

# Decode: Decoding the Design Code

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Launch of DCODE: The CII-IISc Design Workshop Series on New Product Development, by Anurag Kumar, Director, IISc, (extreme right) along with (right to left): Amaresh Chakrabarti, Chairperson, CPDM; Ramesh Datla, Chairman, CII Southern Region; Gregoire Bisson, Director, The Hague Registry, WIPO and Vikram Jayaram, Chairperson, Division of Mechanical Sciences, IISc. (Courtesy: CPDM)

“It is not hard to spot a good design,” said Anurag Kumar, Director, IISc, citing examples such as Bose Sound Systems and cars made by Italian companies. He noted that though India can be proud of ‘beautiful design’ in many traditional areas of handicraft like textiles, leather and basketry, the same cannot be said of the design of seemingly simple industrial products manufactured in the country, such as a UPS or a power supply unit.

He was speaking at the launch event, on 27 July 2016 at IISc, of DCODE, a series of two-day knowledge and capacity-building workshops on New Product Development. Organized by the Centre for Product Design and Manufacturing (CPDM), IISc, along with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), DCODE aims to inform and train industry professionals on how better design and development can help them gain a competitive edge in Indian and global markets.

During the inaugural session, Vikram Jayaram, Chairperson, Division of Mechanical Sciences, outlined the motivation of the workshop series and highlighted how CPDM was uniquely poised to lead it. This is particularly so in the context of the ‘Make-in-India’ initiative, he felt, where engineering science, design and manufacturing must work hand-in-hand in order to develop successful products.

Ramesh Datla, Chairman, CII Southern Region, and an alumnus of IISc, recounted how his learning experiences at IISc were invaluable in his later work in industry. CII, he said, sees design as a key element in strengthening competitiveness of Indian industry. Gregoire Bisson, Director, The Hague Registry,

WIPO, explained the role World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a United Nations body, has been playing in Intellectual Property and Design Protection around the world. He urged the industry to see design registration as a protection analogous to an insurance policy. In this context, he spoke about the Hague Agreement, an international system that brings together member countries under a common system for design registration. He said that India, currently not a member of this arrangement, should consider becoming one.

Amaresh Chakrabarti, Chairperson, CPDM, spoke of the vision behind the DCODE workshop series, which is targeted at the MSME sector. The low GDP contribution of the Indian MSME sector despite its relatively high employment numbers, said Chakrabarti, signals the relative lack of innovation in the sector. This, he felt, presents an opportunity for design-led innovation. To this end, the workshop series will focus both on the hard aspects of design---engineering---and the soft aspects, such as aesthetics and usability.

The inaugural session was followed by a walk-through poster exhibition featuring more than 20 posters on the research labs and design projects at CPDM. The later part of the day had sessions targeted at industry, policy and academia. Anil Kakodkar, Former Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy; Baldev Raj, Director, National Institute of Advanced Studies; B Gurumoorthy, Chief Executive, Society for Innovation and Development, IISc; and B Ravi, Institute Chair Professor, IIT Bombay were among the speakers and panelists in these sessions.

The first workshop took place on 28 and 29 July 2016 at CPDM, with industry participants joining from all over the country. The sessions, conducted by faculty members from CPDM and other departments of IISc, also included talks by industry representatives. The workshop will now travel to Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Delhi, with a target of sensitizing around 200 MSME companies.

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