



THEME

ONE WORLD, ONE FIGHT: Eliminating Counterfeiting and Smuggling Through Collective Action

Concept Note

BACKGROUND

Illicit trade has emerged as one of the most complex and pressing challenges confronting the global economy today. Smuggling and Counterfeiting, have evolved into a highly organised, technology-enabled, and transnational enterprise that undermines fair market practices, weakens governance systems, distorts legitimate trade, and fuels organised criminal and terror networks. The rapidly expanding scale and sophistication of illicit trade continue to erode economic resilience, compromise consumer safety, and place immense pressure on regulatory and enforcement frameworks across countries.

Across the globe, illicit trade has now assumed proportions comparable to some of the world's largest economies. According to Global Financial Integrity, the illicit economy is estimated to exceed 3 trillion US dollars annually. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) estimate that counterfeit and pirated goods alone account for more than 2 % of global trade and nearly 5 % of imports in certain regions. The World Economic Forum has identified illicit trade among the top risks to global stability, while the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has warned that nearly two-thirds of terrorist organisations worldwide derive funding through illicit trade and related criminal activities.

These are not merely alarming statistics, they are stark reminders that illicit trade is no longer just an economic or regulatory concern. It has emerged as a serious threat to public health, consumer safety, government revenues, investor confidence, and national security. From counterfeit pharmaceuticals and smuggled tobacco products to illicit alcohol, fake consumer goods, and illegal digital commerce, illicit trade adversely impacts industries, governments, and citizens alike.

In this context, combating illicit trade require a comprehensive and coordinated global response. Addressing the interconnected nature of smuggling, counterfeiting, and illicit financial flows demands stronger international cooperation, robust policy and regulatory frameworks, technology-driven enforcement mechanisms, intelligence sharing, and deeper collaboration between governments, industry, enforcement agencies, multilateral organisations, and civil society. Such collective efforts are essential not only to prevent and disrupt illicit activities, but also to promote transparency, accountability, fair competition, and sustainable economic growth.

FICCI CASCADE

FICCI CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy) has been pursuing a campaign to counter the challenge of growing illicit trade in counterfeit and smuggled goods. FICCI CASCADE is committed to address the critical issue of illicit trade through collaborative efforts with policy makers, industry stakeholders, enforcement agencies, youth, media, and consumers. Our mission involves fostering an engaged and informed public discourse on this pressing issue through various awareness programmes across different states. The committee aims at creating a national movement to make India safe from the bane of smuggling and counterfeiting by advocating effective actions, promoting legal businesses and protecting consumer's interests, thus, achieving the vision of a secure, healthy and prosperous India.

As per a 2024 FICCI CASCADE's study titled – **“Challenging Landscape of Illicit Trade: How Changing Factors of Consumption Affect Illicit Markets in 5 Key Industries in India”**, estimates the size of illicit market in India at Rs. 7,97,726 crore in 2022-23. Considering 5 key industries— FMCG (packaged goods), FMGC (personal and household care goods), alcohol, tobacco, and textiles & apparel, where illicit trade significantly undermines legitimate businesses, distorts market competition, and erodes government tax revenues.

Since its inception, FICCI CASCADE has organized over 150 state-level awareness programmes, reached 10,000+ schools and impacted over 1 lakh youth nationwide, 100 capacity-building workshops, 11 international conferences, 4 auto-rallies, 18 Twitter Space sessions, and a series of impactful dialogues and campaigns to address the challenges posed by counterfeiting and smuggling. CASCADE's efforts have garnered recognition and appreciation for the diverse engagement programs and activities it has orchestrated. As we continue to combat illicit trade, it becomes increasingly imperative to fortify and augment regulatory frameworks. Through collaboration and concerted efforts, we can forge a path towards greater resilience and integrity in the global marketplace, thus fostering trust and prosperity for all stakeholders involved.

MASCRADE 2026

FICCI CASCADE has been consistently working towards addressing the growing challenge of smuggling and counterfeiting through sustained advocacy, public awareness initiatives, and multi-stakeholder engagement. As part of these efforts, MASCRADE – the Movement Against Smuggled and Counterfeit Trade, has emerged as FICCI CASCADE's flagship annual international conference, providing a dynamic platform for discussions on policy interventions, enforcement strategies, and collaborative action against illicit trade.

Continuing this endeavour, FICCI CASCADE is organising the 12th edition of its annual flagship international conference MASCRADE on **September 17-18 September 2026**, at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, bringing together key stakeholders to further strengthen the global response to smuggling and counterfeiting. **The theme of this year's conference is "One World, One Fight: Eliminating Counterfeiting and Smuggling Through Collective Action".**

The conference underscores the urgent need for a united worldwide effort to address the mounting menace of illicit trade and its adverse consequences on economies, governance, and public well-being. It will focus on dialogue and collaboration among policymakers, enforcement agencies, industry leaders, and international experts to examine emerging trends in illicit trade and identify innovative, coordinated, and forward-looking approaches to combat these threats.

Various institutions of international repute such as WCO, OECD, INTERPOL, WIPO, UNODC, GITOC, UKIPO, JETRO, DKPTO, TRACIT, USPTO, US Dept. of Homeland Security, Australian Border Force and subject matter experts from Denmark, Italy, France, Belgium among others are working concertedly to address this issue in the global arena. A coordinated approach, both at the national and international levels, is the need of hour to effectively combat this critical challenge.

Our previous editions include:



MASCRADE 2025

Growing Illicit Trade: Destabilising Economic Welfare
18th –19th September 2025, New Delhi



MASCRADE 2024

Building Resilient Economies and Implementing Robust Measures from a Global Initiative against Smuggling and Counterfeiting
25th – 26th September 2024, New Delhi



MASCRADE 2023

Tackling Illicit Trade: Socio-Economic Perspectives and Way Forward
28th -29th September 2023, New Delhi



MASCRADE 2022

Unleashing the Power of Consumers in the fight against Smuggling and Counterfeiting
22nd -23rd September 2022, New Delhi

**MASCRADE 2021**

Impact of Counterfeiting and Smuggling on Personal Health and Safety
21st -22nd January 2021, New Delhi

**MASCRADE 2019**

Containing Counterfeiting, Smuggling and Piracy: A Winning Strategy
26th -27th September 2019, New Delhi

**MASCRADE 2018**

Ensuring Brand Security for Sustained Businesses and Employment Generation
1st -2nd November 2018, New Delhi

**MASCRADE 2017**

Protect your Brand Globally: Fight Counterfeiting, Smuggling and Piracy
12th -13th October 2017, New Delhi

**International Conference on Illicit Cross Border Trade in Goods: Impact on Economy and Consumers**

8th December 2016, New Delhi

**International Conference on Illicit Trade – Threat to National Security and Economy**

15th January 2016, New Delhi

**International Conference on 'Trade in Counterfeit, Pirated and Smuggled Goods - A Threat to India's National Security and Economy'**

19th -20th September 2013, New Delhi

GLIMPSES OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF MASCRADE





Strategic Priorities Driving MASGRADE 2026

- Assessing the economic and social impact of illicit trade on revenues, jobs, businesses, and market integrity.
- Strengthening global cooperation and harmonised standards to combat smuggling, counterfeiting, and illicit financial networks.
- Examining the impact of illicit trade on supply chains, brand reputation, and consumer confidence.
- Promoting consumer awareness, ethical business practices, and public health safeguards to curb counterfeit and smuggled goods.
- Adopting global best practices to enhance transparency, regulatory coordination, and institutional effectiveness.
- Empowering enforcement agencies through intelligence-led strategies and technology-driven interventions.
- Showcasing successful industry initiatives and fostering stronger government–industry collaboration against illicit trade.

Key Deliverables from MASGRADE 2026

- Formulation of actionable policy recommendations for a multi-dimensional enforcement strategy.
- Strengthened collaboration and information-sharing between enforcement agencies, industry stakeholders, and regulatory authorities.

Takeaways for Participants- Capacity Building, Knowledge Sharing, and Strategic Insights

- Expert-led insights into global best practices in tackling counterfeiting and smuggling.
- Deeper understanding of sector-specific challenges and collaborative solutions.
- Opportunities to build long-term alliances with stakeholders committed to curbing illicit trade.

Who Should Attend MASGRADE 2026



Industry Professionals



Consumer Rights Activists



Legal Experts



International Institutions



Technology Providers



Enforcement Agencies



Media



Consumers



Policymakers

Themes Driving the Dialogue

- ❖ Strengthening Economic Resilience: Tackling Illicit Trade for Sustainable Growth
- ❖ Countering Counterfeiting and Smuggling: Aligning Industry, Policy, and Innovation
- ❖ Beyond Borders: Advancing Global Partnerships to Counter Illicit Trade
- ❖ Enhancing Intelligence-Led Enforcement Measures to Counter Illicit Trade
- ❖ Disrupting Illicit Trade and Organized Crime Networks: Enforcement, Intelligence and Strategy
- ❖ Catalyzing Change: Industry-Driven Solutions to Combat Counterfeiting and Smuggling