

ENHANCING THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS FROM THE TERRITORIES IN COLOMBIA

Colombia is the Latin American country that has made the greatest commitment to the development of Denomination of Origin labels for its territorial traditional handicrafts. Colombia currently has 11 traditional handicrafts and typical manufactures that have the Denomination of Origin recognition, which distinguishes their quality directly linked to a specific geographical origin.

This number is significant because although initiatives to recognise typical local products with Denomination of Origin signs are spreading in many countries, these mainly refer to food products derived from agriculture and livestock farming.

At present in Colombia 29 products made in different Departments of the country have been recognized with the Denomination of Origin label and 11 of them are traditional handicrafts. These products include textiles, ceramics, basketry, jewelry and hats. The Denomination of Origin recognizes the collective effort of local producers to maintain the qualities of the products of their region.

The Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio is the entity authorized by the Colombian Government to register the Denominations of Origin in the country. The legal framework adopted reflects the international guidelines established for Geographical Indications. A Denomination of Origin is a label used for products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, characteristics or a reputation derived primarily from their place of origin.

In Colombia, the work aimed at valuing and protecting local products is part of a complex set of strategies that the Government has adopted so that the country's territories can develop their great potential. The wide range of traditional handicrafts recognised with the Denomination of Origin represents one of the results of these national strategies for territorial development.

The great and varied natural and cultural patrimony of the country, as well as the knowledge of traditional techniques with which the artisans elaborate different materials and products, has allowed the regions to create their own identity in each handicraft, showing their talent and ingenuity. Colombian products cross borders, reaching many countries, acquiring a commercial value at a global level and at the same time showcasing the Colombia's territories to the world. In this context, the Colombian Government encourages artisans to use the intellectual property system to protect their creative work and obtain equitable remuneration for their efforts, while also preserving the country's national heritage for future generations. The objectives defined for the initiative to grant Denomination of Origin labels are the increase in new job opportunities and better income for artisans, the improvement of their



quality of life, the improvement of prices in marketing and a greater positioning of products at a foreign level.

The national result of having 11 traditional handicrafts recognized with Denomination of Origin was achieved thanks to the contribution of producers and their organisations, local governments in all Departments and the extraordinary work carried out throughout the country by *Artesanías de Colombia*.

Created in 1964, [Artesanías de Colombia](#) is the governmental institution linked to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, that leads the strategy to preserve the trades and artisan tradition in Colombia through inclusive development programs. It promotes marketing and practices aimed at achieving the sustainability of craft activities and the best quality of life for the artisans. Through its [Innovation and Design Laboratories](#), it is active in all 32 Departments of the country supporting projects for the development of arts and crafts in collaboration with producers' associations, municipalities, local governments, chambers of commerce, private and public organizations. [The 2021 call for these Laboratories](#) is addressing groups and associations of producers from 29 territories of Colombia.

[The 2019 Artesanias de Colombia publication](#) presents the main activities and results achieved in the country. [The inventory of Colombian Artisans](#) shows the richness of products promoted. All ongoing activities in 2021 can be found on the official website.

Some other initiatives highlight their relevant impact in the country. A 2019 publication for example [presents the results of Etnias](#), an initiative that contributed to strengthen the craft work of more than 5 thousand artisans from 43 ethnic groups during six years, earning 108 million dollars of revenue for their communities. Through specific consultancies, *Artesanías de Colombia* has involved artisans in the development of 84 product lines under a *collaborative design methodology*.

In 2020, in order to cope with the reduced mobility of the technical team towards the regions, in collaboration with the artisans of the Department of Sucre and the *Fund for the Promotion of Culture and Arts of Sucre*, the Catalogue [Sucre, a story to tell](#) has been produced and disseminated. To produce the catalogue, the artisans were commissioned to photograph their products and to present the fibres, fabrics, textures and processes of their creations, as well as their workshops and their stories.

In 2020 the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism and *Artesanías de Colombia* launched the [Mercado Libre platform for online shopping](#) to support the economic activity of the country's artisans. Handcrafted products from more than 20 artisan workshops from 11 Departments are available in the Official online Store of *Artesanías de Colombia*.

Within the framework of strategies and investments oriented to support the craft activity in all territories, the initiative of Denomination of Origin represents in Colombia another important legal tool to enhance the value of traditional handicrafts through an international instrument for the protection of intellectual property and at the same time to enhance the value of the country as a whole. *Artesanias de Colombia* supported producers from various trades and areas of the country in submitting more than [65 Denomination of Origin applications](#).

Colombia's experience can inspire other countries to adopt Geographical Indication procedures to promote their artisans, who translate knowledge, techniques and natural materials into concrete products showing the richness and cultural diversity of their territories, both nationally and internationally.



To know more

[Denominaciones de Origen en Artesanías de Colombia website](#)

[Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio de Colombia](#)

[Denominaciones de Origen - Document in sic.gov.co website](#)

[Denominaciones de Origen – Manual in sic.gov.co website](#)

[Article in colombia.co website](#)

[Artesanías de Colombia portal](#)

[Artesanías de Colombia in Facebook](#)

[Programa Propiedad Intelectual Artesanías de Colombia](#)

[Plataforma de Mercado Libre in mincit.gob.co website](#)

[Artesanías de Colombia-Curso virtual in Facebook](#)

[Article in colombia.co website](#)

[Article in wipo.org magazine 2006](#)

[Article in lanotapositiva.com](#)

[Geographical Indications in WIPO website](#)

[Handicrafts in WIPO website](#)

