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Italian textile machinery orders rebound 25% in second quarter

xport demand and renewed investment in weaving, knitting and finishing equipment lifted quarterly orders, although the market remained below 2025 levels.

Italian textile machinery manufacturers recorded a strong sequential recovery in the second quarter of 2026, with total orders rising 25% from the January–March period.

ACIMIT's order index reached 46.6 points at constant prices, using 2021 as the base year of 100. Despite the quarterly improvement, orders remained 3% below the same period of 2025, reflecting continuing uncertainty across global textile investment markets.

Exports drive the recovery
International orders increased 23% quarter on quarter, while domestic demand rose 39%. Foreign markets remain particularly important because they generate around 80% of Italian textile machinery manufacturers' order intake.

Compared with the second quarter of 2025, however, Italy's domestic market contracted 25%. ACIMIT attributed part of the weakness to a demanding comparison base and the timing of Italy's new 2026–28 hyper-depreciation incentive, whose effects had not yet translated into machinery orders.

Across the first half of 2026, total orders were still 4% lower year on year. Domestic orders declined 11%, while foreign orders fell by a more moderate 3%.

Weaving and finishing show momentum
Domestic demand was stable or higher across all machinery categories compared with the first quarter, with particularly sharp increases in spinning and weaving.

International markets produced stronger signals for weaving, knitting and finishing machinery. This suggests mills are selectively investing in productivity, product flexibility and value-added processing rather than committing to broad capacity expansion.

The industry's accumulated order backlog currently provides approximately 3.5 months of production, while capacity utilisation reached 79.7%.

Recovery remains fragile
Italian manufacturers expect third-quarter sales volumes to remain broadly stable. Domestic sentiment is cautious, while export expectations are evenly divided between growth and decline.

The second-quarter rebound therefore indicates improving investment activity, but not yet a durable machinery cycle. The next test will be whether foreign orders continue strengthening and whether Italy's investment incentives generate additional domestic demand. For machinery suppliers, the strongest near-term opportunities appear to be in modernisation projects delivering measurable energy savings, automation, labour productivity and processing flexibility.