GAMING ESPORTS FINANCING PROGRAM

2025 REPORT



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Executive Summary

The Gaming and Esports Financing Program, launched in September 2022, aims to position Saudi Arabia as a global hub for the Gaming and Esports industry by enabling local studios, attracting international players, and fostering a vibrant investment ecosystem. Launched under the National Development Fund (NDF), the program provides access to financing, and business development support to accelerate the growth of Saudi game developers and esports companies.

Since its launch, the program has approved financing for 82 companies and with a size of more than ﷼421 million in approved funding. This has contributed to supporting the development of more than 127 games, and the expansion of Saudi companies into international markets. These achievements will result in an anticipated ﷼1.5B+ GDP contribution, +960 expected jobs (direct and indirect), and reflect the program's strategic role in driving economic diversification, nurturing local talent, and advancing the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.



It is with great pride that I present the first report of the Gaming and Esports Financing Program. Since its launch, the program has represented one of our most promising strategic initiatives to support the growth of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia creative industries and contribute to a thriving digital economy.

The progress achieved to date reflects the ambition of Saudi talent and the strength of collaboration between public and private sector partners across the Gaming and Esports ecosystem. Through enabling access to financing, fostering innovation, and encouraging meaningful partnerships, we are laying solid foundations for a competitive and sustainable sector in the Kingdom.

As this report marks the program's first public milestone, it captures our collective efforts to date while setting the direction for the next phase of growth. We remain committed to building on this momentum and expanding the program's impact in line with national development priorities. Together, we are shaping Saudi Arabia's position as a regional and global hub for Gaming and Esports.



HRH Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Al Saud

Gaming and Esports Fund Committee Chairman

1 Opening Statement

This report presents an overview of the Gaming and Esports Financing Program as part of IGNITE's Digital Content Program, a national program designed to accelerate the growth and competitiveness of digital content. Launched to unlock the sector's economic potential, the Gaming and Esports Financing Program aims to attract investments, build local capabilities, and position the Kingdom as a leading regional hub for Gaming and Esports sector.

As part of this effort, the National Development Fund (NDF) plays a
pivotal role in enabling and financing the sector through the Gaming and Esports Financing Program. By mobilizing development finance tools and fostering collaboration with Social Development Bank, NDF contributes to creating a sustainable financing ecosystem that supports private sector participation, stimulates innovation, and drives job creation.

The following slides provide a closer look at the Gaming and Esports Financing Program's main components as well as the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for the Gaming and Esports Sector, which serve as a guiding framework for its implementation.

1 IGNITE and NGES

Introduction

Ignite

One of the key initiatives under Ignite's digital content program is to establish a dedicated fund to financing the production of local content (games)

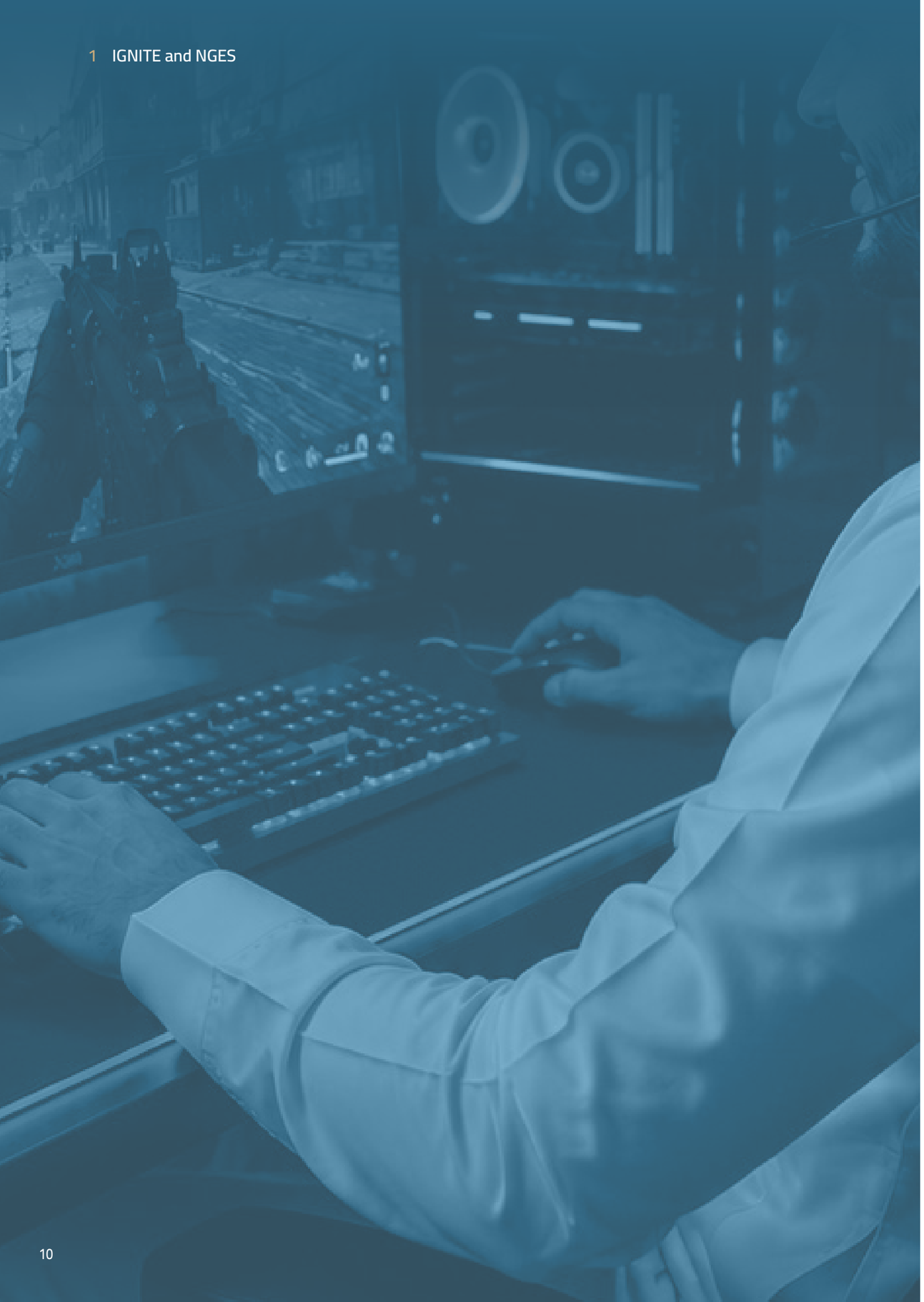
with a total budget of ﷼1.86B

NGES Enablers

NATIONAL GAMING & ESPORTS STRATEGY

NDF plays a major role to fund and unlock developmental financing to the sector

- **Talent attraction & Development**
- **Funding & Financial Support**
- **Government & Regulation**
- **Technical & Physical Infrastructure**



Target Impact by 2030

NATIONAL GAMING & ESPORTS STRATEGY استراتيجية قطاع الألعاب والرياضات الإلكترونية

Around 1% of GDP

The industry will unlock economic contribution of more than ﷼ 50 billion in 2030

Create 39k jobs

Create over 39k jobs in development, publishing, infrastructure & other professions

Strategic Objectives

NATIONAL GAMING & ESPORTS STRATEGY استراتيجية قطاع الألعاب والرياضات الإلكترونية

250+	Gaming companies across the Kingdom.
30+	Games by KSA based studios reach top 300 during next 10 years starting 2021.
#3	Be in the top 3 for number of Esports athletes per capita.
#1	Become #1 event host by organizing & hosting most viewed Esports events in the world.

SECTOR INSIGHTS

Global Gaming Consumer Market

Key Insight

The global gaming market reached **$188.8B in 2025**, with mobile gaming accounting for more than half of total industry revenue. Strong global player engagement and digital distribution continue to drive market expansion.

Market Overview

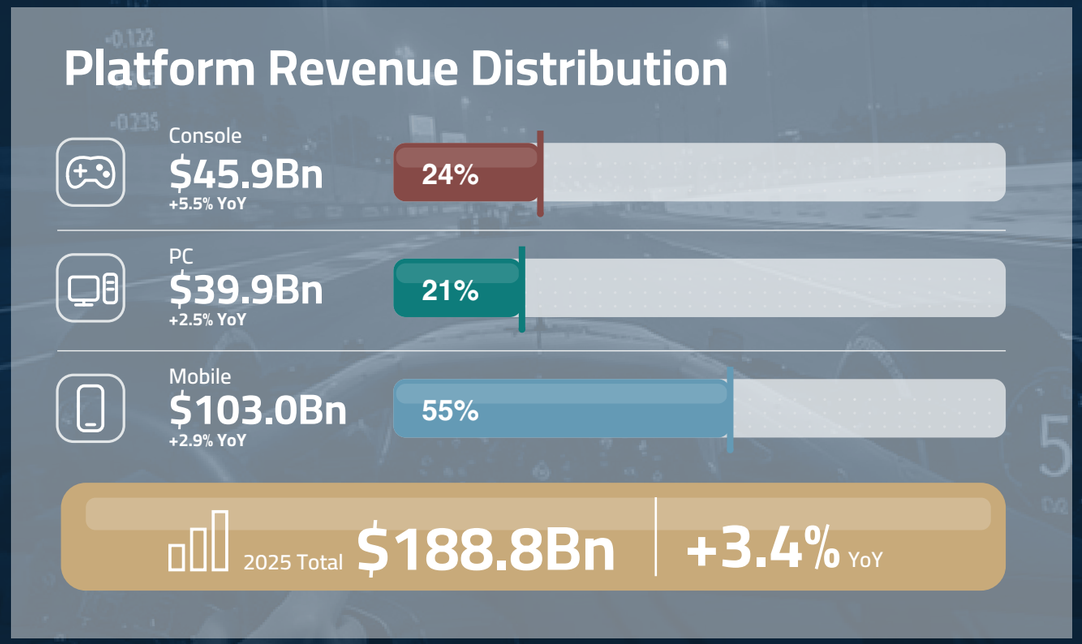
Gaming has become one of the largest segments of the global digital entertainment economy. The market continues to expand as global player participation increases and digital distribution makes games more accessible across devices.

Takeaways

- Mobile gaming dominates industry revenue, accounting for more than half of the global market and serving as the primary growth engine.
- Emerging markets such as the Middle East present significant expansion opportunities due to rising smartphone adoption and a young gaming population.
- PC and console platforms remain critical for premium gaming experiences and esports ecosystems, sustaining strong engagement among core players.

Source: NDF team analysis, Newzoo Global Games Market Report 2025

2 Gaming and Esports Market



Platform Revenue Distribution

Mobile gaming remains the dominant revenue segment globally, followed by console and PC gaming platforms which continue to support premium gaming experiences and competitive gaming ecosystems.

Source: NDF team analysis, Newzoo Global Games Market Report 2025

The Middle East Gaming Market

Key Insight

The Middle East and Africa gaming market is emerging as one of the fastest-growing regions globally, driven by rapid player growth, increasing smartphone penetration, and expanding digital engagement.

Market Overview

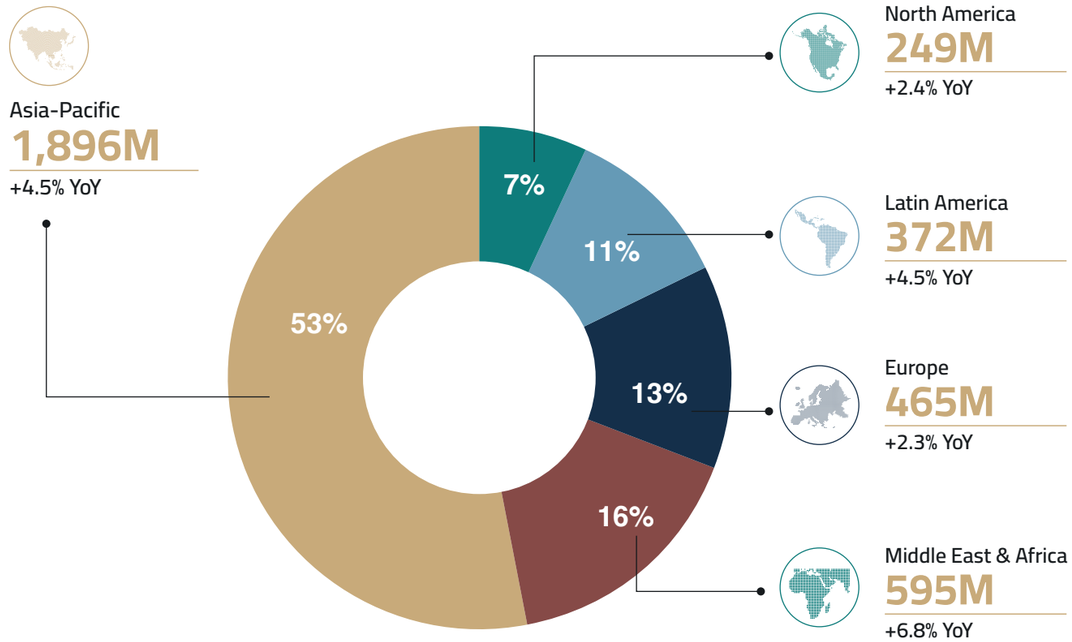
The global gaming audience is expected to reach approximately 3.6 billion players in 2025, with Asia-Pacific remaining the largest regional market. However, the Middle East and Africa region represents one of the fastest-growing gaming markets, supported by a large young population and increasing mobile gaming adoption.

The Middle East and Africa gaming audience reached approximately 595 million players in 2025, representing about 16% of the global gaming population.

Takeaways

- The Middle East and Africa represents one of the fastest-growing gaming regions globally, with player growth outpacing more mature markets.
- A large and rapidly expanding player base (≈595M players) creates strong opportunities for publishers, platforms, and gaming infrastructure investments.
- Mobile-first gaming behavior and a young population make the region particularly attractive for scalable gaming business models.

Source: NDF team analysis, Newzoo Global Games Market Report 2025



Global Gaming Audience Distribution

The Middle East and Africa represent the second-largest gaming audience globally with approximately 595 million players, highlighting the region's significant long-term growth potential for gaming companies and investors.

Source: NDF team analysis, Newzoo Global Games Market Report 2025

The Local Gaming Consumer

To better understand gaming behavior within the Kingdom, NDF's Gaming and Esports Financing Program conducted a consumer survey capturing more than 600 responses from local gamers. The survey explored platform preferences, gameplay habits, and spending patterns to provide a deeper view of how local players engage with gaming.

Key Insight

Local players show strong engagement with PC and console gaming platforms, while action-oriented and competitive game genres dominate gameplay preferences.

Saudi Market Overview

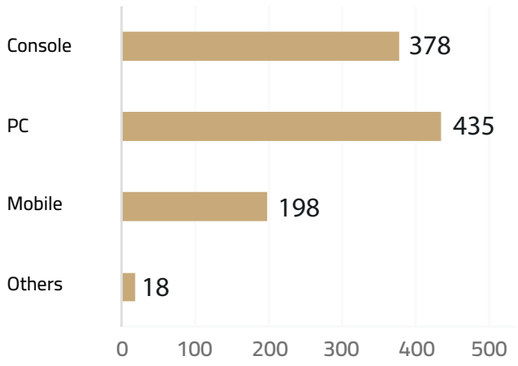
Survey insights from Local gamers indicate that core gaming platforms such as PC and console lead player engagement. In terms of content preferences, action, shooter, and RPG genres represent the most popular game categories, reflecting a player base that actively engages with competitive and immersive gaming experiences.

Consumer spending patterns further indicate a willingness to invest in gaming, with many players reporting annual gaming expenditures ranging from ﷼500 to over ﷼5,000.

Takeaways

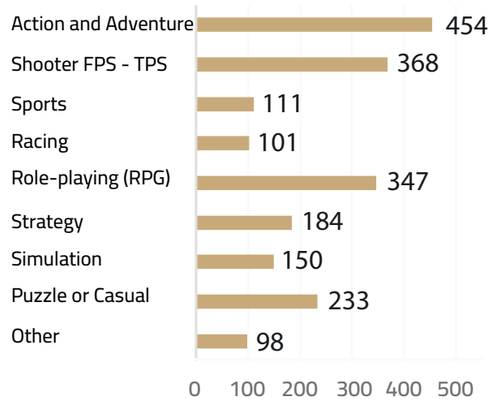
- Local gamers show strong engagement with PC and console gaming, supporting investment in high-end gaming ecosystems and esports.
- Popular genres such as action and shooters align with global competitive gaming trends.
- Increasing player spending signals strong monetization opportunities for publishers and digital gaming platforms.

Source: NDF team analysis on Conducted Survey



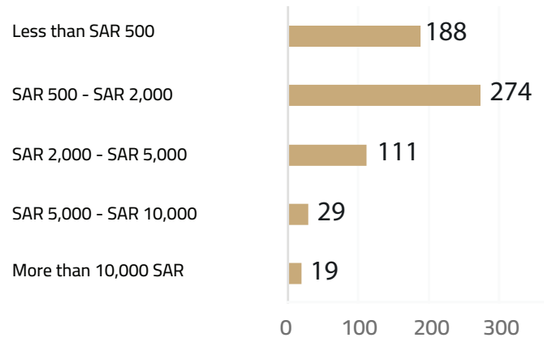
Platform Preferences

PC and console platforms show the highest engagement among local gamers, suggesting strong demand for high-performance gaming experiences and competitive gaming ecosystems.



Game Genre Preferences

Action and shooter genres dominate player preferences, highlighting strong interest in competitive and high-intensity gameplay that aligns with global esports and multiplayer trends.



Gaming Expenditure Patterns

A significant share of players report consistent annual spending on gaming, indicating a market with growing monetization potential for publishers, platforms, and digital gaming services.

Source: NDF team analysis on Conducted Survey



The Local Gaming Consumer

Key Insight

Higher-value gaming expenditure in Saudi Arabia is largely driven by PC and console players, highlighting strong monetization potential within core gaming segments.

Saudi Market Overview

Survey insights from local gamers indicate that PC and console players demonstrate the highest spending levels among surveyed gamers, with the majority of players falling within the ﷼500 – ﷼2,000 annual expenditure range, alongside a notable share spending ﷼2,000 – ﷼5,000 and above.

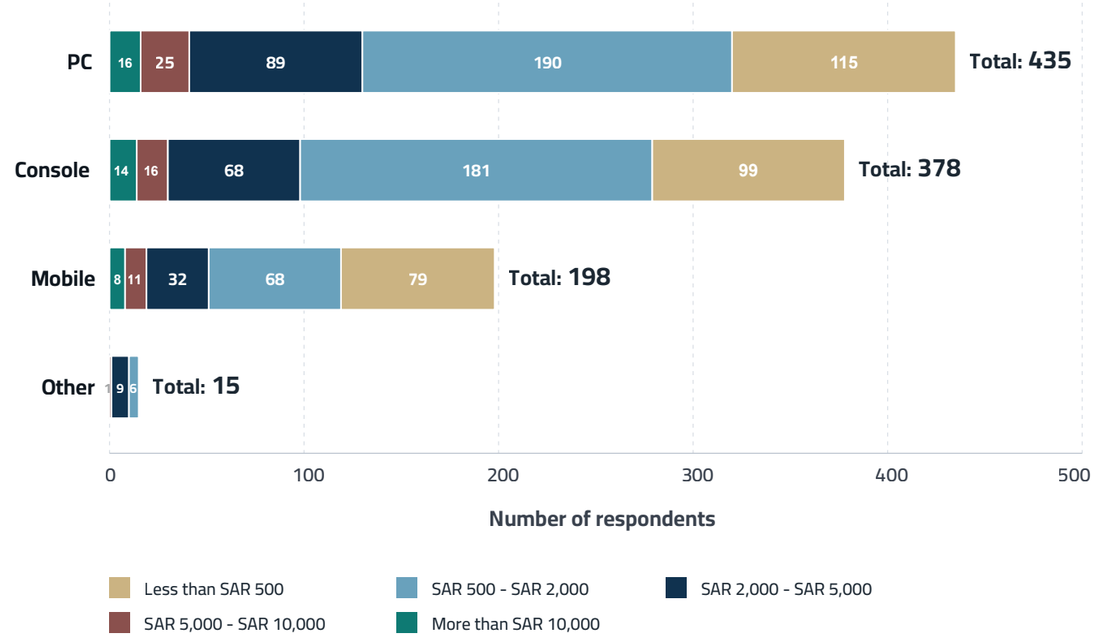
These spending patterns indicate a player base that is not only highly engaged but also willing to invest in gaming experiences, supporting the development of sustainable gaming business models and monetization opportunities within the Saudi market.

Takeaways

- Higher-value gaming expenditure is concentrated among PC and console players, supporting investment in core gaming platforms and ecosystems.
- Local consumer spending patterns indicate strong monetization potential for publishers, platforms, and digital gaming services.

Source: NDF Team Analysis on Conducted Survey

Gaming Platform Preferences by Spending Range



Gaming Expenditure by Platform

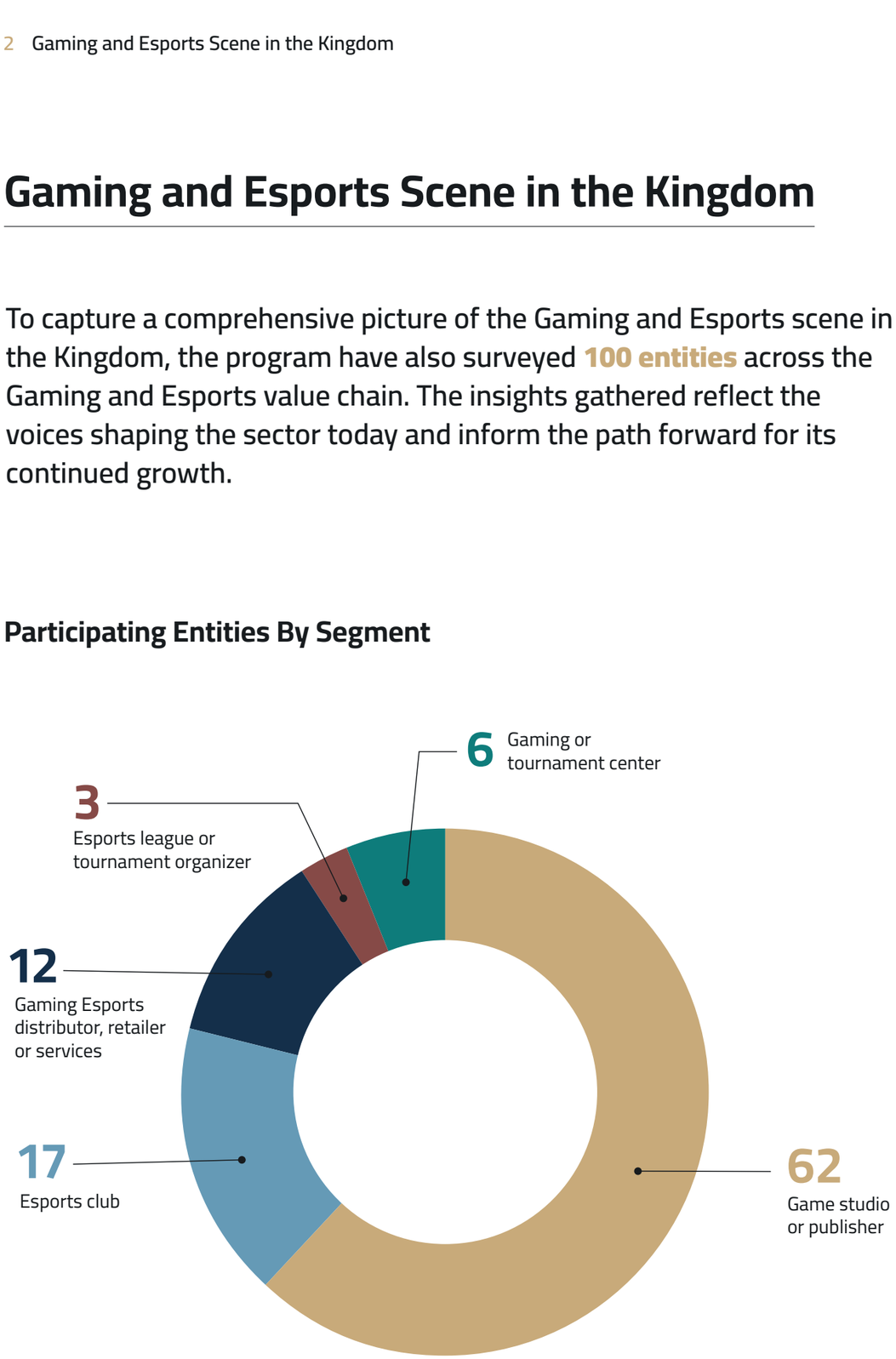
PC and console platforms account for the majority of higher-value spending segments, with a significant portion of players spending above ﷼2,000 annually. Mobile gaming shows lower spending intensity overall, indicating that higher monetization potential is concentrated within core gaming platforms.

Source: NDF Team Analysis on Conducted Survey

Gaming and Esports Scene in the Kingdom

To capture a comprehensive picture of the Gaming and Esports scene in the Kingdom, the program have also surveyed **100 entities** across the Gaming and Esports value chain. The insights gathered reflect the voices shaping the sector today and inform the path forward for its continued growth.

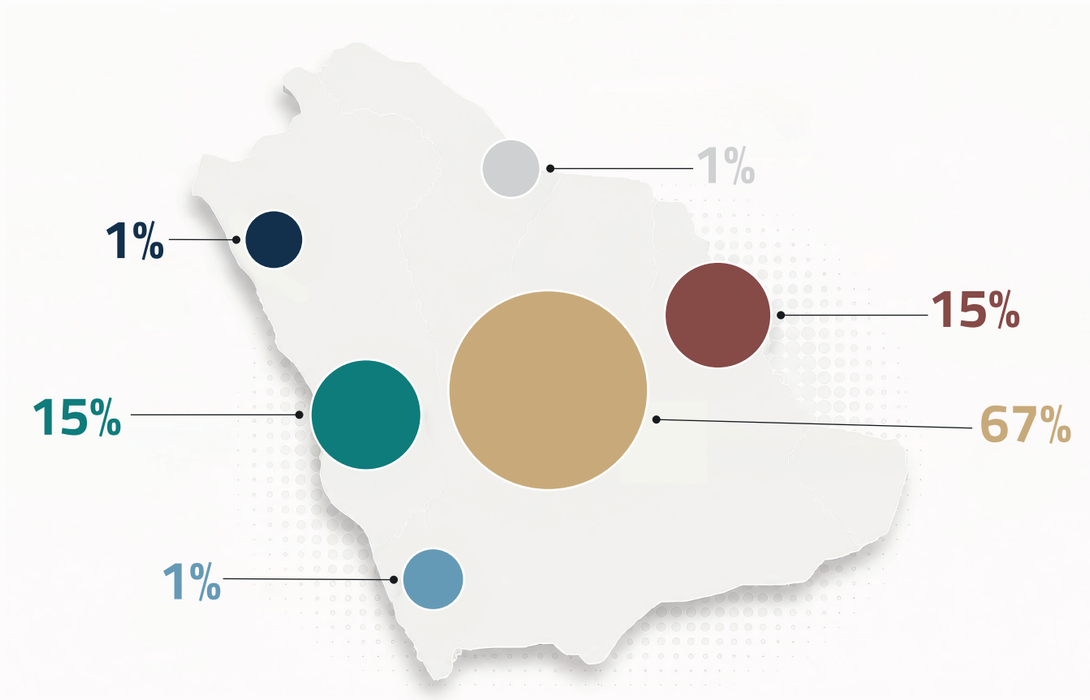
Participating Entities By Segment



Source: NDF's Gaming and Esports Financing Program's Analysis on Conducted Survey

2 Gaming and Esports Scene in the Kingdom

Distribution Across The Kingdom



- Riyadh, **67%**
- Abha, **1%**
- Dammam, Khobar, Dhahran, Ahsa, Jubail, Qatif, **15%**
- Tabuk, **1%**
- Jeddah, Madinah, **15%**
- Rafha, **1%**

With

9% **having locations both inside and outside of the Kingdom**

Source: NDF's Gaming and Esports Financing Program's Analysis on Conducted Survey



Ecosystem Growth and Market Entry Trends

Key Insight

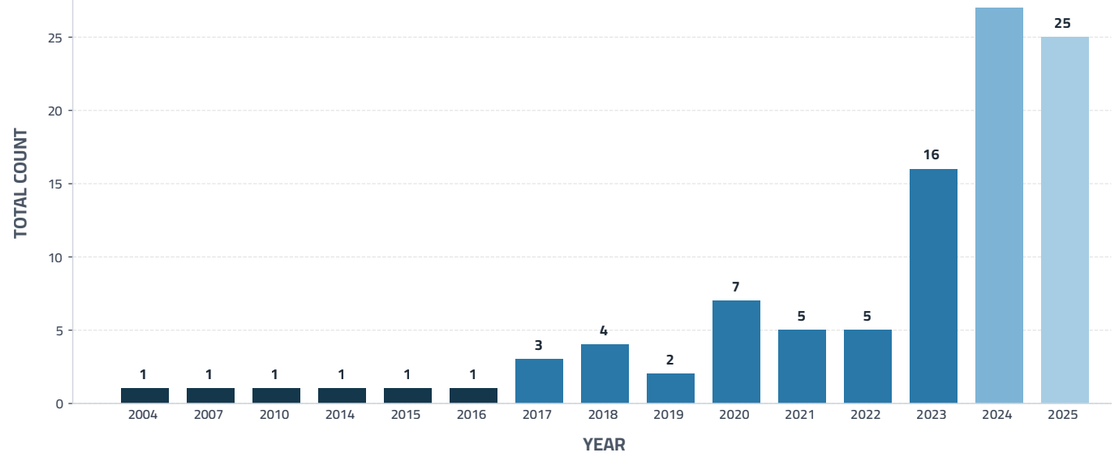
The Saudi Gaming and Esports sector is experiencing rapid ecosystem growth, with a significant increase in new market entrants over the past three years and early signs of commercial maturity among local companies.

Gaming and Esports Sector Overview

- Survey insights indicate a strong increase in company establishment activity in recent years, reflecting growing interest and participation in the Gaming and Esports sector. This growth aligns with the expansion of ecosystem support initiatives, financing programs, and industry development efforts across the Kingdom. This signifies the impact of the financing program's accelerator (Exel by Merak) along with the incubators and accelerators launched by our ecosystem partners like CODE and NEOM.
- Despite the sector still being relatively young, early commercial traction is already evident, with 51% of surveyed entities reporting that they have begun generating revenues. This indicates improving market maturity and suggests that local companies are increasingly transitioning from early-stage development to commercially active operations.

Source: NDF team analysis on Conducted Survey

Entity Establishment Year



Entities' Establishment by year

A significant portion of surveyed entities were established in recent years, with 68% of entities founded between 2023 and 2025. The largest concentration of new companies emerged in 2024 and 2025 alone (52%), indicating a clear acceleration in ecosystem growth compared to earlier periods. This jump can be correlated to Exel by Merak's accelerator launching within the same two-year period.

This trend reflects increasing market confidence, improved access to support mechanisms (e.g. incubators and accelerators), and growing private sector participation in the Gaming and Esports industry.

Source: NDF team analysis on Conducted Survey

Ecosystem Before Funding

Key Insight

Prior to the introduction of the Gaming and Esports financing program, the Saudi gaming sector was largely self-funded, with limited access to external capital, highlighting the importance of financial enablement in supporting ecosystem growth.

Gaming and Esports Sector Overview

- In 2022, Nine66 (a former subsidiary of Savvy Games Group) conducted one of the earliest comprehensive studies of game developers in Saudi Arabia*, interviewing 51 developers and companies to assess the structure and challenges of the local industry.
- The findings highlighted limited access to financing and a heavy reliance on self-funding. Access to funding was identified as one of the primary barriers preventing developers from launching studios or scaling projects, with many developers citing financial risk and the absence of a safety net as key obstacles to industry growth.
- In addition, many developers had not pursued external funding, often due to the early stage of their projects or uncertainty around how to approach investors, further reflecting the early-stage nature of the ecosystem at the time.

Takeaways

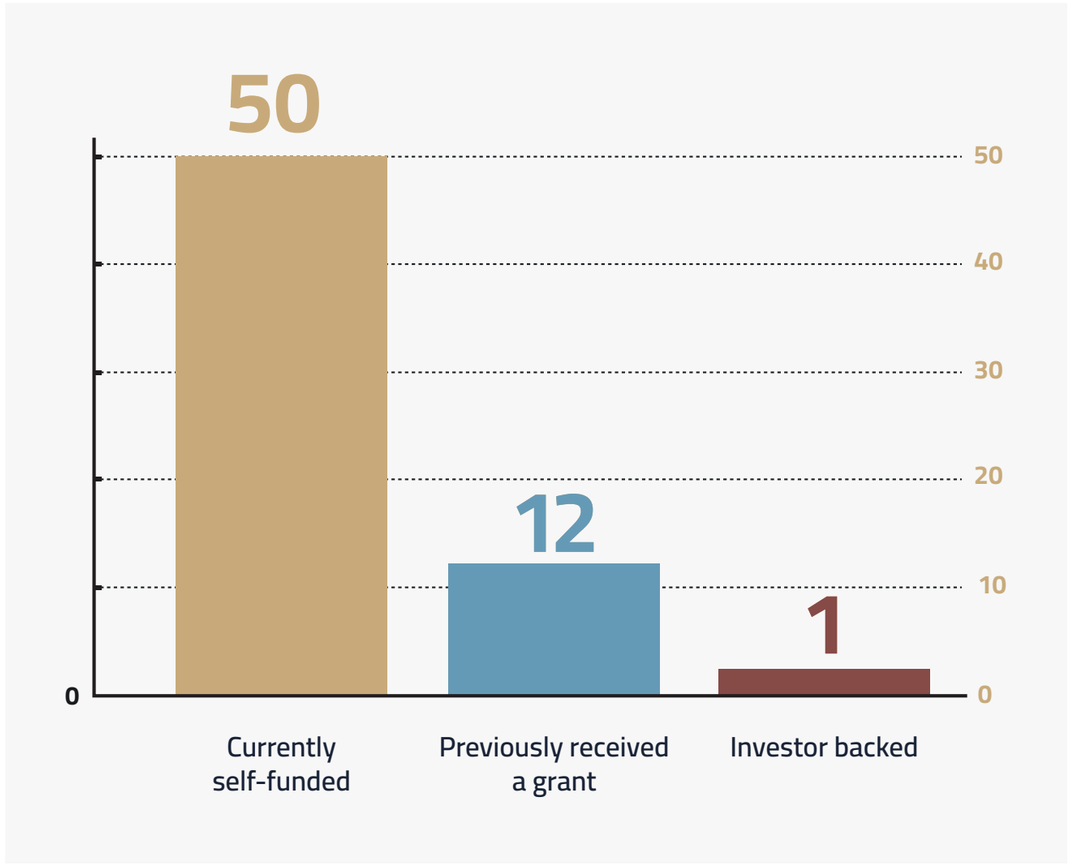
Prior to ecosystem financing initiatives, most gaming companies relied on self-funding due to limited access to investment and financial support.
Access to financing was identified as one of the main barriers to studio creation and project scaling.
The introduction of the Gaming and Esports financing programs plays a critical role in enabling ecosystem growth and reducing investment risk in the sector.

*The Nine66 report focused specifically on game developers and publishers operating within Saudi Arabia and therefore reflects the challenges and dynamics of this segment of the ecosystem rather than the broader Gaming value chain.

Source: Comparative baseline insights derived from the Nine66 (under Savvy Group) "Game and Esports Developers in Saudi Arabia" Report (2022)

2 Gaming and Esports Scene in the Kingdom

Status of start-ups investment for developers



Funding Landscape in 2022

Nearly all developers interviewed reported funding their projects independently, with only one developer having received investor backing. This highlights the limited availability of structured financing mechanisms for gaming companies in the Kingdom at that time, despite the presence of a broader technology investment ecosystem.

Source: Comparative baseline insights derived from the Nine66 (under Savvy Group) "Game Developers in Saudi Arabia" Report (2022)

Ecosystem After Funding

Key Insight

Gaming and Esports entities in Saudi Arabia are demonstrating increasing awareness of financing and support mechanisms, alongside improved access to funding, indicating growing ecosystem maturity and capital accessibility.

Gaming and Esports Sector Overview

- Survey results show that 75% of entities are aware of available financing and support mechanisms, indicating strong ecosystem engagement and improved visibility of funding programs within the sector.

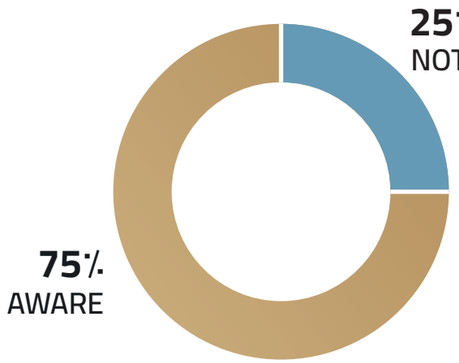
- More importantly, 51% of surveyed entities reported having received funding, including government, private, and in-kind support, demonstrating a clear improvement in capital accessibility compared to the funding landscape observed in earlier ecosystem studies.

- Where funding has been accessed, utilization is primarily focused on talent and operational enablement, with 82.4% allocated to in-house team salaries and 76.5% to core business operations. This reflects the sector's talent-intensive nature and the strong need for operational funding to sustain and scale companies.

Takeaways

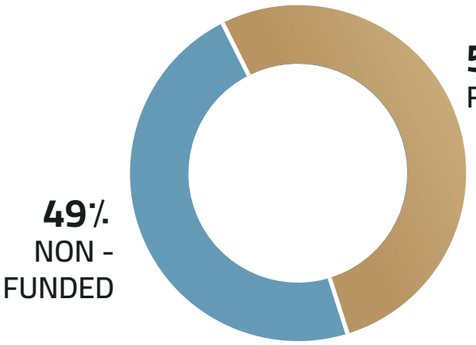
Awareness of financing and support programs across the ecosystem is high, indicating improved visibility and engagement with support initiatives.
Access to funding is relatively balanced, with over half of surveyed entities having received some form of funding support.
Funding is primarily utilized for talent and operational expenses, highlighting the importance of operational financing in supporting company sustainability and growth

Source: NDF team analysis on Conducted Survey



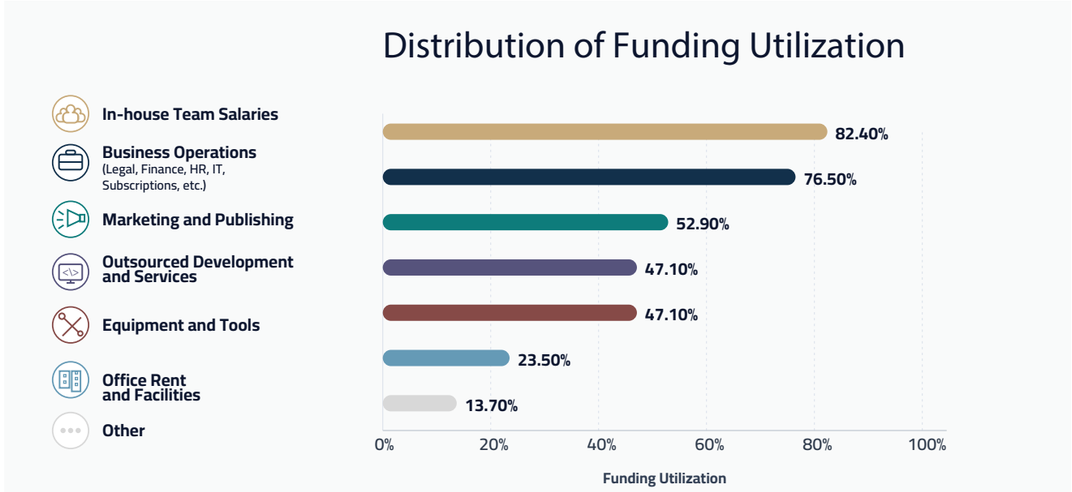
Awareness of Available Financing/ Support

- 76% of entities are now aware of available financing and support mechanisms, indicating strong ecosystem engagement and improved visibility



Funded Entities' Ratio

- 51% of surveyed entities reported having received funding, including government, private, and in-kind support



Funding Utilization

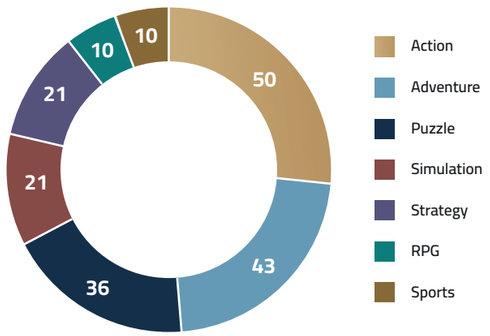
Funding is primarily directed toward talent and operational expenses, reflecting the sector's talent-driven nature and the importance of operational capital in supporting company sustainability and growth.

Source: NDF team analysis on Conducted Survey

Gaming

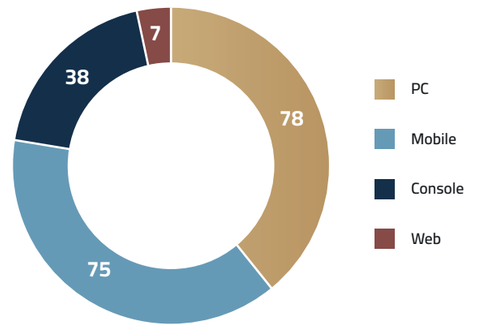
Growing Local Game Development Pipeline

Survey respondents reported **149 games** currently in development or recently developed, highlighting a rapidly growing pipeline of locally produced gaming content. This reflects increasing developer activity within the ecosystem as access to financing, talent, and industry support continues to expand.



Game Genre Distribution

Analysis of reported game genres shows a strong concentration in Action (50 titles) and Adventure (43 titles), followed by Puzzle (36 titles). These genres align closely with the preferences observed in the local consumer survey, where action-oriented and competitive genres ranked among the most popular.
This alignment indicates a growing connection between local game development focus and player demand, supporting the commercial potential of locally developed content.



Game Development by Platform

The surveyed games are being developed across multiple platforms, with PC (78 titles) and Mobile (75 titles) emerging as the dominant development platforms. Console development remains present with 38 titles, indicating growing ambition among local developers to participate in higher-value gaming ecosystems alongside mobile-first opportunities.

Takeaways

- The local game development pipeline is expanding, with a significant number of games currently in development across the ecosystem.
- Action, Adventure, and Puzzle games dominate local development, aligning with local player preferences and supporting commercial viability.
- PC and Mobile are the primary development platforms, while console development indicates increasing technical capability and ambition among local studios.

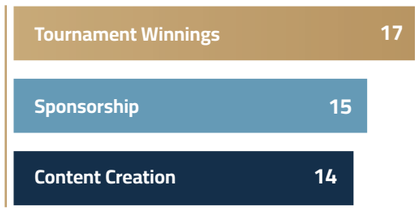
Source: NDF's Gaming and Esports Financing Program's Analysis on Conducted Survey

Esports

Competitive Performance on the Global Stage

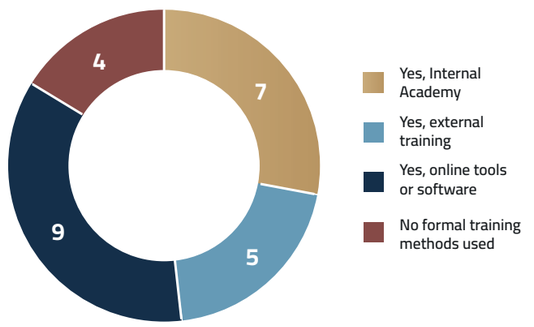
Surveyed esports clubs reported **20+** regional and international tournament victories, demonstrating the growing competitiveness of Saudi teams on the global esports stage. These winnings have been reported by 8 of the surveyed clubs, reflecting increasing international participation and performance.

Esports Clubs of main Revenue streams



Monetization Model for Esports Teams

Tournament winnings (17 responses) and sponsorships (15 responses) emerged as the most important funding sources for esports organizations, followed by content creation (14 responses).
This highlights a revenue model driven primarily by competitive performance, brand partnerships, and digital engagement, consistent with global esports monetization trends.



Talent Development and Training

Most organizations reported implementing structured player development methods. Internal training academies and online training tools were the most commonly used approaches, while external training providers also contributed to player development.
Only a small number of organizations reported having no formal training structure, indicating that most esports teams are investing in systematic talent development and performance improvement programs.

Takeaways

- Esports teams are increasingly competing and winning in regional and international tournaments, reflecting growing competitive performance globally.
- Esports organizations rely primarily on tournament winnings and sponsorships, aligning with global esports revenue models.
- Most esports organizations are investing in structured training and talent development programs, supporting long-term competitive performance.

Source: NDF's Gaming and Esports Financing Program's Analysis on Conducted Survey

PROGRAM'S OVERVIEW

Introduction



The Gaming and Esports Financing Program

What the program is:

The Gaming and Esports Financing Program, launched in September 2022, aims to position Saudi Arabia as a global hub for the Gaming and Esports industry by enabling local studios, attracting international players, and fostering a vibrant investment ecosystem. Launched under the National Development Fund (NDF), the program provides access to financing, and business development support to accelerate the growth of Saudi game developers and esports companies through its allocated budget of ﷼1.09 Billion

Program's Objectives

Why the program exists:

The Gaming and Esports Financing Program aims to address the financing gap within the sector by enabling access to capital for companies seeking to participate in and grow within the Gaming and Esports ecosystem. By providing targeted financial support, the program helps reduce investment risk for early-stage and scaling businesses, enabling them to accelerate sustainable business models.

At the same time, the program plays an important role in catalysing broader ecosystem development by encouraging greater participation from the private sector. Through structured financing mechanisms and partnerships, it supports the growth of local companies while helping create the conditions for a more competitive and investment-ready Gaming and Esports industry in Saudi Arabia.

3 Gaming and Esports Financing Program

Targeted Value Chain*

Who the program supports:

Value chain Level 1	Game Studio and Publisher						Gaming Esports Distributor Retailer and Services						Esports Clubs	Esports Leagues and Tournaments	Gaming and Tournament Centers
Value chain Level 2	PC/Web Games	Console Games	Mobile Games	Game Development Technology	Game Publishing and Content Localization	Digital Streaming Platform	Cloud Gaming Platform	Digital Tournaments Platform	Digital Distribution Platform	Digital Streaming Platform	Infrastructure Services	Gaming and Esports Media Outlet	Esports Club (Agencies, Equipment, Training)	Tournaments Organization & Management (Agencies)	Gaming and Tournament Centers

*Key definitions and terminology are detailed at the end of the report

Program's Overview

Portfolio of Active Products

All numbers as of Q4 2025

Program's Portfolio | Active Products			
Product	Debt	Equity Financing – Venture	Equity Financing – Accelerator
Size (MM SAR)	458.5M	150M	306M
Description	Provided by SDB Active since January 2023. Approved loans: ﷼319.5M 35 Beneficiaries.	Fund Manager: impact46 **Target stage:** Seed to Series C. Active since Aug 2024. ﷼52.85M investments made in 11 companies.	Fund Manager: Merak.Capital **Target stage:** Pre-seed to Series B. Active since Nov 2024. ﷼49.3M investments in 39 companies.

Notable Program Achievements:

+421 Million ﷼

Of approved financing to be disbursed to the entire value chain of the Gaming and Esports Sector through the three active products

+1.5 Billion ﷼ *

GDP Contribution is expected to be generated from the disbursed amount, creating +960 jobs (Direct & Indirect)*

+127

Games are under development by funded studios for Mobile, PC, and Console. Including 43 games that are fully developed

82

Beneficiaries of the program across the entire value chain of the Gaming and Esports Sector

First impact46

VC Fund in the Kingdom that invest in the local Gaming and Esports Sector

First Merak.Capital

Largest VC backed gaming accelerator Fund in MENA, pushing companies to compete and go commercial

* Socioeconomic impact is based on a detailed methodology developed by NDF working team that considers the economic multiplier of each segment and stage of the value chain.

Debt | Equity | Accelerator

Debt – SDB

بنك التنمية الاجتماعية
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK

Financing Products

Product Brief

The Debt product aims to provide financial support for micro, small, and medium enterprises, to empower innovation and growth in the Gaming and Esports sector with a financing ceiling of up to ﷼45 million, a financing period of up to 8 years, and a grace period for up to 24 months.

Product beneficiaries' coverage across the value chain



Approved Debts Amount	Number of Beneficiaries
﷼319.5M	35

Extra Mile Developmental Milestone

Built Debt Financing Knowledge for a Previously Non-Bankable Sector

Financial Innovation and Sector Enablement

Developed lending knowledge and financing frameworks tailored to Gaming and Esports companies, a sector historically not considered bankable within traditional lending practices. This required building an understanding of industry business models, revenue structures, and risk profiles to enable structured debt financing. This milestone positioned the program among the first in the Kingdom to provide debt financing to Gaming and Esports companies, supporting financial inclusion, expanding access to capital, and contributing to ecosystem growth.



Debt | Equity | Accelerator

Equity Financing; Venture – Impact46

Operated by impact46

Financing Products

Product Brief

The Impact Gaming Fund is a ﷼150 million investment fund that aims to support Gaming and Esports companies with high growth potential by investing in scalable companies across the gaming value chain. The fund invests from Seed to Series C, with an average ticket size of ﷼3.75 million, to support companies in building, scaling, and expanding their operations while contributing to the development of the gaming ecosystem in Saudi Arabia

Product beneficiaries' coverage across the value chain

Coverage map with approved debt amount and number of beneficiaries



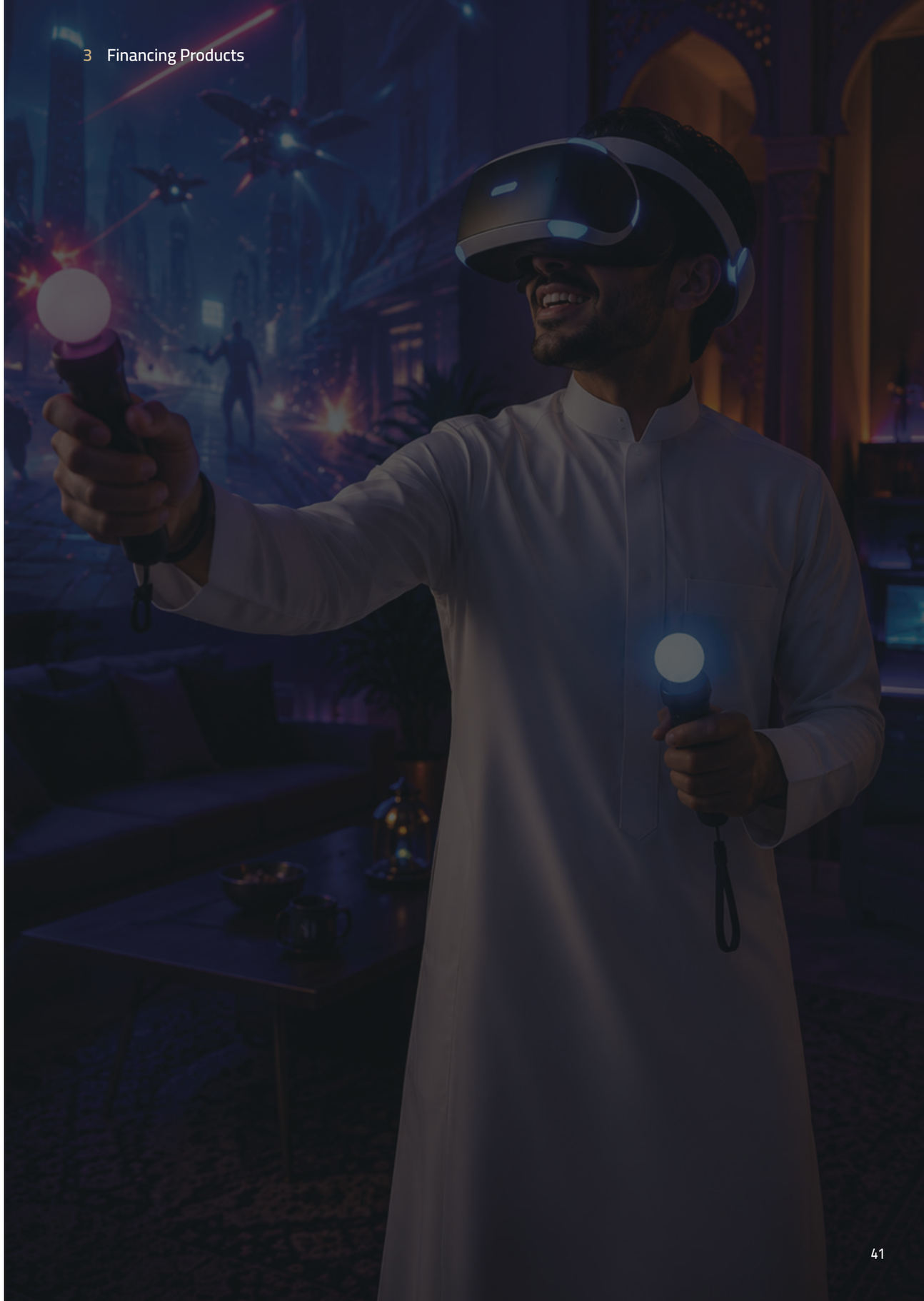
Total Financing Amount	Number of Deals
﷼52.8M	11

Extra Mile Developmental Milestone

First major acquisition of a local gaming company by the private sector

Private Sector Engagement and Market Signalling

Elevating the Saudi gaming M&A landscape to regional and global visibility through international media coverage and interviews. This milestone has helped signal viable growth pathways for local founders and studios, reinforcing the role of private-sector participation in building long-term ecosystem success.



Debt | Equity | Accelerator

Equity Financing; Accelerator – Merak Capital

Operated by Merak.Capital

Financing Products

Product Brief

The Merak Gaming Fund and Accelerator aims to support gaming studios, publishers, and gaming technology companies across different stages of growth, starting with early-stage companies through the Exel Gaming Accelerator and continuing with direct investments in established and revenue-generating companies. The accelerator provides financial and in-kind support equivalent to ﷼1.12M, while the fund provides direct investments typically up to ﷼7.5M per company, contributing to ecosystem developmentand industry growth in the Kingdom.

Product beneficiaries' coverage across the value chain

Coverage map with approved debt amount and number of beneficiaries

VALUE CHAIN

- Game Studio and Publisher
- Gaming Esports Distributor, Retailer and Services
- Esports Clubs
- Esports Leagues and Tournaments
- Gaming and Tournaments Centers

Total Financing Amount	Number of Deals	Number of Cohorts	Number of Accelerator Start ups	Acceptance Rate
﷼11.06M	5	2	34	5%

Direct Fund
Makes direct local investments in established and revenue generating studios, publishers, and gaming technology companies. Initial investments are typically up to USD 2 million per company, with flexibility to provide additional funding as companies scale, expand operations, or deepen their presence in Saudi Arabia. This approach supports long term company growth, job creation, and sustainable economic value.

Accelerator
supports early-stage companies that already have a vertical slice or an early working version of their product. The 14-week program helps teams improve product quality, strengthen commercial readiness, and prepare for launch and growth. along with mentorship and access to international gaming experts and partners. The accelerator is designed to develop local talent, raise standards, and create the next generation of high-quality gaming companies.

Extra Mile Developmental Milestone

Strengthened Local Gaming Community and Expanded Global Visibility of the Saudi Gaming Ecosystem

Ecosystem Development and Community Engagement

Supported gaming community development and talent pipelines through strategic partnerships and sponsorships, including three community events and industry panels with the local International Game Developers Association chapter, a high-school gaming hackathon with King Saud University, gaming-focused initiatives with Alfaisal University, and a career fair with Tuwaiq Academy. In parallel, the program represented the Saudi gaming ecosystem across eight regional and international conferences and panel discussions.

3 Financing Products



Debt | Equity | Accelerator

Exel by Merak Accelerator – Merak Capital

Financing Products

Exel by Merak Program Overview

Program Phases:

Bootcamp

Initial 2-week onboarding, training, and setting strategic goals

Acceleration Phase

14-weeks program focusing on Commercialization and Go-to-Market for Games.

Post-Program Support

Continued mentorship, Investments, and industry connections

Expected Outcomes:

- Launch of polished gaming products
- Pitch decks and funding readiness
- Revenue growth, audience building, and key partnerships.
- Clear monetization strategy

Link to try the Accelerator games:

Super Bullet, Taka Studio, Stellar Mythical, Evolite Studio, FitNot Games, HYENA HON, HYS Games, LIVA Interactive, Phys

Symmetric Studio, Limeless, Twenty Ninety Creative, Blame the Game, Dynamic Box, Entropy Minds, Evlnu GameWorks, Holodot Studio, Inventix Games

Copa Fantasy, Classy Games, Rojeh Games, Sandouq Studio, Saer Games, Eshi Games, Playback Games, Luma Play, Nimble Fox Games

Package Development DOO, Dreaming Door Studio, Dafluffs Games, AstraValle Studio, Sheba Joy Games, Kiddo Education



SUCCESS STORIES

Success Stories

Gaming

Sheba Joy – Game Studio

Stage at time of support: **Early stage**



Faisal Al Hamed

Established 2021

Pre-Support Context

The company was focused on scaling its senior technical and operational leadership capabilities within the Kingdom. While Sheba Joy had established a strong creative foundation, it required experienced gaming leadership with a proven global track record to accelerate execution and support the transition from early development into commercial game launches in Saudi Arabia.

Outcomes & Measurable Impact

Expanded its Saudi-based team by hiring three senior developers, successfully launched Town Stars globally, and generated early commercial traction supported by strong gameplay and performance data. Building on these results, the company is currently exploring publishing partnerships to further scale user acquisition and international reach

The studio also completed the global launch of **Match Magic 3D** and advanced development across additional mobile titles scheduled for release in **Q2 2026.**

What would Faisal say to individuals or companies considering entering or growing within this sector?

"Saudi Arabia now offers a real environment for building gaming companies that can compete globally. What made the difference for us was ecosystem support that enabled experienced talent to return and build from within the Kingdom. When you combine strong teams, commercial discipline, and a long-term view, gaming companies here can move quickly from development to sustainable growth."

SUCCESS STORIES

Success Stories

Esports

Twisted Minds – Esports Club

Stage at time of support: **Growth stage**

Pre-Support Context

the company faced liquidity constraints and insufficient cash flow, which limited its ability to execute its strategic plans and achieve its growth objectives. While the organization had strong market presence and growth potential, additional financial support was required to enable expansion, strengthen operations, and support long-term sustainability.



Ibrahim Bin Jibreen

Established 2021

Outcomes & Measurable Impact

Following the financing support, the company achieved significant operational and commercial growth. Revenues increased by 220%, alongside the expansion of the company's business activities, including the launch of Twisted Labs and Twisted Café. The company also expanded its reach beyond Saudi Arabia, contracted internationally recognized professional players to strengthen competitive performance, and increased brand visibility and market presence locally. As a result, the company increased its market share to 60%.

> **What would Ibrahim say to individuals or companies considering entering or growing within this sector?**
>
> "The support we received enabled us to scale our operations, expand our brand, and compete at a higher level both commercially and competitively. The esports sector in Saudi Arabia is growing rapidly, and with the right support, local organizations can build sustainable businesses and compete on the global stage."

HOW TO REACH OUT

Social Development Bank Debt

Operated by بنك التنمية الاجتماعية SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK

How to Reach Out

What we are looking for

Gaming and Esports companies and entrepreneurs operating across the value chain that require financing to support business growth, operational expansion, product development, or working capital needs. The financing is intended to support companies with viable business models that are seeking to scale operations, expand teams, develop products, or enhance their market presence within the Saudi Gaming and Esports ecosystem.

Eligibility requirements

Eligible companies must be registered and domiciled in Saudi Arabia and operate within the Gaming and Esports value chain. Companies should demonstrate a viable business model, a clear use of financing, and the ability to repay the financing through business operations. Companies must also meet the Social Development Bank's credit and financial requirements and maintain good credit standing.

Contact Info

Email:
GAMES-ESPORTS@sdb.gov.sa

Website:
https://www.sdb.gov.sa

Impact46 Gaming Fund

Operated by impact46

How to Reach Out

What we are looking for

Game studios that have demonstrated proven traction or a portfolio of successful titles. With a specific interest in games that authentically reflect Saudi society's culture, behaviour, and player preferences. In parallel, we are actively exploring opportunities with teams addressing meaningful challenges across the Gaming and Esports value chain, such as game distribution, technologies that enable faster or more cost-efficient development, and platforms harnessing the power of user-generated content (UGC).

Eligibility requirements

Eligible companies are Saudi-based teams with a clear vision, a track record of execution in a relevant industry, and demonstrated traction or market validation for their product or idea. Founding teams should possess complementary skill sets, a strong understanding of their target audience, and a clear path toward scalable growth and monetization

Contact Info

Email:
gg@impact46.sa

Website:
https://impact46.sa

Merak Gaming Fund / Accelerator

Operated by Merak.Capital

How to Reach Out

What we are looking for

Game studios, publishers, and gaming technology companies that are beyond the idea stage and are operating in Saudi Arabia or willing to establish a local presence.
We look for companies that demonstrate A vertical slice, working build, or live product, Early commercial traction or existing revenue, A clear plan to grow and operate sustainably, and the Willingness to contribute to the Saudi gaming ecosystem through local teams, partnerships, or operations

Eligibility requirements

Eligible companies operate as a game studio, game publisher, or gaming technology company and are beyond the idea stage, with a vertical slice, working product, or live offering in Saudi Arabia or ready to relocate to the kingdom and is seeking growth capital to support product launch, scaling, or market expansion Eligible companies may range from Pre-Seed to Series A, as well as larger and more established companies.

Contact Info

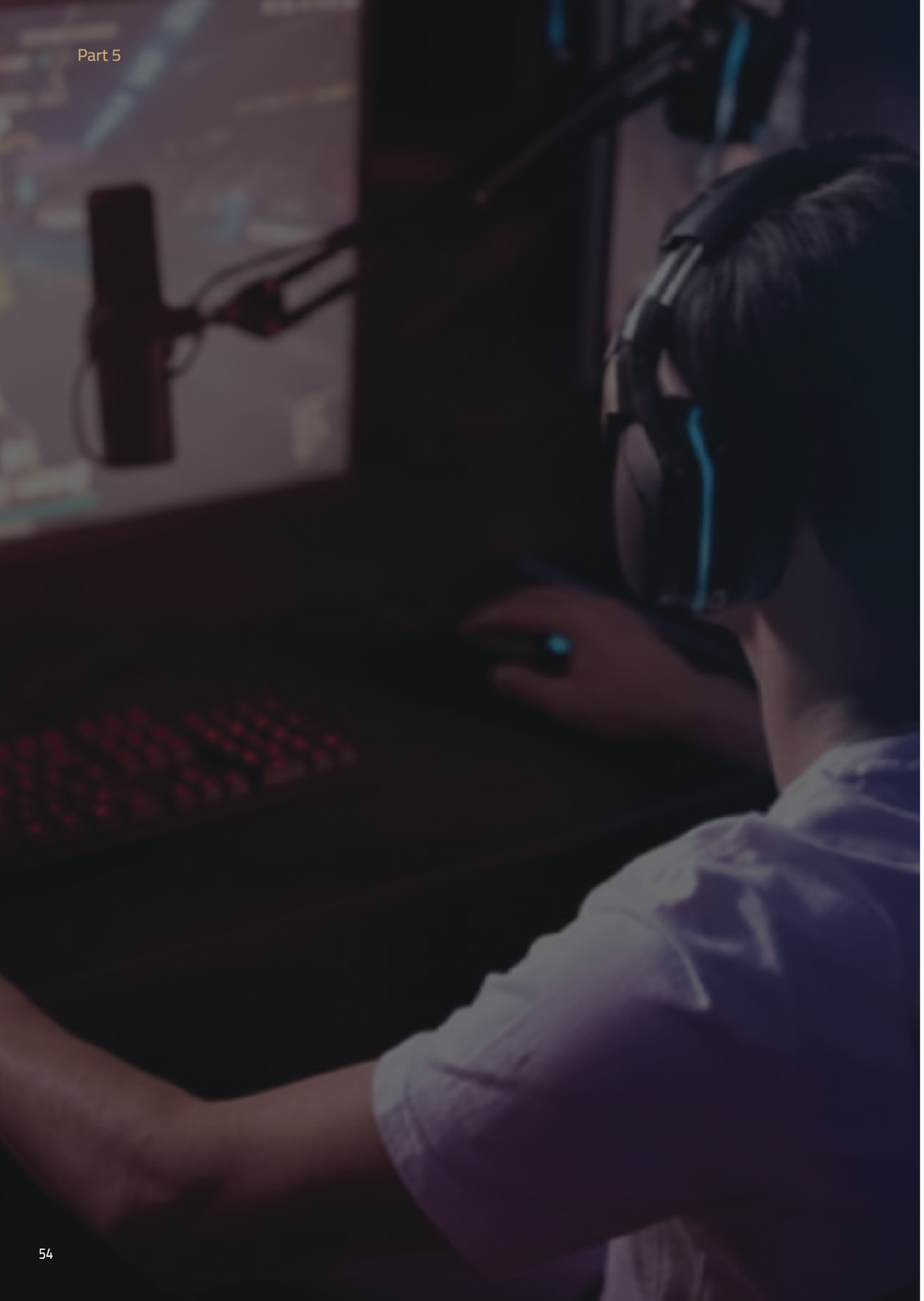
Direct Investment:

Email:
gaming@merak.capital

Website:
www.merak.capital

Accelerator:

Website:
https://www.exelbymerak.com/gaming-accelerator



How to Reach Out

صندوق التنمية الوطني
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

National Development Fund
Gaming and Esports Financing Program

For ecosystem collaboration, partnerships, and strategic initiatives related to the Gaming and Esports sector, stakeholders may reach out to the Gaming and Esports Financing Program at

GEFP@ndf.gov.sa.

Part 5

KEY DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Term	Definition
PC/Web Games	Video games designed to be played on personal computers or via web-based platforms
Console Games	Video games developed for dedicated gaming consoles (e.g. PlayStation)
Mobile Games	Video games designed for smartphones and tablets
Game Development Technology	Technologies and tools that support game creation, including engines, middleware, backend systems, and infrastructure
Game Publishing and Content Localization	Activities that bring games to market, including publishing, marketing, localization, distribution, and ongoing player support across regions
Game Publishing Technology	Platforms and tools that enable game distribution, user acquisition, monetization, analytics, and live service management.
Cloud Gaming Platform	Platforms that allow users to stream and play games over the internet without the need for high-performance local hardware
Digital Tournaments Platform	Online platforms that organize and manage competitive gaming tournaments, including match making, scheduling, and results management
Digital Distribution Platform	Platforms that enable the sale, download, and management of digital game content across devices and operating systems.
Digital Streaming Platform	Platforms that allow live and recorded broadcasting of gameplay content, enabling audience engagement and creator monetization
Infrastructure Services	Technologies and services that support gaming operations, including servers, cloud computing, data storage, and performance optimization
Gaming and Esports Media Outlet	Digital media platforms that provide gaming-related news, reviews, analysis, and community engagement, This include content creation, podcasts and digital streaming platforms.
Esports Club (Agencies, Equipment, Training)	Organizations that develop and manage professional and amateur esports teams, focusing on training, competition, and talent development.
Tournaments Organization & Management (Agencies)	Entities responsible for organizing, operating, and promoting competitive esports events, including league management and tournament execution
Gaming and Tournaments Centers	Physical venues designed to host Gaming and Esports events, providing dedicated infrastructure for players, audiences, and organizers

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