

Essilor partners with Australian Government to launch livelihood building programme, Eye Mitra, in Bangladesh

(Charenton-le-Pont, France, 22 January 2018) – Essilor is proud to announce its selection by the Australian Government to be part of its Business Partnership Platform – an aid investment programme to generate social and commercial returns in developing countries. This partnership will create affordable vision care for almost 100,000 low income consumers in rural Bangladesh and train young people to become primary vision care providers known as Eye Mitras.

By launching its flagship inclusive business model, Eye Mitra (friend of the eyes) Essilor and partners will help young people to set up village-based businesses to detect vision problems and dispense affordable eyeglasses. The programme will improve the lives of rural Bangladeshis by improving their sight.

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Her Excellency Ms Julia Niblett said, *'The Australian Government supports private sector engagement in development and is very pleased to partner with Essilor, who will work with local partners to train Eye Mitras to help provide eye care services in rural Bangladesh'.*

Essilor's Chief Mission Officer, Jayanth Bhuvaraghan commented; *"We're delighted to partner with the Australian government to further our common goal of social and economic development in developing countries. Uncorrected poor vision affects 1 in 3 people worldwide impacting their ability to learn, work and be safe. At Essilor we are working to eradicate poor vision by raising awareness on the issue and creating access to vision care where it is needed most. We look forward to bringing the immediate benefits of eyeglasses to people in rural Bangladesh."*

Uncorrected poor vision is the world's most widespread disability and affects 2.5 billion people, 90% of whom live in developing countries. Every year USD 272bn is wasted in the global economy due to lost productivity as a result of uncorrected poor vision. This impact is felt acutely in rural areas where awareness and access to vision care is often poor.

In partnership with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Essilor launched the Eye Mitra programme in December 2017 with non-profit organisation Grameen Kalyan and local training partner MART. Grameen Kalyan will support with the setup of 400 Eye Mitra shops and, where necessary, provide microloans to Eye Mitras as they build their micro-enterprises.

About BPP

Engaging the private sector is at the cornerstone of Australia's modernised aid program, supporting economic growth, incomes and jobs. The Business Partnerships Platform (BPP) contributes directly to accelerating Australia's collaboration with business to address development challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. For more information, please visit [BPP's website](#).

About Eye Mitra

Essilor's inclusive business arm, 2.5 New Vision Generation (2.5 NVG), launched its Eye Mitra program in 2013 in India as part of its strategy of increasing awareness and access to vision care for underserved populations and at the same time improving their livelihood. Eye Mitra (Hindi for "friend of the eyes") addresses unmet needs for vision care by recruiting and training unemployed and underemployed young people to become primary vision care providers.

Essilor's inclusive business programmes impact seven out of 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. These include no poverty, quality education, gender equality and decent work and economic growth.

About Essilor

Essilor International (Compagnie Générale d'Optique) ("Essilor") is the world's leading ophthalmic optics company. Essilor designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of lenses to improve and protect eyesight. Its mission is to improve lives by improving sight. To support this mission, Essilor allocates more than €200 million to research and innovation every year, in a commitment to continuously bring new, more effective products to market. Its flagship brands are Varilux®, Crizal®, Transitions®, Eyezen™, Xperio®, Foster Grant®, Bolon™ and Costa®. It also develops and markets equipment, instruments and services for eyecare professionals.

Essilor reported consolidated revenue of more than €7.1 billion in 2016 and employs approximately 64,000 people worldwide. It markets its products in more than 100 countries and has 33 plants, 490 prescription laboratories and edging facilities, as well as 5 research and development centers around the world (as of December 31, 2016). For more information, please visit www.essilor.com.

The Essilor International share trades on the Euronext Paris market and is included in the Euro Stoxx 50 and CAC 40 indices. Codes and symbols: ISIN: FR0000121667; Reuters: [ESSI.PA](#); Bloomberg: [EI:FP](#).

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