

Report on Virtual International Rawal Expo 2020

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Introduction

Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) in collaboration with TDAP organised the Virtual International Rawal Expo 2020 from August 7 to August 16. The objective of the virtual expo was to support national and international businesses by bridging trade exhibitors with a broad range of business figures and ultimately consumers. The virtual nature of the expo was to have many benefits including the absence of travelling needs for exhibitors, easy participation for international clientele, international exposure, detailed data capture, and built in e-commerce for business transactions in real-time.

Co-ordination between TDAP and RCCI

TDAP Islamabad closely coordinated with RCCI in bringing about the Virtual International Rawal Expo. First, TDAP Islamabad prepared a brief (annex A) for TDAP headquarters. In this brief TDAP Islamabad gathered details about the proposed Virtual International Rawal Expo from RCCI and apprised it about the benefits of the exhibition. In this brief TDAP Islamabad recommended that TDAP should support RCCI for carrying out this virtual expo. Thereafter, through communication via RCCI TDAP Islamabad conveyed the requirements of RCCI to TDAP HQ, which were subsequently. These were that TDAP provided a letter of support to RCCI for its virtual expo and got in touch with trade and investment officers abroad for its promotion. TDAP Islamabad also carried out a series of meetings with RCCI in order to help make this event a success. This included a preliminary meeting in which in collaboration with TDAP Islamabad, participants from more than fifteen Pakistani missions abroad participated (Annex B).

Efforts for Success

TDAP closely worked with its Trade and Investment Officers abroad and sent them information about the Virtual International Rawal Expo so that they may advertise and disseminate information about it to their respective regions and ensure that foreign buyers participate in the event. Furthermore, TDAP in collaboration with RCCI carried out a series of meetings t

Moreover, in order to organise a successful event, RCCI in collaboration with TDAP Islamabad conducted one Virtual International Trade Forum – Africa Chapter (summary note annex C). In this trade forum, commercial counsellors of the region were asked to assist in helping make Rawal Expo successful by disseminating information about it to their regions as well as help arrange buyers.

Event Details

Virtual International Rawal Expo was virtually inaugurated on August 6 with the President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi as the chief guest in the inauguration. Moreover, there were video messages by Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment, Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Mr Asad Umar, Minister for Industries and Production, Mr. Hammad Azhar, and Governor Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar. TDAP Islamabad also participated in the virtual inauguration.

This virtual event showcased exhibitions in three main halls, with one hall predominantly containing exhibitors from defence production, one containing real estate and construction sector, and one containing exhibitors from a diverse range of sectors. The layout of the expo was user-friendly in which the user could horizontally scroll through different stalls. Moreover, images of the stalls also acted as icons for them and by clicking on each stall, the user would

be taken to a special view of the booth, which contained company information, its contact details, product videos, brochures. Each booth had a live chat function through which customers could interact with the stall manager.

The International Rawal Virtual Expo had approximately 32,000 visitors. A number of activities also took place under the ambit of the virtual expo. These included webinars trade forums with support from TDAP as well as live interactive sessions and segments. The details of the virtual trade forums and webinars is given below:

1. Pakistan-Shanghai Trade 2020: Mr. Hussain Haider, Consulate General Shanghai, participated in this event in which he apprised the participants about Shanghai and briefed on the ways Pakistanis can capture the Chinese market.
2. Webinar on Defence Industry Production: The webinar was attended by defence attaches of Pakistan in Italy, Egypt, Nepal, Indonesia, and Ukraine. Defence attaché of Sri Lanka in Islamabad was also present. Chief guest of the event was DG Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) Maj. Gen. Tahir Gulzar Malik.
3. Webinar on Pakistan-Japan Trade 2020: Mr. Tahir Habib Cheema, Trade and Investment Counsellor, Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo, Japan participated in this event and highlighted and identified trade potential between Pakistan and Japan.
4. Pakistan-Algiers Business Opportunities Conference on Real Estate and Construction: Mr. Qazafi Rind, Trade and Investment Councillor of Pakistan to Algeria highlighted the potential and requirement of construction businesses in Algiers and identified the potential and requirement of construction related products.
5. Pakistan-Mauritius Trade Forum: H.E. Dr. Syed Rizwan Ahmed, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Mauritius and Mr. Faisal Idris, Commercial Attaché of the High Commission of Pakistan in Mauritius participated in the event along with Mr. Hugnin Guillaume – chairman MCCI.
6. Pakistan-Hong Kong Trade Forum: H.E Mr. Bilal Ahmed Butt, Consul General of Pakistan in Hong Kong, Mr. Malik M Asim, Consul of Pakistan in Hong Kong, and Mr. Ali Awan, Trade and Investment Officer of Pakistan in Hong Kong participated in the event. Participants highlighted potential products and opportunities in the Hong Kong market.

TDAP's Stall

RCCI provided a complimentary stall to TDAP in the Virtual International Rawal Expo. This stall of TDAP was managed by Assistant Director TDAP Islamabad, Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Hassan. TDAP's booth contained TDAP's introductory video, three product videos (knitwear, bed wear, and footwear), eight TDAP standees, TDAP head office address, TDAP website link, and contact information of TDAP focal person for the booth. The booth had a total of six visitors, who interacted with TDAP. Out of these six, two visitors asked queries relating to TDAP, which were resolved. One of the businesses who asked a query, Pernia Couture, has been connected with the relevant product officers at TDAP HQ as well as TDAP Islamabad office and communication with the business is still ongoing.

Recommendations

This first ever virtual exhibition by RCCI was a learning opportunity for TDAP as given the exigencies of COVID 19 and the push towards virtual events, TDAP is in the process of creating its own series of virtual exhibitions. As decided, TDAP plans to hold product-wise virtual exhibitions for textile, agro, surgical and pharma, sports goods, and IT. Keeping this in mind, TDAP Islamabad was closely involved with RCCI in this virtual expo. Moreover, in order to determine lessons learned, TDAP Islamabad analysed the event and formulated the

following salient features of the Virtual Rawal Expo that TDAP can consider for its own proposed virtual exhibitions:

1. Extensive marketing program preceding these virtual exhibitions by holding trade forums. Stakeholders from product associations, trade bodies and chambers can be brought together via zoom to interact with Trade and Investment Officers abroad so that prospective buyers for the products can be targeted well in advance and the virtual exhibition can be advertised to them.
2. Webinars by TIOs to be made part of the virtual exhibition in which they would introduce their region, highlight prospective products, apprise the participants of the regulatory requirements there, and answer their questions. This would allow participants to help tap new markets and equip themselves of the latest information in those regions.
3. For the virtual exhibition, a simple user interface with 2D graphics should be considered that is easy to navigate. Live chat and video call feature should be provided for each stall as well as tabs for product videos and company brochures.
4. A detailed manual should be sent to all booth owners prior to the launch of the virtual expo, which contains detailed instructions on how to operate the booth, upload brochures, videos, company profiles etc.

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ANNEX A

BRIEF

Rawalpindi chamber of Commerce and Industry: Virtual Rawal EXPO, 2020.

Introduction:

The international Rawal Expo is a landmark event of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It has gained popularity over the period of time.

Last year's International Rawal EXPO, 2020- Highlights:-

It is a five day event with activities including business stalls, Auto Show, Pets show, kid's carnival, food festival, musical shows. Approximately 200 exhibitors showcased their products in last year expo including 40 companies from China, 8 from Indonesia, 3 from Afghanistan and 2 from Sri Lanka. Approximate footfall was 500,000.

Virtual Rawal EXPO, 2020:-

With the current situation caused by the pandemic the inclination towards the having virtual events, meetings etc has seen an increase. Keeping in view this new emerging global trend the Virtual Rawal Expo, 2020 seems to be a step in the right direction.

Format of the exhibition:

- Execution Date: Tentative Date is 7th-16th August, 2020.
- No. of Booths: 50 Approx.
- Live for One week At least
- Target Exhibitors: International and National
- Type of Business Interaction: B2B , B2C
- Type of Audiences: Buyers, Distributors, Manufacturers
- Product Category: Diverse real estate, FMCGS (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods), electronics, apparel, jewelry, etc.

Layout:

The Exhibition Hall Virtual Floor Map

According to the booth selected, the exhibitors will get more visibility and efficiency in promoting and selling their products.

Steps of booking booths include registration, booth package selection, marketing package, finalization of purchase and check out.

Benefits of exhibition:-

- Exhibiting at an International Event without Travelling
- Inviting Prospective Clientele from any country
- Visitors from over other World
- Product Launching
- Live Video Demonstrations
- Finding New and Updating Old Distributors
- International Exposure
- Advertising Products
- Custom branded stands, booths and sponsored spaces
- Advanced 'connecting' features enabling delegates to fully network online e.g. exchange business cards, build personalized lists
- Detailed data capture and live post-event attendee analytics for CPM (cost per thousand impressions: advertising analysis method) and targeted marketing

- Live streaming of HD quality broadcasts globally
- Interaction between live and virtual delegates
- Built-in e-commerce for business transactions in 'real-time'.

Assistance Requested From TDAP by RCCI for Virtual Rawal EXPO, 2020.

RCCI has requested TDAP to disseminate information about Virtual Rawal Expo, 2020 among Trade Mission abroad (especially in UK, USA, KSA, Spain, Belgium, Germany and France).

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that TDAP should extend its cooperation to RCCI for marketing this event internationally via its trade missions.
2. RCCI may be requested to provide the marketing material and the same maybe shared with the missions abroad.
3. TDAP should closely monitor the event so that the pattern of virtual exhibitions maybe replicated on the TDAP's planned exhibitions calendar. This includes requesting pre and post event analysis report from RCCI and information of all the tools used for this virtual activity.

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ANNEX B

Record Note of the “Preliminary Meeting for Rawal Expo” Scheduled by RCCI with CCs & TDAP Islamabad on July 17th, 2020

Time: 03:00 PM PST

Venue: Virtual Meeting through Zoom

Agenda: RCCI held a meeting with TDAP Directorate Islamabad, Pakistan's Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Commercial Counselors around the world to promote Pakistani exports through Virtual Rawal Expo 2020.

Participants: Chairman RCCI with organizers of Rawal Expo, more than 15 missions, DG TDAP Islamabad and team participated in the preliminary meeting.

Discussion:

The countries that were expected to participate in this were China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it was aimed that the virtual expo would have a strong social media following with a target of 20 million followers.

RCCI declared that participation fee of 500 \$ per exhibitor for 10 days of the expo is set by RCCI. Expo shall be a B2B interaction, there shall be no on-spot buying and selling. One day is dedicated to Defence production sector and Defence attachés are also taken onboard. The countries that were expected to participate in this were China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it was aimed that the virtual expo would have a strong social media following with a target of 20 million followers. A demo of the virtual expo was given by RCCI in which each stall had its own dashboard that had company profile, brochures, and video. Moreover, there was a 24hr live chat feature through which customers could interact with company representatives at the back-end.

Pakistan’s Trade Missions:

Representatives of Pakistan’s Missions abroad put several recommendations and queries regarding the upcoming “Virtual Rawal Expo”. It was suggested by missions, not to limit the products to a specific day of expo rather keep all products and sectors throughout the ten days of expo. Moreover, Russian language was decided to be included among Urdu, Arabic, French and English in order to facilitate the exporters throughout the world.

Director General TDAP Islamabad:

Directorate General Islamabad also joined the meeting. It was mentioned that TDAP has scheduled its product-specific “Virtual Expo Calendar” for the next quarter. Rawal Expo shall prove to be a learning opportunity for TDAP in finalizing its virtual expos calendar. He also added that TDAP is keenly looking forward to cooperate and coordinate with RCCI in its upcoming initiatives.

Mr. Khurshid Barlas (Chairman RCCI):

Chairman RCCI suggested the RCCI organizers team to share a product & sector specific list and promotional material with all the missions and TDAP well before time in order to attract relevant exporters in the event. It was also decided to hold a post-event debriefing session and report with all the stakeholders in order to get feedback about the first ever virtual international expo.

Way forward:

RCCI welcomed suggestions from all the stakeholders especially regarding possibility of including webinars (maximum 1 hour session) highlighting major exports/imports of the

country to create awareness among buyers and retailers. The meeting ended with a thankful note by RCCI.

ANNEX C

Zoom Meeting of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry with Commercial Counsellors for Rawal Expo 2020

Participants: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Commercial Counsellors, TDAP Islamabad

Date: July 17, 2020

Minutes:

Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry started the meeting started with an introduction about the Rawal Expo being conducted by it. According to RCCI this virtual expo was not a commercial venture and instead it was aimed at increasing Pakistan's exports. The countries that were expected to participate in this were China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it was aimed that the virtual expo would have a strong social media following with a target of 20 million followers.

A demo of the virtual expo was given by RCCI in which each stall had its own dashboard that had company profile, brochures, and video. Moreover, there was a 24hr live chat feature through which customers could interact with company representatives at the backend.

The structure of Rawal Expo as explained by RCCI was that one day of the virtual expo would be dedicated to defence products while for other days the virtual expo would be open to all products. Each exhibitor would be charged USD 500 for each stall for ten days. Rawal Expo would be open 24 hours across the floor across all exhibitors so that there is no issue with buyers located in different time zones. Moreover, ancillary activities such as seminars would also take place in the expo and RCCI requested commercial counsellors to conduct half hour seminars focused on a topic of their country of posting to guide Pakistani businessmen. RCCI also requested commercial counsellors to find sellers for Pakistani products in their country while buyers would be arranged by RCCI. Thereafter, RCCI would be able to arrange B2B meetings with them.

Commercial counsellors raised some points in the meeting. First it was suggested to RCCI to engage defence attaches as well since there is an entire day in the expo dedicated to defence products. Second, it was also suggested to invite to the expo serious buyers only so that it is not crowded out and virtual expo remains focused. Third, a post event impact report by RCCI was also recommended to gauge the effectiveness of Rawal Expo.

Director General TDAP Islamabad mentioned that Rawal Expo is a learning opportunity for TDAP as it is also in the process of making its own calendar for virtual expos. Hence, RCCI was requested to keep TDAP actively in the loop and to coordinate with it.