Emerging Printer DTF-PET Expected to Grow Aggressively in Asia/Pacific* Graphic Textile Market

JAKARTA, August 3, 2021 — Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a fundamental part in reviving the economy during and post-pandemic, including microbusiness in the graphic textile industry. An emerging technology, direct-to-film (DTF)–polyethylene terephthalate (PET), has particularly become more popular among SMEs and entry-level users during the pandemic, according to IDC report Direct-to-Film–PET Printers in Graphic Textile Business and Comparison with Direct-to-Garment, Flexprint, and Dye-Sublimation Printers.

DTF-PET allows everybody, especially traditional screen-printing end users and microbusinesses, to produce good quality print on garments by short-run to mid-run production with cheaper cost than any other existing technology in today’s market. While the pandemic has limited businesses’ ability to spend, DTF-PET’s affordable cost makes it an attractive option, with an initial investment that only ranges from 5,000-10,000USD.

Other factors that make end users consider this method are its reliability and simple principle of production, durability of end products, speed, and ease of operations.

The printer targets entry-level users but is predicted to spread outside this segment as demand for high-speed DTF-PET continues to grow and the technology keeps improving in terms of speed, consistency of color, and reliability.

“It can also be an open opportunity for flagship vendors to enter the market and join as suppliers,” said Muhammad Faris Latief, Market Analyst for IPDS at IDC Asia/Pacific.

So far, only Chinese vendors and some local India brands have models and lineups in this market, without flagship
vendors promoting DTF-PET technology. As DTF-PET achieves wider acceptance, vendors can expand its research and development (R&D) and develop current pigment printers to be capable to print on the PET media.

All countries in APEJ (exclude ANZ) have reported significant growth of DTF-PET machines since mid-year of 2020. In some countries, the number of shipments has already surpassed dye-sublimation and Direct-to-Garment printers.

Figure 1

![APEJ Composition of Textile-Garment business between DTF-PET and DTG (All Size-all segment)](image)

Source: IDC Quarterly Industriai Printer Tracker, 2021Q2

Note: DTF-PET units were derivates from the actual units in graphic products by filtering the aqueous ink-based sizing 24in.
DTF-PET has the potential to become the next major solution in the graphic textile industry but since it is only supported by Chinese vendors, after sales, consumables, and supplies would be scattered, bringing more challenges such as limited warranty or even no warranty at all. The consistency of color quality also needs to be considered as ink for DTF-PET is only supplied by third-party vendors.

“The DTF-PET technology is gaining momentum, and we can either use it as it is or explore the technology and provide the market with a better solution from tech supplier’s perspective. In the near future, we will see some technology shifting from traditional screen printing player to DTF-PET machine, meaning there will be a significant exodus from analog’s way for short run garment printing to digital printing machine with DTF-PET,” said Faris Latief.

*Note: Asia/Pacific excluding Japan

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