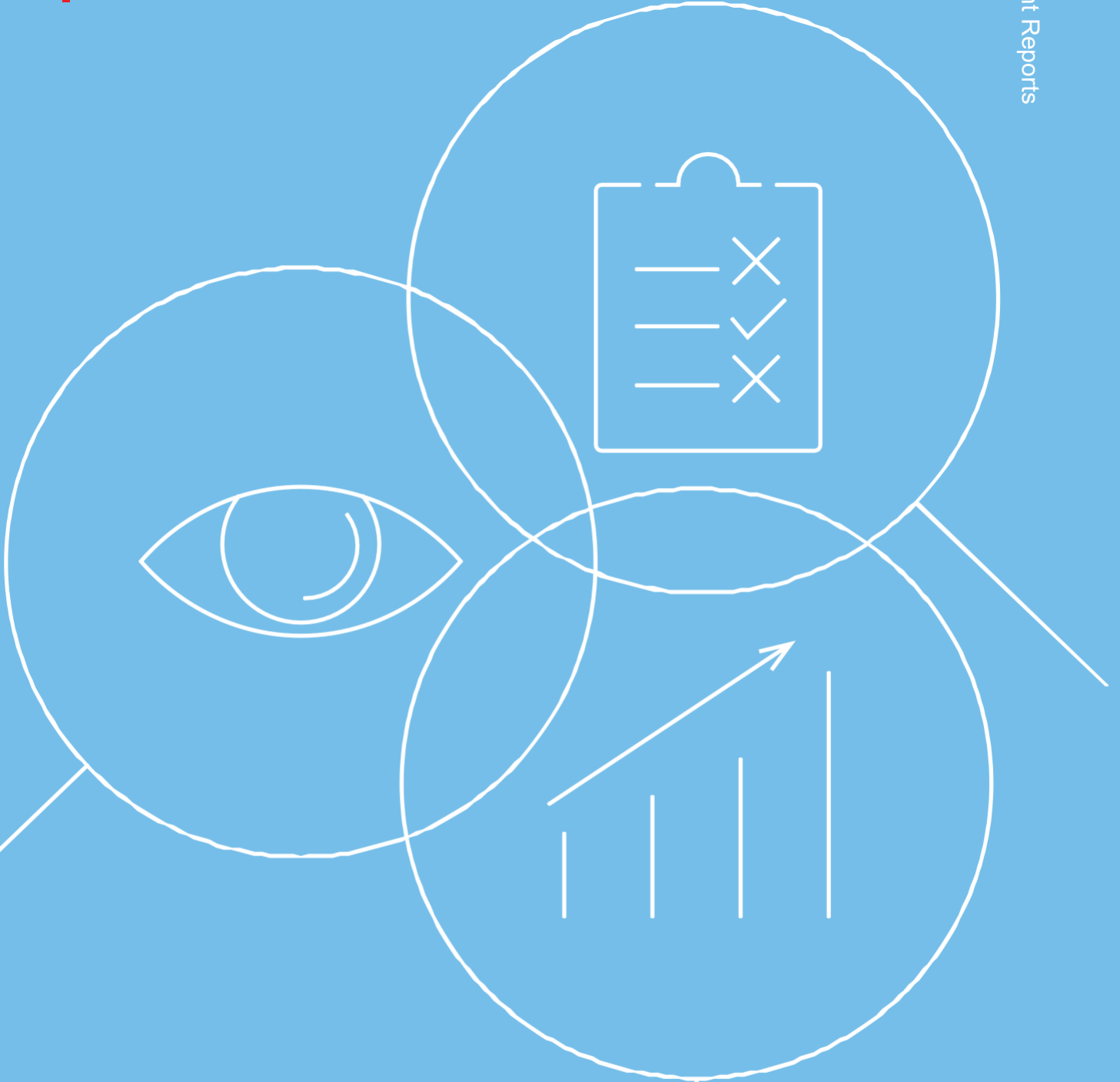


Evaluation of Chobe Baskets Project

Learning from the Implementation of WIPO Initiatives aimed at Empowering Women Entrepreneurs

Internal Oversight Reports



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDIP	Committee on Development and Intellectual Property
CIPA	Companies and Intellectual Property Authority
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCD	Department for Cooperative Development
FITS	Funds-in-Trust
ICS	Individual Contractor Services
IOD	Internal Oversight Division
IP	Intellectual Property
JPO	Japan Patent Office
MITI	Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry
MTSP	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's
PCT	Patent Cooperation Treaty
QuIP	Qualitative Impact Protocol
RNDS	Regional and National Development Sector
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TOC	Theory of Change
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WEP	Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Chobe Baskets Project (Botswana), launched in 2019, was an initiative proposed by the Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA) and the Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry (MITI) of Botswana, to create a collective mark for baskets made in the Chobe District, Botswana. The project was funded by the Japan Patent Office (JPO). After the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) engaged with MITI, CIPA and JPO, a national consultant was hired for the process, which included a feasibility study and intermediary support between all stakeholders.
2. The project focused on Chobe District, Botswana which had an organized women entrepreneurs' group. They applied for trademark protection, created a cooperative union and an APEX board, and underwent three training sessions of four days each.
3. Although the branding was a significant milestone, the primary goal of the training was to teach participants how to start and finish baskets more effectively, improve their quality and competitiveness. The Department for Cooperative Development (DCD), MITI delivered the training, and "master weavers"¹ from Maun, North-West District of Botswana were brought in to train the participants on the basket-making process.
4. Although the official launch of the brand was planned for 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 delayed the project. The launch finally took place in November 2022, where the group sold, as reported by CIPA: "basket weaver went from selling in April 2021, 11,816 Botswana Pula to August 2022, 28,080 Botswana Pula more than twice the number of baskets previously sold, to Japan". Initially, there was a shop in Kasane Airport, where local hotels displayed the "Chobe Baskets" for sales to tourists, and tour operators drove into the villages to showcase the baskets to tourists. However, when the WIPO evaluation team visited the communities in November 2023, the optimism had waned as the airport shop remained closed and basket sales to tourists remained lower than pre-COVID pandemic levels.
5. Moving forward, the cooperative union should focus on marketing and commercialization of the Chobe baskets, leveraging as appropriate on available national government support or other international cooperating partners. The cooperative union should also proactively seek out business forums to gain insights from other organizations and learn to compete effectively. Introducing and integrating younger people to the basket weaving craft would also help in scaling up.
6. Detailed conclusions and recommendations are as included in Section 5 of this report.

¹ As indicated in the UNESCO Periodic Report on the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (cycle 2020-2024) <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Signed%20periodic%20report%20-%20Periodic%20report-62601.pdf>. Also indicated in the WIPO Project Implementation Strategy – Branding Project for Chobe Baskets, document dated September 17, 2019, Kasane. Included as well in the WIPO Document WIPO/IP/BBK/19/INF/1, October 11, 2019. Across all WIPO and international documentation, the Maun weavers are referred to as Master Weavers.