

## UNDP and Ministry of Communications Launch the International Startup Forum 2025 at TurkmenTel-2025 Conference

**Ashgabat, 13 November 2025:** On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Turkmenistan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications of Turkmenistan, successfully launched the International Startup Forum 2025 within the framework of the Turkmentel-2025 Exhibition and International Conference. This event marked a significant milestone in advancing Turkmenistan's innovation and digital transformation agenda.

The Forum serves as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, bringing together visionary entrepreneurs, policymakers, development partners, and private sector leaders from across the region.



The Forum started with presentation of the Roadmap for the Modernization of the IT Park by the UNDP International Consultant. The roadmap provides a comprehensive framework for developing a viable and dynamic innovation hub, capable of evolving into a regional center for technology and entrepreneurship. It includes an assessment of Turkmenistan's national startup ecosystem, identifying key strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for

innovation-driven growth. The roadmap also explores the most promising sectors for digital transformation—including ICT, agriculture, and energy—where technology can unlock new opportunities for economic growth and sustainable development.

The Forum also featured two high-level panel discussions on building a Thriving Startup Ecosystem - Financing Startups in Emerging Markets and building Entrepreneurial Capacity - Incubators, Accelerators, and Education. The panels brought together experts from Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Estonia, Armenia and international organizations, representing government, banking and finance, innovation and technology parks, startups and entrepreneurship, education and EdTech, and professional economic associations — offering a broad regional perspective on digital transformation, finance, and economic development.

The discussions focused on the legal and financial frameworks necessary to foster a dynamic startup ecosystem, investment strategies, and the role of business angels, venture capital, and international investors. Panelists also explored the best practices in establishing and managing startup incubators and accelerators, as well as strategies for youth entrepreneurship, gender-inclusive initiatives, and strengthening university-private sector collaboration to drive innovation.

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***“Digital innovation is no longer optional — it is a strategic driver for inclusive growth, competitiveness, and sustainable development,” - said Ms. Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan. “UNDP is proud to partner with the Government of Turkmenistan to modernize the IT Park, foster entrepreneurship, and build a vibrant startup ecosystem that empowers women, youth, and all citizens to participate in the digital economy. Together, we are laying the foundation for Turkmenistan to become a regional leader in technology, innovation, and sustainable digital transformation.”***



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The Forum will continue on 14 November at the “Ish Nokady” co-working center in Ashgabat, gathering Entrepreneurs and startups from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, which will have the opportunity to present their ideas, receive expert feedback, and engage in vibrant knowledge exchange, while regional experts and international partners discuss ways to strengthen collaboration and advance the Central Asian startup ecosystem.

The International Startup Forum 2025 plays a key role in creating an environment for the exchange of knowledge and the fostering of partnerships, laying the foundation for a sustainable, innovation-driven ecosystem in Turkmenistan and contributing to the acceleration of its digital transformation.