

Nairobi Design Week 2026 – Exhibitor FAQ Handbook

Welcome to the official **Exhibitor FAQ Handbook** for **Nairobi Design Week 2026 (NDW)**.

This guide is designed to give you everything you need to know **before, during, and after** the festival regardless of if you're a physical, digital, or food & beverage exhibitor. Please read it carefully as it forms part of your official **Exhibitor Information Pack**.

Sustainability:

- Exhibitors are expected to minimize waste.
- All materials must be removed during teardown.
- Use of eco-friendly materials is encouraged.

Emergency Procedures:

- Emergency exits and safety rules will be provided.

Code of Conduct:

- NDW is an inclusive, respectful environment.
- Discrimination, harassment, or offensive displays are not tolerated.

Q: How do I apply to exhibit?

Applications are submitted online through the NDW social media platforms and website once the annual theme is announced. You will need to provide:

- Full name, organisation, or brand name
- Contact details (email, phone, address)
- A short bio or background of your practice
- Portfolio links, images, or video samples of your work
- A statement describing how your work connects to the festival's theme
- Your preferred participation type (physical or digital exhibitors)
- Any technical requirements (electricity, AV, installation needs)

Q: Is there a cost to apply?

No, applications are free. Fees only apply if you are selected and confirm your space.

Q: When is the festival?

The festival will run from the 7th of March to the 15th of March 2026. It is a nine day festival.

Q: Who reviews applications?

The NDW curatorial team will review submissions. Selection is based on:

- Creativity and originality

- Alignment with the annual theme
- Value for the audience and cultural impact

Q: Can digital exhibitors apply?

Yes. NDW accepts digital exhibitors who wish to showcase. Digital exhibitors receive:

- Their work shown on a screen at the festival.
- Longer than 60 seconds, shown on the main stage.
- Video showcases streamed during the festival
- Digital talks, panels, or workshops

Q: Can students or emerging designers apply?

Yes. NDW encourages applications from students, recent graduates, and early-career creatives. Emerging designers in this case are those within the first 10 years of their careers.

Q: Can past exhibitors return?

Yes, returning exhibitors are welcome.

Q: Can groups or collaborations apply?

Yes. Collectives, partnerships, and community projects can apply under one shared application.

Q: Can I share a space with another exhibitor?

Yes, you can share a space and split costs. Please list all exhibit collaborators on your application.

Q: How is space allocated?

Exhibitors can state preferences, but NDW allocates spaces to ensure fairness, flow of traffic, and thematic balance. Priority is sometimes given to installations that require special positioning.

Q: When will I know if I've been accepted?

Notifications are sent within 4 weeks of applying, or 2–3 weeks after the application deadline, whichever is sooner.

Q: What types of spaces are available?

- **Physical Exhibitors:** Regular space and Premium space either outdoor or indoor
- **Digital Exhibitors:** Dedicated online profiles, digital showcases, and inclusion in NDW's virtual programming.
- **Food & Beverage Vendors:** Allocated outdoor or indoor food areas

Q: What is included in a physical exhibitor space?

- Allocated floor and or wall space
- General venue lighting and basic electricity
- Venue-wide security during open hours
- Listing on NDW website, programme, and social media

Q: What is not included?

- Furniture (tables, chairs, shelves, tents)
- Special lighting, sound, or AV
- Internet upgrades
- Insurance for your property
- Catering or food

Q: What happens if I don't pay by the deadline?

Your space may be released and offered to another exhibitor on the waiting list.

Q: Are there any hidden costs?

Not hidden, but additional costs may apply for:

- Furniture hire
- Special technical support (e.g., sound engineers)
- Food and beverage licensing
- Crew support (if you need NDW staff to manage your space temporarily)

Q: Are there height or build restrictions?

Yes. Maximum build heights and structural restrictions will be communicated in your onboarding pack.

Q: Can I use heavy equipment or machinery?

Yes, but it must be approved for safety. Exhibitors must ensure compliance with safety standards.

Q: Can I use projection, video, or sound?

Yes, but all A/V requirements must be declared in advance. Sound must be kept to moderate levels so as not to disrupt neighbouring exhibitors.

Q: What if my installation requires extra time?

Notify the NDW team in advance. Some installations may require overnight or early access. Approval must be secured beforehand.

Q: What tools and materials should I bring?

Bring all tools needed for assembly, including tape, extension cables, scissors, or special fixings. NDW does not provide these items.

Q: What is the refund policy?

- **100% refund:** Cancellation at least 1 month in advance
- **50% refund:** Cancellation at least 2 weeks in advance
- **0% refund:** Late cancellation or no notification

Q: How do refunds work with installments?

Refunds are based on the total fee, not just amounts paid. Example: Cancel 1 month early and get 100% of the total fee back, regardless of whether you'd finished paying installments.

Q: When can I set up?

Setting up takes place a week or 5 days before the event. There is no fixed date on when you can set up during this period however if you have an installation that requires a lot of assistance and equipment we advise you work on it at least 3 days before the event.

Q: Can international designers participate?

Yes. NDW encourages global participation.

Q: Does NDW cover travel or accommodation?

No. International exhibitors are responsible for travel, shipping, accommodation, and visa costs.

Q: Are you able to recommend accommodation and suppliers, and offer local advice?

Yes, we have a list of accommodation providers for varying budgets, suppliers list, and are happy to advise how we best can.

Q: As an international exhibitor, can you provide assistance with set up?

Yes, you are able to book our crew's time at an additional cost.

Q: Can NDW assist with visas?

Yes, by providing an official invitation letter. Exhibitors must handle their own applications.

Q: Can I ship work internationally?

Yes, but you must handle customs, duties, and logistics. NDW cannot serve as consignee or clear goods.

Q: Is storage available?

That is subject to the venue and will be communicated after selection.

Q: When must I dismantle?

All exhibits must be removed immediately after closing on the final day, within the time allocated. Items left behind may be discarded.

Q: What do digital exhibitors receive?

- A dedicated NDW profile and catalogue entry
- Social media promotion
- Access to NDW's online networking sessions
- Option to participate in talks, panels, or virtual showcases

Q: How should I prepare content?

Submit high-quality images, videos, or interactive media. NDW provides format guidelines.

Q: Do I need to staff my space at all times?

Yes. Exhibitors are responsible for ensuring their space is attended during all festival hours.

Q: Can I bring assistants?

Yes you may have assistants. The number of assistants you can have will be communicated in the Exhibitor Information Pack.

Q: What if I need someone to cover my stand?

NDW offers crew support services at extra cost. This must be booked in advance.

Q: Will NDW crew help?

Volunteers can answer general visitor questions, but they will not be assigned to manage exhibitor spaces unless specifically arranged.

Q: Can I take orders for future work?

Yes. Many exhibitors use the festival as an opportunity to secure commissions, collaborations, or long-term clients.

Q: Can I sell my work at the festival?

Yes. Exhibitors may sell products, services, or artworks directly from their space.

Q: Are digital exhibitors charged?

Yes, but digital packages are lower-priced than physical spaces.

Q: How much does it cost to exhibit?

Fees vary by type (physical, digital, F&B) and space size. Rates are published in the Exhibitor Information Pack.

Q: What payment methods are accepted?

- Bank transfer
- M-Pesa
- Debit/credit card

Q: When and how do I pay?

- All fees must be cleared before the festival begins.
- Payment can be made in full or via installments.

Q: How do installments work?

- A deposit secures your space.
- Balance may be split into 2–3 installments, arranged with the Exhibitor Relations Team
- All installments must be cleared before exhibitor check-in.

Q: Are receipts required?

Yes. Exhibitors are responsible for issuing receipts/invoices.

Q: What currency is used?

Kenyan Shillings (KES). International exhibitors should set up local-friendly payment options.

Q: Can I exhibit as an F&B vendor?

Yes, but you need:

- Nairobi County health permits
- Food handler certification
- Compliance with hygiene standards

Q: Is food provided to exhibitors?

No. But independent vendors will be present at the venue.

Q: How will NDW promote me?

- Listing on the NDW website & catalogue
- Social media campaigns
- Mentions in press releases
- Festival programme visibility

Q: Can I promote myself?

Yes. NDW will provide official logos and assets.

Q: Will the media cover the event?

Yes, ND partners with local and international press. Exhibitors may be interviewed or featured.

Q: Should I insure my work?

Yes, especially if you are exhibiting high-value items. Exhibitors are responsible for their own insurance.

Q: Can I distribute flyers or merchandise?

Yes, within your own space. Wider distribution requires NDW approval.

Q: Will NDW take photos/videos of my work?

Yes, professional media will capture the event. You may request copies after.

Q: Is security provided?

Yes, general venue security is in place.

Q: Is insurance included?

No. Exhibitors are responsible for insuring their work.

Q: What happens if NDW cancels or postpones?

The ND team will communicate alternative options, which may include carrying forward your booking to the next edition.

Q: Who attends NDW?

- Designers & artists
- Students & educators
- Industry leaders
- Business partners and investors
- Government & NGOs
- Media & press
- The general public

Q: What do visitors expect?

Interactive, engaging, and well-presented exhibits. Visitors enjoy learning the process and story behind your work.

Q: How many visitors attend?

Exact numbers vary each year and are shared with exhibitors post-event.

Q: Are there networking opportunities?

Yes. NDW hosts:

- Opening and closing events
- Exhibitor mixers
- Talks, workshops, and panels
- Previews for media and partners

Q: Will I meet other exhibitors?

Yes, through orientation sessions, the festival days, WhatsApp groups, and community events.

Q: Is there a community network?

Yes. Past exhibitors are invited to join ND's year-round creative community.

Q: Can I collaborate with NDW after the festival?

Yes. NDW runs ongoing projects, pop-ups, and partnerships with the community.

Q: Will there be an orientation?

Yes, all exhibitors join a briefing session before the festival.

Q: Will there be parking for exhibitors?

Yes, within the location of the festival

Q: How do I get updates?

- Email newsletters
- WhatsApp exhibitor group
- Phone support

If selected, you will be expected to coordinate all planning and logistics to deliver and de-install your work at the festival location.