

Startupbootcamp chooses Miami for first U.S. accelerator

By Nancy Dahlberg
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Startupbootcamp, Europe's largest business accelerator operating in eight countries, will launch its first U.S. program in Miami, with \$2 million in support from the [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#).

The organizations will announce Monday that the Miami program will focus on supporting and scaling startups in digital health, building on both the city's reputation as a center for healthcare and life sciences and its position as a launchpad into Latin America.

Christian Seale will be managing director of Startupbootcamp Miami, an accelerator program that will focus on digital health.

Startupbootcamp operates 10 accelerators across Europe and one in Singapore — each focused on an industry suited to the location — and has been actively looking to expand into the United States, said Alex Farcet, who founded Startupbootcamp in Copenhagen in 2010. Since then, Startupbootcamp has supported 290 startups, of which over 70 percent have received an average of \$660,000 in funding and together have created 1,160 jobs.

After three trips to Miami in the past three or four months, Farcet was sold on South Florida. "It just feels like the right time. We think we are in the sweet spot of being early but not completely pioneers. Miami itself and the health focus, access and visibility with Latin America, the support of the Knight Foundation — a lot of things came together that felt right," Farcet said. "Miami is ready, and we are ready for Miami."



Farcet said Startupbootcamp will put its proven accelerator and mentorship model to work helping to find, support, fund and grow 30 digital health startups over three years. [Startupbootcamp Miami](#) will invite entrepreneurs from across the globe to apply; 10 companies per year will be selected to participate in the three-month program. Applications will be due Feb. 1 and the first program will begin next spring; entrepreneurs can find more information and apply at <https://www.f6s.com/startupbootcampdigitalhealthmiami2016/apply>.

Each chosen startup will receive a three-month accelerator program, six months of free co-working office space, a seed investment of \$20,000 with possible additional investments up to \$100,000, and in-kind services from partners such as Google, PayPal and Amazon Web Services. More than 100 participating mentors will come from companies, venture firms and universities across the U.S., including Microsoft, CVS Health, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Healthways, Lyra Health, Bessemer Venture Partners, Google Ventures, MIT and Harvard.

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Matt Haggman, Miami program director of the Knight Foundation

The Miami area has a few accelerators, including the Knight-supported Venture Hive downtown, but it's not enough to support the ecosystem, said Matt Haggman, the Miami program director of the Knight Foundation [who is spearheading efforts](#) to develop a tech and startup ecosystem. "We think Startupbootcamp is complementary to what is here because it is focused on a vertical," Haggman said. "We have this huge healthcare system in Miami, and you

are seeing some connection but not enough. This is a way to connect the dots.”

The Startupbootcamp funding is one of the top three Knight grants supporting Miami entrepreneurship. Knight has committed about \$18 million to 165 organizations and projects in the past three years, including Endeavor, the Idea Center at Miami Dade College, LaunchCode and eMerge Americas.

Christian Seale will run the Miami program as managing director. Previously, he helped build Startupbootcamp’s Smart Transport & Energy accelerator in Berlin. He is also a founding member of Equitable Origin, a certification program for responsible energy production. Seale, who has an MBA from Harvard Business School, has also worked for venture capital firm Maveron, Goldman Sachs, Teach for America and has spent a year in Barranquilla, Colombia, as a Fulbright Scholar.

Seale and Farcet said the decision to focus on digital health emerged after a number of discussions with leaders in the entrepreneurship community. Startupbootcamp will look for companies at the intersection of technology, in areas such as remote-patient monitoring, population health management, personalized medicine, telemedicine, payer administration and analytics, big-data and fraud detection.

Seale hopes some of the Miami program’s startups will serve up solutions for the growing yet underserved U.S. Latino population: “Latinos soon will comprise 30 percent of the U.S. population yet fewer than 4 percent of healthcare providers speak Spanish and many do not know how to approach the cultural and economic diversity within the Latino population. More broadly, we seek to support the eradication of healthcare disparities in the U.S.”

The accelerator location hasn’t yet been selected, but it will likely be a 4,000- to 6,000-square-foot space in Wynwood or downtown Miami with room to grow, said Seale, who has been visiting the area for tech events for a couple years and is relocating to South Florida now. Miami-based Carevoyance, which provides a platform for healthcare companies to access and analyze data, and its co-founder Abhinav Gautam will be part of Startupbootcamp’s Entrepreneur-in-Residence program.

Startupbootcamp Miami will host an internship program, and it will produce educational events and pitch days open to the public as well as make training available online. One event is already planned: Startupbootcamp and the Idea Center at Miami Dade College will co-host an [MIT Hacking Medicine](#) hackathon Feb. 20-21, Seale said.

The accelerator will partner with the Frost Museum of Science to test products and services from Startupbootcamp ventures, and is working with the Idea Center at Miami Dade College and U Innovation at the University of Miami to support more local innovation. “We want to help transform Miami into a place where if you want to start a healthcare company Miami is flat out on the top of your list,” Seale said.

In addition to the Knight Foundation, Startupbootcamp is backed by Univision, Nicklaus Children’s Hospital and Microsoft’s BizSpark Program as well as Dr. Maurice R. Ferré, chairman of Insightec and co-founder of MAKO Surgical, Michael Simkins, president and CEO of Innovate Development Group, which is leading the Miami Innovation District project, Miro Ventures and Rokk3r Labs.

Farcet said that historically, the mix of teams in other Startupbootcamp accelerators has been about 80 percent international and 20 percent local, and one of the measures of success for the new program will be how many of the entrepreneurs stay and grow their companies in Miami after the program is over.

“This is a test of both Startupbootcamp and Miami’s broader startup ecosystem,” said Farcet. “There are good programs in Miami already and a lot of initiatives. We expect to inject new talent and new blood by importing people and showing that Miami is a really strong alternative to Boston and California.”

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