



Reference No.IEIA/1015/2020

17th July 2020

Shri. Ajay Kumar Bhalla, IAS
Home Secretary
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India
North Block
New Delhi - 110 001

Dear Mr. Bhalla,

Sub: Request for re-start of exhibitions during Unlock Phase III in India

COVID 19 has brought in unprecedented adverse impact on the overall economy and 'Business Exhibitions' sector are no exception to this. Govt. of India has taken up all challenges during the pandemic times head-on and turned them into opportunities by re-aligning the focus on self-reliance with the **vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat**. The exhibition industry in India with their multiplier effect has all the potential to complement this goal and stands committed to contribute towards the building of a strong and self-reliant country. 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 country and give us a date by when we can restart the exhibition organisation.

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 exhibitor's worth over **Rs. 3 lac crores** supporting the growth of all industries, besides generating government revenues estimated at around **Rs.19,500 crores annually**. 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, which is vital for Indian economy.

Exhibitions largely stimulate the growth of Travel, Tourism and hospitality sectors in 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 in the country 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 compared to 'mass gatherings' or other entertainment or sports events.

Moreover, the participants in any exhibition make well informed decisions for attending exhibitions for 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 country.

International Best Practices

- Many countries across the globe such as **Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Hong Kong, 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) and India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) have 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 to announce a date for re-opening exhibitions during Unlock Phase III in India:

Being a planned activity, exhibitions require about 6-8 weeks of lead time to launch the show.

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

We highly appreciate Govt. of India's timely permission for opening up of the airlines, hospitality, travel and retail sectors with sector specific SOPs put in place.



On similar lines, **Re-Start** 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 Indian industry to open up its doors for business, but also make a head start to achieving the PM's vision of an **“Atmanirbhar Bharat”**.

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 in India by way of announcing the re-opening date for exhibitions in the country.

Look forward to your earliest kind support.

With warm regards

S. Balasubramanian
President
Indian Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA)

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.