

Preface

In the world of crafts, culture and trade complement each other for the welfare of craftspeople. The true added value of artisanal products is their constant reference to creative expression and to the culture and heritage of an individual craftspeople or group of craftspeople who have unique skills. The crucial role of the craft sector in sustainable development and poverty reduction is receiving ever greater recognition at national and international levels.

The craft sector is thus ideally situated to respond to the increasing needs and demands of the international market for authentic local products using natural renewable materials. Participation in an international trade fair is widely regarded as a most efficient means of exposure to export markets. The advantages include audience concentration, face-to-face communication and product presentation, competition watch, and acquaintance with new business partners. At the same time exhibitors have to face the growing challenge of international competition, greater customer empowerment and increasingly versatile markets, products and processes.

Countless small craft enterprises in developing countries need support and guidance if they are to avail of the many opportunities arising out of their participation in such trade fairs. This practical Guide has been written for their benefit, and that of trade support associations and capacity-building sources whose vocation is to assist craft exhibitors from developing countries to meet the manifold costs of collective, worthwhile participation in international craft trade fairs. Appended to the Guide is a directory of notable specialized international craft trade fairs, a list of sources of information – both traditional and electronic – and a bibliography.

It is our hope that this Guide should provide essential data to improve the exposure of artisanal products for the benefit of craftspeople worldwide, and so contribute to greater awareness of the cultural and socio-economic input of crafts to development.



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