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# Advisory companies gain as startups look to woo investors

By Payal Ganguly, ET Bureau | 17 Feb, 2015, 07.20AM IST

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Budget 2015

Financial services company ValPro launched its deal-enabling platform, Enablersinvestment.com, for facilitating seed round and Series-A funding for startups and SMEs (small and medium enterprises). The company has tied up with Nasscom's 10,000 Startups initiative and SIDBI Innovation and Incubation Centre at IIT-Kanpur for grooming startups.

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"Currently, we are beta-testing the platform and 15 companies are under review for addition to the platform. Often we find that startups are not completely investor-ready and we help them choose between a pure-play investor and strategic funding which can open up a larger network for these young enterprises," said Manish Malik of boutique advisory firm ValPro, founded in 2005, where he looks after M&A, deal execution and PE.

The startups pay a listing fee of ₹30,000 for reviewing their profiles and grooming by



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ValPro. If the startup is not accepted for listing for funds, the money is refunded. The platform also charges about 2% of the deal amount from the startups which get funded through its network of investors. "We need to be honest to our investors. We have 25 HNIs ready to invest and have also been approached by a development fund for investment in social enterprises," said Malik.

"We sense the need to act as a catalyst for entrepreneurs in realising their dreams. We have partnered with a few boutique consulting firms, to support early stage startups on their business and funding aspects," said [Rajat Tandon](#), senior director of Nasscom's 10,000 Startups initiative. Startups value being groomed by firms that work in close collaboration with institutional investors. With a background check done by advisory firms, individual investors are open to the proposition of completing a deal online. "It is a workable solution," said investor [Suresh Shetty](#), ex-CFO, [Hero Honda](#).

"Being reviewed by professionals helps us understand valuations and synchronises expectations and reality. As a part of other deal-enabling platforms, the discovery process has been tedious and we have been running around in circles," said Vishal Singhal, co-founder at [ArtZolo](#), an online marketplace connecting artists, galleries and buyers. A part of IIT-Kanpur's incubator programme, the startup is looking to raise a seed round through the platform. For startups that cannot afford to pay the steep subscription fee, the advisory firms are willing to take equity in lieu of their services. "We work either on a subscription-fee model for the services provided or take a stake in the company on a par with angel investors in the range of 5-10% for the services," said Jeenendra Bhandari, partner, MGB & Co, which runs Empowerstartups. in.

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