

WORLD CRAFT CITY PROGRAMME GENERAL GUIDELINES

(Refer to "Applicant Manual" for detailed submission and other guidelines)



World Crafts Council AISBL



About the World Craft City Programme

The World Craft City Programme has evolved into a global development framework for craft-led cities, positioning craft as a driver of cultural identity, creative economies, sustainable production systems, and inclusive livelihoods. This programme represents one of the most dynamic global craft networks.

The programme is guided by four core principles:



People

Artisans, communities, and human stories



Planet

Sustainable materials and ethical production



Prosperity

Livelihoods and creative economies



Preservation

Safeguarding heritage and cultural identity

The World Craft City Programme is distinct from broader cultural city frameworks as it specifically focuses on:

Craft production ecosystems

Artisan livelihoods


Material culture and heritage

Integration of craft into economic development

1. Purpose

The World Crafts City Programme recognises cities that demonstrate excellence in craft heritage, innovation, sustainability, and community engagement. The designation aims to:

- 1 Strengthen global craft identity and cultural exchange
- 2 Promote economic development through craft-based industries
- 3 Support artisans, institutions, and creative ecosystems
- 4 Preserve and revitalise intangible cultural heritage
- 5 Integrate crafts into tourism, education, and public policy

 Cities participating in this programme must demonstrate commitment, capability, and long-term stewardship of their craft ecosystems.



2. Key Benefits

Becoming a WCC—World Craft City is more than a title — it's being plugged into a global dynamic & coveted craft network.

2.1 International Recognition & Prestige



- Puts the city on the global cultural map, alongside other recognised craft hubs.
- Strengthens the city's brand as a serious centre of heritage, creativity, and culture.
- Useful in diplomacy, city branding, and positioning with UNESCO-type networks, ministries, and donors.

2.2 Boost to Tourism & Local Economy



- Attracts cultural and craft tourists who stay longer and spend more.
- Encourages creation of craft trails, festivals, markets, and museums.
- Opens doors for new jobs in guiding, retail, design, packaging, storytelling, and experiences (workshops, studio visits, homestays).

2.3 Direct Benefits to Artisans



- Raises the status and visibility of craftspeople as culture-bearers, not just producers.
- Supports better pricing and fairer trade because the city's name itself signals quality and authenticity. Seen as a Sourcing Hub.
- Leads to more training, design collaborations, and access to new markets.

2.4 Stronger Policy & Institutional Support



- Encourages collaboration between various wings of the city and state governments to create or strengthen cultural policy for crafts in a coordinated manner.
- Can justify budget lines for infrastructure, training centres, museums, craft clusters, and marketing.
- Helps align craft work with education, urban planning, tourism, and economic development.

2.5 Networking & International Collaboration



- Access to a global network of World Craft Cities for exchanges, twin-city projects, joint exhibitions.
- Easier to build partnerships with universities, museums, NGOs, design schools, and festivals.
- Greater chance to be invited into international forums, conferences, and policy discussions.

2.6 Safeguarding Heritage & Inspiring Youth



- Creates a formal reason to document traditions, master artisans, and intangible heritage.
- Can inspire young people to see craft as a future – not just as something their grandparents did.
- Supports innovation that keeps traditions alive but relevant.

2.7 Funding & Project Opportunities



- Stronger positioning when applying for national and international grants.
- Easier to attract philanthropic, CSR, and cultural investments tied to heritage, livelihoods, and SDGs.

2.8 Access to Expert Advice Through the Evaluation Process

One very valuable aspect of the World Craft City designation is the evaluation mission itself. During their visit, WCC-appointed jurors—who are experts in craft heritage, urban cultural policy, creative economy, design, museums, and sustainability—provide strategic, high-level evaluation insights that would otherwise require costly consultancy:

- Professional insights on strengthening the city's craft sector by identifying untapped potential, structural gaps, and development opportunities that local stakeholders may not see.
- Cities receive guidance on a variety of areas, such as organising craft clusters, improving artisan livelihoods and safety, strengthening branding and tourism, supporting design innovation, preserving endangered crafts, enhancing educational programs and apprenticeships, etc.

- International benchmarking: Since jurors draw on global best practices from other WCC-World Craft Cities, helping the city align itself with international standards.

Long-term development value: Many cities report that the jurors' advice becomes the basis for new cultural policies, infrastructure investments, craft trails and museums, artisan training programs and public-private partnerships.

This knowledge transfer is considered one of the hidden but most impactful advantages of participating in the WCC-World Craft City Programme.

2.9 Integration with WCC Flagship Programmes

Designated cities are encouraged to align with WCC's flagship initiatives, including:

World Craft Forum

Policy dialogue, strategy, and market development

World Craft Academy

Training, research, and knowledge exchange

Seal of Craft Authenticity

Certification of origin and ethical production

Craft Next Initiative

Youth engagement, innovation, and entrepreneurship

3. Eligibility



3.1 Cultural and Craft Significance

Cities should have:

- A historic or contemporary craft tradition of recognised importance
- A concentration of practicing artisans or craft communities
- Distinctive & specific craft forms, materials, or techniques with cultural relevance
- Strong representation of crafts in the city's identity



3.2 Institutional Structure

Cities must show evidence of:

- Local government or municipal support
- Active craft organisations, cooperatives, or guilds
- Educational institutions, museums, or cultural centres supporting craft
- Partnerships between public and private stakeholders



3.3 Craft Economy and Markets

The city should demonstrate:

- Viable craft markets, festivals, or retail networks
- Opportunities for artisan income, fair trade, and entrepreneurship
- Tourism engagement connected to craft heritage



3.4 Community Participation

Cities must ensure:

- Active involvement of craft communities in planning and decision-making
- Inclusivity across gender, age, socio-economic groups, and minorities
- Recognition of artisans as cultural carriers



3.5 Institutional Alignment

Cities must also demonstrate alignment with:

- National and regional government policies
- Ministries related to culture, tourism, and industry
- Long-term governance frameworks ensuring continuity

4. Application Requirements

4.1 Required Documentation

Cities must submit:

01

Formal Application Letter

From the mayor or competent Government authority

02

City Craft Profile

Detailing heritage, artisan population, sectors, and institutions

03

Economic and Cultural Impact Assessment

Of crafts

04

Photographic and Video Documentation

05

Letters of Support

From craft communities, cooperatives, academia, and NGOs

06

Proposed Three-Year Development Plan

For craft promotion post-designation

4.2 Submission Protocol

i Applications must be submitted through one of the country's National Entity members of WCC.

☐ Where no National Entity exists, applications must be submitted directly to WCC Secretariat.

⚠ All submitted materials must be in English unless otherwise approved.

For detailed application requirements refer to the "Applicant Manual".



5. Criteria for Assessment

Assessors evaluate cities based on the following criteria:



5.1 Heritage Value

- Authenticity and continuity of craft traditions
- Preservation of techniques, raw materials, and symbolic knowledge



5.3 Innovation and Creative Development

- Integration of contemporary design
- Adoption of new materials and technology
- Support for youth innovation



5.5 Economic Impact

- Artisan income generation
- Market mechanisms and tourism linkages
- Local and international demand



5.2 Craft Ecosystem Strength

- Artisan livelihood conditions
- Education and transmission systems
- Institutional support and policies



5.4 Sustainability and Ethical Standards

- Fair wages and safe working conditions
- Ethical sourcing of materials
- Environmentally sustainable production



5.6 Community Engagement

- Inclusion, gender balance, and youth involvement
- Local pride and cultural identity



6. Assessment Process

6.1 Composition of the Assessment Jury

- A minimum of three (3) external jury members appointed by WCC AISBL.
- Jury members selected for expertise in heritage crafts, cultural policy, and creative economy.

6.2 Language Requirements and Translation

If:


- (a) one or more jury members do not speak English, or
- (b) the applicant city primarily communicates in a non-English language,

the applicant will provide a professional translator for the evaluation mission. Cities must also ensure translated documents where required.

6.3 Minimum Duration of Evaluation Visit

The assessment visit must span at least three (3) full days (not including arrival and departure days), and include:


- Meetings with government officials
- Visits to artisan clusters and production spaces
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Documentation verification
- Review of markets, institutions, and cultural infrastructure

 **NOTE: Shortened evaluation visits will not be permitted.**

6.4 Cost Responsibilities of the Applicant City

Applicant cities must bear all costs of the formal assessment visit, including:

- International and domestic travel
- Accommodation and meals
- Local transport
- Translation services (if needed)
- On-ground logistical arrangements

 **NOTE: Support must be transparent and non-influential to protect assessor independence.**

6.5 Operational Protocols for Jury Visits

- The program should be structured such that it doesn't exceed 8-hrs per day.
- Allocate one hour at the end of each day for jury reflection and discussion.
- Provide 1–2 hours at the end of the visit for the jury to reach a preliminary decision.
- A dedicated city contact person is mandatory. Their name will appear in the evaluation report.
- Set a ticket-booking deadline to ensure timely travel, including visas and health requirements.

7. Post-Designation Guidelines for WCC-World Craft Cities

7.1 Official Designation Ceremony

Upon designation, the city shall organize an official public ceremony to mark its recognition as a WCC–World Craft City.

- The ceremony shall include the formal presentation of the WCC World Craft City Certificate to the senior-most city official (e.g., Mayor or equivalent authority) by the President of the World Crafts Council AISBL.
- It is customary and strongly encouraged that senior WCC officials, members of the evaluation jury, and relevant regional representatives be invited to attend the ceremony.
- The event should be positioned as a high-visibility cultural occasion, reflecting the significance of the designation and showcasing the city's craft heritage, artisan communities, and cultural identity.
- Cities are encouraged to integrate the ceremony with public exhibitions, craft demonstrations, or cultural programming to maximise visibility and community engagement.

For further details please refer to the document titled :Certificate Presentation, Protocol & Hospitality Guidelines”.

7.2 Periodic Reporting

- Submit annual reports using the WCC template
- Provide updates on activities, progress, and challenges
- Maintain data on artisan populations and craft economy
- Provide updates on Jury recommendation

For detailed reporting requirements refer to document titled “Annual Reporting Template & Impact Assessment Questionnaire”.



Ongoing Obligations of Designated Cities

7.3 Participation in WCC Programs

Designated cities should actively participate in:



- Exchanges and twinning programs
- Sister/Brother Craft City partnerships
- WCC conferences and forums
- Award of Excellence activities
- Training programmes and global knowledge exchange

7.4 Visibility and Branding

Cities must:



- Use WCC branding appropriately
- Highlight designation in tourism materials, signage, and publications
- Provide visibility to WCC in festivals and events

7.5 Support to Craft Communities

Cities should ensure:



- Initiatives and policy frameworks that directly benefit artisans
- Support for cooperatives and guilds
- Development of apprenticeships and education
- Inclusion of women, youth, and marginalised groups
- Development of craft-based tourism eco-systems
- Market expansion and export development
- Certification and branding initiatives

7.6 Preservation and Innovation

Cities must balance:



- Preservation of traditional knowledge
- Encouragement of contemporary design and creative industries

7.7 Hosting and Exchange Obligations



- Host delegations, assessors, and scholars
- Participate in joint exhibitions with other World Craft Cities
- Promote international collaboration

8. Review and Compliance Guidelines

8.1 Review Cycle

The designation is subject to review every FIVE years.

8.2 Grounds for Withdrawal of Designation

Lack of activity or stagnation

Failure to support artisan welfare

Misuse of branding

Failure to submit required reports

Misalignment with WCC principles

9. Ethical Guidelines

Cities must commit to:

Ensuring artisans' rights, fair wages, safe conditions

Protecting intellectual property and traditional knowledge

Preventing exploitation or cultural misrepresentation

Upholding transparency and ethical practice



10. Communication Guidelines

10.1 With WCC

Cities must appoint a dedicated focal point for coordination.

10.2 Public Communication

Cities should:

- Share success stories
- Contribute content to WCC channels
- Engage with international craft networks

⊗ No WCC generated or related content should be used without prior approval from WCC Secretariat.

10.3 Official Representation Protocol

Any participation of WCC officials in any Craft City program must be formally coordinated with the WCC Secretariat. For speaking slots ensure minimum 7-10 minutes in case of in-person participation and 5 minutes for virtual participation.

| Participation Type | Minimum Duration | Format |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Virtual participation | 5 minutes | Online / Remote |
| In-person participation | 7–12 minutes | On-site |

11. Conclusion

These guidelines ensure that the World Craft City initiative remains a prestigious and globally credible designation rooted in cultural authenticity, artisan dignity, sustainability, and long-term development.

Cities receiving the title join a worldwide mission to preserve craft heritage, empower communities, and advance cultural resilience.

© World Crafts Council AISBL. All rights reserved. The World Craft City Programme and all associated nomenclature, structure, methodology, and visual identity are the intellectual property of the World Crafts Council AISBL.