



► “By following the same COBO Group values and ethos, we intend to be a key player in India.”

Stefano Scapin,
Head of Business Development APAC, COBO Group.

COBO is in India to help vehicle manufacturers solve their problems by providing innovative solutions. COBO has already identified a range of products that are suitable for the Indian market but we are also flexible enough to develop new products, says **Stefano Scapin, Head of Business Development APAC, COBO Group.** Excerpts from the interview:

Could you tell us about your company, product range and solutions?

COBO Group’s mission is to be



12.1” TFT multi-touch display

worldwide leader in design, development and supply of global solutions and integrated systems for off-highway vehicles, with a particular focus on agricultural machinery, construction equipment and industrial vehicles. We have five product lines with a wide range of components suitable for both in-cabin and out-cabin applications.

COBO Group is a multinational business with nine manufacturing locations and eleven sales and marketing offices complete with after-sales and service support.

Our product lines include:

Electromechanical – Switches (rocker panel switches, lever combination switches, ignition key switches, rotary switches, push button switches etc.); lighting equipment (with different technologies including LED), fuel level sensors; and power modules;

Mechanical – Seating systems,

Steering wheels, Columns and Complete Steering Column Assembly;

Instrument Cluster – Instrument clusters (from simple analogue gauges connected to individual sensors to fully programmable devices with TFT displays);

Electronics – Sensors, master and slave controllers, displays (up to 32 bit



Steering column kit



Electronic throttle pedal



Full range LED worklamps



LED beacons



Hall effect lever combination switch



Passenger seat

uC running on Linux OS) and joysticks/keyboards; and

System – Wiring harnesses.

We also have a Division responsible for Military Defense Components.

What are your India-specific strategies?

During 2015, we have set up our liaison office in New Delhi with the objective of rapidly expanding our presence in the market. Of course, local presence is extremely important from a customer point of view. We will be consolidating existing customers and also introducing ourselves to new ones.

What is your business model? Will you be focusing on the end-user market, too?

Our main focus is OEMs, but we will also be developing a network of agents and dealers to satisfy end-users.

What is your R&D spend?

Every year, COBO Group invests over 2.5 per cent of sales turnover in R&D for new products. Every year 15 per cent of the turnover comes from new and innovative products.

Is there any specific category of

equipment that you are catering to?

Off-highway segment is the primary; specifically agricultural machinery, construction machinery and industrial vehicles. However, the Group is expanding in some niches, such as two-wheelers, luxury cars and marine applications.

Do you have any OEMs already to whom you supply in India?

We are working with the majority of International OEMs who are already in India. However, we also have long standing collaborations with local Indian OEMs and this is increasing, due to our business growth here.

How do you look at the potential in India as compared to the global market?

This is a huge and growing market. India has a bigger agricultural machinery market than China or any other country. Currently, the level of mechanisation within machinery is still very low compared with developed markets, but there is a gradual shift in India where final users are starting to really understand concepts like functionality, productivity and reliability of their machines. So, components related to machine functionality are becoming very critical, and

vehicle manufacturers must upgrade their machines to provide better performance and reliability; that's where we can help. Moreover, India is exporting a significant number of vehicles and these are extensively equipped with 'Western' components.

What is your target in the Indian market?

We aim to become a key player and become a solution provider to vehicle manufacturers by deeply understanding their needs and proposing the best solution for the application. We are sure that this approach will enable us to be successful in India.

Do you have a plan to make India a hub?

Not immediately, possibly at a later stage.

What are your future plans on expansion?

In India, there are some niches where technology and durability are needed and imported components from our Italian headquarters are still competitive. In the long term, there is the possibility that we will establish manufacturing facilities here, but it's too early to have any kind of time scale yet. **ET**