



## SUCCESS STORY

# Apparel Company Dazzles Top Clients

### A small Serbian knitwear company becomes an international success



Milos Ivkovic, left, and a staff member discuss new textile designs at the company's production facility in Belgrade.

***With USAID's help, quality Serbian clothing products are moving into international markets.***

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For Serbian knitwear-maker Ivkovic Trikotaza, the future is looking as bright as the company's innovative fashions. With help from USAID, the company has sold its entire 2005 production line, received financing to help cover expansion costs, and entered new markets. The company is now emerging as a major international brand, available in London, Rome, Tokyo, and New York.

Just one year ago, it was a different story. Faced with declining sales, Ivkovic was looking at possible layoffs. But USAID's project team recognized Ivkovic's potential. "The designs were perfect," said Nenad Popadic, an apparel advisor. "We thought that with a few changes and the right exposure, they could easily compete with top international labels."

USAID worked with senior management to streamline production, standardize sizing, and promote Ivkovic designs at international trade shows. To make it easier for buyers to review the designs, Ivkovic was featured prominently on the Serbian apparel industry's website, [www.serbianapparel.com](http://www.serbianapparel.com). USAID's team helped Ivkovic hire professional sales agents essential to breaking into new markets.

Results came swiftly. At a trade show in Germany, Ivkovic was a runaway success. Buyers loved the company's playful styling, hand finishing, and attention to detail. The company quickly sold out its entire annual production, more than doubling revenues compared to the previous year. And the orders keep coming. Ivkovic signed more than 100 contracts as a result of the show.

General Director Milos Ivkovic is pleased with the company's new outlook: "The production lines are at absolute capacity. We're running all the machines in three shifts, 24 hours a day. From here it's all about expansion." He will have to act quickly. Ivkovic's success has caught the attention of some of the world's leading fashion retailers. The family-owned company is now completing test orders for some of the biggest names in luxury apparel.

Ivkovic Trikotaza is one of more than 40 apparel companies that receive support from a USAID project that works with select industries and firms to help companies build on their advantages, add unique value to their products, and get those products to the right customers both at home and abroad.