

## BACKGROUND ...

## FUTURE TRENDS ...

The TGAS in collaboration with government agencies including the Trade Development Board, the Economic Development Board, and the National Productivity Board has embarked on a series of projects to spearhead the move to expedite automation and computerization of the local textile and garment industry. The first such project, the Automated Sewing Transportation System, is expected to reduce labor requirements by 20%.

The EDB has allocated S\$60m to help clothing companies automate, while the TDB has allocated part of the S\$40m estimated to be collected from sales of textile quotas to develop materials handling systems which will result in savings in labor cost.

Other projects in the pipeline include the setting up of a fashion research library, an apparel retail center and a fashion institute geared to develop Singapore into a fashion design center.

In the jewelry market, demand for imitation costume jewelry will continue to grow. Singapore will continue to be one of the most competitive sources of gem stones and diamonds from India, Burma, Sri Lanka and Australia because of its strategic location close to the world's largest gem and diamond producers and the fact that jewelers can import and export gold, precious metals and precious stones duty-free.

Apart from Singapore, there is a large external market for jewelry and clothing and apparel as shown by Singapore's substantial domestic exports. Major markets for apparel and imitation jewelry include the US, Europe, Japan and the ASEAN countries while the major markets for jewelry include the Middle East, US, Europe and Japan.