

## Driving investment and entrepreneurship in the Middle East

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. EDT/5:00 – 6:00 pm GST

Online event via Zoom

### Speaker Bios

#### **H.E. Dr. Tariq Bin Hendi**

*Director General, Abu Dhabi Investment Office*



H.E. Dr. Tariq Bin Hendi is the Director General of the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO). He leads the organization's efforts to grow and diversify Abu Dhabi's economy through private sector investment. He also oversees strategic initiatives that support the emirate's economic growth and reputation on the world stage. Prior to joining ADIO, His Excellency held leadership roles at various institutions including Emirates NBD, Mubadala, and Citibank. He also sits on a number of boards including AXA GCIC and EPG (Emirates Post Group). His Excellency holds a PhD in Economics from Imperial College London and graduate degrees from Columbia University and London Business School.

#### **Areije Al Shakar**

*Director & Fund Manager, Al Waha Fund of Funds*



Areije Al Shakar is a senior leader in Bahrain's financial industry, bringing 17 years of experience in the startup and banking sectors to Al Waha Fund of Funds via her role as Senior Vice President at Bahrain Development Bank. She has been featured among Bahrain's Most Influential Women by Business in Gulf. Areije is also a Kauffman Fellow and the chairperson of the prestigious investment programme's MENA Chapter. At Al Waha, Areije works to build out a venture capital ecosystem within the region by meeting with funds, building networks, and connecting startups with funding opportunities, including as part of

Bahrain's annual delegation to the World Economic Forum. In pursuit of this goal, Areije has spearheaded several initiatives including the pioneering Rowad Program, a holistic full-cycle support platform focused on connecting entrepreneurs through a global partnership network. She also worked on setting up SeedFuel-Rowad, an early-stage funding program that is managed and run out of the Bank. Before joining BDB, Areije worked in banking and advisory roles at BNP Paribas, and Lehman Brothers, contributing to setting up their respective Advisory and Investment Management desks for the wider region. She also worked at Citibank and Investcorp B.S.C. Areije graduated from the John Molson School of Business with a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance and holds a Master of Science in Public Policy and Management from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



### **H.E. Dr. Nabeel Koshak**

*CEO & Board Member, Saudi Venture Capital Company*

H.E. Dr. Nabeel Koshak is the CEO and Board Member of Saudi Venture Capital Company (SVC). Nabeel is the Founder and Angel Investor at Athaal (Angel Investors Group). He is the Chairman of GEN (Global Entrepreneurship Network) Saudi. Koshak is a member of the Investment Committees of KAUST's Innovation Fund. Formerly, he was the Founding Dean of Prince Mohammad Bin Salman College (MBSC) of Business and Entrepreneurship at King Abdullah Economic City. He is the Co-Founder and the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Wadi Makkah Company (Startup Accelerator, and Venture Capital Fund).

Nabeel is a mentor at Endeavor Saudi Arabia. He is a Board Member and the Chairman of the Investment Committee at King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Innovation (Mawhiba). Koshak is a Member of the Executive Committee of King Faisal International Prize. Formerly, he was a Board Member of Oqal (Angel Investors Group) Jeddah branch and a mentor at Flat6Labs Jeddah (Startup Accelerator). Nabeel is the former Co-Founder and Director of King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) GIS Technology Innovation Center. He is the former Co-Founder and General Supervisor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute. Nabeel is the former Co-Founder and Chairman of Board of Directors of Transportation and Crowd Management Innovation Center. As an entrepreneur, Koshak was the Founder and CEO of five tech startups. Nabeel received an Executive Education in "Venture Capital and Private Equity" from Harvard University in 2019, an Executive Education from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in "Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program" and "Management, Innovation, Technology" in 2017, a PhD in Design Computing from Carnegie Mellon University in 2002, and a Master of Architecture (Computing in Design and Planning) from the University of Colorado in 1997.



### **Mr. Ayman Mohamed Soliman**

*CEO, Sovereign Fund of Egypt*

In 2019 Mr. Ayman Mohamed Soliman was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Sovereign Fund of Egypt for a three-year term. Mr. Soliman's career spans over 22 years with experience in managing over 200 companies in diverse sectors, with a record of accomplishments in global investments and transactions, and a long-standing career in managing complex assets and mega transactions. Over the past 17 years, Mr. Soliman served as a board member of a wide range of companies with various capacities inclusive of Orascom Investment Holding, Beltone Financial, Lamancha Holding (Gold mining), Euronews plc, RiverBank (SME Banks in Europe), Auerbach Grayson (USA), Texegy (Oil & Gas USA), Ora Developers BV (Real estate), Nile Sugar Co (Egypt), and Ezdehar Fund, to name a few. Mr. Ayman Soliman was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Gemini Holding for the past 10 years, a company investing in various industries. He led multiple merger and acquisition transactions for the Gemini group, as well as startups and greenfields, to build a diversified portfolio of assets in more than eight distinct industrial verticals. These fields included, technology, food, fashion, agroindustry, energy, financial services and fintech, media and real estate. Prior to joining Gemini, Mr. Soliman headed Orascom Telecom Holding's corporate strategy team where he spearheaded the formulation of the business development and growth strategy for the company. Prior to joining Orascom, Mr. Soliman had a career in investment banking, where he closed numerous IPO's, Corporate Finance and M&A transactions spanning technology, food, and building materials sectors. Moreover, as Vice President of EFG-Hermes Private Equity, he focused on managing technology funds. Mr. Soliman holds an MSc. degree in International Business and Finance and a BSc. degree in Economics with a Minor in Computer Science, both from the American University in Cairo.

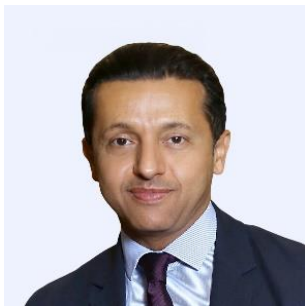


**Dr. Mark C. Thompson**

*Senior Research Fellow and Head, Socioeconomics Unit, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies*

Dr. Mark C. Thompson is Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Socioeconomic Unit at King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS) in Riyadh. He was previously Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, (2012-2019) where he taught undergraduate courses in International Relations and Globalization. Mark has lived and worked intermittently in Saudi Arabia since 2001 for diverse institutions such as Saudi Arabian Airlines, the Saudi Arabian National Guard, and Prince Sultan University. Mark holds a Ph.D. from the Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK, where he also taught a course on Political Reform in the Gulf. Mark also runs his own consultancy business that offers an objective perspective of contemporary Saudi socio-political issues. His principal research areas are Saudi socio-political development and societal transformation, and he has published on topics such as Saudi youth issues and challenges facing Saudi women leaders in publications such as the British Journal of Middle East Studies, Journal of Arabian Studies, Asian Affairs, Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Policy; POMPES Studies, Chatham House, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies and Gulf Affairs. In addition, he published a book with I.B. Tauris “Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change: National Dialogue and Civil Society” (2014). Mark is also the co-editor of the IB Tauris book entitled “Policy-Making in the GCC: State, Citizens and Institutions” (2017) with Dr. Neil Quilliam from Chatham House based on their Gulf Research Meeting workshop in 2015 as well as providing chapters on Saudi Arabia for edited books such as “Public Brain Power: Civil Society and Resource Management” Palgrave Macmillan (2017). In October 2019, Mark published his Cambridge University Press book “Being Young Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom” about societal issues and change from the perspective of young Saudi men.

**Moderator Bio**



**Mr. Amjad Ahmad**

*Director and Resident Senior Fellow, empowerME, Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, Atlantic Council*

Mr. Amjad Ahmad is director and resident senior fellow of empowerME at the Atlantic Council’s Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. He focuses on shaping innovative investments to empower entrepreneurs, women, and youth in the Middle East. He develops strategies and policies to drive sustainable prosperity through the creation of dynamic entrepreneurial economies, the economic participation of women, and educational transformation. Amjad is also managing partner of the venture capital firm Precinct Partners and serves on the boards of Eyewa, Tapal Tea, RSA Global, Mumzworld, Mr. Usta and The Luxury Closet. Based in the United Arab Emirates for fifteen years prior to moving to Washington, DC, Amjad has collaborated with business leaders and entrepreneurs to build leading companies in the Middle East. Through his work as a venture capital and growth investor, Amjad established two investment firms in the region that provided over \$1 billion in funding to over fifty companies in sectors ranging from technology and education to healthcare and finance. During the past five years, Amjad has focused his investments on entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology. Amjad holds a master’s degree in international affairs with a concentration in international finance and economics from Columbia University and is a graduate of the general management program at Harvard Business School.