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Welcome to the sixth edition of our Newsletter!

We are happy to share with you the sixth edition of our Newsletter about 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), which is geared to modernize the country's economy and integrate it into the world economy.

The focus of this issue is on the support extended to Uzbekistan under this project between January and March 2022. Highlights include a technical assistance series in the area of trade in services, that commenced with workshops on distribution services, environmental services, telecom and courier services, and on audiovisual services, which were held in February and March 2022. More workshops in the series are anticipated, based on the needs of the country's services negotiators.

In this quarter, the project also received a request from the MIFT to start a gap-analysis on 15 pieces of legislation related to measures that support domestic producers and increase their competitiveness in the foreign markets. This work will facilitate the adjustment of the laws to bring them in compliance with WTO rules, in order to smooth the accession process.

This newsletter is also available in RUSSIAN and in UZBEK.

For more information on our project: intracen.org/UZBWTO

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

Stay connected: #WTOAccessionUZB

Happy reading!

NOTA BENE from our team:

(EN)

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.

(RU)


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.

(UZ)

Siz axborotnoma pochta ro'yhatimizga bizning tadbirlardan birida ishtirok etganligingiz natijasida kiritilganligingizni eslatib o'tamiz. Ushbu obunani bekor qilmoqchi bo'lsangiz, keltirilgan xavola orqali uni rad qilishingiz mumkin.

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 position 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 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 W
	ITC's work will increase the business sector's - including women's associations- awareness of the WTO accession process and benefits

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

In the WTO accession process, an acceding country needs to communicate its current trade and economic policies to WTO Members, which then forms the basis for the negotiations. To support this process, the project helps Uzbekistan **with developing and reviewing the accession documentation**. Over the past three months, further advisory assistance was provided with several accession documents submitted earlier to the WTO such as the offer on goods, domestic support tables in agriculture, notification on subsidies, and the questionnaire on state-trading enterprises.

In addition, to support trade in services negotiations, work started on a fact-based regulatory assessment of the distribution services sector with a view to facilitate the Uzbekistan's position on the scheduling of commitments in distribution services. This

follows work already done on regulatory assessments for the financial and telecommunications sectors to examine existing trade in services regime of Uzbekistan.

To facilitate MIFT delegates' participation in WTO negotiations in the light of COVID-19 restrictions, the project ensured **the acquisition of IT devices and equipment**. Overall, seventeen equipment items were procured successfully in January 2022 for the needs of the beneficiaries.

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

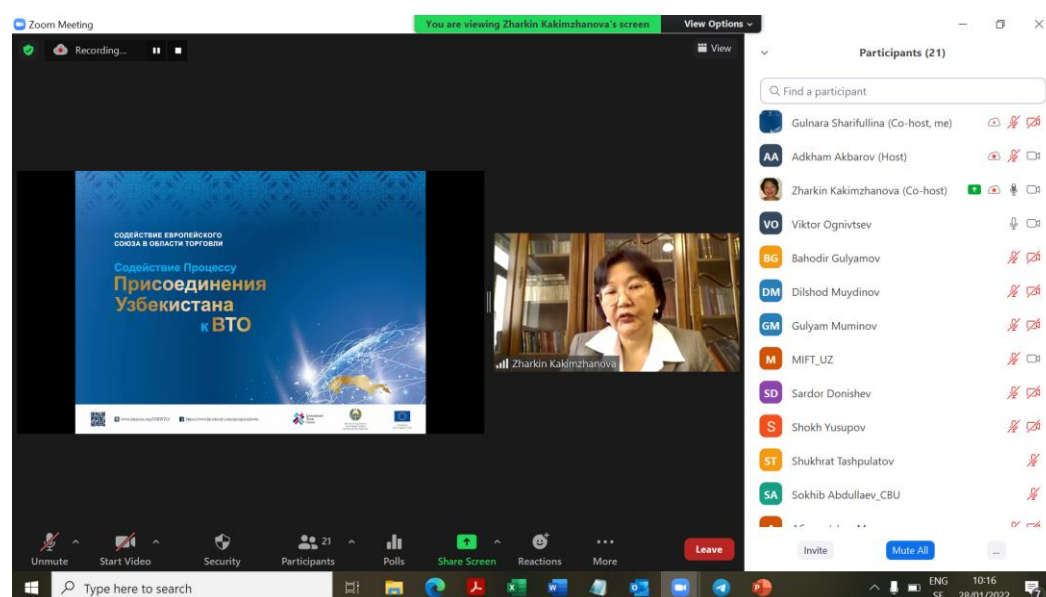
Another key component of WTO accession is the need for national laws to comply with the WTO agreements. The project therefore helps Uzbekistan to review its national laws to support the legislative compliance leg of the accession. The project has been reviewing the **intellectual property rights (IPR) laws** of Uzbekistan on its **compliance with the WTO TRIPS Agreement** and related international intellectual property conventions, including the Paris and Bern conventions. The project's support is now focusing on addressing provided recommendations to bring the national IPR regulation into conformity with WTO rules.

Furthermore, the project has now also been requested to commence a **gap-analysis on several laws in areas related to incentives to support domestic producers** and increase their competitiveness in the foreign markets. Fifteen national laws have been identified for review to determine their consistency with WTO rules. As a first step, the translation of the laws from Russian into English was arranged under the project for further analysis.

OBJECTIVE 3

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

Capacity-building and technical assistance to enhance the skills of government officials on matters related to the WTO agreements and its legal framework is another key pillar of support extended by our project. In January 2022, two workshops were held – one **“On Raising Awareness on the WTO Accession Process”** (27 January 2022), for the MIFT and other ministries and agencies that participate in the accession process, in which the fundamental principles of the WTO were explained. A workshop **“On Inter-Agency Commission and its Role in the WTO Accession Process”** was held on 28 January 2022 to facilitate the ongoing reform of the Inter-Agency Commission of Uzbekistan on the WTO accession by overviewing the experience of other WTO Members, such as Kazakhstan, in establishing such commissions.



Ms. Zharkin Kakimzhanova, an international expert in international trade and development and WTO accession, and Former Head of the WTO Section in the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan, briefed representatives of various of Uzbekistan's ministries and agencies about WTO accession, from the experience of Kazakhstan.

Over the course of February and March 2022 a series of technical workshops were held in the area of services trade to bolster expertise in services negotiations. The first workshop was held from 9-10 February 2022 on **Distribution Services –**

Scheduling WTO Commitments and primed participants about the scope of services under the GATS agreement; the four modes of supply for distribution services, and the sectoral classification under the Central Product Classification.

A second workshop was held on **Telecommunication Services in Uzbekistan** on 16 February 2022 and focused on the reforms that marked the industry; its liberalization; and the objectives of reform and the rationale of the Chairman's note. It also covered the results of the negotiations and how commitments are phased in.

A workshop on **Environmental Services under the GATS** was held on 25 February 2022, which focused on definitional issues, covering both the Cooperative Patent Classification and W-120 Understanding of Environmental Services, and the modes of supply of environmental services. The linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals was discussed and participants were briefed on how to schedule environmental services, whilst reserving space for public services.

On 2 March 2022, a workshop took place on **Audiovisual Services in the GATS and Accessions Negotiations**, to prepare participants on the scheduling of specific commitments in relation to the key obligations of market access and national treatment. This capacity-building event was delivered in collaboration with the WTO Secretariat. During the training, background was given about the audiovisual sector and its links to cultural objectives. The training further focused on how the sector was addressed in the Uruguay Round and how audiovisual services are treated under the GATS.

Furthermore, our project again facilitated trade policy training for government officials. In January-February 2022, three more MIFT officials participated in the week-long trade policy courses provided during the **Winter Academy at the WTI** in the following areas:

- WTO Law on Border Measures and Trade Facilitation
- WTO Law on Anti-Dumping and Safeguard Measures
- WTO Law on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures

The implementation of the initiative to develop the **WTO Law and Practice course, to be taught at the selected Tashkent-based university – University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED)** – gathered pace. During this quarter the next phase of the project was initiated, namely the commencement of a series of short, tailored training sessions and guest lectures for the academic personnel and students of UWED. The objective of these sessions is to build capacity among UWED professors to present the WTO regulatory framework in key areas such as trade remedies, TBT- and SPS-measures, trade in services and trade-related intellectual property rights. The capacity-building training and guest lectures commenced in March 2022 and will run until January 2023. The commencement of the lectures was announced in a [press release](#) of UWED in which the project was also mentioned.

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 on the **review of TBT and SPS-related laws** and assistance to reform them in compliance with WTO rules was completed and the recommendations on the revision of national laws are currently under consideration by Uzbekistan. Over the past quarter, the Laws on Technical Regulation, Standardization and Accreditation – to which the projected had lent its support in redrafting – were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan. In the area of SPS, the Law on Food Safety (the redrafting of which was also supported by our project) was still under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.

OBJECTIVE 5

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

A key goal of the project is to **raise awareness among both the private sector and civil society**, including women and youth, about **WTO Membership** and the benefits stemming from successful integration into the global economy. This will ultimately contribute to:

- building consensus on Uzbekistan's WTO accession among government agencies and the private sector
- addressing potential misconceptions about the WTO by accounting for all interested stakeholders' views when calibrating negotiating stances.

The project has commenced with the development of information guides that will explain key topics of the WTO framework and its technical concepts in condensed, easily digestible language to further these objectives. The information guides will be made available at events aimed to foster private sector understanding about the WTO and the implications of Uzbekistan's accession. These guides will also be hosted on the project website to serve as educational material to keep the private sector informed about the benefits of global economic integration. Further outreach opportunities to the private sector continues to be explored in cooperation with the MIFT.

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