

Newsletter 7, February 2021

PROMOTING COTTON BY-PRODUCTS in Eastern and Southern Africa

Countries: United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Duration: 2016–20

Website: <https://unctad.org/project/promoting-cotton-products-eastern-and-southern-africa>

Project closure

On 31 December 2020, UNCTAD closed United Nations Development Account Project 1617K on “Promoting cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa”.

UNCTAD has hired an independent evaluator to conduct the final evaluation and, in the meantime, is pursuing follow-on initiatives stemming from the project, including two joint projects on cotton by-products with its sister agencies, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC).¹

Based on the successful implementation of the activities contained in the original 2016-19 plan for Project 1617K, the donor granted a one-year extension to the end of 2020, with funds for two additional activities.

Unfortunately, due to travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCTAD had to cancel the two planned activities. Although lost to this project, UNCTAD will look to carry the plans for these activities forward to its new projects on cotton by-products.

Preliminary project results

According to its logical framework, the project met all four of its output-oriented indicators of achievement, namely:

- Completed surveys in all four countries.
- Validated national action plans and policies to develop cotton by-products in three countries – Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe; and
- Delivered investment profiles for priority cotton by-products in the same three countries.

On this basis, the project realised its two expected achievements:

- Improved capacity of cotton value chain stakeholders to evaluate and pursue opportunities to add value to cotton by-products; and
- Improved capacity of policy makers to formulate evidence-based policies to support the development of cotton by-products.

¹ For more information, please visit the project site: <https://unctad.org/project/unlocking-hidden-value-cotton-wto-unctad-itc-initiative-cotton-products>.

In addition to its expected achievements, the project generated promising progress in three of the four project countries: Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In each country, a cross-section of stakeholders – including farmers, private sector, and relevant government agencies – reported momentum and consensus towards developing value-added processing, including cotton by-products.

Among the most promising results are several entrepreneurs in the three countries who have developed investment plans for value-added processing businesses. UNCTAD will offer what support it can as these entrepreneurs seek to finance and implement their investments.

The project also fostered South-South cooperation on technology transfer, between India and the project countries. In 2019, the Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (CIRCOT) hosted an excellent study visit in Nagpur, India, where participants learned about Indian technologies and business models, as well as establishing commercial contacts with business owners and machinery suppliers.

Follow-on work: WTO-UNCTAD-ITC initiative

To sustain the project's momentum and expand its work to other countries in Africa, UNCTAD formed a joint technical cooperation initiative on cotton by-products with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC). Member States endorsed the joint initiative at the November 2018 WTO Cotton Days meeting.

The agencies have since implemented a first-phase project, funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), involving feasibility studies in eight African Least-Developed Countries (LDCs), including three from the UNCTAD project and five new ones: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia. As of 31 December

2020, all feasibility study reports were complete and awaiting approval by Member States at the WTO cotton proceedings in 2021. More information can be found at [the project site](#).

UNCTAD and ITC have also drafted a proposal for a second phase of capacity-building activities to follow up the findings of the EIF-funded studies – the proposal will be presented to Member States in the WTO cotton proceedings in 2021, and then to donors.



Next steps

In the coming months, UNCTAD will undertake the following activities:

1. The independent evaluator will interview project stakeholders and submit the final evaluation.
2. UNCTAD will disseminate findings from the final progress report and evaluation at relevant cotton gatherings, such as WTO Cotton Days and the ICAC annual meeting; and
3. UNCTAD and ITC will present to Member States their proposal for a second phase of capacity-building activities for the joint EIF project on cotton by-products, which includes Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

Contact us

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