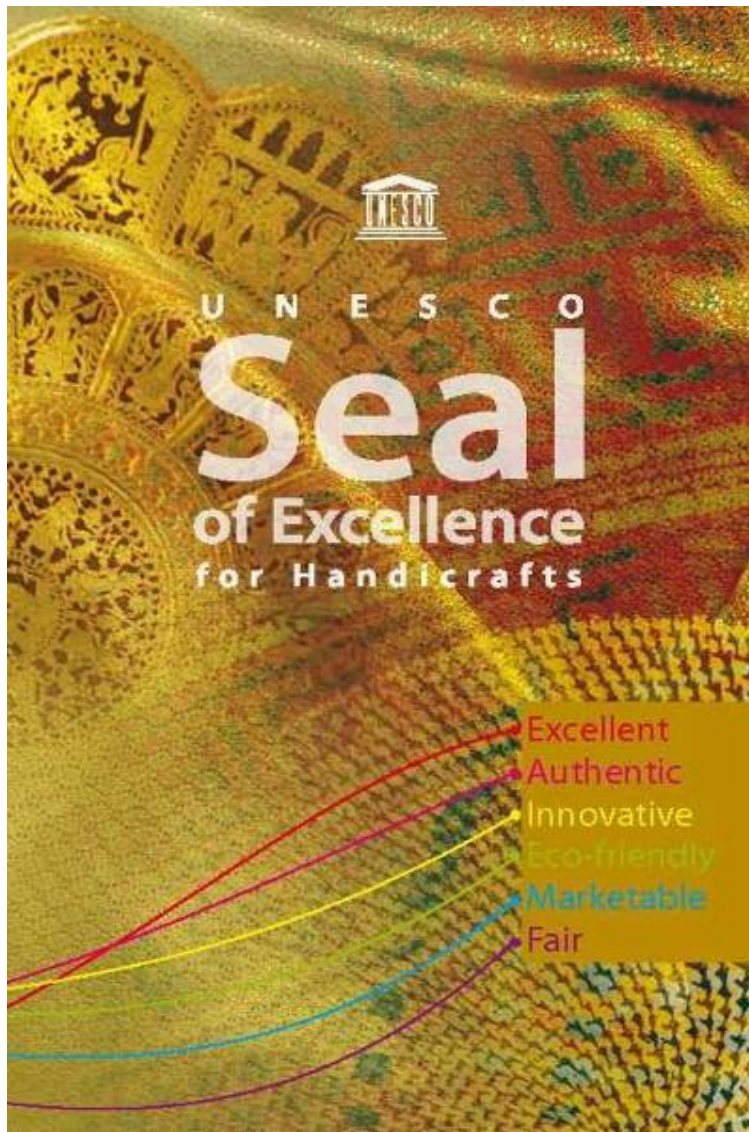


UNESCO Award "Seal of Excellence"
2008 East Asia Programme



About the SEAL

The UNESCO award “Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts” (hereafter referred to as the “SEAL”) 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. The SEAL is UNESCO’s flagship programme for supporting craft producers.

Objective 1: Establish rigorous standards of excellence for handicrafts

The UNESCO award “Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts” aims to promote quality crafts that upholds rigorous standards of excellence. It aims to ensure that when consumers buy SEAL-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 SEAL 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

UNESCO SEAL 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 market 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 SEAL 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.

Benefits

The producers of SEAL-awarded products benefit in the following ways:

Certificate of excellence

Each product recognized with the UNESCO award is given a certificate. The certificate can be used as a promotional tool (for this specific product or product line only) to attest the quality and authenticity of a product.

Training and capacity-building

UNESCO assists national and sub-regional partners in organizing workshops on product assessment, design and promotion for the producers of SEAL-awarded products and programme applicants.

Trade fairs and exhibitions

Producers have the opportunity to display the SEAL-awarded product at annual exhibitions and fairs and will receive guidance about participating in international trade fairs.

Communication and promotion

Producers benefit from the communication and promotion campaign coordinated by UNESCO and its partners. Promotional materials, such as brochures and catalogues, will enhance the product visibility and acknowledgment.

Website

All SEAL-awarded products, together with producers’ information data, are listed on the UNESCO Bangkok website so that interested persons can directly communicate with producers.

Intellectual property and copyrights

Producers of SEAL-awarded handicrafts are sensitized on the benefits of registering their products under intellectual property rights regimes.

The SEAL Process

• Submission

Producers of handicraft products and product lines from participating countries are invited and encouraged to submit their highest quality items for consideration. Please refer to the attached calendar for relevant dates in your region.

• Evaluation

The evaluation takes place in September each second year. Products that meet SEAL standards are awarded with the “Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts.”

• Awarding

Products that are awarded with the Seal of Excellence will be announced on 15 October. The form and number of certificates awarded is at the discretion of the evaluation panel and UNESCO, and may vary from year to year.

Evaluation Criteria and Pre-conditions

A product that is awarded the "Seal of Excellence" meets the highest level of craft excellence and is distinguished as a benchmark for craft production. An international panel of experts, nominated by UNESCO evaluates submissions based on meeting ALL of the following four criteria. To be certified with the SEAL, a product must be:

- **Excellent**

Demonstrated excellence and standard-setting quality in craftsmanship: determined by the use of high quality materials, a high standard of technique and the special attention to manufacturing and finishing details.

- **Authentic**

Expression of cultural identity and traditional aesthetic values: demonstrated by a well-achieved application of aesthetic and cultural expression or traditional crafting techniques.

- **Innovative**

Innovation in design and production: demonstrated by an effective and successful blend of traditional and contemporary, or inventive and creative use of material, design, and production processes.

- **Marketable**

Marketability of the craft products with potential for the world market: related to the functionality of the product, the safe use by potential buyers, a balanced price-quality relationship or the sustainability of production.

To be eligible and enter the evaluation, all submissions must first fulfill two pre-conditions. Products and processes must be:

- **Eco-friendly**

Respect for the environment in materials and production techniques: Exemplified through the sustainable use of natural dyes, natural fibers, recycled materials and the use of materials and production processes that are environmentally friendly

- **Fair**

Social responsibility: The producer must affirm that no labour law or copyrights was violated and no individual or group exploited unfairly at any stage in the production of a handicraft submitted for the SEAL.

Programme Regulations and Eligibility

1. The SEAL is awarded every two years by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in collaboration with regional partners.
2. The SEAL is open to: individual craft producers, community groups, cooperatives, designers and other craft organizations that produce commercial handmade product lines, and are capable of maintaining adequate stock levels to fulfill orders.
3. The applicant must reside permanently (for individuals) or be registered (for organizations) in one of the participating countries.
4. Only finished "handicraft" products will be accepted. Please refer to the definition of handicrafts below:
 - Products of a purely artistic nature are not eligible.
 - Sections of large products (i.e. carpet sample) or semi-finished products (i.e. roll of textiles) are not eligible
5. Products submitted without a complete and signed application form will not be considered for the award.
6. The SEAL is only valid for one product or one product line and the SEAL certificate or name cannot be used for the promotion of other products manufactured by the same producer if these products have not been submitted to and awarded by the programme.
7. The SEAL certificate is valid for a period of 4 years, which can be extended without fee upon confirmation that the product or product line is still available, and meets the same characteristics and quality level. Without confirmation from the producer, the product will be removed from the website and other promotional materials.
8. The certificate can be reproduced in unlimited number for promotional purposes. Applicants who are not direct producers are responsible for sharing the certificate and programme information with the artisan.
9. Craft products or prototypes submitted for consideration for the SEAL will be retained for educational and promotional purposes and cannot be sold by the programme.
 - Awarded products cannot be returned to applicants
 - Products not awarded the SEAL can be returned to the producer at their own cost upon written request.
10. All patent, copyright and other reproduction rights are retained by the producer.

Application Requirements

All of the application requirements must be adhered to for an application to be successful. Please read carefully. Send your complete application to the national or regional partner listed on the enclosed leaflet.

Completed and signed application forms: Please provide all the requested information about the product, otherwise the product cannot enter the evaluation process and will be excluded.

Any details provided will be treated with confidentiality and will not be made public.

Photographs

- 1) 12x17cm (5x7 inches) photo of the sample handicraft product photos of the major production steps
- 2) The photograph of the product will be used for the certificate and website. Therefore, it is important that a high quality picture is submitted (either in photo, slide or digital format).

Craft product sample(s): One sample of the craft product must be sent to UNESCO SEAL partners (national partner organization or sub-regional secretariat). The product will be used for the evaluation and for exhibitions.

Entry processing fee in the amount of US \$20 (twenty dollars US): The collected fee will serve to cover SEAL entry processing and administrative costs and part of communication and exhibition expenses.

Dispatch cost: The cost of dispatching the application form and craft product samples to the project partner is to be borne by the applicant. Clearly indicate on the package: "Samples for submission to UNESCO Seal of Excellence – no commercial value," in order to avoid unnecessary custom fees.

Good quality packing: Items that are broken or damaged during transportation will not be evaluated.

For additional information, please consult the enclosed application form guidelines or contact us.

Handicrafts

Handicrafts are defined as products that are produced either completely by hand or with the help of tools. Mechanical tools may be used as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. Handicrafts are made from raw materials and can be produced in unlimited numbers. Such products can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally expressive, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant.

(Adapted from the definition for crafts/artisan products at the UNESCO/ITC International Symposium on "Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codification", Manila, Philippines, October 1997)

The SEAL will be awarded only to handicrafts produced from one or a combination of natural materials. Following is a list of some of the natural materials from which products can be made. This list is provided as a guide for producers and is by no means exhaustive:

- Textiles (e.g. cotton, silk, linen)
- Natural fibers (e.g. bamboo, vetiver grass, rattan)
- Ceramics (e.g. clay, earthenware, pottery, stoneware, porcelain)
- Wood (including paper and lacquer ware)
- Metal (e.g. silver, gold, bronze, iron, pewter)
- Stone (e.g. precious, semi-precious, jades)

The UNESCO Award "Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts" in Asia

The Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts was jointly established by UNESCO and the ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA) in 2001. Owing to its success, the programme has been expanded worldwide. Within Asia, the SEAL is coordinated by the following sub-regional partner organizations:

Southeast Asia: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and Viet Nam.

Regional Partner: ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA)

Central Asia: Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Regional Partner: Central Asia Crafts Support Association (CACSA)

South Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Regional Partner: Crafts Council of India (CCI)

East Asia: People's Republic of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea

Regional Partner: National crafts associations in East Asia on a rotational basis