



Press Release

EIPA invites handicraft retailers and artisans to register for the Handicraft Fair 2021

Mbabane, 20 September 2021- On the 24th of September 2021, EIPA will host the Handicraft Fair which will be hosted on BuyEswatini.com, EIPA's online shopping mall and online exhibition venue. The event, which will run for 21 days, is aimed at local handicraft retailers, and will be hosted in order to allow local handicraft businesses a platform to showcase their unique products to potential customers.

The handicraft fair will open with a free webinar on 24 September, which will host a series of speakers who will launch the official proceedings of the handicraft fair. Industry experts from the private and public sector will form part of the programme including speakers from the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade, a representative from SWIFT and other relevant organisations including EIPA. Each of these speakers will give perspective on how local handicraft stores of any size can increase capacity, find new markets and create sustainable long term partnerships, while also giving an overview of the industry's performance in current market conditions. Retailers are encouraged to register for the exhibition by contacting trade@sipa.org.sz. The free Handicraft Fair webinar will also be live on Zoom. The login details are as follows, Log in ID: 894 5595 1192 and passcode: 552168.

Head of Trade at EIPA, Mr. Bongani Ntshangase comments on the importance of hosting events such as the Handicraft Fair and gives his view on why it is important for local artisans to strategically market their unique and diverse offerings of skillfully handmade products to the rest of the world. "The Handicraft Fair forms part of the Eswatini Virtual Trade Fair (EVTF) which we launched in late 2020. The EVTF was set up in response to the need for safe digital spaces to host events due to the COVID-19 pandemic while also allowing local industry, such as the handicraft industry in this case, to continue showcasing their capability despite limitations on



physical exhibitions. As one of Eswatini's leading export goods through tourism, the handicraft industry was largely sustained by tourists coming into the country and buying wares which they would then take back to their homes. In recent months, however, with the imposed travel restrictions many businesses have taken a hard hit. The Handicraft Fair is an attempt to give these retailers support to continue displaying their goods to an international market despite the sharp decrease in international visitors to the country, while also offering them the permanent benefit that they can get from registering their goods on BuyEswatini.com.”

The Eswatini Virtual Trade Fair offers exhibitors the benefit of a virtual 3D exhibition booth, product activations and demos, on demand video and file uploads/ downloads and online visitor registration and profiling among other features. It also offers exhibitors a large number of benefits including 24/7 access to the exhibition space regardless of your location across the globe, intelligent matchmaking capabilities due to online client registration and minimal setup costs for exhibition spaces. During times when there are no live EVTF exhibitions on BuyEswatini.com, the virtual platform will continue to operate as a permanent online shopping mall of goods and services offered by traders from all over Eswatini.

Ntshangase concludes, “With the EVTF and exhibitions such as the Handicraft Fair, EIPA seeks to present Eswatini's trade potential to both domestic and international business people, while also creating linkages for increased export and domestic trade. Eswatini has trade agreements with SADC, COMESA, AGOA, The Economic Cooperation Agreement (ECA) signed with Taiwan and The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA), all of which make it easier for local retailers to launch their goods into a diverse pool of markets with favourable trade conditions. To register on BuyEswatini.com or to register for the handicraft fair, retailers can contact us at trade@sipa.org.sz. On registering for an online shop on BuyEswatini.com, local traders are in control of how they can best present their goods to the world; through product pictures and competitive pricing. Although we are running a focused trade fair on the handicraft industry this month, when it comes to an end, we would still like to encourage any registered business in any industry to contact us and register on BuyEswatini.com which remains Eswatini's online mall open to the world 24 hours a day, all days of the year.”



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