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## Brazil's Oficina de Design Wants to Change How Furniture Is Made

Contributed by Omar Nasser  
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The furniture hub of Araçongas, in the north of the Brazilian state of Paraná, one of the greatest in Brazil, with 545 industries, is investing in improvement of the design of its products.

With this objective, Oficina de Design was established in the state of Paraná, which is going to analyze and propose modifications in the furniture developed by the participating companies. The first group is composed of 15 companies.

Innovations and improvements obtained will favor not only the domestic market, but also exports. Last year, the furniture hub of Araçongas presented revenues of US\$ 402 million, of which 5.6% - US\$ 23 million - came from sales abroad.

"The objective is to significantly improve the performance of companies through the development of a new product or of the modification of existing products," explained Reinaldo Victor Tockus, coordinator of the Technology and Technical and Technological Service Network of the National Service of Industrial Education (Senai) in the state.

The Oficina de Design project is promoted by the government and is financed by the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, the Senai and the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae).

Oficina de Design in Araçongas has four phases. The first is training, and the objective is to prepare the companies to diagnose their problems.

The second phase is consultancy with members of the Center for Wood and Furniture Technology (Cetmam), which will diagnose the productive process and the products of each participant, initiating development and renovation work of existing products or the development of new products.

The other two phases include the development of prototypes and the implementation of production processes, using similar production conditions as the company's.

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