



The voice of small business at COP27

Central Asia, Middle East, Africa

Boosting small businesses in textiles and clothing

The textile and clothing sector has a major impact on the global economy.

- ▶ **60 to 70 million jobs**
(75% women)
- ▶ Global export:
\$853 billion in 2021
- ▶ **Sustainable**
investment opportunities

The challenges

Access to markets, COVID-19 disruptions

In developing countries, small and medium-sized companies working in textiles and clothing have difficulties in adapting to changing market and client requirements, and consequently in accessing markets. Additionally, the severe disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated changes in the sector's trade patterns; for instance, retailers now increasingly require environmental and social compliance and digitalization.

Relying on preferential market access only is no longer enough to serve clients who want to buy sustainable and high-quality clothes. Moreover, companies are expected to digitalize along the supply chain, while buyers look for nearshoring opportunities and multi-country suppliers.

GTEX/MENATEX

An ITC Programme with impact

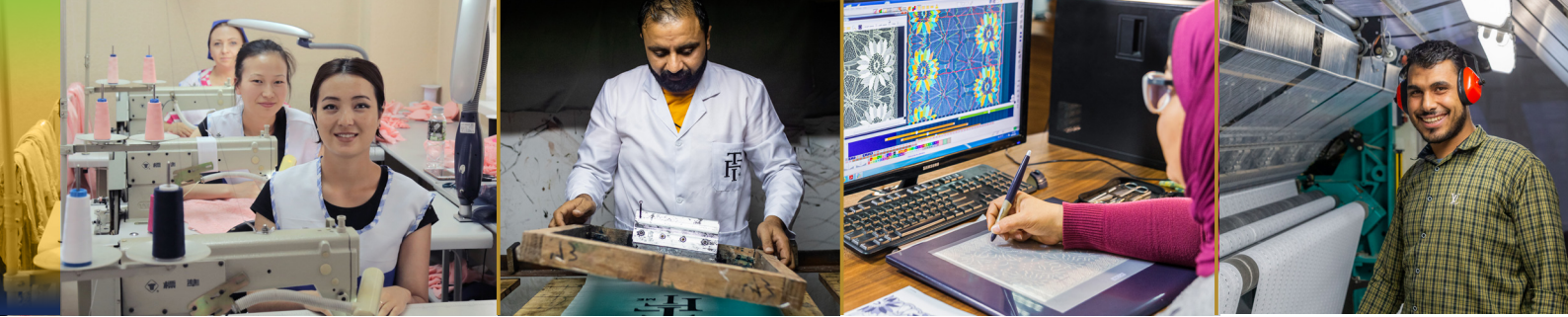
To address the urgent needs of small businesses in the sector, the International Trade Centre (ITC) through its Global Textiles and Clothing Programme (GTEX) and its related work in the Middle East and North Africa (MENATEX) strengthens the textiles and clothing sector in six developing countries. GTEX/MENATEX increases the export capabilities of enterprises and subsequently jobs along the value chain, while reducing poverty and the sector's environmental impact. Apart from working directly with enterprises, the programme also supports an institutional ecosystem capable of moving the sector forward.

Boosting skills of small businesses

A sustainable approach

ITC builds the capacity of small businesses along the value chain. This includes technical training and coaching at the production level, including quality improvement and lean manufacturing. At the pre-production stage, ITC supports companies in sustainable sourcing, product and design development. At post-production, companies develop their marketing and sales strategies, including on e-commerce, and are linked to new clients. Finally, improving their social and environmental performance is fundamental to the programme.

Knowledge management and strategic linkages complement these national efforts, with enterprises learning from global best practices. It also builds sector-related networks and initiatives that shape the sector's future. In addition, the four signatory countries of the Agadir Agreement (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) are deepening regional collaboration and trade.



Partnerships for an improved business environment

GTEX/MENATEX supports **business support organizations** by improving their operations and expanding their service portfolios for companies. Better collaboration among these institutions means better support to enterprises.

Linking **academia** and **vocational training institutions** to the industry also ensures sustainable job creation. Industry-specific curricula and regular internship placements link students to value-added jobs in the industry.

How does ITC address value addition?

The smiley curve for value addition in the global apparel value chain shows where and through which services companies can capture value and add it to their operations. It also reflects opportunities for closer collaboration at the regional level to address missing links in the value chain.

Contributing to the UN SDGs

GTEX/MENATEX emphasizes economic empowerment and paid job opportunities for women, youth, refugees and migrants and other vulnerable populations. ITC contributes to the UN 2030 Agenda by reducing poverty, tackling climate change, encouraging responsible production, investing in industry innovation, decent job, enhancing the academia and knowledge of professionals in the sector, supporting gender equality, and encouraging new connections and partnerships throughout the value chain.



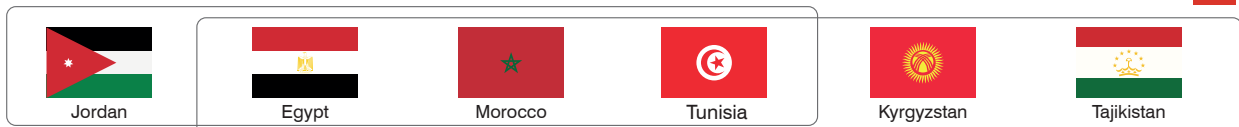
ITC data

- Working with more than **200 garment manufacturers**
- Impacting over **60,000 lives**
- Training more than **1,000 workers and managers**

Funding

GTEX is funded by Switzerland and co-funded Sweden for the MENA region. ITC is implementing the programme in close collaboration with the Swiss State Secretariat of Economics Affairs (SECO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The programme runs until December 2023.

 **Funded by Sida**



Funded by SECO 