

---

## EU, ITC announce partnership to strengthen fashion value chain and boost job creation in West Africa

---

### **Burkina Faso and Mali to benefit from value addition in ethical fashion and design sectors in effort to create sustainable jobs and reduce irregular migration.**

(Brussels-Geneva) – The [European Union](#) (EU) and the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) today announced a €10 million project to support increased job creation in the ethical fashion and design value chains in West Africa. The project, which is supported through the [EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#), is part of a wider international effort to address root causes of migration from Africa to Europe and elsewhere, and to create economic opportunities in developing countries.

The project – Job Creation and Sustainable Development of Micro-Enterprises through the Management of Ethical Fashion, Lifestyle and Interior Design Supply chains in Burkina Faso and Mali – will be implemented by ITC through its [Ethical Fashion Initiative](#), which is focused on reducing poverty by connecting marginalized artisans from developing countries to the international fashion value chain.

ITC Executive Director Arancha González said: 'I welcome this partnership with the European Union which will enable ITC to scale up the Ethical Fashion Initiative and create more economic opportunities and jobs in poor communities in Burkina Faso and Mali. Key will also be to equip migrants wishing to return from Europe with skills that will contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth in their countries.'

In Burkina Faso and Mali – the four-year project aims to spur the creation of dignified jobs and support the sustainable development of micro-enterprises in the ethical fashion and design supply chains. Creating fair employment opportunities and decent working conditions for youth would help reduce irregular migration and assist in the fight against human trafficking.

In collaboration with the [International Organization for Migration](#), the project will also pilot in Italy the assisted voluntary return of migrants originating from West Africa. ITC will expand its existing vocational training programme to include hundreds of migrants, with an initial goal of enabling them to return to their countries of origin with new skillsets and knowledge.

Over a four-year period, the goal is to create around 5,000 direct jobs and 6,000 indirect jobs in social, micro and small enterprises, which will adhere to international fair labour standards.

Already two of Africa's leading cotton producing countries, the artisanal cotton and textile sectors in Burkina Faso and Mali offer untapped potential. Scaling up value addition in the cotton sector in the two countries would provide more job opportunities for youth in poor communities while offering an attractive final product for the international fashion and design markets.

### **About the European Union Trust Fund for Africa**

The [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) addresses the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. More specifically, it helps address the root causes of destabilization, forced displacement and irregular migration by promoting economic and equal opportunities, strengthening security, development and resilience of vulnerable people.

### **About the International Trade Centre**

About ITC – ITC is the joint agency of the [World Trade Organization](#) and the [United Nations](#). ITC assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more

competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development within the frameworks of the Aid-for-Trade agenda and the United Nations' Global Goals for Sustainable Development. For more information, visit [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org). Follow ITC on Twitter: [@ITCNews](https://twitter.com/ITCNews)

### **About ITC's Ethical Fashion Initiative**

A flagship programme of the International Trade Centre, the Ethical Fashion Initiative enables artisans living in urban and rural poverty to connect with the global fashion chain. The Ethical Fashion Initiative also works with the rising generation of fashion talent from Africa, encouraging the forging of fulfilling creative collaborations with artisans on the continent. Under its slogan, 'Not Charity, Just Work', the Ethical Fashion Initiative advocates for a fairer global fashion industry.

### **For more information:**

#### **ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative**

E: [efashion@intracen.org](mailto:efashion@intracen.org)  
W: [www.ethicalfashioninitiative.org](http://www.ethicalfashioninitiative.org)  
Facebook: ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative  
Instagram: [@ethicalfashion](https://www.instagram.com/ethicalfashion)  
Twitter: [@\\_ethicalfashion](https://twitter.com/_ethicalfashion)

Mr. Jarle Hetland  
Media Officer  
Office of the Executive Director  
P: + 41 22 730 0651  
M: + 41 79 582 9180  
E: [hetland@intracen.org](mailto:hetland@intracen.org)

#### **EU Trust Fund for Africa**

E: [EuropeAid-EUTF-SAHEL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EuropeAid-EUTF-SAHEL@ec.europa.eu)  
W: <http://bit.ly/2ku9Q02>  
Twitter: [@EuropeAid](https://twitter.com/EuropeAid), [@CarlaMontesi](https://twitter.com/CarlaMontesi),  
[#AfricaTrustFund](https://twitter.com/AfricaTrustFund)  
Facebook: EuropeAid  
Instagram: [@europeaid](https://www.instagram.com/europeaid)

#### **Aurélie Valtat**

Information and Communication Officer/Digital  
Communication  
European Commission  
P: +32 2 29 87664  
E: [Aurelie.VALTAT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Aurelie.VALTAT@ec.europa.eu)