



**PLUSTEX**

Policy Learning to Unlock  
Skills in the TEXTile Sector



## NEWSLETTER 05

June 2014

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## EDITORIAL

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The United Kingdom has an established tradition of textile production that has led to some of the most distinctive regional textiles in the world. These include Harris Tweed, Scottish Tartans, English laces, Fair Isle Knits to name a few. Throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the UK experienced a reduction in its domestic textile production as outsourcing to overseas suppliers increased. In the last decade, textile producers have re-evaluated their business capabilities, achieving greater competitiveness by considering the role of design. This includes a focus on skilled designers, computer aided design and reviving old traditions of craftsmanship to offer bespoke quality, providing a level of service which cannot easily be replicated by off-shore suppliers. Additionally, an understanding of the value of heritage, working with in-house archives, has become a natural practice for design studios. This blending of modernity and tradition is one of the hallmarks of British textile and fashion production.

The production units that remain in the UK are lean and competitive, with most, but not all, having “traded up” to focus on advanced and specialised techniques and skills, to produce high-added-value products with a global reputation. These units remain in the important regions where the manufacturing industry was developed at the time of the Industrial Revolution. An example is the fine-gauge knitwear manufacturer John Smedley, which has been based in Derbyshire for more than 220 years. Fox Flannels, in the rural county of Somerset, specialises in luxury woollen cloth made in the UK for London’s Savile Row. One reason for its success has been the retention of a skilled labour force, many of whom are second- and third-generation workers. To ensure the continuation of this process, the company has invested in a new apprenticeship scheme.

The UK fashion industry is the focus of much policy development, to capitalise on creative industries exports. Opportunities identified in this sector are the creativity of UK designers, the diversity of high street shopping opportunities and the strength of its fashion education system.

Ongoing challenges are the lack of business skills and entrepreneurial training; in textiles and manufacturing, there is lack of linkage with the UK’s scientific and technical innovations, a slow pipeline of talent and the threat to financial support for apprentice schemes to transfer skills to younger generations.

Within this context, Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, has a long standing reputation for educating new generations of textile and fashion designers, and continues to produce successful practitioners working at the highest levels of industry. The School’s graduates are recognised for their ability to balance technical understanding with design innovation that is underpinned by a respect for modernity and tradition, including the use of hand-finishing processes, digital technologies and archive research.



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It has come to an end with the presentation of eight interesting Good Practices related to the policy "Fostering eco-innovation and social responsibility in the sector" the 9<sup>th</sup> Thematic Exchange Workshop organized in Winchester (UK) by **PLUSTEX** Partner University of Southampton and Winchester School of Art, last 14 and 15 May. The proceedings of the workshop began with **Cardato Recycled**, experience from Prato territory, green brand developed by Prato Chamber of Commerce, that guarantees the measurement of the product LCA (Life-Cycle Assessment). The session continued with presentations by all partners such as Lille Metropole that introduced "**VARETEX – Vallée du Recyclage Textile**" regional program to develop innovation and business on textile recycling activities and Portuguese partner AMAVE that presented **Fábrica de Santo Thyrsó**, a symbol for the town's traditional ties with the textile industry.

**INVEGA** (Investment and Business Guarantees), Good Practice introduced by KTU Regional Science Park, supports activities to promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in Lithuania and **Tex-EASTile Project**, presented by ARED Vratsa, aims to establish a community of excellence to improve the offer of "green" textile in the market.

Lodz University of Technology described its role as a leader, partner or contactor in different projects in the area of eco-innovation and social responsibility in the T&C industry such as **BIGRATEX, Biomass and BIOPOL**.

The workshop closed with GP **Fashion Enter** introduced by Southampton University, a non profit social enterprise, which core business is helping people to get a foothold in the fashion industry, combined with a drive for social responsibility.

The workshop concluded with a debate open to all participants, partners and stakeholders, for questions, clarifications and points of view on the experiences presented.

The afternoon Study Visit to the Winchester School of Art gave the opportunity to discover the Knitting Reference

Library also meeting the Head Librarian, Linda Newington and attending to a creative demonstration of knit collections. The following tour of Fashion and Textile Design Undergraduate studios concluded the workshop activities.

### FOCUS ON UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON AND WINCHESTER SCHOOL OF ART

The University of Southampton is located in the South East region of the UK, 1 hour from London. The city of Southampton has an important



aviation and maritime heritage, beginning in Tudor times up to the present. The city port is the UK's busiest cruise port and in 2012 was ranked the number one-performing container terminal in the UK, handling 40-45% of the UK's deep-sea trade with the fast-growing economies of the Far East and China. Building on this historical context, the University has a distinguished heritage that can be traced back to 1862. Full university status was conferred in 1952, by Royal Charter. As a founder member of the Russell Group of 20 major research-intensive universities of the UK, the University of Southampton has built on its local strengths and is one of the UK's top institutions for engineering, computer science and medicine. The University's vision is to unlock creative potential and provide opportunities that transform the lives of students, the community, society and the economy. It aims to enrich the lives of individuals by developing the arts offering on campus and by continuing to support staff and students to participate in a wide range of community projects, outreach activities and business partnerships. Winchester School of Art, in the Faculty of Business and Law, is part of this vision and one of the UK's leading art and design institutions, with a history of excellence in Fine Art and textile and fashion subjects. As an international centre for ideas and innovation the School has a highly contemporary global outlook with study programmes that include graphic communications, media, fashion marketing, and fashion and design management subjects. Graduates from the textiles and fashion programmes continue to achieve notable success with a range of companies such as Mulberry, Alexander McQueen, Burberry, Peter Jenson, Rachel Rowberry, Cole & Sons and Idaho design.

[www.wsa.soton.ac.uk](http://www.wsa.soton.ac.uk)



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## TEXTILE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

### A GOOD PRACTICE FROM HUDDERSFIELD (UK)



The Huddersfield and District Textile Training Company was established in 1976 to unite the local textile industry in a shared approach to professional, equitable and high-quality training. HDTTC is a private, not for profit business. HDTTC Directors lead companies that manufacture both locally and globally, supplying the world's premier fashion houses and technical fabric markets. In 1999 the company established the **Textile Centre of Excellence**, a £2 million development located in Leeds Road, Huddersfield, providing a wide range of 'state of the art' textile and clothing training and production facilities. Further work in 2009 saw the launch of a six million pound textile innovation development programme to bring new technologies to market through collaboration between companies in the textile manufacturing sector. Most recently, the company has been successful in securing, with the manufacturing sector, new funding for training through an Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot. The Textile Centre of Excellence is a not-for-profit company owned by its members, primarily textile manufacturing companies in West Yorkshire. The Centre delivers a wide range of training and development support. Training provided includes apprenticeships and NVQs, Leadership and Management training, Health & Safety, IT and Fork Lift Truck training. The Centre provides support to hundreds of companies each year.

The Textile Centre of Excellence provides:

- High quality training for business and their employees covering a range of skills and areas
- Access to innovative, leading edge technology for the textile sector
- A technical workshop for warping and weaving operations
- A research and product-testing laboratory
- A fully equipped clothing studio
- Information technology training suite
- Award winning multi-media meeting and conferencing facilities

The 20,000 sq ft Centre offers quality assured, flexible training at all levels from introductory courses and Apprenticeships to training for technicians, supervisors and company managers. Frequently, we provide flexibility for employers

by also training on a client's premises. A range of professional services is also offered including Occupational Health, Environmental and Health and Safety services provided by the Centre's in-house expert team.

The Centre is a recognised BS EN ISO 9001: 2008 company with more than 70 members. It works closely with its members and with a range of public and private sector bodies to develop and deliver a wide range of activities that stimulate innovation and to develop new skills in areas relevant to the region's manufacturing industry. The Centre is a member of UKFT, the industry body for UK fashion and textiles and works closely with Creative Skillset, the industry's sector skill council.



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## SPINPARK

### A GOOD PRACTICE FROM AMAVE (PT)



The **Spinpark Technology Incubation Center** is a private non-profit entity created in 2006 on initiative of the University of Minho, Avepark and the Science and Technology Association Park in Porto (APCTP) which promotes and supports activities of advanced technology, intensive in knowledge and also serves as an innovation platform in the context of the economy of knowledge.

In line with the University of Minho's objective to support spin-offs throughout their evolutionary process, the mission of Spinpark is not only to provide physical space but consulting, knowledge, networking, access capital seed and capital venture, too.

The incubator's goals are: to increase the survival rate and the potential growth of new technological companies, especially those belonging to the region's strategic sectors; to enhance the economic development and increase of jobs in the region by supporting and providing incentives to the birth and growth of innovative companies.

#### Objectives of the Spinpark Good Practice:

- Promoting the interaction between business actors and scientific units;
- Business incubation;
- Supporting companies setup in the field of composite materials and polymers;
- Developing technical and technological capacities in the Textile and Clothing sector, through innovation and the promotion of quality standards;
- Ad-hoc support to industrial policies;
- Delivery of excellence technological services in several domains, e.g. Tests and Testing Laboratory, Product and Process Engineering, Product Certification and Standards, R&D&I, Fashion Intelligence, and Training and Qualification.



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## PLUSTEX FINAL EVENT

Lille (FR), October 2014



### **Textile and Clothing 2020 – Smart strategies for Regional Development**

9<sup>th</sup> October 2014 Tourcoing (FR) – Campus CETI  
(European center of innovative textile)

Textile and Clothing is a major sector of the European industry and a spearhead of European manufacturing. Although hit by globalisation and the consequent de-industrialization, the sector still features some 250,000 businesses, 240 billion euros turnover and more than 3.2 million employees across the European Union.

In the last decades, Textile and Clothing has reacted by developing new jobs and ways of working, by upgrading its value chain and logistics, and through bottom-up innovation driven by SMEs. This was made possible by businesses pioneers, researchers and innovation-oriented initiatives at the European, national and local levels aimed at supporting SMEs and funded through public policy actions.

The PLUSTEX Project (Policy Learning to Unlock Skills in the TEXTile sector) is an INTERREG IVC initiative that promotes knowledge exchange to help regional and local authorities foster the Textile and Clothing sector.

In its three years lifetime, the project has enabled partners from eight European countries to exchange policy know-how and Good Practices, thereby identifying the most effective ideas and solutions to develop Textile and Clothing in their territories.

The PLUSTEX final conference will showcase the project's results and discuss how they can help European, national and local authorities and stakeholders to innovate the sector. The morning will host two round tables on "Challenges and Opportunities for European T&C", and "New Perspectives for the sector as seen by Innovative Textile Stakeholders", respectively. In the afternoon three parallel workshops will focus on the project's policy themes. Several Good Practices will be presented by practitioners and policy experts, and the partners' Plans to implement innovative Good Practices in their own territories will be introduced to the public.

More information on PLUSTEX web site ([www.plustex.eu](http://www.plustex.eu))