



INVEST IN
TURKIYE



2024

THE STATE OF TURKISH GAMING ECOSYSTEM

An In-Depth Analysis Evaluation

WELCOME TO THE TURKISH GAMING ECOSYSTEM

**NEXUS OF
THE WORLD**



Credits & Contact

Startups Watch
Istanbul, Türkiye

<http://startups.watch>
support@startups.watch

Serkan Unsal Founder, CEO

The State of Turkish Gaming Ecosystem 2024
Version v2.0 // January 10, 2025



Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Investment Office
Istanbul, Türkiye

<http://www.invest.gov.tr>
info@invest.gov.tr

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREDITS & CONTACT	Page 2
KEY TAKEAWAYS	Page 4
Section 1 TÜRKİYE SNAPSHOT	Page 5
Section 2 QUICK HISTORY	Page 6
Section 3 A GAMING ECOSYSTEM SUPPORTED BY SUCCESS STORIES	Page 8
Section 4 SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM	Page 10
Section 5 JOURNEY TO THE TOP	Page 12
Section 6 WHY TÜRKİYE & WHY NOW? Anıl Şimşek Barış Özistek Burak Yılmaz Ceren Sayar Emre Yıldız Görkem Türk İsa Turgut İnci Rina Onur Serdar R. Alemdar Volkan Biçer	Page 14
Section 7 APPENDIX	Page 20

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Quick Look at the Ecosystem



Türkiye's gaming startup ecosystem has become a significant global player, marked by an impressive number of high-profile exits and rapid entrepreneurial growth. With Istanbul emerging as the second-largest gaming hub after London in terms of studio density, the region has demonstrated a strong capacity for innovation, particularly when it comes to mobile gaming. Successful exits by companies such as Peak Games, Gram Games, and Rollic have not only drawn international attention but have also created a ripple effect, inspiring a new generation of game studios and founders who drive continued growth and competitiveness in the global market.

Supporting this ecosystem, Türkiye now hosts 13 game-focused venture funds, along with specialized accelerators and incubators tailored to meet the needs of gaming startups. These resources provide critical early-stage funding and strategic guidance, allowing local talent to scale and refine their offerings quickly. As a result, Türkiye is seeing increased foreign interest in acquisitions and partnerships, further establishing the region as a vital contributor to the global gaming industry and a promising environment for investors seeking innovative, high-growth opportunities.

01

TÜRKİYE SNAPSHOT



The biggest game hub in the region

TAKE-OFF



Gaming Startups ⁽¹⁾

844



Gaming Incubators ⁽¹⁾

12



Gaming Accelerators ⁽¹⁾

21



Gaming Clusters ⁽¹⁾

2

SPEED



Fastest Unicorn ⁽²⁾

23 months



Fastest Exit ⁽²⁾
(\$100M+)

21 months

EXPERIENCE



Gaming Only Funds ⁽³⁾

13



Unicorns ⁽²⁾

2



Exits ⁽²⁾
(\$100M+)

5

02

QUICK HISTORY

The Emergence of the VC-Backed Ecosystem

Prior to 2010, Türkiye's startup ecosystem was entirely driven by bootstrapped startups, with no presence of venture capital (VC) firms or angel networks, and only a single Fund of Funds (iVCi) operating in the space. The rapid growth of startups like Peak (later acquired by Zynga), Markafoni (later acquired by Naspers), and Trendyol (later acquired by Alibaba) following external investments in 2009 and 2010 paved the way for the establishment of a VC-backed startup ecosystem in Türkiye.

In the following years, angel networks, VCs, incubators, and accelerator programs began to emerge, gradually shaping the startup ecosystem. This period can be seen as the ecosystem's learning phase, as entrepreneurs, investors, and other stakeholders were still gaining experience and refining their approaches.

One of the most defining misconceptions of this phase was the belief that with Türkiye's large population, the local market would be sufficient for many startups. While smaller countries were forced to globalize from day one, Turkish startups were focused on growing within the domestic market first with the aim of expanding globally only after proving themselves locally. However, there were very few examples for these startups to follow when it came to global expansion.

At the beginning of the 2010s, barely a handful of funded startups existed. However, with the establishment of the first angel network (GBA) and the first VC firm

(212) in 2012, combined with the increasing support for entrepreneurs and investors, the number of investments began to rise year by year. Catalysts such as grants for early-stage startups and tax incentives for angel investors significantly accelerated the growth of the ecosystem. As a result, the total investment volume, which stood at \$20 million in 2010, surged to \$116 million by 2017.

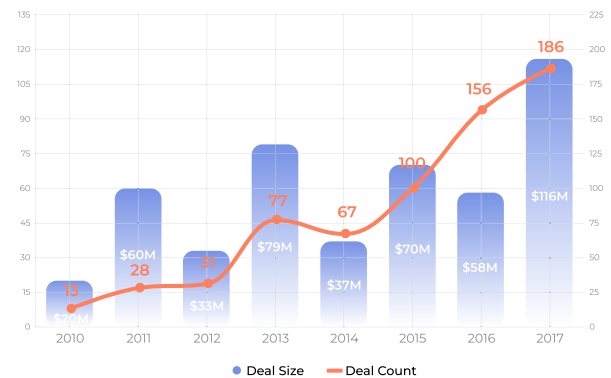


Chart 1 - Angel & VC Deals in Türkiye in the Learning Phase⁽⁴⁾

By the mid-2010s, accelerators and investors began to recognize that globalization was essential, leading to a significant increase in visits and programs focused on Silicon Valley. This shift marked the beginning of efforts to explore and enter new markets, as entrepreneurs sought to expand beyond local boundaries.

The number of incubators, accelerator programs, and co-working spaces grew exponentially during this period.

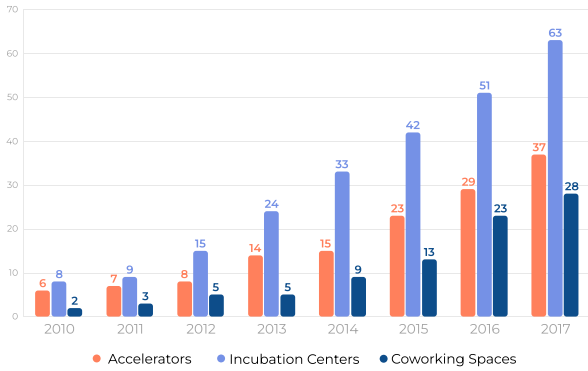


Chart 2- # Accelerators, Incubation Centers, Coworking Spaces in the Learning Era⁽²⁾

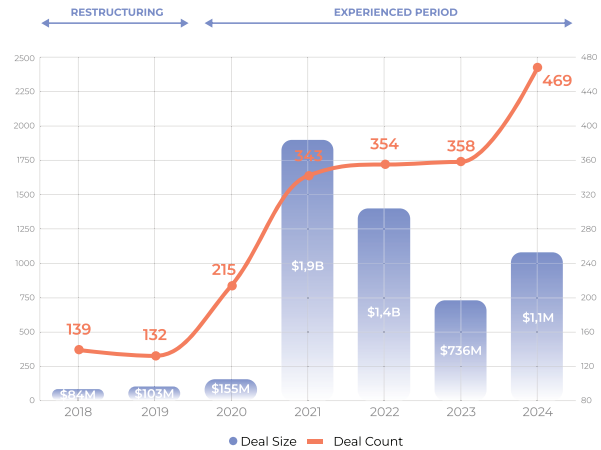


Chart 3- Angel & VC Deals in Türkiye 2018-2024⁽⁴⁾

Restructuring

Following the learning phase, many funds reached the end of their investment cycle without producing a global success story. As a result, 2018 and 2019 saw investors focusing on recovering returns and raising new funds. Despite this, some VCs successfully exited with local champions, facilitating the faster launch of their second funds and maintaining momentum in the ecosystem.

Pandemic

Despite being early in the pandemic, Zynga’s \$1.8 billion acquisition of Peak and the acquisition of 80% of Rollic for \$180 million just 21 months after its founding gave a significant boost to the ecosystem.

As the pandemic intensified, Türkiye, like the rest of the world, experienced an accelerated digital transformation, advancing sectors by 5-6 years. E-commerce, logistics, and gaming industries reached milestones during the lockdown that would have otherwise taken several more years.

In 2021, Getir achieved unicorn status, followed by Dream Games just 23 months after its inception. Hepsiburada’s IPO on Nasdaq and Trendyol’s rise to decacorn status further propelled Türkiye’s startup ecosystem, setting an all-time investment record that year.

Economic Downturn

While the post-pandemic period saw a global shortage of capital and significant drops in valuations, Türkiye’s situation was quite different. There are several reasons for this difference. Valuations in Türkiye did not drop significantly because they had not surged dramatically during the pandemic and remained at reasonable levels. Furthermore, the funding shortage was not felt in the pre-Series A stages at all. This was due to several factors: the introduction of equity-based crowdfunding regulations in 2019, allowing startups to secure financing through crowdfunding; the establishment of three fund of funds between 2020 and 2022 to support VCs; the 2021 regulation allowing R&D firms to accelerate their investments in GSYFs (Venture Capital Investment Funds); and the transformation of the BiGG program from an idea-stage grant initiative into a pre-seed investment fund by the end of 2023, which now invests in nearly 300 idea-stage startups each year. These factors created an abundance of capital in the early stages.

The only similarity Türkiye shares with the global trend was the post-Series A capital shortage, which was also strongly felt locally.

The abundance of seed-stage capital, combined with a more experienced investor base—many of whom with their own unicorn and decacorn success stories—has positioned Türkiye to achieve new milestones in the coming years.

03

A GAMING ECOSYSTEM SUPPORTED BY SUCCESS STORIES

Brief History (2000-2017)

The gaming industry in Türkiye traces its roots back to the early 2000s. At that time, a structured gaming ecosystem was virtually nonexistent, though platforms like Superonline and Mynet hosted early digital games like Backgammon and Okey, playable through Java. These offerings later transitioned to Flash-based formats.

A few pioneering startups began developing mobile games for Symbian and Java devices at this time, though most focused on localizing international titles. Among them was Sobee, a PC game developer founded by Mevlüt Dinç. It later gained significant recognition following its acquisition, cementing its reputation as one of Türkiye's leading game companies from 2000 to 2010. The emergence of Sanalika, an early multiplayer online game reaching millions of users, marked a pivotal moment in the 2010s, showcasing the potential for local industry growth. Its founder subsequently established Gram Games, achieving one of Türkiye's largest gaming exits to date.

Founded in 2010, Peak Games capitalized on the popularity of Facebook games between 2009 and 2012, achieving rapid growth during this period. With the decline of Facebook gaming and the rise of mobile app stores, Peak strategically pivoted to mobile gaming, laying the groundwork for its globally successful games, which now boast hundreds of millions of downloads.

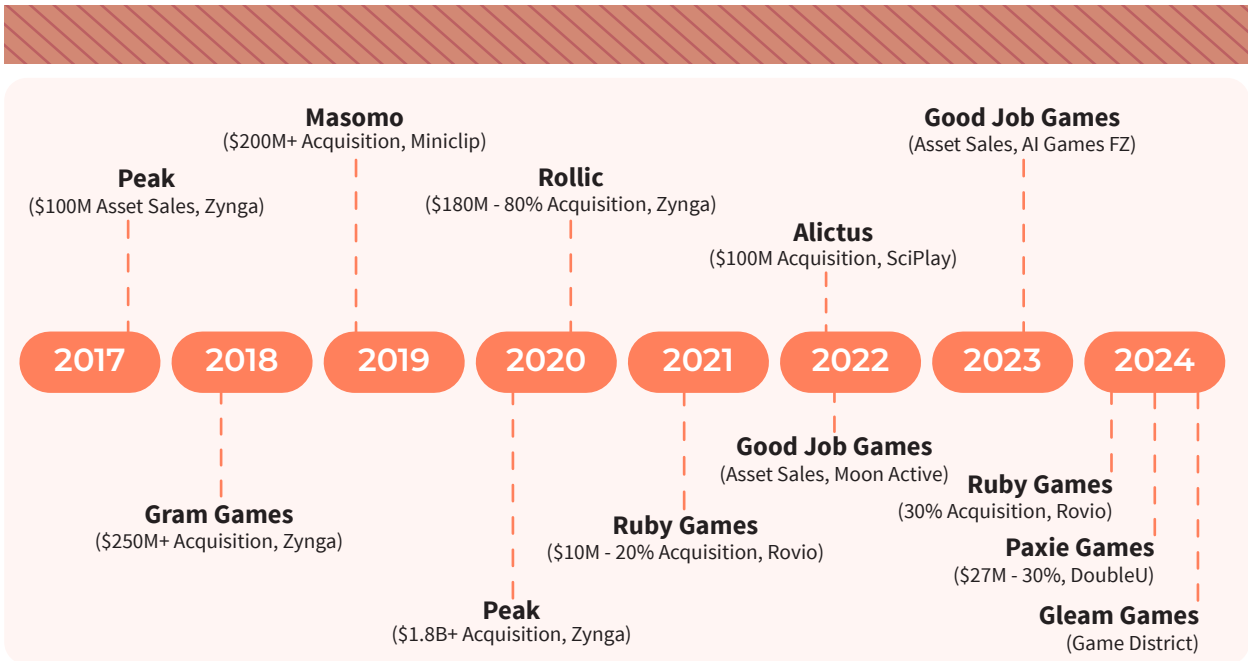
Sidar Şahin, Peak's founder, brought extensive industry experience from his involvement in boxed games,

Symbian, and online games throughout the early 2000s, building a robust foundation for future exits. In summary, the foundations of Türkiye's gaming industry from 2000 to 2017 were shaped by the vision, resilience, and expertise of a few pioneering entrepreneurs whose early efforts catalyzed today's thriving ecosystem.

The Period Beginning with Exit Stories (2017 -)

The acquisitions of Peak's games in 2017, followed by Gram Games in 2018 and Masomo in 2019, accelerated the growth trajectory of Türkiye's gaming industry. By 2020, with a surge in gaming activity driven by the pandemic, engagement levels hit unprecedented highs. Zynga's acquisition of Peak for a record \$1.8 billion, along with its purchase of an 80% stake in Rollic for \$180 million just 21 months post-launch, captured global attention and cemented the industry's importance.

This momentum continued with the acquisition of Ruby Games in 2021 and Alictus in 2022. Despite challenges in early 2022—including the pandemic's end, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, liquidity constraints from the Federal Reserve, and ECB interest rate hikes—the gaming sector demonstrated its resilience. The strategic acquisition of Good Job Games' portfolio in late 2022 and into 2023 underscored the fact that Türkiye's gaming industry remains robust and adaptable amidst global economic shifts.



Timeline 1 - Prominent Acquisitions and Asset Sales (2017-2024)

Gaming Startup Factories Triggered by Success Stories

Following Peak’s record-breaking exit, 108 former employees established 82 startups, 37 of which focused on gaming, accelerating knowledge transfer and ecosystem development. Among these startups, one reached unicorn status within just 23 months, while another secured Türkiye’s largest gaming investment in 2024. Furthermore, another former employee’s startup quickly became one of Türkiye’s top 10 gaming companies, showcasing the ripple effect of Peak’s success on the industry. Another example of the gaming sector’s entrepreneurial impact is seen in the 26 former employees of Gram Games, one of Türkiye’s largest gaming exits, who went on to launch 21 new startups, including 18 focused on gaming.

Former founders and team members from these gaming startups have also transitioned into venture capital, creating game-focused funds. For instance, the angel investors of Rollic—acquired roughly 21 months post-launch—established Ludus Ventures, a fund focused on replicating Rollic’s rapid-growth formula across its investments. Similarly, after Joygame’s acquisition by Netmarble, its founders and chairperson launched Boğaziçi Ventures, now one of Türkiye’s most active gaming investors. This trend highlights the exponential growth of Türkiye’s gaming ecosystem as successful companies evolve and fragment.



Graph 1 - Peak Alumni⁽⁵⁾

While such experience and new success stories have accelerated growth, one of the sector’s core challenges is retaining skilled developers and visual designers in gaming studios and keeping them motivated. To address this, universities in Türkiye have introduced dedicated game design programs at both undergraduate (12 universities) and graduate levels (eight universities), while gaming startups have launched their own talent development programs to cultivate future industry leaders.

04

SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM



Game Dynamics

With its unique dynamics, the gaming industry stands apart from many other sectors. In the hyper-casual game category, for instance, the process involves developing a game within an average of 10-15 days, testing it across several markets, and iterating until it reaches sustainable unit economics. This high-velocity approach yields rapid feedback and results, creating an ever-evolving market when supported by game publishers focused on distributing and scaling these games through the right channels and regions. Financially, publishers provide developers with prepayment and other funding models, fostering a self-sustaining ecosystem. However, studios aiming for self-sufficiency in operations and marketing, with ambitions to grow globally, still require investment to achieve their goals.

For instance, several Turkish gaming startups achieved over \$1 billion in revenue within their first five years, and this has significantly heightened interest among Turkish investors.

With the growing popularity of Türkiye's VCIF (Venture Capital Investment Funds), a venture capital format unique to Türkiye, the past four years have seen the establishment of game-focused funds, and even single-asset single-fund structures created solely to invest in individual gaming ventures.

Increased Investor Appetite

While it may appear that external investment is unnecessary in the gaming ecosystem due to the industry's self-sustaining dynamics, the increasing number of studios aiming to become global gaming giants, coupled with the challenges faced by publishers, has fueled growth and interest on the investor side. This growth is also driven by the gaming sector's ability to generate revenue at a faster rate than many other industries.

Fund	Type
Ace Games	Single Asset Single Fund
DIGIAGE	Accelerator Fund
Game Invest GSYF	VC
Gamecapita GSYF	VC
Games United	Venture Builder + Investor
Joygame Pre-IPO	Single Asset Single Fund
Laton Ventures	VC
Ludus Ventures	VC
Ludus Ventures GSYF	VC
PlayGate Ventures	VC
WePlay GSYF	VC
WePlay Ventures	VC
Youcan Games	Venture Builder + Investor

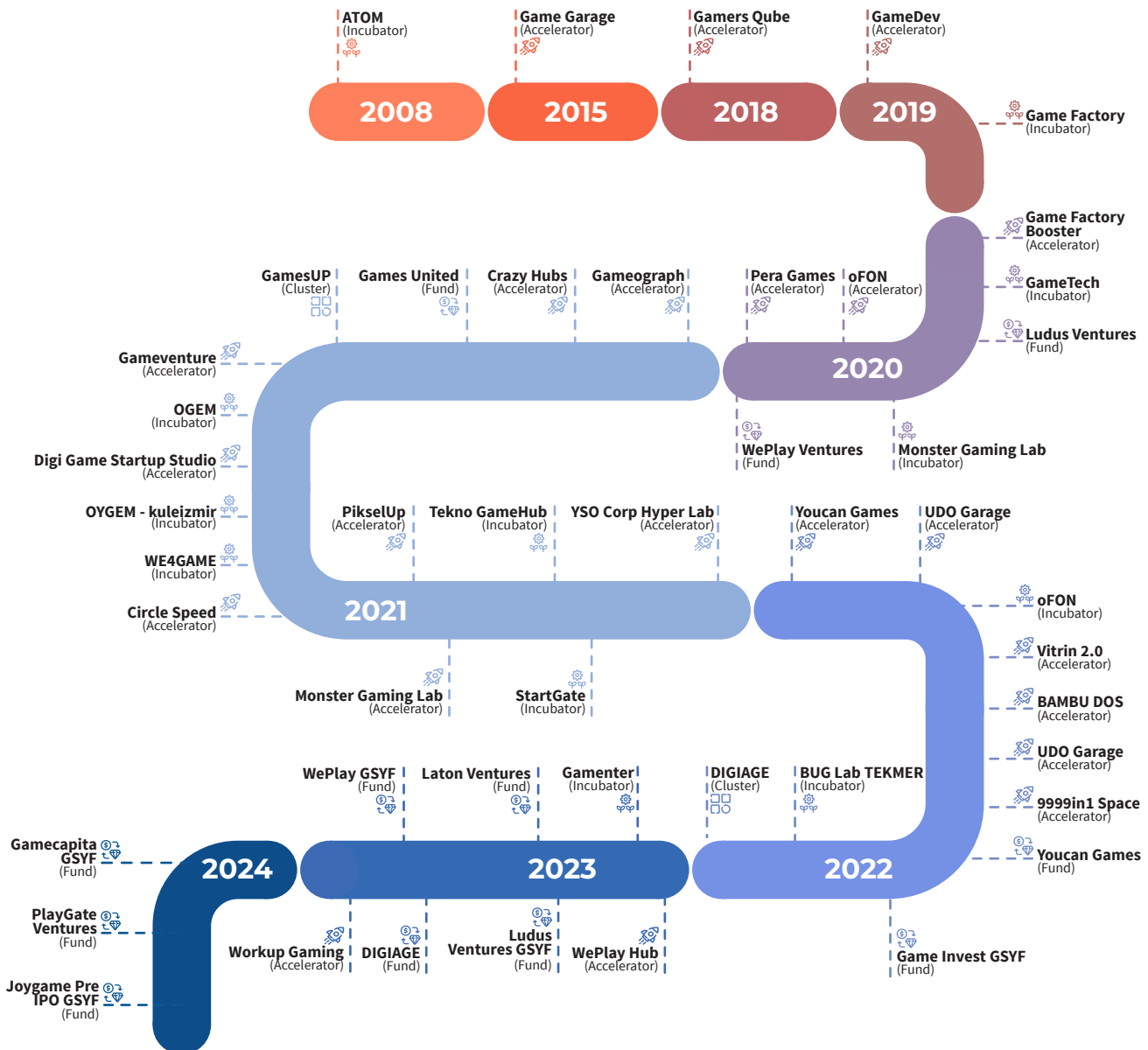
List 1 - Gaming Only Funds in Türkiye⁽³⁾

Government Support

Although there may not appear to be government grants and support exclusively for gaming startups, they can benefit from numerous government incentives. Since the primary market for most gaming startups is the U.S., they qualify for export-oriented incentives, can operate in free-trade zones, and leverage support programs from the Ministry of Trade, TÜBİTAK, and KOSGEB.

Supporting Stakeholders

The journey of organizations supporting the gaming industry, which began with the launch of the ATOM Incubation Center in 2008, gained significant momentum with the Peak Games exit in 2020. Since then, the ecosystem has evolved into a robust network dedicated to gaming, with 12 specialized incubation centers and 21 accelerator programs.



Timeline 2 - Gaming-only Incubators, Accelerators, Funds in Türkiye

05

JOURNEY TO THE TOP

Second Largest Game Hub

The gaming ecosystem in Türkiye developed gradually from the 2000s and gained strong momentum with success stories post-2017. Today, Türkiye is home to 844 active game studios, with 517 in Istanbul, 154 in Ankara, 58 in Izmir, and 115 across other cities.

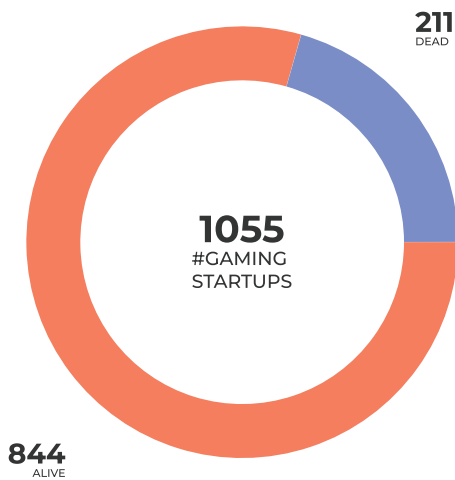


Chart 4 - # Gaming Studios in Türkiye⁽¹⁾

Fifty-five percent of Turkish game studios were established in 2020 or later, underscoring the combined impact of post-2017 success stories and the acceleration triggered by the pandemic. However, by Q1 2022, the end of the pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and corresponding interest rate hikes by the FED and ECB created a global capital shortage, making it harder for gaming startups to access funding.

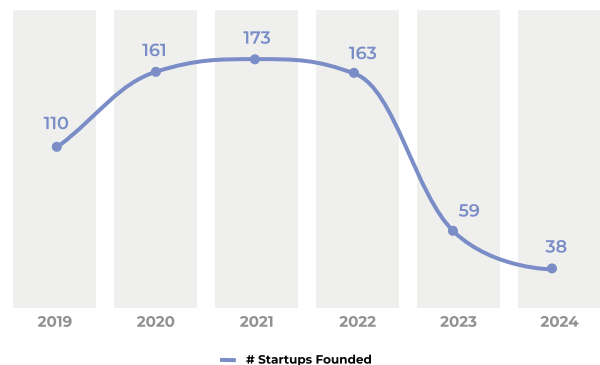


Chart 5 - New Gaming Startups⁽¹⁾

Although the number of new game studios established each year has declined sharply since the end of the pandemic, Istanbul remains the second-largest city in Europe for game studios, hosting 517 active gaming studios—second only to London, which has 733 studios.⁽⁶⁾

It is important to note that over 70% of game studios in Istanbul have fewer than 10 employees. Therefore, rather than focusing solely on the number of studios, the true value lies in the output they generate. To illustrate, Dream Games, founded just five years ago, typifies this impact, ranking in the top 10 global mobile gaming companies by revenue in 2024. This highlights the substantial value being created within Istanbul's gaming ecosystem.

Top Level in Financing

Game investments in Türkiye peaked in 2021 with major funding rounds for Dream Games. Although Spyke Games and Ace Games secured substantial investments in 2022, the total investment volume declined due to global capital shortages following the pandemic. By 2023, the overall investment volume hit a low but still remained higher than pre-pandemic levels. The 46 investments made in 2023 reflect the ecosystem’s resilience and investors’ confidence in the future of gaming. Major funding for Spyke Games, Grand Games and Agave Games in 2024 doubled the total investment volume from the previous year.



Chart 6 - Gaming Deals in Türkiye⁽⁶⁾

It is worth noting that Turkish gaming startups focus heavily on unit economics, particularly LTV (Lifetime Value) and CAC (Customer Acquisition Cost). This focus often enables companies that achieve necessary metrics at low cost to grow without external funding.

Despite significant momentum over the past four years, Türkiye still has a long way to go to reach the scale of the global gaming ecosystem, dominated by the U.S. and China. As the Turkish gaming ecosystem continues to build experience and success stories, the next phase will involve scaling through acquisitions and IPOs.

To achieve this, Türkiye’s game ecosystem must expand beyond hyper-casual gaming, and emerging models like Play-to-Earn and Web3-based games are gaining traction in this direction.

Considering the impressive exit stories to date, the profiles of acquiring companies, the renewed investment momentum in 2024, and the presence of Turkish gaming startups among the top mobile game revenues worldwide, the Turkish gaming ecosystem stands on the brink of creating new, impactful success stories.



List 2 - Most Funded Gaming Startups in Türkiye⁽²⁾

	Acquirer	# Acquisitions
01	ZYNGA	7
02	MINICLIP	1
03	ROVIO	1

List 3 - Top Acquirers of Gaming Startups in Türkiye⁽¹⁾

06

WHY TÜRKİYE AND WHY NOW?



Interviews



We believe the mobile gaming market will continue to grow, capturing an even larger share of the gaming industry. Casual mobile games, in particular, are evolving into lifestyle apps that people engage everyday rather than traditional session-based games. The Turkish gaming ecosystem is adapting well to this shift by focusing on the perfect execution of casual and hybrid-casual games.

While these games are designed for everyday users, many leading titles in the market still fall short on quality. Turkish studios have consistently proven their ability to deliver top-tier products by executing proven game mechanics across all casual/hybrid-casual genres.

Today, mobile users spend an average of 2 to 5 hours daily on their phones, interacting with many various types of content. Unlike midcore and hardcore games, casual games don't just compete with other games, they also compete with social apps like TikTok,



Barış Özistek

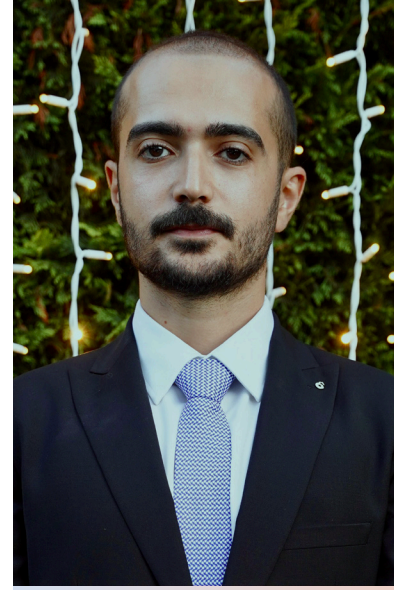
CEO & Managing Partner at
Boğaziçi Ventures

X and Instagram. With people dividing their time between entertainment and social platforms, casual games present incredibly valuable opportunities for advertisers through in-game ads. At Cypher, we are committed to innovating within the casual match-3 puzzle genre, the largest segment in casual gaming. In recent years, Türkiye has produced globally successful games in this space, such as Royal Match, Toon Blast and Toy Blast, setting the stage for further innovation in the space.

Türkiye's success in gaming stems from a wealth of skilled developers and artists who deeply understand what it takes to create engaging player experiences. Whenever we travel abroad, we're often asked, "How are there so many great match-3 developers in Türkiye?" Türkiye has truly become a hub for match-3 innovation, and new developers continue to build on this expertise. We believe this momentum will only grow stronger in the coming decade.

As one of the most active venture capitalists in the gaming industry, we continued to invest in promising early-stage to pre-IPO game companies throughout 2024. While scaling and achieving profitability became increasingly challenging for mobile game companies worldwide, the Turkish game ecosystem has emerged as a key player, thanks to its unique strengths in cost-effective content creation and rapid execution. This is largely attributable to a highly skilled and hardworking talent pool, which offers competitive advantages over other global ecosystems.

Turkish game developers have demonstrated remarkable agility, quickly adapting to shifting market dynamics and identifying new opportunities. In 2024, PC games experienced a notable resurgence, with many Turkish studios producing highly successful titles that gained traction across diverse markets, including China and the United States. Another key strength of Turkish creators is their ability to capitalize on trends from both Western and Eastern markets. This adaptability has become a significant competitive advantage compared to ecosystems



Anıl Şimşek

CEO at Cypher Games

with established histories but increasing difficulties in creating profitable games. As a result, Türkiye has attracted considerable attention from Asian venture capital firms and strategic investors, who are actively exploring opportunities within the ecosystem.

The Turkish game industry is no longer limited to PC and mobile game development studios. Opportunities have expanded to include game publishers and game technology companies, reflecting the ecosystem's maturation and diversity.

A pivotal development in 2024 was the decision by Türkiye's Capital Markets Board to simplify the process for game and innovative technology companies to go public. This regulatory milestone is expected to pave the way for the first publicly listed game company on the Istanbul Stock Exchange in 2025, potentially boosting investor interest in the Turkish market.

In summary, Türkiye's game ecosystem has reached an impressive level of maturity, driven by innovation, adaptability, government support and a forward-looking regulatory environment.

Emerging stronger and more resilient after overcoming significant challenges in recent years, Türkiye's gaming ecosystem has captured global attention with its success stories. With the elimination of paper hands caused by various factors, the sector has gained remarkable momentum in 2024, solidifying its position as a global hub for innovation and talent. At the same time, Türkiye continues to attract global venture capital firms and publishers seeking M&A opportunities, while its creative and innovative games amplify its influence on the global stage.

Long recognized as the "Silicon Valley of Mobile Games", Türkiye had already achieved significant success in the mobile gaming industry by 2024, with multiple high-value exits, including unicorn companies like Peak Games. This success was further reinforced by Dream Games, whose globally popular mobile game, Royal Match, has become one of the most played games worldwide.



Ceren Sayar

Head of Digital Banking at İşbank

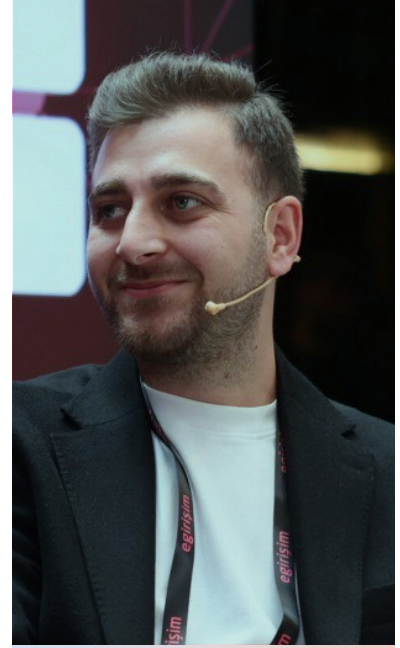
In 2024, Türkiye entered a new era with its emergence in the PC/Console category. While high-value exits in mobile gaming continue to make headlines, the rise of indie studios gaining international recognition signals a significant turning point. For instance, Motion Blur Studio's AAA title, Black State, and Curve Animation's Liar's Bar—the first Turkish game to win Steam's "Most Innovative Game Award"—are standout examples of this transformation.

This success is underpinned by Türkiye's competitive advantages, including an affordable talent pool, cultural diversity, and robust government support. Tax incentives, grants, and favourable investment taxation policies have created fertile ground for startups to scale rapidly, laying the foundation for long-term growth.

Türkiye's gaming ecosystem is not just evolving; it is setting the stage for a future where innovation, creativity, and global competitiveness redefine its role in the industry.

Türkiye's gaming ecosystem has rapidly become a hub for innovation and creativity, driven by a young, tech-savvy population and supportive government policies. At Workup Gaming, supported by İşbank, we are proud to have contributed to this growth through two accelerator cycles, empowering studios with mentorship, resources, and global connections. These efforts highlight Türkiye's rising role as a launchpad for global gaming success.

Türkiye has earned its reputation as the "Silicon Valley of Mobile Games" through remarkable achievements like Peak Games' high-profile exit and Dream Games' global phenomenon, Royal Match. In 2024, the ecosystem has grown beyond mobile gaming, with Turkish indie studios making significant strides internationally. For example, Motion Blur Studio's Black State demonstrates Türkiye's capacity for AAA-level game development, while Curve Animation's Liar's Bar broke new ground as the first Turkish



Burak Yılmaz

CEO at WePlay Ventures

game to win Steam's prestigious "Most Innovative Game Award." These milestones underscore the ecosystem's evolution, creativity, and potential for global impact.

Türkiye's advantages include a cost-efficient and highly skilled talent pool, cultural diversity that fosters innovative storytelling, robust government support through grants and tax incentives, and a strategic location bridging Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. These strengths have drawn the attention of global publishers, investors, and M&A opportunities, positioning Türkiye not just as a participant but as a key driver of the gaming ecosystem's future.

As Workup Gaming, we are excited to be part of this extraordinary journey, empowering game developers and paving the way for Türkiye to continue shaping the global gaming landscape.

The Türkiye gaming ecosystem has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. While the rapid success in the hyper-casual game genre initially fueled industry growth, the market quickly became saturated, posing challenges for developers. However, this shift created new opportunities for Türkiye's game developers to pivot toward more complex and sustainable projects on platforms like Steam, PC, and console.

Beyond major studio acquisitions and large-scale investments, several standout examples highlight this shift. Motion Blur's Black State game trailer generated significant excitement, offering players the thrill of a locally developed AAA title. Additionally, the locally made game Liar's Bar won the "Most Innovative Gameplay" award at the 2024 Steam Awards, showcasing the creative potential of Türkiye's developers on a global stage. Another remarkable success came from Nokta

Games' *Supermarket Simulator*, which sold over 3 million copies in less than a year despite being in early access, breaking sales records and proving the commercial viability of games developed in Türkiye beyond mobile platforms.

At Digiage, we recognized this transformation early and adapted our strategy accordingly. In 2023, five out of six investments we made were in teams developing games for the Steam platform. In 2024, we continue this momentum as Türkiye's most active investment fund, further strengthening our support for the gaming ecosystem. Türkiye's gaming industry is rapidly adapting to market shifts and is well on its way to becoming a major global player with innovative and sustainable projects.



Emre Yıldız

Digiage Director at
Bilişim Vadisi



Görkem Türk

Founding Partner at
Laton Ventures

The Turkish gaming ecosystem has experienced significant growth in recent years, and became a global gaming hub. A strong foundation has been established by pioneering companies, fostering a supportive environment for emerging studios. This has attracted top-tier talent from both academia and other sectors, eager to contribute to the industry's continued development.

The ecosystem in Türkiye is currently characterized by a shift towards hybrid-casual games, offering developers a balanced approach to monetization and a more agile development process. Although competition is intensifying, Turkish developers have continuously demonstrated resilience and innovation, particularly in areas like the puzzle genre.

With a strong talent pool, a supportive environment, and a focus on emerging trends, the Turkish gaming ecosystem presents a compelling opportunity for global

investors. The focus on innovation, coupled with a growing emphasis on the involvement of innovative elements like social features and AI, positions Turkish developers at the forefront of the evolving gaming landscape.

As Laton Ventures, the momentum of the Turkish gaming ecosystem and the position that Türkiye has secured in the global gaming market drive our passion. We recently closed our first fund with 50 million USD and became Türkiye's biggest gaming fund. Within a year after we incorporated Laton, we are thrilled to see that our portfolio startups, such as Grand Games, ranked among the most invested gaming startups of Türkiye. We will continue to support the best teams who will create the next generation of gaming unicorns of Türkiye.

The Turkish gaming ecosystem has marked 2024 with transformative achievements that showcase our industry's growing global influence. The GamesUP community, now home to over 230 companies, more than 15 strategic partners, and 11,000+ professionals, represents the collaborative spirit driving our sector forward. This dynamic ecosystem, comprising nearly half of Türkiye's gaming industry, has reached a combined valuation of 1.2 billion dollars - a testament to our collective potential.

This year's strategic partnerships have significantly elevated our global position. Motion Blur's collaboration with NVIDIA and Supergears Games' alliance with Unity demonstrate how Turkish gaming studios are evolving from content creators to technology innovators. These partnerships have opened new pathways for technology transfer and market access, setting benchmarks for future industry collaborations.



Rina Onur

Co-Founder & CEO at
Spyke Games

A pivotal development in 2024 has been the establishment of DOYEB (Digital Game Developers Association). This professional organization addresses the industry's growing needs, from intellectual property protection to international collaborations, and from standardization to collective rights management. Our ongoing dialogue with international organizations like WIPO strengthens Turkish gaming companies' position in the global market, ensuring sustainable growth for years to come.

The ecosystem's future rests on three fundamental pillars: our comprehensive ecosystem approach, strategic global partnerships, and professional organization framework. Together, these elements create a solid foundation for continued growth and innovation in Türkiye's gaming industry, positioning us as a key player in the global gaming landscape.

Türkiye's mobile gaming ecosystem continues to thrive, with strong growth in casual and hybrid-casual markets. While new game studios are emerging rapidly, the true momentum lies in the established companies and their category-leading games. Larger games are scaling further, capturing more market share, driven by innovative in-game features and effective Live-Ops strategies that enhance user retention and engagement.

Türkiye is globally recognized as a hub for mobile game development due to its highly skilled talent pool, deep technical expertise, and high-quality game production standards. Local teams consistently create polished games with international appeal. However, scaling these games to global success remains a key challenge, largely due to the substantial marketing and user acquisition budgets required to compete internationally.



İsa Turgut İnci

Deputy General Manager at
YTU Yıldız Technopark

Despite these hurdles, Türkiye holds significant promise. Its vibrant ecosystem, coupled with increasing global liquidity and market accessibility, positions game studios with the right resources for rapid growth. Notably, the puzzle genre continues to see innovation, further cementing Türkiye's leadership in this space.

Looking forward, Türkiye's gaming ecosystem is poised for exceptional achievements. With continued investment in talent, infrastructure, and marketing, the emergence of at least three gaming unicorns within the next decade is highly plausible. By combining creative excellence with strategic scaling efforts, Turkish studios can secure a dominant position in the global gaming industry.

The efforts of ODTÜ TEKNOKENT towards the development of the national gaming industry began in 2008 with the launch of the Animation Technologies and Game Development Center – ATOM, the first pre-incubation center in Türkiye focused on digital games and animation. The center, which was launched in 2008 with a capacity of 30 people, has also started providing support to incubation entrepreneurs with its increased capacity, test laboratories and studios.

In 2024, ATOM received a record number of applications, marking a significant milestone. This demonstrates ATOM's strengthened position as a leading game development hub.

Currently, ATOM supports 8 companies and 21 teams driving creativity and innovation, with over 50 graduate game companies in the ODTÜ TEKNOKENT ecosystem. Türkiye's digital gaming sector, which has recently thrived in mobile gaming, is expected to achieve further success in

2025 with new PC and console games. While mobile games drive 49% of growth, PC and console entrepreneurs are gaining momentum through diversified revenue and investments. This is clearly seen in the fact that more than 90% of the teams applying to ATOM in 2024 are specifically operating in these areas.

In response to these global trends, ATOM continuously enhances its training and mentorship programs, contributing to the developers in its ecosystem becoming pioneers of innovations in the industry.

Additionally, ODTÜ TEKNOKENT reinforces the gaming industry through strategic investments, notably via Invest101 GSYF, accelerating growth and innovation. With the global gaming market projected to reach \$213.3 billion by 2027, ATOM and ODTÜ TEKNOKENT aim to position Türkiye as a global gaming leader through support, investment, and talent development.



Serdar R. Alemdar

CEO at ODTÜ TEKNOKENT



Volkan Biçer

Partner at Ludus Ventures

Türkiye has rapidly become a rising star in the mobile gaming world. The 2020 acquisitions of Peak and Rollic by Zynga, along with many others in the industry, were defining moments, driving a wave of investments and turning the country into a dynamic center for innovative startups. Being an early investor in Rollic Games, I've been lucky to witness this transformation firsthand. Since our Rollic exit in 2020, I have continued to actively invest in Ludus Ventures and this year, we saw the first exit from our fund with Paxie which proves to be an early indicator of many more successes to come. Alongside the exits, in 2024, companies like Agave Games and Cypher Games have attracted significant investments, with \$18 million and \$10 million raised, highlighting the growing confidence in Türkiye's mobile gaming ecosystem and its opportunities on the horizon.

On top of that, beyond casual gaming, we are seeing good early traction in other subgenres of the mobile gaming category. Also, the future looks bright for Türkiye, with promising trends emerging in the PC and console verticals. The rise of PC indie games could signal another wave of opportunity, adding new dimensions to the gaming ecosystem. Outcomes are expected to grow exponentially, and we are committed to providing support through Leus, which we established in late 2024, in addition to Ludus Ventures. With Leus, our goal is to broaden our focus and provide debt financing solutions supporting young talents and fostering the growth of the ecosystem.

As the industry evolves, there's no doubt that Türkiye will continue to be a key player in shaping the future of global gaming. We're excited to continue playing a part in shaping that future.

07

APPENDIX

Disclaimer

The information provided in this report is general and does not constitute financial, tax, or legal advice. Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this report, the editors and authors accept no responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions contained herein. Financial, tax, or legal advice should always be sought before engaging in any transaction or taking any legal action based on the information provided. Should you have any queries regarding the issues raised and/or about other topics, please contact the authors of this report.

All information in this report is up to date as of January 10, 2025

Key Terms and Definitions

Startup: A product-focused private tech company with lots of blurry elements like revenue model, customer and product. Tailor-made solution providers are not considered as startups.

Corporate Venture: A subsidiary of an established company created to launch a new product or service

Venture Capital Funds (VC): VC funds are structures that invest in startups and receive minority shares in return. Investment periods are limited and generally five to six years. The goal is to sell the shares at much higher prices when the fund expires.

Corporate Venture Capital (CVC): CVC funds are the same as VC structures, except this fund is financed by a single company. (e.g. Intel Capital)

Pre-Seed Investment: The initial round of funding used to build and demonstrate the viability of a product idea. Pre-seed round size in Türkiye is usually less than \$50 thousand.

Seed Investment: The funding round used to reach product/market fit. The startups at this stage have a working product and some paying customers with some early metrics. Seed round size in Türkiye is generally \$200 thousand.

Series A: The funding round used to scale up a startup. Startups at this stage have achieved product/market fit and have repeat customers. Series A round size in Türkiye is generally \$1 million in Türkiye. It's usually the first round of financing that a startup receives from a venture capital firm.

Series B, C, D, E...: Funding rounds made by VCs with higher valuations compared to the preceding round.

Convertible Debt: This is an “in-between” round of funding to help companies hold over until they want to raise their next round of funding. When they raise the next round, this note “converts” with a discount at the price of the new round.

Growth Equity: This is the type of investment for growing well-established, less-risky businesses. The company does not have to be profitable. The firm’s minority or majority shares may be acquired by the fund.

Private Equity: A private equity round is led by a private equity firm and represents a late-stage financing round. At this stage, the firm has already moved beyond generating revenue and has developed profitable margins along with a stable cash flow.

Equity Crowdfunding: A method of raising collective funds through online platforms where individual users can invest in companies in exchange for equity. Typically, these platforms allow investors to contribute smaller amounts, often through syndicates. In such syndicates, a lead investor evaluates the investment opportunity and pools funds from a group of individual backers.

Corporate Round: A corporate round occurs when a company, rather than a venture capital firm, invests in another company.

SAFE: Alternative to convertible notes. An investor makes a cash investment in a company but gets company stock at a later date in connection with a specific event.

Exit: The method by which an investor and/or entrepreneur

intends to “exit” their investment in a startup. Common options are IPO and buyout from another company.

Primary Transaction: Transaction or funding type where investors buy equities directly from the company issuing them.

Secondary Transaction: Transaction or funding type where investors buy equities from the existing shareholders.

Cash Out: Shareholders who sell their shares personally earn money as a result of this second transaction

Buyout: The purchase of a controlling share in a company

Unicorn: Startup valued at over \$1 billion

Decacorn: Company valued at over \$10 billion

Ticket Size: Average investment amount made by an investor.

Term sheet: A non-binding agreement that outlines the major aspects of an investment to be made in a startup.

Due diligence: A comprehensive analysis conducted by an investor to audit and verify all relevant facts and figures of a potential investment.

VCIF/GSYF (Venture Capital Investment Fund): A fund structure established under the supervision of the Capital Markets Board of Türkiye and based in Türkiye.

VCIT/GSYO (Venture Capital Investment Trust): A company structure established under the supervision of the Capital Markets Board of Türkiye to invest in startups.

Centaur: Company with \$100 million in annual recurring revenue.

References

1. Startups.watch Gaming Snapshot v4.1
2. Startups.watch Data - January 10, 2025
3. Startups.watch Data January 10, 2025 , and Capital Markets Board of Türkiye Data. Single Asset Single Funds included.
4. Startups.watch Year in Review 2024 Report
5. Startup Factories v0.2 Report
6. The UK Games Map Data, Crunchbase Data, Startups.watch Data - January 10, 2025

2024

THANK YOU!

The State of Turkish Gaming Ecosystem



INVEST IN
TÜRKIYE



Startups Watch Istanbul, Türkiye

startups.watch
support@startups.watch

Serkan Ünsal | Founder, CEO

The State of Turkish Gaming Ecosystem 2024
Version: v2.0 // January 10, 2025

Download

Direct Link : <https://invest.tr/gaming-2024>



Scan QR
to download