**Project Summary**

**Project Background**
Colombia counted approx. 350,000 small enterprises in the “Artisanal” sector, 70 % of which operated in rural areas. With the gradual liberalisation of the country and its trading sector, the survival of the traditional Artisanal was threatened and structures, roles and markets of the Artisanal had to be re-defined. It was in this context that the EC launched the project for a design laboratory and support to the Artisans.

**Project Objectives**
The project’s general aim was to contribute to the integration of the productive crafts sector in Colombia into the current economic and social development process, by perfecting the quality and competitiveness of their products through strengthening the design factor.

**Project Activities**
The project pursued a flexible approach to support artisans in three activity clusters where, when and in which matter technical assistance was required:

- modernisation and continuous development of crafts design and production, suitable for SMEs and their production means (incl. laboratory)
- technical information and technological exchange combined with training and skills up-grading; design and production consultancy
- strengthening of local/regional producer organisations and networks for crafts marketing

**Implementation Features**
The project was organised under a Project Management Unit (PMU) which reported to an Inter-institutional Consultative Committee. Consultancy and technical services (provided by the project under the consultant contract) were accompanied by a budget of € 950.000 (managed bei the PMU) for equipment, raw materials, training materials and local operation costs.

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**Creation of a Design Laboratory to Develop Crafts and Small Businesses**

**Client**
European Commission / EC

**Duration**
2001 - 2004

**Personnel**
- 1 int. LTE as team leader
- 8 PM STE in design, production and skills up-grading

**Services Provided**

- Design and implementation of support activities for SME/Artisanat
- Market studies, technological and design development for crafts items
- Formation of producer groups and regional networks
- Training and skills up-grading for product improvement
- Management of the EC project, incl. € 950.000 contributions for materials, equipment etc.