

## ITS Hub: The best of both worlds

New format brings together exhibitors and visitors to InterTabac and InterSupply in a compact, corona-friendly format on 3 and 4 November 2020 – both physically and online

**When announcing the postponement of this year's InterTabac and InterSupply trade fairs, organiser Messe Dortmund GmbH and the tobacco industry partner associations gave advance notice of a new, innovative replacement format this year. Now they are lifting the curtain on the "ITS Hub" due to be staged on 3 and 4 November 2020. The event combines the best of both worlds, being a two-day compact "distillation" of the InterTabac and InterSupply trade fairs as well as a novel mix of physical event and virtual platform. This combination makes it possible – even in times of the COVID 19 pandemic – to bring together visitors, industry representatives and companies from home and abroad, and to provide a corona-compatible platform for sharing information and opinions on all the latest topics, trends and innovations. This makes the ITS Hub the perfect interim solution until the two fairs can once again be held in their customary form at Dortmund Exhibition Centre. The next regular-format InterTabac and InterSupply fairs are planned to take place between 16 and 18 September 2021.**

Dortmund (II) – SARS-CoV-2 (a.k.a. coronavirus) has made it impossible to hold major international trade fairs this year. InterTabac and InterSupply have also had to be postponed (to 16–18 September 2021), but the tobacco industry's desire to "talk shop" face-to-face and have the opportunity to present new products and continue the dialogue with retailers is as strong as ever. As a result, organiser Messe Dortmund GmbH and the tobacco industry partner associations put their heads together and quickly developed a new, compact, corona-compatible format to step into the breach as a worthy alternative to both fairs: the ITS Hub. This is a modern mix of physical event and digital platform, as Sabine Loos explained: "Our event brings together the best of both worlds, reflecting the diversity of the tobacco industry and tobacco production, and merging the advantages of a conventional trade fair and an online event. For this purpose, we have planned a physical presence zone with 'presence spots' taking the place of conventional trade fair stands. Here, one to four companies each have the opportunity to present their products and then move to separate communication islands for further discussions or product samples – both fully compliant with statutory requirements, as partition walls, adequate space between individual spots and wide corridors ensure that distancing rules are complied with," Ms

Loos, who is Managing Director of the exhibition centre operating company Westfalahallen Unternehmensgruppe GmbH, continued: "There's also a stage area and a 'video spot' connecting the real world and the digital world. The stage program will be streamed unedited, as will the contents of the 'video spot', which companies and media partners can use for interviews and product presentations." To keep real-life discussions and the live streams running smoothly, the organizers will be relying on innovative technology on the ground, giving all participants the ability to transfer a variety of audio resources to their smartphones and follow the program using their own headphones or earpieces (these will also be available to be borrowed in the exhibition hall).

### **A digital platform enabling a wealth of interaction**

The central point of contact on the Internet is a digital platform on which visitors aged 18 and over will be able to register and follow the programme happening on site, take a tour of the trade fair and participate in interactive tastings. "Due to worldwide travel restrictions, many international exhibitors, industry players and tobacco enthusiasts are unable to attend physically. For them, our digital offerings are the ideal alternative, helping them keep up to speed with the latest topics and trends. Access to the online content will be free of charge," said Steffen Kahnt, Managing Director of the German Federal Association of Tobacco Retailers (BTWE), explaining the idea behind the online aspects of the ITS Hub. "When it comes to the live streaming of the on-stage programme and individual product presentations – complete with simultaneous interpreting – we'll be using tools to enable direct interaction, ensuring everyone has as 'normal' a trade fair experience as possible. This will allow both virtual and physical visitors to ask questions after product presentations and following talks by experts from home and abroad. We are also currently preparing offerings such as tobacco product samples that exhibitors and partner organisations will be able to send to verified users' homes. This means that one of the signature aspects of InterTabac and InterSupply – smelling, tasting and experiencing the various products – will be preserved even during the current pandemic," added Sabine Loos.

### **Attractive offerings for businesses**

The combination of virtual and physical event in this compact format also has several benefits for businesses, for example the presence spots which enable a cost-effective physical presence while requiring a minimum of personnel on site. "Exhibitors need only bring their products and documentation with them, leaving us to take care of the rest and ensure all requirements for protecting against COVID-19 infection are met," said Sabine Loos. In addition, the online platform enables companies to take part without being tied to time or location, and reach a big audience without any staff requirement. "Companies can book pre-roll ads, banners, display ads or their own virtual tours of the fair. Indeed, we can also offer live interviews from the presence spots, specialist contributions to the stage programme and video product presentations. This content will remain on the web after the event and thus generate further coverage after the ITS Hub has drawn to a close."

This innovative format has met with great interest among industry representatives: "The first places have already been booked. The packages are in high demand, so anyone wishing to secure one should come to a decision as quickly as possible. The various options are already up there on the Internet," said Sabine Loos in conclusion.

For further information please visit: [www.its-hub-dortmund.de/en/start/](http://www.its-hub-dortmund.de/en/start/)

## ■ ITS Hub: key details at a glance

### **Name:**

**ITS Hub** - the tobacco industry event of 2020

### **Date:**

3 and 4 November 2020

### **Event organiser:**

Messe Dortmund GmbH (Dortmund Exhibition Centre)

### **Visitors or participants:**

Tobacco product wholesalers, and specialist and general retailers from across the whole of Germany and Europe. People engaged in the tobacco industry worldwide, including managers and specialists in the purchasing, production, product development, research & development, quality and management accounting disciplines.

Admission to the physical event in Dortmund strictly for trade visitors aged 18 and over.

### **Key subject areas:**

Cigars, cigarillos, pipes and smoking accessories, cigarette and pipe tobacco, cigarettes, leaf tobacco, next generation products, hookahs, shisha tobacco, raw tobacco and raw materials, flavourings, additives and essences, cigarette paper, automated production machinery for tobacco products, hookahs and e-cigarettes, packaging and packaging machinery, production equipment and software

### **Admission:**

Admission to the ITS Hub (limited to trade visitors aged 18 and over) costs EUR 22.00 per day.

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