

Developing the Furniture Design and Manufacture industry in Botswana – A Design Thinking approach

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ABSTRACT

Botswana is making efforts to become a developed economy by vision 2036 and the furniture design and manufacture industry is one of those earmarked as a strategic industry that can boost the achievement of this target. The researchers carried out field visits to the small and medium enterprises in the country, to make an analysis of the status of the furniture design and manufacture. The purpose was to develop strategic interventions in order to advise government and the private sector on how to develop this industry. It was found that no enterprises are injecting enough investment in the design and development phase, but these are currently redundant due to the absence of iron smelting plants in the country. Of the 15 enterprises and or fabricating units making furniture products, only 5% employ design thinking methods in their production process; the rest import and copy designs from foreign magazines and catalogues.

The country's trade deficit in furniture products is extremely high, estimated to millions of Botswana Pula. This furniture design and make sector can be developed by coming up with incentive packages for investments in design thinking capacity building and, exploiting latest technologies in digital manufacturing such as use of CNC routers, laser cutters, etc.

Keywords: Design thinking, Botswana vision 2036, SME, Digital manufacturing, Economic Diversification Drive, Beneficiation of Raw materials

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