

MOU to boost SA homeware design exports to EU

The Cape Craft & Design Institute (CCDI) and the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) have signed a memorandum of understanding to develop exports of South African home decor and textile products to the European Union (EU).



CBI Senior Programme Manager Henriette Postma-Hazelaar and CCDI executive director Erica Elk sign a memorandum of understanding, whereby Western Cape SMEs will be supported in exporting to the European Union.

The CBI, set up in 1971, is an agency of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It initially supported producers and exporters within the Dutch market and then its mandate was broadened in 1991 to cover the full EU. The CCDI was set up in 2001 as a joint initiative of the provincial government of the Western Cape and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, to support the economic sustainability of the craft and design sector in the Western Cape.

Under the new agreement, the CBI is implementing the Home Decoration & Home Textiles South Africa programme from 2013-2018. It aims to support the development of business export capabilities and address obstacles within the larger business environment.

"Developing internal company expertise and systems will result in the professionalization of the participating companies," said CBI senior programme manager, Henriette Postma-Hazelaar. "This will increase their chances of finding new European trading partners, through a focused penetration of the EU market, with a well-designed export collection."

20 businesses selected

The CCDI conducted the selection process in November and December last year and each of the 20 businesses chosen for the full five-year programme now has an export audit and action plan.

Executive director of the CCDI, Erica Elk, said that the CCDI has years of experience in training craft and design entrepreneurs in export preparedness. It works closely with the dti to enable local producers to take part in overseas lifestyle shows.

"This agreement with CBI is a great opportunity to develop off this solid base, as the local market is relatively small and exporting radically expands the potential market. While we always encourage companies to first establish themselves locally, exporting is the next step to increase sales, particularly given the current rand exchange rate."

For more information, go to www.cbi.eu or www.ccdi.org.za.

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