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Welcome to the twelfth edition of our Newsletter!

We are pleased to share the twelfth 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 was established to support Uzbekistan's accession to the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), and thereby assist the country's economic progress through its participation in global trade.

This issue focuses on the support extended to Uzbekistan during the quarter between July and September 2023. One of the highlights this quarter was support to Uzbekistan with its schedule of commitments on tariffs lines for goods, to achieve a suitable offer that balances the country's interest with what is requested by the WTO Members. Another highlight was support in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) – the legal document for setting up the structures to deal with SPS matters was reviewed and training was offered to officials on how to set up and operate the SPS National Notification Authority and the National Enquiry Point. The enrolment of an official in the Master's programme on trade law and economics at the World Trade Institute in Bern was also facilitated this quarter. And the project concluded a series of workshops on aspects of agricultural trade for private sector participants in the regions.

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

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](#).

(O'ZB)

Siz axborot xabarnoma pochta ro'yxatimizga bizning tadbirlarning birida ishtirok etganligingiz natijasida kiritilganligingizni eslatib o'tamiz. Ushbu obunani bekor qilmoqchi bo'lsangiz, keltirilgan havola 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 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

In the process of becoming a [WTO Member](#), the principal focus of the negotiations is the acceding country's existing trade and economic laws and policies, which are used as the basis to establish the terms and conditions of the membership. The negotiations take place in the forum of the Working Party Meetings (WPMs), and the project supports Uzbekistan in its preparations for this multilateral aspect of the process. During the past quarter, the project helped to prepare and review **responses to questions** stemming from the 6th WPM, that will form the basis for the negotiation session during the 7th WPM. The project this quarter commenced **assistance with Uzbekistan's schedule of commitments on goods**, which will set the tariffs to be levied on imported goods when the country is a WTO Member.

The project is also extending advisory services on how to approach negotiations in the areas of **agriculture and services trade**. By assessing the approaches of relevant peer countries in their WTO negotiations, recommendations are then made on a suitable negotiating stance Uzbekistan can take in these areas.

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 accede to the WTO, it is also incumbent upon the acceding country that its existing national laws are harmonized with the WTO agreements. Through the review of its laws, the project helps Uzbekistan to comply with this aspect of the accession requirements.

During the past quarter a request was brought for a study to assess **regulation governing the access of foreign firms to the Uzbekistan market**, with a particular focus on the **financial and insurance sectors**. The scope and specifications of this study is under discussion with the beneficiaries.

OBJECTIVE 3

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

To equip government officials with the expertise required to administer the technical aspects of implementing the WTO agreements, the project helps to build the skills capacity of government agencies on WTO requirements by means of technical assistance. To this aim, the project facilitated the **enrolment of an Uzbekistan government official in the Master's degree programme in International Law and Economics (MILE)** at the World Trade Institute (WTI) in Bern, Switzerland, during the 2023-24 academic year, which commenced in September. Arrangements were also made to provide a monthly stipend to enable the official's participation in the programme.

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

Efforts continued apace during the quarter to enhance Uzbekistan's TBT and SPS-related institutions and to build the required capacity to handle the technical aspects of administering international rules in these complex fields.

The establishment of a National Information Centre – to house the SPS National Notification Authority (NNA) and National Enquiry Point (NEP) – is a mandatory step to handle SPS-related enquiries once Uzbekistan is a member of the WTO. To facilitate the creation of this nexus, the project during the quarter **reviewed the legal document for establishing the National Information Centre**. It then provided an expert opinion and recommendations aligned with international best practice to streamline the legal document with the WTO SPS Agreement. A four-day workshop on setting up and operating the NNA and NEP was furthermore held for 12 technicians, who were also introduced to the WTO's new ePing platform, which enables the digital tracking of SPS and TBT measures.

The Law on Food Safety and Quality was also reviewed a second time by at the request of the Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee, which drafted the law. Meetings between the committee and ITC experts were held in order to arrive at an optimal outcome of compliance with WTO requirements that also take reasonable account of the country's priorities. To bolster capacity, the project continued its series of technical workshops on a range of TBT and SPS-related topics (for more, see our [video](#) and [web](#)

[story](#)). In the quarter under review a five-day workshop on **EU practice on risk-based controls for fruits and vegetables** was held for experts of the National Plant Protection and Quarantine Organizations from 31 July to 4 August 2023. The project also facilitated the attendance of 12 regional inspectors in the training.



Participants at the expert SPS workshop addressing the EU's practice on risk-based fruit and vegetable controls. Photo: ITC

In the area of **Technical Barriers to Trade**, an online training series was held between July and September 2023 on **the international standards adopted and maintained by selected international standardization bodies**. Five planned modules were delivered during the quarter and covered: the process of developing standards and how they are applied; the benefits of standards; and an analysis of the standardization framework used by the European Union, one of Uzbekistan's biggest export markets. You can also watch our video below and read our [web story](#) on previous workshops in this training series on TBT).



The seminar was given in the context of support for Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO.

Workshop on the EU's TBT framework. Video: ITC

OBJECTIVE 5

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

One of the central objectives of the project is to create greater awareness among the private sector about the effects of WTO accession and what opportunities could arise for businesspeople from Uzbekistan's participation in global trade. A series of **awareness-raising workshops about WTO rules on agriculture** for private sector participants, organized in the different regions of the country, was wrapped in the past quarter with the final workshops held in July in Ferghana, Andijan, Namangan, Navoi, Bukhara and Tashkent (see full story [here](#)). The workshops, which started in January and were held in 13 regions in total, benefited more than 200 private sector stakeholders.

During the workshops an information-sharing brochure about WTO accession and the WTO legal framework, translated into the Uzbek language, was also shared with participants to create more nuanced knowledge about the global trade body and its workings.



Private sector stakeholders at a workshop on trade in agriculture in Navoi in July 2023. Photo: ITC

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