

# SocGen accelerator cohorts take on real-world problems

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**Bengaluru:** How cool would it be to be interviewed by a bot? Or get a bot's help to network and meet new people? Startup Hyreo has come up with bot Amy to help job applicants and recruiters throughout the recruitment life cycle. Or take Highway Delite, a mobile app that helps highway users plan their trips, giving them information and photos of roadside hotels, petrol pumps and restrooms. The startup, founded by Rajesh G, has now come up with a platform to help differently-abled candidates network, meet industry experts and find jobs. Both of these ventures are working with French banking major Societe Generale in its accelerator programme in Bengaluru. And some of their newer initiatives were developed during their tenure in the programme.

SocGen hopes to integrate Highway Delite's solution into its website for more diverse hiring. Rathnaprabha Manickavachagam, director, innovation and digi-



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tal transformation, Societe Generale Global Solutions Centre, says other banks can also use these solutions.

On demo day for the startups, there were also other banks hearing their pitches. "For the products and solutions the startups come up with, they can approach any bank. We of course have the first right of refusal," Manickavachagam said.

SocGen has set aside €150 million to fund innovation, and the accelerator programme, which started in 2016, is part of that. The programme has seen participation from startups in India, Singapore, Romania, France, UK and Eastern European countries. The latest

batch saw more than 150 applications. SocGen narrowed it down to 20. Manickavachagam says solutions that Indian startups have come up with can have global relevance. He talks about Mumbai-based Quantafic, founded by Sachin Kulkarni and Ajita Mohapatra. Quantafic uses image recognition technology for cheque clearance. "We see a lot of use for this at our African bank branches, where there is heavy reliance and processing of cheques," says Manickavachagam.

For tracking and maintaining an audit trail of real-time movement of people, goods and products, three startups came up with different solutions for SEZ compliance. "They can be used by any corporate or manufacturer at an SEZ to ensure there's automated generation of reports and quality checks for compliance," says Manickavachagam. Merak, another startup in the programme, has come up with a handwriting recognition tool to read invoices—the deep learning tool has a 95% accuracy rate in figuring out scribbles in French and English.