

Trade Promotion Project Phase III – Kyrgyzstan / Tajikistan

Project No. KYR/61/123, TAJ/61/124

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Executive Summary

Background

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the sustainable expansion and diversification of SMEs' exports in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, by increasing the competitiveness of the textile and clothing ("T&C") industry and improving the quality management ("SQAM") infrastructure of the country.

The project will focus on the following four immediate objectives:

Immediate Objective 1: To support the T&C stakeholders in taking a strategic approach to the sector's development

Immediate Objective 2: To enable enterprises, the Government, and sector-related institutions to better understand T&C regional and world market requirements, opportunities and challenges

Immediate Objective 3: To improve the capacities of T&C enterprises and sector-related service providers in product development and marketing

Immediate Objective 4: To improve the capacity of SQAM and SPS bodies and the regulatory infrastructure

The project is planned for 3½ years and started operations in September 2009. The objectives of the textile and clothing component of this project were focussed on sustainably increasing the competitiveness of the sector.

Objective of report

The objective of this report is to provide an understanding of the outcomes and results of the project over the years 2009 – 2011 on the textiles, clothing and artisanal companies. The results and outcomes relate to 'immediate objective 2 and immediate objective 3' of the project document. Recommendations are also provided for the activities related to product design and development, sourcing and trade fair participation.

The overall objective of this component of the project has been to increase the competitiveness of the Tajik and Kyrgyz textiles and clothing sector, build capacity and increase exports. Each activity through the course of the project has been geared to meet this main objective.

Structure and introduction

This report provides details about the impact of the various activities through the project by explaining the link between each activity as well as the impact felt at the company and sector level. Where relevant, some quotes from participants have been introduced. This report does not detail each activity as there are individual reports available for each activity and sub activity where all details can easily be seen.

The implementation of this project started with a needs assessment visit to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in June 2009. The activities conducted under 'immediate objective 2 and immediate objective 3' include the following:

2009:

- Needs Assessment
- Market research Russian market

2010:

- Quality management and productivity improvement training and in – factory work
- Product design and development training and in – factory work
- A Study visit to Europe to understand trade fairs and market trends
- Competitive material sourcing training, in – factory work and sourcing mission

2011:

- Preparation and trade fair participation (including marketing and product development inputs) – Russia
- Preparation and trade fair participation (including marketing and product development inputs) – Paris

Part 1 – 2009

1.1 Needs assessment – creating the link between the different components and setting a timeline based on market requirements

- The activity and its link to the overall project

The needs assessment took place in May – June 2009 in Tajikistan. This was focussed on meeting the ministry in Tajikistan, the SECO mission in Tajikistan, other stakeholder organisations and individual company visits in all the identified regions of Dushanbe, Kulob, Khujand and Kurgan Tube to the identified companies with the national project managers and / or consultants. The needs assessment with visits to companies in Kyrgyzstan took place in December 2009 in Bishkek. The analysis of the company visits and meetings with the association and ministry brought out some key areas which required strengthening. Most of the factories were operating on less than half capacity. Many of the companies had been using old systems and been working on samples for the Durdoi market (wholesale) where the operating agents did not necessarily provide sufficient feedback in terms of quality and design requirements. There was very little marketing undertaken by the companies and product design was almost non-existent. While some companies had made some attempts and were working on preparing separate design collections, the majority of companies prepared products based on orders (CMT) or just prepared collections which they put together based on photos and examples they had seen elsewhere. This greatly affected their competitiveness in the global market, where design, quality and raw material quality is very important. Another very important aspect to be worked on was the lack of good quality raw materials locally available at Madina market and through agents.. The majority of companies sourced fabrics and trims from the local market based on availability and very few were able to go out of the country to look for sources, as they did not know where or how to look, nor had the information and language skills to do so. This greatly hampered competitiveness in the international market as many of the existing products were seen to be of low quality and price point.

This needs assessment activity for the textiles and clothing sector was critical in structuring the project details and all related activities and timelines. This was then used to develop detailed interventions at each level for market research, product design and development, sourcing, quality management and productivity improvement, trade fair preparation and participation.

1.2 Market research – a basis for future activities

- The activity and its link to the overall project

The first step after understanding the supply side, its potential and constraints, is to identify potential target markets. This project focussed on working with the companies from a market perspective to ensure that products were indeed made in a way that would sell and be accepted in the target market.

The Russian market was selected as the key market for in-depth market research. This was decided and agreed upon by all stakeholders including academic universities, participating companies, ministry. It became clear that the companies were keen to know more about this market as compared to any other, as it was naturally and culturally the closest market with good potential for the manufacturers to start with direct exports.

This market research forms a very important component of the overall project as companies were prepared through the course of the project keeping this end market as a target. All activities were designed from a market perspective. The selected companies (17 companies) completed the project activities by successfully participating in the biggest textile and fashion trade show 'Textilegprom' in September 2011 in Moscow.

The market research helped identify the target region (within Russia) as Moscow on account of its buying potential and proportion of business in Russia. Several buyers and wholesalers provided inputs about the perceived profile of Kyrgyz and Tajik manufacturers and suppliers and also provided recommendations through the report on what needed to be changed in their opinion. All these inputs formed part of the market research, which provided the basis for the future activities.

- Key outcomes and learnings

- Detailed information about the Russian market including primary inputs from buyers and retailers was accessible to all participating companies.
- It was confirmed that the key focus was indeed Russia.
- Companies were happy with the level of information and confirmed at the dissemination seminar (held locally in July 2009) that they would use this information for decision making for their businesses.
- They were keen to know the next steps and how this research would lead into the next set of activities and training on entering the Russian market competitively
- The study was critical in setting the foundation for the context of capacity building by using Russia as the first pilot country on account of its natural market linkages with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

- Next steps

The key take away from this research exercise is the importance of accessing a continuous flow of updated and relevant market information. An association or a 'knowledge centre' that has a mandate to collect and disseminate such information could take this up. Each company should indeed look at investing in market information on target markets. The Russian market is also an evolving market. It is important to constantly have networks and links to the fashion business in Moscow to stay updated.

A Tajik and Kyrg representative office in Moscow or a liaison with an existing set up in Moscow with local presence in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan for this sector could be an option. This could be funded privately or by the government or have a public private partnership with an aim to collate, analyse and disseminate vital information for the vital sectors of the economies of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In the future, this service initiated by Tajikistan and Kyrgystan

could be offered and extended to neighbouring countries and companies. This could be discussed with the existing set up of Legprom from Bishkek.

Other potential countries of interest could be Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Turkey, Kazakhstan and China as potential export markets. The same template could be used to gather more information from these countries. Consultants or other business connections could be approached with this request. Some sources for such reports and customised information for Eastern Europe and the region: <http://www.research-pmr.com/>

Part 2 – 2010

2.1 A study visit to Europe – to understand best practises, quality standards, market trends and trade fair requirements for future participation

- The activity and its link to the overall project

As Paris, along with Milan is one of the fashion capitals of the world, the shops, buyers and exhibitors at the fashion and trade shows demand only the best with highest standards. This then trickles through to various other countries and markets such as Russia (A key market of interest for Tajik and Kyrg companies) where styles, market requirements and standards are then followed and adapted.

The study visit was organized before starting the in-depth training and in company inputs, so that companies would have an understanding of what the best in the market requires in terms of standards and benchmarks.

- Key outcomes and learnings

Once the participating companies had been able to see and feel the business in the fashion capital, it was clearer for them and easier to understand the inputs that would be provided for the various subjects.

It also helped them to put the complete set of inputs into perspective. The study visit gave the participating companies from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan an exposure to the market requirements as well as the design and trend inputs that dominate and determine the business of the global textiles and clothing industry. While the focus was on the manufacturers, the study visit also encouraged the participation of association representatives, academic representatives and ministry representatives from both countries who would then be able to take back this information and exposure and be the link which would work towards building capacity in the country. Specific meetings and networking opportunities were set up for them to meet and discuss potential business collaborations at the country and sector level with counterparts in Europe. It also provided them with hands on experience of the global fashion industry in which their manufacturers are competing and representing their country.

The learning from this activity and exposure played a very important role in helping to identify the areas the companies themselves realized they needed to improve on or change going forward. The next set of indepth training and in company inputs as well as the final trade fair participation in Moscow and the Ethical fashion show participation in Paris made reference constantly to the learnings from the Paris study visit.

After the study visit, the owner of Diva Style, who participated in the study visit in Paris mentioned in her feedback after the visit, that they would use the inputs to develop new styles and silhouettes based on the inputs they received and saw in Paris. The development of their

line 'Acqua Terra' and winning the award in Moscow is a great example of how this has turned into a reality.

- Next steps

As companies have realised the impact and difference after participating in a study visit, it is advisable that they continue to undertake study visits of relevance for their business once or twice a year for inspiration, to gather inputs, make contacts and source materials. Some of the companies who have benefitted from the various components of this project activity and have learnt to showcase well-designed collections, could potentially undertake more indepth visits to make contacts and even consider participating in some of the shows in Paris and get recognised on the international platform. There are opportunities for young / emerging designers across Europe in places such as Paris and Berlin. Berlin and Paris could be seen as good entry points for companies who have started developing design collections, eg, 'Acqua Terra' designed by the in house designer at 'Diva Style' from Kyrgyzstan, a result of the inspiration and inputs. The offer of this capsule collection is completely in line with the look and feel of the international fashion business. The marketing material is very well done and the look book is completely in line with what may sell in Paris, Milan or Berlin. Diva Style won the award for the capsule collection in Moscow where they participated in September 2011.

- Selected quotes

'I personally and on behalf of my company would like to express our gratitude for designing such a program and organizing this study tour to Paris. This program will give a new impulse to development of the sector and bringing new technologies to Tajikistan. I have no doubt that thanks to ITC project assistance, Tajik T&C companies will produce new products and exhibit them in the international fairs and make new contracts (Sultonov)

'As a result of our participation in Texworld, we already have specific negotiations about importing accessories from Hong Kong' (Guliston)

'It would be good to arrange participation of Tajik T&C companies in similar fairs in China (Guangzhou, Shanghai)' (Zinat)

2.2 Quality management and productivity improvement training and in factory work – improving product quality as a first step towards preparing market oriented products for direct export

- The activity and its link to the overall project

Product quality, process management and productivity are elements that have to be addressed at the forefront while trying to increase competitiveness of a sector. As the majority of participating companies in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyztan only sold through intermediaries or through the Durdoi wholesale market in Bishkek, they were not used to dealing directly with buyers or in conducting direct export. The finishing and quality standards and benchmarks accepted internationally by retailers and buyers are intense and there are several requirements.

In addition, during the needs assessment it was noted that in several companies, the productivity levels were lower than international standards. An increase in productivity can be directly linked to an increase in profit margins, as was proven through the focussed interventions and inputs in companies.

To be competitive in the international market, it is critical that each company is able to realise its maximum potential.

The implementation of this activity took place through technical training workshops with case studies and examples. This was followed by in factory assessments and immediate recommendations.

- Key outcomes and learnings

The key learning can be attributed to the fact that companies have started to realise the importance of quality management and the cost of quality. They have tangibly understood how to implement improvements and have in fact experienced productivity improvements in their own factories by making some changes to the layouts and set up during the course of the project.

The companies who underwent the training through workshops and in company focussed inputs requested more topics and seminars on modern technologies, some of them to include more materials in handouts. One of the interesting learnings and inputs from the companies was an idea to use in trainings more video-clips, so that participants could see, how recommended changes would look like, how would it be in a real life/conditions. Another important request was to provide more case-studies and conduct more practical exercises in factories as well as have access to more workshops which could provide such inputs.

In terms of tangible impacts on companies, there have been several elements that can be addressed. For the first time, companies have put in place incentives for workers on reducing defects, they have developed innovative solutions such as providing 5 somanis to a worker who identifies a defect, put in place feedback and customer input solutions, started involving workers and staff in quality management process and take their inputs onboard. Each company was individually encouraged to identify and find solutions for themselves. Some were as simple as placing waste bins in different areas for use by all staff and employees!

Companies have seen tangible increases in their productivity. Some examples include, an increase of 20 % in productivity levels, a decrease of 50% in defect rates, the rolling out of a safety policy and the use of masks, gloves etc. Several have put in place simple systems for everyday use. Some have started to go a step further and look for new machines, technology improvement solutions and are actively engaging in quality management!

- Next steps

More training on quality management and productivity improvement is highly recommended. The establishment and strengthening of local association – LEGPROM or others such as academic institutions in this subject would be very useful for the industry. A lot of progress has been made through the course of the project, but quality is an ongoing process and productivity improvement is a process that requires constant input and information. It would be very useful for the local university or sector association to build in a link with an expert / consultant or with an institution elsewhere which has a lot of experience in dealing with similar problems and have found solutions which can be show proven records of best practises and benchmarks. It may even be interesting for companies to visit some factories in another country to see best practises. Certification agencies could also be involved as a next step where some of the bigger companies could establish systems which would help them to undertake garment industry specific certifications such as WRAP or SA 8000. A starting point may even be a simple training on the existing codes of conduct and CSR policies of important retailers such

as H&M, Marks and Spencers, Zara, Levis, etc. It is important to understand what type of certifications one could undertake, as there are so many available in the market. While some are simply based on the ILO convention and are codes of conduct, others can be more specific in terms of putting in place management systems. It is of course a long-term process.

- Selected quotes

“Thank you for enriching us with innovative thinking and importance of quality. At the Department of Industry we will take our responsibility and help the industry and this project in every possible way so that our industry can move forward and be more profitable. “

*Ms. Zamira Akhmedova,
Chief specialist, Dept. of Industrial Innovation and Development
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade*

“Thanks for the visit to Tajikistan and this wonderful presentation. Such discussions help educational institutes. We have to always think whom are we educating and what are we educating them for.”

*Mr. Davlatyor Sheraliev,
Head of department of Historical arts,
Technological University of Tajikistan*

“Best of the Best workshop that I have attended”

*Mr. Bakhtiyor Muhiddinov,
Manager on import/export operations
NIKOO KHUJAND*

2.3 Product design and development training and in factory work – The basic buyer requirement for a product to sell in an identified market

- The activity and its link to the overall project

A product can only sell if it is designed and manufactured to suit the taste and requirement of the buyer and final customer. Product design and development is an ongoing and continuous process, which requires constant links with the market and its consumers. To successfully create products, that the market will buy, it is important to first understand the process involved and then to develop samples based on the market trends and buyer requirements. Inputs are now available on a variety of websites with several online resources accessible to companies. Through the course of the training and in company inputs, such resources and inputs were provided to all companies for use.

Product design inputs and inspiration was provided through the course of the study visit to Paris, and also partially during the study visit after the fair participation in Moscow. Guided information packs helped companies to use their inputs acquired during the training processes to exercise their knowledge while seeing new styles and trends in the markets. A lot of the information provided during the introductory workshop also focussed on hands on pattern making skills as well as fabric utilisation.

Through the training and in company-customised inputs provided, all companies were able to develop samples and understand how to access market trends and use these inputs and resources to integrate them in their ongoing work.

This component of the project forms the core of the product development process that was then translated into development of samples and marketing materials for final participation at the fashion and textiles show in Moscow in September 2011.

Product design and development is linked to every other activity and aspect of the project. Without understanding the process involved and having understanding of the way in which trends work, it would not be possible to improve the quality of the product, or source the right fabric and trims or prepare marketing material and participate in a trade fair. While preparing products for participation in the fairs, all the skills learnt and gained through this component of the project were used intensively to prepare and develop the right types of products and collections for participation in Moscow.

On a broader level, this helped companies to identify and understand the direction they would take and develop cohesive collections and offers for clients. This was a new concept for most companies in the beginning, as they were all ORDER TAKERS, and only developed samples when asked by agents or distributors who gave them spec sheets. The concept of investing in a product design and development process was alien to many companies.

- Key outcomes and learnings

The key outcome really in this activity was the change in mindset! The fact that this element even became relevant to the majority of companies is a great achievement for the companies and the project. The only way in which companies were eventually convinced was when they were able to reap the benefits of their hard work at the fair in Moscow. This was the turning point for most companies and it was literally at the very end of the project. However it was apparent that this change was taking place at a very slow but constant pace through the course of the project. From the first visit to the companies to the final discussions before participation in Moscow, one could see a very large change in the attitude of companies. It was very interesting to see how companies had not only made product design and development a part of their actual ongoing work, but some had even gone a step further and invested in hiring professional designers to start creating capsule collections for showing in sophisticated brand shows in the future!

It was also interesting to see the impact of the study visit, due to its strategic planning and timing which was organised before the actual component of the training and in company work took place. 'seeing is believing' this cannot be more true than in the case of companies seeing for themselves how the business internationally functions. The opportunity to visit and meet with stores and design venues as well as fairs was taken at every step. This was true for Paris, Moscow and Shanghai. Companies were very impressed when they actually visited a showroom (atelier) in Shanghai. This helped to understand how companies across the world and not just in Europe were functioning with relation to product design. It also became very clear for many of the companies that Paris, (one of the key centres of fashion) did indeed dictate fashion trends (still). However the Chinese market was filled with designer stores and fashion boutiques which showed an adaptation of the western trends made for Chinese market. The ability of companies to realise and analyse various designs seen in the different markets is indeed a great outcome, as this can only happen once the process has been understood clearly.

- Next steps

The involvement of the Tajik University through the course of this activity and all market visits is very important as this will form the basis for the next generation of the industry in this region. Product design and development is a slow process and maturity in this activity only comes with time and constant effort.

As an immediate next step, it would be important for companies to continue to develop products based on the inputs provided. An ongoing (At least twice an year) trend workshop on the new market trends of importance for the Tajik and Kyrg companies would be very useful. This could be funded either privately through a joint effort by the companies or through LEGPROM and the Universities.

It is important also to invite some designers and identified brands to visit and meet some of the companies to see the potential of working with them. This could be a great step in publicising the image of the region as well as bringing the region to the international market.

For the next season it would be interesting again for the companies to participate in the fair in Moscow and also aim to put up a fashion show, which would help get more publicity and exposure.

A project focussed on trying to develop a link between the ministry of education and the manufacturers had started taking place through the course of the product design and development training activity. It would be very good to follow up on this initiative to see if at least some component of the Tajik school uniforms could be manufactured and sourced locally.

It would be very useful for the design school (university) to establish links with international fashion and design schools. There is an international federation of fashion institutes world wide called 'IFFTI' which was initiated and established for the first time in 1998 in New Delhi. This is today one of the largest networks globally of fashion schools. Exchanges of students and teachers makes this a very interesting proposition for the school as well as the students and the sector at large.

Competitions for product design should have a market focus and not be done only for the sake of showing talent. Perhaps the artisanal companies should work closely with the design school students and also with the garment manufacturers to provide inspiration and inputs. After participation in Paris at the ethical fashion show, it would be very inspiring for the sector to hear about and see visuals from this event. This will also 'dramatically' prove that it is possible to be noticed with local design techniques when it is prepared to suit the taste of the international audience!

2.4 Competitive material sourcing training, in factory work and sourcing mission – the key and most important component that can help reduce cost of manufacturing a garment, provide better options to customers and increase profit margins

- The activity and its link to the overall project

Fabric and raw materials play a very important component in the making and pricing of a garment. Fabric technology is constantly evolving globally and new blends, along with recycled and other forms of man made fibres including technical textiles are on the rise. By entering any yarn or textile fair in China, Paria, Russia, Turkey, India and other hubs, it becomes apparent how much choice there is currently in the market across the spectrum of price points. This makes buyers and retailers and eventually the end customer demand more and better products with more innovative fabrics that perform better but are competitively priced. Since fabric, yarn and trims account for 60 – 70% of the cost of making the garment, it becomes critical for any garment manufacturer to pay careful attention to the raw materials that they use for making their product. In Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan, there is very little choice in the fabric offer. There are the markets of Durdoi and Madina, but these do not provide a lot of choice or variety. However it provides a good opportunity to engage and in the long term possibly strengthen the offer.

Another very important element in increasing the competitiveness of the garment or textiles sector is the lead time. Since buyers are shortening their fashion cycles and increasing their requirements as a result of consumer choices, manufacturers must be able to offer product within shorter lead times. While shipping time remains constant, due to the distance from market, other factors such as availability of raw materials, pattern and sample making skills, access to communication means (such as emails, networking sites – FaceBook, linkedIn, etc,) become more and more relevant.

While conducting the needs assessment of the companies, and after speaking to them, it appears that access to raw materials is a problem that needs addressing. In Tajikistan there are some vertically integrated companies such as Textile City who actually manufacture fabric as well as garments. However this is not very well linked to other garment manufacturers.

This particular activity focussed on providing companies with the exposure to new fabric sources as well as to training and techniques that they could use to increase their knowledge about fabrics. It was seen that many of the companies were not able to really understand the difference between the fabric types, which lead to confusion and in many cases a lost potential customer.

Companies were very happy to receive knowledge in this area, as this would have a direct impact on the development of samples and collections which would be shown during the trade fair participation the following year in September 2011.

The activity had three components. This included a workshop and training activity to increase the knowledge of companies in the field of textiles, in company specific inputs, and the sourcing mission to China to actually make contacts and source raw materials which took place in October 2010 to Hangzhou, Kechao and the Intertextile in Shanghai – one of the biggest fabric fairs.

- Key outcomes and learnings

The combined learning gained by companies in their understanding of fabrics, the comparison of price points, a great exposure to a variety of different fabrics, access to trends in fabrics and colours in the market and finally links and contacts with several fabric suppliers globally were the highlights of this activity.

Several companies also started discussing the possibility of buying fabrics together to lower costs. Another element was the connection made between the Kyrgyz and Tajik companies. A trend is seen in more and more Kyrgyz garment companies buying and placing orders for fabrics with Tajik suppliers. This is really very good as it is a win win for all involved. The lead times are reduced, access is easy, customised manufacturing is possible, and the overall offer is a very strong story for any international buyer who is always on the look out for regional hubs where they can access everything.

It was also noted that some companies were pushing for the creation of a contact point / post in China which could potentially represent the needs of Kyrgyz and Tajik companies and provide sourcing services.

The fact that this subject has become an important point for most companies, the ministry and academic institutions, is a great outcome of the project activity.

The companies who participated were able to see new fabric variations which they had never seen. The fair (intertextile) provided great business contacts as well as inspired some of the Tajik yarn and fabric suppliers to potentially participate in this event in the future. The ministry representatives, academic institution representatives and the SECO representative were all individually impressed and took back various learnings and inputs for their own institutions. For

the university of Tajikistan, this was a very good visit for him to take back several samples as well as information and analysis for the students. This is a very good point for ongoing capacity building.

This visit also made companies think creatively. Several participants made contact with Kyrgyz or Tajik students and other representatives who lived in and around the areas that were being visited. Some business negotiations and deals were also put in place where some sourcing would take place through these connections in China who spoke Chinese and Russian (and in some cases Kyrgyz or Tajik).

Some contacts and deals were also placed for machinery! This is another area of interest for many companies.

The companies have started creating their own fabric and trim databases. This topic has a link through the various project activities. Several companies at the end of the project have a good idea about price points and are able to compare between what they saw at Texworld in Paris, Intertextile in Shanghai, their own home suppliers (Durdoi, Madina) and also in Moscow.

The most important aspect is that all the training and exposure has been integrated into the everyday working of the companies.

- Next steps

This information and exposure gathered through the project should be stored and distributed in a way, which can be used by the industry at large. For example, the companies who participated in the training and exposure visits were from the mass-market textiles and clothing industry. It would be useful for this knowledge and information to be made accessible to the handicraft and artisanal companies also as they struggle to secure good fabrics (Especially cottons, linens and other natural fabrics). It would also be very useful to see how linkages could be made with other donor funded projects in the region to put in place a sourcing office which could have members / partners who could use this service and thus benefit from economies of scale and lowered import duties. The Durdoi and Madina traders could be engaged in this activity to see how they could play a constructive role and also grow their businesses in the long term. Fabric trends and access to information is very important to keep ahead of the competition. The information provided through this training should be updated with the new trends. The association or university could negotiate good rates with trend agencies and fair organisers.

A fabric training course could be integrated into the curriculum of the university as this information and knowledge is very important for designers, manufacturers, consultants and any professional in the textiles and fashion business.

Would be very good to create linkages with IFC and BAS projects where further ongoing work could potentially take place.

- Selected quotes

“Intertextile” helped a lot in choosing the strategy for future work. As the sector of cotton fabrics has been extensively presented on exhibitions I could collect much contact information, which I am going to use in the future for cooperation. Also having opportunity of meeting suppliers of the same yarn, which my company is going to produce, I have conducted small marketing research, i.e. meeting with yarn suppliers, I learnt what type of yarn they produce, the technical characteristics of such yarn, the yarn count, and the most important the offered price for their production. It also an important issue, because the analysis of prices in the market and understanding of price reference points will help in the future to define the production assortment, quantity and options of realization of production.

Mrs. Shahlo Abidjanova, Head of Department of Marketing of LLC "Olimi Karimzod"

Intertextile fair was also beneficial for Mr. Davlatiyor Sheraliev, the representative of university, in terms of receiving full information on fashion trends of fabrics and the requirements of international customers of clothes to fabrics and finishing materials. According to his presentation about "Keiqao Textile city", during visiting Keiqao, he got information materials about 3 Universities in Keiqao, China, which are specialized only in T&C and prepare specialists for this sector.

"If not ITC would never come to Kiqiao and would never established such good supply contacts!, Now all depends on us – we have to more forward! Felt as the tour was arranged specifically for us!" representative of Bermet, ladies trousers, Kyrgyzstan

Part 3 – 2011

3.1 Preparation and trade fair participation (including marketing and product development inputs) in Moscow – Taking the final step focussed marketing and selling the right product to the right customer

- The activity and its link to the overall project

This activity forms the final part of the set of activities designed to increase the competitiveness of the Tajik and Kyrgyz companies who participated in the ITC project. All the earlier activities including research, training in the process of product design and development, the study tour to Paris, the sourcing activity to Shanghai and Hangzou and the quality management and productivity improvement were designed to prepare the companies for the final step related to finally selling their product in the best way in their target market. Well-prepared products and focussed marketing materials is critical in getting successful deals. This activity brought together the learnings from all the earlier activities. All elements were then used in a focussed manner to achieve a successful participation in Moscow for all the companies.

- Key outcomes and learnings

The delegation of 17 companies had a total number of 212 relevant and good commercial contacts over 4 days at the Textillegprom fair in Moscow. In their feedback session, companies agreed that 100% of them had a better understanding of the Russian market as well as the way in which buyers functioned. 100% of the participants had made contacts at the fair. 100% of the participants were in agreement that the participation and visit would be useful for their businesses.

The key impact on the companies through this activity has been the fact that they have gotten a good understanding of the importance of a market driven step-by-step preparation process before showing products to buyers or before participating in a trade fair.

The success of their participation at this edition of Textillegprom showed many of them how preparation, a good collection and well done marketing materials could have a focused impact for each of their businesses.

For many of them it was the first time while for some of the companies it was a new approach to their existing participation. Many of the companies said (when interviewed) that they now saw how much more business sense it made to go with well developed and purpose designed collections and samples as compared to taking and selling stock in a fair in Moscow. They were really able to

understand in a very tangible way, why and how they could grow their businesses through this process.

Through the success achieved in the form of contracts and deals, the companies have learnt how to communicate and the importance of marketing materials and their presentation to buyers at trade fairs.

The companies learnt how to prepare, the process involved, the timeframe required and the critical importance of having the right design and product collection based on what the market wants. The mission to Moscow has been an "eye-opener" for them (as mentioned by some companies)

One of the key points one should make is, that marketing materials were never given a lot of importance by the companies. They were not used to actually developing something and then going out to look for buyers. Most companies had the experience from older Soviet times, where they had buyers come to them. As the industry has changed over the years, it becomes ABSOLUTELY mandatory for brands and manufacturers to actively engage in marketing themselves to buyers and to position themselves. The companies were very new to this concept and several had completely disagreed to the 'unnecessary' investment of time and money in such activities at the beginning of the project. However with this successful pilot case, it became apparent even to those companies who now were very happy and delighted with their achievements at Textillegprom.

They generated business by participating in the right trade show, with the right products and price points and by behaving professionally through the course of their business negotiations.

The final step of trade fair participation helped them to understand the link between quality management, product design, sourcing, marketing and trade fair participation.

- Next steps

Given the success achieved by ALL companies, it is highly recommended that they come back to participate in Textillegprom in the next editions. It must be said, that to gain sustainable business contacts and networks, it is CRITICAL for the same companies to be seen consistently at the same fair and ideally in the same location, so that buyers who have seen them this time, will remember and come back and perhaps make references to others in the network about the potential. It was very satisfying to see that some of the companies took on the making of 'postcards' as marketing materials and prepared some additional ones by designing and photographing it themselves. This is a great way to record that companies have INDEED taken on and learnt HOW TO and have actually used it themselves. Companies should continue to participate in this fair, and some could potentially even try to participate in the brand fair CPM in Moscow as a next step. They could have one line (manufacturing and private labelling) shown in Textillegprom and another higher line (Such as the capsule collection Acqua Terra) further developed and shown in CPM. Once they have stepped up and shown some more editions in Russia, it could be interesting to see which other market they could target. The opportunities are not confined to only the conservative markets of western Europe. There are several new and emerging markets with great market potential and growing consumer spending power in places like Turkey, China, India, Kazakhstan, etc. They could also look at entering Europe through a more strategic route by leveraging language and traditional relations through Poland, Ukraine, Romania, etc. where markets are also growing and retail is beginning to take prime place. Linking back to the activity on market research, there are several market research agencies who focus on market and retail reports for Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS countries.

- Selected quotes

“We got in contact with a Russian boutique own from Moscow city, and had talks on shipment of 100 units bed collection from our company per month. “ - Mr. Shovali Davlatov, General Director, Dilorom – Tajikistan

“During the fair, I have talked with more than 25 companies and wholesalers from different Russian cities, like Krasnodar, Moscow, Novosibirsk and Nijniy Novgorod for supplying of our company products. Preliminary agreements were made with a wholesaler company from Moscow- “Shveipromservis” for procurement of 120.000-140.000 units of garments in the amount of 770.000 USD during 6 months and with fabrics and trimmings suppliers for our factory”. - Mr.Aslam Nuriddinov, Marketing Manager, Guliston – Tajikistan

“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. Provisional agreement was reached with Mr. Alexander Ekzaryan, Director of a wholesale company “EXPOSE”, Moscow for supplying of men’s and children jeans and shirts in the amount of USD 100,000.” - Mr Nasim Karimov, General Director, Textile City – Tajikistan.

“During the fair, I conducted negotiations with about 80 company managers, specialists, wholesalers from Moscow city, Astrakhan, Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk for possible wholesale of our products in Moscow and other Russian regions markets...preliminary agreement was reached with Mr. Shubin Alexandr from “Chacharel” company of Moscow city, Russian Federation for supplying of 140 thousand pairs of men’s socks (20 tones container) in the amount of about USD 42, 000 by the end of the year”. - “Mr. Abdullo Muhammadiev, Director, Nafisa-Tajikistan.

“We learned how to display and participate in such fairs. ITC assisted to me to make my 1st step into the Russian market. This is our first experience in such fairs in Russia ..I made contacts with small retailers”. - Ms Nazira Beishebaeva, General Director, Beishebaeva – Kyrgyzstan.

“During the fair, I have received several offers for cooperation from Russian leading companies and wholesalers, like “ATEMI”, “Rey-sport”, etc. We will maintain close contact with all these companies and try to establish cooperation in the future”. Mr. Saidamon Isomaddinov, General Director, Leader – Tajikistan

“We learned a lot about Russian clothing market and we also learned how to participate, how to present products and design our booth have also understood that we can sell our products at higher prices as in Russia we are able to sell directly to our clients... I could pay better salary for my sewing operators, give them and their families a better income an avoid the high turnover of workers the industry is nor facing in Kyrgyzstan”. - Ms Zamira Myrzakanova, General Director, Nazik – Kyrgyzstan.

3.2 Preparation and trade fair participation (including marketing and product development inputs) in Paris – Positioning a selected group of artisanal companies in the ethical and sustainable fashion segment thus taking a step from ‘handicraft only’ to ‘sustainable fashion’

- The activity and its link to the overall project

The activity on ‘sustainable fashion’ was developed to add on to the existing mass market textiles and clothing project. The reason for this addition was because it became apparent that there were some very interesting skill sets and artisanal elements and products which were

made locally in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. However till now, the products were only showcased at Handicraft fairs. There appeared to be a very good potential to take these handicraft based products and position them in the main stream of fashion. The trend for hand made and artisanal skills and sustainable products in the fashion business has been growing in the past 5 – 10 years. While it has still not reached the levels of mainstream business, there is a growing interest in seeing how these skills could be translated into mainstream of the business.

As mentioned in several discussion forums, such initiatives would find it very difficult to survive or be sustainable on their own. However there is a good case to be made for such initiatives to co-exist with mainstream businesses where both aspects can benefit from the strengths of the other.

Showing designers and high value products is a great way to bring the image of the region and country into the international market. While business as usual would be required for the country and the industry to survive, it is very interesting to see how a project such as this one, could try to encourage the creation of a strong link between the existing handicraft skill sets of the local people with also existing textile and garment industry.

The novelty of this project activity was in its ability to successfully take the handicraft skill sets, apply them in the context of the mainstream of fashion business and showcase them in the fashion capital 'paris' in the right trade and fashion event which would be able to create that bridge and reach out to the press, media and fashion industry.

This was by no means a simple task, as the time frame, budget and resources were very limited, and at the same time the requirements and expectations of the press and fashion industry were very high and the economies of the world were facing a crises. But at such times, it is the link to traditions, the stories behind, the faces of the people behind the products coupled with the creation of beautiful and yet marketable and easy to sell products that consumers and buyers are drawn to.

It is not possible for private artisans and small companies to take such risks for the first time without concrete inputs from the market and without constant support on product development and design based on the market requirements. But the returns can be very high if done properly and in a focussed manner. A project such as the ITC project provides great opportunity to build such capacity through the market knowledge, linkages and networks, including international consultants that ITC can provide.

This project component was initiated in February 2011 with some background and information gathering in December 2010. The basis for this component was drawn from the results, observations, potentials and findings from the earlier needs assessment missions and in company visits.

- Key outcomes and learnings

This activity has had a great impact in proving to the artisanal designers and crafts persons in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzsan that their products and their skill sets are indeed very valuable and appreciated globally. It is even possible to be showcased on the runway during fashion week in paris and be spoken about in the press and media who come and view. It was a very new experience for most of the participants as the majority of them have only participated in handicrafrt shows in the past. The ambience, the requirements and the price points are all very different in these two places. While selling volumes in handicraft shows, fashion events which focus on sustainable fashion is more about being unique, having specific tastes and being seen and spoken about in the right place. The media and press play a very important role here. They

are by nature very critical of new products from countries that they do not know of very well or have very little understanding of. But these people in the press and media are the ones who create the type of images and reputations, which can raise the image and give business attention to the country and the region.

It was the first time that the press had heard of the wonderful techniques and skills that were available in Central Asia. One of the companies 'Magic Felt' received an award for making the attempt to prepare and create such wonderful pieces that were clearly a favorite on the catwalk. The companies also had the opportunity to see what other artisans and sustainable fashion entrepreneurs and companies were doing from other parts of the world. It was an interesting learning experience for most of the companies.

Being noticed in places like such events can bring very big luxury names to the country and region, as designers are constantly looking for inspiration and unique techniques. Price is a very important criteria for a show focusing on sustainable fashion. This is because while speaking about skills, it cannot be so expensive that it is not affordable. It is difficult and challenging to showcase new things and to create a change in mindset of people anywhere in the world. One has to make it as easy as possible when making a new entrance, especially into the fashion platform of Paris.

It is important also to realize that not every company can or should fit into all activities. A key learning out of this activity was the participation of the fashion house 'Dilbar'. From the beginning this was a mis fit in this group. All the other companies had price points ranging from 10 – 200 EUR, while Dilbar's price points almost started at 150 EUR!

The company was clearly advised in the beginning not to participate in this show, as it was NOT the place for her company. They were advised to go to the UAE market and to India. If they had to come to Paris, it was suggested that they go to another venue which was focused on very high end designers. This place was for sustainable fashion and for showcasing techniques, which had a story to tell. Dilbar on the other hand fits more into the category of designers who would be showcased in a haute couture show.

A suggestion was also provided to them in terms of participation only in the catwalk but not at the booth.

However the company insisted and participated together with all the others. Their pieces were of course exquisite and beautiful. Several of their pieces were talked about by different press companies and fashion magazines and was greatly appreciated on the catwalk. However they received no concrete contacts or orders that were recorded. This goes to show that it is indeed very important to value the type of fair and place that one is going to. Just being in Paris at the Louvre may not necessarily be the best option if it does not cater to the product type and category that one is looking for.

On the positive side, all the other companies (5 out of 6) made very good contacts and connections took back very important learnings and a conviction that their products could indeed be turned into high value fashion mainstream products. It was very interesting to note that the type of buyers who passed by the booths and placed orders were in fact very happy with the product quality and skill set. Several of the companies were able to get feedback from the buyers as well in terms of how they could potentially have an order if they made some small changes.

The companies also understood the importance of telling the story behind their product. They were not used to speaking about the history or story in the past. They just prepared products as they were used to doing. However, this activity gave them the confidence to showcase their stories and to actually undertake more research on trends and colours.

Companies that came to the show with samples that reflected an aesthetic that had a tone of

familiarity for the buyers but also embodied and highlighted unique skills and techniques from the region were successful.

It is really a very great success in terms of the fashion business for any company to participate the first time and have such a good and positive impact and even orders at the show in Paris!

- Next steps

It is important to link such initiatives with existing associations who can help further the development of the region and the techniques. It would be very useful to link Haft Paikar or Cassca with international partners or facilitators who could help with the international market linkage. It is very difficult for artisans to be able to understand how the international market functions and what the trends in the market are. The development of a knowledge centre could be a great initiative, which could be encouraged at the sector level.

Since most of the artisans and entrepreneurs appeared to be women in this sector, one should look at the initiatives for women artisans and vendors that are currently taking place globally. ITC has a programme for women in trade, which is also very intensively involved with other international partners. It would be very important to encourage the linkages between activities so as to benefit from synergies and economies of scale.

If a training centre or a knowledge centre could be developed or if skills could be provided to existing associations, an ongoing stream of market information and knowledge could flow and provide great opportunities for showcasing and selling in the international market to clients from every part of the world. There are several regional markets that could also be looked at as potential markets. These include: India, Middle East. However there is a great and growing demand for hand made and sustainable products in Europe, Japan and US. If funds and resources are available, companies in this sector should aim to continue their presence in Paris and potentially also in Berlin. For such activities, showing the product only once does not bring sustainable and concrete businesses. The companies have to be seen edition after edition to be remembered and recognized. At the minimum, one needs to participate in at least 4 editions (or two years) before seeing REAL benefits.

- Selected quotes

I am so happy to be part of ITC project; I would like to thank everyone whom assists us, to participate EFS in Paris. Even it was our first participation in such event, but we already have 10 contracts with buyers, which we met at EFS, below list of companies, and buyers, which have big interest on our products:-Monica Rebolledo, Columbia -Sass Brown, US, -Jillian Estey-Viennet, -Gloria Gobbi (Antichi Kimono) Italy, -Mathilde Lous, France, -Les atelier heterocities, France, -Saranguerel, France, -Oriflame, Sweden, -Kane agency, France. Also, I would like to thank EFS defile organizers, we never know that our products could be look so acceptable globally; fashion show was organized on high level. - Tatiana Vorotnikova, Studio Tatiana from Kyrgyzstan

EFS show, which took place at Louvre, was breathtaking event for our company, were proud of to be among 100 companies, which participate the fair. First time at Louvre exhibitors and guests of EFS, could see authentic and unique Kyrgyz traditional costumes, and first time on the stage we did show Kyrgyz traditional garments such as, kemsel, beshmant, beldemchiBelow, list of buyers and companies, which are interested in our products.: -Cyrille Rousseau, (agent who works for retailer which has shops in 9 cities in south of France), -Lyudmila Mihailova, Trend Tendance shows room, Paris, France, -Futurefrock, online store, France. On behalf of Z&Z Company I would like to thank ITC staff, consultants for big effort, for chance to present our

products, to be first company, which showed Kyrgyz traditional costume at the Louvre. - Venera Tagaeva, Z&Z from Kyrgyzstan

For our company EFS was big challenge and good lesson. We learned a lot about customer's needs from France, Italy, and South America, US. Also our products were recognized by many customers and buyers, we took prize, we only one central Asian company which took prize from EFS. For me personally it was first abroad visit and I was surprised by concept and power of EFS. Fashion show was well organized, professionally represented by fair organizers. Below, list of buyers and companies interested in our products: -Christine Delpal, Karavan authentic, France, -Velez Lucia, France, -Tony Riga, France, -Lucie Havlova, Happy Materials, Czech Republi, -Amandine Pellizzari, Casames, France, -Verde Doncella, Spain, -Louise Turner, Fred Segal hats, US, A-Betty de Paris, France. Our company got many prizes even we have quality seal of UNESCO, our collection was recognized as the best at Kyrgyz Fashion Week, but Paris experience will give us more opportunities, and we looking forward to introduce Kyrgyz traditional felt making techniques to European market, also we also ready to teach students from EU to make felt and share our knowledge's with them. - Tynys Kydyrov, Magic Felt from Kyrgyzstan

I am very thankful to ITC team and our international experts, Riley Salyards and Rupa Ganguli, who provided us assistance in the preparation and during the fair. It is the second time I visited Paris with ITC. First time, in February 2010, I participated in a study tour to two big international fairs in Paris: "Texworld" and "Pluriel". First time we participated as visitors, but this time we were provided opportunity to participate and exhibit our products. Indeed, for me as a first time exhibitor in such an exhibition, it was a learning opportunity, as this exhibition is specialized one, with its own required criteria for products. As our products are mainly from the collection of national embroidery, including handmade and natural products with national embroidery, there were interest from European buyers, retailers and mass media. We had one interest from one of the French boutiques. This boutique is particularly interested in pillows and cushions from cotton fabric, using national embroidery. Indeed, as this is the first time we are participating in such a specialized fair, we couldn't prepare as well as we had to, in terms of better designing the products and following all requirements, in example we had to prepare also labels and tags. But in overall, I think it was very good opportunity to exhibit our products, to learn the market and to find possible clients for our existing products and those with new proposed designs. And the most important is that it was a learning opportunity, which we are going to use in our future work, as the real work begins after the fair, following up the clients and possible buyers, by contacting and finding ways of cooperation with them. Once again I would like to express my gratitude to ITC team, particularly to our Regional Manager, Mr.Armen Zargaryan for providing us such an opportunity to participate in Ethical Fashion Show. - Mrs. Faizimo Ibragimova, Suman from Tajikistan

This is the second time I visit Paris (first time visited in 2004, UNESCO project), but EFS exhibition is the new experience of participating in such a specialized exhibition. Although, we were new to such exhibition, we were very happy and honored that we could exhibit our products and that our brand products were shown in Central Asian and World catwalk of EFS. With the assistance and guidance of Riley Salyards from Clothing Connect team and ITC team we prepared some special products to EFS fair, for which we got interest and first contacts with Tanzanian designer, which I hope will turn into contracts and cooperation with future orders. Starting from its excellent venue, "Le Carousel du Louvre", its organization, participants from different countries and fashion catwalk, involvement of mass media and different organizations, Ethical Fashion Show went in very high level. We got opportunity to give interviews to radio and TV channels and talk to representatives of different organizations, giving information about our activity, products and the project we are involved in, that I think will serve as a promotion of

tajik companies thru mass media and relevant institutions. As I travel a lot to different countries and participate in fairs and exhibitions, which are mainly focused on handicraft and artisanal products, this fair was different for me in terms of content and type of products to be exhibited, compiling the elements of handicraft and national motifs with fashion and style, by using natural, organic or recycled materials. These four days for me was like four years of a new university and an opportunity to learn more about this new direction, ethical fashion. Indeed, as an exhibitor company, for the future I think we have to better prepare for such a specialized exhibition as EFS, bringing samples which are more appropriate and marketable in the region and we should pay attention to every detail, because I learnt that in such fairs every detail matters, starting from the tag of the product and ending with the packaging and also the displaying products, for example using manikins. We had an opportunity to talk to some exhibitors; many of them attend this event regularly for the past 3-4 years, and according to them it is not easy to find market for products, and for that you have to work harder after the fair, keeping in contact and following up those you met during the fair. And this is exactly what we are going to do, to keep following our possible prospects and try to build cooperation with them and to find new markets for our products. - Mrs. Mukarrama Kayumova , Haft Paikar from Tajikistan

Part 4 – Recommendations and next steps

In terms of recommendations going forward some key thoughts are provided below:

1. A focus on capacity building activities to ensure that all inputs provided until now are indeed placed within the local and regional institutions or within other initiatives, which could take on and further the work.
It would be a shame to lose out on the learnings achieved till now. However it is a challenge to engage the only association LEGPROM that exists in Bishkek. Through the course of the existing activities, Legprom has been invited to participate in all market-oriented activities, but was never present in any of the international activities. It was attended by the ministry representatives and academic representatives, but not by the sector association. This is a challenge. However it may be possible work through the university and other interested stakeholders who may be keen to share and distribute information. It may also be interesting for companies to get together and undertake some initiatives jointly, thus mimicking the functioning of an association.
2. Continued showcasing activities and sourcing activities for the companies
Companies are very enthusiastic at the moment and there is a momentum that has been generated around the process that needs to be followed. It is highly recommended that come inputs and assistance is provided towards one or two more participations in international fairs. After this, the companies would be able to engage in activities by themselves and would have learnt the process well. But two to three initiatives are helpful in strengthening the base so as to not lose out on the learning achieved. Success also builds on success. When companies realise that something works well, they will ensure that it remains like that. But for this to be consistent, on average, at least two to three participations are necessary. (some fairs to consider: continue at Textillegprom, aim at CPM for higher collections (brands),
3. Showcasing for the textile (spinning) companies
There are approximately 3 – 5 textile spinning factories that participated in the various activities. However they were not able to benefit from fair participation, as this was focussed on the garment companies. It would be important to have at least one event where some fair participation related inputs are provided, and some marketing inputs are provided. The negotiation with a selected fair should take place and some handholding

through contacts and networks would be advisable. Some important fairs to consider are the China (Beijing and Shanghai) yarn fair, Turkish yarn fair and the one that takes place in Russia. (Needs more research). There are several fairs that also take place in Europe, but the yarns at Pitti Filatti for example are focussed on knitwear. Whereas the yarns produced mainly by the Tajik factories appear to be for wovens. Further research required to identify the exact offer and packaging it in an interesting and attractive way.

4. Look into a branding initiative for the each country as a positioning strategy globally
Identify a product area of importance or a fibre or technique or a concept, which can be used to brand each country in this industry. Currently Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are relatively unknown in the world of the fashion business. Having a good country branding helps to get buyers and others interested and involved, thereby promoting and putting the country on the global map. This has proven to be successful for many countries
5. Continue to improve and put in place quality management and productivity improvement systems in collaboration with institutions, certification agencies and others.
Ongoing training (short courses) for industry professionals could be offered by academic institutions as well as sector associations. It would be a great opportunity for industry managers to receive training through short courses over the time period of 6 months to an year. It would also be shorter. There are many examples of such courses.
6. Provide training on compliance and the importance of compliance through the CSR policies of international companies
It would be very interesting to bring onboard interested retailers who may be keen to do some mass sourcing out of the region. In this case it would interesting to liaise with companies such as H&M, Marks and Spencers, etc. Look at the CSR policies and bring some engagement through the retailers into the countries to establish good sourcing practices. Look at the example of Marks and Spencers who have set up the first eco factory in Sri Lanka (recently).
7. Undertake further research for new markets of potential (Turkey, Kazakhstan, Poland, Ukraine, etc)
8. Facilitate contracts or the development of relations between international fashion professionals with existing institutions, which could go forward in building strong links to the global fashion business.
9. Engage with the women entrepreneurs to engage them in the global initiatives, which are geared to promote women in the textiles and clothing sector. This is currently being championed by ITC through the women in trade programme. Several of the companies would qualify for this programme.
10. Provide further inputs or facilitate the creation of a sourcing office or database with fabrics and trims for local usage by companies. A knowledge centre could be created with swatches classified by price, content, characteristics, geography and contact name.
11. Look into providing inputs on technology up gradation and machinery up gradation along with possible B to B meetings for interested companies.

Part 5 – Main achievements

This project has had been successful at various levels. Some of the key points are highlighted below in this section of the report.

1. A visibly high level of awareness gained by companies, universities, ministry and other national consultants and professionals about the international textiles and clothing business and its operations.
2. A change in the mind set of the majority of companies who paid almost no attention to being an active provider in the industry as compared to remaining the passive order taker which had been instilled in their systems for generations.
3. A clear understanding of the Russian market which many of them were involved with, but actually knew very little about at the professional level.
4. Tangible (and recorded) productivity improvements and quality improvements in participating companies in both countries.
5. The ability to create and develop actual cohesive collections and samples which could be shown together at a professional trade fair
6. A change in mind set about the importance of marketing and the creation of well thought through and well designed marketing materials
7. An understanding of the importance of GOOD fabric and trims
8. Several contacts (recorded) for sources of raw materials for all participants
9. Tangible and substantial orders (recorded) and very good contacts for every participant who participated in all the market oriented activities. Even though Dilbar fashion house did not benefit substantially from concrete business-to-business deals in Paris, they were showcased on the catwalk at the Louvre in Paris, which was featured in fashion magazines that were read globally!
10. A complete turn around in mindset for the majority of companies in relation to the importance and integration of product design and development into their actual work and ongoing business processes.
11. The showcasing of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Paris in the Ethical Fashion Show, thus raising the profile of the country and its offer and image and putting it on the global fashion map.
12. The regional business linkages created and slowly developed between the two countries for this sector. This is a very high achievement and progress from the start of the project (June 2009). Today, (October 2011) garment and fashion companies from Kyrgyzstan are actually speaking with fabric suppliers as well as garment manufacturers in Tajikistan to develop joint ventures and partnerships.