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## Welcome to the tenth edition of our Newsletter!

We are pleased to share the tenth 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 seeks to support Uzbekistan's accession application to the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), and thereby assist to foster its economic development through WTO membership.

The issue focuses on support extended to Uzbekistan in the quarter between January and March 2023. Among this quarter's activities, the ITC provided support for the participation of Uzbekistan officials in multilateral WTO negotiations, notably the 6<sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting (WPM), which took place on 14 March 2023. Work was also done to help review industrial development and export-related laws in the context of special economic zones (SEZs). A highlight during the quarter was the start of classes of a tailor-made trade law course at the [University of World Economy and Development](#) (UWED) in Tashkent and it is now a fully-fledged module taught in the bachelor's programme. This quarter also kicked off a second series of training workshops geared at the private sector – this time on the important topic of the WTO's agricultural requirements.

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](mailto: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)

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.

## 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 to <b>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**

In the process of WTO accession, an acceding country has to communicate its existing trade and economic policies to the WTO Members, which is then used as a basis upon which the terms of membership are negotiated. These multilateral negotiations take place at the platform of the Working Party Meetings (WPMs). The project assists Uzbekistan in this process. On 14 March 2023, the 6<sup>th</sup> WPM took place in Geneva, helping to advance the accession process to a new stage. In the preparation of the event a series of bilateral meetings were held in January. The project assisted Uzbekistan by covering the travel

costs of three officials from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade (MIIT) to attend the bilaterals in Geneva in January 2023. It also financed the subsequent travel of seven officials to participate in the actual WPM in March at the WTO.

## **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 aspect of accession. During the past quarter, assistance commenced with the review of industrial development support measures extended in the context of Special Economic Zones (SEZ). The project analyzed 18 laws related to investment and trade incentive measures to establish their compliance with WTO requirements. The results are now under the consideration of the counterparts.

## **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 undergird the project's intent to ensure the country's ability to enjoy benefits from its WTO membership in the long run. To facilitate the build-up of this crucial know-how, the project financially supported the participation of seven Uzbek government officials in trade-related courses offered by the [World Trade Institute](#) in Bern, Switzerland, during its Winter Academy in January and February 2023 (see [web story](#) for more details). The officials represented three state departments of the MIIT. They participated in courses on WTO Law on Border Measures and Trade Facilitation; Anti-Dumping and Safeguard Measures; Subsidies and Countervailing Measure; and the Law and Policy of Trade in Services.



*Government officials had the opportunity to attend trade-related courses at the WTI's Winter Academy in Bern, Switzerland. Photo: Supplied / WTI*

A highlight during this quarter was the finalization of a trade law module for the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) in Tashkent. The law department of UWED started teaching the programme to law students in February 2023 and the response from students was emphatically positive. The ITC commissioned the [World Trade Institute](#) in Bern to develop the course for UWED. The commencement of the classes is a culmination of this milestone undertaking by the project to ensure the build-up of institutional technical capacity that will bolster Uzbekistan's ability to administer its WTO membership fruitfully in the long run. More details can be found in a [web story](#) on the topic.



*Law students at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent attending the inaugural trade law course developed by the World Trade Institute with support of the ITC. Photo: ITC*

The course is designated as a mandatory component of the bachelor's degree programmes of the university's law department. It will be a linchpin to ensure the build-up of long-term institutional capacity within government and legal ranks to administer and support Uzbekistan's WTO membership. The course covers key WTO-related subjects such as trade in services, trade remedies, trade-related intellectual property rights and the requirements around measure in the areas of technical barriers to trade (TBT) and

sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues. A video made by the ITC to promote the course can be viewed [here](#).

## **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** on compliance with WTO rules, the project continued discussions to fine tune the earlier agreed workplan. The scope and logistical arrangements of future training sessions have been discussed with the beneficiaries. These trainings will build on the earlier delivered general training on the SPS Agreement, setting the basic understanding about the rules in this area of rules that was delivered in November last year. More details about the training and our next plans for providing technical support are available in the dedicated [video](#).

## **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 benefits that could be reaped from joining the WTO and thereby becoming part of the global economy. This will help undergird meaningful uptake by the private sector once Uzbekistan is a member of the WTO. Private sector training actively seeks to engage, in particular, targeted groups such as women and young entrepreneurs.

In support of this objective, a second training series customized for the private sector, commenced in January. A first series – held in the last two quarters of 2022 – covered general aspects of WTO commitments and the expected benefits that may flow from membership. It was therefore decided that the next clusters of trainings would focus on specialized trade topics. The subject for this second series of private sector workshop was

selected to be on the strategically important sector of agriculture and the WTO rules that cover agricultural exports. Akin to the first private sector training, this series was also rolled out in the regions of Uzbekistan with training done in this quarter – Khorezm, Kashkadarya and Samarkand regions as well as in Karakalpakstan. More details can be read [here](#). The training for the remainder of the regions will continue in the following quarter.

*Private sector stakeholders participate in a training workshop on trade in agriculture during this second series of workshops for businesses and entrepreneurs held in January. Photo: ITC*



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