



# EMPOWER WOMEN, POWER TRADE

TRANSFORMING THE ECONOMIC LIVES  
OF WOMEN IN LEAST DEVELOPED  
COUNTRIES — TWO YEARS ON



Enhanced Integrated Framework

Trade for LDC development



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# THE INITIATIVE — TWO YEARS ON

*Launched in March 2019, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) EMPOWER WOMEN, POWER TRADE initiative helps to improve the policy environment, remove barriers for women's economic empowerment in least developed countries (LDCs) and increase their participation in trade.*

Two years on, six projects stand under the initiative's umbrella. The EIF joined forces with partners on these projects, using EIF's established presence and connections in LDCs and leveraging the technical expertise of partners for maximum impact.

The impacts of the initiative, however, do not limit themselves to these six projects. Since 2019, the EIF has consciously ensured that women's economic empowerment is embedded in all its projects. More than 100 on-going projects now have a gender dimension. This approach reflects the EIF's commitment to support LDCs towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

## COVID-19 IMPACTS

The roll-out of the initiative took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This posed challenges but also created opportunities for EIF's projects:

- In-person trainings transitioned to virtual trainings. Projects were able to include more participants which means more women benefited from them.
- Faced with travel restrictions, projects turned to Train the Trainer models which empowered regional and national partners.
- For some projects, the COVID-19 pandemic only served to emphasise the fundamental importance of digital skill building in women.

# 2019-2021 HIGHLIGHTS

FROM ACROSS THE EIF PROJECT PORTFOLIO

88,000 women were trained in value chain practices to grow their business and access new markets

10,000 women adopted new technologies to increase the quantity and quality of their products

809 women participated in trade fairs with EIF support contributing towards more than US\$400 million in export orders

17 gender sensitive trade- and investment-related policies were developed in LDCs

75% of trade dialogues reported in 2020 included women's groups, ensuring the inclusion of gender considerations in policy formulation and implementation processes

OVER  
US\$1M in co-funding leveraged for the initiative's projects

# EMPOWER WOMEN, POWER TRADE PROJECTS

- **COVID-19 recovery through digitalisation and market access for women horticulture producers in The Gambia** with the International Trade Centre's SheTrades Initiative
- **Promoting gender-responsive trade policy in the LDCs** with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- **Gender Sensitive, Climate Resilient International Market Access through Fairtrade in Timor-Leste and Ethiopia** with Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand
- **Enhancing the Digital Ecosystem and Digital Skills for the economic empowerment of women in LDCs** with the International Telecommunication Union
- **Generating increased pricing and new markets for the women engaged in the shea butter value chains of South Sudan and Uganda** with the East African Women in Business Platform
- **E-commerce capacity-building for women-led micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in South Asia**, with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)



# EMPOWERING WOMEN ON THE GROUND...

A few examples of how Empower Women, Power Trade principles are applied across all EIF projects and directly impacting women in LDCs.

## ... in **Burkina Faso** with the project **Support for the Competitiveness of the Shea Sector**

The Network of Women Shea Butter Producers of Hauts Bassins and Cascades has over 10,000 members. With the help of trainings and new material, the network increased the quality and quantity of their shea butter production. Since 2018, their total production increased from 400 to 1000 tonnes of shea butter per year. As a result, their annual revenue is more than US\$ 2 million. These positive impacts have allowed them to improve working conditions for their members through renovated premises, longer employment contracts and increased salaries. They also created 200 jobs for young women and built schools and wells in communities where they work.

## **GSA**

The EIF partners with the **Global Shea Alliance** on projects aiming to improve the export and competitiveness of shea products, increase the income of shea workers and create jobs for women and youth. The shea sector overwhelmingly employs women throughout its value chain which makes it an excellent sector to target for women's economic empowerment.



### ... in **Lao PDR** with the project **Promotion of Export Competitiveness and Sustainability Support to Public Private Dialogue in Northern Lao PDR**

Women in Mang village in the Oudomxay province of Lao PDR have exquisite skills in weaving and embroidery. They produce textiles and handbags featuring traditional Laotian design. Through a project with the Lao PDR Ministry of Industry and Commerce, they partner with the textile-focused social enterprise Ock Pop Tok to learn how to optimize their resources and skills. Following trainings on natural dying techniques, product costing and marketing, they were able to sell their products at a price that reflects the quality of their products. At the 2020 Lao Handicraft Festival in Vientiane, a bag made from jungle vine and rattan produced by Mang village won first prize in quality.

The EIF works with the **Lao PDR Ministry of Industry and Commerce** to help women in three provinces in Northern Lao PDR to sell their products at higher prices and access more buyers through trade fairs and partnerships with textile companies. This contributes to increase the income of rural women and position Lao PDR's handicrafts in the competitive global market for ethical and sustainably sourced, artisanal goods.

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### ... in **the Gambia** with the **SheTrades initiative**

A frequent swimmer, Ndey Fatou Njie noticed there were no locally made swimwear in the Gambia. She found the leisurewear company Tiga in 2016, using vibrant African colours and designs. She joined the SheTrades Gambia initiative as a participant in 2019, learning about quality control, packaging and labelling. This helped her company build a strong foundation and access new markets. Now, Tiga has 11 employees and actively uses e-commerce, attracting customers from outside the Gambia. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, Njie saw a business opportunity in face masks and Tiga soon started manufacturing cloth face masks for Gambians.

### **ITC's SheTrades Initiative**

Through the **SheTrades Initiative**, the EIF is working with the **International Trade Centre** in the Gambia, Rwanda and Zambia to help women entrepreneurs strengthen their businesses through trainings, connect with other entrepreneurs and grow their markets by participating to events such as trade fairs.

*The Enhanced Integrated Framework brings together partners and resources to support the Least Developed Countries in using trade for poverty reduction, inclusive growth and sustainable development.*



### *EIF Partner Agencies*

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Trade Centre (ITC)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP)

World Bank Group (WB)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

### *EIF Trust Fund Manager*

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

### *EIF Trust Fund Donors*

