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EUROPEAN UNION TRADE-RELATED ASSISTANCE

Facilitating the Process of Uzbekistan's Accession to the WTO



Welcome to the seventeenth edition of our Newsletter!

This is the seventeenth Newsletter on the [European Union](#) (EU) project '[Facilitating the process of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO](#)' which is being implemented by the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC). The project supports Uzbekistan's accession to the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), with the broader objective to bolster the country's economic development through its integration in the global economy.

This issue covers project activities in the quarter of October to December 2024. A highlight of the quarter was a new advancement in the Uzbekistan's WTO accession process, prompted by the release of the Draft Working Party Report in October 2024. This milestone for Uzbekistan's WTO accession process was followed by the 9th Working Party Meeting that took place from 5-6 December 2024 in Geneva, where the report was discussed. As at the end of December 2024, Uzbekistan had concluded bilateral market access negotiations with 22 countries.

Another highlight includes the wrap-up of a review of Uzbekistan's draft Animal Health Law, and recommendations for its improvement. The project also assessed the structure of Uzbekistan's food safety testing system at the request of the San-Epid Committee, with a view to rationalizing and optimizing it. As part of this process 37 laboratory technicians and personnel were trained to build their knowledge about laboratory accreditation in the context of international standards.

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.

For any enquiries, contact us: WTOAccessionUZB@intracen.org

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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](#).

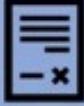
Обращаем внимание, что вы были включены в список нашей новостной рассылки по итогам участия в одном из наших мероприятий. Если вы хотите отказаться от рассылки, пожалуйста, пройдите по этой [ссылке](#).

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

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

When a country joins the WTO, its prevailing trade and economic laws and policies are the basis on which membership is negotiated. The project helps Uzbekistan to prepare negotiating stances and to draft WTO accession documentation. This sustained support led to the release of the Draft Working Party Report by the WTO Secretariat in October 2024. This is a major achievement for Uzbekistan on the road to accession as the report will form part of the final accession package, along with the Uzbekistan's goods and services market access offers. The report was discussed with WTO members at the 9th Working Party Meeting (WPM), held on 5 and 6 December 2024 in Geneva, which the project assisted Uzbekistan to attend. In the quarter, bilateral negotiations with WTO Members also made considerable progress. By the end of December 2024, market access deliberations in goods and services had been concluded with 22 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

To join the WTO, an acceding country has to align its existing national laws with the WTO Agreements, which requires the review of its laws. The project supports Uzbekistan with this element of the accession process. It is also conducting an impact assessment to determine what the potential effects might be from changing the country's laws.

Based on a request from the beneficiary, the project in July commenced with an assessment of the overall potential impact that WTO membership will have on Uzbekistan's economy. The study is expected to be finalized in the first quarter of 2025. The study is using the partial and general equilibrium models to examine trade patterns, the effect of policy changes, the potential impact of tariff rate changes at the product level, and the aggregate economic impact of such changes. It is also evaluating the potential for export growth, stemming from WTO membership.

The results of the study will help inform Uzbekistan's negotiating stance. It will also provide intelligence to plan and prioritize export promotion once Uzbekistan has joined the world economy, and for anticipating support measures for sectors affected by open trade.

OBJECTIVE 3

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

The development of know-how and skills to implement the technical requirements of the WTO agreements is a key tenet in supporting a country's WTO accession. The project helps to build the requisite capacity among government agencies on the WTO agreements and the technical aspects of the accession by means of training and technical assistance.

To help build expertise on WTO rules, the project in the past quarter did the groundwork to have up to six nominated government officials enrolled in Winter Academy courses at the World Trade Institute in Bern, Switzerland, in January and February 2025.



Uzbekistan's Chief WTO Negotiator Azizbek Urunov (left) photographed at the 9th Working Party Meeting in Geneva, with the ITC's team leading the implementation of the project: Jean-Sébastien Roure, the senior officer of Strategy and Policy for Trade and Investment/Division for Market Development and Daria Karman, associate programme officer. Photo: ITC

Among them will be Uzbekistan's Chief Negotiator at the WTO, Azizbek Urunov, who will attend the course on 'The Law and Policy of Anti-Dumping and Safeguard Measures'. The other courses officials will participate in are 'The Law and Policy of Border Measures and Trade Facilitation', 'The Law and Policy of Subsidies and Countervailing Measures' and 'The Law and Policy of Trade in Services'.

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 TBT and SPS-related institutions to comply with WTO rules when the country becomes a member, the project continued activities and training in these complex subject areas.

In the quarter, the project concluded its comprehensive assistance with the review and finalization of Uzbekistan's draft Law on Animal Health. The aim was to align it with the WTO's SPS Agreement, the Codex Alimentarius and the World Organisation of Animal Health's Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

The project made recommendations on aspects of the law that are pertinent to modern-day developments, notably in the area of data sharing, joint responses to transnational animal diseases, and on antimicrobial resistance.

The project also helped with the review of legislation related to the export, import, and transit of goods under the state veterinary control services. Recommendations were made on equivalency recognition and how to improve coordination on veterinary certification with trading partners.

In the area of plant health, the project in the last quarter commenced the review of seven pieces of legislation, at the request of the Agency for Plant Protection and Quarantine. These laws collectively constitute Uzbekistan's import control regime on plants and plant-based products. The objective of the review is to harmonize the import control regime with the SPS Agreement and other relevant international standards.

On the capacity-building side, the project commenced an investigation into the structure of Uzbekistan's food safety testing system, at the request of the San-Epid Committee. The testing is currently done by a great many laboratories resorting under various different agencies. The ultimate aim is to rationalize the structure for optimal performance and compliance with international standards.

The project conducted the assessment in two stages. First, it identified three key food safety testing laboratories based on information collected from 26 laboratories through a survey questionnaire. Second, the project conducted a field visit to the selected laboratories from 10 to 18 October, to assess them against the relevant international standard.

Thirty-seven laboratory technicians and personnel from the selected food testing laboratories were also trained in Tashkent from 15-16 October, on laboratory accreditation against the international standard.

This helped to build their knowledge about quality management, record keeping and documentation, testing protocols, and standard operating procedures to further improve the laboratories.



Technicians of the food testing laboratories at the workshop in Tashkent which explained laboratory accreditation against the requirements of the relevant international standard, the ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

Photo: ITC

A workshop was also offered to phytosanitary inspectors and officials of the Agency for Plant Protection and Quarantine (NPPO) on the National Phytosanitary Export Certification System. The training took place at the NPPO's office in Tashkent from 2 to 5 November 2024 and covered registration, certification, traceability, and export certification inspection.

OBJECTIVE 5

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

A key objective of the project is to help create awareness about opportunities for the private sector from WTO accession. A comprehensive series of awareness-raising workshops on agricultural trade for private sector participants, organized in the different regions of the country, was delivered in the previous year. The parameters of further assistance to the private sector will be discussed with the national partners.

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