

INTERLINGE, MOROCCO

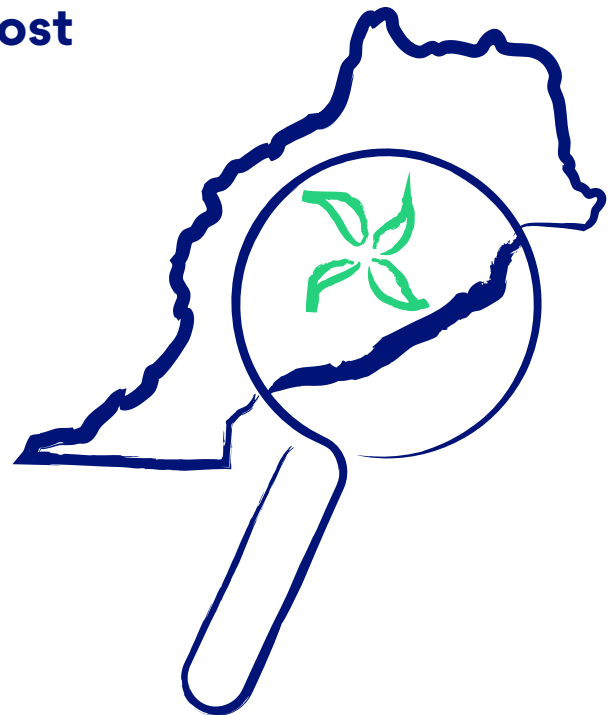
Optimising resources to save cost and save the planet

About Interlinge

Clothing and textile is a historical sector in the Moroccan economy and one of the backbones of the national industry. With 1628 companies employing 189,000 people, corresponding to 22% of jobs at the country level, this sector generates an annual turnover of around 50 million dirhams (13 billion USD) and more than 35 million dirhams in exports (9 billion USD).

Interlinge is a company based in Casablanca, employs two hundred people and, for twenty years, it has specialised in manufacturing swimwear, lingerie and menstrual protection products. 90% of its production is destined to major French, Spanish, English and Slovenian brands.

Aware of the importance of sustainable development, the company established a Training Center to train specialised sewists throughout a 2-year programme. Furthermore, it is committed to the Global Recycled Standard, Control Union certified, and a member of the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI).



Challenges in keeping the textile and clothing production efficient

Like the other companies in the textiles and clothing sector, Interlinge requires large quantities of electricity to produce garments, such as through the engines of the manufacturing tools and sewing machines. It also requires a significant amount of water, in particular, to produce the steam necessary for the ironing operations. In addition to resources used in production costs, resources are also used in the ordinary maintenance of its premises (i.e., lighting, cleaning, etc.) and are causing related costs.

For a country where water shortages are the most pressing issue related to climate change, saving water means pre-emptively engaging in adaptation to avoid resource inputs becoming more expensive in the future. Similarly, consuming electricity more efficiently and replacing fossil fuels with clean energy to power production processes means reducing the business's carbon footprint and realising cost savings - positively impacting company reputation and competitiveness.

Moreover, with clothing being increasingly considered disposable and the emergence of the "fast fashion" phenomenon, clothes, fabric, and fibres too soon end up as waste. Therefore, many fashion brands and producers are spearheading a new system for the textiles economy that is aligned with circular economy principles.



Steps taken and expected results

Interlinge worked with ITC experts to assess its water and electricity use at different production stages as well as the potential to reduce and reuse waste. After a cost-benefit analysis, the trainers suggested measures that Interlinge already started to implement successfully.



- **Water:** The company installed ten water saving devices that can be easily fitted to the taps. This simple measure allowed a cost saving of 8240 dirhams per year (900 USD) and a reduction of one-third of the annual water consumption (400 m³/year).



- **Electricity :** Interlinge opted for low-cost measures, such as replacing existing lamps with LED technology and installing electrical cabinets to monitor electricity consumption. With the sole replacement of old light bulbs, Interlinge reduced almost 20% of its annual electricity consumption. While small in scope, these measures yield immediate results and do not require external investment.



- **Waste reduction and recovery:** Interlinge created a dedicated waste room equipped with bins of different colours to facilitate the separation of waste by type. A register has been set up to keep a record of what was discharged. Moreover, the company embarked on actions to recover fifty per cent of its textile waste. This generated around 100 000 dirhams per year (11,000 USD) due to the sale of non-recyclable waste. Finally, the company is also seizing new business opportunities and launched the production of zero-waste and reusable products, such as washable make-up remover wipes, washable nursing pads and towels, and ecological tissues.

About GTEX/MENATEX

The GTEX/MENATEX program aims to encourage textile and clothing exports from developing countries to promote employment and income generation along the value chain. It is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The program in this context, ITC's Trade and Environment programme supports companies to use resources more efficiently (such as water, energy, or waste) and implement circular production practices through a customized coaching by sustainability and industry experts.

Looking forward

Based on the success of the implemented measures, Interlinge is now ready to take the next step and switch to clean energy to power its processes. Based on this initial scoping, the installation of a 43 kWp photovoltaic station will provide the company with an annual production of 54,000 kWh during peak hours, representing 43% of the electricity needed by Interlinge in one year. The initial investment of 350 000 dirhams will be recuperated in six years, and Interlinge is in the process of finding the suitable partners and financiers for its realisation.



“Based on this initial scoping, the installation of a 43 kWp photovoltaic station will provide the company with an annual production of 54,000 kWh during peak hours, representing 43% of the electricity needed by Interlinge in one year.”

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