

Certification and Verification in the Artisan Sector: Programs and Proposals for Impact and Scale

Certification: Best Practices and Pitfalls

Adapted from a presentation developed by Global Goods Partners

Presented and Moderated By:

- Karen Gibbs, Co-Director, Alliance for Artisan Enterprise

Key considerations for evaluating an existing or creating a new certification or verification system:

- **Scope:** What does this certification do and not do?
 - Example: Marine Stewardship Council
- **Transparency:** Is information clearly communicated and publicly available?
 - Example: USDA Organic
- **Accessibility:** How do you create a system that is accessible to a range of businesses?
 - Example: Fair Trade USA
- **Governance:** How do you ensure third-party independence when the certification agency is supported by brands?
 - Example: SCS Certified and Sustainable Forestry Initiative
- **Compliance:** How do you create a compliance system that is trustworthy?
- **Monitoring:** How do you create a monitoring system that is not too costly or onerous?
 - Example: World Fair Trade Organization and Forest Stewardship Council

Additionally, we will explore:

- Existing Fee Structures
- Measuring Consumer Value
- Consumer Awareness Trends

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An Alliance for Artisan Enterprise Working Group Presentation Exploring Certification for the Artisan Sector

Presented by:

- Doug Guiley, Vice President of International Sourcing, West Elm
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Embedded in the Alliance's mission are the challenges of growing & supporting artisan enterprise, bringing recognition to the sector and preserving cultural heritage. Our goal is to explore a third-party, globally recognized artisan certification system as a starting point to help us address the challenges that exist for everyone working in the sector: from artisans, to governments, to NGO support groups to retailers.

This certification would appear on products that adopt the Alliance's definition of artisanal product, as outlined by UNESCO: Those produced by artisans, either completely by hand, or with the help of hand tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product.

Our strategy is to collaborate with existing certification and support organizations – such as Craftmark, a handicraft certification system in India operated by the All India Artisans and Craftworkers Association (AIACA). By working with existing in-country organizations such as Craftmark, this certification structure could build on prior knowledge and expertise to implement a 'real-world' system of global certifiers in multiple countries.

The Craftmark Model

With over 23 million craftspeople, the crafts sector is the second largest employer in India. The Craftmark initiative helps denote genuine Indian handicrafts, develop sector-wide minimum standards and norms for labeling a product as handcrafted, and increase consumer awareness of distinct handicraft traditions. Under this initiative, AIACA licenses the Craftmark logo for use by craft-based businesses, cooperatives and NGOs. On average, Craftmark certification increases sales of craft-based businesses by 60%.

A Case Study

A key challenge of certification in many of the existing models, including Craftmark's, is that artisans bear the burden of costs. It can be expensive and there are many roadblocks for small artisan organizations who want to be recognized but might not have the money or training for certification. To address this, our model would require buyers to pay a percentage of the costs of goods. To illustrate how this could potentially play out, west elm will present a case study based on certification of their own handcrafted product assortment and the potential scope of consumer marketing.

Exploring Certification, Verification & Standards Systems for the Artisan Sector

Lessons Learned from Creating the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts

Presented By:

- Indrasen Vencatachellum, formerly of UNESCO

History and Development of the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts

The Award of Excellence for Handicrafts (formerly known as Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts) of Southeast Asia was jointly established by UNESCO and the ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA) in 2000, in order to establish quality standards and to enhance international awareness of handicrafts from the 10 ASEAN countries.

Objectives

The UNESCO 'Award of Excellence for Handicrafts' aims to encourage artisans to produce handicrafts using traditional skills, patterns and themes in an innovative way, in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of these traditions and skills. It is UNESCO's flagship programme for supporting craft producers.

Objective 1: Establish rigorous standards of excellence for handicrafts

The UNESCO "Award of Excellence for Handicrafts" aims to promote quality crafts that upholds rigorous standards of excellence. It aims to ensure that when consumers buy awarded handicrafts, they are buying high quality, culturally authentic products that have been manufactured in a socially-responsible manner with respect for the environment.

Objective 2: Encourage innovativeness

While it seeks to promote the continuation of traditional skills, the UNESCO Award also encourages product innovation in order to ensure that handicrafts remain relevant, valuable, and marketable in modern life.

Objective 3: Offer training and support services

The UNESCO programme aims to provide capacity-building and training workshops to assist craft producers in the improvement of their product design and marketing, development of their markets, and protection of their intellectual property rights.

Objective 4: Provide new opportunities to ensure sustainability of handicraft industries

The handicraft sector plays an increasingly significant role in local economic development and poverty eradication. By providing new market opportunities, the programme aims to enable handicraft producers to establish sustainable livelihoods. This will be achieved through developing networks of handicraft producers and buyers, including the higher-end of the market, and through exhibitions and trade fairs.

Market Development

Since the programme was initiated in 2001, 725 products have been granted with the Award:

- 253 in South-East Asia;
- 182 in South Asia (the programme started in 2004);
- 212 in West-Central Asia (the programme started in 2004);
- 78 in East Asia (the programme started in 2002).