



SUCCESS STORY

Ukrainian Glass Sparkles at Show

A U.S. exhibition gives international exposure to small glass-makers



Photo: Tetiana Dudka

Yaroslav Dzhumalo, director of Svitlovodsk SKLO Glass Factory, shows his company's vase collection.

Buyer interest at the North Carolina show was high: the Ukrainian companies' glass received seven separate orders.

Glass-making Ukraine has a long tradition, and in modern times the country has built up strong capabilities in manufacturing glass. But until recently, Ukraine's exposure to global glass markets had been limited, due mainly to a lack of access to information and intermediaries. Now that is all changing. With assistance from USAID, Ukrainian glass producers recently had one of their first opportunities to highlight their products to global buyers. And the response was great.

At the April 2005 International Home Furnishings Market in High Point, North Carolina, three Ukrainian glass producers — Popasnaya Glass Factory, Svetlovodsk SKLO Glass Factory and Lviv Ceramic Sculptural Factory — displayed their wares for an international audience for the first time. USAID helped them prepare, assessing production capacity, improving efficiency and targeting market demands.

Buyer interest at the show was high: two of the American firms showcasing the companies' glass received seven separate orders. After the show, SKLO worked with an American home furnishings designer to develop new products that specifically target American customers and redesign its packaging.

"The American home furnishings market is very challenging and extremely competitive," said Yaroslav Dzhumalo, director of Svitlovodsk SKLO Glass Factory. "We were able to demonstrate the quality of our products and production capabilities of the factory at High Point in October 2004.

"Finally. [We] made our first sales and increased our confidence in our ability to sustain a long-term relationship with our new American partners," said Yaroslav.

And their success is just the beginning. The three glass manufacturers are now working to fill orders from the last U.S. show while preparing to exhibit at the next one — the October 2005 High Point Market, where their products were to be in even more showrooms. The companies were also getting ready for their European trade show debut at Europe's biggest home furnishings exhibition, Tendence Lifestyle, which was scheduled for Frankfurt in August.