



Shri. Ajay Prakash Sawhney
Secretary
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
Government of India
Email: secretary@meity.gov.in

March 26, 2020

Subject: Ensuring Necessary Exclusions from Mandatory Stay-At-Home Policies for Essential IT Functions

Dear Shri. Ajay Prakash Sawhney,

COVID-19 presents one of the most complex challenges governments around the world have faced in modern times. As you consider options for responding to this challenge, BSA | The Software Alliance (**BSA**)¹ seeks to support decisions that maximize public health and safety while maintaining essential functions that millions of citizens depend on for critical business and personal, including healthcare needs.

BSA's members include: Adobe, Amazon Web Services, Atlassian, Autodesk, AVEVA, Bentley Systems, Box, Cadence, Cisco, CNC/Mastercam, IBM, Informatica, Intel, MathWorks, Microsoft, Okta, Oracle, PTC, Salesforce, ServiceNow, Siemens Industry Software Inc., Sitecore, Slack, Splunk, Synopsys, Trend Micro, Trimble Solutions Corporation, Twilio, and Workday.

Following Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi's address² to the nation on Tuesday March 24, Ministry of Home Affairs vide annexure to order no.40-3/2020-DM-I(A)³ issued guidelines on the measures taken for containment of COVID-19 epidemic. Per the annexure, internet services, IT and IT enabled services (for essential services) are exempted from the order. We would like to thank the Government of India for this exemption.

It is important that mandatory stay-at-home or self-quarantine orders and related policies limiting business operations exclude individuals who are necessary to maintain vital functions performed by information technology (IT) and IT infrastructure in order to meet such needs. It is also extremely important that definitions of exclusions be consistent both among and within

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countries; inconsistencies make it more difficult for our members to provide the continuity of services that are needed for stay-at-home and related policies to work effectively.

BSA's members operate and develop cloud services, software and hardware platforms, and other IT infrastructure that support functions that are vital, particularly in the unique circumstances that the spread of COVID-19 entails. These functions enable effective public health responses, support and maintain economic continuity, and underpin many essential personal needs of individual citizens. Health care providers, first responders, the vendors of food and essential supplies and their supply chains, business and government enterprises, critical infrastructures like utilities and financial services, and numerous other functions are reliant on IT and IT infrastructure. Without the necessary exclusions, stay-at-home orders and similar policies that cause substantial disruptions to IT and IT infrastructure providers could cripple these functions.

As you implement mandatory stay-at-home or similar policy responses, we urge you to ensure the continuity and stability of these services by **including IT and IT infrastructure in essential business exemptions that would not be subject to movement or lock-down restrictions. Such exemptions should include: global and local IT and IT infrastructure companies, cloud service providers, communications and web-based services providers as well as their vendors, manufacturers and suppliers.** In order to provide continuous service to critical infrastructure companies in India, it is necessary to exempt the above vendors. It is also critical to allow the on-going construction and installation of new facilities and infrastructure of such companies to ensure they are able to meet the rapidly growing demand for such essential services.

Globally, software and other IT companies are taking significant measures to improve the public health response to COVID-19, and our members are eager to continue working with government and non-governmental stakeholders to confront this crisis together. As you further consider policy responses, BSA and its members are eager to serve as resources to help make these policies as effective as possible. Thank you for your leadership during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Venkatesh Krishnamoorthy
Country Manager - India
BSA | The Software Alliance



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Venkatesh Krishnamoorthy
Country Manager - India
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Shri. Ajay Kumar Bhalla,
Home Secretary
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India
Email: hshso@nic.in

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Venkatesh Krishnamoorthy
Country Manager - India
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Shri. Dr. P.K. Mishra
Principal Secretary
Prime Minister's Office
Government of India
Email: pkmishra.pmo@gov.in

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