

China's camping and outdoor gear suppliers are bracing for several challenges in the months ahead. Foremost among their concerns is how to maintain competitive prices without risking profitability. Increases in manufacturing outlay and the appreciation of the yuan are putting pressure on margins, forcing companies to raise quotes and take the chance that clients may source elsewhere.

Overseas, suppliers have to contend with weaker demand from the EU and the US as consumers there tighten discretionary spending amid the economic crunch.

Although the camping and outdoor gear markets in the two areas remain considerably large, many enterprises see limited growth opportunities in the US and the EU in the months ahead. These suppliers are looking at alternative destinations to keep revenue on the upswing.

Key findings

1. Several companies intend to enter or increase penetration of non-EU countries, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region in the next 12 months, even as they fortify foothold in the EU and North America. A number will be exploring South and Central America, and Africa for growth opportunities.
2. Many manufacturers are boosting R&D investment to provide models suited to new target markets. Part of the additional allocation is spent on hiring more designers, engineers and other technical personnel.
3. At most makers, efforts are geared toward enhancing functionality. Various technologies are being combined in a single product for greater user convenience. Portability, however, remains a key consideration.
4. The safety and environmental requirements of target export destinations are also major influences in product development. With regard to surface treatment, for instance, makers are steering clear of materials that contain phthalates or heavy metal. For light sources, companies are turning to LEDs.
5. Higher production costs and the appreciation of the yuan are expected to push prices of China-made camping and outdoor gear upward in the next half-year. Many companies, however, hope to contain increases within 5 percent to ensure competitiveness.
6. Export projections for the coming months are generally optimistic. Several enterprises are anticipating growth of at least 10 percent in overseas revenue.

Scope & methodology

This report covers the major types of camping and outdoor gear exported from China, namely tents, furniture, sleeping materials, picnicware, hydration devices, lights, optics and tools.

The products and prices section provides details about the different types offered, their common features and price determinants. The latest trends in product development are also discussed.

The Industry Overview examines issues affecting manufacturing and exports. It also identifies the common strategies suppliers are employing to cope with challenges.

To reflect the industry structure, the majority of suppliers in this report are privately owned. More than 50 percent of the featured companies are based in Guangdong, Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces.

To produce this report, Global Sources

interviewed a wide range of enterprises. Rather than focus simply on high-profile makers, we compiled a representative sample of large, midsize and emerging manufacturers. All profiled companies are export-oriented professional suppliers that are verified by Global Sources.

Each supplier is confirmed to be authentic with a legally registered business. All companies are visited three or more times by Global Sources to ensure they are export-ready and have real offices and products.

The listed contact person has been verified to represent the registered company. In each case, companies were required to answer specific questions designed to verify their manufacturing and export credentials.

All profiled suppliers participated in a survey designed to provide insight into

price trends, sales outlook and target markets in the next six to 12 months. All survey questions are single choice. Results were calculated based on the actual number of valid responses to each question.

Global Sources supplier rankings

★★★★★

Suppliers are ranked using a 6-star ranking system. Companies with a higher star ranking provide more business information and verification reports on their Global Sources online homepages.

Suppliers rated 5 or 6 stars have a Credit Check report from First Advantage or Sino-Trust and a Supplier Capability Assessment report provided by Bureau Veritas online.

The rankings are correct at the time of publication and may be subject to change.