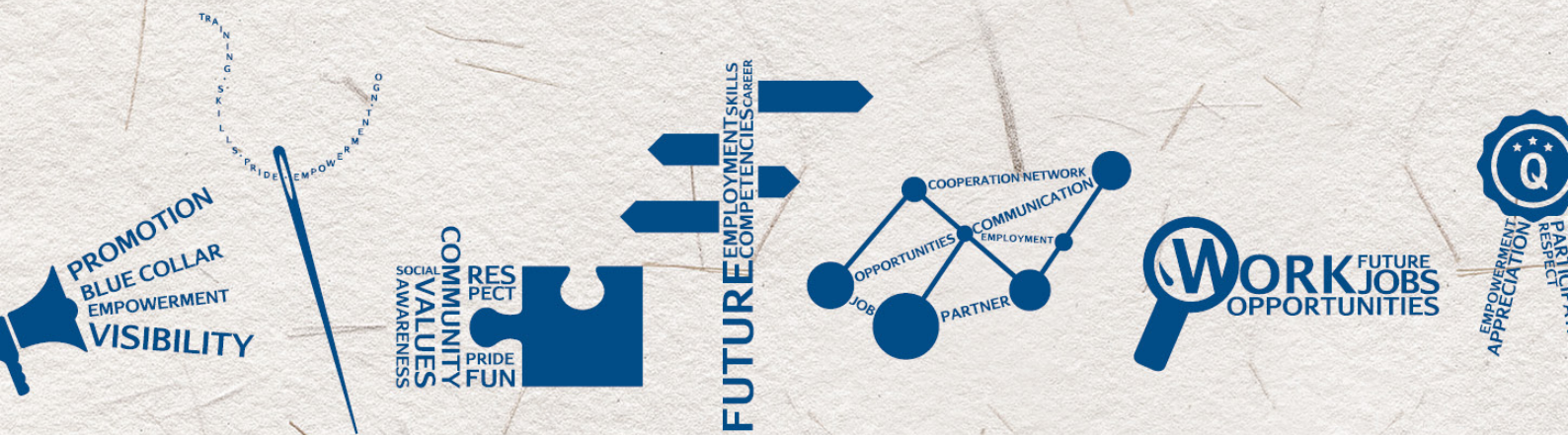




## 6.3 HOW TO JOINTLY DEVELOP MARKET-ORIENTED HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS





# HOW TO JOINTLY DEVELOP MARKET-ORIENTED HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS



## What Is It Useful For

This tool helps to design handicraft products with the goal of selling them later on.

It is crucial to **understand the customers and the market segment** (=market study) in order to develop products (=product design) with **high selling chances** in Egypt and / or abroad (clear market orientation). At the same time, it supports the involvement of the community for the product development.



## What Is Needed

- Handicraft marketing expert
- Designer
- Financial and human resources for market research trips within Egypt and potentially abroad
- Financial and human resources for organization of workshops and meetings



## Examples

The approach has been successfully applied in the handicraft textile sector in Fayoum, in Sinai as well as in Greater Cairo.

Tools 6.1 – 6.4 might also be applied in other sectors, where the required work fulfils the following criteria:

- Allows for homework at local level
- Has a culturally acceptable image
- Is already known to a certain extent to the local community
- Requires relatively low investment costs for required resources
- Requires low to medium level of technical skills, which can be acquired rather easily



## When To Use

The tool can be applied if a community / group of women is willing to earn money through home work, but does not yet have an idea about marketable products and designs.



## How Long Does It Take

Approx. 2-3 months for joint elaboration of most suitable product design and market study

TRAINING  
SKILLS  
PRIDE  
EMPOWERMENT





## WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:



1

### IDENTIFY A HANDICRAFT MARKETING EXPERT

A highly motivated handicraft marketing expert needs to be identified to conduct the market study (see step 2). Based upon this study, s/he will then accompany the product development process with regard to its **chances to be sold on the target market** later on.

Ideally, s / he should dispose of a **network** including potential/ relevant customers / markets / distribution channels (at local level, in bigger Egyptian cities incl. Cairo and – if applicable - the international level) but at least a sound knowledge and understanding of the market and customer expectations. This is crucial to assure that the products will be sold later on (see also [tool 6.4](#)). S/he should also be respected by the community.

Suitable handicraft marketing experts can be identified through NGO networks, local activists, local administrations, art shops, project reports and records of trainings / events of relevant development projects etc.

Ideally, the handicraft marketing expert should work on a **voluntary basis**, which would keep overall design costs low. It could also be the project manager (see [tool 6.1](#)) who undertakes market research, or s / he could come from the NGO where training takes place (see [tool 6.2](#)).

2

### UNDERTAKE A MARKET STUDY

As mentioned above, it will be important to understand which designs (colours, material, shapes) and level of quality will be required in order to make the future handicraft product **attractive for the customers** in Egypt and abroad (see also [tool 6.4](#)).

One promising approach could be to contact specific shops that are highly interested in products which help to **keep old Egyptian handicraft traditions alive** and which cannot yet be found everywhere. So it might be an interesting option to explore with them what could be of particular interest for them and to focus the product design development on such handicraft products. This could, at the same time, considerably help to sell products later through their shops and networks.

3

### IDENTIFY A DESIGNER

A highly motivated designer should be identified. Ideally, it should be a women (due to easier access to female target group) and should be **very knowledgeable, respectful and culturally sensitive** as she should also be respected by the community.

In addition, she should have a high sensibility for the **customers' expectations and taste in the target market (Egypt or abroad)**, which is one important key success factor for selling products later on, as well as good knowledge about the market of raw materials.

**Suitable designers** can be identified through NGO networks, local activists, local administrations, design schools, project reports and records of trainings / events of relevant development projects etc.

Ideally, the designer should work on a **voluntary basis**, which would keep overall design costs low. It could also be the project manager (see [tool 6.1](#)) who develops the designs, or she could come from the NGO where training takes place (see [tool 6.2](#)).





## WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:

4

### UNDERTAKE A DESIGN BRAINSTORMING SESSION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Based on the outcomes of the market study, a design workshop should be organised within the community. During this meeting, the community should be invited to **contribute to the process** on how to design and develop a product which is attractive for customers in Egypt and / or abroad. This is essential for the ownership of the product and furthermore could be a unique selling proposition as it reflects the local designs and environment.

It is recommended to have the designers first introduce the design and product development process. They could also present **successful handicraft product samples** to show the level of quality and design required.

In a second step, the community members should bring along pictures and things which can be used as **source of inspiration** for the future handicraft products. This could be pictures of the surrounding landscape in the case of rural settings, traditional local crafts or patterns, pictures from magazines etc. In small working groups, the community members can together with the designer **brainstorm on potential ideas** for products and designs.

The results of the working groups will then be jointly discussed with all workshop participants, and **key ideas for the product design** jointly agreed upon. It is crucial to document the inspirations in pictures for a future reference.

5

### DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST PRODUCT DESIGNS BY DESIGNER

Based on the outcomes of the design workshop and the market study, the designers will then develop a **design and a few product samples**. These samples should be used for a **first test of the product on the market**.

The production of a product sample will also involve the usage of raw materials. It is highly recommended to carefully verify which materials are **available close to the community**, where production will take place, and in a **sufficient amount and consistent level of quality**. Ideally, raw materials should be produced locally. Experience shows that the quality and availability of the raw material has a decisive impact on the quality of the final product.

Again, it will be important that the newly designed product can be produced by women with **little or no previous handicraft experience**, after a training course which should not take too long.

6

### FINALISATION OF PRODUCT DESIGNS WITH COMMUNITY

In a second meeting with the community, the designers will then present the different product samples. Jointly, a decision will be taken for the **most attractive design and product**.

The final product sample will then be used for the training (see [tool 6.2](#)).







## WHAT TO OBSERVE

The following lessons learnt should be observed:

Involving the women and / or the overall community in the product design process **considerably enhances ownership** with the product and thus overall motivation and commitment. At the same time, it raises awareness of the importance of a **good and marketable design** and required **quality**, and might even encourage women to develop their own designs.

**Document each step.** It is an eye opener and a great source of motivation to look back at the first inspirations after some time and then compare them to the products at a later stage.

It is **absolutely decisive to develop designs which are truly attractive for the final customer** in Egypt and / or abroad (clear market orientation). It is really worth investing sufficient time into this aspect which will then help to secure the overall success of the project.

One has to be aware that in general, the women involved in the project usually do not travel frequently and might not yet have been to bigger cities. They might thus require **further awareness raising about customer expectations** if products will be sold in bigger cities / abroad.

For workshops with communities in marginalised rural and urban areas, it is important to use **easily understandable workshop materials**. This includes pictures and drawings, in particular for illiterate participants.

For workshops focusing on participatory involvement of communities with little or no workshop and / or class room experience, it is very important to **clearly structure the workshop**, assign clear tasks, work with small groups, work with visualisation and not overwhelm participants.

Emphasise the **usage of high quality materials**, if possible locally produced.

