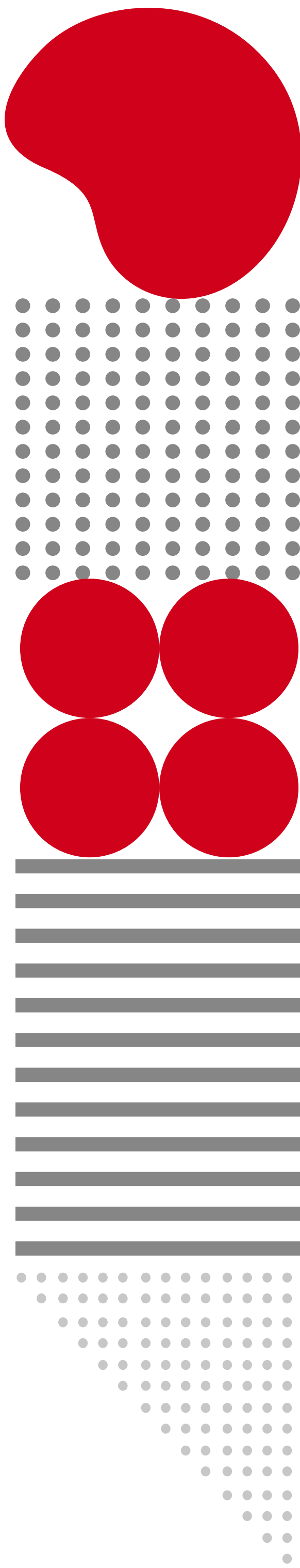


INFORMATION.ADVICE.CONTACT



EXPORT TO CANADA NEWS

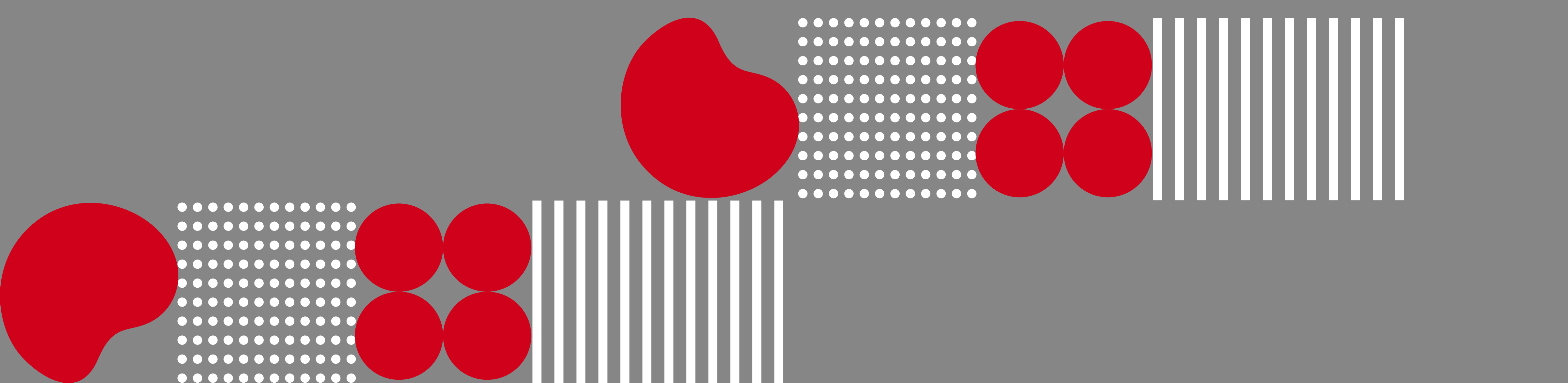
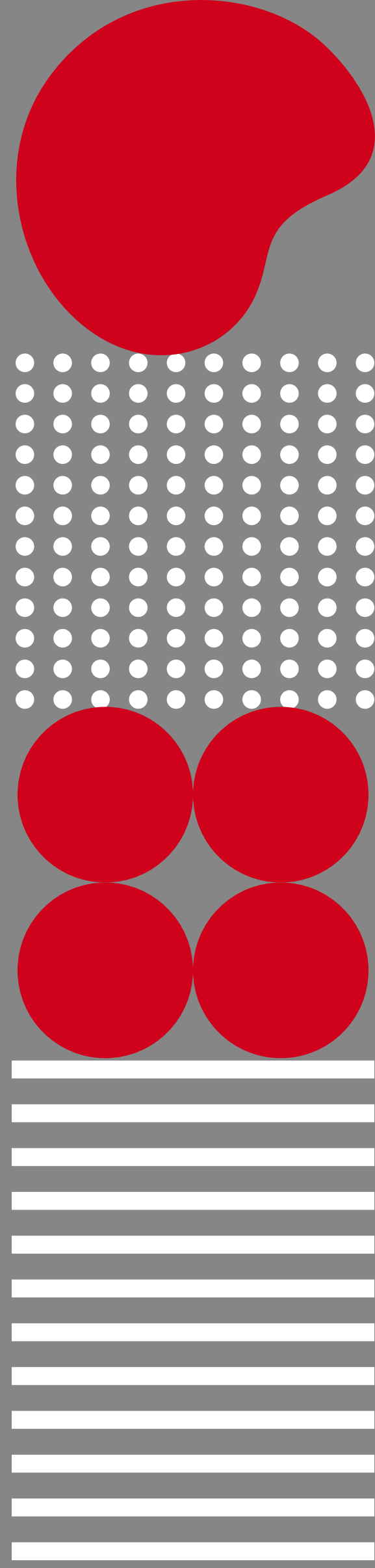


March 2024, Issue 52

Challenges in processed foods logistics and labelling

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- **Managing processed food logistics and the importance of labelling**
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Message from Executive Director

"When you look at selling into the Canadian market, it is important to develop a strategy that includes learning and staying updated on the labeling regulation system. Likewise, selecting the right Logistics and Transportation provider is also key for a successful export experience. Make sure you do your research, check references, and assess company's performance to select the right partner".

| **Steve Tipman**



Trade and Food Security

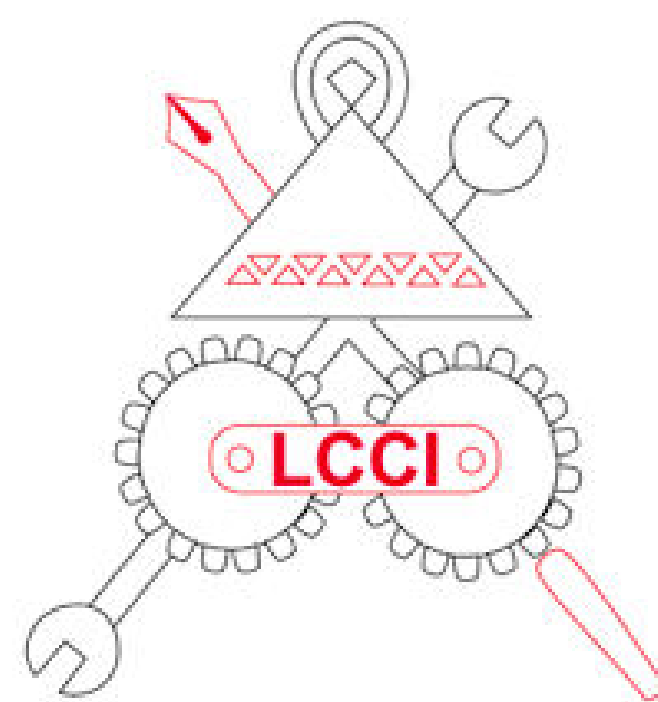
Recently, I`ve been having numerous discussions with friends and colleagues about the food landscape in Canada – in terms of product availability, variety and price. There is no doubt that, like many countries around the world today, this has become an important topic, particularly when looking at the issues around inflation and affordability. But what about looking at the issue as being one that is tied to food security?

The topic around trade and food security is one that encompasses several interconnected issues such as international development, sustainability and an approach to commerce that can better balance between those who need food and those who produce it. Food security can also be determined by having access to food that is affordable and available – something that we all desperately need- which is closely aligned to trade and markets.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), the 2030 Agenda (the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals) recognizes that trade is key to addressing food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture. International agri-food trade can help balance food deficits and surpluses across countries, improve the availability of diverse foods, and contribute to price stability. Yet, the FAO also cautions that greater trade openness may also pose challenges, especially for small-scale agri-food value chain actors.

One of the core sectors of our work over the years as a Canadian Non-Governmental Organization that is focused on issues related to trade-led development has been in agri-food (both fresh and processed). By supporting small and medium enterprises in the sector, TFO Canada provides export capacity-building and market access services that enable businesses to expand beyond their own countries’ borders. When looking at what this represents to the average Canadian, since the country is the 6th largest importer of food in the world, our work contributes towards the products that are available on store shelves, to the variety of what is offered as well as the overall affordability of the consumed goods.

Featured Trade Support Institution Partners in the 1st quarter of 2024



TFO Canada in collaboration with our trade support institutions and partners has been hard at work in the first quarter of 2024, helping small and medium-sized enterprises from Africa, Asia and Latin America, to achieve their export goals. Get ready to dive into the exciting events that unfolded and discover what's in store for the future. Happy Reading!

Managing Processed Food Logistics and Labelling

By Arnon Melo - President, [Mellohawks Logistics](#)

In today's globalized food industry, processed foods play a significant role in meeting the demands of consumers worldwide. From canned goods to frozen meals, processed foods offer convenience, shelf stability, and often lower prices. However, behind the convenience lies a complex network of logistics and labelling challenges that the industry must navigate to ensure consumer safety and regulatory compliance. Managing the supply chain for processed foods involves coordinating multiple steps, from sourcing raw ingredients to delivering finished products to retailers. With perishable ingredients and tight production schedules, any disruptions can lead to delays or shortages, affecting product availability and consumer satisfaction. During the pandemic, these disruptions became even more chaotic and complex causing logistics prices to skyrocket which were eventually passed on to the final consumer. Even though the pandemic is over and logistics costs have come down, we can still have disruptions caused by war and political uncertainty in many parts of the world.

Implementing inventory management systems and adopting lean practices can streamline operations and improve cost efficiency, not to mention choosing logistics partners that can help structure and optimize supply chain and routes. Building strong relationships with suppliers and negotiating favorable terms can help SMEs secure competitive pricing for raw materials and packaging. Exploring alternative suppliers and bulk purchasing options can further reduce procurement costs. I cannot stress enough the importance of networking, making connections and building relationships in your supply chain.

Optimizing transportation routes and consolidating shipments can help minimize transportation costs and reduce carbon emissions.

When selecting partners for logistics and transport, SMEs should prioritize reliability and reputation. Conducting thorough background checks, requesting references, and assessing past performance can help identify trustworthy partners who can meet delivery deadlines consistently. In Canada we are blessed to count on the Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association, CIFFA (www.ciffa.com). For 75 years, CIFFA has been the voice of supply chain in Canada and abroad offering a list of freight forwarders, freight brokers, customs brokers, warehouse operators or drayage operators to help importers and exporters navigate the complex world of supply chains.

Depending on the nature of their products, SMEs may benefit from partnering with logistics providers with expertise in handling perishable goods or specialized packaging requirements.



SMEs must stay abreast of legislative changes and regulatory updates that may impact processed food logistics, labelling, importing, and exporting process. Subscribing to industry newsletters, attending seminars, and seeking guidance from regulatory experts can help SMEs navigate compliance requirements effectively. Information is a crucial tool. Providing accurate and comprehensive nutritional information on food labels helps consumers make informed choices about their diet.

In Canada food items can only arrive and be imported having the mandatory labeling guidelines as per the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Food items must leave the origin country and arrive in Canada with proper nutritional labelling, and it should be in English and In French, to avoid any delays at clearance. No longer can any food item be labelled after it arrives in Canada and it is cleared through Canada Customs, which was the case before 2019.

If I could suggest some tips for SMEs I would say invest in training and education. Providing ongoing training for employees on food safety protocols, labelling regulations, and best practices in logistics can enhance compliance and operational efficiency. Collaborating with industry peers, trade associations, and regulatory bodies can provide SMEs with valuable insights, resources, and support networks to overcome common challenges and stay competitive. Embracing sustainable practices not only aligns with consumer preferences but can also result in cost savings and operational efficiencies. SMEs can explore opportunities to reduce packaging waste, optimize energy consumption, and minimize carbon footprint across their supply chain.

SMEs in the processed food industry face countless challenges in logistics and labelling, but with strategic planning, partnerships, and a proactive approach to compliance, they can navigate these complexities and thrive in the marketplace.

[Read the full article](#)

Unlocking the Export Essentials: Seven Fundamentals of Canadian Food Labeling

By Dr. Henry Vega, TFO Canada Associate

One question we are very often asked at TFO Canada by foreign suppliers is if they need to change their packaging to launch food products in Canada. The short answer is YES! Here are the seven fundamentals of packaged food labelling in Canada, from the perspective of a foreign producer or exporter. They demonstrate how government agencies ensure transparency, safety, and consumer trust in the Canadian marketplace.

1. Product Identification: The first step to compliance is ensuring your product properly displays and distinguishes between the brand name and the product name. In terms of prominence on packaging, the product name typically takes precedence over the brand name. The rationale behind giving more prominence to the product name is rooted in consumer transparency and clarity. When consumers look at a food product, they want to know exactly what they are getting.

2. Country of Origin Transparency: Your product label must indicate where the food was produced or manufactured.

3. Bilingual Compliance: Bilingual labelling is a major requirement under Canada's regulations. Both English and French must be used on food labels with equal prominence. Today in Canada, there are approximately nine million Francophones – people who speak French as a first language – and 31 million Anglophones who speak English as a first language. Although most Francophones live in Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick, bilingual labelling is required Canada-wide.

4. Nutrition Facts Table: These tables empower consumers with information about the nutritional content of your product. The Nutrition Facts Table provides information on the nutritional content of the food, including serving size, calories, macronutrients (fat, carbohydrates, protein), and certain vitamins and minerals. It must follow a standardized format.

5. Comprehensive Ingredient List: Transparency reigns supreme. This list provides a meticulous breakdown of all ingredients, arranged in descending order of predominance by weight, leaving no component undisclosed.

6. Allergen Declaration: You will need to highlight allergens prominently within the ingredient list and through a separate "Contains" statement to safeguard consumers with allergies or intolerances. In Canada, the most common allergens in food – otherwise known as the priority allergens – are: Eggs, Milk, Mustard, Peanuts, Crustaceans and molluscs, Fish, Sesame seeds, Soy, Sulphites, Tree Nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts), wheat and triticale.

7. Health Claims: Any health or nutrition claims made on the label must comply with specific regulations set by Health Canada. These claims must be supported by scientific evidence and must not be misleading to consumers.

Certain types of foods, such as organic products, genetically engineered foods, or foods with specific nutritional characteristics, may have additional labelling requirements. In response to public health concerns, Canada also requires a front-of-package nutrition symbol for foods high in saturated fats, sugars, and sodium. Food manufacturers have until January 1, 2026, to comply. However, products imported, manufactured, or packaged on or before December 31, 2025, can continue to be sold until exhausted from store shelves.



By mastering these seven fundamentals of food labelling, foreign manufacturers and exporters can navigate the regulatory landscape with confidence, fostering trust and transparency within the Canadian marketplace.

For additional information, we recommend foreign companies to visit Canada's Industry Labelling tool at <https://inspection.canada.ca/food-labels/labelling/industry/eng/1383607266489/1383607344939>

Spotlight on TFO Canada Activities

TFO Canada participates in International Development Week (IDW) Hill Day

During International Development Week (IDW), Cooperation Canada and its member organizations, including TFO Canada, convened on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to engage with parliamentarians on the strategic importance of international assistance and the difference it is making in the lives of millions of people worldwide.



Photo: Allison Alley, Compassion Canada, Martin Fischer, World Vision Canada, Sharonya Sekhar, Canadian Red Cross, Steve Tipman, TFO Canada with Members of Parliament Ryan Turnball and Lindsay Mathysen during IDW Hill Day.

Export Launchpad Jordan Scoping Mission

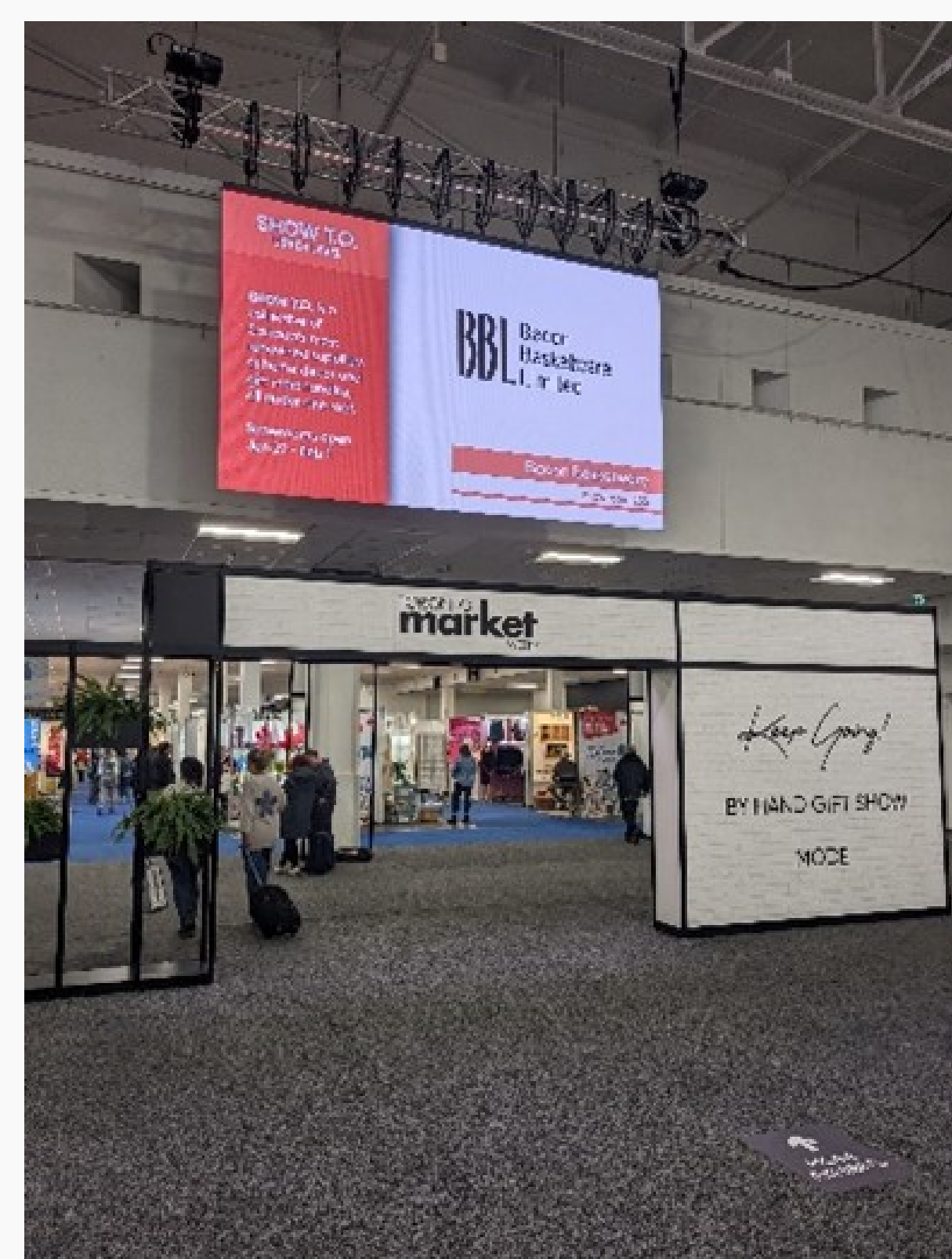
Export Launchpad Jordan (ELJ) is a remarkable collaborative initiative that aims to empower Jordanian SMEs to take advantage of international trade opportunities and contribute to sustainable economic development and employment generation. Funded by the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) and Global Affairs Canada, the program is conducted in partnership with the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO). This initiative is particularly focused on the Dead Sea cosmetic and processed foods sectors. The joint exploratory mission conducted by ITFC and TFO Canada in Amman from January 21 to February 1, 2024, was a crucial step towards understanding the specific needs of the targeted SMEs. More than 35 meetings were held during the mission, which proved to be highly productive and enabled the stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue.



JEDCO and TFO Canada teams and Acting Head of International Cooperation Directorate, ITFC Ms. Lana Alzoubi - Jordan, 2024.

TFO Canada presence in Ontario

The winter edition of Toronto Market Week returned to the International Centre at the end of January, bigger than ever and featuring fashion, gift, home decor and home goods under one roof. It included four shows in one – the Mode Section, the **Gift & Design Section**, the BY HAND Gift Show and **T.O. Permanent Showrooms**. Save the dates for [the summer show](#) in August. Susan Baka, TFO Canada's Ontario's regional representative introduced many exhibitors to TFO Canada's services for Canadian buyers/importers at Toronto Market Week and at the [Gift & Home Market Toronto show](#) which was held at the Congress Centre January 28-February 1. The [fall show](#) will take place in August. Coming this spring in Toronto: [RC Show](#) 2024 April 8-10.



Capacity Building and Skills Development:

TFO Canada's mission is to empower SMEs and TSIs in developing countries, equipping them with the essential knowledge and skills they need to succeed in international trade. With a focus on promoting gender equality and social inclusion, as well as tackling the challenges presented by climate change and environmental considerations, TFO Canada works in 25 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, Africa, and Asia, helping to transform lives and communities, one step at a time.

Here's a glimpse of our team in action:

In British Columbia

In collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), FTC International Consulting, and PCB Customs Brokers trainings on the fundamentals of importing food into Canada were delivered to

21

Trade Representatives from developing countries accredited to Canada, (16 women), from Indonesia, El Salvador, India, Philippines, Mexico and Guatemala. The event provided an opportunity to network with peers and gain more knowledge about how to import into Canada successfully.

Improving the export readiness of Guatemalan and Peruvian exporters

17 SMEs

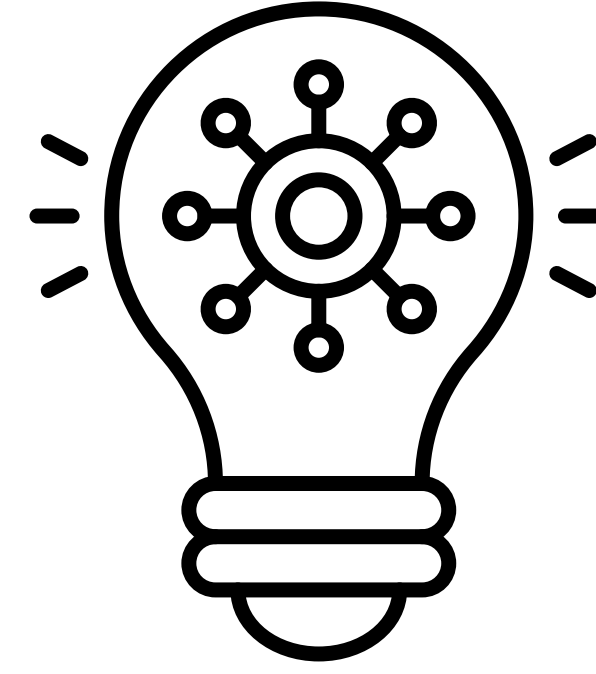
13 WOMEN LED

from Guatemala engaged in the Home Décor and Artisan Sectors

were evaluated to ascertain the:

- SMEs' competitive capabilities,
- motivation and preparedness for internationalization,
- application of good business practices in exporting,
- senior management's commitment,
- negotiation skills, product readiness, and market opportunities,
- pricing and digital presence.

Each enterprise received guidance on how to further enhance their preparedness to access the lucrative Canadian and US market.



In Peru, export readiness training was provided to

68 SMEs

in the agrofood sector.

Aiming to identify and adopt best practices in the use of digital technologies, including Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and blockchain, this initiative equipped the SMEs in methods to improve visibility, promotion, traceability, and the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within their value chains.

E-Commerce and Digital Skills Trainings in Ethiopia, Uganda and Lesotho

Technical trainings are currently being conducted in partnership with trade support institutions for

30 SMEs

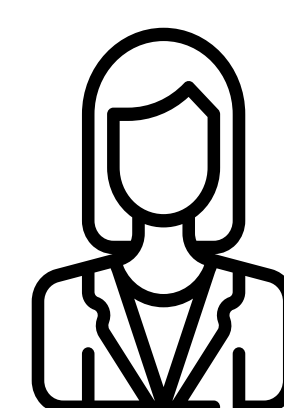
to include website optimization, digital marketing strategies and social media marketing, industry and personal research.



E-Commerce and Digital Skills

African and Indonesian Pavilion at SIAL 2024

52 SMEs



50 WOMEN-LED

from Indonesia, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Benin, Madagascar, Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda, received training and one-on-one coaching, as they gear up to participate in SIAL Montreal 2024.

Pre-Buyers Mission to East Africa - Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia and Madagascar

As part of the [WIT project](#), pre-buyer missions were conducted in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Madagascar to meet with SMEs ahead of the visit of Canadian and International buyers.



86

SMEs

in the agrofood sector (including tea, coffee, vanilla, and fresh produce suppliers) have been prepared and selected for Buyers Mission to East Africa in April and Madagascar in May 2024 respectively.

The buyers' visit to Madagascar will coincide with the COMESA Federation of Women in Business trade show in Antananarivo from May 29th to May 31st 2024.

Market Access and Trade Promotion:

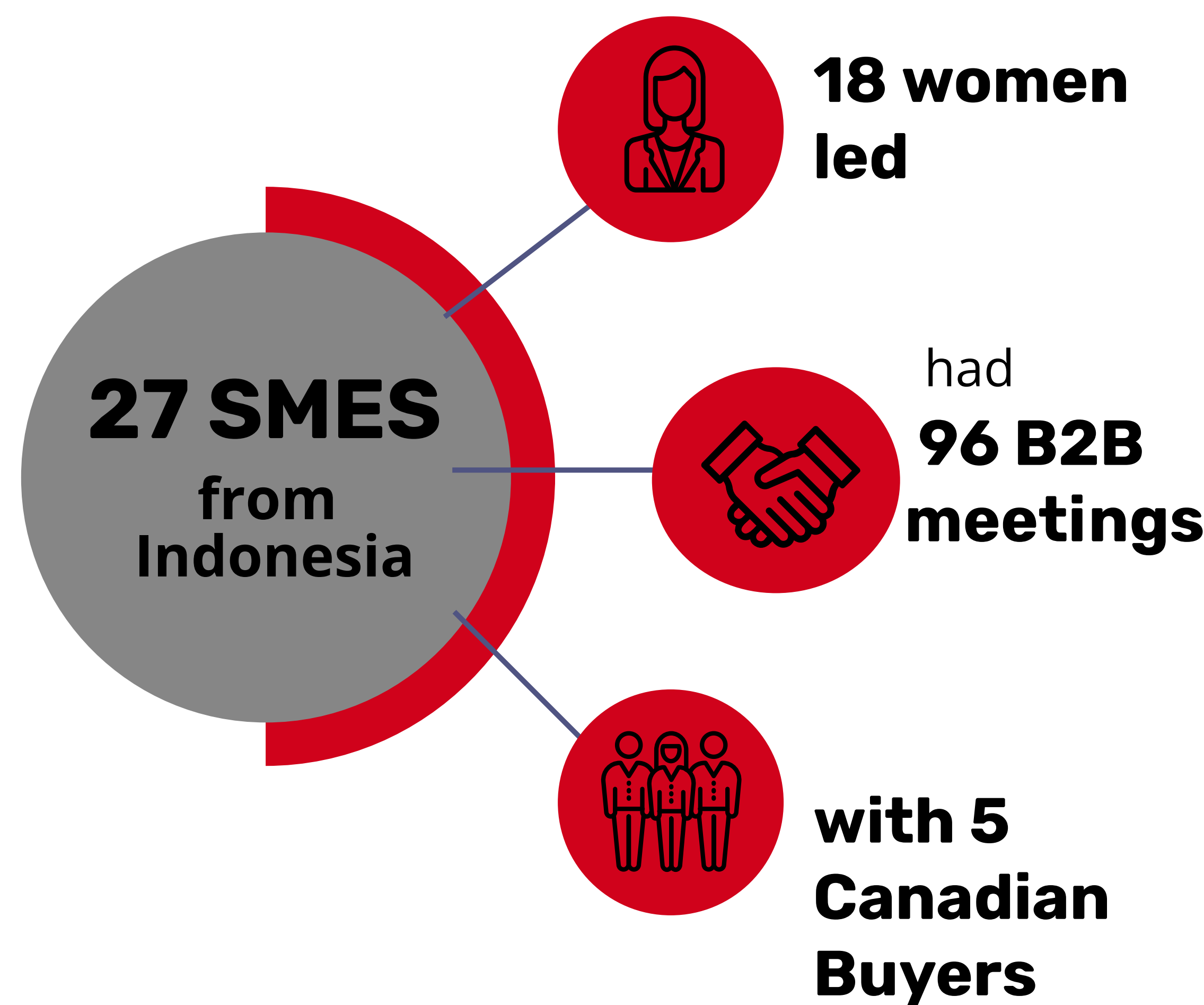
TFO Canada provides comprehensive support to businesses seeking to enter new markets. By leveraging expertise in industry research, entry strategies, trade promotion events, and networking opportunities, we can help SMEs navigate the complexities of international trade and maximize their growth potential.

SMEs from Ethiopia, Uganda and Lesotho at NY NOW

In February 2024, six SMEs from Ethiopia, Uganda, and Lesotho proudly showcased their leather and apparel/textile, baskets, pencils, and bedding at NY NOW under the TFO Canada booth. With the help of Aid to Artisans, these companies received expert guidance on design, coloring, pricing, catalogue, and marketing strategies. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, all SMEs were able to adapt their products to market demands, making them more competitive and resulting in **22** confirmed orders.

Buyers Mission to Indonesia in Process Foods

In February 2024



from Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. The Indonesian suppliers of Jams and Spreads, Coconut products, Coffee, Cocoa-based products, teas, herbal drinks, and garlic-based supplements showcased their professionalism and product offerings, exciting several importers who emphasized the importance of certifications, competitive prices, and efficient logistics.

Bridging the Gap between Honduran and Canadian Coffee Markets

In March 2024, TFO Canada and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Cortes teamed up to organize an exciting opportunity for Honduran coffee SMEs.

A buyer mission connected:

10
Canadian
Buyers

14
Honduran
SMEs

resulting in:
140
B2B
Meetings

The mission started with a welcoming breakfast with the participation of the Canadian Ambassador to Honduras, H.E Elizabeth Williams, and Mr. Karim Qubain, President of Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Cortes.



To culminate the experience, the Canadian Buyers participated in a field visit, where they were able to observe first-hand the practices and techniques in the farming, harvesting preparation, roasting and packaging of several coffee varieties.



Further to improving their understanding of the regulatory system in the coffee sector in Canada, the Honduran producers had the opportunity to receive feedback about their products and business model; whereas the Canadian buyers had the chance to taste 53 varieties of coffee.

SUTAR KABBO - EMPOWERING UNDERPRIVILEGED RURAL WOMEN THROUGH SHANTAJRI

One of the entrepreneurs who has benefited from TFO Canada's support is Ms. Shirajum Munira, co-founder of Sutar Kabbo in Dinajpur, Bangladesh. Ms. Munira, a researcher by profession, aimed to create employment opportunities and teach loom work to rural women to enable them to gain income and contribute to their households. She tells us *"as newcomers to the area it was really challenging to encourage rural women to work outside the home" [and] "I wanted to create employment opportunities and teach loom work."* Since 2017, her company, Sutar Kabbo, has been promoting Bengali culture and empowering underprivileged women by manufacturing biodegradable hand-knotted jute rugs and loom-made chenille rugs.

Sutar Kabbo's factory is equipped with 42 looms and a training center. The training center has empowered rural women to produce stunning handmade products, such as table runners, place mats, and wood crafts, using traditional methods. The company uses a weaving technique called Shantajri, which is specific to the Rangpur region of Bangladesh. In 2021, this technique was declared a Geographical Indication (GI) of Bangladesh. Using a GI label links products to a local heritage and reputation by offering a guarantee of origin and specific characteristics. Consumers are often willing to pay a higher price for GI-certified goods. The company sources raw materials from different regions within the country, particularly the south.

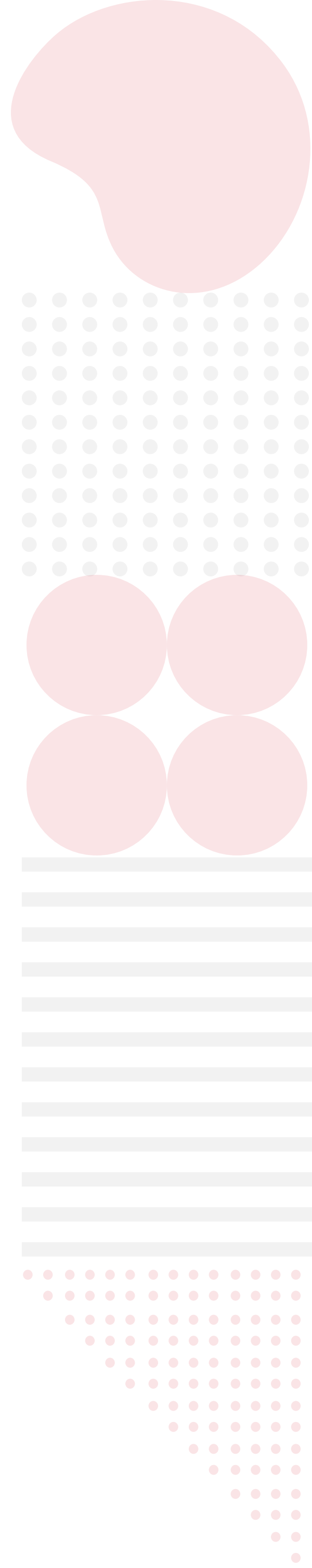
Despite having to temporarily shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic due to rising transportation, raw material costs, and a decline in demand, Sutar Kabbo restarted its business. It worked hard to support its craftswomen and micro and small enterprises in the informal craft sector meeting local demand, participate in trade fairs to gain exposure to competition, improve product design and promote their businesses. In 2022, the company participated in an export readiness training program, jointly organized by TFO Canada and SME Foundation. *"Through this training, we have gathered [extensive] knowledge about preparations we need to make before starting exports and also considerations on gender, environment and climate change and corporate social responsibility. Says Fardous Ahmad, Managing Director of Sutar Kabbo. "We learned how to prepare a price list, create standard catalogues to showcase our products, research the market, and effectively communicate with buyers. We gained valuable knowledge and have confidently started to apply changes to our company".*

In 2023, the company had an opportunity to participate in the NY NOW Trade Show, creating linkages with large retailers and buyers. *"We are having ongoing discussions including design and hope to enter the North American market."* In the same year, Sutar Kabbo began exporting their products to Kuwait and, supplemented with an increase in local demand, has added 30 looms to its business, also resulting in substantial business growth for 25 craft enterprises that support more than 200 families.

These efforts have not gone unnoticed. Thanks to her outstanding contribution to business and the community, Ms. Shirajum Munira received the prestigious DHL-The Daily Star *"Bangladesh Business Award"*. The company has also signed an MOU with an NGO to reuse plastic collected from the community, converting it into handicrafts, wallets, notebook bags, and rugs. It also plans to provide employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities and prides itself on its diverse workforce.

Sutar Kabbo's incredible impact provides an inspiring example of how businesses can empower women and promote sustainable practices while still achieving significant business growth.





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