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Welcome to the last edition of our Newsletter!

We are pleased to share our twentieth, and last, Newsletter on the five-year project '[Facilitating the process of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO](#)', which is now coming to an end. With generous support from the [European Union](#) (EU), and with the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) as implementing partner, the project accompanied Uzbekistan on its path towards [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO) accession. Thank you for making the journey with us.

Our last issue covers activities between September and December 2025. A highlight was the 11th Working Party Meeting, held in Geneva on 5 and 6 November 2025, putting Uzbekistan on track for accession in 2026. In the period, Uzbekistan also wrapped up all, but one, of its bilateral negotiations, leaving only talks with Chinese Taipei to be concluded. A milestone in the period was a major push to help overhaul Uzbekistan's food safety system, thereby materially advancing Uzbekistan's ability to meet the accession requirements for the WTO's SPS Agreement. The work included firstly, finalizing the review of newly developed food safety rules and norms (called SanPiNs), second, developing a package of guidance documents to assist the implementation of these rules and norms, and thirdly, three technical workshops to familiarize authorities and private sector food operators with the new rules and norms. Last but not least, the project organized a high-profile experience-sharing mission to Brussels for officials working with Rules of Origin issues. They learned more about the technicalities of issuing RoO certificates from counterparts in the European

Commission, the Belgium Customs Authority, the Brussels Chamber of Commerce, as well as the World Customs Organization.

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

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Happy reading!



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 polymakers' 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

Uzbekistan's existing trade-related laws and policies served as the basis on which its [WTO](#) accession was negotiated. The project helped to draft accession documents and prepare negotiating positions, thereby supporting Uzbekistan's accession process.

The 11th Working Party Meeting took place from 5-6 November 2025 in Geneva, where the draft Working Party Report was examined, thereby bringing the terms of Uzbekistan's WTO accession near conclusion. The report contains the substance of the negotiations and therefore also Uzbekistan's initial commitments. The project aided the progression of the report throughout the entire negotiating process, thereby helping to advance it. We also supported Uzbekistan's bilateral negotiations throughout the process. During the past quarter, agreements on market access for services and goods were reached with the European Union, Canada, Ecuador, Panama

and Russia, bringing the total number of negotiations concluded to 33. This leaves only one negotiation to be wrap up – with Chinese Taipei.



Uzbekistan's negotiating team at the WTO during the 11th Working Party Meeting in November 2025 in Geneva. Photo: WTO Secretariat

After receiving a request for technical advice on implementing trade in services commitments, the project organized a technical mission in December which gave expert advice on services commitments under the GATS in the context of the experience of neighbouring countries in the region, including Kazakhstan. This helped Uzbekistan to consolidate its final services offer in the negotiations.

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

A key need for the WTO accession was to help bring Uzbekistan's national laws in line with the WTO Agreements. The project assisted this process from the outset, reviewing trade-related laws and suggesting the necessary amendments.

In the last quarter of 2025, the project finalized a comprehensive review of Uzbekistan's legislation on Rules of Origin (RoO). The purpose was to establish if it is

compatible with WTO requirements and make recommendations to bring it in line with the relevant WTO agreements. The request for the review originated with Uzbekexpertiza JSC, the public institution that issues certificates of origin. The technical review was complemented with a workshop in September to bridge knowledge gaps on RoO. More under Objective 3.



Customs compliance expert Marta Ledwos led an ITC-organized technical workshop in Tashkent on administering Rules of Origin (RoO). The workshop complemented work to align Uzbekistan's RoO legislation with WTO requirements. (More on the training under Objective 3.)

Photo: Customs Committee

OBJECTIVE 3

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

A key component of the project's focus was to build capacity and provide technical assistance to enhance officials' skills and knowledge about WTO requirements. In this way, the project will contribute to ensuring a sustainable accession for Uzbekistan. In the last four months of 2025, the project focused efforts on customs compliance issues.

In support of work done to meet the WTO's requirements on Rules of Origin (see Objective 2) the project delivered a three-day RoO workshop (17 to 19 September 2025) in Tashkent. 97 officials participated in the training, among their ranks inspectors and auditors from Uzbekistan's Customs Committee and Uzbekekspertiza, which issues the certificates of origin. The training covered technical procedures for issuing certificates and explored global best practice in RoO legal implementation. Time was also dedicated to Uzbekistan's own legislative review and participants were walked through the relevant different agencies' roles and how to overcome coordination challenges. (More detail about this training can be found [here](#)).



Officials of the Customs Committee and Uzbekekspertiza at the three-day training in Tashkent on Rules of Origin.

Photo: Customs Committee

A five-day training workshop was also delivered on the Harmonized System (or HS) – the systematic list for classifying goods developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO), used by more than 200 countries for customs tariffs and the collection of trade statistics. The correct application of the HS is a key condition for ensuring compliance with WTO commitments and transparency requirements and was therefore of high relevance for Uzbekistan's WTO accession efforts.



Officials of the Customs Committee at the training on the Harmonized System which took place from 17-21 November in Tashkent.

Photo: Customs Committee

The workshop took place from 17-21 November in Tashkent and the participants were officials of the Customs Committee, the Customs Institute and LLC Uzbekexpertiza. The training focused on the practical dimension of implementing the HS system in the context of WTO accession and membership. The EU's Combined Nomenclature (CN), was also introduced, and the differences between the CN and the HS were explained. (For more information, read our [web article](#)).

One of the key highlights of the reporting period was an experience-sharing mission to Brussels, organized at the request of Uzbekexpertiza, for nine officials from Uzbekistan's customs and certification authorities. The purpose of the high-level mission was to learn from European Commission (EC) officials about the technicalities of certificate issuing. The mission took place from 16 to 18 December 2025. The delegation visited the EC's Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD) who gave a comprehensive overview of the EU's regulatory framework for RoO, including the applicable regulatory frameworks and related policy developments. They also met with representatives of the Belgium Customs Authority, the Brussels Chamber of Commerce and the World Customs Organization (WCO). (Read more [here](#)).



The delegation in conversation with counterparts of DG TAXUD, which is responsible for Taxation and Customs Union matters, at the European Commission's headquarters in Brussels. Photo: ITC



The officials met with counterparts at the headquarters of the World Customs Organization in Brussels where they were introduced to the WCO's operations, and shared experience about how RoO issues are treated at the multilateral level. Photo: ITC

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 areas of TBT and SPS count among the WTO requirements that are highly technical. At the request of the beneficiary, the project's assistance over the last year, was focused to a large extent on helping Uzbekistan bridge technical preparations for the WTO accession in these complex areas.

A great push was made over the past year to advance Uzbekistan's compliance with food safety requirements, and thus the project at the end of 2025 completed the review of sanitary norms and rules (called SanPiNs) to ensure that they comply with the WTO's SPS Agreement and with *Codex Alimentarius* standards. Comprehensive feedback was garnered from private sector food operators, relevant ministries, and other institutions to ensure technical accuracy and regulatory coherence. At the same time, the project completed the development of a new SanPiN on food hygiene and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point). It then also finalized a series of guidance documents to key SanPiNs that will help officials to implement the norms and ensure consistent interpretation of the new rules. These guidance documents will also serve as secondary regulatory instruments, complementing the pending Food Safety Law, which was also developed by the project.



Private sector food operators attended the second workshop series to familiarize them with the expected changes to the food safety requirements.

Photo: ITC

The project paired this technical work with capacity building, to deepen the knowledge of policymakers and private food business operators on the SanPiNs. Three workshops were delivered between 3 and 7 November – the first, from 3-4 November, was for specialists of the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Well-Being and Public Health, the second, from 5-6 November, benefited food operators in the business sector. A one-day workshop on 7 November was also given to relevant authorities on how to manage, implement and maintain the SanPiNs. The highly nuanced training included in-depth discussion and enhanced participants' understanding of international requirements and best practices in the area of risk-based food control systems. Private sector food business operators came away with practical knowledge on the new regulatory measures in the food value chain. The comprehensive support package was integral to the work done to reform Uzbekistan's food safety system and materially advance Uzbekistan's ability to meet the accession requirements related to the WTO's SPS Agreement. (For more information, read our [web article](#).)

OBJECTIVE 5

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

One of the objectives of the project was to raise private sector awareness about the effects and opportunities when Uzbekistan's joins the WTO. Apart from a dedicated series of awareness-raising workshops to various sectors across the country over the past two years, the goal was also to include private sector operators in training relevant to them, as for instance, with the food safety system workshops covered under Objective 4.