of-government agenda, the digital transformation strategy promotes service interoperability, open APIs, cloud-first policies, and 5G rollout, which are critical enablers for digitally transforming healthcare, education, tourism, and agriculture. The government also prioritizes secure data

[118] Economic Modernization Vision. (2022). *A better future is possible*. Government of Jordan. https://www.jordanvision.jo/en.

[119] *Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Jordan. (2021). National Digital Transformation Strategy (2021–2025) [PDF]. Retrieved June 2025, from* https://www.modee.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/en/eb_list_page/dts-2021-eng.pdf.

governance, cybersecurity, and institutional change management. Implementation is jointly led by MoDEE and overseen by the Council of Ministers, with clear performance indicators and a commitment to global standards. This ensures digital transformation is not only technical, but also institutional, embedded within public sector reform, and linked to broader development goals.

National vision
"Unleashing potential to build the future". [Economic Modernization Vision]

Digital transformation strategies
The strategic enablers for digital transformation provide a comprehensive foundation for driving inclusive and sustainable development towards: • Transforming public sector operations by enhancing digital infrastructure, expanding digital government services, improving data and interoperability systems, and enabling e-participation to increase transparency and efficiency. • Promoting social inclusion through initiatives such as the Youth, Technology and Jobs programme, alongside change management and HR reforms that build a digitally capable and innovation-driven public workforce. • Strengthening economic sectors by fostering public-private partnerships, enabling SMEs and startups, and applying digital innovation to modernize key industries such as tourism, healthcare, education, and transport. • Supporting sustainability and resilience by digitizing government resource management, promoting green technology adoption, and using data to guide environmentally responsible development.

Social	Economic	Sustainability
Pillar: Quality of life	**Pillar: Economic growth**	**Pillar: Sustainability**
Improve day-to-day life Jordanians	Create economic opportunities for Jordanians	Apply sustainability principles to economic growth
Strengthen the international competitiveness of Jordan as a place to live	Create sustainable and Inclusive economic growth	Apply sustainability principles to quality of life
	Strengthen the international competitiveness of Jordan	

Beyond 2025, sustaining the momentum achieved will require the development of a renewed, forward-looking strategy that builds on existing digital foundations while addressing evolving priorities. This includes deepening the sectoral integration of digital tools, strengthening data governance and cybersecurity, and further institutionalizing innovation across government and industry. Continued efforts are also needed to strengthen human capital, refine adaptive regulations, and expand inclusive digital access nationwide. As digital transformation becomes increasingly central to national resilience and competitiveness, a coordinated whole-of-society effort will be essential to achieving a truly smart, inclusive, and innovation-led economy.

In the next section of this report, ITU offers a variety of recommendations to support the country and its vision. These recommendations are targeted towards strengthening the executive programmes and related strategies in Jordan to achieve the vision and mission. These recommendations include specific new measures, policies and initiatives that can propel the country and its stakeholders towards its national ambition.

9 Recommendations

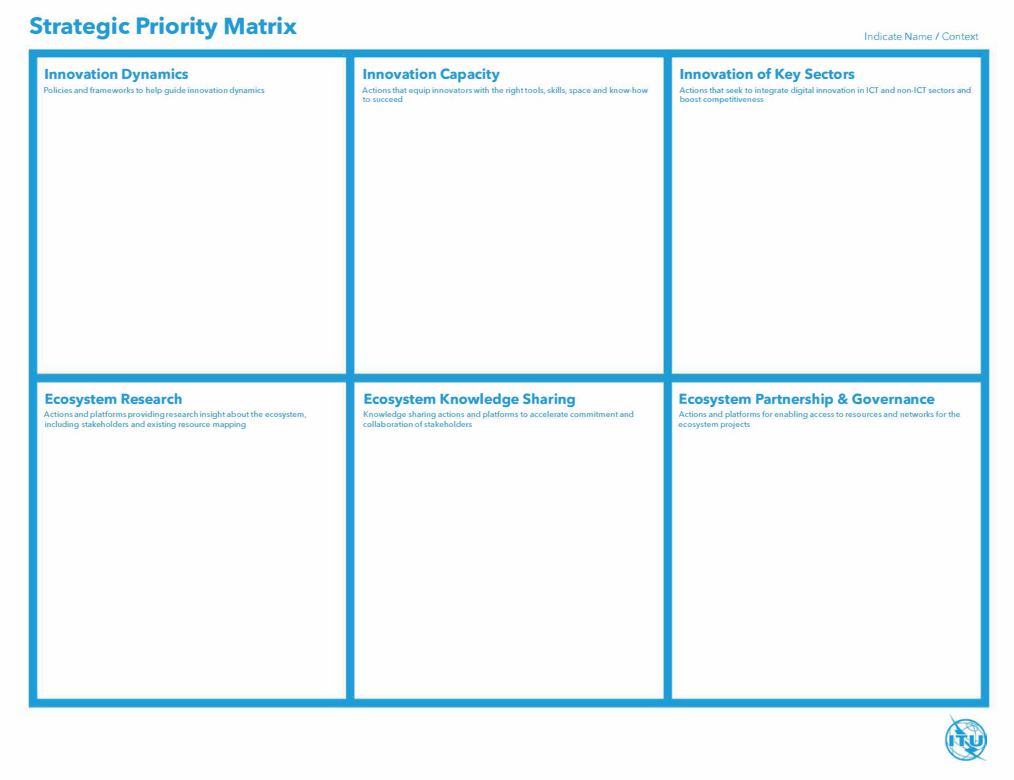
Understanding the strategic priority matrix

Identifying the most critical needs and solving them using the available resources in an ecosystem is an important consideration. Without prioritization and proper planning, success can be limited. Developing the capabilities of an ecosystem requires an agreement from stakeholders on key recommendations, and key performance indicators to monitor them.

The strategic priority matrix identifies actions, programmes, policies and initiatives that must be in place to unlock the key enablers necessary for digital transformation.

This tool helps to develop a high-priority roadmap that amplifies good practices in the ecosystem and fills in the gaps identified. This tool allows stakeholders to identify actions that need to be taken to support the ecosystem and propose missing elements as new complementary actions for the organic development of the ecosystem. The actions proposed need to be aligned with the national strategies of the country and should facilitate ICT policies and programmes to be upgraded. All stakeholders should agree on the priorities.

Figure 4: Strategic priority matrix



The opportunities presented for the ecosystem in this chapter have been arrived at through group discussions with local stakeholders in co-creation workshops and are supported with detailed complementary information in the detailed Appendix 1.

There are three main strategies for developing the ecosystem. These focus on actions that enhance the nurturing environment and concentrate the ecosystem on key sectors:

- Innovation dynamics
- Innovation capacity
- Innovation of key sectors

Three additional cross-cutting strategies help mature the ecosystem through actions that strengthen knowledge and linkages within the ecosystem:

- Ecosystem research
- Ecosystem knowledge sharing
- Ecosystem partnership and governance

The following table lays out key recommendations for each of the six strategic priorities, which will help to develop and mature the ecosystem and achieve the national ambition of digital transformation. The table has been organized into short-term, medium-term and long-term recommendations based on the efforts and resources required to achieve them.

Table 2: Ecosystem strategic and recommendations to accelerate innovation in the country

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations			
Strategic priorities	**Timeframe**		
	Short-term (Year I)	**Medium-term (Year II)**	**Long-term (Year III onwards)**
Innovation dynamics (ID) *Policies and strategies to help guide innovation dynamics*	ID1: Strengthen the **national startup policy framework** to clarify definitions, streamline registration, and company closures, and simplify regulatory processes for innovation-driven enterprises in Jordan.	ID4: Launch a **unified national innovation strategy** with sector-specific proof-of-concept environments to incentivize private sector co-investment in infrastructure, R&D, and innovation procurement across Jordan.	ID7: Adopt a **policy acceleration framework** to make innovation governance more participatory, agile, and responsive in Jordan.
	ID2: Review **SME and public procurement policies** to improve access to markets and the competitiveness of small businesses in Jordan.	ID5: Align **national education and employment strategies** with innovation policy to create an industry-ready, entrepreneurial workforce in Jordan.	ID8: **Establish innovation sandboxes** to accelerate policy learning and safe experimentation with emerging technologies across key sectors in Jordan.
	ID3: Reform **lending criteria** to enhance bank loan accessibility for startups and high-potential SMEs in Jordan.	ID6: **Promote investor protection and incentive reforms** to build a more attractive legal and fiscal environment for domestic and foreign investment in innovation in Jordan.	ID9: Introduce policy incentives such as co-investment schemes, R&D credits, and public innovation challenges to **enhance private sector participation in innovation** in Jordan

Table 2: Ecosystem strategic and recommendations to accelerate innovation in the country (continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations			
Strategic priorities	**Timeframe**		
	Short-term (Year I)	**Medium-term (Year II)**	**Long-term (Year III onwards)**
Innovation capacity (IC) *Actions that equip innovators with the right tools, skills, space and know-how to succeed*	IC1: Integrate an **entrepreneurial mindset and soft skills development programme** into national curricula and incubation systems to cultivate opportunity-driven innovators in Jordan.	IC4: Implement **targeted inclusion programmes** to increase participation of women, youth, refugees, and persons with disabilities in the innovation ecosystem in Jordan.	IC7: Pilot a performance-linked funding programme to strengthen **the financial sustainability and impact of incubators and accelerators** supporting startups in Jordan.
	IC2: Redesign and **institutionalize internship and training programmes** to build job-ready and innovation-aligned talent in universities and TVET institutions in Jordan.	IC5: Strengthen **university innovation capacity** by funding entrepreneurship centres and launching a national faculty innovation upskilling programme across Jordan.	IC8: Establish a **national investment readiness and co-investment platform** to expand early and growth-stage financing through angel and VC networks in Jordan.
	IC3: Expand **public funding mechanisms** for startups with simplified processes and stage-specific instruments in Jordan.	IC6: Strengthen **technical skills development** through regular bootcamps and sector-specific training programmes in AI, IoT, blockchain, and other emerging technologies.	IC9: Design a targeted digital transformation educational programme to **support ICT adoption among Jordan's family-owned businesses**.
Innovation of key sectors (IKS) *Actions that seek to integrate digital innovation in ICT and non-ICT sectors to boost competitiveness*	IKS1: Conduct a participatory national **foresight process to prioritize strategic sectors** for innovation and investment in Jordan	IKS3: Introduce targeted **incentives to promote innovation for sustainability** in climate resilience, water, and agriculture sectors in Jordan.	IKS5: Establish **a tourism innovation cluster** to nurture high-impact startups and enterprises driving cultural, eco, and digital tourism in Jordan.
	IKS2: Launch **community-led local innovation discovery processes** to reveal unmet needs and investment opportunities in priority sectors across Jordan.	IKS4: Deploy digital transformation incentives to **accelerate ICT adoption in priority economic sectors** and traditional industries across Jordan.	IKS6: Strengthen export support mechanisms to **boost innovation-led trade** from high-potential Jordanian sectors.

Table 2: Ecosystem strategic and recommendations to accelerate innovation in the country (continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations			
Strategic priorities	**Timeframe**		
	Short-term (Year I)	**Medium-term (Year II)**	**Long-term (Year III onwards)**
Ecosystem research (ER) *Actions and platforms providing research insight about the ecosystem, including stakeholders and existing resource mapping*	ER1: Activate and expand national open data platforms **to improve access to innovation-relevant datasets** for entrepreneurs and researchers in Jordan.	ER3: Establish a **national research and innovation insight platform** to publish sector-specific opportunity briefs and improve access to research findings for policy-makers, entrepreneurs, and academia in Jordan.	ER5: Incentivize **applied research partnerships** to align academic research with industry needs and emerging technologies across sectors in Jordan.
	ER2: Implement a **national IP awareness programme** to increase innovation protection and commercialization among students, researchers, and start-ups in Jordan.	ER4: Increase and diversify **funding schemes to boost national R&D** capacity and support early-stage research commercialization in Jordan.	
Ecosystem knowledge sharing (EKS) *Knowledge sharing actions and platforms to accelerate commitment and collaboration of stakeholders*	EKS1: Develop a **centralized national innovation calendar** to improve awareness and participation in ecosystem activities across Jordan.	EK4: Institutionalize national **dialogue forums to align donor engagement** with ecosystem needs and national innovation priorities in Jordan.	
	EK2: Develop a national recognition initiative to **showcase local champions and success stories**.	EK5: Increase awareness and **clarity of startup-relevant taxation policies** to enhance compliance and financial planning among entrepreneurs in Jordan.	
	EK3: Facilitate **localized peer learning circles** among incubators, accelerators innovation hubs, and support organizations to share tools, success stories, and lessons learned, fostering community-based innovation capacity.	EKS6: Consolidate and **strengthen the unified innovation mapping platform** to encourage collaboration, knowledge exchange, and transparency across ecosystem actors in Jordan.	

Table 2: Ecosystem strategic and recommendations to accelerate innovation in the country (continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations			
Strategic priorities	**Timeframe**		
	Short-term (Year I)	**Medium-term (Year II)**	**Long-term (Year III onwards)**
Ecosystem partnership and governance (EPG) *Actions and platforms for enabling access to resources and networks for the ecosystem projects*	EPG1: **Strengthen existing public sector coordination mechanisms** by institutionalizing ministry-level innovation focal points and formalizing a cross-ministerial innovation council.	EPG2: Establish a **National Innovation and Entrepreneurship Acceleration Centre** to build new human and institutional capacities to address local problems through an ecosystem-based approach in Jordan.	

10 Next steps

Decisive and active interventions can help transform an ICT ecosystem, making it more innovative and a true driver of accelerated digital expansion in all aspects of society, with real gains in public, professional and personal lives. Stakeholders, based on co-creation and ecosystem priorities, shared recommendations that have helped conceptualize priority projects.

The value of this assessment, which identifies the main obstacles and catalysts that already exist in the ecosystem, is to provide the ideal platform for the launch and development of high-impact flagship projects. Each of these projects, designed to be of unique relevance to the country, would help accelerate digital transformation.

This digital innovation profile (DIP) provides a valuable first glimpse of both the ecosystem and the existing practices. The profile is designed to raise awareness about the local challenges and opportunities, and engage all stakeholders in implementing flagship projects, which can foster an enabling environment for the ICT-centric innovation ecosystem to unleash the full potential of Jordan, and ultimately help bridge the innovation gap.

A roadmap has been co-created with a wide pool of stakeholders in the country, and the recommendations offered in this DIP are based on country-level evidence. The proposed recommendations will assist Jordan in integrating stakeholders and their actions and initiatives into a collaborative and knowledge-based ecosystem aligned around common goals to drive digital transformation across the country.

As a next step, additional engagement will be needed to design, implement, monitor and evaluate each element of the roadmap. Upon request, ITU can also provide Jordan with a consolidated view of the highest priority actions, providing an overview of the immediate tasks needed, representing the minimum set of actions required to drive change across the ecosystem. ITU can also support the country in building human and institutional capacity and strengthening governance systems to take the roadmap forward and guide its implementation in support of ongoing efforts to improve and accelerate the digital innovation ecosystem in Jordan.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed recommendations roadmap

These recommendations are inspired by the co-creation workshops in which all stakeholders participated. ITU can help you turn each of these recommendations and strategies into concrete projects with clearly defined roles for each stakeholder suggested along with indicative KPIs to accelerate your ecosystem.

The table below provides a detailed overview of the recommendations presented in Chapter 9. It outlines the rationale for each recommendation, the proposed solution, its expected benefits for the innovation ecosystem, and its alignment with the pillars of the national vision. Core stakeholders suggested to lead each initiative are highlighted in bold, alongside additional ecosystem actors (a non-exhaustive list) who can support and champion the recommendation in various capacities. Relevant good practices – both direct and indirect – are also included to inspire and inform potential implementation pathways.

Table 3: Detailed roadmap of ecosystem strategies and recommendations to accelerate innovation in the country

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Strategic priorities that nurture the ecosystem or help mature the ecosystem	*Opportunities to address a particular ecosystem challenge*	*Challenge explanation, analysis of the risk of the opportunity, as well as benefits users gain from using product or service*	*Proposed solutions to the ecosystem challenge that meet the needs of users*	*The indicators that will demonstrate whether the ecosystem challenge has been addressed and what will be measured*	*The Key Performance Indicators as established by the country*	*Stakeholders with high power and interest to be involved in this opportunity*	*Good practices nationally or internationally to inspire the course of action*
Innovation Dynamics 1	Strengthen a national startup policy framework to clarify definitions, streamline registration, company closures and simplify regulatory processes for innovation-driven enterprises in Jordan	Many early-stage founders struggle with lengthy registration, rigid tax obligations, and costly legal compliance, which discourage risk-taking and local formalisation. A unified national framework is needed to distinctly define and support home-based businesses, startups, SMEs, and scale-ups.	Strengthen a National Startup Policy that includes clear legal definitions for home-based businesses, startups and scale-ups; introduces simplified and fast-tracked procedures for registration and closure; and establishes tax grace periods and operational flexibility for new ventures.	Reduction in time and cost for company registration and closure Increase in number of startups formally registered in Jordan Uptake of simplified legal and regulatory instruments by start-ups	Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Ministry of Investment JEDCO INT@J ISSF Central Bank of Jordan University of Jordan	Startup Act (Tunisia)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Dynamics 2	Revise SME and public procurement policies to improve access to markets and competitiveness of small businesses in Jordan	Burdensome documentation requirements, high performance guarantees, and delayed payments often discourage SMEs from participating in public tenders. Streamlined processes and SME-specific procurement quotas can incentivise greater local participation, innovation, and economic inclusion.	Revise public procurement frameworks to incorporate SME-friendly measures such as simplified documentation, prequalification lists, reduced collateral requirements, and accelerated disbursements, while enabling faster project implementation through delegated authority, especially for digital procurement.	Increase in number of SMEs successfully bidding for and executing public contracts Reduction in average time from tender award to contract execution Reduction in average payment delays to SMEs for completed projects	Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE General Supplies Department Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Jordan Chamber of Industry JEDCO Sectoral ministries (such as health, tourism, education, etc.)	ChileCompra (Chile)
Innovation Dynamics 3	Reform lending criteria to enhance bank loan accessibility for startups and high-potential SMEs in Jordan	High collateral demands and widespread risk aversion among banks limit access to essential capital for startups and innovative SMEs. Adjusting lending frameworks and incentivising financial institutions to cater to these segments can unlock new opportunities for private sector growth and innovation.	Launch loan guarantee schemes and introduce alternative credit scoring mechanisms to reduce perceived lending risks and expand access to finance for startups and high-potential SMEs.	Increase in number of startups and SMEs successfully securing bank loans Increase in financial products tailored to early-stage or innovation-driven companies	Pillar: Economic Growth	Central Bank of Jordan ISSF JoPACC Jordan Chamber of Industry Commercial Banks	Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme (United Kingdom)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Dynamics 4	Launch a unified national innovation strategy with sector-specific proof-of-concept environments to incentivise private sector co-investment in infrastructure, R&D, and innovation procurement across Jordan	A unified national strategy, anchored in sectoral R&D priorities and proof-of-concept (POC) labs, can foster clarity, reduce fragmentation, and attract co-investment.	Develop and implement a National Research and Innovation Strategy that includes sector-specific innovation themes, funding maps, and proof-of-concept (POC) environments. Establish POC zones in priority sectors (e.g. energy, tourism, agritech, AI) and introduce innovation-driven procurement and an open innovation co-investment facility.	Number of proof-of-concept labs launched and used Increase in public and private co-investment in innovation infrastructure Uptake of innovation procurement practices across ministries	Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	MoDEE National Centre for Innovation Royal Scientific Society Sectoral ministries (such as trade, energy, agriculture, tourism, etc.) Jordan Chambers of Industry Jordan Investment Fund ISSF University of Jordan Umniah Orange Zain	Innovation Strategy 2030 (Portugal)
Innovation Dynamics 5	Align national education and employment strategies with innovation policy to create an industry-ready, entrepreneurial workforce in Jordan	Graduates in Jordan often lack job- and innovation-readiness due to outdated curricula, limited exposure to entrepreneurship and emerging technologies, and weak collaboration between industry and academia. A national shift is needed to embed innovation and employability into education and workforce strategies.	Develop a cross-sector Human Capital for Innovation Strategy that reforms school and university curricula to include project-based learning, digital fluency, and entrepreneurial thinking. Introduce labour market intelligence systems and co-designed youth innovation employment or startup schemes in partnership with industry.	Increase in students undertaking project-based or entrepreneurship-oriented learning Uptake of youth innovation employment and startup schemes Number of institutions implementing innovation-aligned curricula	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	Ministry of Education Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research MoDEE Higher Education Council Ministry of Labour Jordan Chamber of Commerce INT@J	SkillsFuture Movement (Singapore)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Dynamics 6	Promote investor protection and incentive reforms to build a more attractive legal and fiscal environment for domestic and foreign investment in innovation in Jordan	While recent efforts aim to improve Jordan's investment landscape, gaps remain in legal tools for high-risk financing and in the enforcement of intellectual property rights. Enhancing investor protections and providing targeted incentives can further attract domestic and foreign capital, contributing to a more innovation-ready ecosystem.	Enact investor-friendly reforms through an Innovation Law that introduces investor-side instruments (e.g. SAFE notes, convertible equity), strengthens IP enforcement mechanisms, and offers tax incentives for investments in high-growth sectors.	Increase in private investment in innovation sectors Uptake of investor-side financing instruments (e.g. SAFE notes) Greater use of IP protection mechanisms by startups and investors	Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Investments Central Bank of Jordan Beyond Capital Jordan Chamber of Industries	Abu Dhabi Global Market Financial Hub (United Arab Emirates)
Innovation Dynamics 7	Adopt a policy acceleration programme to make innovation governance more participatory, agile, and responsive in Jordan	In areas such as drones, fintech, AI, and blockchain, regulatory responses in Jordan have often lagged behind innovation cycles. As emerging technologies continue to evolve rapidly, a cross-sectoral policy acceleration programme can help ensure timely, inclusive, and agile governance that keeps pace with technological change and global competitiveness.	Establish an Innovation Policy Acceleration Lab that includes agile policy review cycles, public–private co-creation platforms, and open consultation mechanisms to foster inclusive, evidence-based innovation policy-making.	Number of regulations revised or introduced annually through agile mechanisms Stakeholder satisfaction with the transparency and inclusiveness of consultation processes Reduction in regulatory lag for emerging technologies	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	MoDEE Prime Ministry Office INT@J Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Royal Scientific Society	Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OECD)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Dynamics 8	Establish innovation sandboxes to accelerate policy learning and safe experimentation with emerging technologies across key sectors in Jordan	Emerging technologies like AI, drones, and blockchain often stall in Jordan due to outdated or risk-averse regulatory environments. Sector-based sandboxes offer controlled environments for testing innovations, allowing regulators and innovators to co-develop policy responses and foster responsible adoption.	Establish sector-specific innovation sandboxes (e.g. tourism, energy, agritech, healthtech), with transparent entry criteria, data-sharing protocols, and impact evaluation mechanisms.	Number of startups accepted into innovation sandboxes Number of technologies and solutions tests Time to policy validation for new technologies Uptake of sandbox-informed regulatory adaptations	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	MoDEE Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Royal Scientific Society INT@J Injaz Sectoral ministries (such as tourism, energy, agriculture, health)	Smart Nation Sandbox Framework (Singapore)
Innovation Dynamics 9	Introduce national policy incentives such as co-investment schemes, R&D credits, and public innovation challenges to enhance private sector participation in innovation in Jordan	While many corporations in Jordan possess the internal capacity to support innovation, limited incentives and coordination frameworks restrict their ecosystem engagement. Strategic policy tools – such as co-investment schemes, R&D tax credits, and open innovation challenges – can catalyse greater private sector participation and foster industry-led innovation partnerships.	Launch a Private Sector Innovation Partnership Scheme that offers tax credits for R&D activities, co-funding mechanisms for private incubators and accelerators, and incentives for corporates to run open innovation challenges in collaboration with startups.	Increase in corporate-backed innovation initiatives Number of joint startup–corporate innovation projects launched Uptake of R&D tax incentives by private firms	Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Investment Ministry of Finance Income and Sales Tax Department MoDEE JEDCO Jordan Businessmen Association INT@J Telcos (Umnia, Zain, Orange) University of Jordan	Open Innovation Partnership Model (South Korea)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Capacity 1	Integrate entrepreneurial mindset and soft skills development programme into national curricula and incubation systems to cultivate opportunity-driven innovators in Jordan	Entrepreneurship is often seen as a last resort or often only considered at the university stage. This mindset stems from limited exposure to soft skills, innovation thinking, and resilience training throughout formal and non-formal education systems. Embedding these elements early and consistently is key to building confident, adaptable innovators.	Establish a national innovation competency model Integrate an innovation mindset curriculum across schools and universities Develop modular soft skills certification programmes for incubators and innovation hubs	Increase in voluntary entrepreneurship Uptake of soft skills and innovation mindset modules by academic and non-academic institutions Improved entrepreneurial readiness and resilience among youth and early-stage founders	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	Ministry of Education Queen Rania Teacher Academy MoDEE Ministry of Education Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Entrepreneurial Village (Brunei Darussalam)
Innovation Capacity 2	Redesign and institutionalise internship and training programmes to build job-ready and innovation-aligned talent in Jordan's universities and TVET institutions	Most internships in Jordan are perceived as superficial, offering limited exposure to real-world challenges or innovation contexts. Curricula often under emphasizes practical skills, leaving students unprepared for emerging industry needs. Co-designed and mandatory placements can bridge the readiness gap and foster stronger industry-academia links.	Launch a national internship and applied training programme with mandatory industry placements for university and TVET students, co-designed and co-supervised by academic institutions and employers.	Number of students completing industry-supervised internships annually Percentage of employers reporting improved job readiness among interns Increase in the number of academic programmes with integrated applied training modules	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministry of Labour INT@J Jordan Chamber of Industry Academic institutions (GJU, PSUT, HTU, JU, etc.) Association of Arab Universities	Dual Study System (Germany)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Capacity 3	Expand public funding mechanisms for startups with simplified processes and stage-specific instruments in Jordan	Jordan's government-backed funding schemes are often slow, underutilised, and reliant on donor financing, with limited engagement from the private sector. A streamlined, stage-specific public funding mechanism – co-financed by corporates, banks, or local investors – can create more sustainable and scalable support for startups.	Design a streamlined public funding programme tailored to different startup stages, with clear access pathways and simplified processes.	Increase in number of startups accessing public funding Reduction in average application-to-disbursement time Uptake of funding across pre-seed, seed, and growth stages	Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE ISSF World Bank JEDCO Central Bank of Jordan Venture funds Academic institutions (JU, PSUT, HTU, GJU) Private companies (Umniah, Zain, Orange, Microsoft, Amazon, etc.)	Prototron Fund (Estonia)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Capacity 4	Implement targeted inclusion programmes to increase participation of women, youth, refugees and persons with disabilities in Jordan's innovation ecosystem	Structural inequalities limit the participation of women, rural youth, refugees, and persons with disabilities in Jordan's innovation economy. Targeted inclusion programmes can unlock latent potential, increase equity, and create new pathways to innovation.	Launch dedicated funding tracks for women-led startups and mentorship schemes that connect female founders to networks, markets, and role models. Establish innovation clubs in schools and universities, introduce project-based entrepreneurial learning, and co-create youth accelerator pathways with the private sector. Partner with community organizations to create safe innovation spaces for refugee-led ventures and provide tailored regulatory guidance and incubation support. Develop accessible entrepreneurship training and adaptive digital tools, and offer leadership and innovation scholarships for PwDs.	Uptake of inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship programmes Participation of underserved communities in incubators, accelerators, or digital skills initiatives Increase in number of women-, refugee-, and PwD-led startups	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	MoDEE Queen Rania Foundation National Council for Family Affairs Jordan River Foundation INJAZ Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Ministry of Youth Makani UNICEF Jordan Academic institutions (HTU, PSUT, BAU, etc.) UNICEF Jordan UNHCR Jordan Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) Ministry of Interior	Refugee-Led Innovation Fund (UNHCR)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Capacity 5	Strengthen university innovation capacity by funding entrepreneurship centres and launching a national faculty innovation upskilling programme across Jordan	Despite the presence of university incubators across Jordan, most lack full-time staff and strategic support. Faculty are often unprepared to guide students in innovation due to limited exposure to startups or industry. Strengthening institutional capacity and faculty skills can significantly boost student-led innovation.	Strengthen the university innovation initiatives to expedite and improve access to competitive, performance-based funding for university entrepreneurship centres to support full-time teams and innovation activities.	Increase in number of student-led and faculty-supported innovation projects Number of university innovation centres with full-time teams and active programming	Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Quality of Life	Higher Education Council Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Queen Rania Teacher Academy National Centre for Innovation Academic institutions (PSUT, HTU, GJU, JU, AAU, ASU, AUT, AOU, BAU, LTU, TTU)	EXIST University Programme (Germany)
Innovation Capacity 6	Strengthen technical skills development through national bootcamps and sector-specific training programmes in AI, IoT, blockchain, and other emerging technologies.	Jordan's current technical training ecosystem is fragmented, with limited access to hands-on, industry-aligned programmes in emerging technologies. National-level bootcamps and targeted sectoral upskilling can rapidly close digital skills gaps, boost employability, and support innovation across key industries.	Design and deliver a National Emerging Tech Skills Initiative that includes intensive, certified technical bootcamps in emerging technologies, with sector-specific training aligned to priority industries.	Number of individuals completing accredited emerging tech programmes Increase in employment or startup activity in emerging tech fields Industry uptake of certified tech talent in priority sectors	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research MoDEE Ministry of Labour Academic institutions (such as PSUT, GJU, HTU) Telcos (Zain, Umniah, Orange) Multinational corporations (such as Microsoft, Amazon Web Services) INT@J	Future Work is Digital (Egypt)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Capacity 7	Pilot a performance-linked funding programme to strengthen the financial sustainability and impact of incubators and accelerators supporting startups in Jordan	Incubators and accelerators in Jordan often rely on short-term donor funding, limiting their stability and impact. A performance-linked funding model can strengthen their financial sustainability while incentivising better services and outcomes for startups.	Design and pilot a national performance-based funding scheme for incubators and accelerators, tied to clear and measurable service outcomes. The programme could include staged grants, matching funds from national innovation funding windows, and incentives for crowding in private sponsorships.	Increase in number of financially stable, full-time support organizations Improvement in quality, consistency, and outcomes of incubation services Uptake of performance-linked funding models by innovation support actors	Pillar: Economic Growth	National Centre for Innovation ISSF MoDEE Private sector sponsors (such as Umnia, Microsoft, Integrated International, etc.)	Atal Incubation Centres (India)
Innovation Capacity 8	Establish a national investment readiness and co-investment platform to expand early and growth-stage financing through angel and VC networks in Jordan	While some funding mechanisms exist, many startups struggle to move from seed to growth stages due to low investor confidence, fragmented networks, and limited investment readiness. A structured platform could strengthen investor pipelines, build startup preparedness, and crowd in domestic and foreign capital through co-investment.	Establish a National Startup Capital Programme within the StartupJo Platform that connects VCs, angel investors, corporates, and family offices, offering investment readiness programmes (e.g. term sheets, due diligence, financials, pitching) for startups and co-investment incentives ((e.g. matched funding, risk-sharing schemes to boost early- and growth-stage financing.	Increase in number and volume of startup investment deals Growth of active domestic angel investors and early-stage VC firms Uptake of co-investment incentives across different investor profiles	Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Investment StartupJo MoDEE JEDCO Angel investor networks (such as Beyond Capital Angel Network, JoAngel Network) Private banks (such as Bank al Etihad, Arab Bank, Ahli Bank) Venture capital firms (such as ISSF, DASH Venture	Public-Private Venture Capital Model (France)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation Capacity 9	Design targeted digital transformation programmes to support ICT adoption among Jordan's family-owned businesses	Jordan's economy includes many family enterprises that operate with traditional models. They often respond to external pressures rather than proactively embrace digital transformation. Structured support, tailored to their culture and size, could improve productivity and continuity.	SME digitisation programme with dedicated outreach for family businesses, including mentorship, change management support, and peer learning	Increase in digital tool adoption by family-owned firms Number of SMEs participating in digital mentorships Reduction in manual business processes	Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Investment MoDEE Jordan Business Council Jordan Chamber of Industry JEDCO INT@J	Mittelstand 4.0 (Germany)
Innovation of Key Sectors 1	Conduct a participatory national foresight process to prioritise strategic sectors for innovation and investment in Jordan	With limited public and private resources, Jordan must take a strategic approach in selecting 4–5 high-potential sectors for innovation. Building on the Jordan Modernisation Plan and in collaboration with the National Council for Future Technology, a forward-looking foresight process – guided by future demand, local capabilities, and comparative advantage – can help align ecosystem investment and effort.	Lead a multi-stakeholder participatory foresight process to identify, validate and refine priority sectors; and develop an actionable innovation roadmap to leverage future opportunities with dedicated resources and support.	Number of stakeholders engaged in the foresight process Clear identification of priority sectors for innovation and investment Number of policies, programmes, or investments recommendations made to align to the selected sectors Uptake of prioritisation findings by ecosystem stakeholders	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	National Council for Future Technology MoDEE National Centre for Innovation Royal Scientific Society Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply JEDCO Jordan Chamber of Commerce Jordan Chamber of Industry	Foresight 2030 (Finland)

(continued)

Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation of Key Sectors 2	Launch community-led local innovation discovery processes to surface unmet needs and investment opportunities in priority sectors across Jordan	Traditional market intelligence studies can be time-intensive and may overlook location-specific challenges with high innovation potential. A more agile, community-driven approach – starting with governorate-level problem-solving forums or sector-specific solution labs – can reveal unmet needs and generate more market-aligned opportunities.	Facilitate a series of regional innovation forums focused on Jordan's strategic sectors, where ecosystem actors jointly identify local challenges and co-develop potential solutions. Conduct complementary structured feasibility assessments to validate the commercial viability and scalability of high-potential ideas.	Identification of high-potential, locally rooted market opportunities Stronger integration of grassroots needs into innovation programmes Increase in context-relevant innovation investments	Pillar: Economic Growth	JEDCO Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply MoDEE Governorate councils Crown Prince Foundation Queen Rania Foundation INT@J Jordan Chambers of Commerce Jordan Chamber of industries	Innovation Fund Grand Solutions Programme (Denmark)
Innovation of Key Sectors 3	Introduce targeted incentives to promote innovation for sustainability in climate resilience, water, and sustainable agriculture sectors in Jordan	Jordan's water scarcity, climate risks, and agricultural pressures demand urgent innovation. Yet green and climate-tech startups face limited funding, complex regulations, and low market awareness. Strategic incentives can unlock innovation in climate resilience and sustainable resource management.	Introduce a green innovation incentive package that includes targeted R&D grants, fast-tracked licensing for climate-smart solutions, and dedicated pilot zones for testing sustainable agriculture, water efficiency, and adaptation technologies.	Increase in number of green and climate-tech startups launched Volume of funding accessed by climate innovation ventures Growth in multi-stakeholder partnerships addressing climate challenges	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	Ministry of Environment MoDEE Royal Scientific Society Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Water and Irrigation ISSF Donor partners (such as UNDP, GIZ, World Bank, USAID) Mercy Corps Academia and research institutes Mercy Corps	Green Deal Startups Programme (European Union)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation of Key Sectors 4	Deploy digital transformation incentives to accelerate ICT adoption in priority economic sectors and traditional industries across Jordan	Many sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, and services remain under-digitised due to high costs, low awareness, and limited incentives. Startups and SMEs also struggle to access affordable cybersecurity, e-commerce, and e-payment solutions – essential tools often priced beyond reach. Targeted digital transformation support can enhance productivity, competitiveness, and innovation across Jordan's economic backbone.	Launch financial incentives (e.g. tech adoption vouchers, tax deductions) tailored to SMEs, cooperatives, and traditional industries Deploy sector-specific digital audit tools to assess readiness, identify gaps, and guide technology implementation Offer targeted advisory support to help firms integrate digital tools and adopt relevant use cases Facilitate access to affordable cybersecurity, e-payment, and cloud solutions through partnerships with local technology providers	Increase in ICT adoption by SMEs and traditional industries Uptake of productivity-enhancing digital tools Number of firms completing structured digital transformation programmes	Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Jordan Chambers of Commerce Jordan Chamber of Industries Jordan business associations Jordan Exporters Association Private digital solution providers JEDCO iPark Shamal Start	Made Smarter (United Kingdom)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Innovation of Key Sectors 5	Establish a tourism innovation cluster to nurture high-impact startups and enterprises driving cultural, eco, and digital tourism in Jordan.	Despite Jordan's rich heritage, natural diversity, and global appeal, the tourism sector has not fully leveraged innovation or fostered local enterprises aligned with emerging trends in eco, cultural, and digital tourism. Establishing a dedicated digital cluster can generate jobs, attract investment, and position Jordan as a leader in immersive, responsible tourism.	Establish a tourism innovation cluster anchored in a dedicated physical and digital platform offering startup incubation, collaborative R&D, creative content studios, eco-tourism testbeds, and access to international tourism markets.	Number of tourism-focused hackathons and challenges organised Number of new tourism innovation companies registered and supported Increase in public-private partnerships within the cluster Uptake of innovative tourism services or digital tools by local destinations and businesses	Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities MoDEE Jordan Tourism Board Governorates and local municipalities iPark Shamal Start VIAVII University incubators Royal Film Commission Jordan	Tourism Innovation Centre (Portugal)
Innovation of Key Sectors 6	Strengthen export support mechanisms to boost innovation-led trade from high-potential Jordanian sectors	Despite access to international markets, barriers such as weak market intelligence, complex export procedures, and limited product-market fit continue to hinder trade growth for innovation-driven enterprises. Targeted export facilitation can help position Jordan as a regional innovation and production hub.	Launch an innovation export facilitation programme that offers export-readiness assessments, product certifications, IP protection support, and matchmaking with international buyers, with a particular focus on leveraging Jordan's Free Trade Agreements.	Increase in innovation-driven exports Growth in number of startups and SMEs accessing international markets Uptake of FTA-linked opportunities by innovation-based enterprises Increase in high-tech and ICT exports	Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply JEDCO Jordan Exporters Association MoDEE INT@J AmCham Jordan Jordan Chamber of Commerce Jordan Business Association Donor trade facilitation projects (e.g., GIZ, USAID)	GlobalConnect Initiative (Singapore)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Research 1	Activate and expand national open data platforms to improve access to innovation-relevant datasets for entrepreneurs and researchers in Jordan	Public datasets in Jordan are a growing asset for innovation and research. While the government is advancing open data policies, stronger cross-ministerial coordination and investment are needed to fully activate platforms like Jordan Open Innovation Platform (JOIP) and enable secure, multi-stakeholder data sharing.	Upgrade the JOIP open research platform with high-value, cross-sector datasets to strengthen a unified open innovation portal that provides access to public research, grants, and funding opportunities in machine-readable formats.	Increase in number and diversity of datasets shared publicly Growth in platform usage by startups, researchers, and developers Increase in cross-ministerial and public-private data-sharing agreements	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE Department of Statistics Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation Research universities (e.g., JU, PSUT) National Library Relevant line ministries (such as health, water, agriculture, transportation)	National Open Data Portal (France)
Ecosystem Research 2	Implement a national IP awareness programme to increase innovation protection and commercialisation among students, researchers, and startups in Jordan	Many innovators in Jordan are unaware of how to protect or commercialise IP. A national IP awareness programme, targeting students, researchers, and startups, can build foundational knowledge, foster innovation, and improve commercialisation outcomes.	Launch a national IP awareness programme that includes online toolkits, legal support services, curriculum integration in schools and universities, and harmonised IP policies across higher education institutions.	Increase in patent and trademark applications filed domestically Uptake of IP training and awareness programmes Growth in IP licensing and commercialisation deals	Pillar: Economic Growth	Jordan Industrial Property Protection Directorate Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship Universities Jordan Chambers of Industries IP lawyers' associations	IPR Awareness Programme (India)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Research 3	Establish a national research and innovation insight platform to publish sector-specific opportunity briefs and improve access to research findings for policy-makers, entrepreneurs, and academia in Jordan	Access to research and sector-specific insights in Jordan is limited due to fragmentation, language barriers, and lack of publication. A unified bilingual platform can help publish applied research and opportunity briefs to guide innovation, policy-making, and collaboration.	Develop a national innovation insight platform that includes regularly published and user-friendly, bilingual digital repository of research outputs, case studies, and reports from universities, think tanks, and government agencies	Increase in innovation ideas or projects responding to opportunity briefs Uptake of briefs in grant calls, startup support schemes, and public procurement Growth in the number and usage of publicly accessible Jordanian research publications	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	Royal Scientific Society National Centre for Innovation Public universities (such as JU, JUST, HU) Private Universities (such as PSUT, GJU, ASU) Other academic institutes and think tanks (such as Jordan Centre for Strategic Studies, EDAMA Association for Energy, Water and Environment)	Gateway to Research (UK)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Research 4	Increase and diversify funding schemes to boost national R&D capacity and support early-stage research commercialisation in Jordan	Most research grants are donor-driven or face disbursement delays, while private sector participation in R&D remains limited. A nationally coordinated research fund – structured to support basic, applied, and commercialisation-focused research – could strengthen innovation capacity and crowd in domestic and international co-investment.	Establish a National Innovation and Research Fund with dedicated tracks for basic research, applied research, and commercialisation, co-managed with donor partners, universities, and private sector councils.	Increase in annual R&D spending as a percentage of GDP Growth in number of funded applied and commercial research projects Higher volume of private sector co-funding for national R&D initiatives	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	National Centre for Innovation Royal Scientific Society Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation Jordan Chamber of Industry Universities INTAJ Startup-focused investors (such as ISSF, Beyond Capital, Oasis500) Large private companies (such as Zain, Umnia, Orange, Microsoft, Hikma Pharmaceuticals)	Innovation Fund (South Africa)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Research 5	Incentivise applied research partnerships to align academic research with industry needs and emerging technologies across sectors in Jordan	Academic research in Jordan is often disconnected from industry needs, limiting innovation impact. Non-regulatory incentives can foster applied research partnerships in emerging sectors.	Launch a National Applied Research Challenge Programme with joint calls co-designed by universities and industry, and competitive grants for collaborative consortia in frontier sectors. Establish sector-specific innovation labs within universities anchored by industry use cases, supported through co-funding and cost-sharing research schemes.	Increase in co-developed research outputs between academia and industry Rise in innovation-driven partnerships and prototypes Uptake of research results by companies and commercialisation pathways	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	National Centre for Innovation Royal Scientific Society Ministry of Industry and Trade Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Universities (e.g. GJU, PSUT, JU, JUST) Private sector leaders across sectors Jordan Chamber of Commerce Jordan Chamber of industries	Innovation Campus Framework (Germany)
Ecosystem Knowledge Sharing 1	Develop a centralised national innovation calendar to improve awareness and participation in ecosystem activities across Jordan	Ecosystem events in Jordan are often fragmented and poorly communicated, resulting in low visibility and limited coordination, especially for communities outside of the Amman. A centralised calendar could provide an agile and inclusive platform to aggregate events, enable registration, and foster ecosystem engagement.	Design and launch a dynamic digital platform – endorsed by MoDEE and developed by a vetted startup – that serves as Jordan's central innovation calendar. The platform should aggregate innovation-related events across Jordan, enable user-generated listings, registration, and automated reminders, and include features for hosting virtual events and community-curated content.	Increase in registration and participation in innovation events Growth in platform usage and stakeholder-contributed listings Improved coordination across ecosystem stakeholders and event organisers Increase in event participants from outside Amman Percentage of events with gender-balanced, regionally diverse panels	Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE National Centre for Innovation Startup community Incubator and accelerator networks (such as Oasis500, mySTARTup, Zain Innovation Campus, Luminus) University entrepreneurship centres (such as PSUT Entrepreneurship Centre, JU Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre, iPark incubator at GJU, HTU Innovation and Entrepreneurship Office)	Startup Digest (United States of America)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Knowledge Sharing 2	Develop a national recognition initiative to showcase innovation champions and success stories from across Jordan	Jordan's innovators, entrepreneurs, and scale-ups – especially those with regional or global impact – often receive limited national visibility, which can lead to reduced ecosystem morale and missed opportunities for local inspiration. A formalised recognition system can foster pride, promote role models, and celebrate innovation rooted in Jordan.	Launch an innovation recognition initiative to celebrate outstanding entrepreneurs and innovation champions from Jordan and its diaspora through awards and public campaigns.	Number of national and diaspora champions celebrated Increase in media visibility of national and diaspora innovation success stories Improvement in stakeholder perception of national innovation pride Growth in role model engagement across entrepreneurship and education initiatives Number of recognised champions participating as mentors or advisors in ecosystem programmes	Pillar: Economic growth	MoDEE Media organizations (such as Jordan Times, Roya TV) Diaspora networks (such as Oasis500 alumni, iPark alumni) INJAZ Private incubator and accelerators (such as Zain, Orange, Umniah) Angel and VC networks (such as ISSF, Propeller, Flat6 Labs, Bank al Etihad)	Startup Chile Hall of Fame (Chile)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Knowledge Sharing 3	Facilitate localised peer learning circles among incubators, accelerators innovation hubs, and support organizations to share tools, success stories, and lessons learned, fostering community-based innovation capacity.	Support organizations in Jordan often operate in silos, limiting collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Localised peer learning circles would enable incubators, accelerators, and hubs to exchange practical tools, share implementation experiences, and co-develop context-specific resources. These circles can strengthen trust, encourage joint outreach, and build community-based innovation capacity across regions.	Design and pilot peer learning circles among support organizations in governorates, with quarterly facilitated sessions, shared documentation libraries, and a digital coordination space.	Number of peer learning sessions conducted and organizations engaged Volume of tools, practices, or frameworks co-developed or shared Increased collaboration between support organisations (measured via joint initiatives or referrals)	Pillar: Economic Growth	MoDEE Incubators (such as iPark, The Tank by Umniah, Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship) Accelerators (such as Oasis500, ShamalStart, Flat6Labs) Innovation Hubs (such as ZINC, Orange Digital Village, TechWorks) Support Organisations (such as Business development Centre, INJAZ, GIZ)	Peer Learning Communities (East Africa)
Ecosystem Knowledge Sharing 4	Institutionalise national dialogue forums to align donor engagement with ecosystem needs and national innovation priorities in Jordan	Donor funding remains vital to Jordan's innovation ecosystem but is often fragmented, with limited coordination and sustainability. A national forum can create structured channels for dialogue, align donor efforts with national digital transformation and innovation priorities, and promote long-term impact through co-designed programmes and shared accountability.	Establish a recurring Donor–Ecosystem Coordination Forum with clear terms of reference, reporting structures, and alignment mechanisms with national innovation priorities.	Increase in donor-funded programmes aligned to national innovation or digital transformation strategies Growth in jointly implemented donor-government initiatives Enhanced perception of ecosystem ownership and sustainability among stakeholders	Pillar: Economic Growth	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation Donor coordination groups (e.g. UNRC, EU, USAID, World Bank, GIZ) Major accelerators and intermediaries (e.g. Oasis500, ISSF, ZINC)	Donor Roundtables (Ethiopia)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Knowledge Sharing 5	Increase awareness and clarity of startup-relevant taxation policies to enhance compliance and financial planning among entrepreneurs in Jordan.	Many startups lack a clear understanding of eligibility, documentation, and compliance procedures. This results in misinterpretation, missed benefits, or unintentional non-compliance. A dedicated digital tax support system tailored to startups can bridge the awareness and access gap.	Develop a Startup Tax Navigator – a digital platform offering simplified policy explainers, interactive eligibility checkers, tax calculators, and live chat or Q&A support in partnership with the Income and Sales Tax Department and ecosystem enablers.	Increase in tax-compliant startup registrations Reduction in misinterpretation of tax exemptions and eligibility Uptake of available tax incentives by eligible innovation-driven enterprises	Pillar: Economic Growth	Income and Sales Tax Department MoDEE Incubators and accelerators (e.g. iPARK, Luminus, ZINC), University entrepreneurship centres (such as PSUT, JU, GJU, HTU) INT@J	CRA's Liaison Officer Service for Small Businesses (Canada)
Ecosystem Knowledge Sharing 6	Consolidate and strengthen the unified innovation mapping platform to encourage collaboration, knowledge exchange, and transparency across ecosystem actors in Jordan	A strengthened, centralised mapping platform can improve transparency, highlight active ecosystem actors, and encourage coordinated engagement across stakeholders.	Strengthen and institutionalise the existing INTAJ innovation mapping platform as the national unified portal by expanding its coverage, improving data interoperability, and integrating it with public and donor ecosystems	Increase in cross-sector collaborations and joint initiatives Uptake of shared resources and ecosystem tools Improved coordination and reduction of programme duplication	Pillar: Economic Growth	INTAJ MoDEE Orange Jordan GIZ National Centre for Innovation Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, National chambers (such as JCC, JCI), Public and private universities (such as JU, JUST, HTU, GJU, AUT) Other development partners (such as UNDP, UNICEF, EU)	Open Innovation Platform (Singapore)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Partnerships and Governance 1	Strengthen innovation leadership and change management capacity across the public sector in Jordan	Jordan has made progress on digital transformation, including establishing the National Council for Future Technology. However, public sector innovation remains uneven, with limited ownership, weak coordination, and low awareness of its strategic value.	Assign ministry-level innovation focal points with clear mandates and reporting lines Ensure quarterly coordination and planning Establish a dynamic dashboard to track innovation initiatives across ministries Roll out leadership and change management training for public sector leadership and staff with practical innovation use cases	Number of active innovation focal points across ministries Frequency and outcomes of inter-ministerial coordination sessions Increase in ministerial innovation initiatives tracked through national dashboard	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	National Council for Future Technology MoDEE Council of Ministers Sectoral ministries (such as agriculture, transport, industry, tourism, etc) Prime Ministry Office	Government Accelerators Programme (UAE)

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Ecosystem strategies and recommendations roadmap							
Strategic Priorities	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity Brief**	**Product or service to develop**	**Ecosystem outcomes**	**National outcomes**	**Champions**	**Good Practice**
Ecosystem Partnerships and Governance 2	Establish a national innovation and entrepreneurship acceleration centre to build new human and institutional capacities to address local problems through an ecosystem-based approach in Jordan.	While multiple innovation initiatives exist in Jordan, there is no unified institutional anchor that brings together policy experimentation, human capital development, and ecosystem co-creation. A dedicated centre – centralised yet agile – can fill this gap by accelerating innovation projects, fostering structured public-private collaboration, and strengthening national and local capacities for systemic transformation.	Establish a multi-mandate National Innovation and Entrepreneurship Acceleration Centre hosted within a public institution and governed through a multi-stakeholder platform involving public, private, and development actors. The Centre should: Implement capacity development and training for ecosystem actors Lead sub-national challenge labs and public sector innovation pilots Support policy experimentation and ecosystem research Act as a thought leader for innovation and entrepreneurship in the country	Number of innovation projects accelerated or supported Number of ecosystem stakeholders engaged in co-creation pilots Increase in coordinated public-private ecosystem-building initiatives Number thought leadership material developed and disseminated	Pillar: Quality of Life Pillar: Economic Growth Pillar: Sustainability	MoDEE National Council for Future Technologies National Centre for Innovation Public sector actors Private sector actors Financial institutions Academic institutions Support networks	Acceleration Centre (ITU)

Appendix 2: Good practices

Good practices

To develop the recommendations, it is necessary to draw inspiration from good practices used in other ecosystems without necessarily copying them.

Good practice has been tested to produce an impact, based on evidence and positive results and can be scaled up and replicated. Good practice is needed to help develop flagship projects, to benchmark the strengths and weaknesses of a practice, and to initiate evidence-based policy or programme development. Good practice allows actors to effortlessly add value to initiatives in their ecosystems. However, good practice should not be reproduced "as is" because every ecosystem and every project is different.

ITU has developed a database of good practices, a framework to better develop these recommendations in a country's ecosystem. Stakeholders can choose to find inspiration from these best practices to strengthen their existing initiatives or develop new ones.

These following best practices have already been mapped to the corresponding recommendations in the preceding annex.

1. Startup Act (Tunisia) – Tunisia's Startup Act (2018) is widely recognised as a pioneering regulatory framework in the MENA region tailored to the needs of early-stage ventures. It defines startups through legal criteria and offers a dedicated "Startup Label" that unlocks key benefits: fast-tracked registration, tax exemptions, free foreign exchange operations, and leave schemes for entrepreneurs. Overseen by a dedicated council, the Act fosters collaboration across government, academia, and the private sector. It has helped build a vibrant startup scene while easing formalisation barriers. Tunisia's experience offers a regional blueprint for enabling a more inclusive and innovation-driven business environment.
2. ChileCompra (Chile) – ChileCompra is Chile's national public procurement platform aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and SME participation in government contracting. The system simplifies procurement through streamlined digital procedures, reduces bureaucratic hurdles, and includes a dedicated SME portal – ChileCompra Express – that facilitates easier access to public tenders. It also supports real-time contract monitoring and data analysis to improve oversight. With over 90% of contracts awarded to SMEs, ChileCompra has become a central instrument for inclusive economic development. Its comprehensive, tech-enabled structure illustrates how public procurement can serve as a catalyst for innovation, competitiveness, and broader private sector engagement in national development agendas.
3. Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme (UK) – The UK's Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) Scheme is a government-backed initiative that enables banks to lend to creditworthy small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that lack sufficient collateral or financial history. By providing a partial guarantee on loans, the scheme reduces perceived risk for lenders and facilitates access to working capital and growth financing. EFG has played a significant role in enabling thousands of SMEs to secure loans for investment, innovation, and job creation. The scheme is managed by the British Business Bank and reflects a structured, risk-sharing approach to strengthening SME access to finance without distorting market mechanisms.
4. 2030 Innovation Strategy (Portugal) – Portugal's 2030 Innovation Strategy combines targeted investment in sectoral R&D with the creation of innovation districts and POC zones. These zones provide testbeds for emerging technologies in energy, healthcare, and sustainability sectors, and are tied to public procurement and private co-financing incentives. The strategy also builds institutional alignment by linking academia, startups, and corporates under a common innovation agenda. Portugal's approach offers a practical

model for Jordan to anchor national priorities and attract investment through collaborative R&D infrastructure.

5. SkillsFuture Movement (Singapore) – Singapore's SkillsFuture initiative is a national movement aimed at fostering a culture of lifelong learning and building a future-ready workforce. It integrates education, employment, and innovation policies to ensure skills relevance across age groups. The programme embeds digital literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, and project-based learning into school and tertiary education, while also offering mid-career training and upskilling opportunities. Supported by labour market data, SkillsFuture provides innovation-focused internships, startup exposure, and industry immersion to bridge the education-to-employment transition. Its comprehensive ecosystem approach, combining policy, funding, and stakeholder coordination, contributes to national productivity and supports inclusive economic transformation in a fast-changing digital economy.
6. Abu Dhabi Global Market Financial Hub (UAE) – Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) has emerged as a leading financial hub in the MENA region, offering a robust legal and regulatory framework tailored to innovation-driven investment. ADGM introduced simplified structures for venture financing – such as SAFE notes and convertible equity – alongside strong investor protection laws and IP enforcement mechanisms. It provides tax incentives, sandbox programmes, and dispute resolution services, making it an attractive jurisdiction for high-growth startups and venture capital firms. Its integrated approach to financial regulation and innovation-friendly policies serves as a compelling model for Jordan as it strengthens its own legal and fiscal environment for investment.
7. Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OECD) – The OECD's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) supports governments in developing innovation-friendly governance systems through policy labs, innovation toolkits, and agile regulatory frameworks. It fosters experimentation, rapid prototyping, and cross-sectoral learning to enable responsive and citizen-centred policy making. Countries use OPSI frameworks to create inclusive innovation labs and regulatory sandboxes, allowing public institutions to keep pace with emerging technologies and societal needs. Jordan can draw on OPSI's approach to design its own innovation governance model rooted in agility and co-creation.
8. Smart Nation Sandbox Framework (Singapore) – Singapore's Smart Nation Sandbox Framework provides a controlled environment for testing emerging technologies under regulatory oversight, enabling iterative learning and early-stage deployment. Sector-specific sandboxes – covering areas such as fintech, healthtech, and urban mobility – encourage collaboration between startups, researchers, and government agencies. These testbeds offer innovators the opportunity to refine products while regulators assess implications and adapt policies accordingly. The framework fosters agile governance, strengthens public-private coordination, and accelerates the safe integration of new technologies. Its use of phased piloting and real-world validation makes it a valuable reference point for countries developing responsive regulatory mechanisms that support innovation while safeguarding public interest and compliance.
9. Open Innovation Partnership Model (South Korea) – South Korea's open innovation model encourages collaboration between large corporations and startups through structured innovation challenges, co-investment programmes, and tax incentives. These public–private partnerships are designed to accelerate R&D, enhance market access for emerging ventures, and enable corporates to tap into disruptive ideas and technologies. The model is supported by government-led coordination and investment, reducing risk and fostering trust between ecosystem actors. Dedicated platforms facilitate matchmaking, mentorship, and pilot opportunities. By aligning private sector needs with national innovation goals, this approach helps cultivate a vibrant, industry-led innovation ecosystem and provides a practical example of how to bridge the startup-corporate divide.
10. Entrepreneurial Village (Brunei Darussalam) – Entrepreneurial Village, launched by Brunei's Ministry of Education and hosted by Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), integrates entrepreneurship into education through interdisciplinary workshops, incubator

programmes, and mentorship. Initially piloted in schools, it now spans universities, combining experiential learning with structured support to develop communication, critical thinking, and leadership. Students engage in real-world innovation projects while building resilience and creativity. The programme enhances entrepreneurial traits such as risk-taking and proactiveness, fostering a national culture of innovation from an early age. By linking education to business incubation and community development, it offers a holistic model for nurturing youth-led entrepreneurship and innovation.

11. Dual Study System (Germany) – Germany's Dual Study System blends academic instruction with industry training through structured apprenticeship-like placements. Students alternate between classroom learning and hands-on work in participating companies, ensuring they graduate with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. This system is institutionalised nationwide and widely credited for Germany's low youth unemployment and high workforce productivity. An inspiring model, also in use at GJU in Jordan, it mandates applied learning and scaling public–private internship collaborations.
12. Prototron Fund (Estonia) – The Prototron Fund in Estonia provides non-equity early-stage grants to support innovators in transforming ideas into working prototypes. It is jointly managed by a university, the public sector, and private partners, ensuring cross-sectoral alignment and shared ownership. The fund features a streamlined application process, minimising bureaucracy and enhancing accessibility for first-time innovators. By bridging the gap between ideation and market entry, Prototron plays a critical role in Estonia's innovation pipeline. Its focus on speed, inclusivity, and prototype readiness demonstrates how targeted, collaborative funding mechanisms can unlock pre-seed innovation and accelerate the journey from concept to commercialisation.
13. Refugee-Led Innovation Fund (UNHCR) – The UNHCR Refugee-Led Innovation Fund empowers refugee and displaced communities to identify challenges and design innovative solutions by directly supporting refugee-led organizations with funding, mentoring, and technical support. The fund fosters inclusion by building capacity in underrepresented groups and enhancing local ownership of innovation. Its flexible, community-driven approach allows diverse participation, particularly of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This model is relevant for Jordan, which hosts a large refugee population, as it demonstrates how inclusive innovation frameworks can both unlock untapped potential and build resilient, locally rooted innovation ecosystems.
14. EXIST Programme (Germany) – Germany's EXIST programme is a government-backed initiative that fosters entrepreneurship in universities and research institutions. It provides funding for university-based incubators, startup grants for students and graduates, and support for faculty-led spin-offs. The programme combines financial backing with structured mentorship, access to networks, and commercialisation training to help turn academic research into viable businesses. EXIST operates on a performance-based model and encourages partnerships between academia and industry. By strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of higher education institutions, the programme plays a key role in bridging the gap between research and innovation and building a more dynamic startup ecosystem.
15. Future Work is Digital (Egypt) – Launched by Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, FWD is a national upskilling initiative offering free, high-quality digital training in partnership with Udacity. It targets young people and professionals seeking to enter the digital economy, with tracks in AI, data analysis, digital marketing, and more. The programme combines self-paced online learning with mentorship, career support, and real-world projects, reaching over 100 000 learners. Countries can draw from FWD's scalable, partnership-driven model to accelerate its own digital talent pipeline.
16. Atal Incubation Centres (India) – Atal Incubation Centres (AICs), launched under India's Atal Innovation Mission, offer a performance-based funding model to incubators across the country. Centres receive structured financial support over a defined period, contingent on meeting annual performance benchmarks related to startup support, sustainability plans, and capacity building. AICs are embedded within academic institutions, industry

clusters, or research parks, and are encouraged to diversify their revenue models through private sponsorships, training services, and equity-based returns. This approach combines public investment with strong performance monitoring and sustainability planning, helping incubators become more accountable, resilient, and capable of delivering high-quality support to early-stage ventures.

17. Public-Private Venture Capital Model (France) – BPIFrance serves as France's public-private investment bank, offering a comprehensive suite of financing tools for startups and high-growth firms. It blends equity, loans, and guarantees with co-investment schemes that attract private capital into the innovation ecosystem. Beyond finance, BPIFrance supports venture development through startup training, acceleration programmes, and investor matchmaking platforms. The institution plays a central role in de-risking early-stage innovation while fostering commercialisation and scale. With a strong policy mandate and market-aligned operations, BPIFrance has helped expand access to growth capital and build a robust pipeline of investable innovation across regions and sectors in France.
18. Mittelstand 4.0 (Germany) – Germany's Mittelstand 4.0 programme targets small and medium-sized enterprises – especially family-owned businesses – to support their digital transformation. It offers specialised Digital Centres providing personalised guidance, hands-on demonstrations, and practical workshops tailored to different industries. Emphasising practical value and cultural alignment, the programme has successfully engaged conservative businesses by addressing fears and building long-term digital confidence. Its decentralised yet coordinated approach ensures reach across regions and sectors, offering a useful model for engaging Jordan's family business segment.
19. Foresight 2030 (Finland) – Finland's Foresight 2030 is a nationally coordinated, multi-actor framework designed to guide long-term planning by aligning public policy with emerging trends, technological shifts, and evolving societal needs. Led by the Prime Minister's Office, the model integrates annual foresight reports, inclusive stakeholder dialogues, and sector-specific scenario development to shape innovation, education, and industrial strategies. Its participatory approach promotes evidence-based decision-making, strengthens policy coherence across ministries, and supports forward-looking investments. By institutionalising foresight at the highest levels, Finland ensures that future preparedness is embedded into governance, making it a leading example of strategic, anticipatory policy planning.
20. Innovation Fund Grand Solutions Programme (Denmark) – Denmark's Innovation Fund Grand Solutions Programme supports mission-driven innovation projects that tackle clearly defined national challenges – such as green energy, digital health, and food security. Each mission begins with stakeholder engagement workshops and sectoral needs mapping to ensure alignment with societal priorities and industry capabilities. Public–private consortia then propose collaborative R&D and innovation projects, which undergo feasibility assessment before funding. The programme not only encourages demand-driven innovation but also ensures that national investment is directed toward scalable, problem-validated solutions. By tightly integrating national goals, local industry insights, and co-created innovation, Denmark has fostered high-impact innovation pipelines across its economy.
21. Green Deal Startups Programme (EU) – The EU's Green Deal Startups Programme supports early-stage ventures aligned with climate neutrality and resilience goals. It offers funding, policy support, and access to testbeds and accelerators focused on green innovation. By integrating public and private sector efforts, the programme fosters scalable solutions across climate adaptation, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture. Its collaborative, incentive-driven approach demonstrates how governments can catalyse innovation for systemic climate challenges.
22. Made Smarter (UK) – The UK's Made Smarter programme supports manufacturing SMEs in adopting digital technologies to improve productivity and reduce emissions. It offers match-funded grants, expert mentorship, and leadership training tailored to industry needs. Piloted in North West England, the initiative has helped firms develop bespoke

digital transformation plans, leading to measurable improvements in efficiency and competitiveness. With a focus on practical implementation and sector-specific support, Made Smarter demonstrates how coordinated public interventions can accelerate digital adoption in traditional industries and contribute to broader economic modernisation goals.

23. Tourism Innovation Centre (Portugal) – Portugal's Tourism Innovation Centre (NEST) serves as a national platform to foster digital transformation in the tourism sector. It brings together startups, corporates, academia, and public institutions to co-develop solutions in areas such as sustainable tourism, digital hospitality, and cultural heritage. NEST offers physical infrastructure, mentoring, and access to a global innovation network to support experimentation and scaling. By aligning industry needs with innovation efforts, the Centre helps build a future-oriented tourism ecosystem. Its collaborative model illustrates how dedicated sectoral hubs can enhance competitiveness and resilience through innovation.
24. GlobalConnect Initiative (Singapore) – Enterprise Singapore's GlobalConnect initiative provides tailored support to help Singaporean enterprises expand globally. It includes market opportunity reports, in-market advisors, internationalisation grants, and strategic partnerships with overseas trade bodies. The programme offers a one-stop solution for navigating foreign markets, securing product-market fit, and accelerating cross-border trade – particularly in innovation-led sectors. Its ecosystem-wide approach and linkage to trade agreements offer a relevant model for export-driven support in emerging economies.
25. National Open Data Platform (France) – France's data.gouv.fr is a national open data platform providing access to datasets from government, public institutions, and civil society. It promotes transparency, innovation, and data reuse through a user-friendly interface and API integrations, enabling entrepreneurs, researchers, and developers to leverage data for public value. The platform encourages participatory governance by allowing users to contribute and contextualise datasets. Operated by Etalab, it is a key pillar of France's digital government strategy, supporting evidence-based policy-making and innovation. Its phased implementation and inclusive structure make it a strong reference point for countries developing open data ecosystems.
26. IPR Awareness Programme (India) – India's Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, launched a nationwide intellectual property (IPR) awareness mission targeting students, startups, and academic institutions. The initiative includes awareness sessions, toolkits, simplified guides, and integration of IPR concepts into school and university curricula. It aims to demystify intellectual property and build early understanding of patents, trademarks, and copyrights. The programme has contributed to increased awareness and filings among young innovators, helping create a more IP-conscious innovation ecosystem. It demonstrates how structured outreach and education can embed IPR literacy across key segments of society.
27. Gateway to Research (UK) – The UK Research and Innovation's Gateway to Research is a centralized platform that provides open access to research outcomes, funding data, and project details from universities and public research institutions. By making research insights publicly available in an easy-to-navigate format, the platform facilitates collaboration, informs policy, and enables businesses and innovators to identify partnership and innovation opportunities aligned with national priorities.
28. Innovation Fund (South Africa) – South Africa's Innovation Fund is a collaborative initiative between the Industrial Development Corporation and the Department of Science and Technology. It aims to bridge the gap between research and market application by supporting innovation-driven R&D projects, from early-stage prototypes to scalable commercial ventures. The fund leverages public and private co-investment, and is aligned with national priority sectors. It has contributed to building a pipeline of market-ready technologies and improved the economic return on public R&D expenditure.

29. Innovation Campus Framework (Germany) – Germany's Innovation Campus Framework promotes deep collaboration between academia and industry to drive applied innovation. These campuses offer shared research facilities, co-funded R&D programmes, and competitive challenge calls to unite universities, research institutions, and private sector partners around priority themes such as digital health, mobility, and sustainability. By embedding researchers and innovators in a common ecosystem, the model encourages joint problem-solving, shortens the path from idea to application, and enhances commercialisation potential. This structured, mission-driven approach has contributed to stronger regional innovation clusters and accelerated the translation of research into impactful, market-ready solutions.
30. Techstars Startup Digest (USA) – Techstars Startup Digest is a community-driven platform that curates startup and innovation events by city and theme, empowering local ecosystems through grassroots coordination. Volunteer curators – often founders or ecosystem builders – select and share relevant events in sectors such as fintech, healthtech, and developer communities. Subscribers receive tailored updates, improving visibility for local initiatives and fostering greater participation. By decentralising content creation and distribution, Startup Digest supports community ownership, encourages peer discovery, and strengthens local innovation culture. Its scalable, low-cost model makes it a strong example of how startup-led event calendars can increase ecosystem engagement and coherence.
31. Startup Chile Hall of Fame (Chile) – Startup Chile's Hall of Fame recognises standout alumni and innovation leaders who have contributed to Chile's entrepreneurship ecosystem or achieved significant global success. The platform highlights success stories across sectors and geographies – fostering national pride, visibility, and aspirational role models. It also serves to connect successful alumni with current programme participants as mentors or champions, creating a virtuous cycle of knowledge-sharing and celebration. This initiative reinforces ecosystem identity while engaging the global Chilean entrepreneurial diaspora.
32. Peer Learning Communities (East Africa) – The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) established peer learning communities (PLCs) in East Africa, bringing together ecosystem support organizations to share tools, exchange lessons, and collaborate on solving shared challenges. These PLCs operate around themes like gender inclusion, impact measurement, and startup acceleration. With modest facilitation support, ANDE enabled members to co-create frameworks, improve internal practices, and build informal alliances. The initiative contributed to ecosystem resilience, encouraged local adaptation of global good practices, and created sustained collaboration networks across urban and rural regions.
33. Donor Roundtables (Ethiopia) – As part of Ethiopia's Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, the government convened regular roundtables with development partners to align donor investments with national priorities. These structured forums enhanced coordination, reduced duplication, and promoted transparency in funding flows. By enabling joint planning and co-creation of funding frameworks, the roundtables fostered trust and long-term commitment from both donors and ecosystem stakeholders. This model exemplifies how inclusive dialogue between government and development actors can increase the effectiveness, sustainability, and strategic coherence of digital transformation efforts.
34. CRA's Liaison Officer Service for Small Businesses (Canada) – Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) supports startups and small businesses through its Liaison Officer Service, offering free, personalised guidance on tax obligations. Entrepreneurs can access one-on-one consultations, virtual workshops, and simplified toolkits to better understand their responsibilities. This proactive approach builds trust, encourages voluntary compliance, and helps reduce costly mistakes in early business stages. By prioritising education over enforcement, the CRA fosters a more entrepreneur-friendly tax environment, making it a replicable model for countries seeking to improve SME support.
35. Open Innovation Platform (Singapore) – Singapore's Open Innovation Platform (OIP), led by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), connects large organizations

with solution providers – such as startups, SMEs, and research institutions – to co-develop digital solutions to real-world challenges. Through regular innovation calls, corporates post defined problem statements and offer prize funding, while the platform facilitates matchmaking, mentoring, and prototype development. OIP supports the entire innovation cycle – from challenge diagnosis to proof-of-concept – enabling faster, demand-driven innovation. By institutionalising open innovation, Singapore fosters stronger public-private collaboration, accelerates digital transformation, and ensures that innovation is responsive to both market needs and national priorities.

36. Government Accelerators Programme (UAE) – The UAE Government Accelerators Programme is a flagship initiative that applies innovation methodologies to address national challenges through inter-ministerial collaboration. Multidisciplinary teams are given clear mandates, tight timelines, and strong leadership support to rapidly prototype and implement solutions. The programme embeds agility, accountability, and citizen-centred thinking in government operations. It has tackled complex issues in healthcare, education, and public service delivery, demonstrating how structured, time-bound accelerators can transform governance. Its success has positioned it as a global benchmark for agile public sector innovation.

37. Acceleration Centre (ITU) – The ITU Network of Acceleration Centres, under the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development, serves as a flagship initiative to fast-track digital transformation using an ecosystem-thinking approach. Hosted within local institutions, these centres strengthen national innovation capabilities by supporting entrepreneurship, enabling innovation partnerships, and facilitating digital skills development. Each centre is tailored to local needs while benefiting from global ITU guidance, tools, and peer exchange. By fostering inclusive, demand-driven innovation ecosystems, the network contributes to more resilient, digitally empowered societies and supports countries in achieving their sustainable development and digital economy goals.

Appendix 3: Methodology

This study was carried out using a framework developed by ITU for the diagnosis and development of ecosystems centred on ICTs. The framework provides a structured approach to conducting rapid ecosystem diagnostics, identifying key strengths and gaps, and formulating evidence-based recommendations to support ICT-centric innovation.

Designed for policymakers, decision-makers, innovators, and ecosystem builders, the methodology combines analytical tools with participatory processes to ensure that findings are grounded in both data and stakeholder perspectives. Through a step-by-step process, the framework supports co-creation with ecosystem actors, enabling the development of tailored ecosystem blueprints and flagship initiatives that build on existing good practices while addressing identified challenges.

By equipping stakeholders with practical tools and shared analytical language, the methodology aims to support more coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable digital innovation ecosystems, helping communities translate strategic ambitions into actionable and impactful initiatives.

You can read the toolkit here: bit.ly/DIPtoolkit.

Appendix 4: Key words and definitions

This section provides definitions of key terms used throughout the report. These terms are essential to understanding the concepts, frameworks, and methodologies that underpin the report's analysis and recommendations. The terms are listed in the order in which they appear in the report, ensuring easier cross-referencing for the reader. Together, they form a shared vocabulary to support clarity and coherence across all stakeholder discussions.

Table 4: Key words and definitions

Key Word	Definition
Vision	A vision is an aspirational statement that defines an ideal future state to be achieved. It provides direction, mobilises stakeholders, and guides long-term planning and collaboration.
Strategies	Strategies define the core directions for achieving the objectives of the vision. They guide transformation by aligning sectoral development with digital innovation and should include roles for both digital and non-digital actors. Each strategy should be underpinned by a theory of change to coordinate stakeholder contributions.
Broadband	A high-capacity transmission technology that delivers high-speed internet access, enabling fast data transfer and continuous online connectivity.
Mobile Network Generations	Mobile network generations refer to the evolution of wireless communication technologies, each offering improved speed, capacity, and capabilities. 2G introduced digital voice and SMS; 3G enabled mobile internet and multimedia; 4G brought high-speed data for video and app usage; and 5G delivers ultra-fast, low-latency connectivity to support advanced technologies like IoT and smart systems. Each generation builds on the previous, enhancing mobile communication and enabling broader digital transformation.
Digital transformation	Digital transformation is the integration of digital technologies across all areas of an organization or sector, fundamentally altering how services are delivered, how value is created, and how operations are conducted to meet evolving needs.
Digital Economy	The digital economy encompasses a wide range of economic activities that rely on digitised data and knowledge as core production factors. It includes e-commerce, digital services, and the use of digital technologies across all sectors.
Basic Digital Skills	Fundamental abilities needed to use digital devices and the internet safely and effectively, including browsing, emailing, word processing, and online safety.
Advanced Digital Skills	Higher-level competencies in areas such as programming, data analytics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and digital content creation, enabling individuals to participate in the digital economy and tech innovation.
Innovation	Innovation refers to the creation and application of new ideas, technologies, or methods that significantly improve products, services, or systems. It is a key driver of economic development and competitiveness.

Table 4: Key words and definitions (continued)

Key Word	Definition
Innovation Ecosystem	An innovation ecosystem is the network of institutions, stakeholders, resources, and policies that support and enable innovation. It includes startups, corporates, investors, universities, government bodies, and support organizations working in collaboration.
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship refers to the process of designing, launching, and running a new business, typically a startup. In the context of digital innovation, it also includes leveraging technology to solve problems, scale solutions, and create economic and social value.
Unicorn	A unicorn is a privately held startup valued at over USD 1 billion. These companies are often seen as indicators of a thriving and scalable innovation ecosystem.
Valley of Death	The critical phase after ideation where a startup requires significant support and investment but has yet to demonstrate financial viability. Many ventures fail during this stage due to resource constraints and high risk.
Dynamics of innovation (ID) with digital technology	Measures that establish and support the broader environment for innovation. This includes regulatory frameworks, institutional structures, and cultural mindsets that enable the development and scaling of innovative projects, products, and services.
Capacity for innovation (IC) with digital	Measures that ensure the presence of well-developed infrastructure, talent, and digital tools within the ecosystem. These capacities provide innovators with the skills, spaces, and technical know-how necessary for successful digital transformation.
Innovation in key sectors (IS) with the contribution of digital	Measures that apply innovation to strategic economic sectors, enabling startups and SMEs to extend their impact, scale beyond niche markets, and drive transformation across industries.
Research in the digital ecosystem (ER)	Tools and approaches used to generate knowledge about the digital innovation ecosystem, including mapping actors, identifying available resources, and uncovering gaps and opportunities.
Knowledge sharing in the digital ecosystem (EK)	Mechanisms and tools that facilitate the exchange of knowledge, insights, and best practices across the ecosystem to foster collaboration and accelerate innovation.
Partnership and governance in the digital ecosystem (EP)	Measures that support the development of public-private partnerships and governance models focused on ecosystem-wide collaboration. These mechanisms also provide access to networks and strategic resources.
Theory of change and indicator development	A framework that outlines how specific actions lead to desired outcomes and impact. It includes mechanisms for stakeholder alignment and progress measurement, enabling clearer accountability and strategy refinement.

Appendix 5: Acronyms and abbreviations

This section presents a list of acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the report. All entries are arranged alphabetically for ease of use and clarity.

Table 5: Key acronyms and abbreviations

Key Word	Definition
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AWS	Amazon Web Services
BAU	Balqa Applied University
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CBJ	Central Bank of Jordan
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EMV	Economic Modernization Vision
FCA	Free Commercial Agreement
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HCST	Higher Council for Science and Technology
HTU	AlHussein Technical University
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
INT@J	Information and Communications Technology Association of Jordan
IP	Intellectual Property
ISSF	Innovative Startups and SMEs Fund
JCIF	Jordan Capital and Investment Fund
JEDCO	Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation
JIC	Jordan Investment Commission
JSF	Jordan Seed Fund
JU	University of Jordan
KACE	King Abdullah II Centre for Excellence
MoDEE	Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
MoE	Ministry of Education

Table 5: Key acronyms and abbreviations (continued)

Key Word	Definition
MoITS	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply
MVP	Minimal Viable Product
NCI	National Centre for Innovation
NCSC	National Cybersecurity Council
PSUT	Princess Sumaya University for Technology
QRCE	Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship
QRF	Queen Rania Foundation
R&D	Research and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TTO	Technology Transfer Office
UNDP	The United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USF	Universal Service Fund
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
YTJ	Youth Technology and Jobs Programme
ZINC	Zain Innovation Campus

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