

Wesgro creates Made in the Cape brand and trade portal for exporters

Wesgro's Cape Trade Portal, supported by the 'Made in the Cape' digital brand marketing campaign - in partnership with Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town - was officially launched on 3 February 2022, and is set to aid local exporters in expanding their global footprint, as well as strengthen the Cape brand identity across global markets with an initial priority focus on the province's top export market - the United Kingdom.



Source: sedickjones via [Pixabay](#)

"The Western Cape Government's strategic plan for the next five years identifies growing exports as a fundamental component to economic recovery," says Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities, David Maynier. "The Cape Trade Portal promoted by the 'Made in the Cape' brand campaign form part of the initiatives we'll be undertaking in partnership with Wesgro and the City of Cape Town to ramp up our support for Cape exporters."

Virtual connection, resource centre

Developed as the virtual connection point for international buyers and Western Cape sellers of products and services, the Cape Trade Portal is a matchmaking tool and virtual home for proudly Cape-based products. Already boasting 115 registered exporters showcasing over 600 products, the portal remains on track to have 500 registered exporters by March. Wesgro encourages local export-ready businesses to complete the simple onboarding process and take advantage of the increased visibility the digital solution provides.

Wesgro's trade team indicated that in addition to being a matchmaking tool, the Cape Trade Portal acts as a dedicated resource centre providing tools, insights, and expertise to support Western Cape exporters on their journey. Via the platform, exporters can tap into training and mentoring programmes, keep updated on upcoming trade exhibitions, get support with non-tariff export barriers as well as assistance with regulatory and compliance requirements.

Alderman James Vos, mayoral member for economic growth and tourism at the City of Cape Town commented: "Shining the spotlight on the programmes that will attract investments, boost exports and enhance connectivity is a key priority for the City of Cape Town. As part of this plan, we will prioritise the Air Access Initiative and related programmes focused on boosting Cape Town's access to key source markets, which will facilitate increased exports of Mother City made goods and services to the world. Increasing exports will positively impact production, which means more jobs and a stronger economy."

Local product export, brand building

Looking to deepen and boost the brand story of the Cape as a region of origin of quality goods and services, Wesgro has developed a 'Made in the Cape' brand story, supported by a robust digital marketing roll-out. Looking to re-enforce key attributes of quality, sustainability, value, and trust – approved local exporters can download the 'Made in the Cape' logo, supporting brand story video, and white label marketing collateral assets from the portal, all of which can be utilised in their respective marketing efforts.

Responding to requests from local exporters for increased promotional support, the logo development and marketing campaign draws on insights into perceptions of the destination globally. Ensuring a holistic approach, Wesgro engaged with local exporters and export councils to gain industry knowledge of the unique selling and pain points of Western Cape exported products, to effectively promote the province as the preferred source market for goods and services.

"Our campaign speaks to those seeking products produced with care and infused with the unique spirit of a particular people and place. The objective is to leverage the premium that can come from a recognised "region of origin", which evokes a sense of authenticity different from "country of origin". Made in the Cape does not stand apart from Made in South Africa - it will remain proudly South African, but will follow a marketing strategy towards regionalism" explains Jean Scheltema, Wesgro's head of marketing and communications.

The campaign aims to strengthen the identity of Western Cape exports by connecting the Cape to quality through highlighting hard-hitting proof points across five products including but not limited to: rooibos (representative of natural products), citrus (representative of agriculture), wine (representative of wine and spirits), software development (representative of tech innovation), and design (representative of creative industries).

Shedding light on why the UK was selected as the first market in which to launch the campaign, Wesgro CEO, Wrenelle Stander, comments: "Consistently amongst our province's top 5 export markets, the UK has strong buying power and a familiarity with South Africa. Until the end of 2020, work was largely focused on ensuring exporters were well informed and ready for various Brexit scenarios. The needle now needs to shift to ensure that Western Cape products and services do not lose market share as the UK embarks on its new independent global trade drive."

"The Cape Trade Portal builds on lessons learned during Covid. The scale and scope offered by digital platforms increase opportunities for exporters to connect with buyers. We are confident that the effort will build our reputation as an exporting powerhouse of premium, competitive, diverse and quality products and services," concludes Stander.

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