

# PLEXAL JOINS FORCES WITH AL JABR IN OMAN TO SUPPORT STARTUPS AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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- The UK Oman Digital Hub has appointed Plexal and AL JABR to develop a programme to support the startup ecosystem in Oman with the Rapid Innovation Accelerator – the accelerator will tackle challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Plexal and AL JABR will work together to help startups navigate the challenges posed by the global pandemic
- The partnership will provide opportunities for international collaboration from across the UK and Oman's startup ecosystems

Plexal, the innovation centre and coworking space based at Here East in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, has announced a partnership with Omani innovation development company AL JABR to support startups in Oman with navigating the challenges posed by Covid-19.

Initiated by the UK-Oman Digital Hub, the partnership aims to help the startup community in Oman find and develop solutions to local challenges created by the pandemic. Plexal's innovation team has analysed the response to the pandemic from UK startups, as well as the impact of Covid-19 on Omani society and businesses, to design the Rapid Innovation Accelerator: a virtual programme of activity that will see UK innovators share their learnings with counterparts in Oman through mentoring and workshops.

The study from Plexal and AL JABR, with support from the British Embassy in Muscat, analysed the most creative solutions from the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Oman and the UK, and found that the most rich innovation has been taking across three areas of need: digitising businesses (including bricks and mortar stores), digitising communities virtually and digitising education.

It's calling on startups, corporate innovation specialists, academics and business leaders across the UK to register interest in mentoring or providing masterclasses for fellow startups in Oman during the six-week programme. More information can be found at [plexal.com/rapid-innovation-accelerator](https://plexal.com/rapid-innovation-accelerator).

Plexal is an innovation centre and coworking space, established by Delancey, that specialises in forging connections between industry, academia, investors, startups and scaleups to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing society. It also delivers the UK government-backed cybersecurity programme, LORCA (the London Office for Rapid Cybersecurity Advancement) which has supported 72 cybersecurity scaleups gain over £160m in VC funding since the programme launched just over two years ago.



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Based in Muscat, AL JABR is an Omani innovation development company focused on enriching the efforts within the Omani entrepreneurial ecosystem, mainly through startup development programs and industry innovation initiatives.

Plexal's partnership with AL JABR will strengthen ties between Oman and the UK, fostering greater collaboration between the two startup ecosystems and enabling opportunities for startups to work together beyond the programme.

Andrew Roughan, managing director of Plexal commented: *"Both Oman and the UK have thriving startup ecosystems, and the Omani government is committed to supporting the country's brightest entrepreneurs by being open to collaboration. The startup response to the pandemic in the UK has been swift, effective and nothing short of heroic, and Plexal's excited to share what we've learned with Oman and explore local solutions. The pandemic has placed enormous pressure on economies and society, but it's also encouraged open innovation across borders – long may it continue."*

Henry Howard, Head of the UK-Oman Digital Hub, a British Embassy initiative commented: *"Throughout this year, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted and taken lives in every country around the world. But with these challenges are also opportunities. Oman is increasingly finding digital solutions to everyday problems, and the global crisis has accelerated this trend. We are really excited by the Rapid Innovation project, to be working with Plexal again and their local partner Al-Jabr, and to help the budding start up ecosystem overcome challenges presented by Covid. The programme will focus on digitalising business, education, and community, and compliments a series of other accelerator and innovation programmes already underway in Oman."*

Mohammed Al Wahaibi, CEO of AL JABR commented: *"As we navigate through these stormy seas, we have witnessed that the startup ecosystems in both Oman and the UK took upon themselves to lead a very brave and innovative expedition into building new solutions to accommodate the rapid changes in our lives and we are proud to have been a part of it. Our partnership with Plexal comes as another means to expedite innovation in the region through collaboration and knowledge sharing. We have tremendous faith in Omani startups and the ever-developing entrepreneurial environment with the support of the Omani government and we are very enthusiastic to be a part of their ongoing development."*

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Andrew Roughan  
Managing Director  
Plexal

## Notes to Editors

### About Plexal

Plexal is an innovation centre and coworking space located in the fast-growing Here East technology and innovation campus in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Collaboration is at the heart of Plexal's approach to innovation. Its innovation team delivers bespoke programmes for clients like Innovate UK and Transport for London, and specialises in forging connections between industry, academia, investors, startups and scaleups to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing society while getting ideas market-ready.

Plexal has been appointed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport to deliver the London Office for Rapid Cybersecurity Advancement (LORCA): an innovation programme aimed at scaling cybersecurity solutions that are needed most by industry.

It's also delivered OpenDoor, an inclusive innovation accelerator, and has partnered with UCL, Disability Rights UK and more to support disabled entrepreneurs and make its workspace more accessible.

Startup and scaleup members of Plexal's workspace benefit from a comprehensive programme of events and tailored support, including 1:1 consultations. Members work in areas like mobility, AI, healthtech, cybersecurity, fintech, the Internet of Things, VR and more.

Plexal was launched in 2017 and was founded by clients of specialist real estate investment advisory company Delancey.

For more information visit: [plexal.com](https://plexal.com)



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### About AL JABR

AL JABR, is an Omani company that focuses on startup development and corporate innovation with the aim to build a regional hub for startup development, bridge startup innovation with corporate ambition and create new access channels to capital it being Financial, Human & Intellectual.

AL JABR was formally established in 2019, by Mohammed Al Wahibi and Fatma Bahwan who founded multiple startups and initiatives all focused on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in Oman such as co-working spaces, startup ideation programs and Omans 1st experts based online learning platform Edlal.om .

AL JABR efforts in the entrepreneurship ecosystem include hosting and facilitating the focused group labs for the national strategy of SME development for the SME development (Riyada), Content development of EBDA program which is a startups development program within the coworking space in Muscat for 3 cohorts.



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