



## *Elaboration of an Action Plan to reinforce the leather sector in Sokoto State*

### Context

The leather sector is key in Nigeria. It is the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) largest non-oil foreign exchange earner after cocoa. Nigeria is also the eighth(8<sup>th</sup>) leading exporter of leather in the world and the second biggest producer of light leather in Africa. Nevertheless, the sector faces structural challenges along the value chain. Some of the issues include: the tedious process of skin and hide production, the consumption of hides and skins for food, low quality of skins produced, a fragmented cattle market, poor storage facilities, outdated tanning industries, lack of technical capacities to integrate final treatments, negative externalities on the environment, absence of standards including finished leather goods, a limited range of finished products (mainly shoes), slow finishing processes, and few market linkages focused on exporting.

Within this national context, supporting Sokoto State to improve the competitiveness of their leather sector and cluster agents represents a great opportunity to further replicate an initiative in other states and reinforce the capacities of workers in this key industrial sector.

### Main Approach

The UNIDO-Nigeria Industrial Revolution Project Office focuses on capacity strengthening for sustainable industrial development in Nigeria. The aim of the overall project is to contribute to the main goals of the Nigerian government's Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP), which seeks to spur economic diversification, industrial growth, job creation, and sustainable livelihoods.

The NIRP Project Office, in collaboration with the UNIDO Investment Technology Promotion Office (UNIDO-ITPO Nigeria) commenced research work in order to create a roadmap and strategies to assist the Sokoto State government to develop favorable policies for Nigeria's leather sector. The approach consists of 2 main phases:

- Diagnostics spanning the complete value chain of the leather sector in Sokoto State, including production of recommendations for all the implicated counterparts from the public and the private sector.
- Design of a consolidated roadmap to detail the main action lines necessary to improve the competitiveness of the leather cluster in Sokoto State.

After the formulation of the action plan, the team will also support the linkages with potential investors and donors and follow-up the implementation of the different action lines.

### Impact And Results

The project has been structured around 3 main steps:

- In February 2016, the Sokoto State Government sent a request to the UNIDO Investment Technology Promotion Office (UNIDO-ITPO Nigeria) seeking UNIDO's support to develop the leather sector. A study tour was consequently organized in Italy, with the support of ITPO Italy. This activity permitted the Sokoto State delegation to meet both technical and business potential partners.
- An inception mission was then organized in July 2016 by the NIRP Project Office. The main results were the development of the diagnostics for the leather cluster in Sokoto State and the identification of key recommendations to improve its competitiveness.
- Since September 2016, the team has been collaborating with Federal and State Governments in formulating a detailed action plan to reinforce the leather sector in Sokoto State.

### At a Glance

**Project title:** Elaboration of an action plan to reinforce the leather sector in Sokoto State

**Country coverage:** Sokoto State, Nigeria

**Thematic areas :** Improving processing, quality and standards of raw and finished leather goods in Nigeria.

**Main country counterparts:** Federal Government of Nigeria (FMITI), and the Sokoto State government.