



## STRENGTHENING EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE TEXTILE AND CLOTHING SECTOR AND ENHANCING TRADE SUPPORT INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES IN TAJIKISTAN

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### ITC BRIDGES TOURISM TO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan potential in tourism with linkage to creative industries, such as artisanal products is being assessed by the International Trade Centre. Mapping touristic destinations of the country with particular focus on pro-poor backward linkages is one of the ITC's new focuses in Tajikistan.

ITC international consultant on tourism Mr. Francois Laurent completed his second mission under ITC tourism focus to Tajikistan on November 28, 2013. Mr. Laurent visited Tajikistan for two missions, first from 14 October to 27 October, 2013, and the second from November 23 to 27, 2013. During the missions Mr. Laurent accompanied by ITC National Consultants Mr. Surat Toimastov and Ms. Tahmina Karimova visited main sightseeing places of the country including Badakhshan and Zarafshan regions, met artisanal and touristic companies' representatives, as well as, was introduced to the country's potential on tourism. The missions' aims included conducting an inclusive tourism needs assessment, with focus on possible backward linkages to creative industries and feasibility study on possible establishment of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).

Mr. Laurent says: *"Now all necessary information on the current situation in tourism area of Tajikistan, existing governmental policies and strategies, main actors of the sector, as well as the potential for development of this sector was collected for further analysis"*.

When asked about his impressions from his acquaintanceship to the touristic sector of Tajikistan, Mr. Laurent said: *"Tajikistan has just great potential for tourism. Particularly, this country can attract thousands from around of the world for touring, trekking, extreme sports and etc. But, huge work is ahead for making Tajikistan is the real touristic heaven. Preliminary, I can say the web-presence and online services, such as buying air ticket and booking hotel should be improved. Unfortunately, currently, there's no big choice of air connection to Dushanbe, as well as inside the country. Also, airport procedures need to be developed in order to avoid painful first contact. Outside of Dushanbe you face challenges with internet connection and credit card payment, as well as cash withdrawal. In the mountains you have a lot of choice with homestay accommodations; this is really great experience, but facilities, cousin, rooms should be better"*.

Based on the analyses and assessment results it will be determined is there need and use of establishing Destination Management Organizations in two touristic regions of Tajikistan - Zarafshan valley and Badakhshan region or not. The assessment will also identify the tourism value chain including the linkage between the tourism industry such as hotels, restaurants, tour operators and other with local suppliers of products and services with focus on creative industries, such as artisanal producers.

Based on the assessment results and after consultations and validation with all stakeholders, the International Trade Centre will identify and outline the trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) needs and priorities in the tourism sector. The assessment of the tourism sector in Tajikistan is being conducted under the recently approved project on "Strengthening export competitiveness of SMEs in the textile and clothing sector and enhancing trade support institutional capacities", which is component four of SECO's Trade

Cooperation Program (TCP) in Tajikistan. Based on the results of the above assessment, it is expected a new project to support tourism in Tajikistan will be financed by the Government of Switzerland.

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