

SICC Mission to India: July 20 to 25 **Activities and Outcomes**

By Dr. Dorit Sallis, Executive Director, SICC
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From July 20 to 25, 2009 an SICC mission to India took place. The aim of this mission which was jointly led by Franz Probst, Chairman, SICC and Dr. Ursula Renold, Director General, Swiss Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET), was twofold. The central objective was to assess the progress of the VET project thus far, and meet with key partners who could facilitate the project's implementation going forward.

The VET initiative aims to introduce elements of the Swiss dual-track vocational system to India in order to address the country's shortfall of skilled factory labour. Select industrial training institutes (ITIs) from the States of Maharashtra and Karnataka, as well as four Swiss companies, Bobst India, Burckhardt Compressions India, Bühler India and Rieter India, are participating in the pilot project. In the first phase, local Indian instructors and trainers are completing courses from Swiss teachers and technical trainers on Swiss approaches to teaching manufacturing theory and practice. The local teachers and masters will, in turn, adopt these approaches when instructing their students in the classroom and on the factory floor. The project will be ramped up in 2010 and 2011 to include more sectors and companies. The ultimate goal is for the Indian students to graduate with a diploma or a certificate that will be recognized in both India and Switzerland.



The first cohort of ITI teachers are instructed in pedagogical methods by Martin Holder, SVIFET.



The ITI teachers received diplomas for completing their VET training at a ceremony in Pune on July 19. Ambassador Welti and Dr. Schipfer, SVIFET look on,

The delegation included Franz Probst, Dr. Ursula Renold, Dr. Dalia Schipfer, Director General, Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SVIFET), Chandra Kumar, SICC, VET Director, India, J. P. Pradeep, SICC, VET Manager India, Thérèse Künzli, SICC, VET Director Switzerland, José Oberson, OPET, VET Manager, Switzerland and Julie Bitterli, trainee carpenter. The focus of activity for the group was the VET Project.



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The second objective pertained to SICC India administration, specifically, transferring the SICC secretariat from Delhi to Mumbai and optimizing strategic and operational processes among the three SICC offices in Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai. Dr. Dorit Sallis, Executive Director, SICC handled this aspect of the program.

The team, accompanied by Daniel Freihofer, Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Switzerland in India, and joined at key events en route by H.E. Ambassador Philippe Welti and Mrs. Myrtha Welti, travelled to Pune, Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore.

A number of key events stand out in a week jam-packed with activities:

∞ Four Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) Signed

SICC signed MoUs. On July 20 MoUs with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) were signed. On July 22 an MoU with the Department of Vocational and Educational Training (DVET), Maharashtra State, was concluded, and on July 24 with the Department of Employment & Training (DVET), Karnataka State.

SICC has now officially formalized its cooperation with four institutions that will provide key support for the VET project and other SICC activities. While the MoUs with CII and FICCI encompass a broad co-operation with SICC, the MoUs with the two DVETs focus on the VET project only. The first joint SICC/CII activity will be a pre-WEF Event in Zurich in January 2010, which we will henceforth repeat on an annual basis.

∞ Three SICC Dinner Seminars

SICC India kicked off its program activities for the second half of 2009 with three dinner seminars on the occasion of the mission. On July 20, a dinner seminar was hosted by Ambassador Philippe Welti and Mrs. Myrtha Welti at the Embassy of Switzerland in Delhi. In Mumbai, a dinner seminar took place at the Trident Hotel on July 21, and in Bangalore at the Chancery Pavilion on July 24. The main purpose of these events was to showcase the VET program to members of the local business and educational community. Speakers included Franz Probst, Dr. Ursula Renold and Chandra Kumar.

In Delhi, Sharda Prasad, Director General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labor and Employment, Government of India, attended the function. In Mumbai, J. D. Bhutange, Director, Vocational Education & Training (DVET), Maharashtra State, Ambassador Welti and the Honorable Dr. Indu Shahani, Sheriff of Mumbai, were guests of honor. In Bangalore, we were privileged to have with us the Honorable B. N. Bachegowda, Minister of Labor, Government of Karnataka and S. R. Umashankar, Commissioner, Department of Employment & Training (DVET), Karnataka State. SICC signed MoUs with the DVETs of Maharashtra and Karnataka at the dinner events. These occasions also offered members and partners of SICC India to meet and network with the Swiss delegation and one another.

∞ Visits to Robst India Pvt. Ltd. and Bühler India Pvt. Ltd.

Intimate cooperation with the private sector lies at the heart of the VET project philosophy. Indeed, the selection of apprentices and sectors is determined by the needs of the companies involved in the project. The fact that the program is shaped from the grass roots upwards is a paradigm shift compared to similar projects, and is intended to directly answer industry's needs. Ultimately, it not only enhances the population of local skilled labor in India, but positively impacts the bottom lines of Swiss companies involved in the project, by training workers in the quality standards and methods of Switzerland's VET program.

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We had fruitful meetings at two Swiss companies involved in the pilot project - Bobst India, Pune, and Bühler India, Bangalore. The next phase of the VET Initiative is already underway at Bobst India. The delegation had the opportunity to see technical trainers from Bobst, Bühler, Bürckhardt Compression and Rieter India being instructed in Swiss shop-floor methods by Emil Bühler on behalf of Swissmem and Michel Marendaz, from Bobst. These technical trainers will complete their course at the end of August, in time for the first cohort of apprentices who begin their program in October.

Not only did the delegation evaluate the program thus far with Rodolphe Keller, Managing Director, Bobst India and Dipak Mane, Managing Director, Bühler India. They also addressed required steps toward scaling up the project to include more companies and sectors in the coming two years.

~ SICC India Administration

At its AGM on June 30, 2009, SICC members voted in Ranjit Shahani as the new All India SICC President. Given this fact, the SICC India secretariat has moved from Delhi (where it operated from Rieter in the past year) to Mumbai.

The SICC secretariat in Mumbai is currently managed by BTS Financial Advisors on an interim basis. Dorit Sallis met with the responsables at BTS, Dulcina Mendes and Vipal Desai, to discuss administrative and accounting processes. She also met with potential candidates for a full-time SICC management position. A full-time SICC India manager and a permanent SICC India secretariat will be put in place in the coming months.



Signing the MoUs with (clockwise) CII, FICCI, DVET Maharashtra State and DVET Karnataka State.

Stay posted for more information about the SICC Mission and VET Project in the fall 2009 SICC Bulletin.