



कयर बोर्ड
COIR BOARD

REPORT ON PARTICIPATION OF COIR BOARD
IN THE

INTERNATIONAL HORTICULTURAL TRADE FAIR - 2017

8-10 November, 2017
Vijfhuizen, Holland



REPORT ON
COIR BOARD'S PARTICIPATION IN THE
International Horticultural Trade Fair, 2017
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The Ministry of MSME (Govt. of India) vide its letter No. 4(14)/2017-Coir dated 26 October, 2017 accorded sanction for Coir Board's participation in the International Horticultural Trade Fair (IHTF), 2017 held at Vijfhuizen, Holland during 8-10 November, 2017 and the deputation of the undersigned to organize the participation of Coir Board and its Co-exhibitors.



The Fair

The IHTF, Vijfhuizen, Holland is the world renowned event for horticultural products where the sellers and buyers of the horticultural products and devices annually meet and transact business. Holland has got tremendous locational and logistical advantages for access to markets in the UK, Germany and other EU countries, with the port of Rotterdam being the largest port in Europe. Holland has a highly mechanized agricultural sector which employs 4% of the labour force and provides large surpluses for the food-processing industry and for exports. Holland exports two third of the world total export of fresh-cut plants, flowers and bulbs besides a significant portion of the export of tomatoes, chillies, cucumbers, apples etc. Holland offers as one of the most untapped markets for Indian coir products, especially for coir pith products and coir garden articles. International trade is one of the important segments of the economy of Holland. The statistics of exhibitors and visitors of the recent three editions of IHTF are as below.

Year	2015	2016	2017
Total No. of Buyers attended	26288	24431	27116
Visitors from Holland	17735	16437	18211
Visitors from other countries	8553	7994	8905
Countries represented	105	102	114
Percentage of growth in participating countries	-	-7%	11%

The Coir Board Pavilion

The Coir Board pavilion was constructed in an area measuring 105 sq.mtr in Booth No. D 3.11 in Hall D. There were 12 individual booths in the Coir Board Pavilion and two separate booths in other locations. The list of co-exhibitors is furnished elsewhere *ibid*. The construction of the Pavilion was entrusted to M/s Pavilions & Interiors India Pvt. Ltd., Kochi after inviting global response and following due procedures as per GFR, under two cover bidding system. After having reached at Amsterdam late in the night of 6 November 2017, the undersigned took stock of the progress of stall construction and dressing up of the stall on 7th November, 2017. By about 8.30 PM on 07.11.2017 all the 14 stalls were dressed up befittingly to grab attention of visitors and were ready for formal opening during the commencement of the fair. The Board's pavilion was informative and inviting and all the co-exhibitors appreciated Coir Board for arranging ever best pavilion in the IHTF or similar horticultural trade fairs.



Coir Board Delegation

This time Coir Board was able to depute Coir Delegation consisting of 15 persons representing 14 co-exhibitors.



Arrangements at the stall

The stall, after dressing up and display gave an elegant look which was appreciated by all the co-exhibitors and other Indian coir exporters. Apart from the display of exhibits, wall graphics were also arranged in Board's booth educating the visitors on the significant advantage of coir products and projecting its environment friendly attributes. Besides keeping publicity pamphlets, leaflets, etc. for distribution, the following activities were also organized as part of the efforts to improve the overall performance in the participation of Coir Board Delegation.

1. One LED TV was put up in Board's stall and CDs on product profile, manufacturing technologies, advantages of coir products, corporate film on Coir Board etc. were screened throughout the fair timings.
2. Internet facility was provided to all co-exhibitors by distributing the individual data card which was well appreciated by the co-exhibitors.
3. Literatures on export procedures, formalities, etc. were made available in sufficient quantity for the use of needy visitors.
4. The WhatsApp group created comprising of all co-exhibitors, Secretary & other Officials of Coir Board, booth contractor and other service providers was very effective in the exchange of information and other vital data. This was well appreciated by all stakeholders.
5. Direct on-the-spot contact with Head Quarters of Coir Board was made through internet and telephone to sort out issues for offering clarifications, additional information, expert opinion etc. wherever required. This facility was well appreciated by the information seekers.
6. A Power Point presentation was prepared on the possibilities and prospects of Indian coir sector including its manufacturing base, export potential, product innovations etc. and presented to the needy visitors from Board's booth.
7. A separate cubicle with proper seating arrangements was provided in the Board's booth to hold meetings with the buyers and exporters and other prominent visitors.
8. A special brochure incorporating the profiles of the participating co-exhibitors and the ranges of products was brought out and distributed to the visitors of Coir Board Pavilion as well as Hall D in general.
9. Coir Board booth was designed as a facilitating office-cum-theme Pavilion with reception area, Mini Conference area and a small pantry.
10. Arrangements were made for the supply of tea / coffee and snacks, to the co-exhibitors and visitors of the pavilion, from Coir Board Booth.



Inauguration of Coir Board Pavilion

Coir Board Pavilion was inaugurated at 8.30 Hrs. on 08.11.2017 in the presence of all co-exhibitors and representatives of Indian Embassy.



Discussions with Organizers

The location of Coir Board pavilion in this edition of the event was very good giving better visibility alongside of the main pathway. All the co-exhibitors sincerely appreciated Coir Board for grabbing the present location which brought good business results for the participants. However, I had discussions with the office bearers of the event organizers explaining the need for increasing the facilities, for the international participants, like online Ad support, connecting the exhibitors and business visitors, facilities for uploading visuals of exhibits on the official website and making it available to the business visitors etc.



Meeting with Importers

Country-wise meeting were organized with the importers from the major importing countries of coir pith and garden articles. Detailed and fruitful discussions were held with the importers from South Korea, Australia, USA, UK, Spain, Italy, China, Israel and Canada. Another meeting was organized with the importers from Holland to take stock of the situation with reference to the trading status of coir products in the country and on the way ahead for further promoting the coir pith and coir garden articles in Holland.

Trade enquiries / business prospects from the fair

Despite the cascading effects of the double economic recessions and the fluctuation of trading currencies, IHTF 2017 proved to be worthwhile to the Indian coir sector. The overall responses of the co-exhibitors of Coir Board were really good enough to justify the participation. The initial statistics as per the feedback received from the participants are as below.

Sl. No.	Name of the firm	No. of Visitors	No. of trade enquires received	Business Expected (Rs. in Lac)
1	Cloud Coir Exports	22	7	245.00
2	Kelachandra Exports & Trades	45	15	65.00
3	SSS Global	26	5	200.00
4	Cauveri Coco Peat Pvt. Ltd.	12	5	900.00
5	Coconut Products Impex	35	15	215.00
6	Royals International Trade & Allied Products Pvt. Ltd	6	2	195.00
7	Aswini Agrotech	20	12	165.00
8	Madhavan Eco Craft	14	2	19.50
9	Uthayam Coir Exports	150	20	18.80
10	Delta Coirs	60	15	195.00
11	VRS Coirs	43	16	212.00
12	Jaguar Paw	35	7	100.00
13	Greenline Cocopeat	30	15	300.00
14	Techno Exports	32	8	120.00
Total		530	144	2950.30

Cost benefit analysis

An expenditure of Rs 44,306/- was incurred towards the cost of exhibits (Rs.10,911) and freight charges (Rs. 33,395). The details of trade enquiries furnished above would stand as a testimony to the benefits derived from the participation. It can be said beyond doubt that value for the money spent has been recovered by several folds.

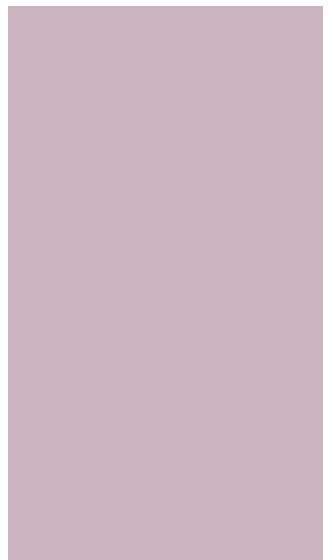
Assessment

The feedback received from the co-exhibitors revealed that the ambience of the show was good and all the co-exhibitors got some business. The buyers have made an appeal that there should be some mechanism to keep the price of the product as same at least for one year. They have also appealed to evolve a mechanism to ensure the quality of the products.

Suggestions of the Co-exhibitors

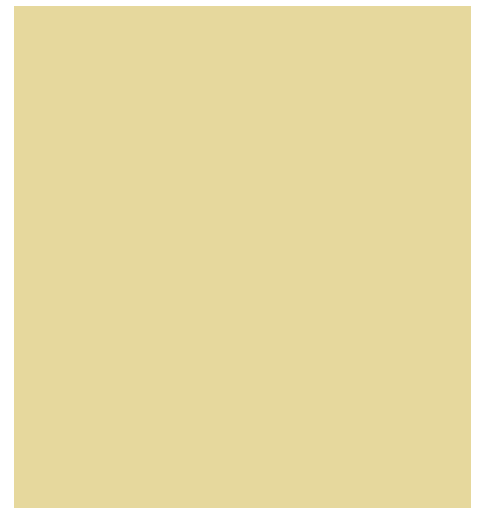
The co-exhibitors were extremely happy over the arrangements made by Coir Board. It was also appreciated that every year Coir Board is making remarkable improvement in the quality of participation. However, they gave the following suggestions as steps towards continuous and further improvement.

1. The positioning of Board's Pavilion to a more visible location nearer to the main pathway.
2. Change the Pavilion to wooden structure with white colour.
3. Keep away from bigger booths.
4. Design of the Pavilion should be further improved.



Conclusion

The Board's performance in the fair was remarkable and rewarding with lot of multifarious improvement and the industry garnered the opportunity to the maximum. All the Co-exhibitors were very much happy with the participation in IHTF 2017. Being the flagship event of Coir pith industry, IHTF 2017 came to a successful conclusion on 10 November, 2017 as it delivered an impressive performance with international appeal, high attendance and a considerable more buoyant mood in the horticultural products trade. The huge array of invitingly cozy fresh-cut plants, flowers and bulbs with captivatingly designed live gardens and astounding variety of materials, colours and patterns which all testified to the highly innovative spirit of the international horticultural industry including the Indian Coir Pith Sector. The mood in the exhibition halls made it clear that the industry had taken a considerable turn for the better, with great hope for improved business prospects. It is also a fact that most of the co-exhibitors of the Board confirmed their repeated participation in IHTF 2018 with increased space requirement.

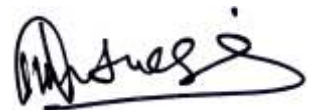


However, the following aspects deserve a serious consideration while embarking upon future participation.

1. Improve the appeal of the pavilion by using wooden material for construction and keeping simple designs and white or elegant colour pattern.
2. The Board's pavilion should be positioned in the main pathway more closely to the main entrance as far as possible, even though it is very difficult since most of the exhibitors currently located there might have reserved the space for years together.

3. Coir Board Pavilion may be constructed in three or four locations in order to avoid unhealthy competitions that may arise due to clustering of co-exhibitors in one location.
4. One locking cabinet may be provided in each booth.
5. Sufficient publicity efforts may be taken in the form of release of ad in Fair Catalogue, carrying ads at the entrance of Hall D to increase the visibility of Coir Board Pavilion and capture the attention of trade visitors.
6. The meeting of the Co-exhibitors should be conducted well in advance and on as much occasions as found necessary.
7. The participants should be motivated for display of innovative products.
8. The mechanization process of the coir industry in India should be accelerated with a view to bring in price competitiveness and also to increase the product varieties and uniqueness of the ranges of products.
9. The participants should be encouraged to go for more value addition and to evolve crop/plant specific product ranges.
10. Arrangements may be made for distribution of some gifts to the visitors from Board's Booth, at least a paper bag or eco-friendly bag carrying an ad visual of coir products to distribute the brochures.
11. Efforts should be made to increase the number of participants in the delegation and also to reserve larger area for participation.
12. More international fairs should be identified for participation by Coir Board on a focus-product & focus-country basis targeting floor covering products, horticultural products, erosion control products, sleeping accessories and coir wood.
13. The officials accompanying the delegations should be deputed two days in advance of the fair opening so as to enable them to take possession of the pavilion from the booth contractor after making required modifications, to attend the responsibilities to organize the participation of the co-exhibitors and the Board and also to coordinate with the organizers.
14. Whenever senior officials from the Ministry, Chairman, Coir Board and Secretary, Coir Board are deputed, one more official from Coir Board should be deputed along with the delegation in order to assist them in organizing participation of the delegation, organizing meeting with stakeholders like buyers, Importers Associations etc.

The undersigned sincerely express deep felt gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister of MSME; Secretary, Ministry of MSME, Chairman, Coir Board and other officials in the Ministry of MSME & Coir Board for their patronage, guidance and co-operation for making this endeavor a grand success. The undersigned also expresses sincere gratitude to H/E the Ambassador of India in Holland and other officials in the Embassy for their invaluable support and guidance. The undersigned also thankfully acknowledge the ethical, co-operative and cordial behavior of all co-exhibitors in the pavilion, which made the participation of Coir Board Delegation a resounding success. Last but not the least, the bountiful and timely deliverables provided by the appointed agencies like M/s Pavilions & Interiors India Pvt. Ltd., UPS etc. also needs to be appreciated.



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