

# “Clients respect Sika as a reliable partner and ‘Building Trust’ is our motto”

Arijit Basu is a techno-marketing professional with more than 18 years of cross functional experience in the field of construction chemicals in Indian market. Mr Basu has been instrumental in new technology introduction and concept selling for entire part of his career and has been associated with the Swiss multinational SIKA AG as the Managing Director for Indian operation and leading a group of motivated professionals and business partners to introduce world class technology solutions for construction industry in an emerging and competitive market like India. His own track record of introducing and successfully establishing many new technologies in competitive Indian market has been well appreciated and recognized in the industry. Mr Basu biggest strength is what he has learnt ‘hands on’ over the years. He is a thorough professional with clear vision and also a person who comes across friendly and easy to approach. CIA World spoke to Arijit Basu.



E x c e r p t s

What are the challenges faced while offering complete construction chemicals and other waterproofing solutions in India?

**Some of the challenges faced are:**

- Lack of Indian standards and codes, multiple overseas codes and standards are in use.
- Government recognition for Construction Chemical as an important and emerging industry.
- Lack of awareness of using speciality chemicals in improving the durability, performance and sustainability of construction.
- Preference of initial cost savings over long term investments and benefits.
- Cost of compromise (in selection of solution and execution)
- Lack of skilled application work force.

How do you view the market for construction chemicals in India? Has there been any impact of global

economic slowdown on your business?

Has there been any escalation in production costs with rise in costs of inputs?

Construction chemical industry still remains a “sunrise” industry with a minimum expected CAGR growth of 10-12% over next 5 years. Refurbishment and Retrofitting of already constructed structures has a clear opportunity. Smart city initiative and development in urbanization will propel the industry growth. Global economic slowdown indirectly has created a challenge specially in terms of infra-structure and manufacturing segments. Input cost rise is also a specific challenge in making products affordable in a competitive market while ensuring a profitable growth.

The infrastructure construction segment has been witnessing an entry of a number of domestic and international players resulting in severe competition.

Please Comment?

Increased competition is always welcome, however, the same should remain healthy and positive. In the absence of a clear guidelines and enforcement by the Govt. in terms of usage and standards of construction chemicals unlike other countries Singapore, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, U.S.A, U.K, Japan and even China, and also the fact that the “entry barrier” is small in this industry, the quality of local competition remains a concern specially for proven and technology leader brands like Sika.

Can you elaborate on the safety aspects being considered while using construction chemicals?

Almost all construction chemicals are very safe to be handled. Like using or handling any other chemicals, the basic safety precautions of preventive protection of vital parts of body like eyes, hands etc. should be followed while using

**Sika was Founded in 1910.** Its Headquarter is in Baar, Switzerland. Sika Group a global specialty chemicals company which supplies to construction markets and the manufacturing industry. Sika is specialized and respected global brand in sealing, bonding, dampening and reinforcing of concrete and steel structures. Sika has over 15,000 employees and a subsidiaries in 91 countries.

**Sika India started its operations in 1985 as an Indian company and was known as Qualcrete India Limited.** In 1987, Qualcrete India Limited forged an alliance with Sika AG, Switzerland and was renamed as SikaQualcrete Limited. In 2002, Sika AG, Switzerland acquired 100% stake in the company and since then the company has been rechristened as Sika India Pvt. Ltd. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of SikaAG.

**Sika India has 11 branch offices** and requisite strength of sales personnel spread across India to meet the varied needs of the market. It has 6 state-of-the-art manufacturing units at Kalyani (West Bengal), Jaipur Bagru & Manda (Rajasthan), Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra), Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu) and Jhagadia (Gujarat). Sika India also serves three export markets namely Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh through a network of associates.

**Currently, Sika India has 350 employees** covering Sales and Marketing, R&D, Technical, Production, Finance and other functions. Sika India is an ISO 9001-2008 & ISO 14001:2004 Company and our Research and Development Centre is recognized by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India.



construction chemicals. The Material Safety Data Sheet must be followed and adhered. In case of any eventual exposure, immediate treatment should be done through medical professionals.

**Have you developed special competencies in: Corrosion Protection, Waterproofing and Epoxy Floorings or any other construction chemicals. Can you elaborate this and also explain the factors that have contributed to your company's growth in India?**

Sika is considered to be technology leader in global construction chemical industry and even in India Sika has pioneered the introduction of many state of the art technology in specific applications like Waterproofing, Roofing, Sealing,

ing technologies like Hydro Swelling water stop (SikaSwell), Adhesive tape system for expansion joints (SikadurCombiflex), Re-injectable hose for critical construction joints (SikaFuko system), Compartment and integrated injection system with synthetic membrane for basement and tunnel waterproofing (Sikaplan), to name a few. One of the key success factors for Sika's growth in Indian market is its reliability and capabilities to specify and execute technologies which provide "solutions" at an affordable price (value for money).

**What are the new developments taken place since the inception of the company? Are there any plans to set up another facility in India or to enhance the installed capacity of current products? How many projects you have completed since inception?**

Sika has recently invested in a state of the art manufacturing unit in Jhagadia in Gujarat which is one of the biggest investments of Sika in Asia Pacific and undoubtedly unparalleled within Indian construction chemical industry. Sika has also made the first acquisition in construction chemical industry in India in 2013 by acquiring the Spanish brand "Texsa" in India which is a leading brand in bitumen membrane waterproofing. Sika is also the first company to achieve ISO 9001 and 14001 in the construction chemical industry and recognised by Ministry of Science, Govt of India for R&D in India.

<p><b>INNOVATION</b></p> <p>Sika's success and reputation is based on its long lasting tradition of innovation. Accordingly, the core of its business is the innovation management and the focus on developing quality products and the best solutions for the customers.</p>	<p><b>MARKETS</b></p> <p>Sika's business is aligned in seven target markets: concrete, waterproofing, roofing, flooring, sealing and bonding, refurbishment and industry.</p>	<p><b>EMPLOYEES</b></p> <p>Sika believes in the competence and the entrepreneurial spirit of its employees and delegates decisions and responsibilities to the level of competence. Training and development of the employees is given high priority. Sika aims to develop its leaders for tomorrow and to focus on internal candidates for promotions.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLIERS</b></p> <p>Procurement Services provide reliable and on-time supply of raw materials, packaging, third party products, technical equipment and services.</p>

Industrial Flooring, Structural Strengthening etc. Sika's introduction of "EpoCem" technology to counter the high moisture content in a newly laid concrete floor before laying a reactive resin floor treatment like epoxy revolutionised the entire industry and still date the only proven solution against "moisture blistering" of epoxy /PU floor toppings.

Sika has also pioneered in Indian waterproofing market thought and game chang-

**What makes your products special to your clients?**

The technology range and the solutions provided by Sika give clients the "peace of mind." The proven track record of Sika even in India over 3 decades as well as being the pioneering force for construction chemical industry in India, clients do respect Sika as a reliable partner "Building Trust" is Sika motto.

**Can you throw light on training imparted to engineers domestically and internationally or creating awareness on your products?**

Sika, with its state of the art R&D facility as well as a fully equipped and competent technical services team provides on the job site as well as special training programs to all stake holders like Applicators, Contractors and even Customers to increase the awareness and know-how at end user level. Sika is also one of the founding members of CCMA (Construction Chemicals Manufacturers Association) and supports various industry specific programs to generate and spread awareness on construction chemicals.

**Name the top five projects you have been associated with since last year?**

The top five projects are Dana Technical Centre, Bangalore Metro, Mandira Dam Project, Reliance J3 and Kakrapad Nuclear Power etc.

**What is the USP of your product and how can users ensure they get maximum benefit by using this product?**

**Our products USP are:**

- Proven and time tested – consistent and quality tested product.
- Value for money – higher return on investment through longer durability over initial cost
- Sustainable solutions.
- Majority products are locally manufactured in India – fit for the market and climate
- Array of technology and solutions.

**Do you find contractors are reluctant to use these products as it pushes up cost? What steps do you take to educate them about the advantages of using the product?**

Initial resistance is always there, however, when explained with demonstrated capabilities to mitigate risk, increase efficiency, shorten project timeline, consistent quality and after sales service, the contractors do realise the value of using a brand like Sika where they can additionally get the benefit of “single window buying” for all their requirements in a project (no multiple vendor, better pricing against volume buying, better inventory and logistics management, time savings).

**Can you tell us about your foreign partner? Do you think foreign products are suitable for Indian conditions?**

Sika is a multi national group and Sika India is a fully owned subsidiary of Swiss group, Sika A.G.

Foreign products do need a local R&D in India to ensure “acclimatisation” of tech-



nologies based on local construction practices, raw materials and weather conditions. There will still be an involvement of overseas technologies in Indian markets for specific and critical applications in construction.

**What, according to you, are the products we are lacking**

**in? Are you planning to offer any new products soon?**

With respect to the type of constructions we are doing as well as the construction practices prevailing in India, in my view, we have enough solutions available from the construction chemical side and there is no noticeable gap. However, in the field of waterproofing, Sika has brought in few innovative introductions like “Sika Wet Room” system in three different packs – Basic, Standard and Premium, whereby any wet room (toilet, kitchen, balcony etc) can be made dry and watertight by opting for a kit pack ensuring no critical products get missed out. That’s why we say Sika Wet Room – Water proof, Worry proof.

**Your views on Make-in-India concept by Mr NAMO to encourage multi-national, as well as domestic, companies to manufacture their products in INDIA.**

“Make in India” is a fantastic initiative and will surely boost the Indian economy. Sika had always been an integral part of “Make in India” and believed to make products locally well before this noble initiative was taken. Currently, Sika has six manufacturing plants all across India and has vision to expand in years to come with the expected growth in business.

**Will the concept of Make in India benefit your sector?**

Yes, we strongly feel with “make in India” initiative as well as efforts of the Govt. to bring “ease of doing business”, construction chemical industry will surely benefit. However, Govt. should look into recognising and acknowledging this emerging and important industry and help the growth by proving strategic support and benefits. In this regard, Govt. can engage with CCMA to make a joint efforts to organise a better future for this industry.

**What are the pros and cons you see for Make in India?**

On the positive side, the initiative will create opportunity and possibilities for international technologies being manufactured in India with a competitive price helping in boosting the internal consumption and domestic economy. On the concerning side, specific to construction chemical industry, considering a low entry barrier, in the absence of any customised standard and code as well as lack of law and guidelines by the Govt on the quality of construction and usage of construction chemicals, the local manufacturing can lead to “unfair” competition. **CIA**



SIKA HAD ALWAYS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF “MAKE IN INDIA” AND BELIEVED TO MAKE PRODUCTS LOCALLY WELL BEFORE THIS NOBLE INITIATIVE WAS TAKEN. CURRENTLY, SIKA HAS SIX MANUFACTURING PLANTS ALL ACROSS INDIA AND HAS VISION TO EXPAND IN YEARS TO COME WITH THE EXPECTED GROWTH IN BUSINESS.