

## PERFORMANCES OF TAJIK AND KYRGYZ COMPANIES AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS – REPORT



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## RECOMMENTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Here below please, find inputs and recommendations for participants to improve their export's performances to Russia.

### *Tajikistan*

#### **Dilorom**

This company has made important progresses since the first inputs provided. At that time, the company mainly produced uniforms, bed linen and mattresses and artisanal products.



After the initial inputs, the company developed some samples of menswear building on their experience in the production of men's uniforms.



The overall quality of patterns is quite good but the company still needs to improve it and adjust details (such as button holes that are too small and positions of pockets). The company can create some main basic patterns, 3-4, and these can be used to make variations by changing fabrics and details like pockets, trimmings, cuffs etc.. The choice of fabrics can be improved and expanded and the contacts with new fabric suppliers had at Textillegprom will be useful (the company met with at least 3-4 wholesalers of fabrics and trimmings). The company needs a bit of time to refine its offer of menswear, and what has been achieved so far is really good and can be considered an important step. To reach next targets, training for the pattern maker and research on fabrics and materials are strongly suggested activities.

Dilorom made some good commercial contacts with garment and home textile wholesalers and retailers in Moscow and one store showed interested in buying 100 units of bed linen per month. This will allow the company refine its offer while exporting one of their core products, home textiles. Once the menswear offer is improved, it can be marketed more strongly.

Further participation in Textillegprom is strongly recommended as this will allow the company to continue market research, useful to improve its offer and strengthen the contacts had in September. For future participation in Textillegprom and any other trade event, it is suggested that the company:

- Finalise samples before showcasing them as most of the samples needed to be adjusted in terms of patterns, size of button holes and other details.
- Samples need to be ironed before hanging them in the stand. The company could bring an iron and iron them in the stand.
- Hangers are important accessories to show garments at their best. Enough hangers have to be brought and they have to be suitable for the garments. This time, hangers were not enough big for men's jackets and therefore they could not be hung in an appropriate way.
- It is also important the company prepares swatches of fabrics and colour cards and, ideally, they should find suppliers who can provide this service.

## Guliston

Guliston has exported to Russian large retailers such as Carrefour for years and this has certainly helped them to make their participation successful. The company has, in fact, made very good contacts with at least 25 wholesalers from different Russian cities and signed a preliminary agreement worth USD 770,000 with Moscow wholesaler, Shveipromservis, for the supply of 120,000-140,000 units of garments of over six months.



Suggestions for the company include inputs to increase their opportunities on the Russian market and improve their participation in trade fairs.

Regarding increasing opportunities in the Russian market:

- The product range could be expanded including more fashionable styles, especially for young ladies and men. The company has, in fact, state-of-the-art facilities, especially for jeans treatments (washing, dyeing), and these could be fully exploited by proposing more trendy garments that could be sold at higher prices to fashion retailers and brands.

- To have a more fashionable offer, the company will have to add new shapes and patterns that can include skinny jeans, comfort stretch fabrics, boot-cut styles. These silhouettes could be proposed as an additional line that won't replace the standard range of garments, it would be just additional to it. This would allow the company to address to fashion brands and retailers and not only to big budget retailers like Carrefour that are very price-oriented and tend to move production where prices are lower. This strategy could be beneficial for the company in the long run.

Concerning inputs to better their participation in trade fairs, the company could:

- Have at least two people in the stand rather than just one. Textillegprom is a big fair and gives a lot of opportunities in terms of research, therefore, if the company sends two people, one can be permanent in the stand (sales person) and the other one can conduct research (on competitors and suppliers – a marketing or a product development person can do this). As this time only one person was in the stand and wanted to do both sales and sourcing, the stand was sometimes left alone and this is not recommendable for two sets of reasons. The image the company gives is not very good and this may bring to lose sales opportunities.
- Bring more samples, given the high number of styles and product categories (both bottoms and tops, for men, ladies and children) they make. The company did not have more than 15-16 samples, mainly for men, and could have brought at least 25 samples.

### Yokut-2000

Like other companies (e.g. Dilorom), Yokut has made important efforts to diversify its product range adding menswear to its offer, previously mainly focused on military uniforms. The company has also made important investments in equipment to make men's suits but still needs to enhance the choice of fabrics they use. Participating in Textillegprom was a big opportunity for Yokut because they were able to benchmark the offer of fabrics from different suppliers and countries and establish direct contacts with them. The company established contacts with twelve fabric vendors of from Russia, Turkey and Italy, both producers and wholesalers.



It is suggested the company refines its offer of menswear in the next year proposing both casual and elegant garments. The company has already developed some samples of casual jackets and specific inputs were given to improve it. The investment made in equipment for men's suit could be fully exploited accepting orders as contractor from Russian men's suit brands. For this market, it is important the company can offer good quality fabrics in blended wool and polyester from which buyers can choose from. Turkish and Chinese suppliers can offer these materials, Italian fabrics can only be used for higher quality lines and the feasibility of employing Italian fabrics has to be carefully assessed.

Given the big experience the company has in the production of military clothing and the common availability of old and new military fabrics in Tajikistan, the company could develop some casual jackets for men using new and vintage military fabrics. The company could also sell it with its own brand in Russia as this is a trendy and sought after type of garment in all market segments (both low and medium to high-end).

The company is also suggested to improve its presence at trade fair by:

- Having more people on the stand, especially if the fair represents an opportunity to source in addition to sell. This time, the stand was left empty for long periods of time.
- Bringing a more consistent range of samples. Samples of menswear were brought with others of military and traditional clothing. This can be good to test the market but it certainly advisable to choose a market strategy and stick to it when preparing for a trade fair. It is also important to understand what the trade fair audience is and bring samples accordingly. Textillegprom is not an event for artisanal products.

## Nafisa

Nafisa has exported to the Russian market for years and had previously exhibited at Textillegprom. During the fair the company conducted negotiations with around 80 companies, mainly wholesalers from various Russian regions and cities. Thanks to their precedent experience, the company was very well prepared to give buyers the information they sought such as prices, transportation and custom costs etc.. Nafisa made a preliminary agreement worth USD 42,000 with a Moscow wholesaler ,Cacharel, for the supply of 140 thousands pairs of socks until the end of the year. Other contracts can be generated in the mid term by turning contacts into leads.



The company is very well prepared for trade fair participation and can only improve by bringing more samples and cones of yarns that can be shown to buyers if they are interested to see the yarn's quality.

Next important steps for the company will include renewing their equipment to be able to add new product categories like women's socks and offer products made with different techniques. The company's very aware of this need but could not afford to make new investments. At Textillegprom they had many opportunities to asses the Asian offer for hosiery equipment and, furthermore, to make a competitive analysis as around 25 producers of hosiery and socks from various countries (Russia, China, Uzbekistan and Turkey) exhibited their products. In this sense, Nafisa could check the quality and price levels of competitors as well as retail prices, especially during the study visit tour to key Russian retailers that took place on October 1.

As previously suggested, given the fact that the company has got in-house dyeing facility, they could offer a customised service of colour dyeing according to their clients' requirements. This is very relevant now as both men's and women's socks have become more colourful and a true fashion accessory.

## Textile City

Textile City has export experience to Russia, however this was their first participation in Textilelegprom.

The company had a successful participation, *“During the fair, I met with representatives of more than 50 companies, wholesalers from Moscow and other regions of Russian Federation, like Chita, Krasnodar and Astrakhan. Russian buyers expressed high interest to our products, particularly shirts and denim products for children, teenagers and men”* – Mr Nasim Karimov, the company’s General Director says.

As previously mentioned, a preliminary agreement worth USD 100,000 was made with a Moscow-based wholesaler called Expose for the supply of men and children’s jeans and shirts.



Textile City’s strength is the good quality of their products that are sold at competitive prices and the fact that they also manufacture the fabrics they use. They can control the quality of their fabrics and can bring innovation with new patterns, designs and colours. Textile City met also with buyers highly interested in their fabrics, particularly wholesalers.

The company can improve the presentation of their products by creating outfits to be showcased in their stand. In fact, the company can supply both cotton trousers and shirts but few trousers were brought. Also, as the product categories the company is stronger in are men and childrenswear, the company could bring enough samples of both and position the relative samples in two different racks to show clearly that they are specialised in both categories. This time this was not immediately clear by looking at the company’s stand.

Regarding additional inputs to refine their market strategy, if the company wishes to push the sales of their own brand, they should propose more outfits and work on increasing the awareness of their brand that, for the moment, is mainly popular in Dushanbe. Russia is a more competitive market than Tajikistan, therefore, the company could focus its efforts in acquiring more orders as manufacturer and, at the same time, fine-tune the marketing strategy of their brand and promote it more strongly in next editions of Textillegprom.

## Leader

Leader can produce different product categories but had a very focused strategy for Textillegprom and this resulted to be a successful move. They positioned themselves as the supplier for martial arts kimonos and had many visits by extremely interested specialised sportswear buyers (e.g. Atemi, Rey-Sports). Russia and, more in general, former Soviet countries are very important markets for martial arts, especially karate and judo as these are very commonly practiced sports.



The overall strategy of Leader is correct and will certainly lead the company to increase its market share in Russia. The company is about to sign an agreement with the Japanese brand Mitzuno, an international leader brand for kimonos. If this agreement is signed, Leader can build on this and raise its profile as a key manufacturer in this market segment.

As previously suggested, the company could organise its range according to the end uses of kimonos, therefore, the types of martial arts they are supposed to be used for. For next events, they could also promote better what they can offer by creating postcards where they specify what types of kimonos they can produce and name the different martial arts these can be used for. Kimonos for various end uses can also be clearly marked with signs in the stand or with hung tags. Samples can then be categorised according to their use, for instance, if it's for training or competition use as this is an important criteria to differentiate kimonos and the fabrics used to manufacture it.

Participating in Textillegprom is certainly beneficial to the company to expand on the Russian market and, with time, the company might also consider to visit a very specialised international trade fair like ISPO, the international sportswear event. ISPO takes place in Munich – Germany at the end of January and in Beijing – China, at the end of February. Considering that Leader is very focus on sportswear, it might be worthwhile to attend such trade show in order to have a better understanding of international buyers' requirements.

## Zinat

For Zinat Textillegprom was mainly a learning and a research opportunity. The company did not develop new products and did not have a clear strategy for the fair. The company brought some samples of the product categories they can manufacture (school uniforms, workwear and shirts) which was a good way to show their capability and skills but the range did not appear consistent enough to say what the company is good at. However, the quality of the samples was good.



The main suggestions for the company to improve its attractiveness for buyers are:

- Decide a more defined export strategy so that it's clearer what the company's strengths are.
- Differentiate the way they communicate to their trade buyers because buyers of workwear and school uniforms have requirements that are very different to buyers of men's shirts. Where possible, the company should adopt a differentiated promotional strategy for different customers' segments.
- Invest more time and resources in product development, especially for men's shirts, in order to be able to offer a wider choice of styles and fabrics. The current impression is that styles are very similar to each other and the range of offered fabrics is not wide.
- Showcase consistent ranges for trade fairs avoiding to present shirts and workwear/school uniforms at the same time.
- If the event is big as Textillegprom, have more than one person to man the stand as the stand was left empty for most of the time.

## Kyrgyzstan

### E-Line Moda

The company's success was determined by a set of factors. In particular, the company:

- Has export experience.
- Had already participated in Textillegprom several times.
- Proposes a very competitive offer and high quality garments.
- Behaves professionally in the market.



E-Line Moda invests regularly in market and trend research and this results in the development of products that are relevant to the market's demand. E-line had 44 meetings with buyers from all parts of Russian Federation over 4 days, some of them were existing clients but most of them were brand new ones. Clients are both retailers and wholesalers with a predominance of the first category. The company's identity is very strong and very well communicated in the stand. The company positions as the specialist brand and supplier for women's jackets that are wearable and, at the same time, fashionable. Style is quite classic and neat and details and colours are fashionable. Products were displayed correctly in the stand and the range was very consistent, in fact, the stand was always crowded.

E-Line Moda can be taken as an example by companies willing to export to Russia or improve their performances in this market. This company shows that some elements like a clear strategy, market focus, constant research and attention to detail are critical to succeed. It's important to note that this event was also an opportunity for this company to connect with Tajik suppliers. In fact, E-line's owner affirmed she's thinking of establishing business relations with Tajik textile suppliers. These forms of co-operation in the region certainly contribute to make the entire textile and clothing value chain stronger.

E-Line could strengthen its brand by adding some product categories such as winter jackets, trench coats, raincoats and coats. This could be done by sourcing different types of fabrics with different textures, weights and compositions. Of course, the company should continue investing in promotion in Russia by participating to Textillegprom in hall 75 C or A.

### NR Group

NR Group is a very strong producer of socks in Kyrgyzstan with new and modern equipment. The current range of socks is very classic and traditional and includes mainly socks for men and girls. The company could easily add boys' socks to their range and provide a complete offer for children. The market for women tights and socks is certainly interesting but competition is very tough and clearly the needed equipment is different, therefore, it is understandable the company is not trying to enter this market for the time being.



Areas of improvement are:

- A more diversified offer for men and girls. Men's socks are mainly represented by black, classic socks that are for sure the most sold in mass market segments but additional styles and a colour card could give buyers more options. Socks for girls could be more playful and special designs could be developed each season according to different themes.
- T-shirts could be coordinated with men's socks to sell outfits and more valuable packages that can represent good deals for wholesalers and retailers.
- The quality of t-shirts can be improved using better cotton fabrics and a better shade card.
- Focus on service and post-sale assistance to build strong relations with customers as service is key. Special re-assortment programmes could be planned to give a better and faster service to retailers all over Russia.

Regarding trade fair participation, the company displayed their products correctly but did not coordinate t-shirts with socks that are treated as two completely separated product categories. The company did quite well at Textillegprom having met 10 potential new buyers from various Russian regions.

### **Credo Fashion**

Credo Fashion has quite a strong focus on a specific product category, ladies' formal dresses and suits. The garment's overall quality is very good especially patterns and stitching. The number of samples they develop is high and trend research is carried out regularly mainly because they have a in-house design team.



It is an opportunity to communicate this design capability to customers who can get a full assistance in the development of customised styles for their own brands. The company could also develop more colourful samples that can be a point of attraction at trade events. Most of the samples are made with grey fabric which is most probably the best seller shade but the design team can also do more research on colour palettes and develop colour themes for each season. As an additional suggestion, the company could keep focused on the product categories they are producing at the moment but have the chance to enhance end-uses, in particular, the types of occasions dresses and jackets can be worn at (casual-free time, formal-business, elegant – eveningwear).

At Textillegprom Credo Fashion met with more than 20 buyers from various Russian regions and, by talking with them, they learned that they need to “*increase the variety of their garments and size range*”. They liked the idea of having promotional postcards but were not very happy with the chosen sample and the photo and, therefore, created their own postcards using the same format and layout of ITC’s ones. Generally speaking, this an important achievement as companies have found out a new way to promote their companies, have learned how to create promotional postcards independently and were happy to invest their own financial resources for this.

### **Nazik**

Nazik’s strategy is very specialised and focused on the production of women’s skirts. The company was at its first direct export experience to Russia and the owner was enthusiastic about the level of knowledge she acquired by dealing directly with customers and this gave her the chance to understand their requirements and needs.



The overall quality of samples is very good and some improvements could be made by:

- Diversifying the types of fabrics used increasing the availability of fabrics with different compositions and textures.
- Making samples in other colours other than only light and dark grey and, therefore, developing colour palettes according to season.

In addition, it is suggested the company brings swatches of fabrics to show the fabric's availability and a differentiated price list for wholesalers and retailers. The owner of the company affirmed that the most interesting learning she could take from this experience in Moscow was the difference between retail and wholesale price levels.

The company should also improve the way they prepare for trade fairs by making a careful selection of samples according to the event's audience and the stand's size not bringing unnecessary samples. The stand was too full of samples and you could not appreciate styles that were hidden by other skirts. The company could have brought between 25 and 30 samples but they were much more and the stand did not seem professional enough. In case the company makes their own posters, it is important the sample in the photo is also displayed in the stand. This time, for instance, the skirt showcased in the poster was not brought at the fair. The garment chosen for the promotional material should be a strong sample the company wants to push the sales of. The company established at least 10 good contacts with potential retailers during Textillegprom.

### Beishebaeva

For Beishebaeva this was mainly a learning experience that gave them the chance to assess market's opportunities and benchmark their competitiveness with competitors. Beishebaeva has been operated mainly as a CMT company so far but is trying to change its strategy by establishing its own brand and selling it to wholesalers and retailer as this means moving up the value chain. This is a big step for the company and the participation at Textillegprom came at the right moment to research the market and gather enough data to make strategic decisions.



The company needs to solve some issues before establishing their own brand:

- Improve the quality of pattern making and manufacturing which, at present, are quite poor. Most of the samples had bad quality stitching and patterns that have to be improved. Specific trainings for workers and pattern maker are essential to obtain a better product.
- Source better quality fabrics that are consistent in terms of materials and colours.

- Develop basic silhouettes and add variations changing the length of dresses, sleeves, and playing with details.
- Improve quality control of samples and production garments.

The owner of the company is very dedicated and eager to learn and improve and, if these suggestions will be followed, she will manage to reach its objectives and bring innovation in her company. The company should not focus only on the establishment of its brand but should gain more experience as manufacturer and this will allow them to learn more about pattern making and customers' requirements. Beishebaeva could develop its own brand with time and at the same time as working as manufacturers to make this venture more sustainable. National market could be the first sales market to focus on in order to strengthen its offer and its quality and gain the necessary confidence to launch the brand on other competitive market such as the Russian market.

Beishebaeva's participation was positive and the company established some contacts with potential suppliers as well as with a couple of buyers. These contacts can be considered as starting point for the company's new strategy.

### **Belek**

Belek's existing range of coats and raincoats is of good quality in terms of both pattern making and manufacturing, in fact, the company established 5 good contacts with potential buyers (retailers). This can be considered a very good number for a small business like the company.



Priorities for the company should be considered:

- Enhance the fabric's choice, especially colours. It is better to have less types of fabrics (composition and texture) but offer multiple colours that represent a consistent colour palette as, in this way, the buyer can build better the offer for its customers.
- Expand the samples' offer, keeping the focus on women's coats and raincoats.
- Develop a complete size range.
- Offer a wider choice for each season following market fashion trends.
- Keep the quality level the same for samples and production garments.

It is recommended the company continues the development of new silhouettes as it has done for the fair. They have invested time and resources to develop new samples and results have been very positive (see below the initial samples and one new style developed after the inputs).



The company will boost its exports if the initiated product development process will be continued and furthered. The company should carry on investing in research (magazine subscription/online research/visit to trade fairs) to get inspiration to develop new styles.

### **Diva Style**

The main objective of Diva Style is promoting their label instead of working as manufacturer. In Moscow, in fact, the company has mainly met retailers (6 serious contacts) and stores that can stock their brand.



The company has a great potential to grow as a brand because the styles and products have got character and a clear identity. The overall quality of patterns and manufacturing is very good and the number of new models is always high. This means the company innovates and proposes new styles on a regular basis and this is critical if you want to establish a brand. The presence of an in-house strong designer will help the brand establish firmly on the market.

The company's designer won the first prize for her high-end capsule collection called Aqua Terra. It would be interesting if this designer label was marketed under Diva Style's umbrella brand as the high-end label project. This structure could see Diva Style's brand addressing to mass market, in particular, to a fashion-oriented customer and Aqua Terra catering to a younger and more metropolitan customer with a modern and global lifestyle.

It is recommended Diva Style build on this participation and continue exhibiting at Textilegrom whereas Aqua Terra could consider to apply for CPM Moscow when a more complete collection is ready. Export potential for both lines is very high and they do not jeopardize if they are managed in a way they address to two very different market segments. The prize won by Aqua Terra in Moscow could be immediately used to get some fashion press coverage which could result in a positive image also for Diva Style brand.

If Diva Style wants to establish as a brand in highly competitive market like Moscow's, the company should invest some resources to create a brand's experience at events like Textilegrom. The company could look Lyla Style, another Kyrgyz company, to understand how to create a brand's experience that strengthen the brand and make it sought after by customers. The stand will have to be decorated in a way that is consistent to the brand's identity and the whole experience with the company's staff will have to reflect the brand's character. Finally, as building a brand is a time-consuming project, the company should not expect to gather results before the third participation at Textilegrom.

## Rusol

Rusol is a brand which has got already a strong personality. This is mainly due to a clear strategic direction and a strong product. Rusol's jackets and trench coats are easily recognizable for the simple and elegant touch and the bright colours. The company is very well organised, the in-house designer is very talented and research on design and fashion trends is a regular activity. All this has brought the company to establish their brand and recently refresh it with a new logo, labels and tags.



The company could move up to the next level by sourcing fabrics with different compositions and a higher value. For instance, wool blends fabrics, rather than synthetic fabrics, could be chosen for winter collections. The company should try to keep collections colourful as this represents a sort of signature of their brand.

The company also prepared well for their first participation in Textilegrom and created, for instance, a fashion logbook using the same model used for the postcard and poster. The logbook was professionally done and was consistent with the brand's identity.

When preparing for next fair, the company should consider to:

- Bring more samples as, this time, the low number of garments in the stand made it look empty and poor.
- Work more on the stand's decoration in a way that helps convey the message of the brand to the target customer.

The company made 8 important contacts with fashion boutique at Textileprom.

If the company raises the profile of the brand by using more valuable fabrics, they could apply for CPM Moscow as the company seems to be ready for this important fashion event.

### **Bermet**

Bermet is a manufacturer specialised in women's trousers and has built quite a strong position in this market's segment. Their strength lies in the quick turnaround of styles and the high number of models they develop every season. Their competitors are aware of their innovation capacity and tend to copy their styles that suit the average Russian woman.

Areas of improvements include:

- Development of colour palettes that can propose best seller shades and new colours according to season and fashion trends. So far, all the samples have been developed in black and grey colours but this does not help sales during a trade fair where colours attracts buyers into the stand.
- One or two new fabrics every season that strengthens the position of the company as an innovative company always proposing something new.



The quality standards are high and the workers seem to be well trained and productive. The main challenge of the company is to gain experience in marketing themselves better but this is quite understandable as the company mainly operates as a manufacturer. Bermet made 7 good contacts with retailers and wholesalers and it is strongly recommended they participate in Textileprom on a regular basis to build their customer base.

### **Lyla Style**

Lyla Style has been one of the most successful participants in Textileprom at which they have taken part as exhibitors for more than 7-8 editions. The company is promoting the brand Lyla Style whose market share has been growing continuously until present. This is the result of a clear strategy, the choice of competing in a niche market segment and a competent team of people. The team is composed of designers, sales and marketing people that monitor the market and develop new ideas according to trends and consumers' behaviour and preferences. In fact, the company started with only girls' party dresses and only after years they added accessories like shoes, gloves and bags to their ranges. Competitors followed their example and also developed accessories to be coordinated with dresses.



The company decided to book their stand in the Childrenswear Salon, separated by the other participants who were positioned in the Fashion Directoire pavilion, part of Salon of Garment. Lyla Style has booked the same stand for several editions and this is important as their clients know where to find them. The company also invested money to upgrade their stand's decoration and get coloured walls (pink), consistent with the dreamy identity of their brand. Entering Lyla Style's stand was equivalent to step into the brand's world with beautiful princess dresses and hand-made animal puppets made by Kyrgyz artisans. Customisation of the stand is critical if a company wants to promote a brand and a lifestyle. This brand should be taken as example by other central Asian companies willing to establish their own brands.

Following the inputs provided, Lyla Stye is now developing outfits of skirts coordinated with shirts/tops that the elegant style of their brand. Creating outfits can expand their product categories and therefore increase sales opportunities. It is suggested the company develops pieces that can be easily coordinated together in order to facilitate sales. It is also recommended the company buys also different fabrics, not necessarily in synthetic fibres, but also in natural fibres or blends. This could grow the company's opportunities in higher end market's segments where natural fibres are preferred. Design and touch and feel of style has to be kept unchanged in order to fit into the range's identity.

The company highly appreciated the idea of having promotional postcards gathering together the technical information every buyer seeks. They stapled postcards to garments to allow buyers to look around independently when the company's staff was busy with other clients. The postcard's idea was adopted immediately by the company who developed additional postcards starting from the same format.

The commercial outcome was a success with a big number of new contacts made. The company indicates that they had 12 meetings over 4 days but this number is higher, may-be the company here refers to brand new contacts as most of visitors were represented by existing clients.

## RECOMMENTATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

This project shows that market success depends on a set of factors:

- Choice of the right target market – Russia is a good choice for these central Asian companies due to obvious cultural and language bonds that facilitate interaction and the understanding of market's dynamics and characteristics.
- Good preparation well ahead of the event in product development and marketing – development of new products relevant to the Russian market was critical for many companies, especially for those with a lower knowledge of the market.
- The presence of the right tools during the event – tools such as posters, postcards but also logbook and technical sheets helped the companies to know which information is important and how to organise it (company history, product categories, key technical specifications, prices, lead times etc..) so that it's available when needed, hence during meetings with buyers.
- Regular investment in research through various media and tools. The most successful companies have in-house designers and/or pattern makers and encourage them to do constant research to come up with ideas that are relevant to target market.
- Knowledge of how the market works and this is an important pre-requisite to conduct successful business negotiations. In fact, those companies with a higher market knowledge know which questions to ask to profile buyers and make offers that are relevant to their markets.
- Good quality of pattern making and manufacturing are basic elements all companies have to have in place before any marketing activities. Mass market does not mean lower quality.
- A well-decorated stand that is attractive and well organised.

This mission has resulted to be successful from a commercial perspective and from a research point of view. All participants made good and serious contacts, if not contracts, with companies from all Russian regions buying and selling textiles and clothing. Participants could therefore have a wide overview of the Russian market that vary region by region and had the chance to establish contacts also with international suppliers, especially Turkish and Asian fabrics and trimmings suppliers. Considering that some companies have limited access to good quality textiles, the fact that they have managed to open new sourcing opportunities is a big achievement that will impact positively on the quality of companies' products.

Now that companies have collected information on the market from the field, they have clearer ideas on the future of their companies and how they would like to conduct their business from now on.

It is therefore advisable that companies undertake the following actions:

- Follow-up immediately with contacts made during the fair and fulfill buyers' sampling orders or requests. A "thank you" email should have reached these buyers just after the fair and a subsequent email should remind them about their inquiry or about agreements made. Any actions to fulfill the buyers' requests should follow immediately. After initial correspondence, it is important supplier talks with buyers in order to establish a more personal relation and make the buyer feels at the centre of the company's work. Delays in answering buyers' email or in fulfilling their orders is not acceptable and decreases possibilities of making actual business.
- Analysis of what has worked and what has not worked in the participation to pinpoint any mistakes or inefficiencies that can be avoided next time. Managers should take note of these mistakes and write any suggestions or things to remember for next events. This information has to be shared with the whole team responsible for product development, sales and marketing operations.
- Analysis of which garments have been more successfully and why. By considering which samples were more demanded the company can make inferences on market's preferences and develop new products accordingly.
- Map Russian customers' requirements and needs – what do they look for in suppliers? What are the most common needs that emerged from meetings and how can the company address them?
- The market information gathered should be digested so that key opportunities and threats can be highlighted. After this, the company can identify its strengths and weaknesses especially related to

opportunities and threats. What are the company's strengths that can help seize opportunities? How can weaknesses overcome?

- This analysis can be extended to competitors. All companies affirmed that Textilegrom was great chance to assess what competitors from different markets are doing and what role they are playing in the market. Notes about their strengths and weaknesses should be written down as well as details about their offer, USP (Unique Selling Point), price levels and retail strategies.
- The above analysis will bring the company to set a clearer strategy and boost exports to Russia. After the fair, what is the company's target market? Most probably now companies can define it in a more specific way. How does the company intend to reach it, with which offer and through which sales channels? It is recommended the companies prepare a brief and simple marketing plan that can include market information as collected during the fair and the company's objectives and strategy. To start with the marketing plan can have a 1-year term and include also a detailed calendar of activities in view of next promotional activities. The plan will have to be simple and guide the company's activities for next year. Companies might need assistance in this process, like a template to work with and someone could review their work.
- Companies wished to participate again in Textilegrom next year and it is advisable they do to build on the contacts made and establish themselves as suppliers/brands on the market. Tajikistan and Kyrgyz companies result to be competitive at the eyes of Russian buyers and a presence in Moscow will facilitate contacts and relations with them. In order to be able to get spaces in halls with higher traffic of visitors (like hall 75A), it is very important stands are booked now as later it'll be more difficult to have good spots left. Dates for 2012 are 28<sup>th</sup> February – 2<sup>nd</sup> March and 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September.
- National field offices can coordinate directly with Textile Expo to organize the participation of their companies and single companies can take care of the decoration of their stands so that this reflects entirely their company/brand's identity.
- It is advisable to hire promoters (at least 2/3) who can distribute invites to the companies' stands at the entrance and in the halls. These promoters can really help attract buyers to the stands as the fair is very big. A special authorization has to be obtained by organisers and the cost for up to three promoters is of euro 150 per day. The cost of flyers' design and print has to be added to this cost.
- Companies should then prepare samples and ranges according to the feed-backs they had from buyers and based on the market strategy they will decide to adopt.