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Welcome to the eleventh edition of our Newsletter!

We are pleased to share the eleventh 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. By supporting Uzbekistan's accession to the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), the project aims to assist the country's economic development through its integration into the global economy.

Support provided to Uzbekistan in the quarter between April and June 2023 is under the lens in this issue. Among this quarter's highlights, the ITC co-organized, with the WTO, a session at the Astana International Forum on regional co-operation between Central Asian countries in the context of WTO membership. The participation of an Uzbekistan delegation at the Astana Forum, which included the newly-appointed chief negotiator, Mr. Azizbek Urunov, was also facilitated. The organization of four technical workshops on measures in the areas of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT) for relevant government technicians was another highlight. And a series of workshops to raise awareness among the private sector about joining the WTO was held in the past quarter in nine 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](#).

(UZ)

Сиз ахборотнома почта рўйхатимизга бизнинг тадбирлар бирида иштирок этганилигиз 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 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 WTO accession, an acceding country's prevailing trade and economic laws and policies are at the core of the discussion, based on which the terms of membership are negotiated. This is being made in the context of the Working Party Meetings (WPMs), which is the forum where the multilateral negotiations then take place. The project assists Uzbekistan in this central process towards the accession.

The 6th WPM was held in March 2023 and was covered in the previous newsletter. Following this meeting, WTO Members raised questions seeking further clarifications on Uzbekistan's trade regime. During the past quarter, the project assisted with reviewing the answers prepared in response to these questions and provided recommendations as requested. The responses are an important step in the process as they clarify the WTO Members queries, thereby paving the way to the next round of the multilateral negotiations on accession to 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 ensurance that national laws adhere to the relevant WTO agreements. The project therefore helps Uzbekistan to review its national laws to support this pillar of the accession.

In the previous quarter, Uzbekistan's investment and trade incentive measures for firms operating in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) were analyzed to verify their compliance with WTO requirements. This quarter, the project facilitated the translation of the final report on these measures into Uzbek and Russian.

OBJECTIVE 3

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

When a country joins the WTO, its officials need the requisite skills and know how to implement the technical requirements of the WTO agreements. The project therefore contributes by building capacity among relevant government agencies on WTO rules and the technical aspects of the accession through training and technical assistance.

During the past quarter, training continued on the complex issue of the **scheduling of services trade commitments**, as part of a comprehensive training series organized by the project in this area, covering a broad spectrum of services sectors, such as banking, courier services, environmental services, telecommunications, and others.

This quarter was marked by training on construction and related engineering services. The WTO rules for the **construction sector** was discussed with the relevant government officials and it was considered how Uzbekistan could approach the scheduling of commitments, including in sub-sectors such as architecture, engineering, integrated engineering, urban planning and landscape architecture.

One of the highlights of the past quarter's activities was a side event at the **Astana International Forum**, which was co-organized with the WTO, and with support of the Government of Kazakhstan. The session, titled **Central Asia in the multilateral trading system: the case for WTO accession**, focused on cooperation between Central Asian countries to boost regional resilience and closer ties in the context of multilateralism. The project facilitated the participation at the forum of a delegation from Uzbekistan, which included the newly appointed chief negotiator Mr. Azizbek Urunov. The forum was a valuable platform for networking between Central Asian countries and created the opportunity for experience-sharing between those countries that are already members of the WTO and those in the process of accession. Useful study tools were shared with the countries on the way to accession. More news on participation at the event is available in this [web story](#).



The panel members at the Astana International Forum side event, from left to right: Uzbekistan's new chief negotiator Mr. Azizbek Urunov, Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhan (Kazakhstan), moderator Ms. Maika Oshikawa (WTO), Ms. Daria Karman (ITC) and Mr. Rahimberdi Jepbarov (Turkmenistan)
Photo: ITC

The project also received a request to enrol a government official from Uzbekistan to participate in the one-year Master's degree programme at the World Trade Institute (WTI) in Bern, Switzerland, in the 2023-24 academic year. Through this initiative the project aims to facilitate solid training on international trade rules of the selected officer, who will rejoin Uzbekistan's negotiating team after completing the programme, thus, ensuring the sustainability of the project's impact. The ITC is currently facilitating this enrolment.

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

The objective to strengthen Uzbekistan's **TBT and SPS-related institutions and capacity** to apply WTO requirements in these highly technical areas received a strong injection in the quarter with a series of workshops.

In the **area of SPS**, three workshops were held. Two five-day seminars looked into pest risk analysis and plant protection products regulation, respectively. The third was a four-day workshop on transparency mechanisms. It focused on setting up and operating an SPS National Enquiry Point (NEP) and a National Notification Authority (NNA) based on international best practice. Thirty eight professionals from the MIIT, the San-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee, State Committee of Veterinary and Livestock Development and Agency of Plant Protection and Quarantine benefited from the workshops. More news on the workshops is available in this [web story](#).



Some of the participants at one of the expert SPS workshops held in Tashkent in June 2023. Photo: ITC

In the **area of TBT**, a three-day workshop was held on aspects of the technical rules on non-food consumer and industrial products in the European Union, which is an important export market for Uzbekistan. To further finetune expertise in the TBT area, the project organized a two-leg mission for an Uzbekistan delegation to attend a three-day TBT Committee meeting of the WTO in Geneva as observers. An online bilateral meeting was arranged with SWITEC, Switzerland's TBT National Enquiry Point and with the Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs' (SECO's) TBT National Notification Authority. In Geneva, the delegation also visited international standard-setting organizations in the area of TBT, including the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to further enhance their

understanding in the implementation of international standards and best practice. The mission then travelled to Brussels, where they met staff of the EU's National Enquiry Point. A [web story](#) on the training and mission gives more information.



*The team of technicians who received training in aspects of TBT along with their trainers in Tashkent, June 2023.
Photo: ITC*

OBJECTIVE 5

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

As one of its key objectives, the project seeks to engage the private sector and civil society at large about the impact and potential benefits that could stem from WTO membership and the Uzbekistan's integration into global markets. A series of awareness-raising trainings and events for private sector participants in the area of agriculture was brought to conclusion. The series started in January with workshops held in four regions – Khorezm, Kashkadarya, Samarkand and Karakalpakstan. Over the past quarter, workshops were held in nine more regions: in June there were workshops in Sirdaryo, Jizzakh and Surkhandarya, and in July, the training took place in Fergana, Andijan, Namangan, Navoiy, Bukhara and in Tashkent region. These benefited more than 200 private sector stakeholders while a further 54 government officials also participated in the workshops.



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

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