

# FIKRA: JAWWAL SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEURS

Courtesy of  
Jawwal,  
Palestine Cellular  
Communications  
Company



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ikra Innovation Hub, the corporate program that supports entrepreneurship, provides a place where individuals and teams can grow their technologies and businesses. Fikra (which means “an idea” in Arabic) is hosted by Jawwal, Palestine Cellular Communications Company which, in turn, is a subsidiary of Paltel Group. It is a creative

space for entrepreneurs with innovative ideas who need to access physical infrastructure, capacity building, and mentoring.

The hub includes a well-equipped co-working space, access to Paltel Group infrastructure such as Jawwal’s own Application Store (through which Palestinian applications are visible to more than three million subscribers on Jawwal marketing channels) and Jawwal Pay (an e-wallet that will help start-ups to monetize), in



WeDeliver winning first prize in Start-up Istanbul.



Tollab qualified for the Hult Prize semifinal competition in London.

addition to from other infrastructure services that aim to transform ideas into projects or products, ultimately turning them into investment opportunities.

A vital element in our business strategy is to discover and unleash innovative ideas, especially those that take advantage of fast-moving technology and that need assistance in order to develop the idea and into a viable business. We are launching the new forward-thinking innovation hub to unlock Palestine’s true potential as a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, and we will assist selected entrepreneurs with support services and investment funds to back Palestinian entrepreneurs who desire to launch their ventures.

The Fikra Hub also applies additional methods of Jawwal’s Corporate Entrepreneurship Responsibility (CER) program that include cooperating with other stakeholders to launch innovative and challenging ideas that hopefully will enable Jawwal to launch its own venture-capital funding that will invest in early-stage technology start-ups and be the bedrock of support for the technology start-ups ecosystem.

Jawwal’s innovation hub aims to prepare entrepreneurs to discover and explore their interests and to equip them with the knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and funding necessary to successfully execute their ideas to create successful ventures. Fikra’s vision is to become a leading innovation hub in the MENA region, a preferred location where start-ups can flourish and their ideas be validated, adopted, and scaled.

Since Fikra celebrated its first anniversary of operation, a lot of exciting things have happened. The co-working space now hosts a dynamic community of entrepreneurs, freelancers, and start-ups; the innovation space is buzzing with vertical integration and events; and it attracts many local and international visitors. The following are three examples of ideas supported by Fikra.

### WeDeliver

WeDeliver was founded by Ahmad Ramahi as a back-to-back crowdsourced, tech-driven logistics company, proudly based at Fikra – Paltel Group Innovation Hub in Ramallah, Palestine. The company is revolutionizing the future of last-mile delivery. WeDeliver essentially enables businesses and customers, such as IQOS by Phillip Morris, Pizza Hut, Hardees, authorized resellers for Huawei and Samsung, as well as e-commerce retailers, to deliver orders more efficiently and reliably.

WeDeliver's scalable platform was built on cutting-edge technology and adds extraordinary value to businesses that operate in emerging markets with payment and infrastructure challenges – leveraging an asset-light model and breakthrough machine learning techniques and artificial intelligence with unmatched automatic dispatching speed. WeDeliver was recently awarded first place in Start-up Istanbul which, by all standards, is considered an amazing achievement!



### Tollab

Tollab was founded by Ameen Taha and Ahmad Etkaidek as a platform to help university students who are looking to earn an income while pursuing their degree. Their focus was initially set on tutoring since Tollab recruits qualified university students to tutor students of all ages, in all subjects. Team members aspire to grow their businesses in other fields as well, providing a wide range of part-time jobs for university students. Their business model has qualified them to enter the semifinal competition for the Hult Prize in London for a five-week accelerator, where they competed with thousands of start-ups from all over the world and managed to achieve a great milestone by being selected amongst the top six teams to participate in the Hult Prize UN finals in New York. Tollab has received mentoring services and is an active member of the Fikra community of early-stage start-ups that are now generating revenue.



### Kitab Sawti

Kitab Sawti, the world's largest Arabic audiobook platform, was founded in Sweden in 2016 by Sebastian Bond, its CEO, with the aim to support the integration of Syrian children into Swedish society. Today, it has offices in Dubai, Cairo, and Palestine, and hosts more than 2,000 Arabic titles on its platform with more than 1 million registered users.

Kitab Sawti has raised US\$ 6 million in Series A funding from prominent new and existing investors. The platform will deploy the funds to expand its content and reach, offering thousands of content creators and narrators an opportunity to join a growing cultural movement in the region. Paltel Group was part of this round, given that one of its investment goals is to create jobs for Palestinians by having an international platform that will open new offices in Palestine.

"We are thrilled to be part of Kitab Sawti's exciting growth journey, which will allow us to provide Jawwal subscribers with access to the largest Arabic audiobook library," said Ammar Aker, Paltel Group CEO. "It is a great opportunity for us to co-invest in this round, alongside major Swedish venture-capital firms and regional angels, which opens new prospects for us to network with local and global innovation and start-up ecosystems."

The Kitab Sawti platform is accessible through [kitabsawti.com](http://kitabsawti.com) as well as the application, which is available for both iOS and Android users.

