

Vetted

Background-check and identity-verification API infrastructure for gig and marketplace platforms in LATAM, SEA, Africa, Eastern Europe — where Checkr and Onfido don't operate at scale.

Category	Set 3 · Post-AI Plays
Customer	Ride-hailing, delivery, home-services, freelance, and short-term-rental platforms operating in emerging markets
Monetisation	\$0.40–4.00 per check (varies by depth + jurisdiction) · \$1k–15k/mo platform integration tier · enterprise SLAs
Build effort	Med
Plan version	v1.0 — 2026-05

Executive Summary

Vetted is a background-check and identity-verification API platform serving gig and marketplace platforms in emerging markets — LATAM (Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile), Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand), Africa (Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, South Africa, Ghana), Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey). These markets host hundreds of fast-growing platforms — local ride-hailing, food delivery, home services, freelance work, short-term rentals — that need worker vetting infrastructure but cannot rely on Checkr (US-only at scale) or Onfido (UK/EU primary with limited emerging-market depth).

The product is an API-first vetting platform offering tiered checks: identity verification (document + biometric liveness), criminal record checks where legally available, professional license verification, vehicle ownership/registration verification, financial/credit checks, watchlist screening (sanctions, PEPs). Each check is jurisdiction-specific and API-callable in real-time or async. Pricing is per-check with platform-tier subscriptions for high-volume customers.

Year-1 target: 18 active platform customers across 8 emerging-market jurisdictions, processing 600,000 monthly checks at average \$1.20 per check = \$8.6 million revenue (~₹72 crore) against ₹32 crore costs. The wedge: emerging-market data-source depth that Checkr / Onfido have not invested in (each jurisdiction has its own ID systems, criminal record access pathways, license registries that require local relationships and engineering work). The operational moat compounds as Vetted builds jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction.

The Problem

Gig and marketplace platforms in emerging markets face a vetting problem with no good infrastructure answer. A Lagos-based ride-hailing platform onboarding 5,000 drivers/month needs to verify identity (NIN — Nigerian National Identification Number), driving licence (FRSC records), vehicle ownership (state-level vehicle registration), criminal history (NPF where accessible). No single API serves all of these; the platform builds piecemeal integrations or accepts risk.

The result is one of three poor outcomes. (1) The platform under-invests in vetting and accepts the resulting fraud / safety incidents (a meaningful share of emerging-market gig-platform horror stories trace to weak vetting). (2) The platform builds an in-house vetting team that operates manually — checking documents by hand, calling registries individually — which doesn't scale beyond a few thousand workers / month and is itself a fraud surface. (3) The platform uses Checkr or Onfido for partial coverage of identity (where these vendors offer it) and accepts gaps for everything else.

Compounding this, the verification needs are jurisdiction-specific and shift continuously. India's Aadhaar-based eKYC matures rapidly; Indonesia's NIK identity infrastructure has different access rules; Nigeria's NIN consolidation is ongoing; Brazil's CPF + RG combination is layered; Mexico's INE / CURP has its own access pathway. A platform expanding across 4-6 emerging markets needs separate vetting integrations per market, each requiring local relationships, local engineering, local compliance work — a stack-of-pain that no startup wants to build internally.

The Solution

Vetted provides API-first vetting infrastructure across emerging-market jurisdictions. A platform integrates Vetted once (REST API + SDKs in major languages), then accesses jurisdiction-specific vetting capabilities through a unified interface. To vet a worker in Lagos: `POST /verifications` with worker info + jurisdiction = 'NG' + `check_types = ['identity', 'driving_license', 'vehicle_ownership']`. Vetted handles routing to underlying data sources (NIMC for identity, FRSC for licence, state registry for vehicle), aggregates results, returns structured response within seconds (where real-time) or hours (where async).

Per-jurisdiction capabilities are built progressively as Vetted establishes data-source relationships and engineering integrations. Launch jurisdictions in year 1: Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Nigeria, Kenya, Brazil, Mexico, Poland. Year 2-3 expansion: Egypt, South Africa, Thailand, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Romania, Turkey, Ghana. Each new jurisdiction adds 12-25 weeks of engineering + local relationship work but compounds the platform's value.

Three structural differences from Checkr / Onfido define the wedge. First, emerging-market focus: where Checkr is US-only at depth and Onfido is UK/EU-primary, Vetted serves the markets they overlook. Second, depth per market: not just identity (where Onfido has thin emerging-market coverage) but the full vetting stack (criminal, licence, financial, watchlist) within each jurisdiction. Third, API-first design for platform integration: built from day one as infrastructure that platforms embed, not a standalone product they use through a web UI.

Platform tier (\$1k-15k/month based on volume) provides predictable pricing for high-volume customers, white-label workflow embeddable in the platform's own onboarding UI, webhook integration for async results, dashboard for platform compliance teams to audit verification outcomes. Enterprise tier provides SLAs (99.9% uptime, response-time guarantees), dedicated support, custom workflow design.

Market Opportunity

Emerging-market gig and marketplace platforms in 2026: estimated 4,500-6,000 active platforms across target jurisdictions, growing at 25-35% per year. Sub-segments: ride-hailing (~800 platforms — regional / city-specific), food delivery (~1,200 — strong local variation), home services (~1,500), freelance marketplaces (~600), short-term rental (~400), agricultural / B2B services (~500).

Aggregate worker vetting volume: estimated 65-90 million worker onboardings per year across target platforms. At average \$1.20 per check (typically 2-3 checks per worker = \$2.40-3.60 per onboarding), the addressable market is approximately \$200-300 million annually. Realistic 5-year capture: 4-7% = \$10-20M ARR.

Adjacent opportunities: ongoing-monitoring services (continuous criminal-record monitoring for already-vetted workers, \$0.10-0.30/worker/month — substantially larger revenue than one-time onboarding), employer-verification services (B2B HR market for emerging markets — separate buying centre but similar infrastructure), financial-services KYC infrastructure (banks, NBFCs, crypto platforms in emerging markets need similar identity/verification stack at higher prices).

Target Customer

Primary persona: a 33-year-old VP Operations at a Series B Indonesian ride-hailing + delivery platform onboarding 8,000 drivers/month. Currently uses in-house manual vetting team of 35 staff costing \$42k/month with 7-day average verification turnaround and ~3% post-verification fraud rate. Will integrate Vetted API for \$1.20 average per worker = \$9.6k/month for verification, reducing turnaround to <24 hours and reducing fraud meaningfully.

Secondary persona: a 41-year-old founder of a Nigerian home-services marketplace at \$4M ARR onboarding 1,500 service providers/month. Currently doing identity verification only (NIN check) — no criminal, no licence verification — and accepting the resulting safety incidents. Will pay \$2,200/month Platform tier for comprehensive vetting that becomes a marketing point ('all our pros are background-checked').

Tertiary persona: a 48-year-old Head of Trust at a Brazilian short-term-rental platform with 30,000 active hosts. Needs ongoing-monitoring for the existing host base + onboarding vetting for new hosts. Will pay enterprise tier of \$14k/month covering onboarding vetting + monthly ongoing-monitoring of the active base.

Product

API: REST + GraphQL APIs with SDKs in JavaScript / TypeScript / Python / Go / PHP / Ruby. Webhook delivery for async results. Real-time response for synchronous checks (~600ms-2s); async for checks requiring upstream wait (criminal record, certain licence checks typically 2-48 hours).

Verification primitives per jurisdiction. Identity: document capture + OCR + face match + liveness detection + government registry validation (Aadhaar, NIK, NIN, CPF, INE, PESEL etc.). Criminal: jurisdiction-specific records access where legal (highly variable; some markets have no civil-side access). Licence: profession-specific registry checks (driving, professional, trade licences). Vehicle: vehicle ownership and registration where applicable. Financial: credit-bureau access where available. Watchlist: sanctions, PEP screening against major databases.

Workflow builder: platform customers configure their verification workflow (which checks run for which worker type) in a no-code dashboard, exported as API configuration. Different workflows for driver vs. delivery vs. home-services worker types.

Platform dashboard: real-time view of verification queue, completed verifications with structured results, compliance audit log, exception handling (workers who failed verification), custom-policy configuration.

Ongoing monitoring (Pro tier): continuous monitoring of already-vetted workers for new criminal records (where data sources support), licence expiration/suspension, watchlist updates. Notifications via webhook.

Compliance: per-jurisdiction data-residency where required, GDPR / LGPD / PDPA compliance, structured audit logs of all verification activity, data-retention policies aligned to local law.

Technical Architecture

Backend: Go on AWS (multi-region deployment for jurisdiction-specific data residency: ap-southeast-1 for SEA, sa-east-1 for Brazil, af-south-1 for South Africa, eu-central-1 for Europe).

Identity verification: in-house document OCR + face matching (Microsoft Florence-2 + custom face-match model) for the visual side; jurisdiction-specific registry API integrations for government-source validation. Liveness detection via custom mobile SDK (Face-API.js variant).

Data-source integrations: per-jurisdiction integration code (typically 8-16 weeks engineering work per integration); the breadth of integrations is the central moat that compounds over time.

Document storage: jurisdiction-residency-compliant document storage (S3 in regional buckets), encryption at rest, time-limited retention with automated purge per local law.

Webhook delivery: reliable webhook infrastructure with retry, dead-letter handling, signature verification.

Compliance: SOC2 Type II from year 1, ISO 27001 by year 2, per-jurisdiction data-protection certifications (LGPD in Brazil, PDPA in Singapore where required).

Monitoring: comprehensive observability for fraud detection (synthetic / forged documents), data-source uptime, latency tracking per check type.

Business Model & Unit Economics

Per-check pricing as primary revenue. Identity verification: \$0.40-0.80 per check depending on jurisdiction. Criminal record: \$1.50-4.00 per check. Licence verification: \$0.60-1.80. Vehicle: \$0.80-1.50. Financial / credit: \$1.20-3.00. Watchlist: \$0.20-0.50. Average per-worker onboarding (2-3 checks): \$2.40-7.00.

Platform-tier subscriptions (\$1k-15k/month): bundled volume + dashboard access + white-label workflow + webhook integration + named support. Customers above ~3,000 monthly checks find subscription model favourable.

Enterprise tier (custom): SLAs (99.9% uptime, response-time guarantees), dedicated support, custom integration work, jurisdiction-specific configurations. Enterprise pricing \$40k-200k/year.

Conversion economics: sales cycle 6-12 weeks (platform compliance team + engineering integration + procurement). Conversion from qualified demo: 22%. Customer LTV is high — platforms that integrate verification deeply do not switch easily (re-integration cost is real).

Gross margin: ~58% blended. Major cost components: government registry access fees (jurisdiction-specific, sometimes substantial), verification infrastructure (compute + storage), local compliance overhead per jurisdiction.

Unit Economics (Year-1 base case)

Year-1 active platform customers (target)	18
Year-1 monthly checks processed	~600,000
Year-1 active jurisdictions	8
Year-1 revenue	\$8.6 million (~₹72 crore)
Gross margin	58%
Customer acquisition cost (CAC)	\$18,500 per platform
Payback period	~4 months
Year-1 all-in costs	~₹32 crore
Year-1 net contribution	~₹10 crore (with material reinvestment into jurisdiction expansion)

Go-to-Market

Channel 1 — Direct outreach to platform compliance + ops leaders (40%): targeted outreach via LinkedIn + industry directories to 300 identified platforms in target jurisdictions. Conversion target: 12 paying platforms in year 1.

Channel 2 — Emerging-market accelerator + ecosystem partnerships (25%): partnerships with regional accelerators (Endeavor in LATAM, AngelHack in SEA, Africa Talks Jobs in Africa) for early-stage platform deal flow.

Channel 3 — Conference and industry-event presence (20%): Money 20/20 Asia + Africa + LatAm, Africa Fintech Summit, regional gig-economy summits — substantive presence at events where platform-ops decision-makers attend.

Channel 4 — Strategic partnerships with platform-infrastructure providers (15%): partnerships with payment providers (Flutterwave, Paystack, Stripe Atlas), with ride-hailing dispatch software providers, with marketplace SaaS platforms for bundled offerings.

Roadmap (first 12 months)

- Month 1-4: First 4 jurisdictions live (Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, Philippines) — identity + driving licence + watchlist for each. Recruit jurisdiction-specific compliance leads. First 4 platform customers signed.
- Month 5-7: Vietnam, Mexico, Kenya added; criminal-record checks added where legally accessible. 8 paying platforms, \$1.5M annualised revenue.
- Month 8-10: Poland added (Europe foothold); ongoing-monitoring service launched. 12 paying platforms, \$4M annualised revenue.
- Month 11-12: 18 paying platforms across 8 active jurisdictions, \$8.6M annualised revenue, enterprise tier with 2-3 signed enterprise contracts.

Key Risks

- Jurisdiction-specific regulatory changes: ID systems, data-access laws, and compliance frameworks shift continuously in emerging markets — Aadhaar policy changes, LGPD enforcement evolution, NIN expansion phases — operational complexity scales with jurisdictional breadth. Mitigated by per-jurisdiction compliance leads (1 staff member per active jurisdiction by year 2), by close registry relationships, by modular platform that can adapt per-jurisdiction changes without disturbing other markets.
- Government registry access dependency: many verification capabilities depend on government-controlled registries (Aadhaar, NIK, NIMC, etc.) that can change access terms, pricing, or availability without notice — significant tail risk. Mitigated by relationships with multiple data sources where available, by escrow / alternate-source fallbacks, by transparent customer communication when access changes.
- Fraud sophistication: bad actors continuously develop new document-forgery techniques + identity-fraud patterns; staying ahead requires ongoing investment — mitigated by dedicated fraud-research team, by ML-model retraining cadence (monthly model updates on detected fraud patterns), by partnership with fraud-intelligence sharing networks.
- Liability if verified worker subsequently causes harm: platforms may seek recovery from Vetted for verification failures, particularly in high-profile cases — mitigated by clear scope-of-service contracts limiting liability to verification scope (we verify what was claimed at point in time; we do not guarantee future behaviour), by professional indemnity insurance (\$25M+ coverage), by liability-cap structures in commercial contracts.
- Jurisdiction expansion is slow and capital-intensive — each new jurisdiction takes 12-25 weeks + meaningful engineering and compliance work before producing revenue. Risk of capital outpacing revenue if expansion is too aggressive. Mitigated by disciplined per-jurisdiction expansion criteria (only launch when at least 2 customer commitments are secured), by careful capital management.