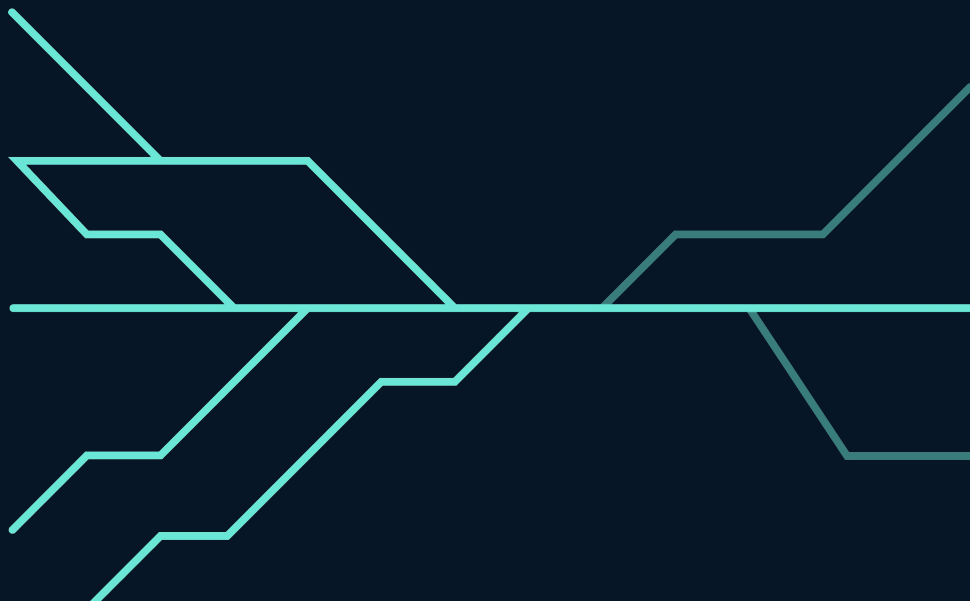


2023 Q3: Glimpse of Normalization



Highlights:

2023YTD saw the lowest deal value activity since the pandemic period

Q1–Q3'20

Q1–Q3'21

Q1–Q3'22

Q1–Q3'23

Private Investments

\$4.7B

262 Deals

\$8.8B

405 Deals

\$9.3B

430 Deals

\$2.3B

325 Deals

M&As*

\$8.5B

144 Deals

\$28.5B

241 Deals

\$36.2B

196 Deals

\$8.5B

94 Deals

Public Offerings

\$9.6B

53 Deals

\$21.4B

61 Deals

\$3.5B

19 Deals







\$4.0B

30 Deals

Note: (*) closed transactions only, excluding the acquisition of Activision Blizzard by Microsoft for \$68.7B announced in Q1'22 and closed in Q4'23

Key Closed Transactions to Date

M&As

Target	Buyer	
Public Takeover		
 ACTIVISION BLIZZARD	 Microsoft	\$68 700m
 ROVIO	 SEGA	\$783m
 SciPlay	 LIGHT & WONDER	\$422m

Control M&As

 SCOPELY	 SAVVY GAMES GROUP	\$4 900m
 TECHLAND	 Tencent 腾讯	Undisclosed
 Magic Leap		\$450m

Minority M&As

 NEXON		\$122m
 ByteDance		\$100m

Private Investments

Target	Key Investor	
Early-stage VC		
 BELIEVER	 Lightspeed	\$55m
 Proof of Play	 10T HOLDINGS	\$54m
	 andreessen horowitz	\$33m
	 GREENOAKS CAPITAL PARTNERS	







Late-stage VC

 VSPD		\$265m
 CANDIVORE	 HAVELI	\$100m
 Sereno Games	 GRIFFIN	\$90m
	 NetEase Games	

Corporate

 Heynext		\$30m
 NODWIN GAMING		\$28m
 xterio		\$15m

Public Offerings

PIPE	
 bilibili	\$409m
 EMBRACER GROUP	\$183m
 Nazara	\$61m
Fixed Income	
 T2	\$1 000m
 Keywords STUDIOS	\$400m
 POPREACH	\$115m

Private Investments: getting back to pre-COVID levels

– Dealmaking activity has fallen from record heights during 2021–22 as the market slows, and the investment landscape has witnessed a notable downturn since 2023.

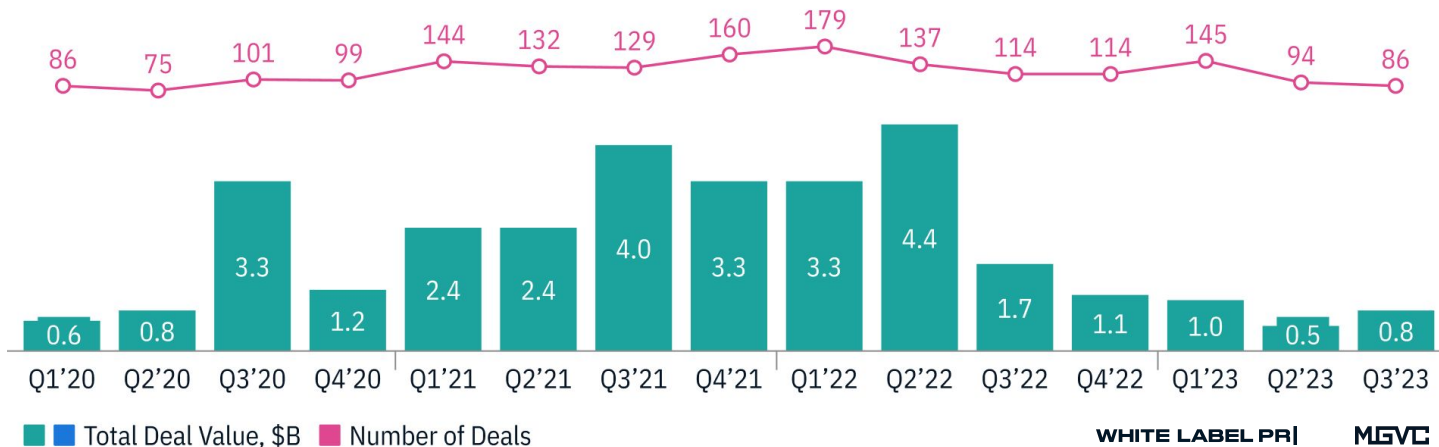
– YTD 2023 capital raised by gaming companies was 4x times lower than avg. of 2021–22 during the same period (\$2.3B vs. ~\$9.1B), with the number of deals shrinking by ~23%.

– Late-stage rounds continue to experience compression, partially explained by the drop in follow-up investment rounds and uncertain exit perspectives in the current market.

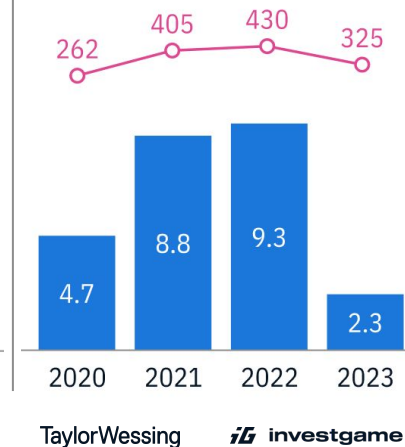
– Early-stage rounds have been less affected by macro-volatility, as reflected in the number of deals, which stay mainly in line with the prior periods at pre-COVID levels.

– The challenging macroeconomic and gaming market environment have notably affected investors’ appetite, shifting investment focuses and making investors more selective with funding new ventures. Nevertheless, the market seems to stabilize and may see further growth in the coming year as Corporate VCs become more active and look for new growth opportunities.

Corporate & VC Investment Activity



Q1–Q3 by Year



M&As: moderate dealmaking activity with long-term growth prospects

– Beginning in 2023, the M&A activity witnessed a notable decrease, with total exit value approaching \$8.5B, 3.8x times below avg. amount of the previous two years.

– The main contributors, accounting for over 75% of the overall value, were acquisitions of Scopely by Savvy Games Group (\$4.9B), a public takeover of Rovio by SEGA (~\$0.8B),

and acquisition of Techland by Tencent (undisclosed).

– The M&A market in 2023 is showing results significantly below the high values of 2021 and 2022. This trend excludes the notable completion of the Activision Blizzard acquisition for \$68.7B in Oct’23, a deal announced in Jan’22. Despite the recent slowdown, it’s essential to recognize

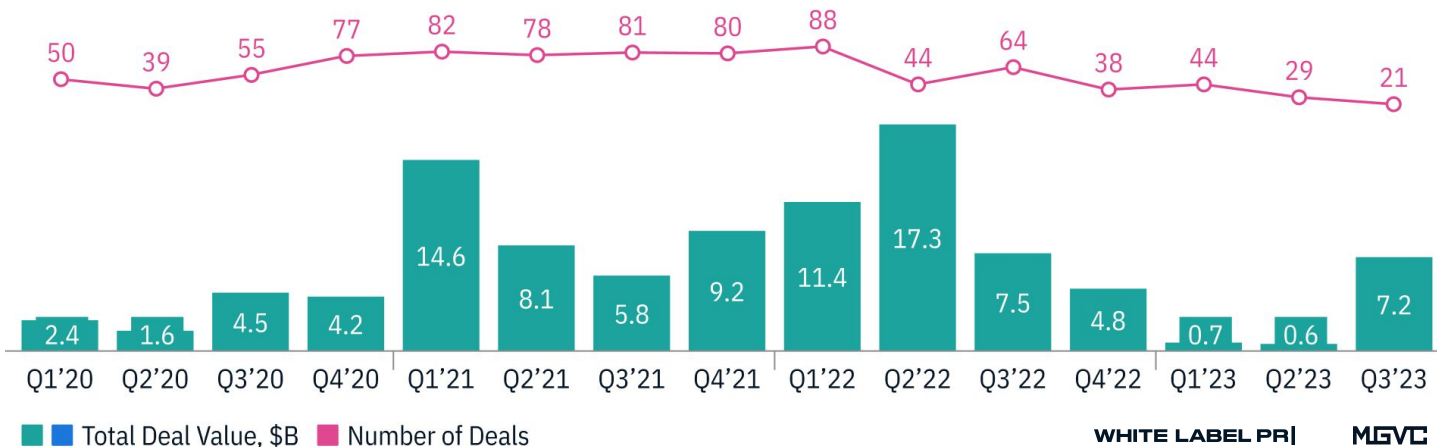
the sector’s structural growth when viewed over a longer time horizon:

1. Massive unspent dry powder of private equity investors looking to get a presence or increase allocation to the entertainment market.
2. Large cash piles on balance sheets and stabilizing stock prices of strategic investors,

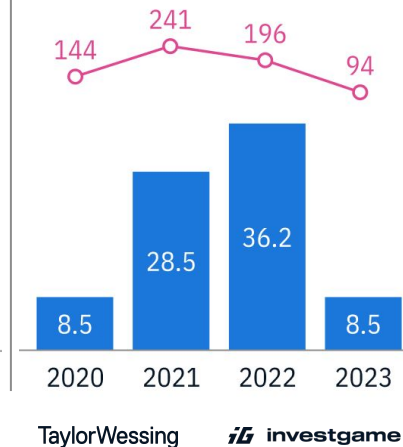
which have enough gunpowder to drive further inorganic growth.

3. Much stronger Early-stage funding environment vs. five years ago, with many new gaming-specialized VCs and CVCs (Krafton, NetEase, Riot) deploying capital into new ventures and creating new unicorns.

Closed M&A Activity



Q1-Q3 by Year



Public Offerings: remain quiet, with the IPO window remaining closed

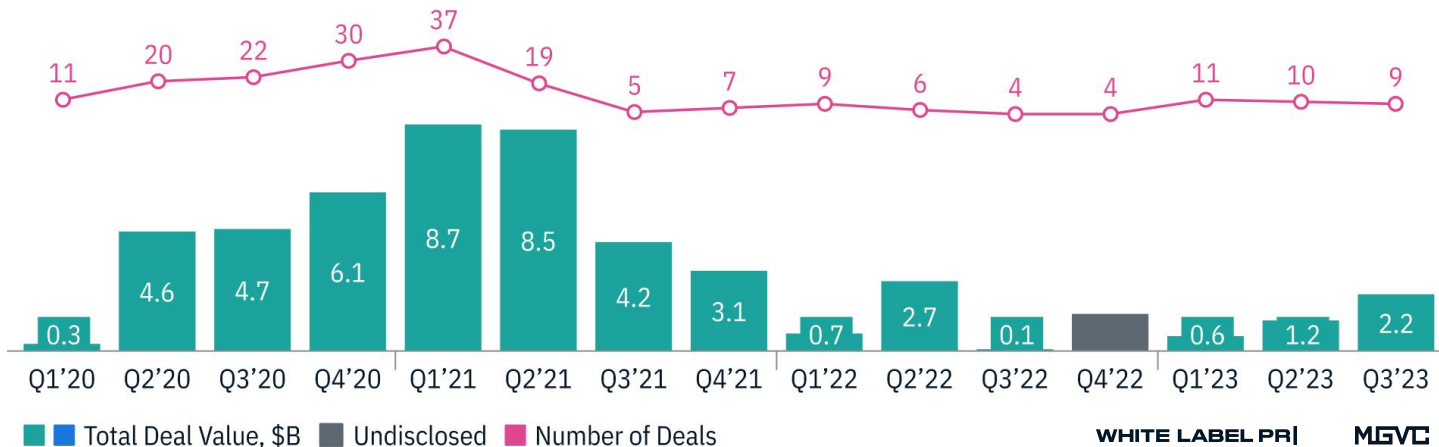
— Excluding AppLovin’s \$1.5B loan refinancing, Public Offerings activity remains the weakest area of the entertainment industry with a ~29% YoY decline in Q1–Q3, with 2023 on track to be the worst year amid the increasingly harsh conditions.

— Higher-for-longer interest rates, the mixed performance of recent US-listed largest IPOs (e.g., Arm, Klaviyo, Instacart), and struggling public market valuations of recently listed gaming comps have raised questions about entertainment IPO prospects in the nearest future.

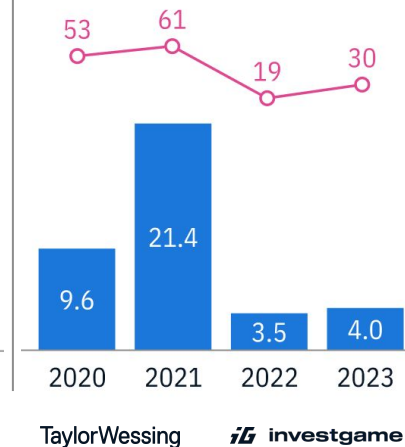
— Since 2022, the gaming industry hasn’t seen any meaningful size public listings, except for Azerion (current market cap of ~\$0.1B vs. initial \$1.2B), which recently sold its Youda games portfolio to Playtika and FaZe clan, which recently has been acquired for ~\$18m (vs. \$0.7B valuation at listing).

— To date, the most notable public offering and fixed-income transactions have been AppLovin (\$1.5B loan refinancing), Take-Two (\$1B senior notes), Keywords (\$0.4B credit facility), and Bilibili (\$0.4B secondary equity offering).

Public Offerings Activity



Q1–Q3 by Year



Gaming

Deals with targets represented
by video game publishers and developers

iG investgame

Highlights: getting through challenging times

Q1–Q3'20

Q1–Q3'21

Q1–Q3'22

Q1–Q3'23

Private Investments

\$2.8B

117 Deals

\$4.8B

215 Deals

\$3.6B

114 Deals

\$0.7B

135 Deals

M&As*

\$7.0B

93 Deals

\$25.6B

150 Deals

\$27.2B

120 Deals

\$7.8B

64 Deals

Public Offerings

\$6.8B

36 Deals

\$13.8B

40 Deals

\$3.0B

12 Deals

\$3.5B

20 Deals

Note: (*) closed transactions only, excluding the acquisition of Activision Blizzard by Microsoft for \$68.7B announced in Q1'22 and closed in Q4'23

Early-stage Gaming: moderate seed activity and fewer outsized Series A rounds

— Although Early-stage investment activity is still below 2021–22 levels in value and volume terms, there is a positive dynamic compared to the pre-COVID period.

— Pre-seed and Seed rounds have remained steadfast, while Series A deals have decreased by 2.6x compared to the average number of deals in 2021–22 (12 vs. 31).

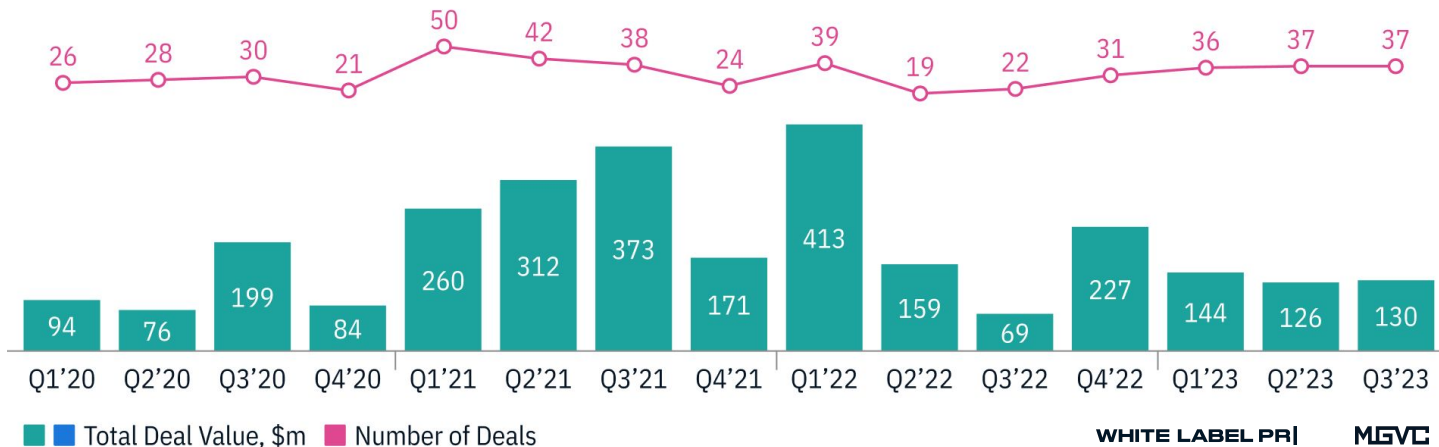
— The number of large-size deals (\$10m+) has significantly dropped to only five in Q1–Q3'23, compared to 23 and 18 deals in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

— CVC provides an extra boost to Early-stage activity by co-investing with VCs and improving the deal risk profile while getting an early presence on the cap table and securing strategic partnership terms (e.g., ROFR).

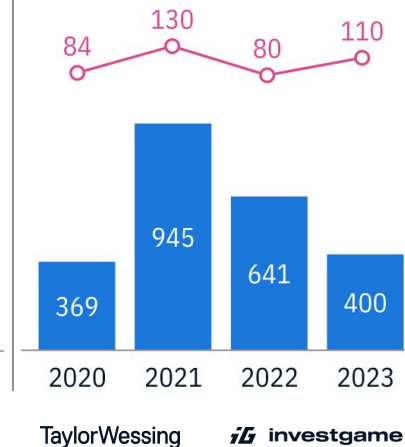
— Investments in the PC & Console and Multiplatform segments have notably increased compared to the avg. number of deals in 2021–22 (55 vs. 45), while investments in mobile gaming have slightly declined (43 deals compared to the average of 48 deals in 2021–22), reflecting recent industry tailwinds and challenges on mobile vs. other platforms.

— VC fundraising was primarily on halt, with only a few funds announcing fundraisings: Play Ventures (\$78m) and GEM Capital (\$50m). Consequently, VC funds have become more selective in their investment strategies. As a result, the average studio fundraising process has become longer and at less favorable terms.

Early-stage Gaming Activity



Q1–Q3 by Year



Most Active VC Gaming Funds for Q1-Q3'23

Note: (1) based on the internal weighted average ranking system (see p. 15);

(2) based on investments in Gaming with the disclosed deal value (no web3 gaming deals included)

Rank ¹	Venture Capital Fund	Deals	Deal Value ² \$m	Lead Deals	Lead Deals Value ² \$m	Select Lead Deals
Ranking by Number of Deals						
1	BITKRAFT Ventures	16	259	7	47	Avalon Corp, HyperPlay
2	Sisu Game Ventures	14	42	9	23	Multiscription
3	Andreessen Horowitz (a16z)	11	162	7	68	CCP Games, Proof of Play
4	GEM Capital	9	21	8	16	Made on Earth Games
5	vgames	9	16	7	9	PeerPlay, Frantic Games
6	Makers Fund	6	31	4	21	Genpop Interactive, Grand-Attic
7	Griffin Gaming Partners	5	133	4	43	Harmony Games, Hardball Games
8	The Games Fund	4	11	4	11	Red Rover, Zakazane
9	Ludus Ventures	4	8	3	4	Paxie Games, Fortune Mine Games
10	Play Ventures	3	21	2	13	Redemption Games, Scenario
Ranking by Deals Value						
1	BITKRAFT Ventures	16	259	7	47	Avalon Corp, HyperPlay
2	Andreessen Horowitz (a16z)	11	162	7	68	CCP Games, Proof of Play
3	Lightspeed Ventures	3	162	3	162	Inworld AI, Believer Entertainment
4	Griffin Gaming Partners	5	133	4	43	Harmony Games, Hardball Games
5	Sisu Game Ventures	14	42	9	23	Multiscription
6	Makers Fund	6	31	4	21	Genpop Interactive, Grand-Attic
7	GEM Capital	9	21	8	16	Made on Earth Games
8	Sequoia Capital	3	20	1	20	Mayhem Studios
9	Play Ventures	3	21	2	13	Redemption Games, Scenario
10	Transcend Fund	3	39	2	7	Cosmic Lounge

WHITE LABEL PR |

MGVC

TaylorWessing

iG investgame

Late-stage Gaming: overcoming harsh conditions and market challenges

— Ascending interest rates, weaker exit environment, and increased focus on solid financials have raised the bar for fundraising and led to a harsh deal-making environment: 2023 reached the lowest point with roughly \$300m capital raised across 8 transactions.

— Many Late-stage startups raised capital during the prosperous 2020–22 years,

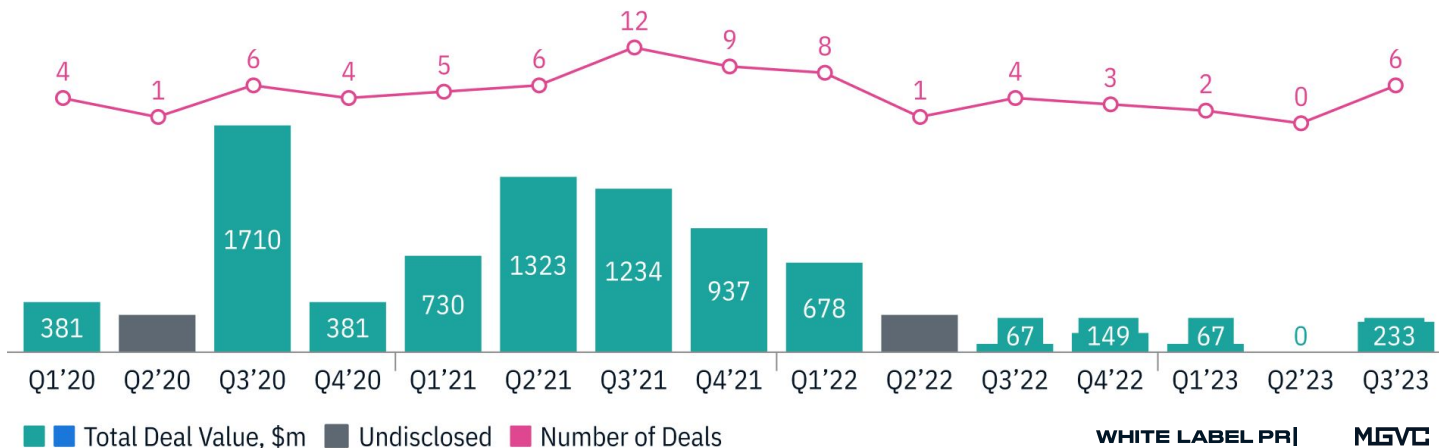
allowing to wait out “winter” amid the current harsh fundraising terms.

— Moreover, the prolonged macro volatility, liquidity crunch, and pullback of nontraditional investors will decrease chances of consequent fundraising for “newcomers” that raised Seed and Series A at the peak of valuations 2020–22

and are forced to return to market due to low cash reserves. This will likely lead to down rounds, premature M&As, or bankruptcies.

— Low Late-stage activity will likely persist through the remainder of 2023. Nevertheless, we still may observe rounds of promising studios, such as \$100m Candivore’s Series C and \$90m Second Dinner’s Series B rounds closed in Q3’23.

Late-stage Gaming Activity



Q1–Q3 by Year



Corporate: strategic investors go less solo, more co-op

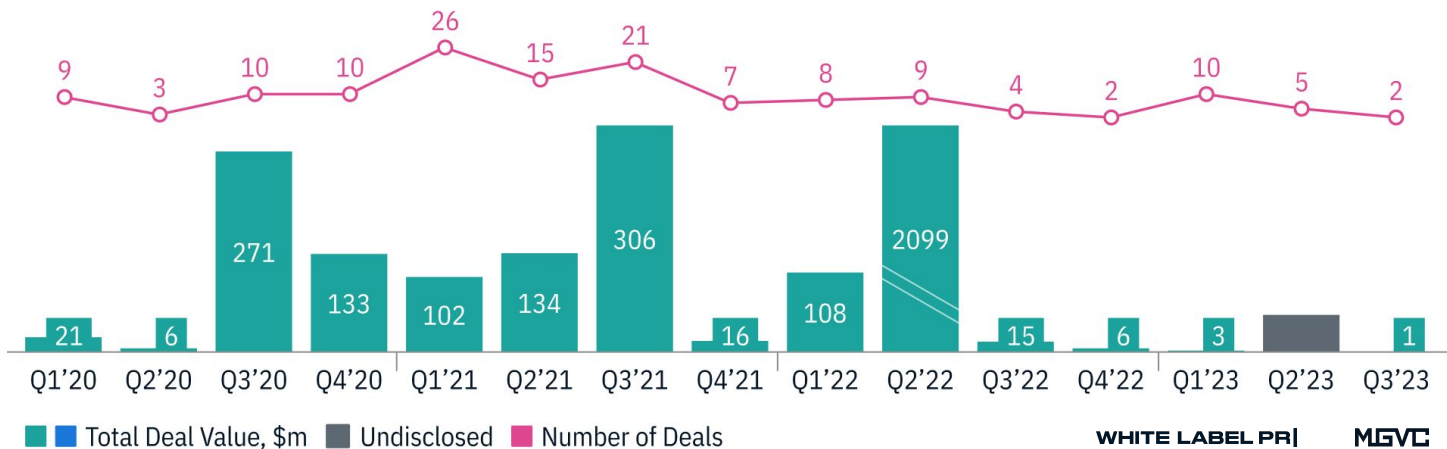
— For the last two years, strategic investors from the Western region have scaled down their corporate investments. We attribute this decline to the continuous turbulent conditions in public markets, ongoing internal restructurings, and changes in development pipelines.

— In the last years of growth, many companies were heavily increasing their headcount, investing in R&D, and making more experimental investments. However, many companies tried to cut expenses during the correction, leading to thousands of layoffs, dozens of canceled games, and a severe decline in investment activity.

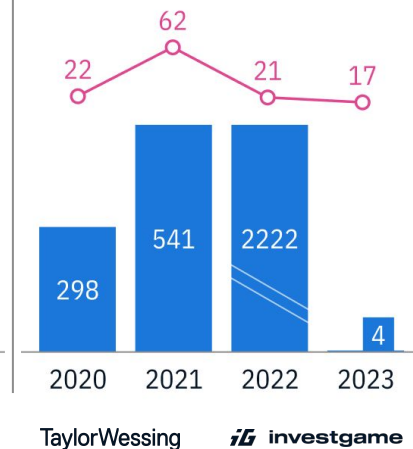
— Despite the substantial decrease in deal value, it is noteworthy that Asian strategic investors like Tencent, NetEase, Krafton, and others are actively continuing to invest, not only within the Asian region but also in companies from Europe and America. We anticipate that this trend will persist in the upcoming quarters.

— In 2023, many Strategics/CVCs switched to co-investment with VCs, making substantially fewer investments that strategic investors fully cover. We categorize such co-investing rounds as Early-stage or Late-stage deals in this report.

Corporate Gaming Activity



Q1-Q3 by Year



Gaming: closed VC deals by targets geo Q1-Q3'23

EASTERN EUROPE \$2m
Early-stage VC: 3 deals

WESTERN EUROPE \$128m
Early-stage VC: 24 deals
Late-stage VC: 1 deal
Corporate: 7 deals

NORTH AMERICA \$327m
Early-stage VC: 37 deals
Late-stage VC: 3 deals
Corporate: 2 deals

ASIA \$85m
Early-stage VC: 17 deals
Late-stage VC: 2 deals
Corporate: 7 deals

MENAT \$34m
Early-stage VC: 22 deals
Corporate: 1 deal

LATIN AMERICA
Early-stage VC: 2 deals

AFRICA \$27m
Early-stage VC: 2 deals
Late-stage VC: 1 deal

OCEANIA
Early-stage VC: 4 deals

AI in Gaming: analyzing the surge in the startup scene

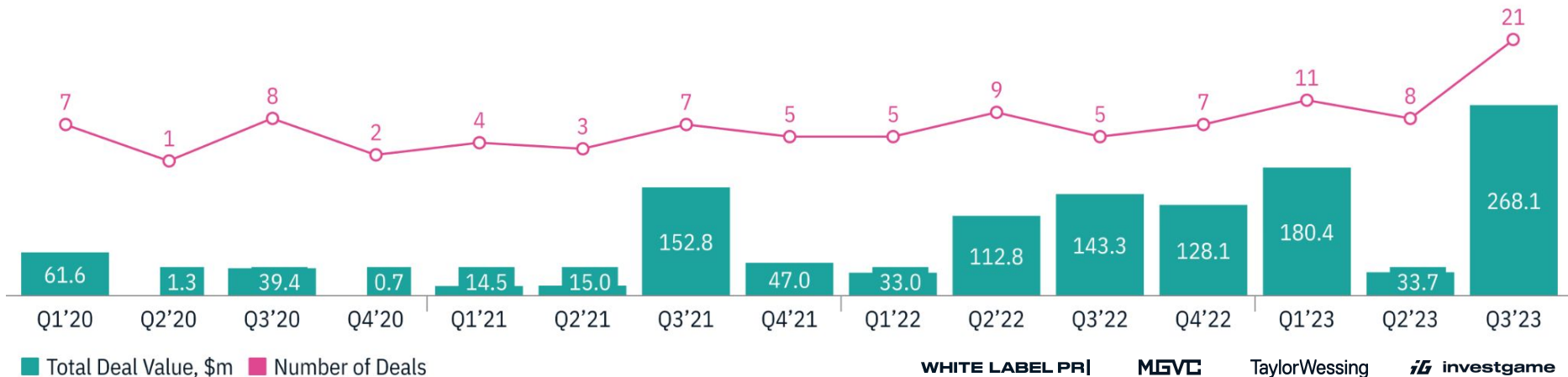
— Though we now observe a massive buzz around everything AI-related, artificial intelligence is the theme that has been present in the gaming industry for quite a while. To better understand the trend growth, we tracked all deals with the targets involved in AI.

— This year shows an increased interest in AI-related startups in size and number of deals. Q3'23 was especially strong, with an unprecedented 21 deals for a total amount of \$268.1m. The year's largest deal was a \$76m round of Inworld AI led by Lightspeed Venture Partners.

— Nevertheless, we can hardly compare this surge with the earlier blockchain gaming boom. The growth in the number of AI-related deals hasn't been as pronounced as in previous years. However, the trend continues to increase, which may become the beginning of something bigger.

— Also, in web3, the startups had to make the blockchain a part of their games. When it comes to AI, many studios use the technology to speed up the production process rather than introducing some innovation to the product. We will monitor the market and see where it will lead the industry.

Closed AI Deals



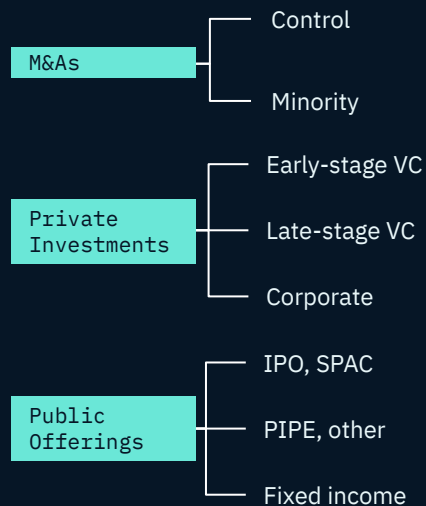
Methodology & Glossary

InvestGame tracks closed transactions (unless otherwise noted) in the Video Games industry, with target companies having core business operations related to the Video Games market. We do not track pure gambling, betting, and non-gaming blockchain/web3 companies.

The private data contained in this report is based on information from sources believed to be reliable, but we can't guarantee accuracy and completeness. Sources include public media, our business partners, data provider S&P Capital IQ, and market insights.

The information, opinions, estimates, and forecasts contained herein are as of the date hereof and are subject to change without prior notification. We seek to update our research as appropriate.

Deal Types Overview



Deal Type Terms Glossary

— Control M&As—mergers and acquisitions resulting in the change of control (50%+ ownership)

— Minority M&As—sale of a minority stake in the business

— Early-stage VC—pre-Seed, Seed, and Series A rounds with a lead VC fund

— Late-stage VC—Series B, Series C, and later-lettered venture rounds

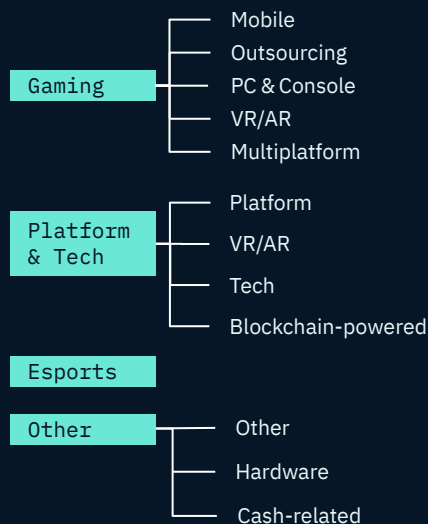
— Corporate Investments—investments with a lead investor being a corporation

— IPOs—the process of a company going public, including IPOs, SPACs, and direct listings

— Fixed-income—debt-related instrument with fixed payments and interest payments

— PIPE, other—private investment in public equity, direct share issue, and other transactions with publicly traded stock

Target's Sector Overview



VC Ratings Calculation

For both the Deals Number and Deal Value lists, we prioritize as follows:

60%—**Lead Deals** number/value;
40%—**Total** number/value.

Since the funds do not usually disclose publicly their individual participation in a particular round (even if some occasionally do), we do not take into account the exact cuts. We prioritize the overall number and the sum of the deals while still placing importance on the value and the count of lead deals.

Disclaimer



[Twitter](#) | [Digest](#) | [Patreon](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

This report is intended for general information purposes only and is educational in nature; it is not a solicitation or an offer to buy or sell any financial instruments or to participate in any particular trading strategy. Nothing in this document constitutes a personal recommendation, or a piece of legal or professional advice.

You agree not to copy, revise, amend, or create a derivative work, provide it to any third party, or commercially exploit any InvestGame research. You shall not reproduce data in any form or by any means without the prior written consent of InvestGame.

This document is for distribution only, as may be permitted by applicable local laws. It is not directed to, or intended for distribution to or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any state, country, or other jurisdiction where such distribution, publication, availability, or use would be contrary to law or regulation or would subject InvestGame to any registration or licensing requirement within such jurisdiction.

We would love to thank our dear friends at [MGVC](#), [Taylor Wessing](#), and [White Label PR](#) for supporting this report. Please note that this support did not affect the integrity or fairness of the data and analysis.

MGVC

TaylorWessing

WHITE LABEL PR |