## [Startup Bharat] With the likes of Bayer as clients, Mysuru's Aasalabs is connecting agritech startups with corporates

Aasalabs' VyavaSahaaya is an open innovation challenge platform that connects corporates, universities and foundations looking for digital agricultural solutions with agritech startups.

Sindhu Kashyaap

31st May 2019



2+ Shares









Pharma major Bayer's crop science division had a problem. The 150-year-old company was on the lookout for approaches to help farmers track, spot, and treat incidence of 'fall armyworm' in corn fields. While Bayer could do with innovative ideas, the problem posed a clear opportunity for several **agritech startups**. However, bringing corporates and startups together was a challenge.

This is where Mysuru-based Aasalabs' platform VyavaSahaaya came into play.

research bodies, universities, and foundations with agritech startups. Founded by Satish Bhavankar, Raghavendra KS, and Raghavendra Joshi, Aasalabs, while registered in Mysuru, has a development centre at Sandbox Startups Hubli.

VyavaSahaaya is an open innovation platform that connects corporate



VyavaSahaaya



[Startup Bharat] How Kochi-based NAVA Design and

Also Read

Innovation's Sapper is tapping AI to automate ... What Aasalabs does

## VyavaSahaaya essentially offers a platform for businesses such as Bayer to share their

processes," says Satish.

challenges that have no established best-practice approach. For these challenges, problem solvers design actionable, scalable solutions. "The ultimate objective is to fundamentally 'open' and transform the agri-food innovation

For example, Bayer has a detailed list of needs and requirements on VyavaSahaaya. The platform connects with different startups or innovators who come up with different solutions.

"The organisation directly interacts with the startup, helps them and even

guides their ideas, but the winner of the challenge will be one startup. What happens in the process though, is all startups get access and an understanding of prototyping, product-market fit, and other necessary elements," says Satish. Challenges and overcoming them

## Before starting Aasalabs, the co-founders were colleagues at Qwinix Technologies in Mysuru. Satish and Raghavendra KS worked on a volunteer management system at Qwinix.

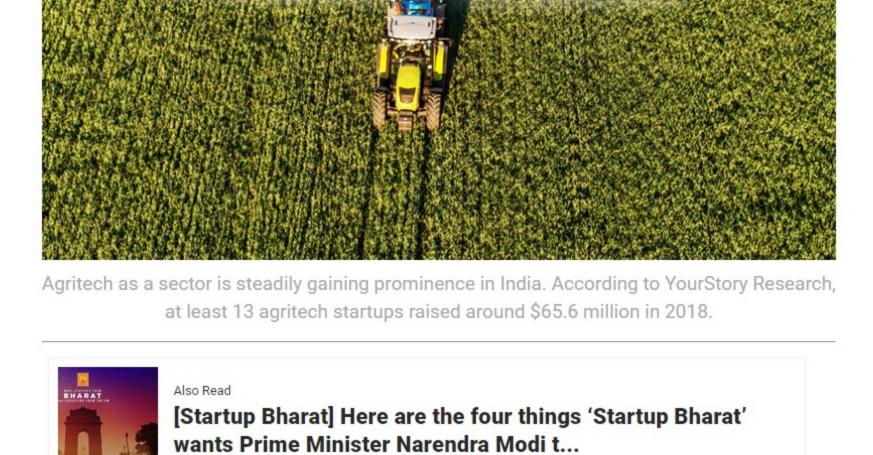
"I wanted to build a volunteer management system customised to India with open innovation to address the social challenges. I first pitched the idea in NUMA (accelerator), and I was

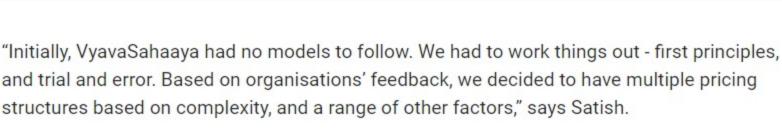
space," says Satish. On further research, he narrowed down on agriculture and agritech. To begin, VyavaSahaaya had to solve the chicken-or-egg problem of getting both sides on board, in adequate numbers, to create value. For this, the founders persuaded companies to

guided to narrow down and concentrate on open innovation, which is a very interesting

launch multiple pilot challenges in private beta, and on-boarded problem solvers from

diversified sectors through their own networks, and through word of mouth.





startup.

structures based on complexity, and a range of other factors," says Satish.

To ensure seamless interaction between corporates and startups, the team designed the platform to enhance the value of direct and indirect network effects between participants.

Now, the platform charges a flat hosting fee of Rs 75,000 from

organisations, and takes 10 percent commission from the winning

Aasalabs has received a certificate of recognition from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for its digital innovation, and was also facilitated by the BSE Social Impact Award 2019-TOP 50.

The team currently works with Bayer, Deshpande Foundation, and Beanstalk Agritech.

## **Bootstrapped** at present, it took the co-founders 15 months to develop the platform at a cost

The market and growth

of Rs 7 lakh. "We are on a healthy growth trajectory with about 2,000 unique hits on our **platform**, and a problem solver base of about 600 from diversified fields in India," says Satish.

startup, announced it had raised \$2 million in seed funding led by Omnivore, Blume Ventures, and BEENEXT, while Pune-based agritech startup AgroStar on Wednesday raised \$27 million in a Series C funding round led by Bertelsmann India.

According to YourStory Research, at least 13 agritech startups raised

around \$65.6 million in 2018, up over 21 percent from \$54 million across

Agritech as a sector is steadily gaining prominence. TartanSense, a robotics driven agritech

18 deals in 2017. Speaking on their future plans, Satish says, "We aim to have a pan-India presence, and a brand that people associate with in terms of all flavours of innovation from lab to land, idea to

implementation, and also making our presence felt globally."



Also Read

[Startup Bharat] Away from the metros, a new breed of deeptech startups is solving 'real India...



(=)

[Startup Bharat] From a water-saving polymer to an innovation lab, 5 inspiring stories from Raj...

2+ Shares

Report an issue

NASSCOM's Japanese Venture Capital Network is for those interested in building an Indian portfolio of innovative businesses. Select startups can travel to Tokyo & pitch to a network of Japanese VCs. Hurry up & apply before June 5, 2019.