

IMPACT SHEET: Going Green

Accelerating competitiveness of green businesses and artisans in the Indian textiles industry



The project strengthened the green textile ecosystem by helping nearly 300 SMEs and more than 15,000 marginalized artisans adopt eco-friendly practices and create green products, increasing their competitiveness in domestic and international markets



CHALLENGE

The textiles sector in India makes up 14% of industrial production in the country, 4% of the GDP and 17% export earnings. It also provides direct employment to over 35 million people including large numbers of marginalised groups. The sector faces numerous challenges affecting sustainable consumption and production, including degradation and depletion of natural resources; use of toxic chemicals/processes leading to pollution and health problems for artisans; and insufficient policies/incentives to adopt environment friendly practices or their ineffective implementation. However, the most prominent challenge is the lack of adequate support and incentives for SMEs to confront these obstacles, limiting adoption of more eco-friendly processes to reduce the damage caused by the industry. More specifically, support is needed in terms of budgets for green product development, improving consumer awareness and overcoming high costs for green certification.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

To help respond to these obstacles and support India's shift to SCP, the European Union (EU) funded the collaborative project, under the SWITCH-Asia Grants Programme, titled Going Green.

Going Green, which operated for four and a half years (2014-2018), worked towards the improved economic competitiveness of green SMEs in the Indian textile industry and promoted well-being of textile artisans in Churu, Kota, Jaipur and Udaipur Rajasthan and Varanasi, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. It was implemented by Traidcraft Exchange and All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Going Green contributed to the economic competitiveness of SMEs within the Indian textile industry and promoted the well-being of textile artisans. The specific objectives of the project included:

- Building sustainable SMEs among textile artisans, and improving their working conditions, through efficient eco-friendly processes, access to resources and increased demand for green products
- Increasing the capacity of artisans through collective empowerment, training and coaching;
- Developing green products through the use of sustainable raw materials, natural dyes and reduced water and energy use
- Ecolabelling: creating and promoting the "Craft Mark Green" label
- Developing strong replication mechanisms

TARGET GROUPS

- **SMEs and artisans** who could benefit from improved environmentally-friendly practices, technologies and processes, and access to finance
- **Government** bodies responsible for public procurement and policy formulation and implementation
- **Government and private institutions** needed for the promotion and provision of finance to SMEs and artisans
- **Textile Research Association** responsible for lab testing, capacity building on environmental parameters and improving compliance
- **End consumers** who need to change unsustainable consumption patterns and switch to quality, eco-friendly products

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Increasing textile SMEs/artisans' bargaining power

The project mobilised SMEs and artisans to form 150 collectives (with 30% women members) and six federations (one per district) to identify issues and advocate for policy change with government and industry bodies. This strengthened regulatory framework to promote/support sustainable consumption and production amongst SMEs and artisans in the textile sector (including financial resources)

Implementing efficient eco-friendly processes with textile SMEs/artisans in target clusters/districts

The Going Green project implemented good practices in these clusters where the level of environmental degradation was substantial, primarily through some erroneous production processes, such as dyeing and degumming in Varanasi; washing of finished products of chikankari in Lucknow; indiscriminate discharge of effluent in Sujangarh/Churu; or use of harmful chemical colours in Kota, Jaipur (Bagru and Sanganer).

Building the capacity of textile SMEs and artisans to access resources

The project organized camps with the active participation of collective members to build awareness and capacity to enable access to government schemes. These trainings were pivotal in helping SMEs and artisans access entitlement schemes as well as linkages with banks and financial institutions, which in turn contributed to economic competitiveness of Indian textile industry.

Developing and marketing an eco-friendly line of 'green' textile products

Going Green aimed at building links with buyers in domestic and international markets, where demand for eco-friendly

textile products is starting to grow (based on the research done in a previous EU-funded project, SUSTEX). The project envisaged a certification called “Craftmark Green” and aimed to develop a set of benchmarks drawn from a range of eco-friendly practices.



PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

- 647 collectives were formed in six clusters – Varanasi, Lucknow, Jaipur, Udaipur, Churu and Kota while a total of 638 community resource persons (CRPs) emerged as leaders/spokespersons for the communities. They acted as the vital link between the project beneficiaries and partner organisations, supporting the community mobilization process on behalf of the communities.
- 80% of target SMEs/artisans learned the value of implementing efficient eco-friendly processes, 70% of target SMEs/artisans adopted at least one change in their production process (e.g. use of natural fibres, installation of an effluent treatment plant, use of safety gear, installation of energy efficient technologies, recycling of waste products, etc.), 70% of target SMEs/Artisans began recycling/reusing waste water and at least 60% percent of artisans and SME workers (out of the 70% who have made changes) perceive an improvement in their health as a result of the changes made. EFP
- Going Green reached out to 5,080 weavers while 2,914 were linked to social entitlement schemes with 1,000 weavers trained in leadership and governance skills. 100 entrepreneurial young master weavers benefitted from support towards design innovation, strengthening their production units through business skills, product diversification and direct exposure to new/alternative markets.
- 400 women in Salumber, Udaipur are now earning through the production of up-cycled products of textile waste and tailoring in this cluster. During the project period they not only travelled to Udaipur for advance trainings, they also became trainers in their own right.
- In Udaipur 1,500 women formed Self Help Groups (SHGs) which enabled them to collectively save more than INR 7.7 Lacs while a further 400 joined the production of

up-cycled textile products to increase their family income. The beneficiaries were impoverished farm labourers who lacked identity, access to bank accounts and social recognition. Many of them had not even ventured out of their villages to the nearest town in their entire lives. This was the most challenging yet successful example of role of SHGs in changing lives both in economic and social sphere.

LESSONS LEARNED

When the project started out to develop the parameters for the certification, it was divided into three segments namely, environmental parameters, social parameters and wage parameters. Initially it was decided to use a rating system. But after consultations with the producers and with the research partner, NITRA, the Project Management Team realised that the rating system could not be used for environmental compliances. It had to be gold standards to be eligible for certification. Also, each batch had to be tested separately making it a deterrent for small producers.

Neither the small producers nor the project beneficiaries had the capacity to convert entire businesses into green business, nor was there any demand for the same in their respective markets for such products from the buyers. But the scenario improved with awareness raising efforts in hand-crafted green products.



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We strengthen the women self-help groups to improve their livelihood, and the Going Green project opens up a new opportunity for the tribal and rural women of Salumber in Udaipur to create new businesses out of textile waste and get extra income. We would have never realised its potential had it not been for the project. We have created 700 new jobs and are supported by government officials and large businesses to build five new training centres for women in this area. We are extremely happy to be part of this change in creating sustainable livelihood and businesses.

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Mr. Shekhar Kumar
Director of Projects
Vishvas Sansthan, Udaipur

Long-term project sustainability

While the action did not continue in its project mode, the impact has been long-lasting and profound in nature. The AIACA has continued to work with some of the clusters through its members, the VWAS and its Craftmark programme. In some cases, the project changed the way businesses work. “Going Green provided us with a new vision for the future,” said Padmashree Runa Banerjee, CEO, SEWA Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. “It is SEWA’s vision to develop a market place for artisans from Lucknow and neighbourhood craft centres to promote India and U.P.’s heritage. Going Green allowed them the opportunity to develop specialisations with increased institutional financial support by the banks during the project period. This has increased the businesses of the SMEs working with SEWA by 25%. Going forward SEWA would link these new entrepreneurs with export licences.”

Ram Swaroop Khandelwal, President, Calico Hand Block Printers Cooperative Society, Sanganer, Jaipur, said, “Going Green helped us save our businesses by installing the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) at our washing area. Today 200 small businesses are saved by the virtue of this ETP and livelihoods are protected. Our businesses have also grown by 25% in the last 4 years due to growing production and going forward this encourages us to adopt progressive sustainable practices. We will keep the momentum by continuing partnerships with other bodies such as NABARD in the future.”

Project contributions to Climate Change Mitigation and SDGs



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides an overarching framework for responding to, protecting and enhancing the natural assets of countries, both marine and terrestrial, mitigating environmental degradation, air pollution and climate change and putting countries on the path to sustainable consumption and production.

- **SDG 12** is at the centre of this project, with the principal objective of aiding SMEs in the adoption of eco-friendly processes to reduce the damage caused by textile production
- Going Green also contributes to **SDGs 1, 5 and 8** through targeting marginalised groups, especially women, by providing them with access to decent work opportunities, thereby empowering them to escape poverty.

Impacts at a Glance

Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of target SMEs increased their sales by selling eco-friendly products in domestic and international markets • Increased workers' daily income from INR 150 to INR 300 (EUR 2.15 to 4.30) in Varanasi • 70% of the SMEs using the "Craftmark Green" label increased total turnover, with "Craftmark Green" products making up 10% of their total sales
Environmental Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 100 SMEs are certified to use the "Craftmark Green" standard on their textile products, paving the way for better environmental standards • 259 SMEs were given training on Environment Friendly Practices (EFPs) • 80% of target SMEs/artisans have understood and see the value in implementing efficient eco-friendly processes • 70% of target SMEs/artisans have adopted at least one change in their production process (e.g. use of natural fibres, installation of an effluent treatment plant, use of safety gear, installation of energy efficient technologies, recycling of waste products, etc.) • 70% of target SMEs/artisans are recycling/reusing waste water • At ecosystem level it strengthened Green Textile Ecosystem by introducing green technology practices across clusters, providing exposure to artisans about importance of eco-friendly production, building capacity of field partners, demonstrating green production (introduction of ETPs, Azofree Dyeing etc.) and developing green certification standards • Reduced contamination of the local environment and water sources
Social Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 12,950 artisans accessed Social Entitlement schemes including Weaver ID, Artisan Card, Aadhaar, Bank Linkage, Insurance, Credit Linkage etc., nearly 50% above the target. • 2,918 artisans from all clusters now access to social entitlements in the form of identity card, health insurance, and financial access through banking institutions. • At least 60% percent of artisans and SME workers (out of the 70% who have made eco-friendly changes) perceive an improvement in their health as a result of the changes made • Improved economic competitiveness of the Indian textile industry and promoted well-being of textile artisans in Churu, Kota, Jaipur and Udaipur in Rajasthan and Varanasi, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh • Helped promote entrepreneurship across all the clusters be it Varanasi where Mustagim grew his business from 5-6 looms to 100 looms or Udaipur where, based on the trainings and capacity building from Going Green. • Helping marginalized artisans access social entitlement schemes
Green Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly INR 3.4 Cr. Mudra loan and other loans were accessed by artisans and SMEs across Kota, Lucknow and Varanasi. Also 8 Mudra Loans were accessed in Churu and 2 each in Jaipur and Udaipur. • Nearly 300 SMEs accessed finance against the target of 175 - an overachievement of 70% • At least 80% of target SMEs/artisans reported that they understand the requirements to access government and private sector schemes that provide relevant services and support • Initiated interaction between SMEs and financial institutions through workshops on compliance issues, banking procedures and schemes available for SMEs and face-to-face meetings with bank officials.
Target Group Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 70% of target SMEs/artisans reported that they have accessed services, finance or technology • At ground level it enhanced capacity of individual artisans, formed and strengthened their collectives, provided trainings and assistance on Design Development, Green Production, SHG Management, GST, Federation, Record Keeping, Business Planning, etc. Nearly 10% of all the artisans, 25% of the SHGs, 56% of all the SMEs and all the Federations under GG were covered through these capacity building initiatives • 10,000 women artisans were impacted which is nearly 65% of total artisans impacted through the project over 4 years. Out of these 10,000 women nearly 3,200 were employed with SMEs
Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of representatives from the 150 artisan collectives and 6 federations report increased capacity to identify issues and advocate for policy change with government and industry bodies • Strengthened regulatory framework to promote/support sustainable consumption and production amongst SMEs and artisans in the textile sector, including financial resources



FUNDING

EUR 1,197,779
(EU Contribution: 80%)



DURATION

January 2014 - December 2017



PARTNERS



Traidcraft Exchange, UK



All India Artisans and Craftworkers
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