



Welcome to the 15th edition of our Newsletter!

We are pleased to share the 15th Newsletter on the [European Union](#) (EU)'s '[Facilitating the process of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO](#)' project, with the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) as implementing partner. The project supports Uzbekistan's accession application to the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), and thereby seeks to foster its economic development through integration in the global economy.

This issue covers support extended to Uzbekistan between April and June 2024. Among the quarter's activities, the project assisted with Uzbekistan's participation in the 8th WPM in Geneva on 23 May 2024. Ahead of the WPM, the project arranged a mission to Kazakhstan for the chief negotiator and nine members of his team, with the purpose to hear about their northern neighbour's WTO negotiating experiences. The delegation met Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Trade and Integration Zhanel Kushukova and Qaztrade.

The chief negotiator and three of his team members also participated in the Second Central Asia Trade Policy Forum in Almaty with the project's assistance, enabling experience sharing. In other highlights the project drew up a roadmap for establishing a trade remedies body. And a series of technical training in the areas of SPS and TBT was also delivered in the past quarter.

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 accedes to the [WTO](#), the process includes sharing its existing trade and economic policies with the WTO Members. This then serves as the basis on which the country's membership is negotiated. The main forum for the negotiations is the Working Party Meetings (WPMs). The project supports Uzbekistan in this process.

The 8th WPM took place in Geneva on 23 May 2024. Uzbekistan announced at the meeting that it had signed market access protocols with two more countries, namely Uruguay and the Republic of Korea. This brings the tally of formally concluded bilateral negotiations to 14, with agreement also reached on commitments with Sri Lanka and Thailand. On request, the project provided technical advice to Uzbekistan on its market access offers both in goods and services.

The project also arranged Russian-English interpretation during the WPM, thereby easing the process of interaction for Uzbekistan's delegation in the negotiations.

In anticipation of the 8th WPM, the project organized missions to Astana ([Kazakhstan](#)) (14-15 May 2024) and Almaty (Kazakhstan) (3-5 June 2024) for Uzbekistan's chief negotiator and members of the negotiating team to enable experience sharing with peer countries on their WTO negotiations (see more under Objective 3).

The project furthermore harnessed the expertise of specialist ITC trainers during lecturing visits to Tashkent to give technical advice to Uzbekistan's negotiating team in a series of meetings. This enabled ITC experts to brief the negotiating team on specific WTO accession agenda topics, such as SPS and TBT.



Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Trade and Integration Zhanel Kushukova welcomes, Azizbek Urunov, special representative of the President of Uzbekistan on WTO issues and chief WTO negotiator. Photo: ITC

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Arthur Appleton was one of the specialists giving Uzbekistan's negotiating team technical advice in a discussion series organized during a lecturing visit in April to Tashkent. Appleton is one of the world's foremost legal experts on the WTO's food safety and animal and plant health requirements.

Photo: ITC

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

A key pillar of WTO accession is to bring the acceding country's national laws in compliance with the WTO agreements. The project therefore helps Uzbekistan to review its laws in support of this requirement of the accession. Last year, the project received a request to assist Uzbekistan with establishing a trade remedies authority and help build capacity to operate it.

With the drafting of trade remedies legislation completed, the project in the past quarter provided further advisory support informing the views of the chief negotiator on an approach to setting up and capacitating the trade remedies body that will be in charge of the implementation of the newly developed legislation.

The project was also asked to share expertise on setting up a Research Centre on WTO Law and Trade Policy that will function as a think tank in support of the ongoing negotiations. Its purpose is envisaged to include economic research and the analysis of legal issues related to international trade law and accession negotiations.

The project has also initiated work, upon request, to conduct a study assessing the impact of WTO accession on Uzbekistan. The study will analyse the effect on the country's economy and trade flows when Uzbekistan changes the import tariff rate as required by the WTO accession. The results will help determine the negotiating team's approach to negotiating market access commitment schedules. It is also anticipated to help identify latent export opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 3

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

Capacity-building and technical assistance to enhance the skills of officials on the content of the WTO agreements and its legal framework are essential in supporting Uzbekistan's ability to draw benefits from its WTO membership. The past quarter was a busy one for the project advancing this pillar of support.

To accelerate the development and finetuning of skills, the project has harnessed its partnership with UWED to offer the Trade Policy Training Programme, with participation of the WTO Chairs Programme where opportune. The Trade Policy Training Programme 2024 – established in January 2024 – is designed to offer 11 courses on WTO accession topics essential for the negotiating team. During the past quarter, the 6th course was delivered on [SPS and TBT issues](#) (on 23-24 April 2024) and the 7th was offered on [subsidies, state aid and competition](#) (on 19 and 25 June 2024).

The project also facilitated the participation of Uzbekistan's chief negotiator and other officials in the negotiating team in two missions to learn from other countries' WTO negotiating experience.

The project organized a mission for the chief negotiator and nine other senior officials to facilitate technical exchanges and experience-sharing in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 14-15 May 2024. They met with Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Trade and Integration Zhanel Kushukova, with the Deputy General Director of Kazakhstan's centre for trade policy development (QazTrade), and with officials who negotiated Kazakhstan's WTO accession.



Participants in a two-day workshop on 23-24 April on SPS and TBT issues. It was the 6th course offered to accelerate technical skills through the Trade Policy Training Partnership at UWED. Photo: ITC

The chief negotiator and three senior officials also took part in the Second Central Asia Trade Policy Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 3-5 June 2024. The forum – co-organized by the ITC, WTO and the Asian Development Bank with support from the Government of Kazakhstan – assembled senior representatives of the five Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan to discuss regional integration and WTO accession.

This created the opportunity for experience sharing and lessons learned about WTO accessions and post-accession.

To further selected officials' technical knowledge, the project received a request to facilitate the participation of four government officials (two from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade, and two from the Ministry of Justice) in the World Trade Institute's Summer Academy courses in Bern, Switzerland, in July 2024.

Arrangements were made for their participation in courses on 'Investment Law and Sustainable Development', and 'International Contracts Regarding Cross-Border Trade and Investment'.



Delegates at the Second Central Asia Trade Policy Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 3-5 June 2024. The forum facilitated experience sharing and technical exchanges on lessons learnt in WTO negotiations between Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan.

Photo: ITC

“Participating in the WTI course helped us to understand how international investment rules work with sustainable development. This is important for joining the WTO ...We learned practical skills for handling conflicts and using international agreements, which will help Uzbekistan work better with investors and speed up the process of joining the WTO.”

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– Ulmeken Yusupbayeva, WTI Summer Academy ’24 participant, Switzerland

Also upon request, the project arranged for two government officials (Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade and the Committee for Competition Promotion and Consumer Protection) to attend the 2024 CWS-WTI Joint Academy on International Trade Law and Economic Policy courses in June 2024 in India on ‘Essentials of WTO Law; Introduction to Economics of Trade’; and ‘Economics and Practice of Global Services Trade; Preferential Trade Agreements; Trade and Environment’. It is the first time government officials from Uzbekistan participated in the CWS programme, highlighting the newly established collaboration between the ITC and CWS.



“I would like to express my gratitude to the ITC for organizing my participation in the training in India. During the course, the necessary skills and knowledge on trade and the rules and regulations of the GATS, GATT, and WTO Agreements were acquired.”

– Timur Shakhnazarov, participant in CWS-WTI Joint Academy on International Trade Law and Economic Policy, India

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 made strides in pursuit of a range of deliverables in the quarter.

The Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee requested further support after the review of the Food Safety law. The project therefore continued work on harmonizing national food regulations with the Codex Alimentarius.

It developed a strategic approach to modernize sanitary rules and norms (SanPiNs) and helped update six selected normative documents in food safety areas.

Selected SPS legislative and normative documents were also translated, making these accessible to more people in the value chain. This also contributes to the transparency commitments of Uzbekistan under the SPS Agreement.

In addition, a series of technical training was delivered during the quarter. In the [area of TBT](#) training was given to conformity assessment service providers, both in the public and private sector, as well as to researchers.



Participants in workshops in June on various SPS subjects.

Photo: IT

The workshops, covering both theoretical and practical dimensions, were devoted to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 and the introduction of mandatory documents (14-15 May 2024); metrological traceability of measurements and tests in testing laboratories (20-22 May 2024); and risk-based approaches in the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies (23-24 May 2024). In the [area of SPS](#), a workshop was given at the request of the Committee for Veterinary and Livestock Development about European Union requirements on national residue control plans to familiarize practitioners with the requirements to access the EU market (12-13 June 2024)

OBJECTIVE 5

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

One of the central objectives of the project is to raise awareness among both the private sector and civil society about the potential benefits from joining the WTO and integrating into the global economy. For the private sector, this could mean export opportunities. After a series of awareness-raising workshops in the course of last year, the project is ready to expand such training at the requests of the beneficiary.

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