

Priority areas for regional development of cotton-textile clusters in the Kashkadarya region

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Abstract: The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the economic, geographical, technological, and social aspects of the territorial development of cotton-textile clusters in the Kashkadarya region. A strategy for forming clusters has been established based on the region's natural resources, transport infrastructure, labor potential, and industrial capacity. It also outlines ways to increase production efficiency, strengthen export potential, and diversify the regional economy by effectively integrating cotton cultivation and processing.

Keywords: Kashkadarya region, cotton-textile cluster, regional development, economic geographical analysis, cotton cultivation, processing industry, export potential, industrial integration, local human resources potential, irrigation system.

Introduction. In recent years, the cotton textile industry has become increasingly important as one of the most important sectors of the global economy. This industry determines the competitiveness of countries' economies not only through the production of raw materials, but also through the export of light industry and finished products. The formation of cotton-textile clusters, taking into account the growth of demand in international markets, the need for sustainable production systems, and environmental aspects, plays an important role in the effective functioning of the global industry. At the same time, cluster systems are creating added value for countries' economies by integrating production processes, reducing logistics costs, improving product quality, and introducing innovative technologies.

The cotton and textile industry is one of the traditional and strategic sectors in the economy of Uzbekistan. In particular, the Kashkadarya region is one of the most potential regions for cotton cultivation and processing, and has favorable conditions in terms of irrigation system, labor resources, and industrial capacity. In recent years, the concept of developing regional cluster systems has been introduced in the country, creating opportunities for the comprehensive integration of production chains. This will have a significant impact on the economic development of the region, increase production efficiency, expand export potential, and make the local industry competitive. Therefore, the issues of forming and developing cotton-textile clusters in the Kashkadarya region are urgent and require in-depth scientific analysis.

Main part. Kashkadarya region was established in 1943 and is an administrative-territorial unit of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with an area of 28,567 sq. km. There are 20 rural municipalities and 751 rural municipalities in the region. Kashkadarya region is divided into 2 regional cities and 14 districts according to its administrative structure. The permanent population of Kashkadarya region as of January 1, 2025 was 3,639.3 thousand people, an increase of 78.7 thousand people, or 2.2%, since the beginning of 2024. In particular, the urban population was 1,553.0 thousand people (42.7% of the total population), the rural population was 2,086.3 thousand people (57.3%), the population density was 127.4 people per sq. km.

The region's climate is continental, with hot and dry summers and mild and humid winters. These conditions are favorable for cotton cultivation, making the region one of the centers of cotton clusters in the country. The irrigation system using the Kashkadarya River and its tributaries ensures high cotton yields in the region. At the same time, the modernization of irrigation systems will save water and increase agricultural efficiency. The economic and geographical location of the region is also important in the development of the cluster system. The region's connections to other regions and international markets via rail and highways facilitate the delivery of raw materials and the export of finished products. Also, existing industrial enterprises in the region are integrated with the cotton and textile sectors, ensuring the efficient operation of the production chain. The region's labor resources are also of great importance; the labor force in rural areas is abundant and mainly experienced in cotton cultivation and textiles. Therefore, the region is considered favorable in terms of natural and economic resources for the formation and development of cotton-textile clusters.

There are several priority areas in the development of cotton-textile clusters, which serve to increase the economy and social stability of the region. First of all, strengthening the raw material base is the most important aspect, as the effectiveness of clusters is directly related to cotton growing areas, yield, and quality. Therefore, it is necessary to modernize arable land, introduce high-yielding varieties, and use modern irrigation technologies. Modernizing irrigation systems will not only save water, but also significantly increase cotton yields. By optimizing the supply system between farmers and cluster enterprises, raw material quality and supply stability are ensured.

The development of the recycling industry is also of particular importance. Cotton processing plants should be located near regional centers and main transport routes, as this reduces logistics costs and makes the production chain more efficient. The introduction of automated production lines and modern technologies will increase product quality, expand production capacity, and create added value for the regional economy, which will strengthen export potential.

One of the important areas is the formation of territorial integration and cluster systems, which will ensure that the production chain operates efficiently by integrating the supply and marketing system between local farmers, large producers, and entrepreneurs. The establishment of transport and logistics centers in regional centers will accelerate the movement of raw materials and finished products, optimize the production process, and serve to diversify the regional economy.

Increasing export potential is also a priority. Adapting products to international market requirements, introducing quality certificates, branding and marketing products, and modernizing the logistics system will increase exports, ensure the integration of the regional economy into world markets, and strengthen the competitiveness of local producers.

Building social and human capacity is important for the sustainability of the cluster system. New jobs will be created in regions with developed cotton-textile clusters, and the development of training and technical education centers will strengthen the labor market. Improving regional social infrastructure can reduce labor migration, increase local employment, and ensure social stability in surrounding areas. The comprehensive implementation of these areas will further develop the regional cotton and textile industry, increase export and production potential, and serve to diversify the local economy.

Conclusion. Kashkadarya region is of strategic importance in terms of natural, economic, and social aspects in terms of developing cotton-textile clusters. The region's climate and irrigation capabilities create favorable conditions for cotton cultivation, while the transport infrastructure and connectivity with other regions of the region ensure rapid delivery of raw materials and an efficient transportation system for finished products. Industrial capacity and existing manufacturing enterprises allow for the integration of the cotton-textile chain in the region, while the availability of labor resources eliminates the shortage of labor and qualified personnel. These aspects make the region a center for competitive cotton and textile clusters in the country's domestic and foreign markets.

The priority areas for cluster development are aimed at modernizing the raw material base, expanding the processing industry, strengthening regional integration, increasing export potential, and strengthening socio-human resources. Comprehensive measures implemented in these areas will significantly increase production efficiency, improve product quality, and contribute to the sustainable growth of the regional economy. Clusters also strengthen social stability by increasing employment in the region, creating new jobs, and improving the living standards of local residents. In this way, by developing the cotton and textile industry, the Kashkadarya region will strengthen its competitiveness in the country's domestic and foreign markets and contribute to economic diversification.

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