

SOUTH AFRICA

A MARKET FOR CLOTHING FROM AFRICA



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EXPORT IMPACT
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SOUTH AFRICA

A MARKET FOR CLOTHING
FROM AFRICA

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Paper dealing with the issues critical to entering the clothing market in South Africa, especially relevant to African exporters - provides an overview of the market structure and characteristics; looks at the tariff structure and non-tariff barriers such as labelling and ethical trading requirements; examines South African domestic market, the clothing retail sector, and business practices; provides a case study on Mauritius as an example of a supplier to South Africa; identifies market niche opportunities in the country; includes statistical data on South Africa's foreign trade in the sector.

Descriptors: **Clothing, Tariffs, Non-Tariff Barriers, Labelling, South Africa, Mauritius, Case Studies.**

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Foreword

This paper aims to guide exporters in developing countries—mainly in Africa—on how to access the burgeoning and almost entirely import-reliant market for clothing in South Africa.

Because of the recent global financial crisis, exporters from developing countries have recently faced shrinking or marginal export growth in many of their developed country markets. Although these markets continue to account for 80% of world imports, imports into large emerging markets like Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa—the BRICS countries—are growing faster and offer significant potential for exploitation by exporters in the developing world.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has a comprehensive approach to assisting exporters from developing and least developed countries in market development and market diversification for key products in certain priority sectors. Under the approach, ITC helps to improve market networks, increases knowledge of new market opportunities in emerging markets and promotes South-South trade along the value chain, among other activities.

This technical paper is one of a series of sectoral market studies in BRICS countries commissioned by the ITC. Specifically, it responds to the need for greater knowledge of how to export clothing to the South African market.

All studies were funded by limited internal resources from the ITC regular budget. Owing to costs constraints, they will be issued as technical papers in a limited number of hard copies. Dissemination to developing country exporters will be done electronically and through the ITC website.

The clothing industry can be an important employment generator for many African countries. Clothing imports into South Africa rose over a five-year period to US\$ 1.1 billion in 2009, making it the world's twenty-fifth largest importer of this product group. Most imports were from Asia. However, some Asian exporters are becoming less competitive and countries like Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi and Mauritius have been making significant inroads into the market. They offer sterling examples of what needs to be done for African countries like them to gain entry into South Africa.

The report describes some attractive market niche opportunities and highlights some issues critical to entering the South African market that are especially relevant to African exporters. Most specially, strategies to influence current patterns of sourcing are required.

Finally, this report provides insights that would be useful in designing an initial marketing strategy and in preparing for an exporter's first sales visit to the market.

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