AIRBUS HELPS STARTUPS ENTER THE AEROSPACE SECTOR

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Four startups have been selected to be part of the aircraft manufacturer's business accelerator, in Bengaluru.

European aircraft manufacturer Airbus is helping startups enter the aerospace ecosystem through its business accelerator Airbus BizLab, which has offices in Toulouse in France, Hamburg in Germany, and Bengaluru in India.

The Bengaluru office, which opened in November 2015, has four startups enrolled for the six-month accelerator programme. “It’s a free programme where we provide startups with office space, a dedicated coach who would support them for six months, mentors and most importantly, aeronautical experts from Airbus who will help startups develop their innovative concepts,” said Bruno Gutierres, head, Airbus BizLab, during a recent visit to Bengaluru.

The “experts” from Airbus would provide the startups with technical, finance, legal, and marketing expertise. Airbus BizLabs is funded from the $2 billion research and development corpus that Airbus earmarks annually, said Gutierres.

Typically, Airbus BizLab looks at startups that are creating innovations in the larger aeronautical ecosystem. As Gutierres explained, “We do not expect that a startup helps us to build and manufacture an aircraft. What we do expect from startups is that they help us to create additional value in a pretty vast field around the manufacture of an aircraft.” He added that there were a whole range of activities like services around airports and passengers, which are not directly linked

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to manufacturing.

Gutierres clarified that the purpose of Airbus BizLab is not to invest in a startup. “We are an accelerator and we do not invest. But, we have an investment firm called Airbus Venture which is located in Silicon Valley. This firm can invest in any startup that makes sense.”

At the end of the six-month programme, Airbus BizLab organises a demo day where startups can present their ideas and innovations to investors and to Airbus’s ecosystem of suppliers, partners, and customers. “We basically give them access to our market,” added Gutierres.

Commenting on the startups which have been enrolled at the Bengaluru centre of Airbus BizLab, Gutierres said: “They are passionate. They have lots of energy and creativity — all the ingredients that make for success.”

From a pool of 80 applicants, four startups have been selected in the Airbus BizLab accelerator in Bengaluru. Among them are: Blue Morfo, which is developing a mobile application to detect and prevent specific health-related issues like exposure of airline crew to jetlag, cabin pressurisation, etc, and Open Turf, which is providing wireless in-flight entertainment using passenger personal devices.

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