

Shri. Nitin Jairam Gadkari
Hon'ble Minister of MSME, Road Transport & Highways
Government of India
New Delhi.

Respected Sir,

Sub: Post-COVID restart for the Exhibition Industry

We express our immense gratitude for your kind support for the stakeholders of the Indian Exhibition industry through your positive hearing of our concerns during the E- interaction held on May 15, 2020. Your positive assurance of all possible support and kind guidance have ushered in a ray of hope for the much distressed sector.

As you are aware, the backbone of the exhibition industry are many MSMEs, where lack of business is putting them into immediate risk of insolvency. While the Government of India has tried to address the constraints on the supply side by announcing several relief and stimulus measures for revival of the MSME sector; boosting the demand side will need focused marketing efforts from MSMEs in these extremely trying times.

Exhibitions are of significant importance to the MSME sector, which unlike large corporations, have limited resources for business promotion and advertising; thereby making it the first and possibly only choice for MSMEs for their business continuity plans post-COVID. Exhibitions act as a springboard for industry and can enable faster recovery of business and trade to normalcy.

Business and industrial exhibitions are structured in terms of process and movement of people from start to end, and are designed to create a market place for business. In doing so, exhibitions enable '**organized gathering**' of exhibitors and business visitors to facilitate trade and business, as opposed to 'mass gatherings'. It was in this context that the IEIA has compiled a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for conducting exhibitions post the COVID lockdown.

Meanwhile, in the global exhibition industry, many countries such as Germany, China etc. have announced opening up of the exhibition sector in order to provide an immediate impetus to business and economy; as well as to support MSMEs to get back to business and revive disrupted local and global value chains. IEIA also has been coordinating with UFI, the Global Exhibition Industry Association, to develop standards for safety and health protocols for an early restart of exhibition industry in India. We are pleased to attach a copy of the global standards developed by UFI, which the respective national associations are trying to adapt to their national conditions.

We are writing to you, to request you to consider a post-COVID restart of the exhibition industry with adequate health and safety protocols for exhibitors and business visitors. The Indian exhibition industry is committed and capable of adhering to the global health and safety protocols. This will enable Indian industry to not only open up its doors for business, but also make a headstart to achieving the PM's vision of an "**Atmanirbhar Bharat**".

We shall look forward to your favourable consideration of our request.

With warm regards,



S. Balasubramanian
President
Indian Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA)