



CEFIPRA: CATALYSING INDO-FRENCH RELATIONS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

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The representatives of ASTech-SYSTEMATIC India Hub, Ms. Foram Chikhal & Mrs. Shweta Pahuja, interviewed Dr. V V Rao, Principal Scientist at "Centre Franco-Indien pour la Promotion de la Recherche Avancée" (CEFIPRA) to gain an insight into the working of this organization.

1. What is CEFIPRA and its activities?

CEFIPRA was established 25 years ago with the objective of promoting collaborative research in advanced areas of Science and Technology between India and France after an inter-governmental agreement. In initial phases, CEFIPRA involved itself in establishing linkages between R & D groups of the institutions of the two countries. Today, we have supported nearly 450 projects in all areas of Science and Technology. More importantly, the linkages which have been established between collaborative scientists of the two countries are being sustained through and outside CEFIPRA.

Towards the end of the first decade, CEFIPRA had expanded its activities to involve industries from the two countries with an idea towards translational research. The programme of Industrial Research projects has been in place for the last nearly 10 years with some success stories.

The major impact of CEFIPRA has been in establishing linkages between various stakeholders in the knowledge innovation chain of the two countries over the last 25 years. With this foundation, CEFIPRA has embarked on programmes that link the national agencies on either side involved in each step of the knowledge-innovation chain to facilitate interactions, in both core knowledge generation, as well as economic development of societal interest.



2. As CEFIPRA just celebrated its 25th anniversary, what are the new projects it would like to initiate?

Having established its presence in both the countries, CEFIPRA has undertaken the task of linking up agencies involved in both the knowledge generation sector as well as those agencies involved in the pursuit of economic development with the two countries. Significant among these are the linkages with OSEO France and TDB in India, ANR and DST, DST & CNRS. At the same time, CEFIPRA has been involved with agencies directly interacting with the small and medium scale sectors in India and France so as to promote direct interactions between these industries for mutual benefit.

3. What kind of assistance does CEFIPRA receive in order to ensure a smooth collaboration between the SMEs and R & D laboratories?

As already mentioned above, we have an Industrial Research Programme, which allows supportive interaction between small and medium scale industries of both the nations through Pôle de Compétitivité and Chambers of Commerce & Industry in France, and Associations of Indian Industries in India. While we support collaborative efforts in the form of interaction in seminars, workshops between SMEs of the two countries, as also projects of duration up to 3 years, budget could be a limiting factor with the expanded activities. It is for this reason we have embarked on the programme of tie-up with the national funding agencies of the two countries like OSEO and TDB that would enable us to fulfill this role in a more successful manner.



4. Thanks to CEFIPRA, “Maintag”, “Silkan” and Mr. Gerard POIRIER, VP- SYSTEMATIC attended a seminar organised by CEFIPRA during the Aero India Show in February 2013. Thus convinced by the potential of the Indian market, both Maintag and Silkan, signed an agreement with Indian distributors. Would it be possible for you to share with us other such examples of cooperation between France and India initiated by CEFIPRA?

It is indeed gratifying to note that with the help of CEFIPRA, CCI Paris and IFCCI India, two French companies; Maintag and Silkan have been able to sign the agreement with Indian industries that would help French companies to expand their markets in areas of Aerospace in India.

This domain of direct liaison between SMEs of the two countries is fairly recent to CEFIPRA. However, we do have a couple of projects, which are nearing completion that would enable both French and Indian industries to have great economic outcome based on the projects supported by us. At this moment, it would be difficult for us to expand on this as the developments are in the process of being protected.