

## SKILLS AND EDUCATION

### SECTOR POLICY GROUP MEETING

On 15th October, we held the third meeting of the Skills sector policy group, with attendees in Gurgaon and London. The meeting was chaired by Kevin McCole, Chief Operating Officer of the UKIBC.

### UKIBC UPDATE:

The group was updated on the findings of the recent 'ease of doing business' survey as well as the upcoming visit of the Indian Prime Minister in November. They were also informed that the UKIBC met with Mr Atul Chaturvedi, Joint Secretary of the DIPP, on 9<sup>th</sup> October in London. Mr Chaturvedi has invited UK companies to put forward their views and suggestions for improving India's operating environment.

ATTENDEES		
John Yates	City and Guilds	New Ventures Director
Sunita Kapoor	UKTI India	Sr Trade and Investment Adviser UK Trade & Investment
Arnold Longboy	The University of Chicago Booth School of Business	Managing Director, Executive Education, EMEA & APAC
James Lockyer	ACT	Development Director
David Boddy	Anglo Schools International Services	Principal Partner
Najmal Hassan	University of Greenwich	Senior Lecturer
Jesh Rajasingham	UKIBC	Skills and Education Sector Manager
Kevin McCole	UKIBC	COO
Ayena Gupta	UKIBC	Policy and Research Executive

## KEY ISSUES

### 1. Skills Pledge

The UK India Business Council is in talks with UK businesses on the Skills Pledge initiative which will promote investment into skills training in India. UK companies that sign the Pledge will state the number of people they will train and the amount they have invested, and they will commit to providing training to the same standard as they do in the UK. The intention is to announce the Pledge at the time for Mr Modi's visit in November.

**Actions:** The UK India Business Council will organise a meeting of UK businesses in India on the 21<sup>st</sup> October to assess the progress of the Skills Pledge.

### 2. CSR Fund

The UK India Business Council is working on a CSR Fund which will allow UK companies to invest collectively in skill development. Currently, UK companies in India spend around 4.4% of their profits on CSR which is over double the government requirement. The CSR fund aims to facilitate the use of these funds by making it easier for companies to meet their CSR requirements. The fund would be beneficial to companies by reducing the administrative burden they face in meeting their CSR targets.

**Actions:** Discussions with the Chairman of the NSDA (National Skill Development Agency) Subramanian Ramadurai and Divya Nambiar – Consultant of the Skills Ministry.

### 3. Executive leadership and management training

It was discussed that a collective approach on promoting UK's expertise on executive leadership and management training in India can be explored by bringing together UK business schools and professional institutions. Currently, most training is for entry level skills and for very senior executives and there is a need for upskilling in the mid management level. It is important to create an awareness among Indian employers on the importance of upskilling and international training standards and a collective approach can be useful.

**Actions:** Jesh Rajasingham, UKIBC, to organise a meeting in November of UK business schools and professional institutions.

### 4. International Standards

The importance of having international standards of training in India was discussed. It was felt that training standards were not uniform even across multinational companies operating in India. Implementation of international standards by the Indian Government and employers will improve India's labour mobility and will attract more FDI. This is also applicable to Indian schools as international standards of teaching and qualifications will help them to showcase their strengths and potential globally.

### 5. Ease of Doing Business

The findings of the UKIBC survey were shared with the group – GST emerged as the main reform sought by UK companies. Members from the Skills Sector Policy Group suggested that the Skills sector requires that the Skill providers often work with the Indian Government – both at centre and state levels. To make these frequent interactions with the Government more seamless it was suggested that contracts should be more flexible, allowing for more transparency. This would ensure timely delivery, payments and completion of projects

## KEY TAKEAWAY

- It was agreed that the Skills Pledge would be discussed with the appropriate ministry and the UK India Business Council will continue to work to increase participants for the Skills Pledge and the CSR Fund.
  - Members views on the ease of doing business would be included in the UKIBC's report.
  - The UK India Business Council will initiate discussions with business schools and professional institutions to structure the engagement strategy with Indian corporates on executive leadership and management training.
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