

Ricoh to endow research center at IIT Gandhinagar

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New Delhi: Ricoh Company Ltd has announced its financial endowment and industry partnership for the creation of the Design and Innovation Centre (DIC) at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN). The partnership is planned for three years starting April 1, 2013. As part of the agreement, Ricoh will take part in joint research projects at the Center. This cooperative effort will further the company's aims of promoting open innovation, accelerating research and development using global resources, and studying market needs in India and similar markets. The technologies and services deployed in the Indian market can form the groundwork for solutions in other large emerging regions, including Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, which together constitute a market of over 2.5 billion people. IITGN was set up in 2008. Located in the capital of the state of Gujarat in western India, IITGN is ideally situated at the intersection of leading-edge IT infrastructure, traditional culture, scholarship and industry. In February 2012, Ricoh established Ricoh Innovations Private Ltd (RIPL) in Bangalore. A subsidiary of Ricoh Innovations Inc (RII) in Menlo Park, California, RIPL was created to combine market-oriented technology development with regionally optimized research to pioneer new business tailored for the Indian market and similar emerging countries. Ricoh's collaboration with IITGN began with RII's study of the application and validation of advanced IT technologies in educational fields. "We are thrilled to promote open innovation in India by locally researching solutions relevant to specific markets," stated Terumoto Nonaka, Corporate Senior Vice President at Ricoh, in charge of R&D. "Becoming the founding industrial partner for the new Design and Innovation Centre is a major step toward achieving this goal." "This partnership with Ricoh will enable the students and faculty of IITGN to work with the colleagues from Ricoh in an inter-disciplinary and an inter-cultural environment, which is most conducive for design and innovation. We are excited with the opportunity and expect that our relationship with Ricoh will grow in time as both sides start to see the tremendous value of such a partnership. Moreover, we believe that this is an interesting model of collaboration between an academic institute and a large company, which may later be emulated elsewhere," added Prof. Sudhir K. Jain, Director of IITGN. The newly established DIC will have both educational and research functions. Full-time and part-time faculty, full-time technical staff and students will conduct research in a collaborative environment. New solutions adopted in an emerging market may also yield innovations in advanced countries, a trend known as reverse innovation. Ricoh continues to aggressively promote open innovation in India with these mid-and long-term goals in mind.