

Chintan Shivir 2025

A Roadmap for India's Footwear and Leather Future

By Mr. Ashish Kumar, Managing Editor (Content)

On 22 December 2025, the DPIIT, in association with FDDI hosted a focused Chintan Shivir at its Noida campus. The programme was anchored with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. The objective was direct. Build a practical roadmap for the future of India's footwear and leather sector.

The one day programme brought together policy leaders, industry experts, academicians, and institutional heads. Discussions focused on skilling, design and innovation, industry collaboration, and standards and compliance. The intent was execution. Outcomes were defined with ownership, timelines, and monitoring.

The Shivir opened with a campus walkthrough. Participants reviewed academic facilities, centres of excellence, and testing infrastructure. This grounded policy discussions in on ground capability and scale.

The keynote address by senior leadership from Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade highlighted the urgency of industry aligned skilling, export readiness, and compliance driven growth. The message was unambiguous. Talent must be factory ready. Research must be applied.



Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, MD, FDDI presenting a memento to Ms. Nidhi Kesarwani, IAS, Joint Secretary, DPIIT

The institutional presentation by FDDI outlined Vision 2030. The focus was national integration, strong industry linkage, and outcome driven education. FDDI positioned itself as a sector enabler with a pan India footprint.

Four thematic panels worked in parallel.

The first panel examined future prospects and skilling. Members stressed industry led training models, mandatory factory immersion, live projects, and cluster based short term programmes. A national footwear skilling framework anchored by FDDI emerged as a key recommendation.

The second panel focused on design, research, and innovation. Discussions covered materials research, comfort science, biomechanics, and technology transfer. Structured collaboration with leading institutions and stronger applied research linked to industry needs were prioritised.

The third panel addressed industry academia collaboration and asset utilisation.

Participants recommended clear systems to convert industry problem statements into student projects and applied research. Better utilisation of campus infrastructure through incubation, PPP models, and CSR partnerships was emphasised.

The fourth panel focused on policy, standards, and ecosystem strengthening. Members called for a structured compliance roadmap, exporter readiness clinics, and alignment with global standards. FDDI was envisioned as a national knowledge hub for standards, testing, and compliance support. A defining feature of the Chintan Shivir was its implementation focus. Dedicated working groups were constituted with clear mandates and monthly reporting. A 30, 60, and 90 day action plan was defined to ensure follow through.

The DPIIT FDDI Chintan Shivir 2025 marked a decisive shift from dialogue to delivery. It reinforced the role of institutions as change engines. It laid the foundation for a stronger, more competitive footwear and leather ecosystem driven by skills, innovation, and standards.



Discussion in progress during the Chintan Shivir

FDDI, India Signs Landmark MoA with the University of Northampton, UK

FDDI, India has entered into a comprehensive Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the University of Northampton (UoN), United Kingdom, marking a significant milestone in its international academic engagement.

This landmark partnership strengthens institutional collaboration and creates enhanced opportunities for FDDI students both past and present—to pursue globally recognized programmes at UoN.

On behalf of FDDI, Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director (MD), signed the MoA whereas from UoN, Mr. Anne-Marie Kilday, Vice – Chancellor and Professor of Criminal History signed the MoA which will remain in force for three years, with provisions for renewal by mutual consent.

The MoA encompasses the introduction of international academic pathways, including dual-degree and joint programmes to promote academic mobility; the launch of



From Left: Mr. Mathew Hanes, Global Director, UoN and Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, MD, FDDI exchanging the MoA

specialized short-term, medium-term, and niche courses aligned with evolving industry requirements; faculty and student exchange initiatives to foster cross-border

knowledge sharing; and collaborative research and development endeavours aimed at driving innovation and addressing emerging challenges in the global footwear, fashion, and allied industries.

FDDI Collaborates with FITT, IIT Delhi for Research and Innovation

FDDI has entered into a strategic collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT Delhi).



From Left: Dr. Arnab Chanda, Associate Professor CBME, IIT Delhi, Dr. Nikhil Agarwal, MD, FITT, IIT Delhi, Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, MD, FDDI and Mr. Sharad Srivastava, Joint Director, CoE, during the MoU exchange ceremony fostering academic and research collaboration

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi. This partnership marks a significant step forward in advancing research and development, consultancy activities, and knowledge transfer between the two premier institutions.

The MoU encompasses the exchange of academic and research materials, publications, and intellectual properties; cooperation in project proposals and research activities of mutual interest; organization of joint short-term programs and intellectual enrichment

opportunities; and the shared use of laboratory and research facilities to strengthen collaborative innovation and skill development.

The MoU was formally signed by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director (MD), FDDI, and Dr. Nikhil Agarwal, Managing Director, FITT, IIT Delhi.

Dr. Arnab Chanda, Associate Professor at the Centre for Biomedical Engineering (CBME), IIT Delhi, and joint faculty at AIIMS, New Delhi, will coordinate the collaboration from IIT Delhi, while Mr. Sharad Srivastava, Joint Director, CoE, will lead coordination efforts from FDDI.