



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

COMITE D'ORIENTATION ET DE SUIVI-COTON
(COS-COTON)



ACP GROUP OF STATES

Progress Report on the cotton component of the AAACP





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CFC Progress report: (as at February 2009)

Commercial Standardisation of Instrument Testing of Cotton (CSITC) for the Cotton Producing Developing Countries in Africa (CFC/ICAC/33)

The project is operational since December 2007. The Fibre Institute Bremen has been contracted by the Common Fund for Commodities to implement the project. The project is supervised by the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC). Within the ICAC, the Task Force on CSITC is the key link between the commercial cotton traders/users and the technical experts involved in developing reliable quality testing mechanisms.

Project Partners:	FIBRE, Germany; CIRAD, France; CERFITEX, Mali; SOFITEX, Burkina Faso; Tanzania Bureau of Standards, Tanzania; Tanzania Cotton Board, Tanzania
Duration:	December 2007 to November 2011
Total Project Cost:	EUR 6,325,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CFC Financing (Grant): EUR 1,650,000• Co-financing (EC): EUR 2,460,000 (part of EC-All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme.)• Counterpart Contribution: EUR 2,215,000

Actual expenditures as at February 2009 stand at about Eur 900,000 (excl. counterparts expenditures). Audited financial statements for December 2007 (start-up of the project) to 31 December 2008 will be available by end March 2009. Expenditure levels are expected to increase substantially during 2009 in view of larger equipment/machinery procurement.

Aim of the project

The aim of the project is to improve the integrity of global cotton trade by establishing a reliable system of instrument-based cotton characterisation, adoptable by all cotton producing countries, especially including developing countries. Therefore, the following objectives are to be achieved:

1. At the **global** level: Introduction of a worldwide acceptable, adoptable and reliable instrument-based cotton quality assessment system with defined test rules and supported by a worldwide instrument-based cotton testing laboratory certification system.
2. **Africa-specific** part (core of the project): Support to African laboratories, so that they will be able to meet the international standards and requirements for reliable instrument testing of cotton. This will be done primarily through the establishment



of two Regional Technical Centres (RTCs), which will act as “centres of excellence”, capable of providing all necessary assistance for the application of instrument testing in cotton testing laboratories at national levels. Especially training and expertise development will be essential for a successful setting-up of a network of well harmonised laboratories to satisfy the cotton testing demands. The RTCs will be installed in West Africa (Cerfitex with Sofitex) and East/Southern Africa (TBS with TCB).

Status

Regarding the global part of the project, the international CSITC structure and tasks/roles of the partners have been identified and agreed upon. Proposed modifications for the international trade rules (including dispute settlement/arbitration issues) have been elaborated and are being implemented on trial basis by programme partners, prior to their formal adoption later this year. The provisional results have been discussed in the latest CSITC Task Force meeting in Bremen in April 2008 and in Ouagadougou in November 2008. A list of criteria has been developed in order to identify suitable Regional Technical Centres world-wide. Further consultations will take place during the meeting of the African Cotton Association in March in Dar es Salaam, while formal adoption is foreseen for May 2009. While the project focus is on Africa with regard to RTC development, also qualified centres in other regions (like Central Asia) have expressed interest to be linked as regional partner to the CSITC system.

An international CSITC Round Trial system has been initiated and is carried out regularly – 4 times per year. The aims that can now be achieved with this new Round Trial are:

- Evaluation of the test methods/test result variation.
- Rating of the participating laboratories, based on the correctness/reliability of the results.
- Issuing of a regular certificate under the auspices of ICAC, stating the participation and the rating result of the laboratory.
- Detailed analysis of laboratory results to assist laboratories in achieving more accurate results.

In the last Round Trial in 2008, 65 laboratories participated with 95 instruments, including eight countries (with 11 laboratories) from Africa (Benin, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The names of the participating laboratories are published regularly on the ICAC website. From the second half of 2008 on, specific direct feedback is provided to the laboratories, assisting them in analysing their own test results.

A database/information analysis system (which will replace the currently used interim software) is currently developed by a contracted company, for use in the international as well as in the forthcoming regional round trials.

For the Africa-specific part, the contractual agreements between the partners have been fixed and experts for each of the two Regional Technical Centres (RTCs) have been nominated. Currently four experts have been identified as “trainers-of-trainers” and they have received extensive training in acknowledged technical centres like the Gdynia Cotton Association, the Fibre Institute Bremen, the Bremen Cotton Exchange and the USDA-AMS, CIRAD, the instrument manufacturers Uster and Premier, and the Texas Tech University. Additional experts are being selected to complement the first group.

Start-up seminars were held in April 2008 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and in May 2008 Bamako, Mali. The seminar in Dar-es Salaam was attended by representatives from



Burundi, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In Bamako, representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Togo were among the international participants. Addresses from all reference contacts, laboratories in the region and stakeholders have been collected. In addition, joint missions were undertaken by project experts with RTC experts to visit neighbouring countries to assess existing quality certification facilities. Countries visited include (for West Africa): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, and Togo. Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal are scheduled to be visited during 2009.

In East Africa, the following countries were visited: Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Next visits are scheduled to cover Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda and Sudan. Based on the outcomes of the assessment visits and based on interest of participation in the CSITC programme, limited support can be provided to upgrade selected laboratories to meet minimum performance criteria as required in the programme.

Both Regional Technical Centres built up a laboratory for the RTC purposes as their in-kind contribution. The testing instruments have been ordered, delivery is expected in the 2nd quarter of 2009. The necessary Ambient Air Management Systems will be ordered during March 2009. The routine work of the RTCs has been prepared, and e.g. training documents are being prepared by the RTCs.

It is expected that in the 3rd quarter of 2009 both RTCs will be fully equipped, staffed and operational. Formal "opening events" will then be organised to demonstrate operations and provide insight in to the expertise that can be provided to national level laboratories.

Studies related to the preparation of standard testing/reference materials for West African cotton have been initiated. Researchers for the required cotton variability studies in West and East Africa have been identified and contracted. Samples are collected for the evaluation. Results are expected in the second half of 2009.

A specific website for the project purposes has been created and is currently under construction (www.csitc.org). On this, basic information about Commercial Standardization and the project will be given, Round Trial data will be delivered, the project partners will have access to all files in their latest version, and suitable technical information will be offered to the project partners and the laboratories.

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FAO Progress report: 5 March 2009

Update on the implementation of FAO's cotton activities under the AAACP in 2008/09

The Quick Start Activity for a Pilot project for diversification and production improvements in Cotton Production Systems has been finalized and paved the way for the three cotton pilot projects in West Africa. In collaboration with the FAO Sub Regional Programme on Integrated Production, Pest and Pollution Management, preparatory activities for the next cotton growing season took the form of 1) background studies and initial pilot activities on diversification of cotton systems to elicit strategic opportunities and strengthen capacities on GAP and 2) a review of lessons from experiences, stakeholder workshops, and work planning for the 2008/09 growing season. Information gathered during this preparatory phase fed into the Regional Kick-off Workshop for West Africa and guided the implementation of the subsequent activities described hereafter.

Burkina Faso

- In November, a workshop was held in Bobo Dioulasso to take stock of, evaluate and plan training activities on GAP / IPPM for cotton-cereal livestock systems and improve the training curriculum. The participants included farmers who take part in the trainings, representatives from cotton Pos (incl. UNPC-B), Farmer Fields School (FFS) trainers, and the national IPPM program coordinator.
- As the work plan was only approved in December 2008, other training activities planned for 2008 were postponed until the next cotton growing season in 2009.
- An agreement is in preparation with UNPC-B to implement training and sensitization activities in 2009 based on the AAACP work plan proposals. This will, in particular, enable to set up a technical unit on GAP and IPPM within UNPC-B to coordinate all training activities in the eight cotton producing regions of Burkina Faso, which is coherent with UNPC-B's 5-year priority plan.
- An exchange visit to Niger is in preparation with UNPC-B to support their plan to set-up pilot cereal banks as part of the diversification of their production system.

Mali

- 562 farmers and 30 trainers have been trained during the 2008 cotton growing season pre-financed by the FAO Sub-regional IPPM Programme. Main partners are APCAM, CMDT, OHVN and the *Projet de Développement Rurale Intégré du Kita*.
- Three press articles and a 10 min documentary were produced during an "Open Day" event held in Ouélessébougou on 18 September 2008 to support further the well-advanced process of integration of IPPM and FFS into the national policies and strategies.
- Several missions were undertaken to supervise and give technical input into the training activities to assure that effective methods were employed from a training and a production point of view.



- Evaluations were made in collaborations with APCAM, CMDT and OHVN to quantify the benefits from the introduction on GIPD / IPM in terms of yield, input and earnings.

Benin

As identified during the FAO cotton QSA, the following activities have been carried out with prefinancing by the FAO Sub-regional IPPM project.

- Season-long training on IPPM production in cotton-cereal-legume for 15 trainers and 171
- farmers in the Alibori province throughout the cotton growing season 2008 (trainers train
- farmers throughout the season, as an integral part of their own training).
- Refresher training on IPPM for 15 trainers that were trained by the IPPM Programme in 2007. On this occasion modules for training of farmers were created on (i) IPPM; (ii) integrated farm management and profitability; and (iii) food security and product quality.
- This second set of trainers trained 600 new farmers through 30 FFS on cotton-based systems. Two in-depth background studies on "Policy, market and institutional environment for cereal-cotton system in Central Africa" have been undertaken for the Central and west African region respectively.

Strengthening cotton cooperative-ginner/buyer linkages - Eastern and Southern Africa

Interventions have been initiated by FAO to strengthen cotton cooperative-ginner/buyer linkages and the capacities of these stakeholders to engage in value chain development. These activities focus in cotton producing areas where markets are not performing well, producers are not organized and there is a lack of alignment between cooperatives and their buyers and generally within the chain.

The Cotton Development Authorities in the respective countries have already identified strategies and implementation plans in which particular market problems have been identified as priorities. The interventions follow the interests of relevant private sector stakeholders including producer organization representatives, private sector (ginner and textile companies).

The objective of the activities identified are to reduce cotton dependent smallholders costs, promote market-oriented diversification for cotton by-products and complementary crops (e.g. edible oils) and improve supply efficiencies to the market. These activities will build on the lessons emerging from the regional COMESA cotton strategy process supported by ITC and FAO and will complement ongoing World Bank and CFC initiatives in the respective countries.

Activities began with in-country consultations with agri-business, farmer cooperatives, government representatives and local NGOs which validated the commodity focus identified at the regional KOW and identified business-farmer organization models to support. Subsequently, business proposition templates were developed which called for the business-to-farmer (cotton coop-to-ginnery) groups to undertake a set of diagnostic and planning exercises that led to the clear identification of an upgraded business model based on consumer success factors. Business models are currently being reviewed,



upgraded and practical interventions identified that encourage alignment between organized smallholder farmers and their business counterparts.

- In *Kenya* consultations identified a model that will improve linkages between the Nyanza cotton farmer organization with district cotton ginneries and Bidco a large Kenyan edible oil refining company. In collaboration with the Kenyan Cotton Development Authority and building on the results of the FAO/CODA cotton sector study (August 2008) upgrading activities will be implemented by Farm Concern International.
- In *Uganda* consultations identified two models (cotton farmer organizations in Bukedi and Kiyunga and the North Bukedi Cotton and a small local ginning company) that will focus on cotton lint supply to a large cotton company. In collaboration with the Cotton Development Authority, upgrading activities will be implemented by Technoserve.
- In *Zambia* the Lusaka province cotton farmer organization will improve their supplies of cotton-by products (oil seed; cotton seed cake) and diversified oil crops such as sesame and sun flower to local district cotton ginneries and Kapa oil refinery. In collaboration with the Cotton Farmers Union of Zambia, activities will be implemented by Farm Concern International

Organic cotton production in Uganda and Tanzania

FAO is currently signing a contract with the Italian institute for organic certification ICEA to undertake various studies on organic cotton production in Uganda and Tanzania, including (i) a desk study and analysis of the South East African cotton market with specific regard to the development of the organic cotton sector; (ii) a mission to one or both of the countries with the purpose of visiting the existing organic cotton initiatives and collect quantitative and qualitative primary data; (iii) identification of the main constraints and opportunities for improving profitability of organic cotton production; (iv) a survey to identify opportunities for the development of integrated and collaborative networks; and (v) recommendations for follow-up activities to be proposed under the 2nd tranche of the AAACP.

Regional strategy development and implementation

FAO has supported the further development and finalization of the regional COMESA cotton-to-textiles strategy as a contributing member of the Implementation and Monitoring Committee that has been charged with the prioritization of actions to be addressed. FAO staff has participated in the strategic meetings held in Johannesburg (Nov 2008) and Lusaka (Feb 2009), continues to actively support the prioritization process, and will select a set of priorities that can be implemented through activities to be proposed under the 2nd tranche of the AAACP.

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International
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ITC Progress report: 18 February 2009

EU All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme Interim Progress Update: ITC Cotton Component

ITC's interventions for the cotton sector under the Programme relate to:

- Support to regional stakeholders to design and organise the implementation of cotton development strategies in two regions: East & Southern Africa, and West & Central Africa (Programme Result 1)
- Implementation of market & product development aspects of the strategies and their implementation plans (Programme Result 2)

Eastern and Southern Africa

Result 1: Cotton Sector Strategy Development

The text of the regional cotton strategy has been finalised. The prioritisation of development activities in the strategy implementation plans needs to be validated by members along with the final narrative of the strategy itself. The strategy will then be presented to the next African Ministerial meeting for adoption by heads of state. Authorisation for COMESA, SADC and EAC regions to join together in designing one pan-regional cotton development strategy came from the Heads of African Nations meeting on 22 October 2008 in Uganda that agreed on a single common market for trading goods and services across East and Southern Africa.

The pan-regional strategy started its life in COMESA countries with a project in 2007 between ITC, ACTIF and COMESA to support the design of a regional cotton development strategy using ITC's methodology. A lack of funds curtailed the initial preparatory activities. Since being included under the umbrella of the ACP Programme progress towards completion of the strategy has accelerated rapidly.

COMESA has continuously supported the work and made a sizable financial contribution to sharing its costs with other partners and the ACP Programme. For example, COMESA financed most of the working group meetings in 2007 and 2008, the Johannesburg validation meeting in November 2008 and the first Implementation Coordination Committee meeting in February 2009. The EU ACP programme financed the participation of ITC specialists and private sector participants from Eastern and Southern African countries beyond COMESA.

The African Cotton Textiles Industry Federation (ACTIF) has also contributed enormously with a strong involvement of its specialist technical team that has contributed to all meetings and workshops. Larger workshops included representatives from all stages of the cotton value chain drawn from across the East & Southern Africa region, eg: farmers,



seed developers, ginners, domestic merchants, research institutions and public sector representatives.

All ACP Programme IOs were invited to join in each of the public workshops and meetings. FAO participated in the Johannesburg validation meeting and the first Implementation Committee meeting in Lusaka.

The final strategy has a very clear market focus and addresses all aspects of the value chain, including value addition through cotton by-products as well as textiles and clothing.

Process:

Following the start of the ACP Programme three technical meetings were organised by COMESA and ACTIF with ITC in 2007 and 2008 in which the fundamentals of the regional strategy were developed. In mid 2008, After the ACP KOW in Dar Es Salaam and a request by participants for a pan-regional strategy the strategy formulation process accelerated. Major building blocks became clear. As a result ITC organised market-focused training missions to enhance strategy design participants knowledge of market requirements and contribute to the strategy formulation process. The results of the practical exercises undertaken with ITC in the KOW by cotton sector participants were incorporated into the COMESA/ACTIF members' strategy. Technical meetings in Lusaka in August and September of 2008, with ITC participation, resulted in a draft strategy for the East & Southern Africa Region. At this time COMESA officially floated the possibility of creating a pan-regional strategy at the October 2008 Heads of African Nations Conference in Uganda.

Following further design work COMESA, ACTIF and ITC organised a pan-regional (i.e. COMESA, plus Tanzania and Southern African countries) strategy validation meeting in Johannesburg, 27-28 November 2008 (documentation is attached.). Participants were drawn from public and private sectors including farmers, ginners, textile and clothing representatives and the event was cost-shared by COMESA. The meeting finalised the draft strategy, validated objectives and some priority activities and formed an Implementation Coordination Committee. This committee consists of representatives of all parts of the value chain, including farmers, ginners, textile and clothing representatives. The Implementation Coordination Committee met for the first time in Lusaka on 12-13 February 2009. Formal launching of the strategy is expected for late spring 2009.

Result 2: Cotton Strategy Implementation

All value chain stakeholders in the EU ACP Programme identified Cotton contamination as the single most important aspect to be addressed. ITC organised 24 East African producers to visit traders, yarn, textile and garment manufacturers in Bangladesh so they could gain a clear understanding of users problems with their supplies. The visit reinforced the importance of a market focus and of delivering what markets want. For the first-time ever Eastern and Southern African value chain stakeholders visited the premises and factories of their third largest import market, spoke directly to customers, users, local Bangladeshi and Turkish traders. Direct trial orders from Bangladesh are being negotiated, pending HVI test results of cotton samples. The first ever direct sales of 800 tons of lint from a Tanzanian ginner to a Thai spinning company were also achieved without the involvement of an international merchant, increasing the revenue of the indigenous ginner.



During the process South-South cooperation has been enhanced in the area of seed development, cotton growing and harvesting, ginning (with Turkey), cotton consumption, value addition as well as development of textiles and clothing industries (with the help of Bangladesh and Turkey).

A regional producers' sub-group has been formed between Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi (MoZaZiMa).

ACP Programme funding was extended in the above events by cost sharing from private sector participation: The 14 participants sponsored by the EU-ACP programme to Bangladesh were joined by another 7 ginners and bankers from Tanzania who paid all of their own costs. Other reports are expected soon from Bangladesh and the participating countries to augment these results.

ITC has been able to integrate the activities of the ACP Programme with other ITC projects to for example: the ITC South –South trade development programme (Mwanza training), and the bilateral Mwanza training and Turkey programme.

Result 2 activities – East & Southern Africa:

- Regional workshop “Understanding the cotton markets of Bangladesh and Turkey” in Mwanza (7 – 9 July 2008), Tanzania for approx. 35 value chain participants from Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
- Training programme on “cotton seed development, harvesting, ginning, value addition and direct marketing” in Turkey (19 - 26 October 2008). Workshop financed by ITC
- Counselling programme on cotton marketing, value addition and South-South cooperation on textiles and clothing in Bangladesh, 30 January – 5 February 2009, 24 participants.

West and Central Africa

Result 1: Cotton Sector Strategy Development

With the exception of the “Agenda Coton” of 2004, West and Central Africa are not as far advanced in strategic thinking about their future direction as their African neighbours. ITC received an official request from UEMOA to help it update the Agenda for Cotton and develop a prioritised, detailed implementation plan.

So far a working relationship with UEMOA has been established with UEMOA officials dedicated to assisting the strategy development and implementation. This relationship will be extended to representatives of the sector in English-speaking countries in the region. There has been close I/O involvement with UEMOA at several meetings, i.e. the World Bank, CFC, UNCTAD and ITC had joint consultations with UEMOA in Ouagadougou 17 to 21 November 2008. The African Cotton Association (ACA) has also been consulted and is expected to play a key role in the strategy updating/re-formulation. The World Bank and ITC met in Brussels on 18 February 2009 and outlined a RoadMap for the I/O work that is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2009. (see memorandum prepared and exchanged with UEMOA Secretariat and draft RoadMap attached. Further discussions will



be held with COS and other cotton partners after the current round of missions has been completed.

Result 2. Cotton Strategy Implementation

ITC implementation of the Stratégie du Coton pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale (AOC) should start between May and July 2009 in both English and French speaking cotton-producing countries of the region. Contact with target markets in Thailand and China have already been established in preparation for eventual training and market options missions with participants from the region to those countries to see government officials, the spinning industry and cotton importers. ITC has confirmed that there is a high level of interest amongst industrial users and buyers in those countries to secure supplies direct from producers with a better organised and improved value chain to reduce market failures and increase the volume of consistent supply.

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UNCTAD AAACP Cotton Activities under Tranche I: Progress Report as of 05 March 2009

UNCTAD AAACP cotton activities under Tranche I are as follow:

Activity 1: Contribution to the Regional West Africa Strategy for Cotton

Activity 2: Improving cotton sector financing through the development of a guarantee fund in Côte d'Ivoire

Activity 3: InfoComm International Portal Development

Activity 4: Sustainability Claims Portal

Activities 1 and 2 concern the West Africa region and are specific to the cotton sector whereas activities 2 and 3 have a global reach and include components of relevance to the cotton sector.

Activity 1: Contribution to the Regional West Africa Strategy for Cotton

This activity fits into Programme Result **R.1** Strategy Development.

At the IAM Brussels meeting on 19 February 2009, the UNCTAD delegation informed the meeting's participants about UNCTAD SG's initiative to convene a Cotton Investors Forum in Benin (as a follow-up to UNCTAD Secretary-General's Multi-stakeholder meeting on Cotton in Geneva on December 2nd 2008). It was recommended by the participants to the IAM meeting and in particular by COS Coton and the EC representatives that:

- i) COS Coton, the AAACP concerned International Organizations (IOs) and CU representatives should be invited to and participate to the maximum extent possible to the Cotonou Forum UNCTAD SG's initiative;
- ii) this UNCTAD led Forum should be an opportunity for AAACP and COS Coton to share information and make visible to the participants the recent developments that have taken place in relation to the EU-ACP Partnership Programme on Cotton, to which the AAACP is an important contribution.

Prior to this, UNCTAD participated in a COS Coton meeting with UEMOA in November 2008 in Ouagadougou.

In addition, UNCTAD will share the results of the feasibility study on the set up of a guarantee fund for cotton in Côte d'Ivoire with ITC. This could contribute to the thinking around solutions to constraints to supply chain finance in the region.



Activity 2: Improving cotton sector financing through the development of a guarantee fund in Côte d'Ivoire

This activity fits into Programme Results **R 2.2** Market functioning - input, output and financial markets - is improved, **A.2.2.4** Support the development of general supply chain finance.

2.1 Objectives/results

The main objective of this project is to improve the cotton sector financing in Cote d'Ivoire through the development of a special facility, namely a guarantee fund, with greater participation of local banks, thus contribute to the revival of the cotton sector in the country.

2.2 Status of implementation

As a first step to this project, an in-depth feasibility study has been carried out in order to analyze the cotton value chain, identify gaps and bottlenecks, especially those related to the access to finance, examine the necessity and possibilities to establish a guarantee fund and define the scale, organizational structure and operational model of the fund. The first draft of the study was submitted in January 2009. The final draft will be circulated by the end of March.

As a follow up to this study, a workshop will be organized in Cote d'Ivoire in July 2009 with the participation of key actors of the value chain as well as the representatives of government, local banks, funding agencies and international organizations interested in partnering on this project. The objective of the workshop will be to exchange views on the results of the feasibility study and build consensus on the establishment of a guarantee fund for the Ivorian cotton sector. The workshop will also allow UNCTAD to identify potential partners interested in funding and implementing this project as well as potential capacity building needs.

Based on the positive outcomes of the feasibility study and the workshop, UNCTAD will assist in the establishment of the guarantee fund which would be initiated and implemented by the Government of Cote d'Ivoire (or a special coordination unit to be established). UNCTAD will provide advice and assistance with regard to capacity building, public-private partnership, facilitating the mobilization of funds.

Monitoring milestones

Month	Indicator	Status
March 2009	Report on feasibility study completed	On track
July 2009	Workshop organized	Planned
Nov. 2009 - Feb. 2010	Capacity building activity (such as training or awareness raising) based on the needs identified	Planned



March 2010	Government agencies or special unit in charge of the establishment of the guarantee fund identified or established Eventual funding agencies contacted or identified Capacity building activity implemented, if needed	Planned
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Activity 3: InfoComm International Portal Development

This activity fits into Programme Results **R.2.2.** Market functioning - input, output and financial markets - is improved, **A.2.2.1**Facilitating enhanced access to market information and systems effectively i) meeting the needs of NCCS, in particular producers, and ii) improving ACP policy makers and planners access to key information, data and analysis.

3.1 Objectives/results

Stakeholders have an easy access to strategic, accurate, up-dated, specific and structured information on commodity markets.

3.2 Status of implementation

The Cotton pages of InfoComm are maintained in partnership with the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC). This partnership allows the *Outlook of world cotton market* made available to Infocomm users as well as ICAC press releases relating to the state of the international cotton market.

The InfoComm website provides general information on cotton, its quality, uses, marketing chains, relevant international, professional, trade and research organisations, companies, industry directories, technology, prices and economic policies. The information is regularly updated.

Monitoring milestones of relevance to cotton

Month	Indicator	Status
April 2009	Infocomm is transferred to a new technology.	On-going
April 2009	Existing and new profiles are translated into three languages.	On-going
September 2009	linkages created with national MIS (developed under AAACP with Infoshare and also with other MIS national or regional existing portals)	Planned

Activity 4: Sustainability Claims Portal



This activity fits into Programme Results **R2** Access to and use of sustainability claims standards is improved, **R 2.2** Market entry requirements - and standards compliance - is improved , **A.2.2.1** Facilitating enhanced market access through market entry compliance and quality systems effectively meeting the needs of ACP producers and EU consumers

3.1. Objectives/results

The two main objectives of the SCP are: to generate useful discussions on "sustainable claims" with a view to promoting sustainability, enhancing accountability, and public and private sector responsibility on trade in goods marketed under sustainability claims. The SCP is to provide to ACP producers, EU consumers, manufacturers, handlers of agricultural products, policy makers, third-party certifiers, exporters and buyers: (i) a central access point to existing schemes responding to defined requirements concerning organic production, fair-trade schemes, environmental and social accountability; and (ii) a clear presentation of relevant minimum requirements offering added-value to small producers and cooperatives by filling the gaps among current sectoral programs. Organic standards used and applied to organic cotton will be developed before finalizing the portal.

3.3. Status of implementation

The Portal includes information on fair trade labels for the textiles industry. These include the following labels: Fair Wear, Oxfam and Magasins du Monde. A meeting with stakeholders is planned for April 2009 with a view to discuss further improvements to the site prior to its launch through regional workshops (Planned from May to September 2009).

Monitoring milestones of relevance to cotton

Month	Indicator	Status
April 2009	End of design and development of portal (already online)	On-track
May 2009	Stakeholder meeting to complete and verify content	Planned
September 2009	West Africa Regional Launch Workshop	Planned
October 2009	East and Southern Africa Regional Launch Workshop	Planned