



Independent project evaluation:

**Development Account Project 1617K:
“Improving the value added of cotton by-products in
Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA)”**

Independent Evaluation Unit
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACVAZ	Association of Cotton Value-Adders of Zimbabwe
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
CDO	Cotton Development Organisation (Uganda)
CIRCOT	Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN)
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ICAC	International Cotton Advisory Committee
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit (UNCTAD)
ITC	International Trade Centre
MA	Ministry of Agriculture (Zambia)
MCTI	Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (Zambia)
MIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce (Zimbabwe)
MITI	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (Tanzania)
REC	Regional Economic Commission
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMP	Sustainability Monitoring Period
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This independent final project evaluation covers UNCTAD project "*Improving the value added of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA)*" funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA; Project Code 1617K). The project is aimed at supporting selected countries in ESA (Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to promote opportunities for greater value addition in the cotton sector, with a focus on cotton by-products. It is focused on strengthening national capacities to (a) assess the economic viability of developing cotton by-products and (b) formulate relevant policy measures to stimulate investment aimed at improving value addition of cotton by-products. The project had an initial duration of approximately 3.5 years (up to December 2019) with an approved budget of US\$ 591,000. Mid-2019 the project was granted an extension and budget increase by US\$ 100,000. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an additional extension up to December 2020.
2. The purpose of this end-of-project evaluation is to assess in a systematic and objective manner project design and implementation, the latter covering the achievements against the intended outcomes and results and related indicators as set out in the project's logical framework. This assessment is expected to result in practical recommendations, good practices and lessons learned from the project for the different project stakeholders listed above in order to (i) feed into decision making as regards the way forward beyond the closure of the current project in the focus region/countries and (ii) enhance the design and implementation of related interventions elsewhere.
3. The project assessment has been structured in accordance with the standard evaluation criteria, examining the following: the relevance of the project (including the degree of country ownership and ownership by the COMESA Secretariat), the implementation approach used, to what extent the activities have been carried out in an efficient manner, with which results (effectiveness), to what extent there is progress towards the planned outcomes and impact and whether the results are likely to be sustainable. Moreover, the assessment covers cross-cutting themes, in particular the dimensions of gender equality and, when appropriate, human rights, as well as the degree in which there have been partnerships and synergies in support of results and the sustainability thereof. Finally, it addresses to what extent the project made adjustments as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic at the level of the beneficiary countries.
4. A mixed method approach was used, including qualitative as well as, where available, quantitative data gathering and analysis to draw conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation findings. Due to the Covid-19 context, the assignment was entirely home-based and has been conducted over the period December 2020 - March 2021. All interviews were conducted via Skype/WhatsApp/Zoom and in a few cases, responses were obtained via email due to communication challenges.

Findings

5. The pilot project played a pioneer role, seeking to contribute to the development of cotton by-products through capacity building support in the four selected countries. Many country stakeholders considered it eye-opening to learn that there is value in residues and appreciated the project including the manner in which it was implemented. In terms of its achievements, the

project reached by and large its performance targets. Considering its available budget, the project encompassed what could reasonably be covered in terms of awareness raising, stakeholder consultations, national priority setting resulting in a national action plan (Outcome 1) and support towards progressing regarding selected aspects of that plan (Outcome 2).

6. This pilot experience faced nevertheless some challenges. The engagement of stakeholders in consultations culminated in National Action Plans (NAPs), policy recommendations and in the preparation of some investment profiles/initiatives. However, their implementation and other steps needed to take the work done forward remained so far essentially “in the pipeline”. The emergence of COVID-19 did not help but cannot fully explain this situation. The wrap-up workshop (May 2019) was a relevant and appreciated event but did not result in reinvigorating decision making at country level to organize the next steps. Summarizing, country buy-in was promising at the start but watered down towards the end of implementation. Momentum was lost as the steering mechanism - explicitly announced in the NAPs - did not become operational. Similarly, there is no indication that the investment profiles were effectively used in the sense of their dissemination to potential investors (targeting first and foremost local investors).
7. The implementation of identified and validated actions/initiatives would have required, inter alia: seeking investor interest; supporting identified investors in the preparation of business plans, mobilising to this end local business service providers as appropriate; raising awareness and interest of farmers; getting financial intermediaries on board after convincing them that there is business potential in by-products’ processing; involving relevant private sector/SME/rural development/rural finance/renewable energy/climate change related schemes (national/donor supported).
8. The project is operationally closed on the side of UNCTAD, but it is argued, based on the above, that the pilot phase in the participating countries is not yet adequately wrapped up. Even though time has passed, there is no need to go back to the start. It is the role of the country stakeholders to review/update/expand priorities set in 2017/18 in the NAPs and policy recommendations and mobilize the widest range of local actors that can initiate the phased implementation on the ground. At policy level this would entail moving from policy recommendations to actual government decision making and resource allocation. The above would serve as a “pre-entry” (avoiding the term “exit”) implementation strategy and plan to which a new round of external assistance to promote investment in cotton by-products can be anchored (i.e., the planned joint WTO-UNCTAD-ITC initiative).
9. The findings resulted in a total of ten (10) **recommendations** (see Section 9 for explanatory notes regarding each of the recommendations):

Participating countries

Official project focal points

- A. To ensure dissemination of the core documents that were produced in the context of the project to all country level public and private sector stakeholders that contributed, directly or indirectly, to these documents and are expected to play a role in the effective use of the outcomes of the pilot project.

National cotton sector organizations (public and private)

- B. To activate the planned but so far dormant multi-stakeholder steering mechanism and agree on a road map or implementation plan for cotton by-products’ development that guides the way forward, specifying who is expected to do what and setting targets.

- C. (based on the above) To mobilize local resources (technical and financial) to kick off tangible, even if small scale, actions on the ground that demonstrate that cotton by-products can boost the incomes of smallholder farmers (men and women) and create jobs and livelihoods for youth.
- D. To organize Cotton Day(s) at country level, not only in the capital but also in the main cotton producing provinces/regions, once the evolution of COVID-19 permits.

UNCTAD

- E. To share with the country project focal points a folder containing all key outcome documents of the project as regards each of the countries with a request for its dissemination to the national stakeholders (public and private) having contribute to these documents.
- F. to engage, together with ITC and WTO, the beneficiary countries in conceiving and implementing the funds mobilisation strategy of the successor initiative.
- G. to examine how follow-on support to Zimbabwe could be organized, if it is excluded from the joint initiative (Zimbabwe not being a LDC).
- H. to encourage ITC and WTO - partners in the follow-on initiative - to issue where feasible joint publications on cotton by-products rather than parallel publications

Other partners

COMESA Secretariat

- I. to clarify as requestor of the now completed project which role it expects to play in the follow-on support in its Member countries.

ICAC

- J. to pursue attention of its members to the wide range of business opportunities pertaining to cotton by-products.

1. Introduction

10. This independent final project evaluation covers UNCTAD project "*Improving the value added of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA)*" funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA; Project Code 1617K).
11. The project - developed based on a request from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat - aims at supporting selected countries in ESA (Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to promote opportunities for greater value addition in the cotton sector, with focus on cotton by-products. These include cottonseed oil, cake, cotton stalks and other residues that can be processed into by-products with both local market and export potential. Emphasis of the project is on strengthening national capacities to (a) assess the economic viability of developing cotton by-products and (b) formulate relevant policy measures to stimulate investment aimed at improving value addition of cotton by-products. A detailed description of the context in which the project was developed and implemented is provided in Chapter 2.
12. The current evaluation is an end-of-project evaluation as per the standard procedures of UN Development Account funded projects and follows its Project Evaluation Guidelines (October 2019). Chapter 4 describes in detail the purpose and scope of the evaluation that has been conducted over the period December 2020 - March 2021. In terms of its expected users and use, the evaluation is carried out in the spirit of providing accountability and lessons learned to regional and country level project stakeholders, UNCTAD management, the Development Account Programme managed by the Capacity Development Programme Management Office of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), as well as UNCTAD's member States at large. The assessment is expected to result in practical recommendations for different project stakeholders to facilitate decision making with respect to (i) the way forward beyond the closure of the current project in the focus region/countries as well as (ii) eventual future projects in this thematic area elsewhere.

2. Project context

13. Cotton is an important export crop for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) that is reported to account for about 15% of global (predominantly raw) cotton exports. With a projected growth in global demand for cotton over the next decade, the market share of SSA is expected to increase to 17%, with Asia as the main export destination. Almost 75% of current cotton exports from SSA originate from West Africa (OECD-FAO, 2019). Cotton is however also important in Eastern and Southern Africa.
14. There are opportunities to create more local value in the sector, yet a number of challenges exist in this regard (that in fact apply to SSA at large), summarized in Box 1 below. It is in this context that the COMESA Secretariat requested UNCTAD to address some of the below constraints, in particular the data and policy gaps that hinder value addition in the cotton sector, with focus on cotton by-products. The support is directly anchored to the implementation of two core strategies, namely:

- (i) the Pan-African Cotton Road Map developed with assistance from UNCTAD in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP);
- (ii) COMESA's Regional Cotton to Clothing Strategy (June 2009).

**Value addition in the cotton sector -
opportunities and challenges along the value chain**

Opportunities

- There is potential to improve the cotton yields per hectare (e.g., through seed quality)
- There is scope for efficiency gains in local processing, such as recovery rates in oil extraction
- Residues from ginning and cotton seed oil extraction can be processed into numerous cotton by-products, such as:
 - *using cake (residue of oil extraction) for animal feed
 - *using low quality lint (called linters) for making polishing cloths or high-quality paper
 - *using cotton stalks in the production of particle board, paper and corrugated boxes
 - *transforming cotton stalks into briquettes of firewood/charcoal
- Value addition in the sector is expected to contribute to both increasing and diversifying the incomes of farmers, including women (the latter are estimated to own about 25% of the land, and represent above 55% of the workforce engaged in planting and picking, as well as more than 20% in ginning)
- The development of by-products is expected to attract youth to the sector as new/additional source of livelihood.

Challenges

- The majority of cotton produced in SSA is exported as lint (with further processing into yarn etc. taking place overseas)
- There are residues in lint and cotton seed production that are under- or unutilized as a result of inefficient and outdated processing methods and equipment
- The downstream infrastructure for further local processing of residues is inadequate
- There are weaknesses in the policy and institutional environment to support the development of cotton by-product industries, which also affects their market potential (such as alleged unfair competition from imported edible oils)
- There are gaps in information on the market potential of by-products and on investment opportunities in this field
- The burning of cotton stalks in the field after harvesting to avoid the transmission of pests to the following season's crop generates Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

Based on Project document pp. 1-5

15. It is appropriate to recall that in all four countries the liberalisation of the cotton sector (1990s) had major (negative) impact in terms of its organization, production, value addition and employment. Despite recent growth, the performance of the sector has still not reached the levels of production and value addition seen before the 1990s. Summarizing, the current situation in each of the project pilot countries is the following:

Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton is, after coffee, the most important cash crop in terms of the country's foreign exchange earnings
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton farming is smallholder based, is estimated to involve some 400,000 farmers each year and is a major source of their livelihood • Cottonseed oil processing (for local market) is relatively developed albeit using less efficient processing technology (cotton oil is used in soap making and cottonseed cake in animal feed for local/regional market) • The large edible oil import deficit creates demand for increase of local oil seed production (among which cotton oil)
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cotton value chain employs, directly and indirectly, a large number of people, covering farmers, farm labourers, traders, transporters, ginnery and oil mill workers etc. • Cotton being primarily grown by small farms, it is an important source of income for some 250,000 low-income households • A small number of enterprises are involved in oil extraction and processing of by-products such as cottonseed cake for animal feed and soap making, using less efficient equipment • There are obstacles to engaging in local value addition, including a lack of investment incentives, frequent power cuts and high interest rates
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton constitutes, after maize, an important crop in terms of value and also of number of farmers involved (with estimated 300,000 famers growing cotton annually) • Cotton production increased by 250% in the past two decades compared to the situation before 2000 (from some 20,000 to 50.000 tonnes per annum) • There is a small number of ginning enterprises and oil producers (targeting the South African market); cottonseed cake is exported to Botswana (where there is a market given the size of its livestock sector) • There are opportunities for further development of cotton by-products
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is estimated that some 300,000 smallholder households are involved in cotton growing, corresponding to cotton farming being the source of livelihood of about 2 million people • Production fell during the past years due to several factors among which producer prices, climate change, and use of inadequate inputs due to high costs; accordingly, the ginning industry operates at low capacity • There is small scale processing of cotton linters and some exports • The export ban on cotton seeds has stimulated oil processing (cotton oil and soybean oil being the main edible oils in the local market) • There are opportunities for further development of by-products of the sub-sector (further processing of linter and other residues)

Based on: project document, p. 2/6-7 and on the country background papers prepared in the context of the project.

3. The project

Project, coverage and timeframe

16. As mentioned in the Introduction, the ultimate objective of the project is to contribute to improving the value added of cotton by-products by addressing challenges that hamper the development and growth of this sub-sector in the region. The selected countries formally confirmed by February 2016 (i.e., prior to the actual start of the project) their interest in participating in the “pilot” project.

17. The project covers two interrelated areas of intervention and corresponding activities that are summarized below. For the complete description thereof, reference is made to Annex 2 (Logical Framework).
18. Funding was received in March 2016, but the project started effectively in June 2016 with the recruitment of national consultants tasked with preparing the background studies in each of the four countries. The project had an initial duration of approximately 3.5 years (up to December 2019) but was granted an extension (and budget increase) up to August 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an additional extension up to December 2020.

Summary of project structure

<i>Expected Accomplishments (EA) or Outcomes</i>		<i>Main activities/steps as per the project document</i>
EA 1	Improved capacity of (public and private sector) cotton value chain stakeholders to assess the potential value, market situation and prospects for cotton by-products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Country surveys on the cotton by-products national/ regional value chains, resulting in country case studies *Synthesis report based on the above studies¹ *National workshop in each of the four countries *Study visit to learn from best practices on cotton by-products processing in a model country
EA 2	Improved capacity of policymakers to formulate evidence-based policies that improve the value added of cotton by-products and to devise investment profiles to attract potential investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Special session for policymakers (back-to-back with above national workshop) to identify policy gaps and potential policy actions *Advisory support in the elaboration of national policy options *Assistance in the development of investment profiles and their dissemination *Sub-regional meeting to share lessons and identify follow-up activities, bringing together representatives from the four beneficiary countries and from other cotton producing countries in ESA

Project partners

19. The project is implemented by UNCTAD in collaboration with the COMESA Secretariat (the requesting party having the mandate to support member countries in the implementation of regional/national strategies). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) was another core partner through its engagement in the review of background papers and surveys and also participation in several of the events organized by the project
20. At the country level, the following counterpart organizations acted as country level focal points:
1. Tanzania: Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (MITI)
 2. Uganda: Cotton Development Organisation (CDO)
 3. Zambia: Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI) and Ministry of Agriculture (MA)
 4. Zimbabwe: Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MIC).

¹ During implementation it was decided to change the purpose of the synthesis report. Rather than summarizing the surveys, the synthesis focused on the investment profiles prepared and on lessons from the different capacity building activities.

21. During project implementation there has been cooperation with a number of additional partners, in particular:
- Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (CIRCOT), India: contribution to the national and regional events and host/organizer of the study tour;
 - United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at country level (within the spirit of coordination of UN activities in the respective countries);
 - International Trade Centre (ITC): contribution to events (resource person/panellist) based on its work in the sector and also partner of UNCTAD, together with WTO (see also below) in the follow-on Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) project on cotton by-products;
 - World Trade Organization (WTO): platform for information sharing on the project through the WTO Cotton Days meetings and as convenor of global consultations on cotton;
 - Cotton South Africa: host of the regional wrap-up workshop;
 - International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC): source of expertise, platform for information dissemination on the project work and participation in project workshops.

Financial and human resources

Budget

22. The total initial budget of US\$ 591,000 increased with US\$ 100,000 (approved in July 2019). This additional allocation was awarded through a competitive process to program residual balances of the 9th UNDA tranche for successful active projects. Project 1617K was granted the additional funds as it was deemed to have already shown good results and could implement the additional activities with a limited extension of 6 to 9 months.
23. Project expenditures as at early December 2020 totalled US\$ 549,727, which, based on the increased budget, corresponds to an overall implementation rate of 79.6%. Due to the pandemic situation, the project was unable to utilise the additional funds. The breakdown by budget item is presented in Table 1 below, covering both the planned (amended and increased) budget allocation and actual expenditures/commitments. In terms of budget breakdown by outcome, a total of 61% of expenditures covered Outcome 1, compared to 39% for Outcome 2.

Table 1
Planned budget and actual expenditures/commitments by budget line ²

Budget code/ item	Total planned (US\$)			Expenditures and commitments as at early Dec. 2020	
	initial budget as per project document and % share	incl. increase (2019)	Reallocations (based on progress reporting) and % share	total	% share of expenditures/commitments
015 General temporary assistance (HQ)	25,000 (4.2%)	25,000	0	0	0
105 Consultants and experts	127,250 (21.5%)	187,250	277,250 (40.1%)	197,367	35.9
115 Staff travel	112,000 (19.0%)	132,000	132,000 (19.1%)	108,162	19.7
120 Contractual services	159,650 (27.0%)	167,650	62,650 (9.1%)	51,551	9.4
125 General operating expenses	2,500 (< 1%)	14,500	15,000 (2.2%)	5,965	1.0
135 Furniture and equipment	3,000 (< 1%)	3,000	0	0	0
145 Grants and contributions (workshops/ study tours)	161,600 (27.3%)	161,600	204,100 (29.5%)	186,682	34.0
Total	591,000 (100%)	691,000	691,000 (100%)	549,727 (see footnote 2)	100
Balance (US\$)				141,273	
Implementation ratio (%)					79.6

Human resources

24. The project is managed by a HQ-based Project Manager - staff of UNCTAD's Special Unit on Commodities (referred to as the Commodities Branch – name hereafter used) in the Division on International Trade and Commodities, and its Commodity Policy Implementation and Outreach Section, supported by other staff in this Branch.³ National consultants were recruited for the country specific background papers, surveys and workshop reports. One of these consultants was tasked with the preparation of the synthesis report (one of the inputs for the regional workshop). The report of the study tour (India) was prepared by its host (CIRCOT) as was the case for the report of the regional wrap-up event (prepared by Cotton SA).

25. In terms of monitoring, the project document refers to monthly meetings of the Head of the Commodities Branch with the project team to review progress, as well as to close cooperation with the COMESA Secretariat as regional partner. Periodic reporting on project progress was

² It is to be noted that these figures are preliminary; the final figures will be available at the moment of financial closure of the project (after this evaluation). Addendum (March 2021): according to the project's final report (Feb. 2021), total expenditures as at 29 December 2020 were \$ 564,727, which corresponds to an implementation ratio of 81.7%.

³ In the course of 2020, the Project Manager moved to another Division but dealt with the project up to its closure.

done on an annual basis in line with UNDA requirements. No Steering Group (including the main country focal points and the core project partners) was envisaged to guide project implementation.

4. Evaluation purpose

Scope and objectives

26. The purpose of this end-of-project evaluation is to assess in a systematic and objective manner project design and implementation, the latter covering the achievements against the intended outcomes and results and related indicators as set out in the project's logical framework. This assessment is expected to result in practical recommendations, good practices and lessons learned from the project for the different project stakeholders listed above in order to (i) feed into decision making as regards to the way forward beyond the closure of the current project in the focus region/countries and (ii) enhance the design and implementation of related interventions elsewhere.
27. The evaluation covers the entire duration of the project, i.e., from June 2016 (effective start) to December 2020 (including the two extensions of the project duration from the initial end date - December 2019 - to respectively end August 2020 and December 2020).
28. The evaluation has been structured in accordance with the standard evaluation criteria, examining the following: the relevance of the project (including the degree of country ownership and ownership by the COMESA Secretariat), the implementation approach used, to what extent the activities have been carried out in an efficient manner, with which results (effectiveness), to what extent there is progress towards the planned outcomes and impact and whether the results are likely to be sustainable. Moreover, the assessment covers cross-cutting themes, in particular the dimensions of gender equality and, when appropriate, human rights, as well as the degree in which there have been partnerships and synergies in support of results and the sustainability thereof. Finally, it addresses to what extent the project made adjustments as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic at the level of the beneficiary countries.

Questions

29. Based on the above, the evaluation is guided by the following seven core questions:

Q1. *To what extent and how did the project design and its implementation reflect and address the development needs and strategies of the selected countries? Also, to what extent was the project aligned to UNCTAD's mandates and how did it reflect the organization's comparative advantage in this field (**relevance**)? To what extent were the regional stakeholder (COMESA Secretariat) and the country level stakeholders involved in implementation (**ownership**)?*

Q2. *What are the project's key achievements in terms of progress towards the intended results (**effectiveness**) and what is the likelihood for the project to achieve the intended objective (**potential impact**)? Is there evidence of any positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended? Have there been catalytic effects of the project at national/regional/global levels?*

Q3. Has the project “done things right” in terms of inputs, covering the adequacy of implementation modalities, timeliness and quality of inputs; adequacy of monitoring and steering (**efficiency**)?

Q4. What is the likelihood that results/benefits will continue after the project ends (**likely sustainability**)? Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project?

Q5. To what extent were a gender mainstreaming strategy and, if appropriate, a human rights-based approach incorporated in the design and implementation of the project, and can results be identified in this regard (**cross-cutting issues**)?

Q6. To what extent have partnerships with other public/private stakeholders (national/regional/international organizations) been developed and how did these partnerships enable or enhance the project results and the likely sustainability thereof? Did the project facilitate other synergies among related efforts? (**partnerships and synergies**)?

Q7. To what extent did the COVID-19 situation affect project activities in 2020? What adjustments were made? To what extent and how did these adjustments affect the project work and planned achievements (**responses to COVID-19**)?

5. Methodology of the evaluation

30. The evaluation has been conducted in accordance with UNCTAD and Development Account Evaluation Guidelines and followed a theory-based and utilization-focused approach, guided by the project results framework (Annex 2). A mixed method was used, including qualitative as well as, where available, quantitative data gathering and analysis to draw conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation findings.

31. The evaluation process covered the following main steps:

- First round of document review as the input for the inception report (first draft submitted on 18 Dec. 2020), with documents being revisited throughout the evaluation process
- Finalization of the inception report based on comments from UNCTAD through the Chief of the UNCTAD’s Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU)
- Planning and conducting skype/zoom/whatsapp/other based interviews with the main project stakeholders and partners (see above);
- Preparation of the draft evaluation report (draft 1 submitted 17 Feb. 2021);
- Finalization of the draft evaluation report based on comments from UNCTAD/other project stakeholders (through IEU) as appropriate.

32. The evaluation matrix (attached as Annex 4) followed the seven core questions listed above and guided the interviews of the different stakeholders (adapted to the specific role of the different stakeholders in the project). The evaluation followed a participatory approach, providing an opportunity for the different stakeholders to share their perception on the overall performance of the project including its implementation strategy. It served at the same time as a means to build/strengthen trust among the project stakeholders and also to ensure accountability towards the funding source (UNDA).

33. Based on the review of the list of core persons and discussion with the Project Manager, the latter formally introduced the evaluator to the stakeholders concerned in the form of an introductory email. Due to confinement and travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Skype/WhatsApp/other. The list of institutions/persons contacted is attached as Annex 6. These covered all key project stakeholders, namely:
- the UNCTAD project manager and support team, as well as UNCTAD's DA Focal Point;
 - the core project partners, namely the chief counterpart in the COMESA Secretariat and staff of UNECA involved in project activities;
 - the chief counterparts (Project Focal Points) in each of the four targeted countries (Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment in Tanzania; Cotton Development Organisation in Uganda; Ministries of Commerce, Trade and Industry and of Agriculture in Zambia; Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Zimbabwe);
 - the sector apex bodies (whenever not the project chief counterpart organization), namely: the Cotton Boards in Tanzania and Zambia; the Cotton Research Institute in Zimbabwe;
 - the Investment Promotion authorities/agencies in three of the four countries (excluding Tanzania, as the work there did not cover investment profile preparation);
 - representatives of private stakeholders at country level involved in the project activities, through their associations
 - Delegates of the Permanent Missions in Geneva of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia that are aware of and have been to some extent involved in the project (except the one from Zimbabwe that was not substantially involved);
 - a sample of national experts involved in different stages of implementation (background paper; survey; national workshop moderation; investment profile preparation; synthesis report);
 - external partners involved in project activities, namely (other than UNECA, see above) CIRCOT/India, Cotton South Africa and ICAC;
 - UN sister agencies cooperating with UNCTAD in the follow-on project: WTO and ITC.

Limitations

34. As per the project document - the evaluator was expected to participate in the regional meeting planned at the end of the project (i.e., prior to its budget increase and extension of its duration). This would have allowed meeting in person with the project stakeholders of each of the beneficiary countries as well as with the main project partners. This approach changed following the above changes (budget and duration) and, accordingly, the timing of the evaluation was moved to the amended project closure (December 2020).
35. The approach to have virtual meetings with the different stakeholders was the only feasible one. Travel of the evaluator to each of the four countries would have been costly and, given the Covid-19 pandemic, was in any event not possible. The time earmarked to data collection in the context of this evaluation did not allow for a survey that risked a high non-response rate, to the extent the evaluation took place more than 1.5 years after the last project activity. This being said, qualitative interviews of the main stakeholders generated relevant information on performance, complemented by document review. It proved difficult to get a response from about 15% of the stakeholders contacted, notwithstanding several reminders. This was compensated by examining to what extent the potential of cotton by-products was mentioned

on their websites. Summarizing, the above limitations are considered not to have affected the findings and the overall validity of the assessment.

6. Findings

6.1 Project design

Context analysis

36. The socio-economic importance of the cotton sector in the target region (ESA), including missed opportunities to produce cotton by-products are clearly described in the background section of the project document. It also refers to relevant studies that highlight the potential for increasing value addition in the cotton sector. Unambiguously, cotton production, ginning and cotton (lint) trade is *as such* a field in which there is scope for greater value addition by addressing supply-side challenges (productivity improvement in cotton growing and primary processing of cotton), pursuing market development/diversification and reducing trade barriers. Yet the project focus is not on the main product (the fibre) but on cotton by-products as an area in which there are missed or underutilized opportunities in the region covered. Accordingly, the context analysis zooms in on the use of residues and the expected socio-economic benefits thereof.
37. Due attention is paid to the policy roots of the project, it being anchored to wider policy frameworks, in particular the Pan-African Cotton Road Map (2014) developed with UNCTAD support that was in turn based on earlier regional cotton sector strategies across the continent, including COMESA's Cotton to Clothing Strategy of June 2009. The latter was the result of various regional roundtables in the period 2007-2008. The strategy was prepared within the context of a comprehensive programme focused on supporting SMEs and promoting cross-border trade within the COMESA region that also targets other value chains (cassava; leather) in addition to cotton/garments. Among the priorities listed in these consecutive strategies features the objective to promote local processing of cotton and its by-products. The 2014 Road Map aimed to focus on fostering the implementation of existing regional strategies, including the one of COMESA. Challenges faced in the cotton sector, including opportunities for greater value addition through processing of and market development for cotton by-products, had thus been identified already earlier on. But there were apparent gaps in the implementation of the multifaceted priorities set in these strategies. Accordingly, the 2014 Pan-African Road Map and COMESA's request for UNCTAD assistance to address data and policy gaps impeding value addition of cotton by-products in the region can be seen as a sign of the desire to *reinvigorate earlier strategic intentions*.
38. The project document also refers to the project's alignment to the recommendations of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development (2012), combining economic growth, social improvement and environmental protection. Similarly, reference is made to the project's link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particularly Goals 1, 2, 8, 9 and 12. In essence, the promotion of cotton by-products (using residues) was and remains to be an opportunity for generating income and employment opportunities in rural areas (including for women and youth) and for diversifying markets. As such, the theme constitutes an important feature in the fight against poverty highlighted as an overarching objective in the different above-mentioned strategies and goals.

39. Finally, it is clear from the above that, for UNCTAD, the project is aligned to its prior work in the field of this commodity. As mentioned in the project document (p. 4), it is a continuation of its longstanding research and support to cotton producing countries, with the aim to help build a sustainable cotton sector that contributes to economic development and poverty reduction. In terms of the project's alignment to UNCTAD's mandate and organizational strategy, the project document highlights in particular UNCTAD XII and XIII (covering themes such as greater integration of farmers into local, regional and global value chains and fostering domestic and foreign investment), as well as its 2016-17 Strategic Framework (with special reference to the theme of addressing trade and development problems of commodity-dependent developing countries).

Target countries

40. In its request for support to the implementation of the cotton by-product dimension of its Regional Cotton to Clothing Strategy, the COMESA Secretariat proposed three of its member countries as pilot countries, namely Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to which Tanzania (not a member of COMESA since 2000) was added, given the importance of cotton production in these countries and the importance they attached to developing the cotton by-products subsector. UNCTAD asked, appropriately, for and received a formal confirmation of interest by each of the four countries prior to the start of the project, as was explicitly specified in the project document (p. 4).

41. As the countries were pilots, the concluding project activity (regional meeting) aimed at sharing the findings and lessons of the pilot experience, including discussion on scaling up/replication in other cotton producing countries in the ESA region.

Problem analysis, stakeholder analysis and capacity assessment

42. The problem analysis contains an overview of the situation as regards to processing cotton by-products, mentioning non-utilized or underutilized residues notwithstanding business opportunities in processing and the potential to reduce undesirable environmental effects. The main challenges and opportunities are summarized in Chapter 3 above (and thus not repeated here). This overall problem analysis is complemented by an overview of the situation in each of the four countries (see also Chapter 3). While recognizing that there are some differences among the countries, the project document concludes that the issues at stake are the same: need for collecting and disseminating more country-specific information on the sub-sector, on the potential for value addition, on market opportunities, and for incentives. Not surprisingly, the stakeholder analysis and capacity assessment (p. 8 of the project document) is of a general nature, to the extent that the country specific information was envisaged to be collected and assessed under Outcome 1 of the project (background study and survey).

Implementation strategy

43. The core principles that guide the project logic and interventions are the following:

- Public and private cotton value chain stakeholders need to be aware of and be able to assess the potential value, market situation and prospects for cotton by-products (Objective 1). This implied data collection/compilation/analysis shared with and discussed among the

stakeholders, a study tour to learn from relevant experiences elsewhere, all to culminate in a national action plan validated at country level;

- Policy makers need to be able to (i) formulate incentives (evidence-based policies) to foster the development of the sub-sector and (ii) prepare investment profiles to stimulate investment in the sub-sector (Objective 2). This implied discussions with policy makers on the policy and regulatory environment, the identification of gaps therein and the formulation of policies/incentives to foster investment in the sub-sector.

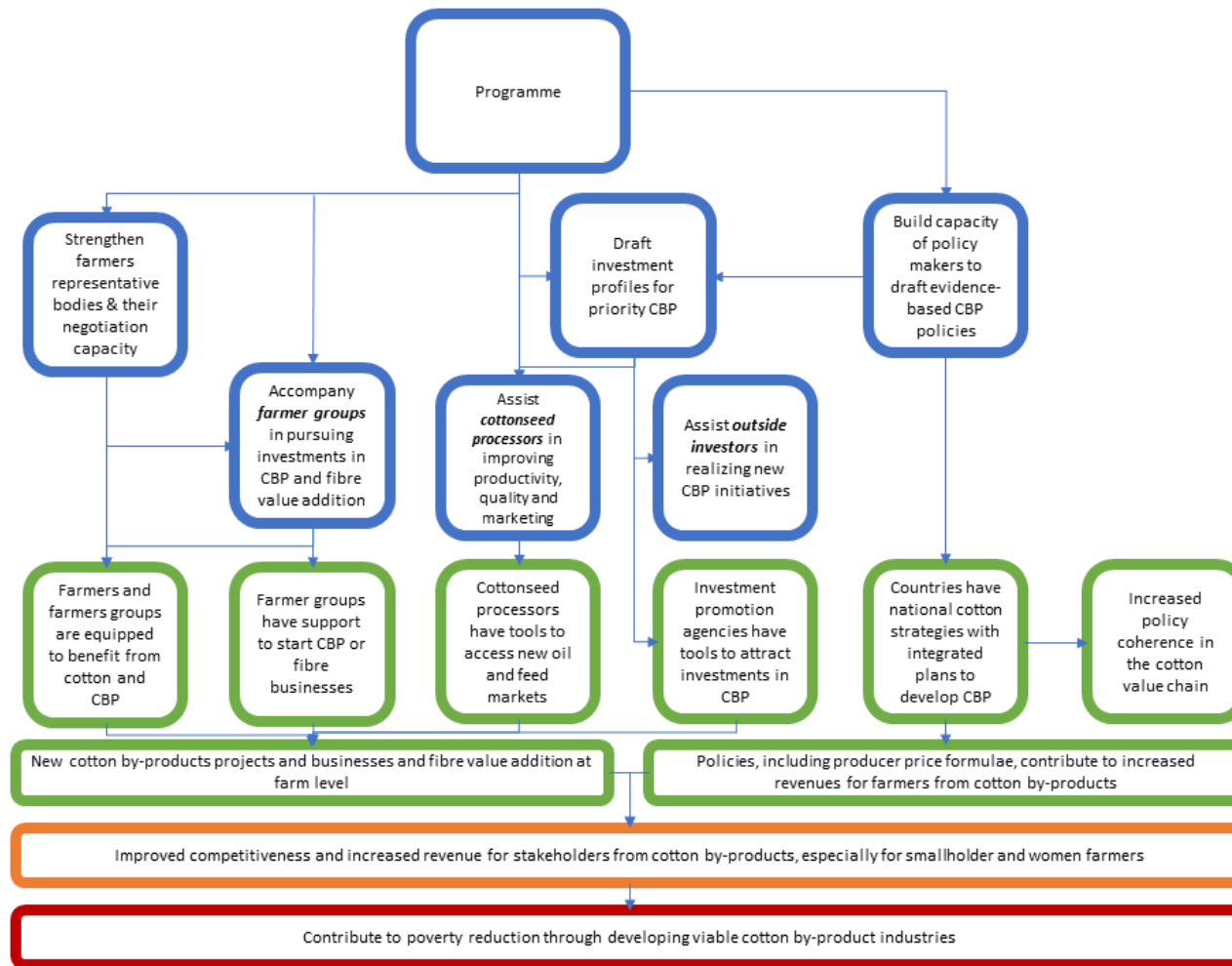
44. The logic is based on the assumption that capacity building of national stakeholders (i) relies on information (in this case sector data collected through in particular surveys) that (ii) provides the basis for multi-stakeholder consultations, resulting in (iii) a national action plan and (iv) policy recommendations. Moreover, it is assumed that by supporting the preparation of (v) investment profiles, policy makers are capacitated to facilitate investment in the sub-sector. These capacities are indeed important and necessary, and, given its scale and duration, the project focused on what could reasonably be achieved. It is understood that more would need to be done for value addition of by-products to effectively kick off (see preconditions, below), namely by the countries themselves with eventual external support. The latter was supposedly to be addressed in a subsequent project (to the extent that this was a pilot phase).
45. Most planned interventions were country specific, with two events that aimed at bringing the four countries together inter alia to learn from and share experiences based on this pilot phase, namely the joint study tour and the regional meeting. Whereas the project strategy refers to the identification of follow-up activities during the planned regional event, there is no explicit reference to an exit strategy that would seek to stimulate (i) the effective implementation of the action plans/policies/incentives and the dissemination and use of the investment profiles by the selected countries after the completion of the pilot project and (ii) outreach of the pilot experience to cover also other cotton producing countries in the region.
46. Finally, the strategy does not include a Theory of Change (ToC), but there was no need for the evaluation to reconstitute the underlying ToC, to the extent the joint UNCTAD-ITC-WTO spin-off project on cotton by-product development in African Least Developed Countries (LDCs) contains a ToC (reproduced as Figure 1 below). The ToC identifies the causal and transformational pathways from project outputs to expected impact and spells out the main assumptions that could affect project performance. As observed by the Project Manager, this ToC is the result of a rigorous Result Based Management exercise, seeking more focus on outputs and outcomes than reflected in the project under review (that has a more activity focused logical framework).
47. Even though the new project has a slightly wider scope in terms of outputs, its overall objectives converge with the ones of the project under review. For the latter the following preconditions are considered important as affecting the likelihood of the achievements being effectively used by the stakeholders:
 - Stability/increase in cotton production triggered by the actual/expected commodity price evolution;
 - Governments approve and implement incentives to stimulate investment in cotton by-products;
 - Proven market potential for cotton by-products and an enabling business environment encouraging investment therein;
 - Related to the above, individual farmers or farmer associations willing to invest in the sub-sector having access to finance at a cost commensurate to expected benefits.

Logical framework

48. The observations on the logical framework are the following:

- i. Overall, the design of the project structure is logical, separating (i) data collection, public-private stakeholders' consultations and priority setting towards the formulation and validation of a national action plan aimed at improving value addition of cotton by-products and (ii) public sector actions to this end. Given limited project resources, it was realistic as regards what reasonably could be done: focus on capacity building to formulate policies/incentives and investment profiles in the four targeted countries.
- ii. As the project has a pilot focus (to demonstrate opportunities for value addition in the sub-sector), it could be argued that the regional meeting (placed under Outcome 2) could have been grouped under a separate and third outcome aimed at extracting lessons from the pilot experience and mapping out next steps not only in the 4 pilot countries but also in other countries within the spirit of rolling out the approach geographically (through the COMESA Secretariat, given its mandate to support its member countries to implement regional and national cotton strategies). However, it is understood that one single activity (a regional meeting) does not justify a separate outcome.
- iii. To the extent that the surveys and country reports (called case studies in the design and background study during implementation) are considered inputs for the national stakeholder consultations and ensuing national action plans, the main indicator for Outcome 1 is the validated action plan (i.e., indicator 1.2 in the logical framework). The indicators for Outcome 2 are based on the assumption that not all four countries would take the expected follow-up in terms of drafting concrete policy measures including investment profiles as incentive to promote investment in the sub-sector. By referring to 'drafting' and not 'adopting', the project approach remained (too) prudent, possibly based on the fact that the actual adoption of the policies is in the hand of the national policymakers. This implied that the approach in essence remained more activity than results focused, with indicators measuring activities rather than their outcomes. A more rigorous results focus in the project logic would have meant more emphasis on the results of the work undertaken, its use by the target beneficiaries and thus project sustainability (a point highlighted by the Project Manager within the spirit of auto-assessment, while not having designed the project.)
- iv. The formulation 'made available to relevant ministries' and 'made available to the investment promotion institutions' (means of verification, Outcome 2) does not reflect the notion of ownership - to the extent these parties were integral part of the implementation process.
- v. Given UNCTAD's prior work in support of related strategies (e.g., Pan-African Cotton Road Map), it knows that the bottleneck lies in the actual *implementation* of such strategies, road maps and actions plans. In this regard the project could have shown some more ambition, in terms of ensuring that the action plans specify roles and responsibilities and involving country-based organizations and programmes engaged in rural enterprise/SME development, cleaner production etc. that could take support to enterprises/cooperatives interested in investing in cotton by-products forward. In this regard there is some difference in understanding of what an action plan should cover as per the project document (footnote 17, page 15) versus how it was implemented.

Figure 1 - Theory of change (source: UNCTAD/ITC/WTO project, p. 18)



Main assumptions

Activity level

- The main stakeholder groups and government agencies cooperate.
- One or more cotton by-products are feasible for development.
- Farmers associations and cooperatives have sufficient absorptive capacity to transmit project activities to their members.

Output level

- Suitable farmer-owned structures are feasible for implementation of CBP.
- Entrepreneurs and cooperatives have access to sufficient resources to implement business plans.
- Cotton seed processors have enough raw material for a viable business
- Pest management regulations allow for the utilization of cotton stalks after harvest.
- Forestry regulations are sufficiently enforced to allow for biomass fuels to compete with wood fuels.

Objective level

- End users buy cotton by-products.
- Seed cotton producer prices and cotton production remain stable enough for farmers' additional revenues from cotton by-products to be measurable.
- Edible oil market is not distorted

Cross-cutting issues

49. The project context mentions that women constitute a significant share of cotton sector stakeholders (with about one quarter of cotton farmers in ESA estimated to be women farmers). Accordingly, the development of cotton by-products industries is expected to contribute to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment through the increase in and diversification of employment and income generating opportunities. The potential impact on youth is also referred to, with the sub-sector's development opening livelihood opportunities in rural areas.
50. While the human rights concept is not mentioned in the project document, there is attention to stimulating farmers/farmers associations to engage in the development of cotton by-products, thus providing income and employment opportunities for rural poor. The investment profiles do not make a distinction between domestic or foreign investors as expected users thereof. But by involving farmers' associations in all activities, the project sought to stimulate farmers' awareness of and interest in investing in value addition of cotton by-products as a means to diversify their source of revenues and also increase their income level. There was no plan to collect performance data disaggregated according to criteria such as gender, income, location, which can be justified by the fact that the deliverables (in particular the action plan, incentives, and investment profiles) do not really call for such disaggregation. It will be discussed under Chapter 6.2 (cross-cutting issues) what was done to ensure female participation in the project activities.

Risks and mitigation actions

51. The risks listed in the project document focused on organizational dimensions (including gaps in stakeholder interest, difficulties to coordinate activities at country level and deficiencies regards national consultants to timely deliver) and political dimensions (in particular political instability and gaps in government buy-in to follow up on the stakeholders' recommendation).
52. The list does not include dimensions that are of economic/other nature, such as
- The overall business environment not being conducive to investment in (inter alia) the cotton sector/cotton by-product sub-sector;
 - Specific cotton sector conditions affecting the viability of investment in the sector and sub-sector, such as a decrease in cotton (lint) market price, resulting in farmers turning to other commodities/crops than cotton (less cotton = less cotton waste = less inputs for processing of waste into by-products);
 - Weaknesses in the physical infrastructure affecting the cost of collection and transport of inputs to processing plants and of products to markets, affecting the feasibility of producing by-products.

Sustainability

53. The project document refers to sustainability being ensured through follow-up actions by UNCTAD and COMESA. Whereas this is appropriate in the case of the COMESA Secretariat as requestor and co-owner of the project, the need for follow-up support by UNCTAD would, *stricto sensu*, not be a sign of sustainability. It is noted that UNCTAD

aims to monitor (beyond completion of the project, together with COMESA) the implementation of the action plan at country level in what is labelled a one-year sustainability monitoring period (SMP). According to the document, UNCTAD commits support not only during the one-year SMP but also thereafter (p.12). Whereas this is in principle a relevant step of this pilot project and would also reflect the COMESA Secretariat's role, it is not evident for UNCTAD to carry out this joint monitoring of the work at country level without project resources.

Monitoring and evaluation

54. The project document refers to internal (intra-UNCTAD) monitoring of project performance. The external evaluation was foreseen at the end of the project, envisaging its timing, as already mentioned, with the regional meeting that was to wrap up the project work. The extension of the project changed the initial planning of the evaluation.

Management and coordination agreements

55. The project document refers to close cooperation between UNCTAD and COMESA Secretariat regarding project implementation. Also the need for collaboration with other organizations was highlighted, particularly UN entities at country, regional and HQ level. No Steering Committee was envisaged bringing together the different core stakeholders and partners.

6.2 Project implementation

6.2.1 Relevance and ownership

Relevance

56. More than a decade ago, a comprehensive report on the organization and performance of cotton sectors in Africa mentioned that the valorisation of by-products had received insufficient attention (World Bank, 2009). Meanwhile the aim to enhance value addition of cotton by-products in Africa has been reflected in several strategies, in particular the 2014 Pan-African Cotton Map and cotton sector strategies adopted by the different Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and at country level.

57. Focusing on COMESA (requestor of the project under review), its 2009 Strategy for the Cotton to Clothing Value Chain identified a number of actions to foster value addition of by-products. These envisaged *inter alia*: awareness raising through workshops and study tours; policy reviews to identify policies and incentives to facilitate production and trade in cotton by-products; identification of market opportunities; feasibility studies to determinate the viability of investment in the production of by-products; market development supported by promotion campaigns (cf. Result 3 of the 2009 COMESA Strategy). These planned strategic actions converge painstakingly with the objectives of the project under review.

58. The project was also aligned to the national policy and strategic frameworks in place pertaining to the promotion of economic diversification through value addition, including country specific Cotton to Clothing Strategies. More precisely, the project was and remains directly linked to in particular the following:
- Tanzania: Cotton to Cloth Strategy 2016-2020;
 - Uganda: National Development Plan II 2015/16 - 2019/20; Buy Uganda, Build Uganda/ (BUBU) Policy (2017); Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan 2015/16 - 2019/20; Cotton Sub-sector Strategic Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20;
 - Zambia: National Agricultural Policy (2016) and National Industrial Policy (2018);
 - Zimbabwe: Industrial Development Policy 2011-2016, Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation 2013-2018 and Cotton to Clothing Strategy 2014-2019.
59. Notwithstanding the existence of the above policies/strategies at continental, regional, and national levels, the background studies and surveys carried out at the start of the project in each of the targeted countries show very limited activities with regard to value addition of cotton by-products (with some variation in this respect across the four countries). In other words, there remained major gaps in the effective implementation of the above policies/strategies. As the project supported the identification and specification of priority actions (de facto operationalizing the broad policy perspectives that had been adopted), the project came timely.
60. Interviews with country level stakeholders revealed that project stakeholders perceived the project as relevant and qualified it as eye-opening, in particular in terms of having raised awareness about potential business opportunities not yet seized so far that have the potential to raise the incomes and livelihoods of smallholder farmers. In this respect, most indicated that they had ignored the potential use of cotton stalks to produce pellets and briquettes (stating “we learned that we have been burning our money”). Also, the environmental benefits thereof were highlighted by many, namely reducing not only the emission of carbon dioxide generated by burning stalks but also the speed of deforestation. The use of cotton stalks as substrate in mushroom growing was also mentioned to be an area so far unknown, just as the issue of removing gossypol (a toxic enzyme in cottonseed). It is recognized that there are existing business operations in the field of cottonseed processing (oil, cake) and (in some countries) also the production of absorbent cotton wool using fibre residues. But there is reported to be scope for process and product upgrading of these existing industries, coupled with policy measures.
61. For UNCTAD, the project is aligned to its mandate, as already discussed under Section 6.1 (thus not repeated here) that highlighted the coherence with several SDGs, with UNCTAD’s prior research and support to cotton producing countries and with its organizational strategy. So far external support to cotton sector development has targeted primarily the promotion of the production of cotton, including the training of farmers, with the ultimate aim to raise productivity and increase revenues of farmers.⁴ By

4 Among the large-scale programmes implemented one can cite : The Competitive African Cotton Initiative (COMPACI; 2009-2016) supported by the Gates Foundation, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Gatsby Foundation and several others; support to boost cotton sectors in Africa through the EU-ACP Partnership on Cotton; efforts under the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

and large, assistance has tended to focus on cotton lint (the fibre). UNCTAD's attention to the need and opportunities to develop the cotton by-products' subsector based on its potential source of additional revenues, with particular focus on farmers, is thus considered important. Notwithstanding the small size of the project and, correspondingly, its limited scope, it is considered a laudable start, planting the seed to put cotton by-products higher on the agenda of cotton sector stakeholders in the targeted countries.

62. At the country workshops presentations were made by CIRCOT on the wide spectrum of opportunities, but in their action plans the countries choose to focus on a limited number, with the tendency to oscillate between "briquettes/pellets" and "absorbent cotton". In the case of Uganda also the use in mushroom growing was retained among the priorities. If a phased approach is adopted by the countries in the implementation of the action plan, it is expected that in due course other uses of residues will retain the attention of the stakeholders, given the potential to affect the income of farmers and to provide income generating opportunities for women (such as the use of residue fibres/cotton cake for other value addition activities; use of stalks in composting to enrich the soil as one of determinants of productivity;). In other words, it is justifiable that, in a first stage, there has been emphasis on few products (briquettes and absorbent cotton), also taking into consideration expected feasibility in the countries' context. However, in a subsequent stage, other by-products' opportunities are also expected to be pursued.
63. Finally, as far as the funding source is concerned, the project was fully in line with the 'seed money' vision underlying DA funding. Taking into consideration the relatively small budget of DA projects, these are meant to support innovative/pilot efforts that - based on their results and where justified -, are expected to be picked up by other funding sources to take the results further. To this end reference is made to the spin-off initiative bringing together ITC, UNCTAD and WTO, including Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) funding already mobilized for the preparatory phase of this wider initiative. The above is based *inter alia* on the project under review, making the project a good example of the use of DA funding as 'seed money'.

Ownership

64. The project document was prepared by UNCTAD following the request by COMESA. The latter reported that it selected three of the four countries to be targeted by the project (all COMESA Member States). Tanzania (no longer COMESA Member State since 2000) was added, given the size of its cotton sector. As integral part of the project preparation the four countries were asked to formally confirm their interest in being included as pilot countries, which all four countries did (cf. project document, p.4). This was a sign of country interest and commitment at the start of the project. The idea was for the project to showcase the benefits of supporting the development cotton by-products and get the buy-in of the beneficiary countries (including financing). Based on the pilot cases, the experience was expected to spread across the region.
65. During the first two years of implementation, the engagement at country level is illustrated by the relative smooth process from data collection (background paper; survey) to reaching consensus on a National Action Plan (NAP) at the end of the national workshop. By March 2018 all four countries had conducted the national workshop. The

speed of formal validation of the NAP that emerged from the stakeholder consultations varied among countries. The latter was fastest in Uganda and Zimbabwe, whereas it took some time in Zambia (about 1.5 years).

66. In the case of Tanzania there is to date no formal validation of the NAP. Notwithstanding exchanges with the Tanzanian counterparts, no decision was taken on the next steps after a round of national consultations on the NAP during 2018. Therefore, the project could not pursue with the next step, i.e., the preparation of investment profiles. For the same reason Tanzania did not take part in the study tour to India (incidentally, cotton sector stakeholders from Tanzania indicated having visited CIRCOT already at earlier occasions). In brief, other than Tanzania having been invited to the wrap-up meeting in South Africa, the project work in Tanzania stopped de facto with the non-validated NAP.⁵
67. Based on the interviews, ownership seems to have also somewhat faded out since the validation of the NAP in the 3 countries. The envisaged multi-stakeholder committees to oversee the implementation of the NAP, bringing together different public and private sector stakeholders, did not become operational and there is no sign of the existence of implementation plans. Notwithstanding good intentions to move forward at country level after the South Africa event, momentum is somehow lost. The challenge is, again, how to move from NAPs to the effective implementation of these plans and intentions.
68. This being said, while there are gaps in country focal points taking the lead to move forward, the interviews indicate that there was and still is interest in the cotton by-products sub-sector triggered by the work of the project. The latter could not provide support to private sector driven initiatives to the extent these were faced with lack of capital to invest in equipment. The same was the case for R&D related plans of research institutes regarding by-products for which they were not able to secure funding at their end. The exchange with the countries on priority setting as regards to the use of the additional project funding (2019) is also an indication of interest to move forward. This includes the plan for a study tour of stakeholders from Zambia and Zimbabwe to learn about experiences in Uganda (briquetting and use of stalks as substrate in mushroom growing) and a study tour of stakeholders from Uganda and Zimbabwe to learn about the experience as regards to the establishment of cooperatives engaged in value addition activities in Zambia. Due to COVID-19 these regional study tours could not be implemented. Also, the request of Zambia to learn from the experience of the Association of Cotton Value-Adders of Zimbabwe (ACVAZ) did not result in a visit or a study. Again, the interviews revealed that there is interest to date but there is no indication of concrete steps - mapped out in the NAP - since mid-2019 to sustain the work of the project. Evidently, the emergence of COVID-19 early 2020 did not foster such follow-up either, even though the lack thereof cannot be fully attributed to the pandemic.
69. As regards to the COMESA Secretariat, it took part in the study tour to India (January 2019) but was not represented in the South Africa event that aimed at identifying not only follow-on activities in the four countries but also opportunities to extend and replicate the work to other cotton-producing countries. COMESA was thus not present to share its planned role in the next step following this pilot project. The absence of the requesting party in the project wrap-up meeting is not a sign of effective (co-)ownership.

⁵ None of the parties from Tanzania invited to attend the South Africa event was however able to attend (reported to be due to sector -related emergencies at that time).

70. A final point regarding ownership relates to the format in which UNCTAD presents the work undertaken. Publishing the NAPs and the policy recommendations as an UNCTAD document does not encourage the spirit of country ownership of the outcome of the stakeholder consultations at country level. One could argue that it was not up to UNCTAD but up to the countries to finalize the NAPs and publish/disseminate the same with their own logos/ emblems (recognizing the source of funding/support). Country validation is considered stronger when a country adopts and disseminates a NAP among the stakeholders than merely through a validation letter of an UNCTAD document. Moreover, adopted policy recommendations have to end up in government decision making (including budget allocations) to increase the likelihood of their use/implementation. Along the same line, the development of investment profiles was expected to support the steps from idea to investment and these were intended to be owned by investment promotion agencies and circulated through their own channels. There were gaps on this regard and these profiles were essentially published as UNCTAD documents with at best indirect involvement of the countries' investment promotion agencies, affecting (co-)ownership.

6.2.2 Effectiveness and impact

71. This chapter starts with an overview of the achievements against the planned objective and its underlying outputs/activities (in matrix format). This is followed by the assessment of these achievements, the results and progress towards impact.

Concise overview of achievements against planned results and activities ⁶

Summary of project logic/structure as per the project document		
Objective	To strengthen the capacity of selected countries in Eastern and Southern Africa to assess the economic viability of the development of cotton by-products and formulate evidence-based policies to promote value addition <i>Indicator: none</i>	
Output	Summary of planned activities as per project doct	Achievements
<p>1. Improved capacity of cotton value chain stakeholders incl. government officials, the private sector and farmers' associations in target beneficiary countries to assess the potential value, market situation and prospects for cotton by-products</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data on cotton by-products value chain collected and analysed in the 4 selected countries • national action plans developed and adopted in at least 3 of the 4 target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey in each of the 4 countries • Country case studies • Synthesis report based on the case studies • Two-day national seminar • National action plans • Multi-stakeholder committee in each of the 4 countries to monitor implementation of the action plans • Study tour to country considered a model in the development of cotton by-products 	<p><u>Country level</u></p> <p>Tanzania</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception mission, November 2016 • Background Paper, August 2016 • Survey report, 2017 • National workshop, November 2017 (combined total of 74 participants including 16 women in the national workshop and subsequent policy maker session) • Workshop report, non-dated • Draft National Action Plan (NAP) based on discussions at Nov 2017 workshop • Stakeholders comments on draft NAP during validation workshop on resp. 31 August 2018 (DSM) and 5 Sept 2018 (Dodoma) and UNCTAD responses, Sept 2018 • No formal validation of the National Action Plan nor concrete decisions on the next steps (see also 2 below) <p>Uganda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception mission, April 2017 • Background Paper, March 2017

⁶ Based on the project progress reports and complemented by the evaluator with information obtained during the interviews; the overview covers the *main* achievements and does not claim to be exhaustive in terms of covering *all* the project work carried out by the project.

countries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey report, 2018 • National workshop, March 2018 (combined total of 84 participants including 22 women in the national workshop and subsequent policy maker session) • Draft National Action Plan (NAP) discussed at March 2018 workshop • Workshop report, 2018 • Validation of NAP by Cotton Development Organisation, October 2018 <p>Zambia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception mission, March 2017 • Background Paper, December 2016 • Survey report, 2017 • National workshop, December 2017 (combined total of 66 participants including 13 women in the national workshop and subsequent policy maker session) • Draft National Action Plan (NAP) discussed at Dec 2017 workshop (agreed by consensus) • Workshop report, 2017 • Validation of NAP by Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, July 2019 <p>Zimbabwe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception mission, November 2016 • Background Paper, August 2016 • Survey report, 2017 • National workshop, September 2017 (combined total of 52 participants including 9 women in the national workshop and subsequent policy maker session) • Draft National Action Plan (NAP) discussed at Sept 2017 workshop (agreed by consensus) • Workshop report, 2017 • Validation of NAP by Secretary for Industry, Commerce and Enterprise, January 2018
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		<p><u>Multi-country activity</u></p> <p>Study tour to India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory mission to meet host institution in Nagpur, India (Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technologies, CIRCOT), November 2018 • Study tour to India, 14-18 January 2019 covering in total 20 participants, including 16 participants (of which 4 women) from Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 2 from respectively COMESA and ITC and 2 from UNCTAD • Study tour report, February 2019
<p>2. Improved capacity of policymakers in the beneficiary countries/region to (a) formulate evidence-based policies that improve the value-added of cotton by-products and (b) devise investment profiles to attract potential investors</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 3 of the 4 target countries have drafted concrete policies to enhance the value added of cotton by-products • investment profiles developed in 3 of the 4 target countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-day meeting for policymakers (back-to-back with national seminar) • Advisory support in the development of evidence-based policies to promote value addition (based on requests from government focal points) • Support to the development and dissemination of investment profiles to attract investments into the sub-sector • Two-day regional meeting to share lessons and identify follow-up actions, as well as discuss opportunities for upscaling and replication across the ESA region 	<p><u>Country level</u></p> <p>Tanzania</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy recommendations emanating from the Nov 2017 workshop • No formal validation of the National Action Plan nor concrete decisions on the next steps (see also 1 above) <p>Uganda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy recommendations agreed on at March 2018 workshop • Policy recommendations validated by Cotton Development Organisation, October 2018 • Investment profiles: (i) Briquettes and pellets production and (ii) Absorbent cotton wool production (2019) • Preparation and presentation (South Africa meeting) of follow-on project proposals: (i) establishment of demonstration centre for conversion of residues to briquettes (aiming to become a regional centre for briquetting technology) at Uganda Industrial Research Institute and (ii) R&D project focused on seed cotton variety (SATU variety) and its use in the production of absorbent cotton wool <p>Zambia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy recommendations agreed on at Dec 2017 workshop • Policy recommendations validated by Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, July 2019 • Investment profile: Briquettes and pellets production (2019)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and presentation (South Africa meeting) of follow-on project proposals: (i) establishment of cotton processing (surgical cotton wool) plant (Lusaka) by Premier Multi-purpose Cooperative Society and (ii) R&D project focused on production of briquettes (National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research) • Request of Government of Zambia to advise on creation of association of cotton value-added producers (based on experience of Association of Cotton Value-Adders of Zimbabwe/ACVAZ), followed up by contract proposal (study of experience/lessons from ACVAZ to be presented to Zambia) <p>Zimbabwe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy recommendations agreed on at September 2017 workshop • Policy recommendations validated by Secretary for Industry, Commerce and Enterprise, January 2018 • Investment profile: Briquettes and pellets production (2019) • Preparation and presentation (South Africa meeting) of follow-on project proposals: (i) establishment of a commercial biomass briquetting plant in Gokwe (Midlands Province) and (ii) establishment of surgical cotton wool plants in Harare. <p><u>Multi-country activity</u></p> <p>Regional meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis report, July 2019 • Workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, 28-30 May 2019 hosted by Cotton SA, covering 72 participants of which 18 women, covering 24 (8 each) from Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 2 from Mozambique, 36 from South Africa, 2 private sector foundations and representatives from ICAC, ITC, UNECA, WTO and from UNCTAD as co-organizer • Workshop report, July 2019
Additional activities and results	<p>➤ Planned additional activities following (i) budget increase and (ii) extension of duration up to Dec 2020: *On-site technical training activities (complementary to training by Indian/other machinery producers/vendors and covering business/supply chain management, including filming of training for subsequent dissemination work) to</p>	

support three commercial cotton by-products initiatives by entrepreneurs (Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe) – based on contacts/opportunities identified during the study tour, concerning

- Uganda: a demonstration biomass briquetting plant
- Zambia: upgrading of absorbent cotton plant
- Zimbabwe: upgrading of joint venture biomass briquetting plant

*As by end of 2019 capital to invest in above by-products initiatives was not secured by the entrepreneurs, planned activities were refocused on

- Study tour to Uganda planned for April/May 2020 (for some 10 participants from Zambia and Zimbabwe) to Uganda Industrial Research Institute to learn about carbonised briquetting machinery developed
- Study tour and seminar in Zambia planned for August 2020 (for some 10 participants from Uganda and Zimbabwe) to visit value addition facilities of farmer-owned ginning and pressing company (Mumbwa Ginning and Pressing Company)

The above activities were planned but not implemented in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic

➤ **Participation/presentation** in

- Annual ICAC meetings: 77th ICAC, Côte d'Ivoire (Dec. 2018) and 78th ICAC, Australia (Dec. 2019)
- WTO events (Cotton Days): November 2018 and June 2019
- WTO Committee on Trade and Development, Aid for Trade session, February 2020

➤ Development and approval of **spin-off project "WTO-UNCTAD-ITC Initiative** – Cotton By-Product Development in African LDCs:

- Joint initiative approved at November 2018 WTO Cotton Days meeting
- Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) funding for the first phase (US\$ 204,694), covering feasibility studies in 8 LDCs, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia (hence including 3 DA 1617K project target countries). In the case of these 3 countries, the activities could build on the work done under the DA project

➤ Other: Intention of UNCTAD to work with COMESA and ESA on project **proposal to draft a regional strategy for edible oils** (recommendation after study tour/India)

Assessment of effectiveness and impact

72. Assessing the achievements against the performance targets set in the project document, the project results are *stricto sensu* accomplished. More precisely,
- A background study and subsequent survey were conducted in each of the four countries and contain relevant data on the cotton sector, the state of the cotton by-products value-chain, including its potential and challenges (indicator 1.1);
 - National Action Plans have been developed in all four countries and were validated in 3 of the 4 countries (indicator 1.2);
 - Policy recommendations were drafted based on the consultations and were validated in 3 of the 4 countries (indicator 2.1); and
 - Investment profiles were developed in 3 of the 4 target countries (indicator 2.2).
73. Especially to the extent this is a *pilot project*, it is considered important to discuss these achievements in greater detail and also from a wider perspective. In this regard the following observations are made on the main achievements/deliverables:

Background paper and survey

74. The project strategy emphasized the need for situation analysis/data focused on cotton by-products in the beneficiary countries. To this end first a background paper was prepared and subsequently a survey was conducted, each by different consultants. This approach was based on the understanding that for the paper a consultant with sector knowledge/overview was required, whereas research experience was needed for carrying out the survey. With hindsight, it is argued that combining both into one single data collection exercise (including cotton sector expertise in the survey team) would have been faster and resulting in one single document providing a situation analysis (it is understood that the latter is the approach followed by WTO in the EIF funded work in, in particular, West Africa).
75. The resulting reports have been issued as UNCTAD documents (not featured on the websites of the cotton sector organizations in the countries). The use of the information/data collected was strictly focused on these being baseline information for the national workshop, guiding the process of the formulation of the NAPs and of policy recommendations.

National stakeholder workshops and ensuing (i) National Action Plans and (ii) Policy Recommendations

76. The workshops brought together a large number of stakeholders from the public and private sector (totalling between 54 and 84 participants in the respective country events). These events constituted an important platform for raising awareness and for priority setting on required actions to foster investment in cotton by-products. A confirmation letter from the counterpart organization to UNCTAD was used as evidence of country validation of both the NAP and the policy recommendations. The participants in the events from which the NAPs emanated did not automatically receive the outcome document (NAPs) from the country focal points. Web search showed that in none of the countries the NAPs are posted by the counterpart organizations/local project partners (the same applies to the investment profiles discussed below). This being said, UNCTAD disseminated deliverables via periodic newsletters, with links to the web portal (reaching out though email to all country and external parties involved in project activities).

77. The NAPs broadly indicate the priority areas for action, assuming that the details (who would do what by when) would be worked out in the “next stage” led by the multi-stakeholder oversight committee (the composition of which was specified in the NAPs). Stakeholder interviews indicate that the mechanism to follow up and steer the next steps did not become operational. There were country presentations on plans at the meeting in South Africa (28-30 May 2019) as well as at the (soon thereafter organized) WTO/ITC/UNCTAD Workshop on cotton by-products in Geneva (7 June 2019). The country presentations recapped the intentions but did not report on what had happened in terms of concrete follow-up of the NAPs elaborated in 2017/18 (beyond the project funded investment profile work).
78. A final observation on the NAPs relates to the focus of the investment initiatives. In all countries, the stakeholders selected a limited number of possible business ventures, namely briquettes and pellets based on cotton stalks, processing of short-staple and waste cotton into absorbent cotton wool and (in some countries) also removal of gossypol from cottonseed cake and use of cotton stalks as substrate for mushroom growing. As already mentioned under Relevance, such focus was justified in the initial stage. Yet it is expected that in subsequent stages a wider range of opportunities will be pursued to use residues and benefit farmers and rural industries. Among alternative uses one can cite fostering composting of cotton stalks to enrich the soil and thus contribute to yields or using linter in weaving or other types of fibre processing).

Study visit (India)

79. The study visit programme was comprehensive (as illustrated by the study visit report prepared by the host organization, CIRCOT - of which staff had also contributed as resource persons to the national workshops). For most participants it was their first time to visit CIRCOT (one of the counterparts who did not participate indicated that he had visited CIRCOT in the context of an earlier cotton sector development programme). Participants confirmed that the study visit provided outstanding exposure and was eye-opening. There is no indication of a study visit per country delegation (seemingly not a requirement) even though one participant - member of an association - was reported to have briefed other members on the India tour. Another person reported to have engaged in follow-up contacts with Indian equipment suppliers in view of the expansion of an existing cotton by-product operation but opted in the end for a supplier in China he had identified through a web search.
80. Attention is drawn to the final section of the India study visit report entitled ‘action plan for the success of the project’ (based on discussions during and at the end of the study visit) Summarizing, the recommendations focus on issues such as the importance of awareness raising of farmers, of manufacturers and of consumers; the need for collection/chipping locations of cotton stalks (to be thereafter supplied to the processing plant); the need for market information; focus on the identification and motivation of entrepreneurs. These recommendations, reflected in the synthesis report (see below) albeit partially, remain valid for future steps when promoting the development of cotton-by products industries.

Investment profiles

81. There was no target set as regards to the number of investment profiles to be developed in the context of the project. The following matrix compares the priorities as per the NAP and the profiles/initiatives developed and also presented in the South Africa wrap-up event:

Country	NAP	Investment profile	Follow-on initiative/concept
Uganda	*implement de-gossypol technology in view of market potential (non-ruminants feed) *absorbent cotton *briquettes *use as substrate in mushroom production	*Briquettes/pellets production *Absorbent cotton wool	*Demonstration centre (briquettes) – proposed by UIRI *R&D project to test use of cotton variety (SATU) for use in production of absorbent cotton wool – proposed by CDO
Zambia	*absorbent cotton *briquettes	Briquettes/pellets production	*Upgrading/modernization of existing absorbent cotton production plant – proposed by Premier Cooperative *R&D project/briquetting plant – proposed by NISIR
Zimbabwe	*stabilization fund for cotton prices *briquettes *implement de-gossypol	Briquettes/pellets production	*Briquetting plant – proposed by ACVAZ *Surgical cotton wool – proposed by Cotton Processing Company
Tanzania	*implement de-gossypol technology in view of market potential (non-ruminants feed) *absorbent cotton *briquettes	--	--

82. The analyses to facilitate investment in the by-products industries thus focused on two applications, namely briquettes/pellets from stalks and absorbent/surgical cotton wool. In the case of Uganda the preparation of a profile for the use of stalks in mushroom growing was contemplated but, in consultation with the investment promotion agency, not pursued as mushroom growing is for now a cottage-scale operation with intermittent production. With hindsight the question can be asked if preparing converging profiles for each of the countries was the best way to trigger investor interest. Another approach could have been to prepare a compendium of (short) profiles of the widest possible use of cotton by-products as one of the deliverables of the pilot project (compiling in a handbook the materials presented by CIRCOT in the national workshops, eventually complemented by other sources).

83. Investment profiles are meant for triggering investor interest ("teasers"), are not investment ready proposals, and should be short. It is the business plan prepared by/with the prospective investor that will determine decision making. Profiles present a general idea of a business opportunity, give an approximate indication of the feasibility of the investment, specifying also assumptions and risks, and are as such a somewhat "simplified" presentation of the investment idea. Any investor interested in taking up the idea to make, e.g., briquettes/pellets from cotton stalks, will have to conduct a detailed analysis of the market (covering different potential users of different sub-products), of competition from competing products, of the organization and cost involved in putting in place stalks collection-cum-chipping points and other preconditions for the plant to have adequate supply year-round (possibly requiring also other sources of biomass).

It is the ultimate investor who is at the core of elaborating the detailed business plan (eventually with external business advisory support), as “the devil is in the details”.

84. The profiles prepared under the project do not seem to allow for a gradual approach, i.e., starting small and scaling up step by step, based on performance. The technology requirements are referred to in the profiles as “small in scale” and “relatively affordable”, without it being clear how the options rank on the scale of available capacities (e.g., if a capacity of 20MT/day is the minimum option for a pilot briquetting plant).
85. There are found to be gaps in the dissemination of the profiles. Other than their inclusion in the synthesis report (that served as input for the wrap-up meeting) and reference to the profiles in presentations at global level (ICAC Plenaries; Cotton Days), the interviews revealed that awareness of the existence of the profiles is low, including at the level of actors that could be or facilitate potential investors. Contact with two of the three investment promotion agencies (no response from Zimbabwe) gives a mixed picture. Whereas the agency in Uganda reported to have been involved in the preparation, validation and diffusion of the profiles, the situation in Zambia was not convincing, most likely due to staff turnover (no awareness of the profiles; no dissemination). In Uganda the agency is planning to organize an online meeting bringing together existing and potential investors in the cotton sector to reinvigorate investment in the sector. The evaluator found no trace of the investment profiles on the websites of the investment promotion agencies or cotton development organizations in the countries covered. The preparation of the profiles (outsourced to national consultants) did not go hand in hand with a strategy on how to disseminate the profiles beyond providing them to the entities in charge of investment promotion. In brief, even though the project briefed the investment promotion agencies during the inception mission and involved them in the identification and briefing of consultants tasked with drafting the profiles in line with their standards and in the review of the drafts, there were gaps in the effective use of the profiles by these agencies.

Synthesis report

86. UNCTAD rightly amended the sequencing of the synthesis report that, as per the project document, was planned to summarize the background paper and survey findings as an input for the national workshops. Instead, the synthesis report became the input for the wrap-up meeting in South Africa. To the extent the meeting in South Africa was not an investment forum, it is not clear why emphasis was put on summarizing the investment profiles prepared in three of the four countries (actually covering the bulk of the synthesis report). The sections covering lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations are however considered the most relevant parts of such a synthesis.

Regional wrap-up meeting

87. The meeting in South Africa brought together a wide range of public and private stakeholders from three of the four participating countries, representatives of South Africa’s cotton sector, of Mozambique as well as of the institutional project partners (with the exception of the COMESA Secretariat). The interviews revealed that the event was considered a good opportunity to meet with and exchange among peers at regional level. It triggered interest in learning from one another’s experience (resulting in the idea of study visits to Uganda, Zambia). The interviews also revealed that the field visits organized by Cotton South Africa were appreciated in the sense of

realizing the degree of mechanisation in the cotton sector in South Africa (from seed planting to harvesting) compared to the situation in their own countries.

88. It is noteworthy to mention that South Africa itself took follow-up action, in that the project wrap-up meeting triggered another meeting convened by Cotton South Africa in October 2019 discussing the potential for cotton by-products' industries in the wide sense in South Africa (bringing together 18 stakeholders). No collective report was prepared by the country delegations having participated in the event, most likely as there was no such requirement (the same was the case regarding the study tour to India). There is unfortunately no clear indication of concrete follow-up by the participation countries. In this regard, the fact that the envisaged local steering mechanism did not become operational did not help. What should be mentioned however is the participation of some in WTO's Cotton Days and the inclusion of Mozambique (that also participated in the South Africa event) in the preparatory phase of the new WTO-UNCTAD-ITC project.

Other meetings

89. Project visibility was facilitated by its participation in two of ICAC's annual meetings (2018; 2019) as well as in WTO's Cotton Meetings. It was reported that following the presentation of the project (including the case of Zambia that was presented), cotton producing countries in West Africa asked to receive similar support (i.e., the genesis of the joint spin-off project "WTO-UNCTAD-ITC Initiative - Cotton By-Product Development in African LDCs).

6.2.3 Efficiency of implementation

90. Regarding the use of resources, the following observations are made:
- i. Project stakeholders referred unanimously to the project being well-organized and having been implemented in a smooth manner by devoted and motivated staff. The project manager (who was not the designer of the project) was reported to be actively engaged and providing rapid responses to questions. It is noted that the project manager continued project implementation while, in the last year of implementation, was reassigned to another organizational unit.
 - ii. Regarding the budget, there is harmony between the planned budget allocation and the actual use of the budget. The border closures and travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic largely explain the implementation rate (around 80%). In essence, the increased allocation (2019) was not used, as the planned activities covered regional study tours that could not be organized due to these travel restrictions. Yet also gaps as regards to the next steps expected to be taken on the side of the beneficiary countries implied that UNCTAD could not provide the planned advisory support in developing evidence-based policies (foreseen as activity A.2.2).
 - iii. The intensive use of national expertise (other than involving experts from international partner institutions as resource persons in events) is commendable. To facilitate the recruitment process, the experts were engaged through individual contracts rather than the (more complex) process of subcontracting institutions/firms. With hindsight it could have been appropriate to recruit a national coordinator (part-time) ideally anchored to an

institution closest to cotton sector stakeholders to coordinate activities on the ground and foster “keeping the momentum”.

- iv. Challenges faced in the case of project implementation in Tanzania were addressed in a transparent manner. As it remained unclear if Tanzania wanted to remain part of the project (or not), time passed and it was in the end too late to substitute Tanzania with another cotton-producing country in the region. Also, for the evaluation it proved difficult to speak with the project’s chief counterpart organization in Tanzania (no response despite several reminders).
- v. Progress reporting was in line with UNDA requirements. As the project had early results and a good financial implementation rate, it benefitted from UNDA’s opportunity to obtain additional funding, based on the assumption that it had the capacity to implement more. Following this offer and in consultation with the countries, additional activities were identified.
- vi. There was no cost-sharing of project activities with the beneficiary countries, national workshop reports were prepared by consultants and the host organizations prepared the reports of respectively the study visit (India) and the wrap-up event (South-Africa). The country delegations in the study visit/wrap-up event were not expected to submit a report that would indicate how they planned to use the experience to move forward at country level.
- vii. External communication was good, taking different forms: comprehensive website; periodic newsletters; participation in international events (Cotton Days; ICAC meetings); information sharing with Permanent Missions. However, country level communication - referring to the dissemination of the outcomes of the project, with special reference to the NAPs and investment profiles - was found to be deficient. To illustrate, in principle all stakeholders having participated in the national workshop (and thus having contributed to its outcome) should have received a printed version of the NAP once validated by the chief counterparts. They should not be expected to go to the UNCTAD project website to find these documents (issued as UNCTAD publications rather than documents with the respective country’s logo/emblem). Incomplete dissemination of the project deliverables at country level are an illustration of gaps in project co-ownership. Reference was made by stakeholders interviewed to staff turnover in Ministries. Timely and wide distribution of the documents by the country focal points to the range of country stakeholders involved in their preparation would have increased the likelihood of their use.
- viii. With hindsight, some work could have been undertaken as it was in principle not directly affected by the pandemic. The planned study of the background and functioning of the Association of Cotton Value Adders of Zimbabwe could a priori have been conducted (using local expertise) and its report could have been shared electronically and discussed in a virtual meeting. Although not envisaged, the preparation of a compendium with profiles of cotton by-products related opportunities (in the widest sense) would have been a useful deliverable of such a pilot project (including for any next stage). Similarly, the next steps would have benefitted from more detailed market studies at country level pertaining to the by-products promoted by the project, (building on the preliminary analysis reflected in the profiles) a priori achievable even in the context of COVID-19. At the same time, it can be argued that such deeper market studies would be more relevant once investment interest was secured and are ideally conducted/commissioned by the investor. It was probably too early to support country level buyer awareness campaigns as long as there was no supply (with the

exception of cotton oil which was not considered a focus area in the project but is integrated in the planned follow-on regional project).

6.2.4 Likely sustainability

91. The likelihood that results are being used at the level of the pilot countries will first and foremost depend on the commitment and drive of country stakeholders to take the project forward. As described in detail in Section 6.2.1, there are several concerns in this regard (not repeated here) that have a direct impact on the likelihood of sustainability. Ownership needs revitalization by the countries themselves, starting with (re-) dissemination of the main deliverables of the now completed pilot project, reviewing/updating/expanding the same where required, deciding on the next steps, and agreeing on the organization that is best placed to effectively spearhead the next steps (in order to move from good intentions to tangible results on the ground). This may require cotton sector stakeholders to re-explain the earlier intentions to current policy makers/office bearers, in case of changes in government and staff turn-over since 2017/18.
92. In the design of the project, the COMESA Secretariat and UNCTAD put more emphasis on their own roles than on the role of the beneficiary countries in the post-project stage. The project document stipulates that a one-year sustainability plan and monitoring period were envisaged at the end of the project (as the project was closed at the end of 2020, it is not clear if this will be implemented in 2021). Both the COMESA Secretariat and UNCTAD were to play a role in this post-project monitoring, engaging also in follow-up actions (project document, p. 12). Counting on follow-up external support to ensure sustainability is somewhat confusing. There is no exit strategy that defines how the findings of the pilot project would be subsequently rolled out both in the beneficiary countries and to cover also other countries. To that extent the involvement of COMESA in project implementation was minor; its role in monitoring the actions of national stakeholders upon completion of the project is unlikely. Regarding UNCTAD, the continuation of its support beyond the project depends on the availability of fresh funding (see section on Partnerships, below) and could not have been committed at the time of the design of the DA project.
93. The project sought to address some of the challenges affecting the development of cotton by-products industries, i.e., data and policy gaps, and focused on capacity building (cf. formulation of the project objective and of the two outcomes). In this regard the background papers, surveys, multi-stakeholder meetings, ensuing MAPs, policy recommendations and (selected) investment profiles, combined with exposure through the study tour and sharing of lessons in South Africa, in principle capacitated countries to move to the next stage.
94. While the project efforts constituted an important contribution to prepare actions promoting investment in by-products' industries, more is evidently needed, starting with countries taking effective ownership. There are several other factors determining the effective use of work done in this pilot project among which the following are cited:
 - The cotton price encouraging farmers to grow more cotton rather than competing crops such as soybeans
 - Timely access to certified cotton seeds and other inputs required to increase seed cotton production
 - Farmers' awareness of the wide range of opportunities to use residues to get buy-in at grassroots level

- Proven market potential for the use of processed residues and consumer/buyer awareness raising
 - Organization of farmers/others interested in investment in processing
 - Access to finance (credit at affordable rates/matching grants) to foster investment in by-products' processing;
 - Organization of year round input supply (e.g., the structure/system to collect the stalks and other biomass inputs or capacity to store cotton seed).
95. Finally, with hindsight the recruitment of a part-time project coordinator in each county (subject the availability of budget resources to this end) could have facilitated the process of keeping momentum after project events, including the establishment and periodic meetings of the country level steering committees as envisaged in the NAPs as pillars of ownership and sustainability.

6.2.5 Cross-cutting issues

Gender

96. As indicated in the assessment of the design of the project (the section on cross-cutting issues), gender equality, women empowerment and income/employment opportunities for youth were explicitly reflected in the project strategy. During implementation, gender related dimensions were addressed, illustrated by repeated attempts to ensure participation of women in project activities and the challenges in this regard (systematically repeated in the annual progress reports). The latest annual report (January 2020) refers to a total of 364 participants spread out over the different events (national workshops, study tour, regional workshop), of which a total of 80 women (average of 23%). Of the 18 consultants recruited for project activities, three were women (17%). Whereas not included in project reporting, it is noted that several of the (current) chief counterparts (Ministry; cotton sector organizations) are women professionals. In fact, three of the four Permanent Secretaries overseeing the project are women (Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe). This being said, the proposal for the second phase of the EIF project contains capacity building activities specifically for women – supporting associations of women entrepreneurs and farmers, for example, in developing by-products as new income streams.
97. The NAPs and policy recommendations do not make reference to gender issues, which can be considered a missed opportunity. E.g., attention to gender impact could have meant that also other by-products would have been identified among the priority initiatives (such as soap making or use of residue fibre). In general, women are certainly among the ultimate beneficiaries, once tangible by-processing activities will take place on the ground. After all, they constitute a sizable portion of smallholder farmers. The latter took indirectly part in project activities in which their membership organizations were represented. The choice of the types of by-products targeted by the project (briquettes/absorbent cotton) meant that cotton by-product activities that typically involve women were not featured, among which include soap making and use of residue fibre for spinning/weaving. In this regard one is reminded of the importance to look at by-product's potential in the widest sense.

Human rights (with emphasis on economic rights)

98. As explained in the assessment of design, the human rights dimension is not mentioned in the project. It has no specific significance in this project other than reiterating that the project aimed to focus on helping farmers earn money from cotton residues that go to waste to address rural poverty. In some of the potential by-products processing activities they are expected to be able to have a direct role (such as chipping of stalks; composting; making briquettes/pellets from stalks and other biomass provided, as this is expected to be feasible at small scale in a rural context). Other by-product processing activities (upgraded/modernized oil extraction; production of animal feed using cotton cake for a wider market after application of de-gossypol technology) are expected to interest existing industries (ginners/oil extractors) and potential new investors. It is argued that absorbent cotton production (another focus area promoted by the project) is also an industrial activity that goes beyond rural processing by and for farmers. Based on an interview of an entity already engaged in this business, farmers are suppliers of the inputs (linked to the company through an out-growers' scheme, with ginning being outsourced to obtain the pre-processed input for absorbent cotton production).
99. The above shows that one has to be precise about what are the expected benefits for farmers that are stated to be the ultimate beneficiaries. It would be misleading to think that by-products industries are predominantly going to be rural based industries operated by farmers' organizations. While, as indicated above, some processing of residues is indeed expected to be done by farmer groups, other processing is and will remain to be at industrial level. Namely, farmer groups (including rural women groups) are likely to face obstacles such as access to finance (and hence also to technologies) to invest in the processing of by-products. Demand for industrially produced by-products is expected to have a positive influence on the price paid to farmers and encourage them to grow more cotton rather than competing crops. Such an increase in cotton production would be a "win-win" for both cotton main products and cotton by-products and for different players along the cotton value chain, including farmers (subject to their negotiation capacity). The latter is not automatic and is recognized as one of the areas for attention in the follow-on EIF project.
100. In any event, it needs to be highlighted that stimulating "new income opportunities for farmers" was the overriding policy priority, as emphasized in the workshops and study visit to India by governments, ginners, representatives of farmers and other country level partners. This was a main reason - alongside the availability of raw materials and the potential to replace deforestation - for each country to have selected biomass pellets and briquettes as priority products for development. By-products derived from stalks were prioritised in the context of contract farming, as in such schemes, stalks are the only part of the plant the farmer owns. Farmers can thus earn income directly by selling their stalks to processors, or establishing businesses themselves, most likely in a collective structure. To this end, interest in farmer-owned value-added processing businesses were the motivation for the planned study visit to Zambia in 2020 (allowing the well-established Mumbwa cooperative to evaluate how to mount a briquetting business, and for other project countries to learn about how to set up this kind of cooperative).

Environmental protection

101. Last but not least, environmental dimensions constitute an important cross-cutting issue to be highlighted. Countries proved to be particularly interested in the potential of cotton stalk-based briquettes/pellets to replace the use of wood and charcoal at household and also enterprise level (to remedy deforestation). Moreover, such use of the stalks would also avoid their burning and the ensuing GHG emissions. As indicated in the synthesis report (p. 43), such ventures (eventually combining cotton stalks and other sources of biomass) would be very relevant in Africa and requiring further study in terms its cost competitiveness compared to substitutes (wood, charcoal, fuel).
102. Also, other potential uses of the stalks merit attention in this context. The yields of cotton production in Africa being low compared to other cotton growing regions, soil enrichment is one of the vital steps to address this problem. Composting of stalks (for which there are new/fast technologies) and their "return to the soil" can contribute towards increasing crop yields (thus also optimizing the use of industrial fertilizers that also have greenhouse effects).
103. Whereas composting was presented at all the national workshops, it was not selected by the stakeholders as a priority area for development in the NAPs
104. To the extent cotton is a pesticide-intensive crop, eventual risks in by-products merit further study. According to an interviewed sector expert, the varieties grown in Africa are different from the ones in India (that adopted genetically modified/GMO cotton several decades ago, with reduced pesticide use as one of its benefits). Whereas studies conducted in India did not find evidence of pesticides residues in by-products, the picture may be different in the African context and could require further analysis (testing) in pilot operations on the ground before upscaling investment in such by-products.
105. Not involving the Ministries in charge of Environment/Energy is considered a missed opportunity, as these Ministries coordinate efforts (including multiple sources of external funding, among which includes the GEF) in fields such as cleaner production, climate change, land degradation, including also the mobilization of the financial sector for environmental goals. Circular economy is increasingly a cross-cutting theme on the global agenda that could trigger interest in waste management and materials recovery in the cotton sector. It is perhaps wishful thinking, but a circular fibre initiative for fashion could ideally be deepened by also including cotton and its by-products.
106. Finally, whereas not a purely environmental issue, it is noted that the issue of the existence of a toxic enzyme in cotton seeds (gossypol) has been given attention in the national workshops and in the context of the study tour. A cotton oil extractor who participated in the same indicated not being aware of this problem before and explicitly expressed the desire for this to be tested on the ground (to be able to assess if/to what extent the presence of the enzyme in oil/cake exceeds acceptable levels). This could be an area for further analysis/testing in Africa as input for awareness raising, combined with a comparison of the state of de-gossypol technologies across countries. The issue has both a human/animal health dimension and a market dimension (as de-gossypolization widens the market for cotton cake by allowing its use also in animal feed for poultry, fish and piggery).
107. In any event, it is to be recognized that the issue of gossypol in cotton seeds is a long-standing field of study, both for researchers and regulators. For example, UNCTAD reported that varieties bred without gossypol were trialled in West Africa some decades ago, but the crops failed because gossypol is a key part of the plant's defence against pests. More recently, an

American study developed a variety that has gossypol in the leaves but not the seed, which they will try to commercialise. In all project countries, there are regulations that forbid the use of cottonseed-based feed in the human food chain. Yet enforcement of these regulations is apparently lax, with cottonseed-based feed being sold for poultry on the informal market.

6.2.6 Synergies and partnerships

Internal synergies

108. The project could build on prior efforts of UNCTAD. Special reference is made in this respect to the preparation of the Pan-African Cotton Road Map (2014) that aimed at creating synergies between the numerous interventions in favour of “African Cotton”, with special attention to the fields of productivity, marketing and value addition. While based on existing regional strategies for the cotton sector in Africa (including the COMESA one of 2009), it was reported that the process of adoption of this Road Map has been slow and complex. Given the uncertainty about how or if the Road Map will actually be integrated and implemented into existing political structures, it has been difficult to make detailed programmatic decisions based on the Road Map. Still, UNCTAD has disseminated and supported the Road Map to the degree possible, including framing its subsequent projects in this vision. The project under review is thus considered a logical follow-up of the work carried out in the context of the preparation of the Road Map, by aiming to operationalize the action listed in very general terms, i.e., ‘develop local and regional markets for cotton by-products’ (Road Map, p. 15).
109. As the project was regional including four pilot countries, there were two opportunities for stakeholders in the countries covered to meet and share experiences/intentions, namely the study visit to India and the wrap-up workshop in South Africa. This stimulated the idea to organize some regional study tours to learn from one another’s experience, yet due to COVID-19 these could not take place. No WhatsApp group or similar platform was established by the cotton sector stakeholders to facilitate follow-on contacts among them in the region on the subject of cotton by-products.
110. It is noted that focus has been on identifying country specific priority actions. It was probably premature to discuss opportunities for regional integration based on competitive edges, e.g., some countries having a more advanced agriculture base and others having a more advanced industrial base.
111. Finally, it is noted that there were in-house linkages with UNCTAD’s Investment Division, as staff in the latter reviewed both the ToRs of the consultants engaged for the preparation of investment profiles and the draft investment profiles.

External synergies and partnerships

112. As mentioned in Section 3, the project was implemented in collaboration with several partner organizations, each having different roles and degrees of involvement in the project work. Observations thereon are limited to the following points:
 - i. COMESA Secretariat: as requesting party, it was represented in some of the events, but did not participate in the wrap-up workshop. It remains unclear to date if/how the COMESA Secretariat intends to engage in taking the achievements of the pilot project further. Its

attention to the sector may be reinvigorated, as cotton is among the thematic priorities set by African countries in the context of the recently created African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA, January 2021). Time will tell if and how the rather sensitive and pending issue of Rules-of-Origin regarding trade in edible oils will be addressed (affecting the market for locally produced edible oils, including cottonseed oil);

- ii. UNECA: it contributed to the initial stages of the project and also participated in several events; the role of UNECA in disseminating the findings of the pilot project will need to be defined, possibly linked to its work regarding AfCFTA. It is noted that the project's counterparts in UNECA were responsible for national AfCFTA implementation workshops; the project provided materials and suggested participants for inclusion in these workshops in which cotton sector related presentations were made.
- iii. UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Field Offices as well as other resident UN agencies: it was reported that following contacts made during UNCTAD's inception missions to the four countries, UNDP offices were kept in the loop. Indeed, this is not only relevant for the coordination of UN activities on the ground (in the framework of UNDAF/One UN) but could also be an avenue to be explored for follow-up funding (noting that UNDP is one of the key implementing agencies of for example GEF - see above comment under crosscutting issues). In Tanzania the project requested the inclusion of UNCTAD's One-UN focal point in the networks there. Also, in Zambia the project was requested to be included in the local "economic" and "environmental" networks of their coordination among resident agencies. Unfortunately, none of these requests were accepted. It is noted that the local offices of resident UN agencies were invited to the workshops, with limited response (only the UNDP office in Zimbabwe sent a representative to the national workshop). This is regrettable, as there are opportunities for synergies. E.g., cotton is an area of attention for FAO and processing and renewable energy are areas of attention for UNIDO. Similarly, also, as regards to the need for access to finance in rural areas, IFAD could have been a relevant partner.
- iv. ITC: its cotton/textile expert was directly involved as a resource person in several of the project's events and the follow-on initiative brings together both ITC's and UNCTAD's experience in the cotton/cotton by-products field. ITC issued in December 2020 a publication entitled 'Beyond the Fibre - Capturing cotton's full value in Africa) that is to a large extent built on the work of UNCTAD in the project under review (which is recognized in the report). In view of the new joint WTO-UNCTAD-ITC initiative, there is scope for issuing *joint* publications on the same theme rather than each agency publishing on the subject, with risk of overlaps (recognizing that such coordination is not easy, to the extent that the agency that has the funds for a publication will proceed with the same). In any event, the project's cooperation with both ITC and WTO (see below) has been smooth and effective.
- v. WTO: it offered through its Cotton Days an opportunity for the project and its achievements to gain wide visibility. This triggered interest from other cotton-producing countries in Africa (particularly in West Africa) in developing cotton by-products, which resulted in the new WTO-UNCTAD-ITC initiative targeting some 10 LDCs. The new initiative is presumably for three of the four pilot countries, Zimbabwe being excluded as it is not an LDC. Whereas the cotton sector in West Africa is ahead of the ESA region in quantitative terms, it is reported to be behind in terms of value addition of by-products. WTO completed by the end of 2020 the preparatory work entitled *feasibility assessment* (funded by EIF) in the targeted countries that were not already part of the UNCTAD DA project. It covered a study and validation

workshop, and its outcome is reflected in one single document. The preparatory phase did not include the development of investment profiles. Meanwhile the three agencies drafted a proposal for the main phase (for which funds mobilization efforts started in the form of circulation of the proposal to WTO members); there was reported to be interest (based on the initial concept circulated earlier on; at the time of the evaluation the proposal had not yet been formally presented to WTO's member States and potential donors). The approach in the new initiative is wider than that of the DA project, including oil processing upgrading, use of cotton fibre residues and also price advocacy issues.

- vi. CIRCOT: its experts actively contributed to the country workshops, hosted the study tour and also took part in the wrap-up event in South Africa. CIRCOT has thus been a close partner in the project. CIRCOT is also the implementing agency of the Cotton Technical Assistance Programme of the Indian Government that is reported to involve the C4 countries, Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria and others and covers capacity building and pilot/ demonstration activities. Any project in the field of by-products in Africa is thus encouraged to seek synergies with this India funded programme. A representative of Tanzania (where the project under review quasi ended with the draft NAP) - interviewed in the context of this evaluation - made reference to *ongoing* contacts with India as source of technology, advice etc. The experience and expertise of India including technologies developed and used in India that are reported to be appropriate in Africa, are evidently all relevant. This being said, the experience of other countries is not to be ignored as potential sources of equipment/advice (preferring in this regard the term equipment purchase to technology transfer). A case in point relates to a decision of a project stakeholder and participant in the India study visit to purchase equipment in China (where he found what was needed for the expansion of the business, after having tried to supply the same from India). In general, there is emphasis on the search for technologies and techniques that are adapted to the African context, wherever they exist. For example, for briquetting, the Indian technology involves mechanically compressing the raw material, with the resulting heat binding them into a briquette. The mechanical force requires three-phase power, which is not widely available in Africa. With this in mind, the Ugandan team at the regional workshop suggested that the other countries look at the carbonised briquette technology tested in Uganda (which was the basis for the planned study visit to Uganda in 2020).
- vii. Last but not least, ICAC: similar to the WTO Cotton Days, ICAC events provided an opportunity for the project to present its aim and achievements. Also, its experts contributed to project events both at country and regional level. As ICAC events bring together representatives of cotton producing countries across the globe, it is a very relevant platform to draw attention to business opportunities in by-products at large and stimulate exchange among countries. So far by-products are not yet featured as a thematic area on ICAC's portal, whereas ICAC supported in the past the implementation of by-products' projects in India and West-Africa.
113. Finally, it is noted that all partnerships were at global/regional level. With hindsight, it would have been appropriate to seek additional formal partnerships at country level from the start. It is argued that the local counterpart organizations would have been best placed to create such synergies, as it is difficult to forge such synergies at a distance (from Geneva). Such local partnerships could involve:
- the Ministries of Energy/Environment (regarding the pellets/briquettes initiative);

- the Ministries of Agriculture (recognizing that even if this ministry was only an official counterpart in the case of Zambia, it was included in project activities in all four countries) to facilitate raising awareness at grassroots level through agricultural extension services;
- local banks/other financial intermediaries with products covering e.g. equity investment for the creation of new/upgrading of existing operations;
- industrial associations representing manufacturers in different sectors;
- any related donor/agency programmes and projects in the countries focused on themes such as renewable energy, industrial upgrading, agribusiness, rural enterprise/SME development, rural finance.

6.2.7 Responses to COVID-19

114. The pandemic affected the project's ability to implement the activities that were envisaged in the remaining period (that had been extended prior to the emergence of COVID-19). As mentioned, it meant that the bulk of additional funding made available mid 2019 could not be spent. DA projects that involved the organization of workshops were able to pursue the same in a virtual mode. However, this was not possible in the case of the project under review to the extent activities covered regional study tours that were no longer implementable given travel restrictions.
115. With hindsight some activities would have been possible, using the available resources, as they were not requiring travel. As mentioned earlier, the study of the experience of Zimbabwe's Association of the Cotton Value Adders could in principle have been conducted. Other potentially useful activities for the upscaling of the pilot projects one could think of were not initiated, possibly as not constituting an integral part of the project strategy. In this regard the preparation of a compendium containing the wide spectrum of investment ideas pertaining to the use of residues (non-fibre/fibre) could have been a useful deliverable of the pilot project.
116. It would have been probably too 'revolutionary' to propose a project revision in the course of 2020, requesting DA agreement to the following idea: sharing the available balance over the three countries, allocating the same to *existing* matching grant schemes, business plan contests or calls for proposals in fields such as private sector/SME/rural development, environment or energy with the aim to use such cost-sharing for incentivising investment in concrete cases of by-products' value addition. It is noted that the UN Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plans prepared in 2020 for the countries included an economic pillar covering inter alia support to farmers and SMEs. Special reference was made to quick impact projects and projects aimed at encouraging innovation (including green energy) and local manufacturing. Some agencies "repurposed" funding of ongoing programmes to priorities listed in these Response and Recovery Plans. This could have also been an option for the DA project, as the use of its balance as cost-sharing for pilot operations on the ground would be aligned to both the project goal and that of the Response and Recovery Plans.
117. It is worth mentioning that COVID-19 meant growing business for one of the companies interviewed that is already engaged in the production of absorbent cotton, who benefitted from different types of support from the project (connecting the enterprise with potential equipment suppliers in India, reviewing its investment plan cum funding requests). Constraints to import

supplies incited public hospitals to buy locally and resulted in the enterprise expanding its operation and invest in equipment (supplied from China).

7. Conclusions

118. Cotton production is vital in the ESA region: the livelihoods of many rural households are dependent on cotton growing (in combination with other crops) and cotton lint is an important export commodity. After major drops in production in the past, production has been again on the rise triggered by demand and price trends. Yet the cotton sector is faced with major challenges, among which low yields, inefficiencies in processing and, overall, lost opportunities for local value addition of cotton main- and by-products. Multiple efforts were and are being undertaken to address low productivity in cotton growing and in (predominantly primary) processing. It has been recognized in various cotton sector strategies and related road maps (prepared more than a decade ago) that value addition in by-products (the focus of the project under review) needs to be pursued in parallel with promoting efficient cotton cultivation. But fibre and non-fibre residues continue to be wasted or are at best severely under-exploited. It shows that moving from good policy intentions to tangible actions and results on the ground is not evident.
119. There is no doubt about the pilot project having played a pioneer role, zooming in on analysing the by-products potential in the four selected cotton-producing countries and seeking to contribute to the development of by-products industries through capacity building support. For many country stakeholders the notion that there is value in residues was what they called eye-opening and there was and remains keen interest 'to make it happen'. The enthusiasm generated and unambiguous appreciation of the project work and of its efficient management, as well its actual achievements in terms of reaching the performance targets are commendable. Taking into consideration its budget size, the project encompassed what could reasonably be covered in terms of awareness raising, stakeholder consultations, national priority setting resulting in a national action plan (Outcome 1) and support towards progressing selected aspects of that plan (Outcome 2).
120. This pilot experience faced nevertheless the same challenge as the previously validated strategies it sought to operationalize: the flow from recommendation to implementation being neither mechanical nor smooth. The engagement of stakeholders in consultations culminated in NAPs, policy recommendations and in the preparation of some investment profiles/initiatives. Evidence of the significance of policy recommendations, once validated by the counterpart organizations, lies in their actual use in government decision making and related resource allocation in budget cycles, with the ultimate goal to see new business ventures in the field of cotton by-products on the ground. These and other steps needed to take the work done forward remained so far essentially "in the pipeline". The emergence of COVID-19 did not help but cannot fully explain this situation. The wrap-up workshop (May 2019) was a relevant and appreciated event but did not result in reinvigorating decision making at country level on ways to progress. Such immediate follow-up was difficult to steer from Geneva. In any event, UNCTAD could nor should remain in the drivers' seat, it being the role of the countries to organize the next steps on which eventual follow-on external support can build. The development of a successor initiative cannot replace a country-owned exit/roll-out strategy of a pilot project.

121. Country buy-in was promising at the start but watered down towards the end of implementation. Momentum was lost as the steering mechanism - explicitly announced in the NAPs - did not become operational. This implied that no implementation plans were prepared that specified who was expected to lead/be involved in which step and that also defined targets. The NAPs and policy recommendations thus remained paper-based intentions. Similarly, there is no indication that the investment profiles were effectively used in the sense of their dissemination to potential investors (also recalling that the types of investment stimulated by the project are not of large scale, implying that first and foremost local investors should be targeted).
122. Again, the definition of implementation plans would have revealed what was to be done by the country stakeholders to further develop the identified and validated actions/initiatives. This could have covered inter alia: seeking investor interest; supporting identified investors in the preparation of business plans, mobilising to this end local business service providers as appropriate; raising awareness and interest of farmers; getting financial intermediaries on board after convincing them that there is business potential in by-products' processing; involving relevant private sector/SME/rural development/rural finance/renewable energy/climate change related schemes (national/donor supported) as potential co-financers of (pilot) initiatives on the ground. Access to finance to invest in by-products' industries was and remains a constraint that constitutes a brake for interested investors. Yet each of the countries *have* schemes and programmes in place that could in principle be source of both financial and non-financial support to existing and prospective pioneer investors in the cotton by-products sub-sector, complementing the capacity building offerings of the DA project and its planned successor initiative.
123. The project is operationally closed on the side of UNCTAD, but it is argued, based on the above, that the pilot phase in the participating countries is not yet adequately wrapped up. Even though time has passed, there is no need to go back to the start. It is the role of the country stakeholders to review/update/expand priorities set in 2017/18 in the NAPs and policy recommendations and mobilize the widest range of local actors that can initiate the phased implementation on the ground. At policy level this would entail moving from policy recommendations to actual government decision making and resource allocation. The above would serve as a "pre-entry" (avoiding the term "exit") implementation strategy and plan to which a new round of external assistance to promote investment in cotton by-products can be anchored.
124. Summarizing, the project outcomes are fully in line with what was planned, and targets were by and large achieved. But there are gaps in 'the next steps' of this pilot project, underemphasizing the role of the countries themselves. When discussing the latter in the South Africa wrap-up meeting, focus was on the follow-on joint WTO-UNCTAD-ITC initiative (announced at end 2018) and as regards to UNCTAD, on its support to assist countries in pursuing the work. Such external support can support but cannot replace decision making by the participating countries on providing the incentives and addressing the obstacles.
125. "Money" is not necessarily the main issue, if the goal is to move from concept to concrete commercial demonstrations of value addition on the ground. The countries should agree on which institution is best placed to effectively steer the process (drawing lessons from signs of weakened ownership in the pilot project). In this regard a cotton stakeholder driven approach is expected to be most effective. In other words, if those closest to the sector (sector

associations/bodies) are put in the drivers' seat to spearhead and mobilize relevant other (public/private sector) stakeholders and partners, the likelihood of effective implementation of sector focused action plans increases.

8. Lessons learned and good practices

126. It is useful to make a clear distinction between what are cotton main products and what are cotton by-products. Whereas both projects focus on cotton-by products, the DA project excluded cotton seed oil processing, as it is considered a main product, while the follow-on EIF project includes among its pillars support to the upgrading of cotton oil processing companies.
127. When promoting cotton by-products in such an awareness raising pioneer initiative such as this project, it is considered relevant to address this from the widest possible perspective. It means looking at non-fibre and fibre residues related opportunities covering different sectors: agriculture (e.g., composting), micro, small and medium size industry (e.g., soap making, weaving, animal feed, absorbent cotton production, cotton oil, mushroom growing, ...), energy (briquettes and pellets from cotton stalks possibly combined with other biomass sources, ...).
128. The purchase of machinery to engage in processing is, subject to ability to finance the same, just one of many ingredients for a successful business operation. Caution is needed when there is primarily focus on the technology side. Good understanding of likely demand and also competition in the market are preconditions for engaging in the business rather than mere risk factors to this end. The same applies to the organization of the regular supply of raw material inputs including awareness by and incentives for the suppliers thereof.
129. The design of a *pilot* project is expected to include the development of an upscaling strategy together with its beneficiaries in order to take the findings of the pilot further, based on its results. The development of a new donor funded project is not the same as the development of an upscaling strategy with the project beneficiaries.
130. If externally supported capacity building focuses on the development of regional/national action plans and policy recommendations, its donors/implementing agencies should not issue the outcome of such work as if a publication of their own. They should accept that the mere recognition of financial and technical support sources is not only sufficient but also more appropriate. If validated plans and recommendations do not carry the name/emblem of the beneficiary entities and users, ownership of such project outcomes remains ambiguous.
131. Interventions aimed at fostering particularly domestic investment should involve local actors engaged in financial intermediation and raise also *their* awareness of the business opportunities (in this case cotton by-products).
132. The development and implementation of a communication plan including how to disseminate project results at country level - other than through the UNCTAD website - is expected to stimulate the use of project results.

9. Recommendations on the way forward

133. Based on the evaluation findings, a total of ten (10) interrelated recommendations are made for consideration by the different project stakeholders/partners. The main purpose of these recommendations is (i) to facilitate discussion and support decision making in the pilot projects in the four countries on the next steps to be taken at their end and (ii) to feed into the

implementation strategy and guiding principles of the planned successor initiative. Each of the recommendations is accompanied by explanatory notes.

134. The 10 recommendations are the following:

Participating countries

- **Official project focal points**

- A. To ensure dissemination of the core documents that were produced in the context of the project to all country level public and private sector stakeholders that contributed, directly or indirectly, to these documents and are expected to play a role in the effective use of the outcomes of the pilot project.**

135. There are found to be gaps in the effective dissemination of the key project deliverables at country level, particularly the NAPs, the policy recommendations and the investment profiles. As time passed, there has also been staff turnover on the side of the counterparts, meaning that they have to be informed of the work done if not briefed by their predecessors. There is no need to go back to the start. Moreover, there is scope for showing country ownership of these validated documents by putting the country's emblems/letter head on these documents prior their local dissemination.

- **National cotton sector organizations (public and private)**

- B. To activate the planned but so far dormant multi-stakeholder steering mechanism and agree on a road map or implementation plan for cotton by-products' development that guides the way forward, specifying who is expected to do what and setting targets.**

136. It is crucial that momentum is kept in promoting by-products related value addition (which is per definition tightly linked to the development of cotton growing). This requires the mobilization of a wide range of parties, including financial intermediaries and relevant operational schemes and programmes in fields varying from agricultural productivity, SME/rural development to energy efficiency and climate change. This supposes also effective inter-ministerial cooperation, covering not only Ministries in charge of trade, industry and agriculture but also Ministries in charge of environment/energy as well as the Ministry of Finance. These Ministries are evidently expected to be an integral part of the steering mechanism and to contribute to the implementation plan and its actual implementation, in line with their respective mandates. But the ones driving the process are suggested to be the sector stakeholders, i.e., the entity/entities closest to the sector (public or private).

- C. (based on the above) To mobilize local resources (technical and financial) to kick off tangible, even if small scale, actions on the ground that demonstrate that cotton by-products can boost the incomes of smallholder farmers (men and women) and create jobs and livelihoods for youth.**

137. There is not only need to pursue awareness building at grassroots level but also need to demonstrate there is a market for cotton by-products and need for “models” or “champion enterprises” whose experience could incite others to engage in by-products’ related operations. A phased approach in supporting ‘real life’ commercial initiatives (starting small) will allow for testing key factors among which the market and the organization of the supply of inputs (residues). This can include, as and when needed, R&D work of local research institutes to finetune/improve processes on the ground, i.e., at enterprise level.
138. It is to be noted that, as in the case of the pilot project, the successor initiative will be focused on capacity building and does not foresee any grants or subsidies towards investment. The latter has to be raised by the beneficiary countries/prospective investors themselves. Rather than waiting for the next project (developed but not yet funded), the countries are encouraged to tap into existing schemes at country level to kick off pilot demonstrations in a real context. In case there are ongoing (even if rudimentary) initiatives in the countries involving cotton by-products, these may be (also) candidates for support to make them into true champions.

D. To organize Cotton Day(s) at country level, not only in the capital but also in the main cotton producing provinces/regions, once the evolution of COVID-19 permits.

139. Inspired by the WTO Cotton Days (a bi-annual parliamentary meeting within WTO and by the global World Cotton Day initiative (founded by WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, ICAC, FAO), there is room for organizing at country level events to demonstrate that “cotton matters” in the countries. As cotton sector development and cotton by-products’ development have to go hand in hand, it would be a multipurpose opportunity to stimulate cotton sector development in general and also reinvigorate the outcomes of the pilot project. It would contribute to creating awareness of farmers at grassroots level on by-products’ opportunities in the widest sense and of consumers on, e.g., stalks based briquettes being clean fuel and on the qualities of cotton oil. Depending on local interest, the days are expected to become a recurring event. Flexibility is called for, as there may be opportunities to insert attention to the cotton sector as an integral part of already existing/planned events, such as regional trade fairs or agri-business focused investment promotion meetings.

UNCTAD

E.To share with the country project focal points a folder containing all key outcome documents of the project as regards to each of the countries with a request for its dissemination to the national stakeholders (public and private) having contributed to these documents.

140. Several stakeholders interviewed indicated not having seen the documents that resulted from the consultations and investment profiling. It is possible that they received the same but forgot about it as time passed meanwhile or that the documents got lost at the time of staff turnover. Yet revitalizing attention is proposed to start with ensuring that the documents produced– that did not lose their relevance – are soonest in the hands of those at country level that are expected to take the work further. Merely referring to an UNCTAD project portal where all documents are available is not advisable. Also, UNCTAD is encouraged to suggest countries

to demonstrate their ownership by issuing and disseminating the documents they validated (NAPs; policy recommendations) with their own emblems and not as UNCTAD publications.

F. To engage, together with ITC and WTO, the beneficiary countries in conceiving and implementing the funds mobilisation strategy of the successor initiative.

141. The new initiative drafted by the three sister agencies has already been announced at different global events such as WTO's Cotton Days as well as in the wrap-up workshop in South Africa. It targets support to 10 African countries (including 3 of the 4 countries included in the DA funded pilot project). Whereas not envisaged in the strategy of the pilot phase, it is suggested to involve the targeted countries in funds mobilization efforts. This is not only desirable to create ownership from the start, but also makes sense to the extent local donor representatives play a role in decision making on funding. Moreover, it is suggested to include the principle of country cost-sharing in the strategy of the joint initiative. Domestic sources of funding are not necessarily limited to public funding. There could be opportunities for public-private partnerships, as there are expected to be enterprises with interest in by-products (for example, existing industries could be interested in the use of briquettes as alternative for fossil fuel/coal/firewood use as source of energy in their productions processes). The funds mobilization strategy could seek to convince a coalition of donors, not necessarily limited to one donor or several traditional donors. In this regard it could be envisaged to also try to involve private donors engaged in global "better cotton" type efforts, encouraging them to go deeper, i.e., going beyond traceability in textile/garment production by looking into issues at the level of cotton production (including by-products).

G. To examine how follow-on support to Zimbabwe could be organized, if it is excluded from the joint initiative (Zimbabwe not being a LDC).

142. Based on the assumption that the conditions of smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe engaged in cotton growing is not very different from the situation of their fellow farmers in Zambia, Uganda or Zimbabwe, it would be regrettable if the next round of support after the pilot project would exclude Zimbabwe. The country should also be supported on taking the pilot project further, like the other three countries. As Zimbabwe retained cotton as a priority in the context of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, this may be a route to be explored in funds mobilization with and for Zimbabwe. In any event, it is understood that yes/no inclusion of Zimbabwe depends primarily on the source of funding (not possible in case of EIF funding, yet possible if other donors contribute the bulk of funding of the new joint initiative).

H. To encourage ITC and WTO - partners in the follow-on initiative - to issue where feasible joint publications on cotton by-products rather than parallel publications

143. In addition to UNCTAD's publications on cotton by-products based on the work done in the context of the DA project, ITC recently issued from its side a publication, largely based on the work of the afore-mentioned UNCTAD project and its partners, on the potential of cotton by-products (Beyond the Fibre, December 2020). It is not unlikely that WTO will do the same based on its recent work under the EIF project that is de facto preparatory assistance for the follow-on joint initiative. Within the spirit of seeking collective efficiencies, it is encouraged to issue joint

publications on the subject matter. Whereas not necessarily easy to implement in case of separate funding by each agency, having a shared budget in the new joint initiative is expected to facilitate joint publications.

Other partners

COMESA Secretariat

- I. To clarify as requestor of the now completed project which role it expects to play in the follow-on support in its Member countries.**

144. COMESA Secretariat was not represented in the wrap-up workshop in South Africa, yet it would appear relevant to understand (i) how it sees its role in the next stage, based on its mandate and (ii) if there are new opportunities for support to the cotton sector, e.g., in the context of the start of the African Continental Free Trade Area as of January 2021 through its Accra-based Secretariat.

ICAC

- J. To pursue attention of its members to the wide range of business opportunities pertaining to cotton by-products.**

145. ICAC is an international membership-based organization of which all African cotton producing countries are member. It provides inter alia a forum for discussion on key cotton issues. In this context, the project was given the opportunity to present its work and achievements in several ICAC meetings. While ICAC's mandate is mainly focused on cotton production and not value addition, its Secretariat is encouraged to complement "facts about cotton" (featured on its website) with information on the range of opportunities of cotton by-products (fibre/non-fibre) in agriculture, industry and energy fields and also include reference to relevant publications in this regard (UNCTAD/other). Also, the discussions at the level of its committees could be a channel for globally advocating by-products in connexion with promoting cotton production and productivity. This is expected to contribute to widening awareness on these opportunities among the cotton community at large).

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

External Evaluation of Development Account Project 1617K - “Improving the value added of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa”

I. Introduction and Purpose

1. This document outlines the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the final independent project evaluation for the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project titled “Improving the value added of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA).”
2. The evaluation will provide accountability to UNCTAD management, the Capacity Development Office/Development Account of DESA, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.
3. The evaluation will provide assessments that are credible and useful, and also include practical and constructive recommendations. In particular, the evaluation will systematically and objectively assess project design, project management, implementation and overall project performance. On the basis of these assessments, the evaluation will formulate recommendations to project stakeholders, in particular to UNCTAD and/or the Capacity Development Office/Development Account of DESA with a view towards optimizing results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

II. Context of the evaluation

4. Cotton remains a strategic crop in Africa, especially for countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA). It generates export revenues, as well as employment and incomes for families in rural areas. Although cotton is primarily grown for its fibre (lint), other parts of the plant can be processed into by-products that add value to the sector and benefit all value-chain stakeholders, including farmers, processors and traders. Cotton by-products include cottonseed oil used for human consumption and soap manufacturing; seed cake used for animal feed; and waste fibres used for absorbent cotton and currency paper. In addition, cotton stalks can be used in the production of particle board, paper, and biomass fuels.
5. Despite these potentially high economic benefits, cotton by-products industries are underdeveloped in ESA owing to several impediments. These include, for example, the lack of adequate downstream infrastructure; weak enabling policy and institutional environment to support the development of cotton by-products industries; poor market information for cotton by-products; and, the lack of data to assess economic viability of, and opportunities for investments in cotton by-products businesses.
6. This project is developed in response to a specific request from the COMESA Secretariat to assist in the implementation of its Regional Cotton to Clothing Strategy, designed and owned by its member countries. The COMESA Secretariat proposed four project pilot countries, namely Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These countries are major cotton producers in the region that have recognized the importance of developing cotton by-products for a sustainable national cotton economy.
7. A country-level problem analysis included in the project document is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Country analysis

Country	Status of affairs
Uganda	<p>Cotton was Uganda's most important cash crop for several decades before 1970s but the sector became less important after the political and economic turmoil of that decade. However, the sector remains vital for a large number of people in the country, generating incomes for more than 250 000 households. Given the importance of cotton for the country, the government is under pressure to look for ways to reinvigorate it.</p> <p>Cotton by-products industries in the country are not well developed despite the existence of potential markets. For example, the demand for cottonseed oil is high as Uganda is a net importer of edible oils. A limited number of cotton processing factories produce edible oil which is sold in local markets, but they continue to rely on the less efficient expeller pressing technology. Few companies produce other cotton-by products such as meal for local dairy and poultry farmers, or soap. For example, in 2009, only one factory used cotton oil to produce soap.</p> <p>Although Uganda has restrictions on imported edible oils, as a means of promoting local oil production, the development of the by-products industries is limited, due to a number of challenges. These include low institutional support for investment promotion in cotton value addition industries; a lack of incentives for adding value to the by-products; and a lack of data and information on potential market opportunities for investors. In addition, processing facilities encounter problems such as disruptions to electricity supply, high interest rates and utilization of antiquated machinery.</p>
Tanzania	<p>Tanzania is a major cotton producer in the region. The cotton sector is a vital source of income for more than one-third of the country's total population.</p> <p>The cottonseed oil industry is relatively developed compared to other countries in the region. A number of crushing operators and ginneries produce cottonseed oil, albeit with less efficient expeller press technology. Most of the oil produced in the country is distributed through wholesalers and supermarkets and consumed locally, which suggests that the potential market exists for additional production of cottonseed oil. Some factories use limited quantities of oil for soap manufacturing. Other companies also produce cottonseed meal, which is sold locally or exported to the regional market. Cotton stalks are unused and are burnt in the fields after harvest.</p> <p>The full potential of cotton-by products industries is yet to be realized. For example, cottonseed oil represents less than 3 per cent of national edible oil production in Tanzania, despite the country's high demand of edible oils.⁷ There is a need to assess the challenges faced by the sub-sector (of cotton-by products) so as to identify appropriate actions required to enhance its development.</p>
Zambia	<p>A significant share (11 per cent) of the country's farmers is involved in cotton farming. Cotton production has increased in the country from less than 20 000 tonnes per annum before 2000 to more than 50 000 tonnes per annum afterwards.</p> <p>The by-products sector is not well developed. A limited number of ginneries process their ginned seed into oil, while others export the ginned seed, especially to South Africa. Some others produce cake, which is exported to Botswana to feed the country's large livestock sector.</p> <p>There is a need to fully explore the potential for national and regional markets to sustain the development of cotton-by products. In particular, the country needs data to assess the economic viability of by-products development and sound investment policies to promote the sub-sector.</p>
Zimbabwe	<p>Zimbabwe is a major cotton producing country in ESA. Between 350 000 and 500 000 small farmers grow cotton in the country; and more than 1 million people's livelihoods depend directly on the sector.</p> <p>In terms of cotton by-product development, the country is more advanced compared to others in the region. It exports by-products such as cotton linters, cottonseed oil and cotton waste to regional markets. Linters, hulls and cake are also exported to Europe. Soybean oil and cottonseed oil are the leading edible oils traded in local markets. The development of oil processing activities in the country is supported by an export ban on ginned cottonseed. However, the full potential of</p>

⁷ See the country's 2009-2015 Cotton Sector Development Strategy: A Stakeholder Roadmap for Increased Production, Productivity and Profitability. http://www.coton-acp.org/sites/default/files/docs/strategies/Tanzania/SECOND_COTTON_SECTOR_DEVELOPMENT_STRATEGY_REVISIED.pdf

Country	Status of affairs
	cotton by-products remains to be realised. For example, some of the by-products, such as linters and gin waste, that could be processed and traded, are often thrown away. The government has clearly identified the development of cotton by-products in its Cotton-to-clothing strategy for 2014-2019. Consonant with this strategy, the project will identify the main impediments to the sub-sector's development and propose adequate policy options and instruments to revitalize it.

8. In this regard, the project is designed to address some of these challenges, in particular the data and policy gaps that need to be filled to promote the value added of cotton by-products in the region.

III. Subject of the evaluation

9. The ultimate objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of selected countries in Eastern and Southern Africa to assess the economic viability of the development of cotton by-products and formulate evidence-based policies that improve the value added of the by-products promote their value addition.
10. The expected accomplishments of the project are as follows:
- a. Improved capacity of cotton value chain stakeholders, including government officials, the private sector and farmers' associations in target beneficiary countries to assess the potential value, market situation and prospects for cotton by-products; and
 - b. Improved capacity of policymakers in the beneficiary countries/region to (a) formulate evidence-based policies that improve the value added of cotton by-products; and (b) devise investment profiles to attract potential investors.
11. The main activities, as originally planned in the project document, include:
- (A1.1) Conduct surveys in four major cotton-producing countries in Eastern and Southern Africa; and prepare four country case studies analyzing the value chains of cotton by-products based on survey data;
 - (A1.3) Based on the outcomes of activities A1.1 and A1.2, organize a two-day national seminar in each of the four target countries so as to: (a) build capacity of cotton value chain stakeholders to understand the key issues linked with cotton by-products development, including their potential values, market situation and prospects; (b) disseminate the findings under A1.1 and A1.2 ; (c) agree on key elements of national action plans to improve the value added of cotton by-products;
 - (A1.4) Organize a study tour for cotton value chain stakeholders from the four beneficiary countries to learn from best practices on cotton by-products processing in model countries;
 - (A1.5) Prepare a synthesis report, summarizing and analysing the priority cotton by-product initiatives developed by the countries through the project activities, to be presented and discussed at the regional workshop (A2.4);
 - (A2.1) Organize a special session (1 day) for policymakers back to back with the national seminars organized under activity A1.3 to: (a) assess the current policy framework for cotton by-products processing in the beneficiary countries based on the studies prepared under activities A1.1 and A1.2 ; (b) review best practices in cotton by-products policy formulation; and (c) identify policy gaps and potential actions required to develop cotton by-products in these countries;
 - (A2.2) Provide advisory and consultancy assistance to support countries in developing evidence-based policies;
 - (A 2.3) Work with the investment promotion institutions in the four target countries to develop cotton by-product investment profiles to attract investments into the sector.
 - (A 2.4) Organize a two-day sub-regional meeting to share lessons learnt from this project and identify follow-up activities in developing cotton by-products.
12. The project is implemented by UNCTAD with collaboration of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

13. The project started in June 2016 with an approved budget of \$591,000 and was scheduled for completion by December 2019. In July 2019, the United Nations Development Account allocated the project an additional US\$100,000 from residual funds and granted an extension until 31 August 2020 in recognition of its good performance and a further extension to 31 December 2020 due to covid-19 pandemic.

IV. Evaluation scope, objectives and questions

14. This final evaluation of the project has the following specific objectives:
- Assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realised; and
 - Identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance the implementation of related interventions.
15. The evaluation will cover the duration of the project from June 2016 to December 2020.
16. The evaluation is expected to address the following questions under the below criteria (to be further developed in the inception report, as appropriate):
- a) Relevance**
- To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates?
 - What is UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area of work and to what extent did this project optimize it?
- b) Effectiveness**
- Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives and outcomes as enunciated in the project document? Is there evidence of any positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?
- c) Efficiency**
- Have project implementation modalities, and internal monitoring and control been adequate in ensuring the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely and cost-effective manner?
- d) Sustainability**
- Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project and/or have there been catalytic effects from the project both at the national/regional levels?
- e) Gender and human rights**
- To what extent a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention?
- f) Partnerships and synergies**
- To what extent has the project advanced partnerships amongst project participants with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector in support of results, and sustainability of results?
- g) Responses to Covid-19**
- What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?
 - How did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?

V. Methodology

17. The evaluation will adopt a theory-driven, utilization-focused approach. It will be guided by the project-results framework and ensure a gender and human rights responsive evaluation. The evaluator is required

to use a mixed-method approach, including qualitative as well as quantitative data gathering and analysis as the basis for a triangulation exercise of all available data to draw conclusions and findings.

18. In view of the current global pandemic situation, innovative methods for data collection are required. Hence, methods for data gathering for this evaluation include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Desk review of project documents and relevant materials;
 - Collect and analyze relevant web and social media metrics related to the outputs of the project;
 - Observe a sample of virtual meetings, webinars and other activities to be implemented by the project, as appropriate;
 - Telephone/skype interviews with relevant UNCTAD staff;
 - Online surveys of beneficiaries of the project, and other stakeholders, as may be required; conduct follow-up interviews as may be necessary;
 - Virtual focus group discussion, as appropriate;
 - Telephone/skype interviews with a balanced sample of project participants, project partners and other relevant stakeholders.
19. Contribution analysis could be undertaken in particular to assess project results.
20. As part of the desk review, which will lead to an Inception Report, the evaluator will use the project document as well as additional documents such as mission reports; progress reports, financial reports, publications, studies - both produced under the project as well as received from national and regional counterparts. A list of project beneficiaries as well as other partners and counterparts involved in the project will be provided to the evaluator.
21. The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in an Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including developing tailor-made questions that target different stakeholders (based on a stakeholder analysis), and developing the sampling strategy and identifying the sources and methods for data collection. The methodology should follow the UNCTAD and Development Account Inception Report Guidelines.
22. The evaluator is required to submit a separate final list of those interviewed in the Annex of the evaluation report. The evaluator is to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders, bearing in mind the need to include those in a disadvantaged or minority position as appropriate.

VI. Organization of the evaluation

(i) Deliverables and Expected Outputs

23. The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, should draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project.
24. More specifically, the evaluation should:
 - Highlight what has been successful and can be replicated elsewhere;
 - Highlight, as appropriate, any specific achievements that provide additional value for money and/or relevant multiplier effects;
 - Indicate shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the project while, at the same time, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action;
 - Make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how UNCTAD's work in this area can be further strengthened in order to address beneficiaries' needs and create synergies through collaboration with other UNCTAD divisions, international organizations and development partners, and other international forums;
 - Draw lessons of wider application for the replication of the experience gained in this project in other projects/countries;
25. Three deliverables are expected out of this evaluation (following Evaluation Unit's templates):

- i. An inception report⁸;
 - ii. A draft evaluation report; and
 - iii. The final evaluation report⁹
26. The inception report should summarize the desk review and specify the evaluation methodology, determining thereby the exact focus and scope of the exercise, including the evaluation questions, the sampling strategy and the data collection instruments.
27. The final report of the evaluation must be composed of the following key elements:
- i. Executive summary;
 - ii. Introduction of the evaluation, a brief description of the projects, the scope of the evaluation and a clear description of the methodology used;
 - iii. Findings and assessments according to the criteria listed in Section IV of this ToR, with a comparison table of planned and implemented project activities and outputs; and
 - iv. Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the assessments.
28. All the evaluation assessments must be supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and well-substantiated logic. It follows that proposed recommendations must be supported by the findings and be relevant, specific, practical, actionable, and time-bound recommendations.

(ii) Description of Duties

29. The UNCTAD Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU), in close collaboration with the Division on international trade and commodities (DITC), will facilitate the evaluation as undertaken by an independent evaluator.
30. The evaluator reports to the Chief of EMU. S/he will undertake the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the EMU and in coordination with the project manager. The evaluator is responsible for the evaluation design, data collection, analysis and reporting as provided in this TOR. The evaluator will submit a copy-edited final report to UNCTAD.
31. The evaluator shall act independently, in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and in her/his capacities and not as a representative of any government or organisation that may present a conflict of interest. S/he will have no previous experience of working with the project or of working in any capacity linked with it.
32. The evaluator should observe the UNEG guidelines, standards¹⁰, and norms¹¹ for evaluations in the UN system, as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy¹², in the conduct of this assignment. The evaluator needs to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluations to the extent possible.¹³ The evaluator needs to ensure a complete, fair, engaging, unreserved, and unbiased assessment. In case of difficulties, uncertainties or concern in the conduct of the evaluation, the evaluator needs to report immediately to the Chief of EMU to seek guidance or clarification.
33. The project team will support the evaluation, by providing desk review documents (following EMU desk review documents guidelines), contact details of project stakeholders as well as any additional documents that the evaluator requests. It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure senior management

⁸ Quality of the inception report should meet those set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=608

⁹ Quality of the evaluation report should meet those set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607>

¹⁰ "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Standards (2005); http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22;

¹¹ "Norms for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Norms (2005); http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=21;

¹² "Evaluation Policy" of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), December 2011. December 2011, http://unctad.org/Sections/edm_dir/docs/osg_EvaluationPolicy2011_en.pdf.

¹³ "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2014): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations: Towards UNEG Guidance" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2011): <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>.

engagement throughout the evaluation and timely feedback in the quality assurance and factual clarification process coordinated by the Evaluation Unit. The project team will review and provide comments on the inception, draft and final reports with a view on quality assurance and factual accuracies.

34. The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit acts as clearing entity during the main steps of this evaluation. It endorses the TOR and approves the selection of the proposed evaluator. The Evaluation and Monitoring Unit reviews the evaluation methodology, clears the draft report, performs quality assurance of the final report and participates in disseminating the final report to stakeholders within and outside of UNCTAD. The Evaluation Unit engages the project manager throughout the evaluation process in supporting the evaluation and validating the reports.

(iii) Timetable

35. The total duration of the evaluation is equivalent to 25 days of work and will take place over the period 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021.

(iv) Monitoring and Progress Control

36. The evaluator must keep the Evaluation Unit informed of the progress made in the evaluation on a regular basis.
37. The evaluator will submit the first draft of inception report by **18 December 2020**. The Report should include draft data collection instruments for review.
38. The first draft of the report should be presented to the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit by **1 February 2021** for quality assurance purposes (approximately 1 week). The revised draft report will then be shared with the project manager for factual clarification and comments (approximately 2 weeks).
39. The deadline for submission of the final report will be **31 March 2021**.
40. The contract concludes, and payment issued, upon satisfactory receipt of the final report.

(v) Qualifications and Experience¹⁴

- **Education:** Advanced university degree in economics, international development, public administration, rural development, or related field.
- **Experience:** At least 10 years of experience in conducting evaluations, preferably on interventions in the areas of trade-related technical assistance and capacity building. Demonstrated knowledge of trade, the cotton value chain and the cotton sectors, particularly in African countries, is an advantage. Experience in gender mainstreaming is desirable.
- **Language:** Fluency in oral and written English.

(vi) Conditions of Service

41. The evaluator will serve under a consultancy contract as detailed in the applicable United Nations rules and regulations. The evaluator will not be considered as staff member or official of the United Nations but shall abide by the relevant standards of conduct. The United Nations is entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights deriving from this exercise.

¹⁴ The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.

Annex 2: Project logical framework

Intervention logic	Indicators	Means of verification
<p>Objective: To strengthen the capacity of selected countries in Eastern and Southern Africa to assess the economic viability of the development of cotton by-products and formulate evidence-based policies that improve the value added of the by-products and promote their value addition</p>		
<p>EA1 Improved capacity of cotton value chain stakeholders, including government officials, the private sector and farmers' associations in target beneficiary countries to assess the potential value, market situation and prospects for cotton by-products</p>	<p>IA 1.1 Four target countries have collected and analysed statistics on the cotton by-products value chain, including the availability of raw material, processing and market conditions of these by-products (i.e., cotton seed and/or stalk).</p>	<p>Country case studies which include the analysis of data collected during the surveys in the four beneficiary countries. The project baseline for participating beneficiary countries is zero.</p>
	<p>IA 1.2 National action plans¹⁷ aiming to increase the value added of cotton by-products have been developed and adopted by cotton value chain stakeholders in at least three of the four target countries</p>	<p>Meeting reports of national seminars under activity A1.3. The project baseline for participating beneficiary countries is zero.</p>
<p>A1.1 Conduct surveys in four major cotton-producing countries in Eastern and Southern Africa; and prepare four country case studies analyzing the value chains of cotton by-products based on survey data; UNCTAD will collaborate with COMESA and national/regional statistical institution under contractual arrangements to conduct surveys and prepare four case studies. The surveys will cover data and information on the cotton by-products' national and regional value chains, including characteristics of local and regional cotton by-products markets, structure of the cotton by-products industry, operating costs for cotton processors, demand for and supply of raw material as well as existing policies that may have impacts on the development of the by-products.</p>		
<p>A1.2 Prepare a synthesis report based on the outcomes of the activity A1.1. UNCTAD will work with international/regional consultants to prepare a synthesis report using cases studies prepared under A1.1. The synthesis report will also identify best practices from countries where the industries of cotton by-products are well developed. The report will come up with effective policy stances needed to improve the valued added of cotton by-products in the targeted countries.</p>		
<p>A1.3 Based on the outcome of activities A1.1 and A1.2, organize a two-day national seminar in each of the four target countries so as to: (a) build capacity of cotton value chain stakeholders to understand the key issues linked with cotton by-products development, including their potential values, market situation and prospects; (b) disseminate the findings under A1.1 and A1.2 ; (c) agree on key elements of national action plans to improve the value added of cotton by-products (the key elements would include elaborating evidence-based policies and designing investment profiles to promote the value added of cotton-by products; these two elements are covered by the project's objectives); and (d) discuss and establish a multi-stakeholder committee in each of the beneficiary countries to monitor the implementation of the action plans.¹⁸</p>		

A1.4 Organize a study tour for cotton value chain stakeholders from the four beneficiary countries to learn from best practices on cotton by-products processing in model countries;

A study tour for the cotton value chains stakeholders from the beneficiary countries will be organized so that they can learn from best practices on cotton by-products processing. The tour will be organized in a host country which is considered as a model in the development of cotton by-products. A consultant from the host country will be selected to lead the tour. Each beneficiary country will have 2 participants comprised of a government officer and a private sector representative coming from a national cotton ginners/processors association. COMESA will also send one participant in the study tour.

To ensure the study tour benefits to countries, a detailed mission report will be written after the tour and shared with relevant stakeholders (through their network or associations) along cotton value chains in the beneficiary countries. Moreover, the participants to the study tour will be invited to attend the regional meeting (i.e. activity A2.4) and share their experience and lessons learnt.

Increasing further the number of participants (including representatives of cotton producers) to the tour is also important to fulfill capacity building objective of this activity. Therefore, UNCTAD would seek additional funds, preferably from its partners or the host country to finance more participants for the study tour. In addition, as the study tour is expected to take place at the end of year 3, savings from implementation of previous project activities could be used to fund more participants.

EA 2 Improved capacity of policymakers in the beneficiary countries/region to (a) formulate evidence-based policies that improve the value added of cotton by-products; and (b) devise investment profiles to attract potential investors	IA 2.1 At least, three of the four target countries have drafted concrete policies to enhance the value added of cotton by-products	Draft policy papers to enhance the value added of cotton by-products. The draft policy papers shall be completed and made available to relevant ministries dealing with trade and/or agricultural issues.
	IA 2.2 Cotton by-product investment profiles developed in three of the four target countries	Investments profiles to promote the value added of cotton by-products. Investment profiles will be made available to the investment promotion institutions.

A 2.1 Organize a special session (1 day) for policymakers back-to-back with the national seminars organized under activity A1.3 to: (a) assess the current policy framework for cotton by-products processing in the beneficiary countries based on the studies prepared under activities A1.1 and A1.2; (b) review best practices in cotton by-products policy formulation; and (c) identify policy gaps and potential actions required to develop cotton by-products in these countries

A 2.2 Provide assistance through advisory missions (UNCTAD) and consultancy (consultants) to support countries in developing evidence-based policies; UNCTAD and regional/national consultants will work with relevant ministries in each beneficiary country to identify and elaborate necessary policy options needed to develop cotton by-products industries. It may include the establishment of an inter-institutional task force or committee composed of government officials from relevant ministries to formulate, discuss and agree on specific trade and development policies which would contribute to promoting the value added of cotton-by products. The consultant duties here will include providing substantive inputs, comments and acting as resource-person for the activity A2.2.

A 2.3 Work with the investment promotion institutions in the four target countries to develop cotton by-product investment profiles to attract investments into the sector. This activity will be delivered through advisory missions (UNCTAD) and consultancy (consultants). The profiles will be a document prepared jointly by UNCTAD Staff and officials from the pilot countries' investment promotion institutions, highlighting current and potential market opportunities, the support provided by national and local governments, and, investment incentives available for the cotton by-products production. The investment profiles will be disseminated through various channels including websites of relevant ministries or investment promotion institutions and private sectors networks. The profiles will also be made available for foreign investors through the embassies/consulates of the project beneficiary countries. The specific duties of the consultant here will include providing substantive inputs, comments and acting as resource-person for activities when designing the investment profiles.

A 2.4 Organize a two-day sub-regional meeting to share lessons learnt from this project and identify follow-up activities in developing cotton by-products. This sub-regional meeting will help conclude the project, share lessons learnt and identify follow-up actions to sustain the impact of the project. Participants and panelists will also discuss and identify how this project could be scaled up and replicated in other cotton producing countries across the region. It will also help identifying potential other cotton producing countries where the project can be replicated. Participants include officials, private stakeholders such as potential investors and representatives from cotton processors and representatives of farmers or producers associations from the beneficiary countries as well as from other cotton producing countries in ESA.

Annex 3: Stakeholder mapping/analysis

Stakeholder	Stake in the project and the topic that the project addresses	Level of influence over topic and project/ways in which affected by topic and project	Expected use of the evaluation results	Way(s) to involve this stakeholder in the evaluation process
UNCTAD	Overall responsible for project design and management	In project steering and management position	Lessons for future projects on same topic	At core of evaluation process: source of information, sharing self-perception on performance of project, review of draft evaluation report and drawing attention to factual errors in draft report if any); overall management of evaluation and final clearance of report by UNCTAD's EMU
COMESA Secretariat and UNECA (see also below)	Requestor of project and core partner	Involved as partner in project implementation	Promoting follow-up work (regional/country level) based on achievements and lessons from four pilot countries including dissemination thereof to other cotton producing countries in the region	Source of information, sharing perception on performance of project as project partner
Chief counterparts (in the 4 target countries) and other public/ private sector stakeholders at country level	Submitted formal request to be included in this project (Ministries), partners in implementation of specific activities or target beneficiaries	Involved in country level project planning (Ministries) and implementation (Ministries/other organizations) and expected to be involved in its follow-up, also after project closure	At the core of the use of project work and achievements of the project, including of the evaluation findings (after project closure)	Source of information, sharing perception on performance of project and on priorities as regards the way forward
Project staff (national experts)	Direct role in different stages of project implementation (background paper, survey,	Working based on ToR/specific assignments and under guidance of Project Manager	Depending on the extent in which involved in follow-on work in the country	Source of information, sharing self-perception on performance of project

	workshop facilitation, investment profile preparation, synthesis report)			
Project partners at activity level	Cooperation agencies as envisaged in project document (e.g., UNECA - see above) or identified and selected during implementation (e.g., CIRCOT/India, Cotton South Africa)	Playing a direct role/provided a direct contribution to (some) project activities at country level and/or through south-south cooperation	Dissemination of lessons for future projects on the topic (e.g., UNECA); role in follow-up work such as technology transfer/advice (e.g., CIRCOT)	Source of information, sharing perception on performance of project as project partners
Other partners	Building on project pilot experience and cooperation agencies in spin-off initiative (ITC-UNCTAD-WTO); others representing important provider of TA in sector (GIZ) or opportunity for visibility of project work (WTO Cotton Days/Cotton Meetings, ICAC)	Sharing of experience, information (based on complementary mandates); joint funds mobilization/implementation building on pilot project work	Eventual use of evaluation results expected in follow-on joint initiative (ITC-UNCTAD-WTO)	Source of information, sharing perception on the sector covered and lessons learned in other TA; to the extent involved in project activities, sharing perception on performance of project as project partner
UN Development Account Office	Funding source; end-of-project evaluation being compulsory step in DA funded projects	Initial project appraisal and approval; review of annual progress reports; review and acceptance of project/budget amendments and of final project report	Lessons for future UNDA projects in general and regarding the topic of the project	Use of final evaluation report

Annex 4 : Evaluation Matrix (*Interview guidelines*)

		Sources of information	Data collection/ analysis methods
A. Project identification and design			
How were the four countries selected (criteria; process) and to what extent was the project design based on a need assessment (analysis of situation/problems/opportunities and of stakeholder capacities)?		UNCTAD Project Manager (PM) COMESA Secretariat Project document Reports of inception missions	Interviews Content Analysis
To what extent did the design of the project follow a logical framework approach? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project’s design have a clear thematically focused development objective? • Were the project outcomes clear, realistic, relevant, addressing the problems/opportunities identified and providing a clear description of the benefits or improvements that are expected to be achieved after project completion? • Is the results hierarchy in the logical framework –from activities to outputs, outcome(s) to overall objective – logical and consistent? • Can the attainment of the overall development objective, outcome(s) and outputs be determined by a set of SMART verifiable indicators as defined in the logical framework? • Were baselines established to measure progress? 		Project document incl. its logical framework	Content Analysis
Other design aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were cross-cutting issues reflected in the design of the project? • Were the assumptions adequate and were important external factors and risks that could affect project performance identified (as well as mitigation measures)? • Were the project steering, management, monitoring and reporting mechanisms clearly described? • Were the role and responsibilities of the different project partners clearly described? 		Project document	Content Analysis
B. Project implementation			
Core evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Sources of information	Methods and tools for (i) data collection and (ii) data analysis

Relevance and Ownership				
Q1. To what extent and how did the project design and implementation properly reflect and address the development and strategies of the selected countries (relevance) and to what extent and how are the local stakeholders involved in the implementation (ownership)?				
<i>Relevance</i>	How relevant is the project to (i) regional (COMESA) priorities/strategies, (ii) needs/priorities and strategies in the selected focus countries, (iii) to UNCTAD (incl. alignment to its mandate, to SDG priorities and to country level collaboration among UN agencies)	*To what extent did the project take into account and was relevant to the regional (COMESA) and to the national policies and strategies in each of the four selected countries? *To what extent were the activities and achievements thereof addressing the needs/opportunities of the target countries? *If there were prior related efforts in this field in the country, to what extent and how was the project different and complementary thereto? *How is the project anchored to UNCTAD's mandate and experience? *To what extent are the project's objectives sought part of the country specific UN Cooperation Framework and aligned to SDG priorities?	UNCTAD PM and DA Focal Point COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Project experts (field) Delegates from the Missions in Geneva if involved in project design/implementation Project partners Project document Progress reports UNCTAD strategic documents National development/trade strategies UN Cooperation Framework of each participating country	Interviews Content Analysis
<i>Ownership</i>	To what extent were country stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation	*To what extents were the country focal points and other national stakeholders involved in the design/launching stage of the project at country level *To what extent did they support the implementation of the project? In what forms (political, technical, administrative, financial/other)?		
Effectiveness and impact				
Q2. What are the project's key achievements in terms of progress towards the intended results (effectiveness) and what is the likelihood for the project to achieve the intended objective (potential impact)?				
<i>Effectiveness</i>	Which results have been/are likely to be achieved?	*To what extent have the intended results been produced in each of the four countries? Is progress measured against baselines? *How do the counterparts, UNCTAD and the	UNCTAD PM COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Missions/Geneva	Interviews Content Analysis

		<p>partners (i) perceive the quality of the results and (ii) use these results? If not, what have been the constraining factors?</p> <p>*Has the implementation strategy been appropriate in order to achieve the results? *Are there external factors which have affected the effectiveness of the project?</p>	<p>Project experts (field)</p> <p>Project partners</p> <p>Progress/other reports</p>	
<i>Impact</i>	<p>What is the likelihood of impact at this stage?</p>	<p>*Have outcomes been or are likely to be achieved through the utilization of outputs?</p> <p>*Have developmental changes (economic, environmental, social, inclusiveness) occurred or are they likely to occur as a result of the interventions (including expected contribution towards SDGs)?</p> <p>*Are there other catalytic effects of the project at both the national and regional levels?</p> <p>*Were there other direct/indirect/foreseen/unforeseen effects (positive/negative) so far?</p>	<p>UNCTAD PM</p> <p>COMESA Secretariat</p> <p>National counterparts</p> <p>Missions/Geneva</p> <p>Project experts (field)</p> <p>Project partners</p> <p>Progress/other reports</p>	

Efficiency of implementation

Q3. Has the project “done things right” in terms of inputs covering: adequacy of human and financial resources; timeliness and quality of inputs; quality and adequacy of planning and monitoring (**efficiency**)?

Adequacy, timeliness and quality of inputs	Were all inputs and services provided in an efficient manner?	<p>To what extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have resources (funds; human resources, time) been allocated strategically and appropriately to achieve the intended results? • have UNCTAD and – to the extent applicable – counterpart inputs been provided as planned and were these adequate to meet requirements and provided in a timely manner? • was the quality of UNCTAD inputs and services (expertise, training, methodologies, etc.) as planned and did it lead to the production of outputs? 	UNCTAD PM and UNCTAD DA focal point COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Project experts (field) Progress/other reports	Interviews Content Analysis
Adequacy of steering, management and monitoring	To what extent is a project steering, management and monitoring system in place at project level?	<p>*How is the project being steered and managed? *To what extent has M&E function been developed and managed (M&E design and implementation) at project level? *monitoring data adequate? Are these data disaggregated (gender/age)?</p>	UNCTAD PM and UNCTAD DA focal point COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Progress/other reports (mission reports, minutes of steering meetings)	Interviews Content Analysis
Q4. <i>What is the likelihood that results/benefits will continue after the project ends (likely sustainability)? Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project?</i>				
Likelihood of project benefits to continue beyond the intervention	How sustainable are the results achieved?	<p>To what extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are the developmental changes that have occurred or are likely to occur as a result of the interventions sustainable? • was sustainability correctly factored in into the project strategy? Were risks analysed and assumptions identified at design stage? Has an exit strategy/approach towards the search for sustainability been 	UNCTAD PM and DA Focal Point COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Project partners Progress/other reports	Interviews Content Analysis

		<p>formulated and is it appropriately monitored during implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is there prospect for technical, organizational & financial sustainability of the support provided by the project? • are the partnerships established sustainable? 		
<p>Q5. To what extent were a gender mainstreaming strategy and, if appropriate, a human rights-based approach incorporated in the design and implementation of the project, and can results be identified in this regard (cross-cutting issues)?</p>				
Gender mainstreaming	To what extent were gender equality issues addressed in the project (design and implementation)?	<p>To what extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have gender issues been mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the project? • have gender related data collection and analyses been included in baseline studies, monitoring and reporting? • have women benefited (directly and indirectly) from the project or to what extent can they be expected to benefit? 	<p>UNCTAD PM and DA Focal Point COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Project experts (field) Progress/other reports</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
Other cross-cutting issues	To what extent were other cross-cutting issues addressed in the programme/project, such as human rights and environmental dimensions?	<p><i>Human rights:</i> Did the activities address the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination? Do the intervention results respond to the needs of all stakeholders? Were the intervention resources used in an efficient way to address HR in the implementation (e.g. participation of targeted stakeholders, collection of disaggregated data, according to criteria such as gender, age, ethnicity, location, income etc. (to the extent applicable)?</p> <p><i>Environment:</i> To what extent and how did the activities address environmental concerns and with which results?</p>	<p>UNCTAD PM and DA Focal Point National counterparts Project experts (field) Progress/other reports</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>

Q6. To what extent has coordination with related efforts (internally) and also partnering with other public and private sector organizations (external complementarities/synergies) enabled or enhanced the project results and the likely sustainability thereof? (partnerships and synergies)				
Adequacy of coordination among related initiatives including complementarities (internal/external)	Were there efforts aimed at coordination and search for with a view to generating collective efficiencies?	<p>*Were there synergy benefits in relation to other UNCTAD activities at global, regional and country level (internal synergies)?</p> <p>*Were there synergy benefits in relation to related past/ongoing/planned activities of others at global, regional and country level or are there opportunities to establish/ strengthen such linkages (external synergies)?</p> <p>*In case of cooperation, what was in concrete terms the nature thereof (by partner)? To what extent have these partnerships (with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector) enhanced the likely sustainability of the project results?</p>	UNCTAD PM COMESA Secretariat National counterparts Project experts (field) Project partners Progress/other reports	Interviews Content Analysis
Q7. To what extent did the COVID-19 situation affect project activities in 2020? What adjustments were made in response to the new priorities in relation to COVID-19? To what extent and how did these adjustments affect the project work and planned achievements? (responses to COVID-19)				
Did COVID-2019 affect the project and how?	Which adjustments were made in response to the COVID-19 situation?	What was possible administratively in terms of adjustments? What was the effect of these adjustments on the project activities, outputs and planned achievements?	UNCTAD PM and DA Focal Point COMESA Secretariat National counterparts	Interviews Content Analysis

Annex 5 References to secondary information sources

List of documents by type of document	Year
General project information	
Concept Note	non dated (est. 2015)
Project document, UNDA 1617K	non dated
Annual Progress Report 2016	non dated
Annual Progress Report 2017	non dated
Annual Progress Report 2018	Jan 2019
Annual Progress Report 2019	Jan 2020
Additional funding request	2019
Extension request	2020
Budget status	as at Dec 2020
Inception mission Zimbabwe and Tanzania, Mission Report	Nov. 2016
Inception mission Zambia, Mission Report	March 2017
Inception mission Uganda, Mission Report	April 2017
Report on study visit, 14-18 Jan? 2019, India	February 2019
Mission reports, India (preparation of study tour and study tour)	Nov. 2018 and Jan. 2019
Synthesis report	July 2019
Regional workshop, 28-30 May 2019, South Africa, report	July 2019
Power Point presentation on project, WTO Cotton Days	29 Nov. 2018
Power Point presentation on project, 77 th ICAC Plenary	Dec. 2018
Project Newsletters (6): 2017: Feb and June; 2018: Jan and July; 2019: April and July	2017, 2018, 2019
Documents/reports on focus countries	
*Project work in Tanzania	
Background Paper – Cotton and its by-products in URT	August 2016
Analysis of cotton by-products survey	2017
National Workshop 15-17 Nov. 2017 report	2017
Draft Action Plan and Policy Recommendations	2017
Matrix on stakeholders comments to validate the National Action Plan	Sept 2018
*Project work in Uganda	
Background Paper – Cotton and its by-products in Uganda	March 2017
Analysis of cotton by-products survey	2018
National Workshop 14-16 March 2018 report	2018
National Action Plan and Policy Recommendations – validated by the Cotton Development Organisation, 4 October 2018	2018
Investment profiles	2019
*Project work in Zambia	
Background Paper – Cotton and its by-products in Zambia	Dec. 2016
Analysis of cotton by-products survey	2017
National Workshop 6-8 Dec. 2017 report	2017
National Action Plan and Policy Recommendations – validated by PS/MCTI, 29 July 2019	2017/2019
Investment profile	2019
*Project work in Zimbabwe	

Background Paper – Cotton and its by-products in Zimbabwe	August 2016
Analysis of cotton by-products survey	2017
National Workshop 27-20 Sept 2017 report	2017
National Action Plan and Policy Recommendations – validated by Secretary for Industry, Commerce and Enterprise, 31 January 2018	2017/2018
Investment profile	2019
Other documents	
World Bank, D. Tschirley et al. (eds), Organization and performance of cotton sectors in Africa	2009
COMESA, Regional Strategy for Cotton-to-Clothing Value Chain	June 2009
OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook	2018 and 2019
WTO, Why cotton matters to us, statements by WTO, FAO, UNCTAD, ITC, ICAC, and Cotton-4 as well as testimonials by a range of different organizations/corporations at the occasion of the World Cotton Day Launch event	7 Oct. 2019
Joint UNCTAD, ITC, WTO Initiative, Cotton by-product development in African LDCs, Project proposal	version Dec 2020
ITC, Beyond the Fibre – Capturing cotton’s full value in Africa	2020