InTex

www.unep.org/intex

UN environment programme

Funded by the European Union

What is InTex?

The project "Innovative Business Practices and Economic Models in the Textile Value Chain" (InTex) is a three-year UNEP project funded by the **European Union (EU)**.
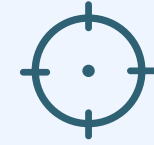
The InTex project has **five components**. Two components have global reach and three components focus on national implementation in three countries in Africa: **Kenya, South Africa, and Tunisia.**
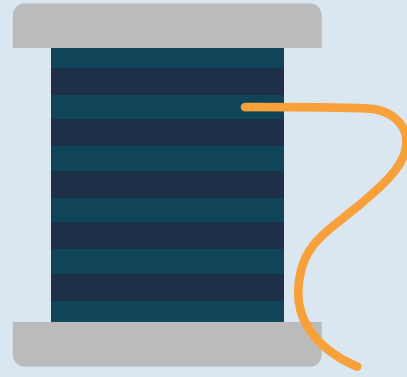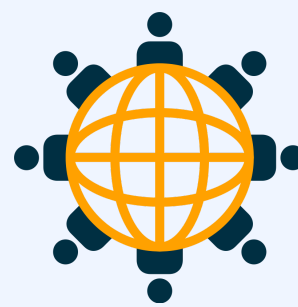
Project duration

From September 2020 to January 2024.

Global components

- **Increase access to environmental and lifecycle data** so businesses and policymakers can make better-informed decisions and implement relevant strategies.

- **Provide evidence** of the **environmental and socio-economic impacts** of the different sustainable economic models in the textiles value chain, to help **bridge the science-policy gap and raise awareness** on the potential impacts of adopting and fostering innovative sustainable and circular policies and practices.

"Achieving circularity in textiles will require entirely new business models and conducive policy frameworks to evolve from an industry producing large volumes of disposable items, to one producing valuable items that remain in use for a long period before being repurposed or recycled."

(UNEP 2020, **Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain – Global Stocktaking**, www.oneplanetnetwork.org/new-report-launched-sustainability-and-circularity-textile-value-chain)

3 key concepts

Eco-innovation

UNEP's **Eco-innovation approach** guides SMEs in incorporating circularity and resilience into every aspect of their business strategy and underlying business models, operations, products, and processes to reduce the environmental and social impact of human activity.

This results in an agile, reactive, and competitive company. UNEP provides a manual, sector guidance, and other tools to apply the eco-innovation approach. The UNEP eco-innovation website can be found here: http://unep.ecoinnovation.org/

Product Environmental Footprint

The **European Commission's Product Environmental Footprint** (PEF) measures the environmental performance of a good or service throughout its life cycle (from extraction of raw materials, through production and use, to final waste management).

As it is a standardized methodology, SMEs can gain competitive advantage and credibility by using PEF, providing a robust way for consumers to compare the environmental footprint of their products to that of similar products or to the European benchmark.
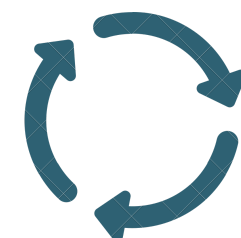
Circularity

Circularity provides a model to transform the current economic system towards a sustainable future.

As outlined in the **UNEP circularity platform** (www.unep.org/circularity) circularity's underlying objective is that materials should be kept at their highest possible value as they move and are retained within the value chain. Circularity builds on a guiding principle: "Reduce by design", as well as value-retention processes: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture, Repurpose and Recycle.
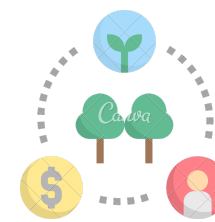
3 national components

- **Increase SMEs and policymakers knowledge** on resource efficiency, life cycle thinking, circularity and eco-innovation in the textile value chain
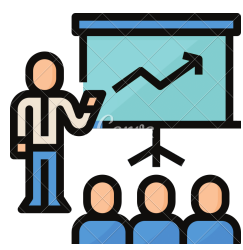
- **Train stakeholders** on eco-innovation and product environmental footprint (PEF)

- **Accompany businesses in transforming their approach and business models** to increase sustainability and circularity in the textile value chain

Tunisia

Textiles are considered a cornerstone of the Tunisian industry, contributing to more than 20% of the national GDP. It is the second-largest exporting industrial sector in the country (16% of industrial exports) and is the first manufacturing sector in terms of employment (over 150,00 jobs) and the number of enterprises (1,415 companies).

Country partner: The International Centre for Environmental Technologies of Tunis (CITET) is a non-administrative public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment, specialising in protecting the environment in the context of sustainable development.

Kenya

The textile sector is an important manufacturing activity in Kenya, employing over 2.5 million people and contributing to about 14% of employment. Most of these employees (84%) work in Micro SMEs, and 8% are employed indirectly in support services. The total turnover of the sector is about US$ 564 million, and it is expected to contribute even more to Kenya's GDP, increasing from 10% in 2019 to 15% by 2022.

Country partner: Moi University is a public university located in Kesses and established in 1984 with an intention of making it a science, technology and development oriented institution.

South Africa

The clothing and textiles industry in South Africa is an important sector and is part of the government's Industrial Policy Action Plans. It contributes 2.5% to the country's total manufacturing output. In the entire value chain of textiles, including both manufacturing and retail subsectors, there are approximately 212,000 formal jobs in South Africa, 92,000 in manufacturing and 120,000 in retail.

Country partners:

- The **Centre for African Resource Efficiency and Sustainability** (CARES) aims to support small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by creating awareness and giving access to sustainability tools and skills.
- The **National Cleaner Production Centre of South Africa** (NCPC-SA) promotes the implementation of resource efficiency and cleaner production (RECP) methodologies to assist industry in lowering costs.

## How are SMEs benefiting from the project?
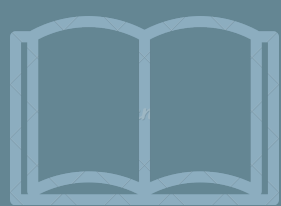
Knowledge building

- Learning about eco-innovation, PEF and circular business models
- Gaining access to tools and guidelines that can help make your business more sustainable, circular and resilient

Data analysis

- Learning how to calculate and communicate the environmental footprint of your textile product
- Accessing PEF-compliant LCA datasets, learning how to collect relevant LCA data and generate PEF studies
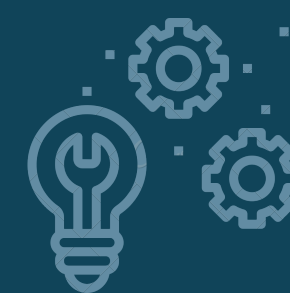
Technical assistance

- Developing a new business strategy and underlying business models, and receiving support in implementing these, following the eco-innovation approach
- Getting support in analyzing your product environmental footprint to guide decision-making on improved product design and manufacturing.