

STARTUP INC RIPE FOR FUNDING DEALS

VCs Ready Tools to Plant Seeds in Startup Ground

Launch separate seed-stage funds, accelerators and mentorship schemes

**Aditi Shrivastava
& Biswarup Gooptu**

Bengaluru | New Delhi: Venture capital firms are rushing to snap up startups early by launching separate seed-stage funds, specialised accelerators and mentorship programmes, in a hyped up deal-making market.

The push to spot companies at the seed-stage comes at a time when a bunch of new early stage funds like Stellaris VP, Pi Ventures and Waterbridge are scouting for the same set of founders, making the market extremely competitive.

ET reported earlier this month that early-stage technology and startup deal activity were set to intensify, with venture capital firms such as Accel Partners and Lightspeed Venture Partners expected to raise fresh capital, and several other funds, both old and new, stepping up investment in the country.

Accel, an investor in homegrown online retailer Flipkart and food delivery platform Swiggy, has started an accelerator called ReBound, exclusively for second- and third-time founders. ReBound, launched in July, is a peer-led programme helmed by Dinesh Katiyar, a five-time startup founder himself.

Silicon Valley-based Katiyar is a partner at the VC fund, which has traditionally made hundreds of seed bets. Accel also separately runs Launchpad, where it funds early-stage ideas and offers a co-working space to startups.

Accel did not comment on the ReBound initiative.

Orios Venture Partners has brought on board MakeMyTrip group founder and CEO Deep Kalra as a mentor for its Misfits scale-up programme.

The investment firm, which counts the likes of PharmEasy and Country Delight in its portfolio, has also brought in founders of its portfolio companies. They include Dharmil Sheth, chief executive of online pharma major PharmEasy, and Anupam Mittal, who has co-invested in a number of ventures alongside Rehan Yar Khan, to help the ventures scale, hire talent and raise funds.