

Handicrafts value chain to be bolstered via gov't-drafted comprehensive policy



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Iran's handicrafts sector is one of the country's most deeply rooted cultural and economic assets, shaped by centuries of craftsmanship, regional diversity, and accumulated indigenous knowledge. From textiles, ceramics, and metalwork to wood and stone crafts, these products embody local identities while also reflecting broader cultural values embedded in everyday Iranian life. Beyond their artistic and heritage dimensions, handicrafts have long functioned as a source of livelihood, community cohesion, and cultural continuity, particularly in rural and small-scale production settings. As the scope of this sector has expanded and its role within the cultural and creative economy has become more prominent, the need for a coherent, cross-sectoral framework to organize production, distribution, supply, and export has gained increasing attention. In response to these structural requirements, a comprehensive policy document has been formulated to guide the sustainable development of hand-

icrafts at the national level. Within this framework, the Cabinet has recently approved the Comprehensive Document for the Management of the Production, Distribution, Supply, and Export Chain of Handicrafts, following a proposal by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts and pursuant to Clause (a) of Article 83 of the Seventh Five-Year National Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The document, adopted in compliance with resolutions of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, serves as the national roadmap for the sustainable development of Iran's handicrafts sector. It obliges all relevant executive bodies to carry out the duties and measures outlined in the plan. The approval was formally communicated with the signature of Mohammad Reza Aref, First Vice President.

According to the document, the government's primary objective is to complete and strengthen the handicrafts value chain, improve production and supply conditions, expand domestic and international

markets, and enhance the role of handicrafts within Iran's cultural and creative economy. The text emphasizes that Iranian handicrafts, beyond their economic function, play a fundamental role in reinforcing cultural and identity-based values and promoting the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle. From this perspective, handicrafts are considered a key component of the country's "identity-based economy."

In its definitions section, the document clarifies key concepts such as the handicrafts value chain, professional handicrafts associations, cultural-economic diplomacy, empowerment, large-scale handicrafts enterprises, and qualified institutions. The handicrafts value chain is defined as an integrated set of activities — from design and production to distribution, marketing, and export — aimed at preserving authenticity and regional identity while enhancing both the cultural and economic value of products.

The principles and policy directions of the document focus on improving the entire value chain, safeguarding national

authenticity and local identity, developing target markets to achieve an eight-percent growth rate, increasing investment in handicrafts, and institutionalizing the consumption of handicraft products within the Iranian lifestyle.

The document further outlines its macro-strategies, including encouraging investment — particularly by large enterprises, cooperatives, and professional associations — ensuring sustainable access to raw materials, improving product quality and authentic design, strengthening distribution and sales networks through innovation and technology, diversifying exports, empowering human resources, and enhancing the position of handicrafts in household consumption. Implementation requirements emphasize the creation of mechanisms to attract and guide investment, the establishment of a modern education and skills system based on the traditional master-apprentice model, the development of data-driven infrastructure and a national handicrafts platform, demand stimulation through cultural storytelling and media

campaigns, the organization of credit facilities, and the creation of sustainable marketing and export infrastructure.

Overall, the Comprehensive Document for Managing the Production, Distribution, Supply, and Export Chain of Handicrafts stands as a key upstream policy framework in the cultural industries sector, outlining an integrated approach to organizing, developing, and strengthening Iran's handicrafts at both national and international levels.

At the same time, the document is framed against the backdrop of the wide diversity of handicrafts produced across Iran's cities and regions, each shaped by local history, climate, materials, and cultural traditions. Cities such as Isfahan are internationally recognized for metal engraving, enameling, and miniature painting, while Tabriz is closely associated with leather crafts, metalwork, and traditional weaving. In Yazd and Kashan, textiles such as handwoven fabrics, brocades, and carpets reflect centuries-old production techniques adapted to desert environments.

In western and northwestern regions, including Kermanshah and Kurdistan provinces, traditional weaving, woodcraft, and felt-making remain closely tied to nomadic and rural lifestyles, while southern provinces such as Hormozgan and Bushehr are known for maritime-inspired crafts, palm-leaf weaving, and shell-based decorative arts. In eastern Iran, cities like Mashhad and Birjand maintain distinctive traditions in stone carving, embroidery, and textile production, rooted in both local demand and cross-regional trade routes.

This geographic and cultural diversity underscores the importance of a flexible, value-chain-oriented policy framework capable of accommodating regional specificities while strengthening national coordination. By addressing production, distribution, and export within a unified structure, the comprehensive document seeks to create conditions under which local handicraft traditions can be preserved, economically sustained, and more effectively introduced to domestic and international markets.

Winter adventures at Khoshaku Ski Resort in Urmia

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Khoshaku Ski Resort is one of the most exciting destinations for winter sports enthusiasts. It is located in northwestern Iran, near the city of Urmia, which is the capital of West Azarbaijan Province. This complex is currently the only active ski slope in the province, and for this reason, it welcomes large numbers of domestic and international skiers every year during the cold season. It is worth mentioning that Khoshaku is also the name of one of the villages located in the Urmia region, from which the resort takes its name.

The complex is situated approximately 30 kilometers west of Urmia, in the Razhan area, which enjoys favorable climatic conditions. The total area of this region is about 50,000 square meters. Due to its heavy snowfall during winter, the complex



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has become one of the major winter sports hubs in northwestern Iran. The Khoshaku ski slope lies at an elevation of about 2,800 meters above sea level, which makes it suitable for various snow-related activities and ensures good snow

quality throughout the season, according to visitiran.ir. The best time to visit the complex is in late autumn, and its facilities remain usable throughout the winter months. The resort offers shops that sell or rent skiing equipment



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and related gear, as well as experienced instructors who are ready to train beginners and advanced applicants. In addition to skiing and snowboarding, paragliding is also available at the resort. Many visitors come not only for sports but

also to enjoy leisure activities such as making snowmen or riding snow tubes. The Urmia Telecabin connects Khoshaku Ski Resort to Kuh-e Sir (Sir Daghi), offering scenic views of the surrounding landscape. Because of its close proximity to the urban

area, this complex is one of the most popular recreational destinations for the residents of Urmia. The presence of mineral springs, attractive green spaces, and a safe environment creates unforgettable experiences for tourists. In addition, a variety of restaurants, cafés, and hotels are available in the area to accommodate visitors.