DFII Geotechnical Characterisation for Foundations Committee – Progress Update as of 5 March 2020

We are pleased to announce that the committee has steadily developed a 3-month lab technician’s training program over an 18-month period with tangible results. Hopefully, the collective efforts of industry leaders will provide incentive to all stakeholders to develop additional programs in the future that benefit the Indian construction/deep foundation industry. Following is an update as of 5 March 2020:

1. The 10-member DFII for Geotechnical Characterisation for Foundations Committee was formed in Sept ’18 to promote best practices in geotechnical investigation jobs and skill programs catering to this scope.
2. An agreement has been reached on course materials to be covered in 3-month program. Ten chapters of content has been prepared by the committee members, and the course content has been reviewed by Dr. Sastry Putcha from the DFI US team.
3. Mr. Anirudhen is compiling these chapters, along with general chapters like basic mathematics and soft skills, per NSDC norms and preparing a final book, expected to be ready by July ’20.
4. A 5-year MOU was signed in July ’19 with National Academy of Construction (NAC) for implementation of 3-month training programs. DFII will be the knowledge partner and NAC will provide necessary infrastructure/finance to implement the programs.
5. Model Curriculum for a ‘Soil Investigation Lab Technician’ program was developed by DFI and checked/modified by NAC in Aug-Sept ’19.
6. NAC sent it to National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) & Construction Skill Development Council (CSDC), Govt. of India bodies for skill training, for inclusion in approved Job Role Programs of NSDC in mid-Sept ’19.
7. CSDC sought few clarifications regarding career progression for DFII developed programs and employment potential for the said course for qualifying the course for getting necessary approvals by CSDC. These inputs are being provided.
8. Several other documents (Qualification Pack-QP, National Occupational Standards-NOS) are prepared and have been sent to CSDC.
9. CSDC also asked NAC to get validation from 30 small, medium and major organizations in India about the need of the lab technician’s program as per approved format, and letters have been sent to more than 50 organizations seeking their response.
10. Space has been identified for setting up the soil lab at the NAC campus and quotations have been obtained for procurement of lab equipment. Suppliers are being approached to sponsor lab equipment and, depending on the response, NAC may consider funding the purchase of balance equipment from its internal sources.
11. Upon obtaining necessary approvals from CSDC/NSDC, NAC gets necessary grants from concerned government organization for training unemployed youth free of cost and will take the responsibility of providing placement opportunities.
12. At time, 30 trainees can be covered for each 3-month program and in a year, it is possible to cover 120 candidates.
13. These approved programs certified by NSDC are valid across India and any other institution and organization with requisite infrastructure/facilities can provide training to a greater number of candidates.
14. Required mechanism will be developed in stage 2 to assess the competencies of already employed technicians and provide short-term training, conduct testing and issue a certificate. Accompanying course materials will be developed in next stage.

15. Assessment shows that there will be a requirement of approximately 10,000 technicians employed by different soil investigation agencies and engineering colleges across India, and necessary efforts will be made to cover this total requirement in the future with the help of other forward-looking organizations.

16. DFII is thankful to Professor V.S. Raju and other committee members including Mr. Bikshapati and Mr. Radhakrishna from NAC for providing phenomenal support for this initiative at every stage of the implementation.

17. Pranav Jha, assistant coordination engineer at DFI of India, has been posted at NAC for a period of 3 months to closely coordinate with NAC and CSDC/NSDC officials in the accomplishment and positive outcomes of above tasks.