



# Welcome to the eighteenth edition of our Newsletter!

We are pleased to share the eighteenth Newsletter on '[Facilitating the process of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO](#)' – a project of the [European Union](#) (EU) of which the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) is the implementing partner. The project supports Uzbekistan's accession to the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), with the overarching aim to unlock the country's economic progress through its participation in global trade.

This issue focuses on support extended during the quarter of January to March 2025. A key priority for Uzbekistan at this advanced stage of its accession process, is to develop key skills in the areas of technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. A highlight during the quarter was assistance with the ongoing process to rationalize Uzbekistan's food safety system. The project helped with the selection of key laboratories and upgrading them to the level of the relevant ISO international standard. Technicians also received advanced training to carry out food safety testing against selected parameters. Another highlight was training organized at the request of the Uzbek Agency for Technical Regulation on the ISO methodology for developing a standardization strategy. This has enabled technicians to bring Uzbekistan's standardization framework in line with international best practice. Uzbekistan also made strides building trade remedy capacity, with key officials attending trade remedy courses at the WTI Winter Academy with the project's assistance.

This newsletter is also available in RUSSIAN and in UZBEK.

More information on our project is available on our websites in [English](#), [Russian](#) and [Uzbek](#) languages.

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Stay connected: #WTOAccessionUZB

Happy reading!



## NOTA BENE from our team:

Kindly note that you have been included in the mailing list of our newsletter following your participation to one of our events. If you wish to unsubscribe, you can do so [here](#).

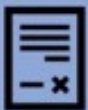


Обращаем внимание, что вы были включены в список нашей новостной рассылки по итогам участия в одном из наших мероприятий. Если вы хотите отказаться от рассылки, пожалуйста, пройдите по этой [ссылке](#).

Сиз ахборотнома почта рўйхатимизга бизнинг тадбирлар бирида иштирок этганлигиз натижасида киритилганлигизни эслатиб ўтамиз. Ушбу обунани бекор қилмоқчи бўлсангиз, келтирилган [хавола](#) орқали уни рад қилишингиз мумкин.

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# IMPLEMENTATION: PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

The project operates against a set of targeted objectives:

	The Uzbek government will be better equipped to <b>draft the documents and develop its negotiating positions as required by the WTO accession process</b>
	The executive and legislative branches will be better informed <b>to develop specific sectoral laws and regulations</b> as needed to comply with Uzbekistan's new international commitments
	<b>The policymakers' understanding of the WTO accession process</b> and its legal framework will be reinforced
	Uzbekistan will have an increased <b>capacity to comply with WTO Rules, in particular with regards to the SPS/TBT &amp; Trade Facilitation Agreements of the WTO</b>
	ITC's work will increase the <b>business sector's - including women's associations- awareness of the WTO accession process and benefits</b>

For a clear view the activities and achievements in the past quarter are discussed along the project's five objectives.

## OBJECTIVE 1

### Informed drafting of documentation & negotiating positions required for WTO accession process

The existing trade and economic laws and policies of a country provide the basis on which terms and conditions are negotiated when it joins the [WTO](#). The project supports this component of Uzbekistan's accession process by helping it to draft accession documents and to prepare negotiating positions.

In March 2025, the draft Working Party Report (WPR) – a crucial step in the accession process – was updated to reflect WTO Members' feedback given at the 9th Working Party Meeting held in December 2024. The draft WPR refines the accession documentation and brings Uzbekistan closer to WTO membership.



The bilateral negotiations have also advanced with the support of the project. A milestone was achieved with the conclusion of market access negotiations on services with the European Union. So far, Uzbekistan has successfully concluded bilateral negotiations with 23 WTO Members and 10 negotiation tracks are ongoing. Once all the bilateral negotiations have been concluded, the final schedules of commitments will be consolidated and shared with all WTO Members.

## OBJECTIVE 2

### **Enhanced capacity for the development of specific sectoral laws and regulations to align Uzbekistan's national trade policy with the requirements for WTO membership**

For WTO membership, an acceding country also needs to align its existing laws with the WTO Agreements. This normally requires an overhaul of the relevant national legislation. The project assists Uzbekistan with this task.

At the end of last year, Uzbekistan asked help to set up a Trade Remedies Unit (TRU). The project responded by drafting and sharing an outline on how to approach this task. It has already helped to set up the legislative architecture for a trade remedies regime by drafting the relevant legislation to deal with anti-dumping, as well as countervailing duty and safeguard measures. The TRU will institutionalize the trade remedies regime and shield local industries against unfair trade practices. In the meantime, the project is making headway with building the necessary skills to operationalize a TRU. During the quarter, key officials led by the Chief Negotiator, Mr. Azizbek Urunov, participated in a training course on anti-dumping and safeguard measures at the World Trade Institute (WTI) in Berne. (Watch the [video](#) below. For more details, see Objective 3).



“The course was very informative, very useful, especially as we are updating our [trade remedy] legislation ... It will help us get this new law through parliament and to apply [trade remedy measures] in practice.” – Chief Negotiator Mr. Azizbek Urunov after anti-dumping training at the WTI.

During the quarter, the project also made progress with its evaluation of the potential impact of WTO accession on Uzbekistan. The study, launched in July 2024, seeks to assess the economic and trade effect that tariff adjustments could have on the country. It comprises a comprehensive analysis of trade flows, policy changes, and a product-specific impact assessment, using partial and general equilibrium models. The draft paper is expected to be submitted in the second quarter of 2025. Its findings will set the tone for Uzbekistan's negotiating stances going forward.

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## OBJECTIVE 3

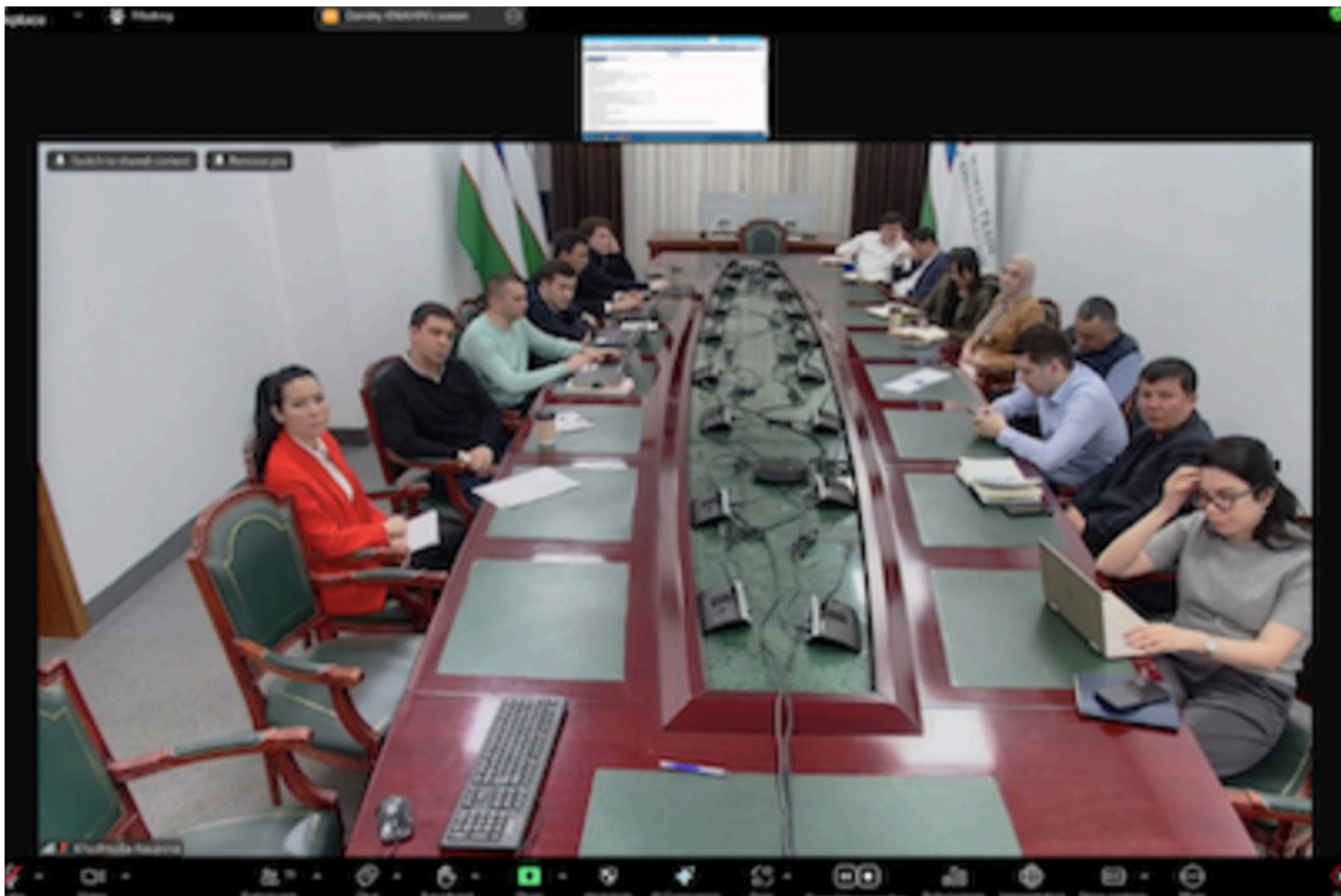
### **Increased understanding by policymakers of the WTO accession process and legal framework**

To equip government officials with the necessary expertise to administer trade legislation in line with the WTO Agreements, the project helps to build the capacity of government agencies through technical assistance.

In the past quarter, two final courses were delivered under the Trade Policy Training Programme. The programme, offered in collaboration with the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) in Tashkent, was conceived last year to build the skills of Uzbekistan's negotiating team.

On 15 January, a course was delivered on Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs). The 25 participants came to grips with the structure of the JSI on Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement. They also learned about the scope of the JSIs on Services Domestic Regulation and on E-commerce.

The final course, delivered on 25 and 26 February, introduced participants to the ITC's flagship Market Analysis Tools. Forty-eight trainees learned to use the Trade Map for analysing trade statistics and to use the Market Access Map to deal with Rules of Origin. They were taught how to identify export opportunities by using the Export Potential Map, and, finally, participants were familiarized with the Global Trade Helpdesk – a tool for market analysis. As part of a commitment to evolve skills in Uzbekistan's universities, 28 professors, researchers, and students of UWED participated in the two courses.



Officials attending the penultimate course of the Trade Policy Training Programme offered in collaboration with UWED. The training, on 15 January, covered the WTO's Joint Statement Initiatives. Photo: ITC

During the first quarter, six government officials participated in the WTI's Winter Academy 2025 in Berne, Switzerland. Among their ranks was the Chief Negotiator, Mr. Azizbek Urunov. The attendees successfully completed structured courses on the law and policy of Border Measures and Trade Facilitation (20-24 January 2025), Anti-Dumping and Safeguard Measures (27-31 January), Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (3-7 January), and Trade in Services (10-14 January).

The officials who benefited from the courses were from key ministries and government agencies involved in Uzbekistan's WTO accession process, including the Presidency, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Customs Committee, and the Committee on Competition Development and Consumer Protection.

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Attendees at the WTI Winter Academy course on anti-dumping and safeguard measures presented by international expert Edwin Vermulst. Uzbekistan's Chief Negotiator at the WTO, Mr. Azizbek Urunov, is sixth from the left. Photo: WTI

## OBJECTIVE 4

### **National institutional capacity strengthened on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) issues, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Trade Facilitation (TF) compliance in line with WTO obligations**

With the objective of strengthening Uzbekistan's institutions in the highly technical areas of TBT and SPS, the project is now largely focused on building expertise in these areas.

In the past quarter the Uzbek Agency for Technical Regulation (UATR) asked for help to prepare its technicians to apply the ISO methodology to develop a National Standardization Strategy (NSS). The aim is to equip officials to bring Uzbekistan's standardization framework in line with the requirements of the WTO's TBT Agreement.

A workshop was therefore given from 20-24 January 2025 on ISO methodology to develop an NSS for Uzbekistan. Thirty-eight officials from the country's national standardization and technical regulation agencies attended.

The project also continued to support efforts to optimize Uzbekistan's food safety system. As part of the plan, which commenced in October 2024, food testing laboratories were benchmarked against the ISO/IEC17025:2017 with a view to rationalize them and minimize duplication.

The laboratories were assessed through a survey questionnaire and three were selected for upgrade to the international standard related to several food safety testing parameters.

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ITC expert Upali Samarajeewa (far right) at one of the laboratories that was visited.

Photo: ITC



This was followed by a field visit in October 2024. After providing remote guidance to the laboratories, a follow-up mission was organized: From 4-5 February, technicians received advanced training on laboratory quality management against the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 international standard.

The expert then visited some of the laboratories and guided 37 technicians on how to conduct testing for the selected food safety testing parameters. The laboratories selected for optimization are the National Reference Laboratory (under the Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee), and the Republican State Center for Diagnostics of Animal Diseases and Food Safety (under the Committee for Veterinary and Livestock Development).



A laboratory technician carries out tests at one of laboratories during the expert visit in February 2025.

Photo: ITC

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# OBJECTIVE 5

## **Enhanced awareness of stakeholders, including women's associations, about WTO accession**

One of the key objectives of the project is to create awareness among the private sector about Uzbekistan's WTO accession and export opportunities that could arise from Uzbekistan's integration in the global economy.

The project facilitated a series of awareness-raising workshops over the past year and stands ready to continue such training when requested.

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