

Aramco's VC arm builds India team, scouts for new deals

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MUMBAI: The venture capital (VC) arm of Saudi Aramco is building an India team and scouting for early-stage deals in the country, two people aware of the plans said, in a move to leverage India's startup story and widen the fund's global reach.

Prosperity7 Ventures, a unit of Saudi Arabia's largest conglomerate, is also in talks to hire a head for the India business, the people cited above said on condition of anonymity. The fund has more than \$3 billion in assets under management globally.

"The firm is looking to set aside around \$200-350 million for the Indian market," one of the two people said. "It is looking to have a portfolio of around 15-20 early-stage companies."

"It will invest from seed stage right up to Series A and B of companies," the second person said.

Currently, Prosperity7 Ventures invests in the US, Middle East and China. "The firm wants to expand its geographic presence," the second person said. "With the growing deal flow coming from India, it has become a must-have market."

The Indian startup ecosystem has seen a total of \$7.2 billion

invested in early-stage firms in 2023, data from Tracxn, a private equity and venture capital data provider, shows. Queries emailed to an Aramco Group spokesperson remained unanswered till press time.

According to the company's website, Prosperity7 Ventures has so far invested more than \$1 billion globally in startups with a focus on scalable technologies and business models that catalyse change across sectors. It invests in sectors such as enterprise tech, fintech, deep tech and artificial intelligence, business-to-business, business-to-consumer and medtech.

The VC firm counts companies such as Jeeves, Sunrate, Wasabi, SingleStore, Stream Native, Insilico Medicine, SiFive, PragmatIC, Jaka, Callsign, ElroyAir, Vow, and Cart.com, among others, in its portfolio.

Prosperity7 adds to a long list of new investment firms that are setting up shop in India. Global as well as local fund managers are looking to tap the burgeoning opportunity in the early-stage investing space.

As the funding winter fades globally, the liquidity crunch is easing, and new funds and allocations are now being made. As per data from Tracxn, 42 new funds were raised in 2023, while 110 new funds were launched in 2022 and 198 in 2021.