

StartmeupHK Festival 2024 showcases Hong Kong's thriving start-up ecosystem (with photos)

The annual StartmeupHK Festival is set to return to Hong Kong from October 21 to 25, 2024, following its previous successes. Curated by Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and themed "A Future Unlimited", this year's Festival will delve into contemporary topics such as AI, web3, GameFi, responsible tech, healthtech, greentech, sustainability, and more. As Asia's premier start-up event, the festival anticipates participation from over 12 000 start-ups, investors, and technology enthusiasts from around the world.

Featuring five main events and a series of community events, what sets this year's Festival apart is its inclusion of captivating activities in multiple locations across Hong Kong and beyond, with speakers ranging from global business leaders to some of the world's most innovative entrepreneurs. The Festival will also host a lineup of interactive activities like conferences, debates, exhibitions, pitching competitions, and additional networking opportunities. The Startups team of InvestHK has been conducting roadshows across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East to promote the Festival and position Hong Kong as an ideal location for start-ups to thrive in Asia.

The Director-General of Investment Promotion at InvestHK, Ms Alpha Lau, said, "I am thrilled to witness the triumphant return of this remarkable event, as it reaffirms Hong Kong's leading position as a thriving hub for innovation and start-up success. Start-ups in Hong Kong enjoy a vibrant network of incubators and accelerators, a pool of experienced angels and venture capitalists, and a welcoming community of fellow entrepreneurs. This comprehensive ecosystem has fostered the growth of numerous unicorns and a rapidly expanding start-up landscape, covering diverse sectors such as fintech, retail tech, healthtech, and greentech."

She added, "The remarkable resilience and continued growth of Hong Kong's start-up ecosystem are a testament to its attractiveness. Our 2023 Startup Survey revealed record-high figures, with 4 257 start-ups employing a total of 16 453 staff. This encouraging result can be attributed to favourable factors such as our simple tax system, low tax rate, accessibility to international and regional markets, accessibility to funding, business opportunities in Mainland China, and the free flow of information. Our strong entrepreneurial culture further reinforces Hong Kong's position as a launchpad for start-ups seeking to access the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the broader Asian market."

The Head of Startups at InvestHK, Ms Jayne Chan, said, "This year's StartmeupHK Festival is promised to be more impactful than ever, fostering stronger connections and collaborations among participants, enabling international investors and other key stakeholders to engage the city's

thriving start-up community. This year, we have curated the StartmeupHK Festival to explore the most influential and forward-thinking topics around innovation and technology, igniting the exchange of ideas and inspiring new initiatives that can unlock limitless possibilities for positive change."

She continued, "The Festival will include community events to enhance connections in the start-up ecosystem, such as a unique event where regional venture capital (VC) investors pitch to start-up founders, as well as fun activities such as a harbour run and Peak hike with members of the tech community. Additionally, the Start-ups team is conducting global roadshows in cities like London and Shanghai to showcase Hong Kong's advantages, including access to talent, markets, and funding. These efforts will continue until the festival begins to promote Hong Kong and the Festival to a wider global audience."

Main events

Day 1 (October 21) – As the opening event of the StartmeupHK Festival 2024, JUMPSTARTER Ignition Gala by Alibaba Entrepreneurs Fund will be held at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center. In addition to launching their JUMPSTARTER for One Earth global start-up competition to find companies committed to driving global positive change, the event will feature an AI theme with discussions on investments, trends and regional developments in this area.

Day 2 (October 22) – Game On! 2024, hosted by MaGESpire, will celebrate the essence of gaming, art, music, and entertainment (GAME) industries at Soho House, Sheung Wan. If you are a hardcore gaming fan or art / music enthusiast or an entertainment aficionado keen to learn more about how new technologies are transforming this space, then you must join us!

Day 3 (October 23) – LOUDER Connect, organised by LOUDER Global will be held at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum that will boasts a diverse network of global speakers, each brought together to collaborate and engage in meaningful conversations. The event will showcase a series of engaging Radical Debates, mentor-business matching, interactive workshops, and networking opportunities at the iconic Hong Kong Maritime Museum and Star Ferry.

Day 4 (October 24) – Hosted by Brinc, the Asia Health Innovation Summit will be held at TOWER 535 in the vibrant district of Causeway Bay. This premier event will unite Asia's health technology ecosystem, bringing together start-ups, professionals, investors and government to drive transformative innovation in healthcare. Key discussions include advancements in biotechnology, AI, MedTech, and wholistic well-being and more.

Day 5 (October 25) – Organised by New World Development, 1.5°C Summit – The Defining Decade for Impact with Tech will be held at K11 Musea. This unique tech summit on climate change is dedicated to identifying and implementing the necessary actions to reduce emissions over the next decade. The event will convene leading experts, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders who are actively engaged in mitigating the effects of climate change. Participants will share their insights on how technology can revolutionise

industries and foster a more sustainable future.

Community events

The StartmeupHK Festival 2024 will feature an engaging array of community events across Hong Kong, providing attendees with exceptional opportunities to discover innovative ideas and connect with a diverse network of people.

October 20 – Led by Hong Kong's experimental activity group, Rock & Run, join a group of like-minded individuals for the Victoria Peak Sunset Hike – a perfect way to end your day with stunning views!

October 20 – With the support of Alibaba Entrepreneurs Fund, tap into the regional VC investors with rev Hong Kong, for insights into the propositions, and personalities, of your future potential backers at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center. Connect with top VCs, spanning Pre-Seed to Series B, as they pitch their funds in just five minutes, followed by your questions.

October 21 and 24 – Start your day with an exclusive small-group breakfast designed for people leaders in a Head role across business and HR, to connect, collaborate, and inspire one another. People Leaders' Breakfast Roundtable is a unique opportunity to exchange insights around strategies for leadership and people development for the talent landscape in Hong Kong, in a relaxed and closed-door setting. A limited 10-guest experience will be curated for each day.

October 23 – In partnership with the Hong Kong British Chamber of Commerce and hosted by the Eaton Club, come check out the UK Tech Founders Showcase Event where leading tech founders from the UK will showcase their latest innovations and solutions. The evening features fireside chats with UK tech founders who will share their insights, providing a valuable opportunity to network with industry peers while enjoying drinks and light snacks.

October 23 – To wrap up StartmeupHK Festival 2024, join Rock & Run for a Central Harbourfront Evening Run. It is going to be an amazing scenic run to see a different side of Hong Kong.

October 24 – Join us for an evening of China PropTech Startup Expedition in partnership with UrbanLab and Hong Kong PropTech Association. This exclusive event will showcase Mainland China's tech start-ups that have their sights set on global success through market development in Hong Kong and beyond.

Road shows

The Start-ups team has been going on road shows and will continue to promote Hong Kong and the Festival to a wider global audience.

The London Startup Conference 2024 that was held on June 27 gathered start-up founders, investors, and industry experts for networking and workshops focused on business growth.

Following this, IVS2024 KYOTO was held on July 5. Participants explored the intersection of Japan's cultural heritage and modern technology, emphasising web2, web3, and AI advancements.

On July 13, International Graduates & Returnees Entrepreneurship Sharing in Chengdu highlighted the entrepreneurial journeys of international students and returnees.

The UrbanLab Global Expedition x Hong Kong 1.5°C Summit Briefing on August 16 witnessed discussions on the opportunities through Hong Kong, while the Georgian National Startup Competition on August 20 aimed to connect emerging market founders with investors.

A series of Startup Nights in Beijing, Shenzhen, and Hangzhou throughout September also helped provide networking platforms for scaling start-ups in Asia.

The Game On! 2024 – Dubai Edition event was held on September 13 to celebrate the gaming and entertainment industries, and The Latin Kaleidoscope event in Hong Kong on September 20 and 21 showcased Latin American culture and innovation.

Last but not least, The Barcelona Startup Conference 2024 on October 1 will bring together local start-up leaders and investors for collaboration and growth opportunities.

