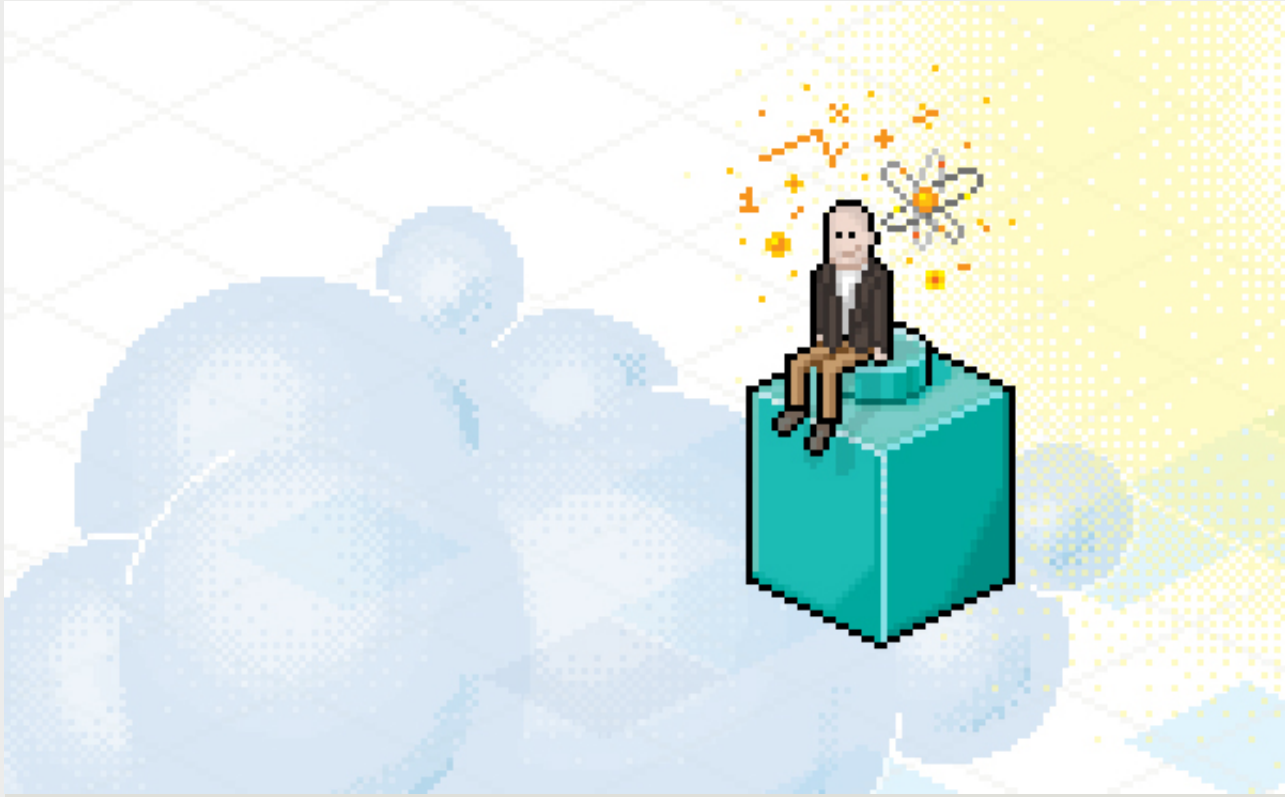




## Chairman's Letter – New business ideas



A desert is a tough place with few life-sustaining resources and harsh conditions that are too challenging for the survival of *new business ideas*. When it comes to raising early stage *IT investment capital* in The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region this is quite an accurate description of what entrepreneurs have to go through. A technology entrepreneur with an idea for an innovative business typically starts out with borrowing family money and using friends and personal savings to attempt to launch this *new business*. Once the initial capital runs out, the entrepreneur is suddenly in a dry inhospitable space; sparsely populated and very unforgiving. Attempts to raise capital are met with disinterest, doubt, suspicion, ridicule and rejection. Welcome to the desert – and very few brave entrepreneurs will manage to cross it. Their *new business ideas* may be great indeed, but without the needed capital, the *new business* will not survive.



Dr. Usama Fayyad, Chairman

In contrast, once a business manages to grow to a stage where it is profitable, the MENA region has a plethora of *investment capital* looking for safe places to be deployed. If only this newly-born business could survive this desert and make it to the other side...

This is why we founded Oasis500: to invest in great *new business ideas* that need this early-stage capital and to provide them with enough supplies, know-how, tools, and training to make the desert crossing successfully. As our entrepreneurs succeed and grow their businesses and secure future capital, we share in the success as their business partners, mentors, and helpers.

We have endeavoured to create Oasis500 as the leading early stage and seed investment company, the first of its kind in the MENA region. At our "Oasis" you will find shelter from the draught, you will find supporting colleagues and professionals, and you will be trained and prepared for an exciting crossing that will change your life and in the process transform the economic landscape of our region: If you have what it takes; if you have the commitment, the perseverance, the courage and the desire; if you are willing to learn with us; then we welcome you as our partner and we will do our best to ensure your success.



Oasis500 is not for everyone. To join us you must have an idea for a new business. Starting with that idea, you must also pass our selection criteria. If you are selected, you will receive initial funding, free office space in our *incubators*, intensive mentorship and guidance from our network of mentors, and a chance to get angel funding from our funds and from the network of angel investors that we are growing in the region. All these tools are in place to help you succeed in launching your idea into a real business with a bright future.

We want to help passionate ambitious entrepreneurs start their own companies, but we are also doing this as an investment. We believe in the companies we fund, and we are well aware that their profit is our profit; our goals and the goals of our investors are aligned with the goals of our entrepreneurs.

For our investors, Oasis500 is structured to prove that significant return on *investment* can be made in early stage companies. During the first three months of a startup, we incubate it in every sense of the word. We provide entrepreneurs with intensive training, offer them mentorship and guidance, expecting their valuation to double or even triple in those first three months. These startups then learn how to stand on their own feet; pitching to angel investors and proving to them that there can be much higher return by investing in high growth early-stage businesses. We believe the advantages offered by our region: relatively lower cost of labor, new early markets, and a well-educated population of bright students looking for unique opportunities for creating competitive business. This is especially true of Jordan, and that is why we started in Jordan with the help and support of His Majesty King Abdullah II who led our early discussions and planning and who encouraged us to form Oasis500 as a private company. We are also grateful to the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAJD) for providing our seed funding and incubating us as a startup company ourselves until we raised our capital from private sector companies and individuals. They have accelerated our growth, much like we hope to accelerate the growth and success of new companies in our region!

Our valuable workshops, mentorship, and Angel Investors events are funded by sponsors who donate to our non-for-profit training Company. This company is operated independently and its goals are to provide free training and opportunities to qualified entrepreneurs. As such, it is an investment in the Region and its future. I would like to thank our current and future sponsors for their involvement with and generous sponsorship of Oasis500 and its entrepreneurs. Such valuable training programmes cannot be delivered if it weren't for their generous contributions and their commitment to building a better society for us all.

I am excited and inspired by what we have seen so far. We have launched our initial waves of companies and we have already funded our first 10 *IT investments* from the first 3 waves. So far, my impressions are that the commitment of entrepreneurs is higher than I personally expected, the quality of companies higher than I anticipated, and the energy more intense and inspiring than I ever hoped.

*February 1, 2011*

**Usama M. Fayyad, Ph.D.**

**Chairman, Oasis500.**