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How Africa could play a role for the future of the textile industry

by **Maria Cristina Pavarini** – November 24, 2021

Arise Integrated Industrial Platform (IIP), a pan-African developer and operator of industrial parks committed to help Africa thrive, and Fibre Trace, traceable fiber technology, have started a new pilot program enabling spinner-to-garment traceability for Arise IIP's Republic of Benin spinning facilities.

The partnership between Fibre Trace and Arise IIP aims to bring full traceability to the first of their kind, vertically integrated mills in the Republic of Benin to trace, verify and audit the lifecycle of their garments from spinning mills to stores, sharing the journey of Benin premium cotton with end consumers.

The aim of this agreement is also to improve Benin's position in terms of textile innovation and technology, improving visibility, resilience, securing economic competitiveness and creating a thriving value chain for African agriculture as the country is expected to reach a 98,000 tons cotton processing capacity per annum by the end of 2023.

As part of the project, smallholder farmers are estimated to produce around 30% of total crop output globally, making them become the foundation of global agriculture and the food sector. The program will make its debut in the fall of 2022 when the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ) of Benin facilities for spinning, fabric and garment production facilities will start operations.

Fibre Trace, which is already used in other cotton growing regions, will also be adopted at scale across all textile processing sites and facilities in Benin and the African subcontinent. The technology will provide transparency and true custody of supply chain solutions for brands and suppliers across the globe working with African manufacturers and supporting the growth of best practices in agriculture on the continent.



Fibre Trace scanner

To guarantee the traceability of the cotton, Fibre Trace embeds luminescent pigments on the fiber at the spinning mill. The pigments, indestructible throughout the entire textile processing cycle, can be read and tracked at every stage of the supply chain, and each audit is recorded on the blockchain making the information secure, accessible and irrefutable.

The recent events of COP26 and pressure from governments, legislative bodies and consumers to commit to greater climate action and take full accountability for their sustainability progress, have made clear that transparency and traceability are essential to bring change for the global textile industry.



Fiber Trace app used to scan a product's information

Gagan Gupta, founder and CEO, Arise IIP, said: “Arise IIP will now be able to guarantee the sustainability of the premium cotton transformed on its industrial platforms across Africa thanks to the Fibre Trace technology. Across all its industrial parks, Arise IIP aims to lead the way towards the sustainable transformation of local resources, where every stage of production is transparent for the benefit of local farmers and the end consumer.”

Shannon Mercer, CEO, Fibre Trace, added: “We’re truly excited about this partnership because it is the first step in making African grown cotton more visible to the global textile industry, and affords these farmers, who dedicate their land and livelihoods to growing this fiber, the opportunity to take a more prevalent role. We look forward to the day that the primary impact data from African farmers is combined with traceability to showcase Africa’s contribution to a better future for the textile industry.”

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