



Partner-led side event

Building world-class business advisors to accelerate SME growth across the Arab region

18–19 November 2026

13:00–16:00 | Room

Background and rationale

Effective business advisors play a catalytic role in helping entrepreneurs make strategic decisions, improve business performance, access finance, enter new markets, adopt digital technologies, and successfully scale their businesses. Strengthening advisory capabilities therefore creates a multiplier effect, improving outcomes for hundreds of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) while enhancing the overall effectiveness of national entrepreneurship support systems.

Recognizing this opportunity, GrowthWheel and Impact MENA are organizing, in parallel with the Summit, a workshop on building world-class business advisors to accelerate SME growth across the Arab region under the Arab Regional Business Advisors Development Programme. The programme directly supports the Summit's theme, "Accelerating Growth", by investing in one of the most influential actors within the SME ecosystem: the business advisor.

The workshop introduces internationally recognized advisory methodologies while creating opportunities for regional collaboration among professionals supporting SMEs across the Arab region.

Objectives

- **Strengthen the interpersonal competencies** of business advisors working with SMEs and entrepreneurship support organizations across the Arab region.
- **Introduce internationally recognized methodologies** and practical tools for delivering high-impact business advisory services in the Arab region.
- **Improve advisors' ability to guide SMEs** through growth, strategic decision-making, implementation, and long-term business development.
- **Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange** among business advisors, incubators, accelerators, universities, and SME support institutions in the Arab SMEs community.
- **Establish the foundation** for an Arab community of practice for business advisors.

Expected outcomes

- Design structured customer journeys that improve SME engagement and long-term advisory impact.
- Apply internationally recognized advisory frameworks to diagnose business needs and prioritize interventions.
- Use facilitative coaching techniques that empower entrepreneurs to make informed decisions.
- Improve implementation follow-up and results measurement.
- Exchange practical experiences with peers from across the Arab region.
- Develop an action plan for strengthening advisory practices within own organizations.

Methodology

The workshop follows a highly interactive and practice-oriented approach combining:

- Expert presentations.
- Interactive discussions.
- Peer learning.
- Group exercises.
- Reflection activities.
- Practical tools and templates (workbook in English and Arabic).

Participants actively engage in solving real advisory challenges while learning from fellow practitioners across the region.

Participants

This workshop is designed for existing or new business advisors in the Arab region. By joining the Business Advisor Certificate (BAC) programme, the advisors can obtain credentials in interpersonal skills, and can proceed later to become certified by completing three of six workshops of their choice. In addition, participants

gain renewed motivation by taking the training with other business advisors who strive to be the best they can be.

The programme is designed for approximately 25 business advisors and SME support professionals from across the Arab region, including representatives from:

- Business incubators and accelerators.
- Entrepreneurship support organizations.
- SME development agencies.
- Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- Universities and innovation centres.
- Government institutions supporting SMEs.
- Development organizations.
- Business consultants and coaches.
- Investment readiness and enterprise development programmes.

Participants should have prior experience working with entrepreneurs, startups, or SMEs.

Follow-up and certification

Participants receive a certificate of participation and a workbook in English/Arabic and are introduced to the pathway to obtain the Business Advisor Certificate (BAC). They are also invited to join an emerging regional community of practice that promotes continuous professional development, peer learning, and collaboration among business advisors across the Arab region.

Contribution to the Arab SMEs Summit

The Arab Regional Business Advisors Development Programme directly contributes to the Summit's objective of accelerating growth by strengthening one of the most important pillars of successful SME ecosystems, namely the quality of business advisory services.

Well-trained business advisors help SMEs improve strategic planning, strengthen investment readiness, access finance, enter new markets, embrace digital transformation, and implement sustainable growth strategies. By

investing in advisor capabilities, the programme delivers impact far beyond the workshop itself, creating a multiplier effect across the Arab region. It equips professionals from incubators, accelerators, universities, government agencies, and SME support organizations with internationally recognized methodologies that can be applied across hundreds of enterprises. As a result, it reinforces the Summit's mission by strengthening one of the most important drivers of SME success: the experts who support entrepreneurs every day.

As a capacity-building initiative, the programme enhances the practical value of the Summit by fostering cross-country collaboration, promoting the exchange of proven advisory practices, and establishing the foundations of a regional community of certified business advisors.

The programme also introduces a sustainable pathway for continuous professional development through the GrowthWheel certification framework, ensuring that the knowledge and networks developed during the Summit continue to deliver value well beyond the event itself. By strengthening advisory excellence, the Summit creates a legacy that strengthens entrepreneurship ecosystems, elevates the quality of SME support services, and contributes to business growth and economic competitiveness across the Arab region.

Agenda

Day 1: 18 November 2026

Module 1: Mastering the customer journey from onboarding to impact		In this module, each participant discusses with other advisors how to create high-quality customer journeys.	
Time	Title	Session description	Speakers
13:00–14:00	Session 1 Introduction	• Introduction to customer journey.	David Madie, Founder and CEO, GrowthWheel International Farhan Kalaldeh, Co-Founder and CEO, Impact MENA
14:00–15:00	Session 2 Preparations	• How to onboard clients for future success. • How to assess and triage clients. • How to define the scope of work.	
15:00–16:00	Session 3 Implementation	• How to secure implementation. • How to track and report results to all stakeholders.	

Day 2: 19 November 2026

Module 2: Client empowerment		In this module, each participant discusses with other advisors how to start advising clients without giving directive advice.	
Time	Title	Session description	Speakers
13:00–14:00	Session 1 Facilitation role	• How to be a facilitator of your client's decision-making process.	David Madie, Founder and CEO, GrowthWheel International Farhan Kalaldeh, Co-Founder and CEO, Impact MENA
14:00–15:00	Session 2 Facilitation process	• How to ask questions which empower the clients. • How to present clients with alternative options with infographics. • How to give clients the final ownership of the decisions.	
15:00–16:00	Session 3 Moving to action	• How to make a bridge from decisions to actions.	