

## Careem raising \$10m for regional growth

Saudi-based Al Tayyar Travel is investing \$4.5m now and \$4m later in the car-booking service

DUBAI  
By NAUSHAD K. CHEERAYIL  
Staff Reporter

Dubai-based technology start-up Careem is raising \$10 million (Dh36.7 million) from its second round of investment in order to strengthen and expand its operations in the Middle East.

The first web-based chauffeur-driven car-booking service in the UAE raised \$1.7 million funding from STC Ventures, a subsidiary of Saudi Telecoms Company, last year. The app allows customers to book a car for the future or order it on-demand.

Magnus Olsson, founder and managing director of Careem, told *Gulf News* that Saudi-based Al Tayyar Travel Holding Group is investing \$4.5 million now "and has also given us guarantee for \$4 million later". The rest \$1.5 million is [to come] from STC and other regional investors.

"We need money to grow and we are growing. We are investing in 14 cities we are currently operating in, and plan to expand our app development in the broader Middle

### Investment

# \$1.5m

Amount to come from STC and other regional investors.

East cities from Morocco to Pakistan. That is our target," Olsson said.

Careem, founded in 2012, now operates in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Beirut, Cairo, Dammam, Dhahran, Doha, Dubai, Jeddah, Karachi, Khobar, Kuwait, Lahore, Egypt and Riyadh. He said Careem hopes to become profitable in the next couple of years with business growing at more than 30 per cent month-on-month.

On competition, Olsson said: "We are facing competition from Uber in the UAE and many local players in Saudi Arabia."

Careem has more than 4,000 drivers, of which 1,000 are in the UAE alone.

Nasser Al Tayyar, Al Tayyar Travel Group's vice-chairman and managing director, said that the investment is aligned with the company's strategy to embrace new technologies.

"The speed at which Careem is growing has given us confidence in their ability to emerge as a winner," Al Tayyar said.

## UAE luxury yacht market bounces back after hitting rough waters in 2008

Most buyers come from Gulf, Russia and Europe as prices of new boats become more attractive compared to 6 years ago

DUBAI  
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Staff Reporter

Superyachts in the UAE have caught a wave of fresh interest over the last year from Gulf residents as well as Russian and European tourists.

The market for superyachts – yachts more than 30 metres in length – has bounced back from the 2008 financial crisis. "We see a consistent growth in the [boating] market rather than a boom," said Erwin Bamps, chief executive of Gulf Craft, an Ajman-based yacht and boat maker.

Demand is rising as prices of newbuild superyachts become more sensible compared to numbers six years ago, according to Francesco Pitea, chief executive of SF Yachts, a Dubai-based company offering yacht brokerage services. He added that the cost of a typical superyacht is "at least \$15 million (Dh55.09 million)".

According to data from Boat International Media, 361 superyachts have been sold globally so far this year compared to 355 in 2013.

The newbuild superyacht



Gulf News Archives

### Sailing smoothly

A superyacht at the recent Dubai International Boat Show. The newbuild superyacht market is picking up, while the pre-owned market is slowing down, say dealers and brokers.

market is picking up, while the pre-owned market is slowing down, according to yacht dealers and brokers. "The new builds are more attractive for customers – prices are not very different from used ones," Pitea said. Similarly, Gregor Stinner, chief executive of Art Marine, a UAE-based yacht dealership and marina operator, said that the pre-owned market has been "thinning out" over the last two years.

"This market is thinning out because the best boats available in the market have already been sold. [It] was very strong after the financial crisis be-

cause people wanted to sell," Stinner said.

Art Marine is in talks with 12 buyers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, other Arab countries and Russia for yachts measuring between 40 metres and 90 metres. These are priced between 24 million euros (Dh108.57 million) and 90 million euros.

### Good going

SF Yachts said it sold three superyachts in the last six months to customers from Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Pitea said that sales of superyachts in the UAE this year

The market for superyachts – yachts more than 30 metres in length – has bounced back from the 2008 financial crisis. According to data from Boat International Media, 361 superyachts have been sold globally so far this year compared to 355 in 2013. The newbuild superyacht market is picking up.

are similar to numbers before the financial meltdown. However, Stinner said that it will take time before that happens.

Gulf Craft expects sales to grow by 15 per cent this year compared to 2013. The company has a global market share of around five per cent, Bamps said.

He said Russians are still positioning their superyachts in the UAE. The falling rouble, which has lost close to 35 per cent of its value against the US dollar so far this year under the weight of Western sanctions, has deterred some Russians from travelling.