



## BRASIL'S EXPERIENCE

### TITLE: DESIGN EXPORT

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

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**Country:** Brasil

**Coordinating Institution:** The Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil)

**Other institutions involved:** Centro Brasil Design (CBD), Centro Pernambucano de Design (CPD)

**Duration of the experience:** February of 2013 to 2015

**Webpage:** [www.designexport.org.br](http://www.designexport.org.br)



#### 1) Objectives

Design Export is a program that supports Brazilian export-oriented companies to develop innovative products and services with a differentiated design. Launched in 2013, its main goal is to stimulate, by employing design principles, the creative and innovative potential of Brazilian industries as a way of gaining competitiveness, thus better positioning Brazilian products on international markets. The program leverages innovative entrepreneurial initiatives and creates conditions so that small companies can reach foreign markets in a more competitive way, allowing cost reduction, access to new markets and an increase in the added value of their products. With a focus on specific sectors supported by Apex-Brasil, the program stimulates the development of innovative products with good design, geared towards exporting, including innovation and design management as tools for international competitiveness and better positioning of Brazilian products and services abroad. Its specific objectives are:

- Raising companies' awareness on the importance of design as a value adder for their products and services;
- Stimulating the use of design tools for innovation, through consulting in design management;
- Reducing production costs;
- Increasing the added value of supported companies' products or services;
- Fostering companies' exports in target markets, in addition to accessing new markets through Apex-Brasil's export promotion initiatives.

## 2) Relevance

From 2008 to 2010, the Brazilian Government, through the Brazilian Agency for Industrial Development (ABDI), conducted studies on the perspectives for labor-intensive sectors, wherein design was highlighted as an important instrument for increasing the competitive differential of these sectors in the domestic market, and especially in international markets. Studies conducted in 2011 by the National Confederation of Industry (CNI) indicated that 75% of companies that invested in design reported increases in their sales, and from these companies, 41% managed to reduce their costs. In line with these studies, Apex-Brasil confirmed that design was seen as an important factor to add value to products and services, through the analysis of a survey held with trade partner associations in 2011. Thus, the creation of the Design Export Program was a response to the needs of some industries, aiming to increase exports through the insertion of innovation and design management, among companies interested in serving ever more high demanding international markets. The successful results from the first cases inspired other businesspeople to take part on the program, increasing the number of participants and spreading the opportunities from south and southeast to northeast of Brazil as well.

## 3) Concrete activities and actions

The Program has 4 stages:

1. **Planning, methodology and implementation.** Development by CBD and Apex-Brasil. This involves planning; development of specific tools for the program; detailing of its operation process; training of professional consultants.
2. **Diagnosis.** Trade associations seminars, which present design concept, how design can influence businesses, its process and management. Once the seminars gather companies' interest, there are subsequent individual service, through an online tool specifically developed for the diagnosis phase. At the end of this stage, companies will have understood the subject of innovation and design, and will then receive diagnostic visits.

3. **Support.** Participating companies will have access to:
  - Online servicing;
  - In-person guidance by consultants;
  - Financial support;
  - Access to a directory of design professionals;
  - Support information and design management tools;
  - Trade Associations' support.

At the end of this stage, the companies will have developed new innovative products or services oriented towards international markets.

4. **International Promotion.** To promote innovation of products and services in the companies' target markets. In this stage comprehends:
  - Cases by participating companies promoted in the media;
  - Encouragement to participate in Apex-Brasil's export promotion activities, focusing on markets with high buying standards for products and services, such as the USA and Europe.

#### 4) Achievements and results

After 18 months of work, the Design Export Program has been accomplishing its objective of supporting Brazilian companies in the development of innovative export-oriented products with differentiated design, by offering them a simple, instructive and objective methodology which guides the company to include innovation as a permanent part of the development process for new products, using design as one of the tools.

Thus, the program already has some important results:

- Raising awareness: 97 companies informed about the use of design as a way to add value to their products and services, and increase their exports;
- Stimulating the use of design tools: 70 companies registered in the program; from which 59 companies are already using design as an innovation tool, through management design consultancies;
- Cost reduction: at least 10 companies have already reported cost reduction in their production process;
- Increasing companies' exports: so far 10 companies developed new products or services that are currently being introduced to international markets through Apex-Brasil's export promotion initiatives. It is important to notice that companies supported by the Design Export Program are current exporters that also participate in various trade

promotion initiatives supported by Apex-Brasil, such as international trade fairs, roundtables, trade missions and others.

## 5) Sustainability

The program has been promoting the insertion of innovation management in Brazilian exporters companies, using design, once the board from the same companies are hiring design studios they have worked with previously during the Design Export project to develop new products and services.

Thus, the Project's sustainability is confirmed when we ratify that for every US\$ 1.00 invested from Apex-Brasil, we are having a return of US\$ 5.00 from companies' investment to launch new products. These indicators are still being verified since it is a very new project and performance and results are constantly being revised.

One of the evidences of the program's success was the publication by the European Center for Studies on Public Design Policy in its Bulletin no. 10 (<http://goo.gl/PmhoxD>), in December 2013, presenting the Design Export Program's work as a reference case in public policies on design in Brazil.

## 6) Lessons learned

The great legacy from this Project to Apex-Brasil, is the process of continuing the application of the methodology in partnership with CBD. It turned possible the insertion of design management through a structured way.

In contrast, in the next editions we should make mandatory companies' financial or economic counterparts. Currently, it is more a consequence than a requirement.

## 7) Capacity for the exchange of this experience

Cooperation modality	Cooperation modalities the institution can provide to others
Information Sharing	X
Conference Calls	X
Videoconferences	X
Workshops	X
Technical and Experts Visits	X

## 8) Author of this story

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