

## **S'pore new destination for Indian IT**

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Mumbai: As Indian IT firms look at expanding their presence in emerging markets like continental Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada and South East Asia, Singapore cannot be left much far behind. While the region itself is not exactly a 'hub' for Indian IT firms, the government's recent interest in supporting organisations offering the latest digital technologies like cloud, big data, analytics and mobility is something that Indian start ups and IT firms are flocking to.

Singapore, which presently ranks as India's 10th largest global trading partner and largest ASEAN partner, as well as India's largest outbound investment destination, reaching S\$23.8 billion in 2011, according to RBI, also has sizeable Indian investments in Singapore which crossed S\$29.8 million in 2012. Singapore is also India's second-largest investor with a total of \$20.7 billion invested across India over the last 12 years.

While, Singapore's Infocomms industry saw its revenues grow 18.5% in 2011 to reach S\$83.4 billion, its manufacturing output of Infocomms and Consumer Electronics grew by 2.3% year-on-year in 2012, making it number four of the world's top 5 Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) providers, and last year. ICT contributed to 6% of the region's total GDP of S\$360 billion.

In a recent conversation with representatives of the Singapore Economic Development Board that has been present in India since the last ten years, but only recently expanded its India team to attract more Indian investment into Singapore, Koh Jin Hoe, international director (Asia-Pacific), Singapore Economic Development Board (SEDB) told dna, "As a country with no natural resources, Singapore recognises the importance of applied analytics in unlocking the value of data. The Asia-Pacific region is the fastest growing server market, supported by a rapid momentum of data centres being built in the region. Companies value Singapore's talent pool and good infrastructure - such as data centres, data management hubs and high speeds of connectivity around the region - strong competencies in areas such as mobility, enterprise and analytics."

Data analytics is an important growth sector for Singapore. By the end of 2017, it is expected to contribute S\$1 billion in economical value-addition. Today there are about 20 companies playing in the data analytics space.

Some of the prominent Indian IT companies that have presence in Singapore include the likes of Tata Communications' with a commitment to invest approximately S\$110 million per year from 2011 over the next four years, Tata Consultancy Services' which also has its Asia-Pacific headquarters in Singapore with 750 employees, an S\$6 million R&D collaboration with Singapore Management University (SMU) for TCS-SMU iCity Lab, and a S\$2 million 500-seat near-shore delivery centre in Changi Business Park, as the primary software development and delivery centre for the Singapore customers of TCS.

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HCL Technologies also set up its global enterprise mobility lab in Singapore, while L&T Infotech opened its Wealth Management CoE to develop new technologies for its BFSI clients in Singapore.

Infosys and Cognizant also have teams of 400 and 600 employees, respectively in Singapore mainly in the BFSI space, and are now working with Singapore clients to address seven key verticals that the Singapore government is also trying to develop, including retail, manufacturing, healthcare and auto.

Apart from these Indian IT firms, global IT firms like Dell, HP and IBM have established regional and global headquarters in Singapore and are actively involved in R&D and supply chain management, manufacturing, logistics and shared services.

Hoe thus continued, "Indian IT companies partner their clients and Singapore research institutions and universities to establish R&D teams that develop globally-exportable solutions. These companies invest in new technology areas e.g. big data, analytics and mobility to build up vertical domain expertise in Singapore and differentiate them globally."

According to SEDB, "Our strategy is to ensure a steady stream of 2,500 data scientists coming out of the Singapore universities by 2017, as globally data scientists are hard to come by.

Thus, we work with our universities and polytechnics to create masters' programmes or specialisations for one-two years and also internship with companies so that they get hands-on experience. "

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