

## 500 Startups to raise up to \$20 million for India fund Startupwallah

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BENGALURU: Silicon Valley-based seed fund and startup accelerator 500 Startups is in the process of raising \$10-20 million (about Rs 60-120 crore) for its India fund, Startupwallah, which is due for launch in the middle of this year.

500 Startups will offer \$50,000-100,000 (Rs 30-60 lakh) per startup for an equity stake of 7%. "We have to be plugged into the local system. Our regional funds will help achieve that," said Aerin Lim, director of investor relations at 500 Startups. Lim was on a trip to India to meet prospective investors for the fund.



In 2012, Dave McClure, founding partner at 500 Startups, had tried to raise a \$5 million (Rs 30 crore) India-focused fund, but things did not work out. "We started the process two years ago but had to put it on hold because the market was not mature back then," said Lim.

500 Startups has accelerated over a 1,000 startups across 50 countries since 2010. It has launched a series of microfunds in Asia in the recent past. These include a \$15-million South Korea fund called 500 Kimchis and a Southeast Asia fund called 500 Durians. According to some reports, the firm is currently raising about \$10 million for its Thailand fund called 500 TukTuks.

500 Startups has been investing in India since 2011 as part of its global fund. It has so far invested in 30 Indian companies, including TargetingMantra, a personalisation platform for online businesses, and marketing firm ZipDial, which was acquired by Twitter in January.

In this day and age, Indian startups are the apple of everyone's eye. With the likes of Japan-based Softbank, New York's investment firm Tiger Global Management and China's Alibaba closely keeping a watch, the folks from Silicon Valley seem to be feeling the need to pay close attention.

Last year, Kathrina Manalac, partner at YCombinator, said the accelerator wants to bring the famed Startup School, where prospective entrepreneurs can get practical advice from successful founders and investors, to India.