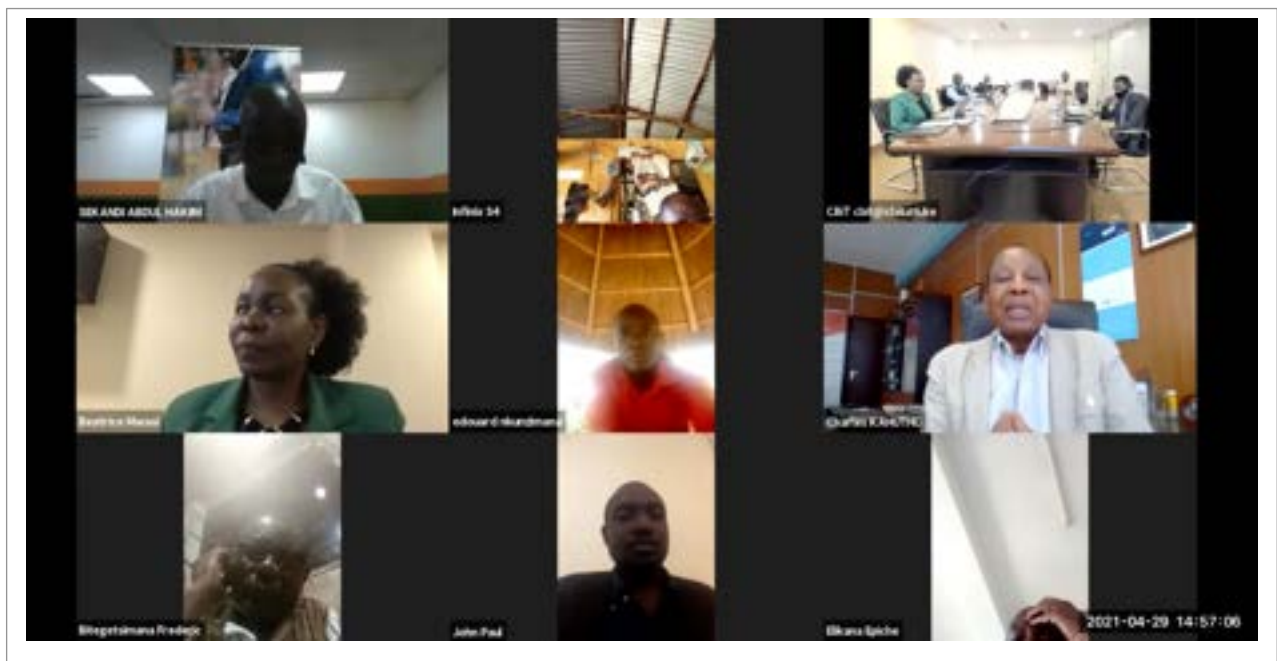




LEATHER INDUSTRY NETWORK (LIN) PLATFORM PROJECT

PROJECT NARRATIVE REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 (2021)

(FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 18, 2020 TO MAY 17, 2021)



BY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The period between January 18, 2021 and May 17, 2021, marked the last quarter of the implementation of the Leather Industry Network (LIN) Platform Project. During this period, the project undertook a number of activities aimed at finalizing the achievement of the project goal, objectives and expected results. This period constituted the fourth and last quarter of the project implementation, and this is a report for the stated period.

The report states the project aim and objectives, for the purposes of keeping the undertaken activities within the correct context. It then presents the planned activities for this final period, followed by a summary on progress against the planned activities. It ends by presenting general aspects of the implementation process for this period.

1.1 Project overview

The LIN Platform is a collaborative project is a collaborative initiative of the Centre for Business Innovation and Training (CBiT) and the East Africa leather consortium through the support of GIZ / EAC, and GFA Consulting group. This is a twelve-month project that seeks to establish a virtual leather networking platform that brings together all actors in the leather industry in the East Africa Community block consisting of: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The LIN Platform will provide an opportunity for leather stakeholders to interact, obtain information and conduct business. The platform will also be a forum for training and capacity building of stakeholders, as well as an advocacy forum for discussing and pushing for policies that promote growth of the leather industry in the East Africa region.

1.2 Project goal and objectives

The overall goal of this project is to foster exchange, networking, and joint regional interest representation of the leather industry for improved market access, intra-EAC trade, and growth. The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Conduct a regional South-South advocacy exchange with successful leather association and companies, and to identify best practices that promote leather value chains
- Develop, host, and operationalize a digital regional leather network platform
- Building advocacy capacity for key private sector leaders and stakeholders
- Promote and disseminate information through the LIN Platform.

The project seeks to achieve these objectives through a number of activities that include conducting a regional South-South advocacy exchange with successful leather association and companies. It will identify best practices that promote leather value chains, and developing, hosting, and operationalizing a digital regional leather network platform. It will also build advocacy capacity for key private sector leaders and stakeholders; and promoting and disseminating information through the LIN Platform.

2. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR QUARTER 4 (2021)

The following activities were scheduled for the reporting period ending April 17, 2021, in line with the project work plan. However, due to circumstances beyond the project, this period was extended to end in May 17, 2021.

EXPECTED OUTCOME ONE	PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THIS PERIOD
1. South-South Exchange	
1.1 South-south leather industry exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design, develop and conduct a South-south leather industry exchange
1.2 Digital profiles of SSE forum participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder sensitization, selection, video shooting, editing and publishing
1.3 Comparative study (Desktop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation and sensitization of comparative study
1.4 Development of policy paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking study validation
1.5 Dissemination of policy paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy paper dissemination
EXPECTED OUTCOME TWO	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
2. Establish Regional Leather Exchange Network & Digital Advocacy Platform	
2.1. Design, coding, & setup exchange network hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of platform Testing and reviews Adoption or redesign
2.2. Coding & integrating digital platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance platform integration
2.3. Training & testing for 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer on-boarding Platform navigation training
2.4. Annual support, monitoring & maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly site briefing meetings Monthly site updates Daily monitoring
EXPECTED OUTCOME THREE	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
3. Capacity building on advocacy	
3.1. Development of advocacy training manual developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuance of certificates for participation in advocacy training.
3.2. Stakeholder mobilized, trainers, trainees, & conference package developed.	
3.3. Training conducted	
3.4. Certificates Issued	
EXPECTED OUTCOME FOUR	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
4. Project Promotion & Information Dissemination	
4.1 Leather Industry Network (LIN) Platform launched. 4.2 LIN Platform promoted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a launch plan and media engagement strategy Stakeholder Mobilization and logistics LIN Platform Launch Develop and activating social media promotion Design and developing infographics Developing social media content Develop and activate Inbound -Marketing; Stakeholder sensitization; Production of media content Conduct above the Line (TV, Radio, Newspaper) feature a month Presentations of the leather policy made by EA member states

Table 1 - Planned activities for the next reporting period

2 ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED DURING THE FORTH (4TH) QUARTER

OVERALL GOAL:	To foster exchange, networking, and joint regional interest representation of the leather industry for improved market access, intra-EAC trade, and growth			
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: To conduct a regional South-South advocacy exchange with successful leather association and companies, and to identify best practices that promote leather value chains				
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THIS PERIOD	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACHIEVEMENT	NOT ACHIEVED AND REASONS
1.1. Generation of an SSE information pack containing: One [1] Video documentary showcasing the EAC leather industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, populate, and launch a digital SSE information and landing page Develop and disseminate an EA leather sector promotion documentary Design, develop and conduct a South-south leather industry exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) SSE digital landing page One (1) EAC leather industry promotional video One (1) virtual South-south leather industry exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSE concept developed. Annex one (1) One (1) SSE digital landing page was developed, populated and launched (https://sse.leatherindustrynetwork.com) Annex two (2) SSE infographics developed and disseminated Annex three (3) SSE press release developed and distributed Annex four (4) SSE promotion conducted. See links to articles in Annex five (5) SSE Email advert developed and disseminated Annex six (6) One (1) video documentary covering EAC leather sector promotional was developed and launched Annex seven (7) (https://youtu.be/nZlq5U_w48c) One (1) highly successful South-south leather industry exchange forum was conceptualized, developed and delivered. This forum saw the coming together of 9 countries as detailed in the forum report. Annex nine (9). SSE Forum Video Links: Annex 9a - Video 1 - https://youtu.be/ewQZyllhsk0 Annex 9b Video 2 - https://youtu.be/x9ltMfCnwnY 	NIL
1.2. Digital profiles of SSE forum participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop profiles of a selection of leather entrepreneurs in East Africa to showcase what the sector has to offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 12 video profiles of leather entrepreneurs developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 videos video profiles of leather entrepreneurs from East Africa were developed and continue to gain traction on the project's YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHDVXOSXpcV3wowSY7lTYiw Annex ten (10). 	NIL

1.3 Comparative study developed	Validation of comparative study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) comparative study report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The completed Comparative Study report was validated and attached as (Annex 11) 	NIL
1.4 Policy paper developed	Development of policy paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) Validation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy validation conducted virtually, and through email 	NIL
1.5 Policy paper Disseminated	Dissemination of policy paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) position paper produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) policy position paper on Harmonizing policies for hides and skins trade produced and disseminated (Annex 12) https://lin-eastafrica.com/knowledge-base/ea-leather-sector-position-paper-no-1-harmonization-of-hides-skins-policy-bm2/ 	NIL

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: Develop, host, and operationalize a digital regional leather network platform

EXPECTED OUTCOME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACHIEVEMENT	NOT ACHIEVED AND REASONS FOR THIS
2.3 LIN Platform design; content writing, assembly & coding; construction of platform; Testing, reviews and adoption or redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of platform Assembly & coding Testing and reviews Adoption or redesign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leather Industry Networking Platform developed and tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform development was completed, officially launched, and is now functional (Annex 13 – Link to LIN Platform Launch video) https://youtu.be/vo092HKl5wo 	NIL
2.4 Secure intellectual Property and trademarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for securing intellectual property and trademarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIN Platform Project intellectual property and trademarks secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intellectual property and trademark were secured and approval receipt obtained in the previous reporting period. 	NIL
2.5 Customer on-boarding; Platform navigation training (for 4 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer on-boarding Platform navigation training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers on-boarded onto the platform Stakeholders trained in platform navigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company profiling and customer onboarding was completed and platform navigation training done (Annex 14 – Link to Platform Navigation Training Manual/ Report) https://lin-eastafrica.com/join-training/ 	NIL
2.6 Site Monitoring Maintenance & Updating; Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly site briefing meetings Monthly site updates Daily monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing reports Update reports Monitoring reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site monitoring commenced on daily, weekly and monthly basis. (Annex 15 – Site Monitoring Report). This continued beyond the project period 	NIL

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Building advocacy capacity for key private sector leaders and stakeholders

EXPECTED OUTCOME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACHIEVEMENT	NOT ACHIEVED & REASONS
3.3 Development of training program; delivery of advocacy training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 (One) TOT on advocacy conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 (One) advocacy training was successfully conducted on January 20 and 21, 2021 (Annex 16 – Advocacy Training Report) 	NIL
3.4 Production of certificates & Preparation of digital storage tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement and distribution of digital storage devices for training content Production and award of certificates of completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 digital content storage devices loaded and distributed 12 certificates of completion issued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificates of completion were produced and issued to participants (Annex 17 – Sample Certificate of Completion of Advocacy Training) 	NIL
3.5 Conducting training evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of the training evaluation report produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 training report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training evaluation report was produced at the end of the training (Annex 18 – Advocacy Training Evaluation Report) 	NIL
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4: Promote and disseminate information through the LIN platform				
EXPECTED OUTCOME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACHIEVEMENT	NOT ACHIEVED & REASONS
4,1 Leather Industry Network (LIN) Platform launched. 4.2 LIN Platform promoted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a launch plan and media engagement strategy Stakeholder Mobilization and logistics Project Launch Develop and activating social media marketing Design and developing infographics Developing social media content Develop and activate Inbound - Marketing; Stakeholder sensitization; Production of blog content Conduct above the Line (TV, Radio, Newspaper) feature a month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 5 stakeholders mobilized from each EAC country and facilitated to participate in launch One (1) Project launch conducted One (1) media briefing Social media (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) activated Infographics developed and disseminated At least 2 blog features developed At least 1 above the Line (TV, Radio, Newspaper) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project launch was successfully conducted – Link to LINP Project Launch video. You can also access the launch video here: https://youtu.be/vo092HKl5wo Awareness creation was conducted through infographics and written articles, which were circulated through various digital platform and newspapers Annex 19 – Promotion & Communication Report featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links for the “Above the line” feature Campaign messages developed and used in marketing Annex 20 - Television advertising was conducted https://youtu.be/pqUyhtUXw4s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPdKYZreMCA 	Presentations of the leather policy made by EA member states was not done due to covid restrictions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations of the leather policy made by EA member states 			
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Table 2 - Progress on the planned activities for this period

3 FINANCIAL REPORT						
The implementation expenses incurred during this reporting period are presented under the column for Quarter 4 in the table below. The table also shows the financial position of the previous reporting periods as well, resulting in the final cumulative financial position of the project as at its closure						
		1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4th QUARTER	TOTAL
	BUDGET LINE	(17/04 - 17/07 2020)	(18/07-17/10 2020)	(18th October to - 17th Jan 2021)	(18th Jan - 17th May 2021)	(17 April 2020 - 17th May 2021)
1.0	North-South Exchange					
1.1	Generation of an SSE information pack	-	94,662	122,779	452,582	670,023
1.2	Digital profiles of SSE forum participants				577,050	577,050
1.3	Desk study: review, research & production	--	--	--	--	-
1.4	Study validation				429,000	429,000
1.5	Development of policy position paper	--	--	--	--	-
1.6	Publication and dissemination of policy paper	--	--	--	--	-
	TOTAL	-	94,662	122,779	1,458,632	1,676,073
2.0	Establish Regional Network					
2.1	Design, coding & set up	119,430	498,462	216,131	1,143,392	1,977,415
2.2	Coding& integrating digital Platform	106,983	229,188		291,928	628,099
2.3	Training & Testing	-	41,208		--	41,208
2.4	Monitoring & Maintenance				174,973	174,973
	TOTAL	226,413	768,858	216,131	1,610,293	2,821,695
3.0	Capacity Building					
3.1	Advocacy Training	--	--	--	--	--
4.0	Project Promotion & Information					-
4.1	Project launch	--	--	--	310,694	310,694
4.2	Promotion of Digital Platform	-	36,000	63,818	267,990	367,808
	TOTAL	-	36,000	63,818	578,684	678,502
	Administrative costs	173,880	384,911	228,430	476,733	1,263,954

	TOTAL	400,293	1,284,431	631,158	4,124,342	6,440,224

Table 3 – Project financial position as at May 17, 2022



4 CHALLENGES FOR THIS PERIOD

The main challenges experienced in the 4th quarter of the LIN platform project are outlined below:

5.1 Covid 19 Pandemic.

The project was hit by the COVID pandemic in a profound manner in the fourth quarter. While contingency measures had been put in place to mitigate challenges brought about by COVID, such as going digital to circumvent travel restrictions, the LIN project team was directly affected in February and March 2021, leading to time taken away in quarantine. Consequently, this called for the postponement of the platform launch date and launch activation.

Some field activities such as video documentation of leather industry activities at the national level were also affected.

The project, therefore, had to request for a no-cost extension period of thirty days, to allow for the completion of the official project launch, closure and exit.

5.2 High turnover of GIZ-Kenya staff assigned to the LIN project.

The project continued to experience a high turnover of staff assigned to the project especially on the GIZ-Kenya side in the 4th quarter. This led to delays in the processing of the project's financial accountability reports. This was unanticipated following the smooth 1st and 2nd quarter reporting. As such, project activities were interrupted, even as the project team and CBIT made efforts to keep project activities running.

In some occasions the staff were not conversant with the accounting tools and procedures as some asked for modification of the tools that had been supplied to us. Others gave conflicting instructions, sometimes contradicting previous guidelines provided for project accountability. This caused a lot of back and forth and delays in the project implementation.

5.3 Poor Handling of financial accountability documents

On a number of occasions, files containing original project accountability documents could not be traced once delivered to the GIZ-Kenya offices. This necessitated CBIT to revert to its scanned copies and the delivery book as evidence of having supplied the files. Secondly, while the procedure for delivery of files was such that a file is received at the GIZ-Kenya reception after which it is internally delivered to the person addressed, often, these files failed to reach the addressed person on time or, at all.

5.4 Delay in disbursement of project funds

By the end of the 4th quarter (17/03/2021) disbursement of project funds requested on February 15, 2021, well within time. By the end of the project implementation period the funds had not been released. Consequently, the requested funds could only be released as refund to CBIT. This therefore demanded that CBIT prefinance the project in settling pending bills. While this was unexpected, CBIT was able to settle pending bills. Refunds to the pre-financing was effected in May and August 2022.

5.5 Financial Constraints

From the onset, a number of project imperatives such as human resource was not financed. Given that this was a project that cuts across 6 countries, it could not run without an administrative team. For this, CBIT had to forgo its administrative allocation of KES 1,272,648 so as to partially meet basic administrative facilitation of staff. This is while CBIT undertook the greater responsibility of affording the project administrative staff, and overhead costs amounting to KES 4,854,000 over the 12-month project period. This cost was over and above CBIT's planned contribution of KES 3,322,407.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The fourth and last implementation period of the LIN Platform Project witnessed a mop-up of the outstanding project activities, with all that had been postponed from the previous reporting period being completed during this period. The main activities for this period were the advocacy training, the SSE forum, both undertaken in January, and the official launch of the LIN Platform, which was done at the end of April. All these activities were successfully undertaken.

Based on this final report and success attained, the project made the following recommendations for consideration, as a way forward:

- i) A funded project extension of 12 months, for the purposes of developing effective and sustainable management mechanism for the LIN Platform through the Leather Apex Consortium of East Africa (LACEA). **See Annex 25** – Concept Note for a proposed way forward.
- ii) Consider providing support for a bottoms-up establishment of strong national leather content development hubs.