

Minutes
of the
3rd Meeting of the Swiss-Indian Joint Committee on Science &
Technology
Berne
(18th September 2015)

The third meeting of the Swiss-Indian Joint Committee for scientific and technological cooperation, established within the framework of the Science and Technology Agreement of 10th November 2003 between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of India, was held in Bern on 18th September 2015.

The meeting was jointly inaugurated by State Secretary Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation of Switzerland and by Professor Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Science & Technology.

The list of the Swiss and Indian delegation members is enclosed as **Annex-I**.

The adopted agenda of the Joint Committee meeting is enclosed as **Annex-II**.

The main objective of the JC meeting was to assess and review the ongoing S&T cooperation between Switzerland and India, amongst others under the Indo Swiss Joint Research Programme (ISJRP) since its inception until the conclusion of the Executive Programme of Cooperation (POC) for the period 2013-2016, to exchange respective views on the future cooperation and its modalities.

Dr. **Mauro Dell'Ambrogio** welcomed the delegations to the 3rd Swiss-Indian Joint Committee meeting, and the occasion of their visit to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme. He greeted this opportunity to look back on the last phase of cooperation and discuss future collaboration. He mentioned the upcoming elections in October 2015 and the future adoption by the Federal Council of the Federal Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation (ERI) for the years 2017-2020, which will define the priorities and the funding for the corresponding period. International research cooperation remain one

of Switzerland's priorities in the frame of ERI for the next period, and SERI is committed to further strengthen the cooperation with India within this framework.

Prof. **Ashutosh Sharma**, while thanking the Swiss side for hosting the 3rd Swiss-Indian Joint Committee meeting on Science & Technology in Berne, highlighted some of the recent policy developments in India particularly in science and education sector. Prof. Sharma briefly highlighted the role of DST, particularly in the context of on Science & Technology for economic development through the vision of the government of India, namely Health and Clean India, Innovation and Skill Development. Some of the new initiatives of DST include Super Computing, Big Data Initiative, Remapping of India (Geospatial information system) and Digital India, etc.

A) Review of the on-going S&T activities:

Dr. **Garbiela Tejada, Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne EPFL** (as Leading House), presented the outcome of the previous phase of cooperation 2008-2012. Both sides took note of the progress of the Swiss-Indian Executive Programme of Cooperation for the period 2013-2016, wherein both sides are investing an equivalent amount of funding, through which a total of 11 joint research projects and two thematic workshops were supported. Two new instruments, financed by the Swiss side, were also introduced: the "Academia-Industry Training", a programme designed to fulfil the gap between scientific research and the industry, and the "FLASH Research Programme", intended to react immediately to exceptional events. The first cycle of Academia-Industry Training took place in 2014 and a second edition will be organised in 2015-16, whereas the FLASH call was launched in 2015 and 4 grants were allocated. A third workshop is planned for 2016.

The developments in human and social sciences projects within the framework of the ISJRP were highlighted, especially through the signature in 2012 of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Lausanne (as Associated Leading House) and the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). Since this agreement, two joint calls were launched allowing to fund 11 projects and two seminars were organised in Switzerland and India. Another workshop will take place in New Delhi and will be followed by a call forecasted for the end of 2015.

Professor Urs Baltensperger (President of Specialised Committee International Cooperation, Swiss National Science Foundation SNSF) also gave an overview of last

joint call launched in 2014 and of SNSF activities outside the ISJRP, underlining further possibilities of collaboration for Swiss and Indian researchers.

Finally, a presentation was given on the Year of Swiss innovation in India (YOSI). The Embassy and other representations of Switzerland in India have identified the landing of Solar Impulse in India as a unique opportunity to launch this initiative, especially designed to strengthen business collaboration and investments between India and Switzerland, to facilitate academic exchange, the sharing of best practices and know-how. Symposia, workshops and travelling exhibitions on diverse topics will take place in major cities all over India between March 2015 and October 2016.

B) Development Cooperation:

The DST and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) expressed satisfaction on the results achieved under the Indo-Swiss Cooperation in the field of “glaciology and related areas”. The different activities of the cooperation included capacity building of young researchers, training programme for officials in the Indian Himalayan Region, collaborative studies on risks, hazards and vulnerabilities, and the promotion of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms. Both sides agreed to further enhance the cooperation in this field over next four years (2016-19) with SDC’s Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme (IHCAP) as knowledge partner of DST’s National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE). The cooperation would further strengthen the partnership by focusing on jointly funded collaborative research studies in the field of glaciology and related areas. It would also continue to strengthen institutional and research capacities in the Indian Himalayan States and promoting science-policy interface.

Both sides also agreed to cooperate in promoting technologies for mitigation and adaptation. The Low Carbon Cement project, which is funded by SDC and implemented by EPFL together with IIT Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, was identified as an interesting project to start collaboration in this field. SDC and DST will work out the modalities of their cooperation on Low Carbon Cement and explore the scope for cooperating on other mitigation/adaptation technologies.

C) Decisions taken by Joint Committee for future cooperation:

Both sides agreed to (details of cooperation to be agreed upon within four weeks):

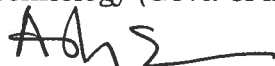
- i. in the framework of the Joint Research Projects with SNFS, launch a call by the end of 2016 if an agreement is reached after discussion and finalisation of the process (joint evaluation of applications, number of projects agreed in advance, timeline and areas of cooperation to be discussed);
- ii. co-support AIT scheme, presently being implemented by EPFL together with Swissnex India. DST would put its concerned division in contact with EPFL to discuss and finalise further details of support;
- iii. subject to availability of funds at both sides, discuss and finalise the launch of a next call under PEP scheme;
- iv. explore the possibilities to connect Swiss and Indian start-ups and industry through R&D projects
- v. broaden the scope of discussions to the Vocational Education and Training, Skill Development and Innovation issues, including the relevant partners whenever required;
- vi. following DST's information about its intention to launch a programme on "Quantitative Social Sciences Research", explore the possibilities for further cooperation in the field of social sciences, especially digital humanities, between EPFL, University of Lausanne (or any other Swiss partner) and DST;
- vii. the Joint Committee endorse the decision to jointly support 11 Joint Research Projects listed in the Annex 3 in the DST/SNSF programme;
- viii. ensure an appropriate working level dialogue between the two sides in the period between the Joint Committee Meetings.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee will take place in India on a mutually agreed date and venue by October 2017.

The discussions were conducted in a most friendly and cordial atmosphere.

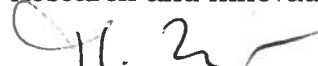
Signed in Berne on 18th September 2015 in two originals in English language.

For the Department of Science &
Technology (Govt. of India)



Prof. Ashutosh Sharma
Secretary

For the State Secretariat for Education
Research and Innovation



Mauro Moruzzi
Ambassador

