Cisco offers LaunchPad for start-ups

Bengaluru campus will give start-ups access to a suite of technologies

OUR BUREAU

Bengaluru, June 30

Networking major Cisco has joined a long list of multinationals such as Target, SAP Labs, Microsoft and Google that have set up accelerator programmes to engage with the burgeoning start-up community in India.

Cisco announced LaunchPad, an open innovation initiative to accelerate early- and late-stage start-ups, by providing strong mentorship, investments, validated use cases from across the globe and a strong go-to-market engine that will help them create digital solutions for the next three billion internet users. Cisco will also provide space at its sprawling Bengaluru campus that will give start-ups access to a suite of Cisco technologies and free grants to those start-ups chosen to work at its campus.

Start-ups will go through a rigorous selection process based on the viability of their business plans, the strength of their teams and their alignment with Cisco's digitisation vision.

"We will select 5-8 early-stage to late-stage start-ups with whom we will co-innovate and co-develop solutions that complement areas that we are already working in, not only in developing digital technology solutions but also in creating innovative business models. We will also co-invest in some of them from Cisco's $280-million allocation for working with the Indian start-up ecosystem and connect them with VCs for their funding requirements," Amit Phadnis, President, Engineering and India Site Leader, Cisco, told *BusinessLine.*

Through LaunchPad, start-ups will get an opportunity to work on solving business relevant problems by working on cases identified and validated by Cisco's go-to-market teams, with an initial focus on manufacturing, retail, transportation, education and healthcare. Successful applicants will have unprecedented access to senior leadership including a Director and Principal Engineer assigned to each project;

Cisco's channel partner ecosystem and select customers, that will offer start-ups a global go-to-market engine to validate and scale innovative ideas.

TechM tie-up

Cisco is already innovating with Tech Mahindra to develop end-to-end digital metering solutions for the Indian Electric Utilities that will address issues such as, power management, distribution and cutting down power pilferage. The company is collaborating with Nasscom to come up with sensor-based smart decision making solutions for farmers and with Saankhya Labs to provide last mile connectivity solutions.

"LaunchPad will bring together Cisco technologies, the start-up community and our authorised partners and developers to scale their solutions, address new markets and build digital businesses that will connect the 3 billion people and 50 billion devices," said Phadnis.

Underlying its commitment to digitisation, Cisco already runs Cisco Digitization Acceleration and Cisco Investment programmes in India.

Amit Phadnis, President, Engineering and India Site Leader, Cisco