



KARCEM TEKSTİL · KNOWLEDGE HUB

Procurement, Sourcing and Collaboration: A Framework for Choosing the Right Knitted Fabric Supplier

Choosing a fabric supplier for a brand or garment manufacturer is not simply a matter of comparing price lists; it means bringing colour consistency, traceability, certificate compliance and delivery reliability together with a single point of contact. This guide examines the decision criteria and process flow of knitted fabric sourcing from a vertically integrated Dye House from a B2B procurement perspective.

KARCEM Tekstil — Vertically Integrated Dye House

karcem@karcem.com.tr · +90 533 833 48 29 · www.karcem.com.tr

Which criteria really determine the choice of a knitted fabric supplier?

Price alone is misleading. The decisive criteria are colour repeatability ($\Delta E < 1$), a traceable supply chain, the valid scope of the certificates you require, breadth of technical capability and delivery reliability. When these five headings are assessed together, the true total cost emerges.

For a procurement manager, the most expensive mistake is working with a supplier whose unit price is low but whose colour does not hold, whose shipments are delayed or whose certificate scope does not meet your requirement. Claims, re-dyeing, late-delivery penalties and loss of brand reputation quickly erase the price advantage that was visible at first. For this reason the sourcing decision must be built on *total cost of ownership* rather than the headline unit price.

When evaluating the right supplier profile, scoring five axes separately turns a subjective preference into an objective matrix. The table below summarises the evaluation axes frequently used in B2B procurement processes and the evidence to look for under each.

Evaluation axis	Evidence sought	Risk signal
Colour consistency	Approved lab-dip flow, ΔE measurement report, CMC/DE2000 rule	"Looks fine by eye" claim, no measurement report
Traceability	Single record across the yarn→fabric→dye→dispatch chain, lot number	Processes spread across different subcontractors
Certificate scope	Valid certificate number, product/process scope match	Logo present but the certificate scope does not cover the product
Technical capability	Single jersey–interlock–rib–jacquard range, finishing options	Narrow product range, every special request is "not possible"
Delivery reliability	Written definition of the sample→approval→production flow	No clear process definition, verbal commitment

KARCEM brings all of these axes together under a single facility: knitting, dyeing, printing and finishing run under the same roof. Once you have set your supplier selection criteria, the next heading shows why these criteria work more strongly when gathered with a single point of contact.

Why does a single facility and a single point of contact reduce procurement risk?

When knitting, dyeing, printing and finishing sit with separate companies, every handover point creates a delay and a gap in accountability. In a vertically integrated *commission* structure the chain is gathered in one hand; colour deviation, lot mix-ups and the "who is responsible?" dispute disappear. A single point of contact means a single traceable record.

In fragmented procurement, when knitting comes from one company, dyeing from a subcontractor and printing from another, each change of hands adds a wait, a transport leg and a quality risk. When the colour does not hold in a lot, it becomes unclear whether to hold the greige fabric or the dye house

responsible. This uncertainty prolongs claim processes and, without being able to distribute the correction cost between the parties, dumps it onto you.

In a vertically integrated facility the entire chain runs on a single record system; the same lot number is tracked from yarn to dispatch. This is also a critical foundation for [Scope 3](#) reporting and future [Digital Product Passport](#) requirements. The comparison below shows the practical differences between the two models.

Dimension	Fragmented procurement (multiple subcontractors)	Vertically integrated single facility
Number of contacts	Knitting + dyeing + printing + finishing separate	Single point of contact, single contract
Traceability	Disconnected records across processes	Uninterrupted lot record from yarn to dispatch
Colour accountability	Uncertainty between parties	Clear accountability in one hand
Handover delay	Transport + wait at every stage	Internal flow, no intermediate transport
Sustainability report	Fragmented data collection	Integrated Scope 3 data

You can find the technical detail of this integration on the [integrated facility advantage](#) page, and the commission process definition in the [commission dyeing/printing/finishing](#) guide. The single-contact model also markedly accelerates the next step, the sample→approval→production flow.

How does the procurement flow progress from sample to bulk production?

The typical flow is: brief and technical specification, fabric development and [lab-dip](#), colour approval ($\Delta E < 1$), bulk sample and fastness tests, followed by bulk production and dispatch. Obtaining written approval at each step prevents surprises in bulk production. Lead times vary by order; [let us clarify together](#).

A sound procurement flow rests on the principle of locking down colour and performance on the bench before moving to bulk production. Colour approval is fixed with a physically signed lab-dip; this reference forms the standard against which production lots will be compared. To reduce the risk of [metamerism](#), the light source under which approval will be made should be clarified from the outset.

The table below summarises the typical stages from sample to dispatch and the output procurement should check at each stage. The duration column is deliberately left out; the actual lead time is determined by order volume, colour/pattern complexity and certificate requirements.

Stage	Output	Procurement's check
1. Brief and specification	Technical document, target weight and width	Are the intended use and test requirements complete?
2. Fabric development	Yarn/knit selection, greige fabric	Are single jersey/interlock/rib correct?
3. Lab-dip and colour	Signed lab-dip, $\Delta E < 1$ target	Is the approval light source defined?

Stage	Output	Procurement's check
4. Bulk sample	Sample under production conditions + tests	Is there a fastness and pilling report?
5. Bulk production	Production against the approved reference	Within-lot/between-lot consistency
6. Quality and dispatch	4-point inspection, dispatch	Are the Incoterms and documents complete?

We detail the [MOQ](#), sample and delivery side of this flow on the [MOQ, sample and delivery process](#) page. For the technical side of colour approval, the [colour fastness](#) and [ΔE](#) guide is complementary.

How do I match my certificate requirement with the supplier's scope?

Seeing the certificate logo is not enough; you need to verify whether the document is valid, which product and process it covers and whether it is supported by a transaction certificate. Standards such as GOTS/GRS require a traceable document chain on an order basis. When the scope does not match, the certificate claim is deemed invalid in an audit.

Many brands require a specific certificate scope because of a customer or regulation. The critical point here is the difference between the supplier *holding* the certificate and *your product being produced within that scope*. For example, if an [rPET](#) requirement calls for a recycled-content claim, this must be documented on a lot basis with a GRS or RCS transaction certificate.

KARCEM works with six standards, and clarifying which procurement requirement each of these certificates corresponds to accelerates the sourcing decision. The mapping table below relates a frequently encountered purchasing requirement to the relevant certificate.

Procurement requirement	Relevant certificate	Verification note
Organic cotton content	GOTS / OCS	Transaction certificate required on a lot basis
Recycled content	GRS / RCS	Content percentage and chain documented
Sustainable cotton sourcing	BCI	Mass balance approach is the basis
Circularity / waste reduction	UPMADE	Production efficiency approach
Chemical compliance expectation	ZDHC / MRSL	Related to dye house chemical management

For the full list and scope of certificates see the [Certificates](#) page, and for the effect of sustainability regulations on the procurement decision see the [GOTS](#), [RCS](#) and [carbon](#) and [ZDHC compliance](#) guides.

Why is colour consistency so important as a procurement criterion?

Colour is a brand's visual identity; deviation from lot to lot undermines shelf and collection integrity. A $\Delta E < 1$ tolerance means keeping the deviation at a level imperceptible to the human eye. This target is assured through lab-dip approval and instrumental measurement, not through a verbal "fine" claim.

On the procurement side, colour consistency is a criterion that is often noticed at the end of the process but that should be assessed at supplier selection from the outset. It is not enough for two separate lots to look the same by eye; the risk of looking different under different light (metamerism) and the drift between lots turn into visible mismatch in pieces placed side by side in the garment.

$\Delta E < 1$ is the industrial tolerance KARCEM targets in its lab-dip→approval→production flow. This discipline requires colour measurement to be carried out with the [CMC](#) or [DE2000](#) formula, under a defined light source and with an instrument. Colour fastness tests ([crocking](#), washing, light) then document the colour's durability over its service life.

- **Question to ask at supplier selection:** Under which light source and with which ΔE formula is colour approval carried out?
- **Request documentation:** An instrumental ΔE report and fastness test results for the bulk sample.
- **Fix the reference:** The signed lab-dip is the standard against which all production lots will be compared.

We deepen the technical foundations of this criterion on the [colour fastness and \$\Delta E\$](#) and [reactive/disperse dyeing](#) pages.

With which documents and data should I support the sourcing decision?

A robust sourcing file contains the technical specification, the signed lab-dip, fastness and pilling test reports, the valid certificate scope and a written delivery/Incoterms definition. When these five documents come together, you have a defensible decision file for both your internal approval process and customer audit.

Professional procurement is built on being able to defend the decision with documentation. When you later need to justify the supplier choice before internal audit, a brand customer or a regulator, it is filed evidence, not verbal agreements, that holds up. The checklist below defines the minimum content of a procurement file.

- **Technical specification:** Fabric type, target weight and width, [tubular/open width](#), test requirements.
- **Colour reference:** Signed lab-dip, $\Delta E < 1$ target and approval light source.
- **Performance reports:** Fastness, pilling, dimensional stability ([ISO 105/AATCC](#)).
- **Compliance documents:** The valid scope of the required certificates and, if needed, the transaction certificate.
- **Commercial terms:** MOQ, delivery definition, [Incoterms](#) and dispatch details.

Looking ahead, EU regulations such as [ESPR](#) and [DPP](#) will increasingly make it mandatory to keep this file in a digital and traceable form. To future-proof your supplier choice in this respect as well, see the [ESPR/DPP and supplier selection](#) page.

How is a long-term collaboration established with a supplier?

A one-off order is different from a strategic collaboration. A long-term partnership is built on a repeatable colour archive, joint product development, priority in capacity planning and transparent sustainability data. The right supplier offers the institutional memory that preserves the accumulated knowledge season after season.

For brands carrying a collection from year to year, the most valuable thing is the preservation of past colour and quality records. Continuity with the same supplier means reusing the approved lab-dip archive, repeating proven recipes and shortening development time. Instead of starting from scratch each season, you build on accumulated institutional memory.

With its vertically integrated structure, KARCEM works at a production scale of ~450 tonnes/month with brands exporting to the markets of Türkiye, Europe, the Middle East and North America. Vertical integration gathers strategic advantages such as priority in capacity planning and integrated reporting of sustainability data in one hand. You can review the product range on the [Fabrics](#) page and the dyeing/printing capabilities on the [knitting, dyeing and printing](#) page.

The fastest way to make supplier evaluation concrete is to test the process with a real sample request. The lab-dip flow, the $\Delta E < 1$ discipline and the certificate scope can only be fully assessed once experienced on your own product.

With KARCEM: Run your knitted fabric procurement from a vertically integrated Dye House with a single point of contact and under a single traceable record. Create a [sample or quotation request](#) to clarify the colour, fabric and certificate scope for your own product; let us clarify the processes and lead time together according to your order.