



# Welcome to the fifth edition of our Newsletter!

As we share the fifth edition of our Newsletter – the first for this year – we wish our readers a prosperous and healthy 2022. Dedicated to the [European Union](#) (EU)'s 'Facilitating the process of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO' project implemented by the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC), our Newsletter communicates the support given to Uzbekistan's development plans to modernize its economy by leveraging its [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO) accession process.

This edition highlights some of the interventions that took place between October and December 2021 under this project. The issue covers the highlights of a recent ITC mission to Tashkent to provide high-level training in preparation for the forthcoming 5th Working Party Meeting on Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO.

During the mission, private sector stakeholders also benefited from a face-to-face brief on the accession bid and its implications for the business sector. The issue also provides an update on the capacity-building activities of the project, which focused on specific aspects of trade in agricultural products.

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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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>

To provide a better overview of our activities and achievements so far, we have categorized them below along the project's five objectives

## OBJECTIVE 1

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

An anchor tenet of the WTO accession process is to communicate to Members existing trade and economic policies by submitting required negotiating inputs. In this regard, the project supports the process through advice with the review and development of the accession documentation. In the period, the project lent support with the preparation of the **revised offer on specific commitments in services**, which was submitted to the WTO Secretariat in November 2021. The 5th Working Party Meeting on Accession of Uzbekistan to the WTO, which is expected to take place early in 2022, is contingent upon and will be informed by the revised services offer. At the request of the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade (MIFT), work also started on the **revision of several other WTO accession documents** that have been submitted to the WTO previously.



In addition, to support the ongoing negotiations, technical assistance was given on the regulatory assessment of existing laws of two services sectors in Uzbekistan – financial and telecommunication services.

## **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**

One of the crucial requirements for WTO accession is the compliance of specific national laws with the WTO agreements. In this regard, the project earlier provided support with the review of Uzbekistan's national legislation on intellectual property rights to ensure its compliance with the requirements of the WTO TRIPS Agreement and related international intellectual property conventions, in particular the Paris Convention and the Bern Convention. Further contributions to bringing the national legislation in line with the WTO requirements are envisaged under the project.

## **OBJECTIVE 3**

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

The project continued capacity-building activities to foster national expertise and provide government officials with the necessary wherewithal on matters related to the WTO agreements and the WTO legal framework. In the period, capacity-building efforts culminated in a mission to Tashkent, held from 10-11 November, to contribute to the preparation of high-level officials for the crucial forthcoming 5th Working Party Meeting on Uzbekistan's accession to WTO.

The event, which was attended by Mr. Badriddin Abidov, the Deputy Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade (MIFT) and Uzbekistan's Chief Negotiator on the accession to the WTO, comprised a two-day workshop on "Balance of Payments and Policy Space Flexibilities in the WTO", complemented by technical meetings on financial services issues with the key stakeholders responsible for financial services and balance of payment issues of the country, namely the Central Bank, the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Ministry of Finance.



Deputy Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade (MIFT) and Uzbekistan's Chief Negotiator in the WTO, Mr. Badriddin Abidov, addresses the ITC-organized workshop on Balance of Payments in Tashkent, 10 November 2021.

Photo: ITC

Also this quarter, our project organized several technical training sessions on key aspects related to trade in agricultural products, which focused on the trade regulation of GMOs (crops) and the application of SPS measures with respect to animal feed additive Ractopamine; and the promotion of goods to foreign markets.

This also included a session on “Conditions and consequences of WTO accession: experiences of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine and Tajikistan” that highlighted the experience of selected peers in the area of trade in agricultural products.

## **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**

Work continued on providing technical support to strengthen the institutional capacity of the government agencies responsible for TBT- and SPS-related issues. This included the review of TBT-related laws and assistance to reform them in compliance with the WTO rules. Building on ongoing work, our project further assisted national counterparts with redrafting laws to incorporate good practices and suggestions by providing recommendations. The work was focused on the following areas of law:

- Law on Technical Regulation – the next edition of the draft law was reviewed and exchanges were held with national partners.
- Law on Standardization – comments and suggestions were provided to the draft law following its review.
- Law on Accreditation of Conformity Assessment – following previously-provided suggestions, a new draft Law on Accreditation was prepared for the expert's review.
- Law on Food Safety – the revised draft law was reviewed and comments were conveyed for further consideration by the SPS-related bodies.



Private sector representatives attend an event arranged in Tashkent laying out the country's accession process bid to the WTO, 12 November 2021.

Photo: ITC

# OBJECTIVE 5

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

A key objective of our project is to raise awareness about the effect of WTO Membership among all segments of society to ensure the interests of all segments of society are taken into account and misunderstandings eliminated. Ultimately, this will foster consensus among the government and its constituents about the WTO accession.

To support expanded private sector's understanding about the accession process and WTO legal framework, the project organized the second private sector workshop "On Accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), WTO Rules on Trade in Services and Domestic Support" on 12 November 2021 as part of the project's mission to Tashkent.

A broad spectrum of private sector stakeholders participated in the event, notably export promotion agencies and business associations and federations. Key public sector representatives – the MIFT and the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction (MEDPR) – also attended the meeting.

Outreach opportunities to the private sector continues to be explored in cooperation with the MIFT.

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