

To

**Shri. Subhash Rajaram Desai
Hon'ble Minister of Industries
Government of Maharashtra
Mumbai**

Subject: Request for re-start of exhibitions in Maharashtra

Dear Sir,

COVID 19 has brought in unprecedented adverse impact on the overall economy and 'Business Exhibitions' sector are no exception to this. **With the complete standstill brought in by the pandemic, the exhibitions sector has been adversely impacted resulting in huge overall business revenue loss of INR 1,25,000 crores to the national economy, with no exhibitions held since March 2020 till date. Approximately 15 lac livelihoods depend on exhibitions through direct and indirect employment generation facilitated by the sector.** Exhibitions with their multiplier effect have all the potential to complement the growth of the regional and national economies to a large extent. **Mumbai being a national hub for exhibitions, this sector has been tremendously supporting the State's economy by way of taxes, employment, and business growth across sectors along with many other benefits brought in by exhibitions.** Many countries across the globe have been leveraging exhibitions since decades to achieve the overall growth of their economies and consider trade fairs as a priority sector due to the multifarious benefits attached to this sector. With this background, we hereby submit our below humble request to allow earliest re-opening of exhibitions in the State of Maharashtra.

Introduction:

Industrial exhibitions are the **Economic Growth Engines** that act as the catalysts for promoting trade and commerce across countries. The exhibition industry facilitates trade and business transactions for exhibitors worth over **Rs. 3 lac crores** supporting the growth of all industries, besides generating government revenues estimated at around **Rs. 19,500 crores annually at the Centre and State levels.** The average exhibitor spend to business generation multiplier ratio goes as high as **1:12**, which is a large output for industry and significant revenues for the government.

Exhibitions largely stimulate **the growth of local economies** of the regions where these are held, while generating **colossal employment opportunities** both in the organized and informal sectors. **Moreover**, the exhibition industry also acts as the **backbone of MSMEs** who largely rely on exhibitions for their business orders and sustenance, while a large chunk of the direct stakeholders of the sector comprising the **Exhibition venue owners, Exhibition organizers & Service providers themselves fall under the category of MSME.**

Exhibitions as ORGANISED GATHERINGS:

Business and industrial exhibitions are **completely structured** in terms of process and movement of people from start to end, and are designed to create **effective market places** for all businesses. In doing so, exhibitions enable '**organized gathering**' of exhibitors and business visitors to facilitate trade and business, as opposed to 'mass gatherings' or other entertainment or sports events.

Moreover, the **participants** in any exhibition **make well informed decisions for attending exhibitions for pre-defined business interests with substantial investment** planned towards their participation in a well organised eco-system. Such exhibitions should no way be compared to leisure events and must be considered as **serious business activity having the potential to reboot the overall economy of the regions.**

International Best Practices

Many countries across the globe such as **Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Hongkong, Spain, China, Thailand, Poland, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand etc.** have already gone ahead to announce **opening up of the exhibition sector** with necessary safety protocols 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. Indian Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA) has also prepared the **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for conducting exhibitions in a safe and secure manner with all necessary precautions included right from the planning phases till the concluding phases of exhibitions**, which shall be followed by all members of the association including all leading exhibition venues in the country. These **SOPs are based on the necessary safety measures recommendations by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI)**. The Indian exhibition industry is committed and capable of adhering to the global health and safety protocols.

Request for re-starting exhibitions:

The outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic has adversely impacted this catalytic sector with the major brunt on the MSME enterprises who largely depend on exhibitions for sustaining their businesses. The ongoing uncertainty around the re-start of exhibitions and the standstill brought in by COVID 19 has already impacted many livelihoods with mass lay-offs and no work available to the huge base of permanent and contractual workforce.

Considering the huge economic impact brought in by the exhibitions sector, Indian Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA) requests the Maharashtra Govt.'s consideration and support towards an early announcement of re-opening of exhibitions in the State.

The permission for opening up of the airlines, hospitality, travel and retail sectors with sector specific SOPs put in place have already paved the way for smooth running of exhibitions. On similar lines, **restart of the exhibition industry with adequate health and safety protocols** for exhibitors and business visitors may also kindly be allowed at the earliest please. This will not only enable the industry to open up its doors for business, but will also hugely support the lacs of livelihoods who are waiting for exhibitions to restart for supporting their survival.

It may kindly be noted that the exhibition organisers would anyhow **require a lead time of minimum 6-8 weeks** for making the requisite arrangements for organising the exhibitions and an early announcement for the re-opening will help them prepare in advance.

Once again, we earnestly request your favourable consideration and kind support towards revival of this important business sector by way of announcing the re-opening date for exhibitions in the state. We are happy to enclose the **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** developed by IEIA for your kind reference.

Look forward to your earliest kind support.

Sincerely



S. Balasubramanian
President



Copy to:

Sh. Ravindra Boratkar,
President,
Maharashtra Economic Development Council (MEDC)
Mumbai

About IEIA: Indian Exhibition Industry Association is the National Apex body representing all the segments of the exhibitions sector in India including organisers, venues, stand fabricators and logistics providers. IEIA works for the development of the sector through its various initiatives including advocacy, training programs, industry meets etc.