

Helios Announces Hire of Financial Services and Fintech Industry Expert

23 January 2023. Helios Investment Partners (“Helios”), the leading Africa-focused private investment firm, is pleased to announce that Elias Yazbeck has joined the firm as Managing Director, Financial Services and Fintech. This addition to Helios’ investment team demonstrates the significance of the financial services and fintech investment opportunity across the continent and reaffirms Helios’ commitment to playing a leadership role in the sector.

Elias brings to the firm a wealth of experience in building, transforming, and scaling financial services products and businesses across both developed and emerging markets. Most recently, he served as Group Director, Head of Growth at VEON, where he was responsible for driving the company’s strategy to identify and scale digital ventures across its operating markets. Prior to joining VEON, Elias was Facebook’s Head of Finserv Partnership and Market Development for EMEA, focusing on enabling payment acceptance and launching new commerce and payment experiences across the region. He also held leadership positions at Mastercard, advising private and public entities across the Middle East and Africa on their financial services and payment strategies, prior to which he advised financial services institutions as a management consultant. Elias’ appointment by Helios as an industry expert follows that of [Guy Willner as Managing Director, Digital Infrastructure](#) in December 2022.

Since Helios’ was founded nearly two decades ago, the firm has backed growing financial services and fintech businesses across the continent during an extraordinary period of African innovation which continues to build momentum. Examples of Helios-backed companies in this space include Interswitch, Fawry, Crown Agents Bank, TPAY, Equity Bank, Africa Specialty Risks and Thunes. Helios provides its portfolio companies not only growth capital and expertise, but access to its networks and guidance on setting and adhering to the highest ESG standards. For example, Helios has helped its companies to diversify their products and services and expand geographically; to transform boards, bringing in global experts; and to prepare companies to tap the public markets.

Importantly, these businesses promote financial inclusion which drives economic growth, enabling the poorest and most vulnerable in society to step out of poverty. The increased access for individuals and businesses to the local economy increases gender equality and creates significant economic opportunities through access to financial products and services for individuals, taxation for governments, increased revenues for financial service providers and ultimately stronger returns for investors.

Tope Lawani, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Helios Investment Partners, commented:

“Our investment strategy is centered on opportunities driven by the dual long-term secular trends of demographics/urbanization and technology/innovation that we believe will power economic growth in Africa over the coming decades. Elias brings significant industry experience to our team that will reinforce our strong position as a partner of choice for growing financial services and fintech businesses, and as a trusted counterparty for future buyers of our market-leading companies.”

Providing access to financial services and financial technology is consistent with our mission to generate globally competitive investment returns and create positive socio-economic outcomes by building profitable, value-creating and socially responsible businesses. By doing so, we contribute, at scale, to sustainable development in Africa, helping to deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We create economic opportunity in our businesses and impact even more lives through supply chains and increased capital flows to the continent.”

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About Helios Investment Partners

Established in 2004, Helios Investment Partners is the largest Africa-focused private investment firm, with a record that spans creating start-ups to providing expanding companies with growth capital and expertise. The firm is led and managed by a predominantly African team based in London, Paris, Lagos and Nairobi, with the language skills and cultural affinity to engage with local entrepreneurs, managers and intermediaries on the continent. Helios leverages its local and global networks to create attractive proprietary investment opportunities, with an emphasis on building market leaders in core economic sectors and driving performance through a highly engaged approach to portfolio operations. The firm's unique combination of a deep knowledge of the African operating environment, a singular commitment to the region and a proven capability to manage complexity, is reflected in its diverse portfolio of growing, market-leading businesses and its position as a partner of choice in Africa. Helios is the second mainstream private equity firm globally, and the largest emerging markets-focused private equity firm, to receive B Corp certification. B Corp status recognizes the firm's long-standing commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices.