

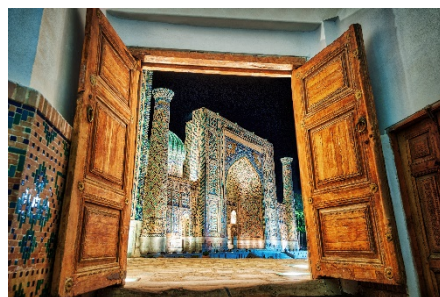


Ministry of Investments
and Foreign Trade of
the Republic of Uzbekistan

Funded by
the European Union

EUROPEAN UNION TRADE-RELATED ASSISTANCE

Facilitating the Process of Uzbekistan's Accession to the WTO



SUMMARY AND PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES

The five-year project, funded by the European Union (overall budget is EUR 4 750 000), aims to support Uzbekistan's development plans to modernize its economy through leveraging the process of the WTO accession. The Project's

specific objective is to facilitate the creation of a trading regime in Uzbekistan that is in conformity with the WTO rules.

BENEFICIARIES

The primary beneficiary of the Project will be the line ministry responsible for the WTO accession negotiations i.e. the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade (MIFT) and Inter-Agency Commission. Other direct beneficiaries will be the various government departments/agencies involved in pre- and post-accession process. The project will also work closely with the Uzbekistan

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, sectoral business organisations and associations, export-import enterprises, and civil society organisations, including women, youth and consumer associations. The ultimate stakeholders will be Uzbek businesses, especially SMEs, consumers, as well as women, youth and people living in vulnerable and marginalised situation.

CONTEXT

The process of Uzbekistan's WTO accession was initiated in 1994, but was frozen in 2005 due to the self-sufficiency policy that existed during that time. Shortly after his election, President Mirziyoyev initiated a broad package of socio-economic reforms and transformation aimed at trade liberalisation and modernisation of domestic trade regime. In the light of these reforms, the process of

accession to the WTO was further supported through the renewed accession ambition that translated into a formal application to the WTO Secretariat signed by the Minister of Foreign Trade Khodjaev in March 2018. In July 2019, Uzbekistan circulated its Memorandum of Foreign Trade



Regime (MFTR) to the WTO members. Being keen on resuming the Working Party (WP) process, Uzbekistan has submitted a number of required documents to the WTO, including initial offers on

goods and services, and successfully held its 4th WP meeting at the WTO on 7 July 2020.

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED UNDER THE PROJECT

1. Informed drafting of documentation/negotiating positions required for WTO accession process

- Supporting the drafting of WTO accession documents (e.g. LAP; Agriculture supporting tables; SPS/TBT and Customs valuation Checklists; Market access offers on goods and services)
- Providing advisory services in support of the ongoing negotiations
- Facilitating Uzbekistan delegations' participation in the negotiations (e.g. the Working Party meeting)

2. Enhanced capacity for the development of specific sectoral laws and regulations

- Advising on trade policy formulation and implementation, particularly relating to WTO accession negotiations
- Reviewing, revising and developing specific sectoral laws and regulations in line with the national trade policy and WTO accession commitments
- Undertaking accession-related trade policy studies, reviews, and policy/regulatory impact assessments

3. Increased policymakers' understanding of WTO accession process and legal framework

- Organizing capacity building programmes on topics related to WTO accession
- Undertaking study tours to neighbouring countries which have successfully gone through the WTO accession process
- Providing short and/or long term trade policy training to government officers

- Supporting the development of training modules within universities/institutes in Uzbekistan
- Undertaking training on how to improve inter-ministerial communication during accession process and beyond

4. Strengthened capacity for SPS/TBT & Trade Facilitation compliance with the WTO rules

- Preparing policymakers and key institutions for implementation of the WTO Agreements on TBT and SPS
- Reinforcing the capacity of conformity assessment bodies with a view to undertake testing inspection and certification consistent with international standards and requirements of markets rendered accessible through accession
- Facilitating information and understanding of the business sector on the essentials of quality management as relates to participating and meeting requirements in international markets
- Providing support for the development of a National Trade Facilitation Committee

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

- Organizing awareness-raising events and workshops, both in the capital and in the regions
- Undertaking a mapping of business organizations, to analyze their capacity to contribute to the process of reforms associated with WTO accession
- Drafting explanatory guides on WTO areas targeted for business organizations
- Undertaking assessments on the impact and opportunities of WTO accession specifically for women, youth, and rural communities

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