

FDDI Signs Landmark MoU with Government of Punjab to Drive Skill Development and Industrial Growth

FDDI signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Government of Punjab, on 15 June 2026, marking a significant step towards advancing collaboration in higher education, skill development, innovation, testing infrastructure, entrepreneurship, research and industrial capacity building.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Mr. Jaspreet Singh, IAS, Director of Industries & Commerce, Government of Punjab and Director General, NIIFT.



A view of the MoU signing ceremony

The occasion was attended by Ms. Sarita Duhan, Executive Director, FDDI, Banur; Mr. Prashant Kumar Saxena, Head – Business Development & Skilling Projects, FDDI Head Office; Dr. Kanu Thind, PCS, Joint Director, Industries & Commerce, Government of Punjab and Director, NIIFT; Mr. Ramandeep Singh, Registrar, NIIFT Mohali; and Dr. Simrita Singh, Principal, NIIFT.

The partnership aims to develop industry-ready talent, strengthen MSMEs and startups, enhance quality assurance mechanisms, and accelerate growth across Punjab's footwear, leather, sports goods, fashion, retail and allied sectors.

Through this collaboration, FDDI and the Government of Punjab reaffirm their shared commitment to building a future-ready ecosystem that integrates academia, industry and government. The initiative is expected to promote innovation-led development, support sustainable economic growth, generate employment opportunities and strengthen the overall industrial ecosystem of the region.

Driving Excellence: FDDI's Industry Impact

Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening India's footwear ecosystem and advancing industry excellence, Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI), in collaboration with the CII Institute of Quality (CII-IQ), organized the Leaders' Town Hall on "Transforming the Footwear Industry for Global Competitiveness."

The Town Hall was chaired by Mr. Razak, Managing Director, VKC Group, and attended by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Mr. Neil Castelino, Chief Executive Officer, CII-IQ.

The Leaders' Town Hall witnessed the participation of distinguished leaders representing diverse segments of the footwear, leather, manufacturing, quality, and allied industries including Mr. Vishal Saxena, Senior Consultant, CII IQ; and Mr. Biju K. Raj, Principal Counsellor, CII IQ, Mr. Nikhil Dua, Whole Time Director, Relaxo Footwears Ltd.; Mr. Ashish Nigam, AVP, Relaxo Footwears Ltd.; Mr. Arush, Superhouse; Mr. Arvind, Managing Director, Arvind Gramodyog; Mr. Nalin Gupta, Managing Director, Infinity; Mr. Parimal Bajpayee, Director, Amit Gramodyog; Mr. Imran, Managing Director, S.G. Exports; Mr. C. Govindraju, Vice President, Bata India; Mr. Saurabh Bairathi, Managing Director, Bairathi Shoes India; Mr. Sushil Agarwal, Managing Director, Derpa Industrial Polymer; Mr. Pawan Agrawal, Managing Director, Bansal Industries; Mr. Yunus, Managing Director, East West Tanners; Mr. Tauseef Mirza, Director, Mirza International (Unit-VI), Noida; Mr. Pradeep Sharma, Managing Director, Abros Sports; Mr. Madan Sharma, Managing Director, Dharamveer & Sons; Mr. Sanjay Gupta, President, Indian Footwear Components Manufacturers Association (IFCOMA); Mr. Ajay Gaur, Deputy Director, IFCOMA; Mr. Rohit Bansal, Managing Director, Sumanglam Footwear Pvt. Ltd.; Mr. Vipin Seth, Managing Director, Versatile;; Mr. Dharmender Narula, Managing Director, Guru Kripa Footwear Industries Pvt. Ltd.; Mr. Raj Kumar Gupta, Managing Director, Action; and Mr. Praveen Sharma, Plant Head, Roorkee, Mallcom (India) who shared valuable perspectives on quality excellence and industry transformation for enhancing India's global competitiveness and accelerating sectoral growth.



Memento and Certification Distribution Ceremony

Participants deliberated on key priorities including quality excellence, productivity enhancement, operational efficiency, sustainability, innovation, export readiness and emerging growth opportunities.

Through insightful discussions, exchange of best practices and industry perspectives, the Town Hall fostered meaningful collaboration and reflected a collective commitment towards building a quality-driven, innovation-led and globally competitive footwear ecosystem.

Representing FDDI, Mr. Prashant Kumar Saxena, Head – Business Development; Ms. Rashmi Asthana, Head – International Testing Centre (ITC); Mr. Sharad Srivastava, Joint Director – Centre of Excellence (CoE); and Ms. Shraddha Tripathy, Head – Placements & Alumni Connect, actively participated in the strategic deliberations.

As part of the event, FDDI also organized a Memento and Certification Distribution Ceremony to recognise its Gold, Silver and Bronze Members for their continued commitment to quality, compliance, testing excellence and industry best practices. Mementos and certificates were presented by the dignitaries in recognition of members' valuable contributions towards strengthening the quality ecosystem of the footwear and leather industry.



The ceremony highlighted the impact of FDDI's Business Development initiatives and the International Testing Centre (ITC) in promoting testing, certification and quality assurance practices aligned with national and international standards.

Mementos and certificates were presented by Mr. Vivek Sharma, Managing Director, FDDI; Mr. Razak, Managing Director, VKC Group; and Mr. Neil Castelino, CEO, CII Institute of Quality, in recognition of the members' valuable association and contribution towards strengthening the quality ecosystem of the footwear and leather industry.

The ceremony reflected the strong industry partnerships nurtured through FDDI's Business Development initiatives and the dedicated support extended by the International Testing Centre (ITC) in advancing testing, certification, and quality assurance practices across footwear, leather, and allied sectors. Through its state-of-the-art testing and certification infrastructure, ITC-FDDI continues to support industry in meeting national and international quality benchmarks while enabling enhanced competitiveness in global markets.

Extending its commitment beyond industrial excellence to environmental stewardship, FDDI also marked World Environment Day 2026 through a meaningful plantation drive under the Government of India's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative.



Rooted in sustainability, FDDI's World Environment Day initiative