



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
Ministry of Commerce and Industries



This project is funded by  
the European Union

## ADVANCING AFGHAN TRADE NEWSLETTER

EU TRADE RELATED ASSISTANCE  
MAY 2017 – ISSUE NO 1

The International Trade Centre (ITC) recently launched a trade-related assistance initiative funded by the European Union called Advancing Afghan Trade (AAT). Set in motion on 29 November 2016 in Kabul, the initiative intends to contribute to the strengthening of the country's trade capacities, with the long-term goal of helping to transform Afghanistan and its regional partners into a vibrant regional economic hub. The project will be implemented over a three-year period.

Funded by the EU implementation of the initiative is now under-way and is led by ITC in close collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industries. In this first newsletter, we invite you to read the articles below to discover the first steps already taken. These include statements from ITC's Executive Director and Afghanistan's Minister for Commerce and covers National Export Strategy developments, trade policy and trade facilitation developments and quality management.

We look forward to sharing regular updates with all our stakeholders and garnering as much support from the community as possible, so please feel free to share this newsletter. It is our belief that the AAT will contribute to how trade can be used as a lever for economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and enhanced regional cooperation.

The AAT Project Team





## INTRODUCING ADVANCING AFGHAN TRADE

*Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director, International Trade Centre*

The fabled Silk Road trade routes linking the cultures and communities of East Asia, India, the Mediterranean basin, and Eastern Africa have threaded through Afghanistan for centuries. Afghanistan remains a strategic crossroads, despite the conflicts that have scarred the country for decades. ...

[Read more >](#)



## ITC COLLABORATION WILL ASSIST SME EXPORT GROWTH IN AFGHANISTAN

*Mohammad Qurban Haqjo, Deputy Minister for Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industries*

This ITC-guided project will complement the Government of Afghanistan's ongoing efforts to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of public and private sectors in order to develop export competitiveness for SMEs...

[Read more >](#)



## PROJECT WILL SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS TO DELIVER ON AMBITIOUS REFORM AGENDA

*Franz-Michael Mellbin, Head of European Union Delegation to Afghanistan*

With the 'Advancing Afghan Trade' initiative the European Union is committed to supporting Afghanistan in benefitting from the opportunities arising from greater participation in international trade and enhanced regional economic relations. ...

[Read more >](#)



## NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY ADVANCEMENTS

*Eric Buchot, Output head, Export Strategy, Advancing Afghan Trade*

For a country mired in challenging security and economic conditions, the Government of Afghanistan and the private sector have an inspiring vision to position Afghanistan as an important trade partner for the region and beyond...

[Read more >](#)

## TRADE POLICY ADVANCEMENTS

*Jean-Sebastien Roure, Project Manager and Output Head, Trade Policy, Advancing Afghan Trade*

In order to advance trade capabilities in Afghanistan, the country needs of practical and sustainable capacity building and development in multiple trade-related areas. This includes progress at the institutional level as well as growing the expertise...

[Read more >](#)



## TRADE FACILITATION ADVANCEMENTS

*Pierre Bonthonneau, Output head, Trade Facilitation, Advancing Afghan Trade*

On 22 February this year, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force after two-thirds of the 164 members of the WTO ratified it. It is the first multilateral deal concluded in the 21-year history of the WTO and will now...

[Read more >](#)



## QUALITY MANAGEMENT ADVANCEMENTS

*Ludovica Ghizzoni, Output head, Quality Management, Advancing Afghan Trade*

Given the high significance of quality and standards as non-tariff barriers for exporters, and the relevance of agricultural products in Afghanistan's export portfolio, the institutional infrastructure dealing with quality and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)...

[Read more >](#)



## IN THE PRESS

Since launching Advancing Afghan Trade late last year, the project has attracted significant media attention both within the Afghanistan region and abroad.

In Afghanistan, the Ariana Television Network (the network with the largest private media channels in Afghanistan covering 33 of 34 provinces) ...

[Read more >](#)





## WHAT'S NEXT?

The immediate and decisive next steps will be to submit the NES' positioning paper - comprising the overarching strategic orientations and priority sectors - to the High Economic Council, the premier body for planning and revising economic policies...

[Read more >](#)



International  
Trade  
Centre



For more information visit our website: <http://www.intracen.org/AAT/>