

Weave & Palm: An artisanal microbusiness in natural fiber handbags  
*Internationalization Plan*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, creative industries and environmental sustainability have had a global impact through responsible and ethical consumption of handmade products. Within this context, handicrafts have gained value and cultural richness, as they represent both functionality and cultural identity. Weave & Palm emerged in this setting as a microenterprise with the potential to export Colombian artisanal products made from natural fibers. Its mission is to revalue the heritage of artisanal weaving, empowering women in Cascajal (Bolívar) who create sustainable designs using coconut and sará palms.

The company's products combine tradition and modernity, offering sustainable, exclusive, and culturally significant handbags. This project proposes an export plan for Weave & Palm's flagship product, the Palma Sara Bag, to the United States, a market recognized for its strong demand for sustainable fashion and fair-trade products. We plan to export the bag in its various styles, colors, and sizes by 2026.

## **COMPANY PRESENTATION**

Weave & Palm was founded in 2023 in Cascajal, Bolívar, Colombia. Its objective is to preserve artisanal techniques passed down through generations while improving the economic well-being of local women. The company operates under three fundamental pillars: Cultural Identity: Preserve and promote the traditional art of weaving using native materials. Innovation and Contemporary Design: Blend heritage craftsmanship with modern fashion aesthetics. Sustainability and Empowerment: Promote responsible fiber use and empower women artisans. The Weave & Palm catalog includes handbags, baskets, and accessories made from natural palm fibers, positioning itself as a sustainable luxury brand.

## **PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION**

The flagship product of this company is the Palma Sara bag, classified under tariff subheading 46019405. It is handcrafted both by hand and on a sewing machine to ensure a perfect finish. This painstaking task is performed by artisan women from Cascajal, who have inherited their skills through manual and visual practice from their ancestors. The Sara palm (*Copernicia tectorum*) is a natural fiber that grows on floodplain sheets in the Colombian Caribbean region, contributing to the development of Colombian handicrafts (Artesanías de Colombia, 2025).

The process of making the bag starts with collecting palm buds, which are first dried in the sun for 2 or 3 days. Care is taken to avoid rain, as moisture can weaken the fiber. After being exposed to the strong sun, the buds are unraveled into large strips, then bundled together and woven into a braid. These braids are sewn in a spiral pattern using sewing machines, creating handcrafted items that combine traditional craftsmanship with modern design. To create different colors for the bags, palm fiber is dyed with natural inks and dyes, such as aniline from Bogotá, which are applied in water, allowing the raw palm fiber to absorb the desired shade. After dyeing, it is dried in the sun again, then woven and braided. Additionally, each customer can customize their bag in terms of color, size, and style, making each piece a one-of-a-kind, exclusive accessory. The added value of the bag is based on:

**Labor:** each item is made by women heads of household in the township of Cascajal. They learned this trade from their artisan mothers or grandmothers, preserving the tradition that has been maintained to this day. While the men are mainly dedicated to fishing in the town swamp. Therefore, many women learned to sew because they liked it or because of the family's difficult economic needs, making crafts a source of income, autonomy, and social empowerment.

**Natural raw material:** It belongs to the palm family, Arecaceae; its scientific name is *Copernicia tectorum*, and it is often known as the sarà palm. Additionally, it is a solitary palm, measuring between 6 and 12 meters in height. Its stem is straight, with an average diameter of 30 to 40 cm; it can be smooth or retain scars from fallen leaves. The leaves are large, fan-shaped, and their stems are long, covered by thick spines arranged on either side. It is worth noting that fruits are born between May and August (Zambrano et al., 2007).

**Sustainability:** These crafts are made from the treatment of the Sara palm, a natural fiber carefully harvested from its cutting with a machete on the farmers' farms, through to the process of transforming it into accessories. This is carried out manually using traditional techniques, and dyeing ink is also natural, ensuring the preservation of natural resources.

**Artisanal and traditional value:** Each piece embodies the cultural heritage of the cascajalera families; a legacy passed through generations. This trade was born of ingenuity and creativity, transforming the palm into beautiful hats that protected men from the sun during their labor in the fields. This highlights the strength, resilience, and heritage of a person who has been able to preserve their identity. This allows Weave & Palm to position

itself in a mass market due to the diversity of production, establishing the bags in a competitive and attractive segment for an international audience to expand into new opportunities in global sustainable fashion, not only for its natural character, but also for its variety, cultural history and the empowerment of communities of artisans and mothers' heads of household.

## **COMPANY CONTEXT AND PRODUCT IN GLOBAL MARKETS**

The global market is attracted to Colombian handicrafts, which are reaching various destinations and have the potential to grow in exports. This places handicrafts in a special position as a product with high expectations and a unique edge due to their sustainability, vibrant colors, and originality. They reached USD 6.5 million, an increase of 13.7% from 2022 (Dane, 2023). Since 2020, the demand for Colombian handicrafts in the international market has been valued at \$3.1 million. By 2023, it doubled to \$6.1 million, reflecting significant growth in exports from this sector. This increase was mainly driven by financial support during the pandemic, when governors' and mayors' offices funded hundreds of artisans to continue working. Consequently, marketing opportunities like national and international craft fairs—key platforms for artisanal work in Colombia and beyond—became more prominent.

On the other hand, the countries with the highest demand for Colombian-origin products in 2023 were the United States, Spain, Panama, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, and Aruba (ProColombia, 2024). This means they are strategic destinations for exporting handicrafts, and Colombia has trade agreements with some of these countries, which facilitate tariff policies with other states. It should be noted that globalization and the rise of e-commerce are important ways to expand the product to new segments, independently of physical spaces such as fairs or craft exhibitions, which is what they usually do. Currently, digital platforms and alliances with international brands are effective tools for connecting with new allies and generating greater profitability.

Then, the internationalization of Weave & Palm is not only a way to foster economic growth but also an excellent opportunity to showcase the artisanal work of the Colombian Caribbean on the global market, highlighting the value of handcrafted skills, revaluing traditional techniques, and promoting natural raw materials. This way, the bag in palm will be positioned as a benchmark of artisanal fashion. (See **Annex 1**. Technical specifications).

## **JUSTIFICATION**

Many artisanal microbusinesses face significant barriers to growth, as their work is rarely recognized, and they have limited access to international marketing channels. This situation prevents them from showcasing their potential and competing in more favorable conditions within global markets. Also, the lack of training in marketing and the use of digital tools set

artisans apart from other productive sectors, leaving them at a disadvantage in a highly competitive market.

This problem is evident in different regions of the country, such as the Colombian Pacific, where a large part of the indigenous population and artisans from the interior of the country engage in work that represents their culture, conveying stories and passing down myths and legends through each garment or artisanal creation. However, due to the lack of recognition and low valuation of these expressions by the local population, many products are sold at affordable prices, thereby limiting community development and economic growth.

Altamiranda (2021) considers “*states that in this region artisan artists face barriers to accessing markets and circulation spaces due to limited institutional support, a scarcity of cultural policies, and weak infrastructure for exhibiting products*”. All of these make it difficult for artisans to integrate into broader markets to visualize their products.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **General objective**

Design an internationalization plan for Weave & Palm that enables entry into the San Diego, California market, defining the main digital entry channel, the initial export volume, the operational requirements, and the commercial goals for the first year of operation.

### **Specific objectives**

- Identify the target segment in San Diego, California, analyzing its consumption characteristics, willingness to pay, and projected demand for handcrafted products made from sará palm.
- Determine the most suitable entry channel (e-commerce, specialized boutiques, or commercial partnerships), evaluating logistics costs, delivery times, and operational feasibility for the first export shipments.
- Project the initial sales and export volume for the first year, including pricing, logistics costs, expected profit margin, and the break-even point to ensure the financial sustainability of the internationalization process.

- Define the documentary, legal, and logistical requirements to export from Santa Marta to San Diego, ensuring that the product complies with U.S. market standards and with the Colombia–U.S. Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA).

## COUNTRY PRESELECTION

In Weave & Palm's internationalization process, selecting countries is a crucial step in the commercialization and expansion of the brand's official products. For this stage, three strategic nations were determined: the United States, Germany, and Japan (See Annex 2), which stand out for their interest in sustainable fashion, responsible consumption, and the appreciation of products with cultural identity.

*The U.S.* market shows a clear interest in sustainable crafts. According to Spherical Insights in its *United States Handicrafts Market Size report*: "the expansion of the U.S. handicrafts market is driven by the growing desire for handicraft, distinctive, and culturally significant products, as customers place a higher value on eco-friendly products and craftsmanship than mass-produced ones." This scenario becomes a benchmark to direct our attention to the market in this country, which has a high demand for artisanal pieces.

In **Japan**, a nation with a deeply rooted culture, handicrafts hold a fundamental place in its communities. For the Japanese buyer, these products represent not only beauty but also stories, meanings, and a close connection with nature that they convey. Reports indicate that crafts, both Japanese and foreign, have a long and complex history, whose interactions continue to have a mutual impact to this day (Japan Experience, 2024). These data are favorable for the trade of the bag in sarà palm in this country due to the appeal of its traditional value in reference to Japanese culture.

Finally, **Germany** is a strategic market for strengthening our presence in Europe. According to Artesanías Colombia (2025), a trend of growth in demand for artisanal products has been consolidated in recent years in this country, highlighting it as a consumer who values excellence in elaboration, originality, and the cultural value that these unique pieces contain. Given this, the German market is a significant destination for Colombian handicrafts, as it presents opportunities for generating income, enhancing competitiveness, and driving economic growth.

## JUSTIFICATION SELECTED COUNTRY

The selection of the United States as the entry market for Weave & Palm's internationalization is based on its cultural affinity with Colombia, its economic size, logistical advantages, and favorable trade conditions. The U.S. market shows a high demand for sustainable products with cultural identity, which aligns with the characteristics of *Weave*

& *Palm*'s natural palm handicrafts. According to Spherical Insights & Consulting (2025), the U.S. handicrafts market is projected to reach USD 243.13 billion by 2035, driven by the growing consumer interest in handmade and eco-friendly products.

Furthermore, this country has a robust legal and economic framework that promotes the import of sustainable goods, which represents a competitive advantage for *Weave & Palm*. The Free Trade Agreement between Colombia and the United States also facilitates the entry of Colombian products by eliminating tariffs and simplifying export procedures (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2022). In addition, digital platforms such as Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Shopify provide direct access to consumers seeking authentic, sustainable, and socially responsible products (IMARC Group, 2025).

The report by MINCIT and the Bancolombia study highlight that handcrafted and sustainable goods can strengthen the diversification of Colombian exports, especially to markets such as the United States, where there is high demand for eco-friendly products that reflect cultural identity. The selection of San Diego (California) as the entry point for *Weave & Palm* stemmed from an initial Trade Map search, which identified U.S. companies importing products related to handicrafts and natural materials.

## **METHODOLOGY**

It is reliable and up-to-date secondary sources were used, including: International databases: Trade Map, Market Access Map; Governmental and multilateral entities: ProColombia, MINCIT, DANE, and Artesanías de Colombia; Market studies: Spherical Insights, IMARC Group, and Bancolombia; Specialized platforms: Japan Experience, Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Shopify; Legal and environmental regulations: Official websites of the U.S. Government and the City of San Diego. T

To ensure the rigor and replicability of the methodological process, a quantitative and qualitative weighting system was applied to the preselected countries (United States, Germany, and Japan). For the market preselection matrix, strategic criteria were evaluated using a numerical scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = very unfavorable and 5 = very favorable), allowing for a comparative assessment of each market's suitability. The criteria analyzed included product demand, existing trade agreements, logistical ease, consumer culture, level of competition, and economic-political stability. The combined evaluation of these factors

made it possible to objectively determine the relative attractiveness of each country and to justify the selection of the optimal market for Weave & Palm’s internationalization.

### Data Collection Process

Information published between 2020 and 2025 was prioritized to ensure relevance and up-to-date content. Selection criteria included thematic relevance, source reliability, and applicability to both the product and the target market (See **Table 1**). Market Preselection Matrix was evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Potential impact on the business (high, medium, low).
- Level of uncertainty (high, medium, low).
- Opportunities and threats arising from the external environment.
- Strategic relevance for internationalization decision-making.
- Synthesis and Validation

**Table 1.** Market Preselection Matrix– Weave & Palm

Criterion	United States	Germany	Japan
<b>Demand for sustainable products</b>	High demand: The handicraft market is projected at USD 243 billion by 2035.	The growing market values quality and originality.	High appreciation for products with history and connection to nature.
<b>Trade agreements</b>	Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Colombia facilitates duty-free exports	No direct FTA, but trade facilitated through EU agreements.	No direct FTA but supported by multilateral trade treaties.
<b>Logistical convenience</b>	High: geographical proximity and ports on the West Coast (Los Angeles, San Diego).	Medium: efficient maritime and air transport, but longer distances.	Medium: considerable distance, but excellent port infrastructure.
<b>Consumer culture</b>	Consumers value eco-friendly products with a social purpose	High standards of quality and design; open to artisanal goods.	Strong cultural appreciation for craftsmanship and tradition.
<b>Local competition</b>	High, but with opportunities for differentiation through sustainability and culture.	High, with a strong presence of European products.	High, but open to exotic and customized products.
<b>Growth potential</b>	Very high, especially through digital platforms and niche retail.	High, with an increasing trend toward responsible consumption.	High, due to cultural affinity with artisanal and sustainable goods.
<b>Country risk / stability</b>	Low risk, stable political and economic environment.	Very low risk, solid economy	Very low risk, advanced and stable economy.

Source: Own elaboration.



A systematic documentary review was conducted using official and academic sources for each of the six factors in the PESTLE analysis (See **Table 2**). The findings were arranged in a structured PESTLE matrix, supplemented by strategic insights into each factor. The information was validated through source triangulation and reviewed by the project team. Factors with the greatest impact and uncertainty were prioritized for ongoing monitoring and strategic planning. The United States offers the most favorable macro-environmental conditions for Weave & Palm’s internationalization. Politically and legally, the U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement ensures tariff-free access and stable trade rules. Economically, high consumer purchasing power and the expansion of the sustainable fashion segment generate strong demand for artisanal and eco-friendly accessories.

**Table 2.** PESTLE Analysis – United States (Target Market)

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>	<b>Impact for Weave &amp; Palm</b>
<b>Political</b>	Stable democracy: Free Trade Agreement (CTPA 2012) ensures 0% tariffs; strong trade institutions (CBP, USTR).	Facilitates market entry and reduces tariff risk.
<b>Economic</b>	GDP $\approx$ US \$85 K per capita; low unemployment ( $\approx$ 4 %); sustained demand for sustainable fashion.	High purchasing power; attractive premium niche.
<b>Social</b>	Rising eco-consciousness and fair-trade consumption; interest in handmade, culturally significant goods.	Aligns perfectly with Weave & Palm’s sustainable brand identity.
<b>Technological</b>	Robust e-commerce ecosystem (Etsy, Amazon Handmade); 93% internet penetration; advanced logistics.	Enables cost-efficient digital entry and customer reach.
<b>Legal</b>	Clear customs regulations (19 CFR Part 10 Subpart T); strong IP protection and labeling rules.	Provides legal certainty and brand protection.
<b>Environmental</b>	Growing sustainability policies (California, New York); emphasis on biodegradable materials.	PESTLE Analysis – United States (Target Market)

Source: Own elaboration.

Socially, U.S. consumers are increasingly aware of cultural and environmental values, aligning with the firm’s ethical production practices. Technologically, the dominance of e-commerce platforms and digital logistics networks provides an efficient channel for niche brands to reach their target audience. Overall, the combination of favorable trade policy, purchasing capacity, and digital infrastructure positions the U.S. as the optimal destination for Weave & Palm’s handcrafted palm bags.

## **RESULTS**

San Diego combines cultural diversity, sustainability, and high purchasing power, factors that support the acceptance of handmade products with a Latin American identity. The city promotes small, creative, and green businesses. At the same time, its “Zero Waste San Diego” program encourages the use of natural and biodegradable materials, fully aligning with *Weave & Palm’s* sustainable values (San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, 2024).

### **Market Entry Conditions**

According to the classification and Description, the Tariff code is 46019405. The description corresponds to Plaited or woven products made from vegetable materials, such as natural palm fibers or similar materials. The Application to *Weave & Palm’s* handcrafted handbags are made from natural sarà palm. Tariffs and Trade Preferences: MFN (General) Tariff: 2.5% ad valorem (base rate for countries without trade agreements).

Preferential tariff for Colombia: 0% (duty-free) under the U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA), effective since 15 May 2012. Requirement: The product must comply with the rules of origin set out in Annex 3-A of the agreement and be properly certified by a declaration of origin issued by the exporter or supplier.

### **Required Documentation**

Exporters must comply with U.S. Customs regulations (19 CFR Part 10, Subpart T) under the CTPA. Key documents include a commercial invoice, packing list, certificate of origin, and bill of lading. These ensure traceability, authenticity, and compliance with trade laws (see **Table 3**).

**Table 3.** General Documentation

<b>Document</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Related Entity</b>
-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Commercial Invoice	Declares value, quantity, and product description.	Exporter / Importer
Packing List	Details packaging and contents	Exporter
Bill of Lading / Air Waybill	Transport document.	Carrier
Certificate or Declaration of Origin (CTPA)	Confirms Colombian origin and eligibility for duty-free access.	Exporter / CBP
Country of Origin Label	Mandatory for all imports into the U.S.	CBP / FTC
Special Permits	Only required if raw, untreated plant material is used.	USDA / APHIS

Source: (Market Access Map, 2025)

*Important:* Accurate documentation ensures legal compliance, prevents customs delays, and secures duty-free benefits under trade agreements, thereby ensuring smooth market access and credibility.

### **Logistics and Recommended Entry Points**

Since Santa Marta is located on Colombia's Caribbean coast, shipments bound for the U.S. west coast typically require transshipment and/or passage through the Panama Canal, which increases transit time compared to a Pacific Colombian port.

- Port of Departure: Port of Santa Marta (Colombia, Caribbean coast).
- Suggested U.S. Destination Ports: Port of Los Angeles / Port of Long Beach / Port of San Diego (California).
- Estimated Maritime Transit Time: **09–10 days** for long routes.

The Typical Shipping Route is:

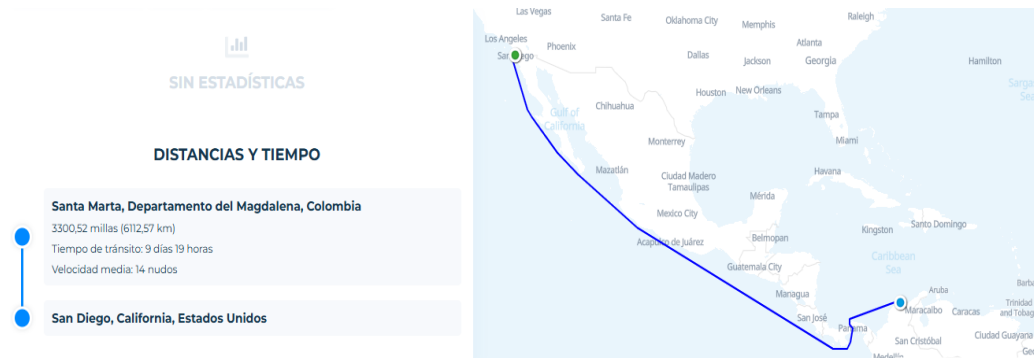
1. Cargo is loaded at the Port of Santa Marta.
2. Transit through the Caribbean and passage through the Panama Canal (or transshipment at one of the Caribbean cargo hubs).
3. Navigation to the U.S. west coast, entering through Los Angeles, Long Beach, or San Diego.

4. Upon arrival, cargo handling, customs clearance, and inland transportation to distribution centers or e-commerce fulfillment.

According to the Distribution Infrastructure in California, its ports have advanced logistics networks, warehouses, efficient customs, and direct access to ecommerce platforms such as Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Shopify, facilitating product visibility and sales in the U.S. market. Given the longer route, it is important to consider booking times, contingency planning, and coordination with the freight forwarder to avoid delays.

### Operational Distribution Strategy

For entry into the U.S. market, *Weave & Palm*'s distribution strategy combines both digital and physical channels. The brand will operate a direct e-commerce channel through its own website and platforms such as Etsy and Amazon Handmade, complemented by a selective retail distribution channel in design boutiques located in California, particularly in the San Diego area (**Figure 1**). Since Santa Marta is located on Colombia's Caribbean coast, shipments bound for the U.S. West Coast generally require transshipment and/or passage through the Panama Canal. This routing increases transit time compared to direct departures from Colombia's Pacific ports.



**Figure 1.** Distance and time between Santa Marta - San Diego. *Notes:* Taken from Searates.

According to Maersk (2023), estimated maritime transit times between Caribbean ports and the U.S. West Coast range from 09 to 10 days, depending on vessel schedules and cargo volume. Additional time for customs clearance and inland transportation typically adds 2 to 5 days, bringing the total delivery estimate to approximately 13 to 15 days.

### Production Analysis

The simulation shows that exporting 40 bags generates an estimated gross profit of USD 490, with a profit margin of approximately 25%. The break-even point is reached at around 10 units sold, indicating a sustainable balance between production and export costs. This reflects a viable small-scale export operation aligned with *Weave & Palm's* model of artisanal, eco-friendly production. The wholesale selling price is set at USD 48 per unit, while the local retail price in Colombia is approximately COP 80,000 (around USD 20.83 at an exchange rate of COP 3,840 per USD). Although the U.S. price represents a premium of more than 100%, this difference is justified by the product's positioning and trade advantages. The price differential is justified by the Sustainable Luxury positioning and the elimination of the 2.5% MFN tariff thanks to CTPA.

**Table 4.** Financial simulation.

Concept	Description	Value (USD)
Exported quantity	Number of bags	40
Fixed costs	Workshop rent, coordination, marketing	230
Variable cost per unit	Materials + labor	25
Total, variable cost	$25 \times 40$	1000
Export and logistics costs	Freight, packaging, documentation ( $2.50 \times 40$ )	100
Total, costs	Fixed + Variable + Export	1330
Selling price per unit (wholesale)	Expected market price	48
Total, revenue	$48 \times 40$	1920
Gross profit	$1,920 - 1,330$	590
Profit per unit	$590 \div 40$	14,75
Break-even point (units)	$230 \div (48 - 25) \approx 230 \div 23$	10

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia (2024), Freightos (2024).

The initial investment includes product conditioning for export, such as specialized packaging, natural fiber treatment, digital platform registration, and marketing campaigns for the U.S. market launch. The first export batch to California strategically leverages the state's cultural diversity, growing interest in sustainable goods, and the logistical efficiency of the Port of Santa Marta, recognized for its strong connectivity with major U.S. ports.

- Logistics cost used: **\$2.50 USD per bag**, estimated from a freight cost of \$2,000 per 1,000 bags plus handling and insurance margin.
- For 40 bags, total logistics = **\$100 USD**.

- The break-even point remains in approximately **10 bags** under these assumptions.

Recent studies highlight that sustainability-driven consumer behavior continues to grow in the U.S. market. Over 76% of American consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly products (DHL, 2024). DHL found that more than 80% of global buyers prioritize sustainability when making purchasing decisions. These trends align with Weave & Palm's positioning in the Sustainable Luxury segment, emphasizing artisanal craftsmanship and ethical sourcing as key competitive advantages.

### Monitoring indicators (KPIs)

The KPIs provide a quantifiable way to measure business progress and identify whether the implemented strategies are effective. When properly monitored, they serve as a reference point for the team to evaluate the company's performance (Asana, 2025). However, with the objective of continuous improvement of Weave & Palm's internalization towards the US market, Weave & Palm is a major contributor to the U.S. market. KPIs were created to measure commercial, logistics, productive, sustainable, and regulatory dimensions.

**Table 5.** KPI Tracking Indicators to Evaluate Weave & Palm's Internalization

Dimension	KPIs	Measurement Method	Goal
Market Access	% of products entered without payment of duties	Products covered by the FTA / Total exported	≥ 90%
	Average Delivery Time	Days from departure in Colombia to reception in San Diego	≤ 15 days
	Logistics cost per unit	(Transportation + permits + customs) / piece	Reduce 10% per semester
Commercial	Monthly sales in the target market	Monthly Invoicing (USD)	+8% monthly
	New buyers	Number of buyers per month	≥ 50 customers/month
	Average ticket	Total sales / number of orders	\$65–90 per order
Marketing and demand	E-commerce conversion rate	Sales / store visits	≥ 2% in 6 months
	Custom orders	Custom orders / total orders	≥ 40%
	CAC	(Customer Marketing Expenditure / New	–15% quarterly

	Acquisition Cost)	Customers	
	Documentary and regulatory obligation	Full exports / total shipments	100%
Sustainability and legal	Biodegradable material per product	Natural inputs / total inputs	≥ 95%
	Customs penalties	Alerts, rejections or sanctions	=0
Productivity	# of products sold	Total productivity/resources used	Increase to 2 units per man-hour (monthly)

*Source:* Own elaboration

The constant monitoring of these KPIs enables strategic decision-making based on data, automates error correction, improves quality, and consolidates the Weave & Palm name in the international segment, based on criteria of competitiveness, sustainability, marketing, and traditional value.

### **Financial Operating Plan**

Manage the company's financial operations to support optimal development in the production, distribution, and marketing of artisanal bags, while establishing viable strategies that ensure product quality and profitability. The purpose of this plan is to analyze the company's financial operations to optimize the production, distribution, and marketing of artisanal bags, and to establish viable strategies that guarantee the quality and profitability of the products. As follows, there is a description to export from Santa Marta (Colombia) to San Diego (The US):

**Table 6.** Financial And Commercial Operating Plan

Country Of Origin	Country Of Destination
Santa Marta (COLOMBIA)	San Diego (USA)
Merchandise – handmade bags	Made with 100% natural sará palm and coconut palm.
Operational logistics	Production, packaging, regulatory documentation, shipment of merchandise by air or sea, distribution, and final consumer.
Resources	An artisanal workshop for bag manufacturing. Also, we have 1 coordinator, 1 assistant, 3 artisans, and 1 logistics provider.
Selected market	American clients who are interested in handcrafted products with cultural identity.
Quantity of bags exported	40 bags
Fixed costs	\$243 USD
Variable costs	\$10.82 USD per bag × 40 bags to be exported = (\$432 USD)

Export Costs	\$2,780 (USD)
Total, Costs	<b>\$3,455 USD</b>
Profit Per Bag	40 bags × 90 USD = \$3,600 USD
Profit	(\$145 USD) profit
Profit Per Bag	(\$145 USD) / 40 = (\$3.625 USD)
Break-Even Point	$243 \text{ USD} / (90 \text{ USD} - 10.82 \text{ USD}) = 243 / 79.18 \text{ USD} = 3.07 \text{ units}$

*Source:* Own elaboration

According to the operational analysis conducted, exporting handicrafts to the United States is a viable option. This leaves us with a profit margin of \$4,060,000, which is sufficient to initiate expansion and establish our presence in the United States.

### **Competitive and differentiation analysis**

Selecting Santa Marta as a port of origin provides distinct advantages for accessing U.S. West Coast markets. The port's exceptional natural depth and high schedule reliability (94.5%) position it as a dependable gateway for export operations (Safety4Sea, 2023; MDPI, 2022). Furthermore, its strong agribusiness ties, which include exporting bananas, coffee, avocados, and other regional produce, mean that goods from this region carry both quality and cultural value (Pro Santa Marta, 2022). On the destination side, the California port network, including ports such as Los Angeles and Long Beach, handles approximately 40% of the U.S.'s containerized imports, providing strong logistics, infrastructure, and e-commerce access. Together, these factors deliver a competitive edge (**Table 7**): efficient export logistics coupled with compelling product origin stories that resonate with U.S. consumers seeking authentic, artisanal, and sustainable goods.

**Table 7.** Weave & Palm Differentiating Elements

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Offers in the market</b>	<b>Weave &amp; Palm's proposal</b>
Origin	Handmade	Colombian Caribbean identity with cultural traceability
Social focus	Nonexistent	Created by women artisans (local economy)
Sustainability	Industrialized Process/Machinery	Fibras naturales (Palm will be)
Consumer Relationship	Economic Agreement (Buyer and Seller)	Brand-customer relationship Card with history on the product
Sales model	Massive sale	Direct-to-consumer (B2C) sales, social media selling, craft fairs, own e-commerce

Source: Own elaboration

Currently, online marketplaces such as Etsy and Amazon Handmade offer artisans a platform to market their handmade products and fabrics made from natural fibers, including jute, palm, raffia, and sisal, which creates a high level of competition. However, this competition is not homogeneous because most of the offerings are industrialized, many of these products utilize standardized processes and machinery, and lack cultural criteria, which positions our flagship product as one with authentic and differentiated value.

It is worth noting that craft fairs and concept stores are events that showcase their creations to a broad audience of buyers from Mexico, Peru, and Morocco, countries recognized for their artisanal crafts in the U.S. (**Table 7**). This means that Weave & Palm does not compete based on the value of the bags but rather on the meaning each fabric holds in terms of tradition, culture, sustainability, elegance, and Caribbean storytelling.

### **Competitive Advantage**

Weave & Palm is positioned in the international market with a unique value proposition based on three key qualities—sustainable materials, contemporary aesthetics, and Caribbean identity—that allow it to offer exclusive, attractive products to buyers. Although it is not made with specialized machinery, we maintain a handcrafted process, perfect finishes, and a focus on female empowerment behind each piece. We are not just talking about a material object but about preserving a tradition that transcends generations and influences those who receive it.

**Table 8.** CAGE Model Analysis

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Key Observations</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>Cultural</b>	Shared appreciation for craftsmanship and sustainability.	Strengthens brand acceptance.
<b>Administrative</b>	FTA simplifies export procedures.	Reduces legal barriers.
<b>Geographic</b>	Short maritime distance via Pacific ports.	Lowers logistics cost.
<b>Economic</b>	High consumer purchasing power.	Increase profitability potential.

Source: Own elaboration

The United States exhibits low market distance across all CAGE dimensions (**Table 8**), reinforcing its suitability as Weave & Palm's target market.



## **MARKETING STRATEGY**

It is a method used to organize, plan, and design strategies that are profitable for the smooth operation of the company. To position Weave & Palm in the national and international market, preserving traditional techniques for handcrafted bags as sustainable, high-quality products for customers who love exclusive designs with a story. Weave & Palm's marketing approach combines digital commerce, storytelling, and ethical branding:

- E-commerce: Launch through Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Shopify.
- Social media: Highlight artisan stories and sustainable processes.
- Alliances: Collaborate with U.S.-based eco-fashion influencers and fair-trade boutiques.
- Pricing Strategy: Premium cultural brand positioning with transparent pricing.

### **Target Audience**

- Domestic Customers: Women from middle-to upper socioeconomic strata, aged 18 to 45, students, professionals, tourists, and lovers of handcrafted design.
- International Customers: Foreigners from the USA, Germany, and Japan interested in handcrafted products.
- Stores: Entrepreneurship fairs, craft markets, and stores interested in the products.

### **Value Proposition**

Handmade bags crafted by women artisans using natural materials and traditional techniques. Each item reflects a blend of culture, sustainability, and contemporary design, transforming traditional craftsmanship into a fashion-forward aesthetic. Based on the following SWOT Analysis (**Table 9**), we propose action strategies (**Table 10**) to achieve through marketing strategies.

**Table 9.** SWOT analysis

<b>INTERNAL</b>	<b>Strengths (S)</b>	<b>Weaknesses (W)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Handmade bags.</li> <li>➤ Good fabric quality.</li> <li>➤ Use of eco-friendly materials.</li> <li>➤ Exclusive products and each piece tell a story.</li> <li>➤ Local female empowerment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Not water-resistant.</li> <li>➤ Limited production.</li> <li>➤ Little-known brand at.</li> <li>➤ Sometimes the material causes skin allergies due to its rigidity.</li> <li>➤ Low budget.</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL</b>	<b>Opportunities (O)</b>	<b>Threats(T)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support institutional artisan ventures.</li> <li>➤ Expo national and international fairs.</li> <li>➤ Global platforms.</li> <li>➤ Brands are interested in artisan fashion.</li> <li>➤ Expansion of local markets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Competition from industrial brands.</li> <li>➤ Increased material costs during certain times of the year.</li> <li>➤ Product imitations.</li> <li>➤ I have little interest in handmade crafts.</li> </ul>

*Source:* Own elaboration

The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis for Weave & Palm reveals that the company's competitive advantage is primarily based on its internal strengths, particularly its production of high-quality, handmade bags crafted from eco-friendly materials. Importantly, the product stands out because of its compelling cultural storytelling and dedication to supporting local female empowerment. These strengths closely match external opportunities, especially the support available for artisan businesses and the increasing exposure from global platforms and international trade fairs.

**Table 10.** SWOT action strategies

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>S+O</b>	-Design digital campaigns to showcase the bag-making process, techniques, materials, and experiences.
<b>S+T</b>	-Use labels that reflect tradition and culture. -Register the brand and products with the Chamber of Commerce.
<b>W+O</b>	-Creation of an e-commerce platform to sell products via the internet.

**W+T** -Plan product inventories and delivery times.

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*Source:* Own elaboration

The S+O (Strength-Opportunity) strategy, therefore, focuses on utilizing digital campaigns to showcase the ethical production process and cultural experience behind the product. However, the company faces significant weaknesses, primarily related to its operational capacity, including limited production, a low budget, and being a lesser-known brand. To counter the threats from industrial competition and the risk of imitation, the S+T (Strength-Threat) strategy is crucial, involving the registration of the brand and using labels that clearly showcase its unique tradition and culture. Additionally, the W+O (Weakness-Opportunity) strategy emphasizes developing an e-commerce platform to directly address the limited brand recognition and expand its reach globally. Lastly, the W+T (Weakness-Threat) strategy involves careful planning of product inventories and delivery times to manage logistical risks associated with its limited production capacity.

## **Marketing Strategies**

The following section details Weave & Palm's International Marketing Plan, structured around the Four P's (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) to successfully penetrate the United States market, specifically targeting the sustainable and artisanal fashion niche. This strategy aims to leverage the Product's uniqueness (exclusive Sará and coconut palm pieces), supporting a Premium Price in the global market. This positioning will be achieved through strategic Distribution (Place) channels, combining physical exports to San Diego with a strong focus on Digital Platforms, and a targeted Promotion approach that emphasizes the brand's cultural value and artisanal traceability.

### **Product**

The product strategy focuses on offering authentic, handmade accessories that combine tradition with modern aesthetics.

- Handmade bags such as backpacks, wallets, and cell phone cases.
- Fabric: Sara Palm and Coconut Palm.
- Product label and packaging.

### **Price TRM: 3.840 cop**

The pricing strategy employs an accessible premium positioning, capitalizing on the product's exclusivity, ethical origin, and the elimination of tariffs under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S. to achieve higher margins compared to the domestic market.

- Production cost of one bag: \$ 10.42 USD.
- Selling price in Colombia: \$ 20.83 USD.
- Foreign market: \$96 y \$120 USD per unit.

### **Place**

The distribution strategy is multi-channel, establishing a physical presence in key high-value markets while prioritizing efficient digital platforms for scalability and brand consistency. Export to San Diego (United States).

- Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Business, Instagram Shop, and Facebook Marketplace.
- Kraft fairs.
- Partnerships with other stores interested in cultural products

### **Promotion**

The promotion strategy is centered on digital storytelling to build a strong brand image based on authenticity, cultural heritage, and social responsibility.

- Photos of real customers with their purchase.
- Frequent giveaways to interact with followers.
- Product photoshoots with a Caribbean backdrop.
- Advertising with other accounts with a high number of followers to create strategic alliances.

### **International Development Plan (IDP)**

The IDP promotes the company's expansion into global markets. Its purpose is to position the brand within the industry, with action plans and sales strategies that generate optimal business opportunities to strengthen production. The core objective of this strategic framework is to promote the Bolívar department's native handicrafts by entering national and international markets with natural products and unique designs.

#### **Place of Production: Cascajal- Bolivar**

**Objective:** The purpose of this action plan is to promote the region's native handicrafts, made by artisans from the department of Bolivar. Weave & Palm seeks to enter national and international markets with 100% natural products and unique designs that highlight the beauty and diversity of our country.

**External Market:** Analyze different countries with a high level of interest and acceptance in handcrafted bags, such as the United States, Germany, and Japan.

**Internal Market:** Study the local market and create alliances with commercial stores to achieve recognition within Colombia.

#### **Strategies:**

- To provide training for our employees to improve the quality of our products.
- To implement the use of digital platforms.
- To seek support from other national and international entrepreneurs.

## **RISK ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

As part of Weave & Palm's international expansion, an artisanal company dedicated to making sustainable handbags from natural palms. A risk analysis was conducted following the C-TPAT (Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism) guide (**Table 11**). This guide recommends five steps to identify vulnerabilities and create action plans within the global supply chain. The analysis specifically focuses on exports from Cascajal (Bolívar, Colombia) to San Diego, California (U.S.), under the Colombia-U.S. Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA).

**Table 11.** Main Identified Risks

Type of Risk	Description	Level	Mitigation Strategy
Logistical	Possible delays or losses during maritime transport from Santa Marta to San Diego	Medium	Establish agreements with CTPAT-certified logistics operators and ensure traceability through GPS and digital documentation.
Documentary / Customs	Documentary / Customs	Medium	Train staff on CTPA regulations and review all documents before shipment using checklists and control software
Cargo Security	Improper handling, theft, or contamination of goods in transit	Low	Use sealed packaging, seal numbering, surveillance cameras at shipping points, and conduct annual internal audits.
Sustainability	Possible non-compliance with environmental or Possible non-compliance with environmental or	Low	Implement certifications such as Fair Trade and Implement certifications such as Fair Trade and
Economic / Financial	Exchange rate fluctuations or increases in international freight costs.	Medium	Maintain operational reserves, negotiate annual freight rates, and diversify export markets (Germany, Japan).
Reputational / Social	Risk of losing credibility if ethical or female empowerment commitments are not met.	Low	The company will actively seek BASC (Business Alliance for Secure Commerce) and Fair-Trade certification as its main framework for ethical and security compliance. This certification ensures adherence to international standards for secure supply chain management, business transparency, and commercial integrity, while promoting continuous improvement and social responsibility (World BASC Organization, 2024). To validate ethical sourcing practices and women's

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empowerment, the company will  
maintain transparent communication on  
social media.

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*Source:* Own elaboration

The analysis shows that Weave & Palm maintains a low-to-medium risk profile (see also **Annexes 2 and 3**), with high mitigation potential thanks to the traceability of its artisanal process, the political and commercial stability of the U.S. market, and the application of C-TPAT best practices. These actions not only ensure regulatory compliance but also strengthen the brand's reputation as a model of sustainable, ethical, and empowering export from the Colombian Caribbean.

#### **Action Plan**

1. Mapping the supply chain: identify all actors producers, carriers, customs agents, and U.S. distributors to establish responsibilities and controls.
2. Training and annual internal audit: follow C-TPAT guidelines to ensure documentary and physical integrity of shipments.
3. Continuous evaluation of suppliers: use security questionnaires, workshop visits, and environmental policy reviews.
4. Monitoring of logistics and commercial KPIs: delivery times, compliance with regulations, and cost per exported unit, according to the internationalization plan.
5. Communication and continuous improvement: implement an internal incident reporting channel, track corrective actions, and update the annual risk analysis.

**Table 12.** Trade Map Companies — Buyers/Importers (HS 46)

<b>Country</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>United States</b>	Michaels; At Home Stores; Creative CoOp; Amazon Services; Seville Classics	Home décor / retail importers
<b>Germany</b>	Franz Müller; West wing; JYSK; Atisan; Globo Fair Trade Partner	Home & fairtrade décor
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Parmar Ventures; Berkshire Fencing	Assorted HS 46 lines

*Source:* Own elaboration, taken from Trademap.

We use Trade Map's Companies module to validate per-market rankings by strategic fit (A/B/C), order size, Incoterms, and payment terms.

#### **COMPANYLEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS (WEAVE & PALM)**

The company should implement a quarterly export plan integrated with sales and operations planning (S&OP). This involves maintaining a substantial 60–90 day working capital buffer to manage cash flow and support operations. It also requires building surge capacity using certified artisans to handle unexpected demand increases. Additionally, developing SKU technical data sheets and a lot of quality control (QC) plans is essential to ensure product consistency. Moreover, a professional commercial kit must be created, including a catalog, detailed sustainability credentials, and clear care instructions for natural fiber products.

Before setting prices for international markets, the company must verify key regulatory and financial factors for each destination. This includes confirming the Harmonized System (HS) code, applicable tariffs, Free Trade Agreement (FTA) preferences, Value Added Tax (VAT), and Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs). To minimize risk and optimize resource allocation, Weave & Palm should focus its efforts on 1–2 pilot markets and a maximum of 1–3 lead SKUs (Stock Keeping Units).

Designs, sizes, and packaging must be carefully tailored to fit the specific channel and culture of the target market. To professionalize the export process, the team needs mandatory training in Incoterms, payment methods, customs and logistics procedures, and B2B digital marketing. Additionally, the company should standardize checklists and contracts to ensure consistency across all operations.

### **INDUSTRYLEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The sector must actively diversify both products and destinations to reduce risk. This includes calculating the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) and market share in new markets to prevent over-dependence on just a few countries or product lines. It is essential to establish a sector market observatory that monitors key data such as tariffs, Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), prices, lead times, and demand signals to support data-driven export decisions.

Governments and trade organizations should work to reduce trade barriers by promoting the use of single window systems and digital documentation. The sector should monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) such as the days and cost to export and the percentage of digital procedures utilized. Artisanal firms should form clusters or consortia to achieve economies of scale. This collaboration enables standardization of packing and stowage, and aids in tracking logistics costs per unit and consolidation rates. Coordinating

Aid for Trade and cooperation projects for MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) is essential to enhance quality, rural logistics, digitalization, and sustainability initiatives.

The sector needs to invest in quality infrastructure like labs and traceability systems. This helps promote sustainability labels and involves tracking certified SKUs and defect rates. Efforts should focus on developing human capital in key design and commercial skills. Monitoring certifications and unit value increases (growth in perceived and actual product value) will assess the success of these programs.

The sector needs to adopt digital catalogs and pilot marketplaces to connect directly with international buyers. KPIs such as digital order share and sample-to-order conversion rates should be monitored to evaluate success. Companies should have access to improved finance and risk management tools, including working capital (WC) lines, trade credit insurance, and factoring. Tracking WC days covered and insured receivables is crucial for reducing financial risks. Greater regional integration efforts, focusing on simple rules of origin and cumulation, will promote trade within regional blocs. The sector should also monitor intra-regional sales and SKUs using cumulation to maximize regional advantages.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The analysis confirms the feasibility of Weave & Palm's export to the United States. The project aligns with market trends in sustainability, gender inclusion, and fair trade. The U.S. market's trade incentives and digital infrastructure make it the most viable option. The comprehensive analysis affirms the strong feasibility of Weave & Palm's export to the United States. The project shows excellent alignment with key global market trends, especially those in sustainability, gender inclusion, and fair trade. Given the favorable trade incentives (0% tariff under CTPA) and the solid digital infrastructure, the U.S. market is the most promising choice for the company's international growth.

The low market distance across all CAGE dimensions further supports this suitability. To achieve successful market entry and long-term success, Weave & Palm should implement these strategic actions: Strengthen artisan production through formal training to ensure consistent quality and prepare for potential demand spikes; proactively obtain eco-certifications like Fair Trade and GOTS to validate sustainability claims and gain access to premium retail channels in the U.S.; develop strategic partnerships with California-based distributors (such as green building suppliers or specialty eco-retailers) to efficiently handle

local distribution and warehousing using a 3PL model; and continuously track KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) related to export performance (e.g., Cost/Unit, Digital Order Share) and market adaptation to enable agile strategic adjustments

**Link to presentation online:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOTjQScjplk&t=4s>

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## ANNEXES

## Annex 1. Technical specifications

Product design	Product Name	Technical Description	Tariff classification	Place of Production
	Sunset Bag	Large size bag 30 x 30 cm in yellow color with raw palm.	46019405	Cascajal (Bolívar)
	Casual bag	Large size bag in raw color decorated with 30 x 30 cm wool.	46019405	Cascajal (Bolívar)
	Beach bag	Large size bag 30 x 30 cm with wool tassel design.	46019405	Cascajal (Bolívar)

Source: Norelis Jiménez García

**Annex 2. Commercial Process — Risk Matrix (summary)**

<i>CTPAT Risk Matrix - Weave &amp; Palm</i>	<i>High Probability</i>	<i>Medium Probability</i>	<i>Low Probability</i>
<i>High Impact</i>		<i>Logistical</i>	
<i>Medium Impact</i>		<i>Documentary / Customs</i>	
<i>Low Impact</i>			<i>Cargo Security - Sustainability- Financial -Reputational / Social</i>

#	Risk (event)	Causes	Controls	Treatment / Owner
<b>C1</b>	Wrong pricing/entry	Outdated data; weak analytics	Dashboard; analyst; reference prices	Mitigate / Exports Mgr.
<b>C2</b>	Negative margin due to costing error	Incomplete costing; no client matrix	Costing SOP; ERP price list; four-eyes	Avoid Mitigate / Finance Exports
<b>C3</b>	KYC Failure / LA-FT exposure	Lack of KYC platform/training	KYC policy; checklist; training; system block	Avoid / Docs+Exports
<b>C4</b>	Billing without credit limit/guarantee	Procedure not disseminated	Credit insurance/guarantee; procedure	Transfer Mitigate / AR
<b>C5</b>	Order vs. invoice mismatch	Manual entry; workload	Parametrized ERP; clear roles; cycle counts	Mitigate / Exports
<b>C6</b>	Production lead-time slippage	Maintenance; late inputs	Preventive maintenance; S&OP; buffer stock	Reduce / Prod Logistics

*Source:* Own elaboration.

**Annex 3. International Transport — Risk Matrix (summary)**

<i>CTPAT Risk Matrix - Weave &amp; Palm</i>	<i>High Probability</i>	<i>Medium Probability</i>	<i>Low Probability</i>
<i>High Impact</i>		<i>Logistical</i>	
<i>Medium Impact</i>		<i>Documentary / Customs</i>	
<i>Low Impact</i>			<i>Cargo Security - Sustainability- Financial -Reputational / Social</i>

#	Risk (event)	Causes	Controls	Treatment / Owner
<b>T1</b>	Damage/shrinkage	Improper handling/pack	SOP; awareness; audits; reinforced pack	Reduce / Warehouse
<b>T2</b>	Deterioration by wrong stowage	Orientation/lashing issues	Visual guide; pre-seal photos; four-eyes	Mitigate / Logistics
<b>T3</b>	Contamination/theft	Uncontrolled areas; weak CCTV	Live CCTV; restricted zones; ISO 17712; canine checks	Avoid Mitigate / Security Logistics
<b>T4</b>	Fines/accident (haz cargo)	Lack of training	Certs; SDS; segregation; checklists	Reduce Transfer / HSE +Transport
<b>T5</b>	Rolled/no-show at port	No tracking/itinerary	TMS+GPS milestones; carrier plan B; alerts	Mitigate/ Transport+ Customs Agent
<b>T6</b>	Pick-up delays	Carrier supply; scheduling	Framework contracts; staggered windows; KPI	Reduce / Transport

*Source:* Own elaboration. KPIs: OTIF  $\geq 95\%$ ; damage  $\leq 1/1,000$  pcs; seal breaches = 0; onetime pickup  $\geq 95\%$ ; 100% client pricelists in ERP; 100% orders with KYC approval pre-entry.