Dear readers,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our Ready4Trade newsletter in Turkmenistan! In this issue, we are delighted to introduce the Ready4Trade Central Asia project, as well as share some of our recent achievements. This project, funded by the European Union, provides targeted trade development support to five Central Asian countries, and we are happy to see Turkmenistan among them.

In line with the implementation of the EU Strategy on Central Asia: “New opportunities for a Stronger Partnership” and the need to ensure a stronger regional integration, Ready4Trade supports the development of intra-regional and international trade by enhancing the transparency of cross-border requirements, removing regulatory and procedural barriers, strengthening business capability to comply with trade formalities, as well as by improving cross-border e-commerce.

Our newsletter will keep you informed of important steps in our activities and plans, achievements and challenges. Each issue will be available online in English, Turkmen, and Russian on our website: intracen.org/Ready4Trade.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our project stakeholders, who provide key support in the project implementation in Turkmenistan and make this project possible. To increase Turkmenistan’s trade potential, which is of paramount importance for its economic growth, Ready4Trade works with the government and a number of national partner organizations through a wide array of activities targeting both the public and private sectors. We believe that through these close partnerships we can achieve our project objectives and have a sustainable impact on some key areas of the Turkmen economy.

Happy reading!

Rustam Alymov
ITC National Project Manager in Turkmenistan

ITC Executive Director and United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Pamela Coke-Hamilton:

‘This ambitious project signals a renewed effort to boost trade-led growth in Central Asian countries. ITC is pleased to work with policymakers and the business community to support a more inclusive and sustainable approach to economic development particularly by modernizing certain strategic areas such as trade facilitation and e-commerce’.
A virtual introductory meeting was held last September to introduce the ITC project team to focal points from the national partner institutions in Turkmenistan as well as to discuss potential project implementation challenges. The event brought together ITC HQ representatives, the national project team and local partner organizations.

An overview of the project was presented during the meeting, including its goal and various objectives, the activities planned under the 2 components—namely trade facilitation and e-commerce and the corresponding expected results. The team also gave some detailed information on the work already in progress.

The fact that Turkmen partners are so highly invested in the project and are ready to provide support in its implementation is key for its impact and sustainability. The project is of paramount importance for the country's economy as it will contribute to strengthening its export potential. Ready4Trade comes at an opportune time in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the introduction of trade facilitation measures and the promotion of e-commerce activities will help mitigate the negative impacts brought on SMEs.

Turkmenistan to launch its Trade Facilitation Portal to ease cross-border trade

Turkmenistan has teamed up with ITC to establish an online trade facilitation portal in the country under Ready4Trade. One of the first steps to that end was the organization of a technical training late last year, to support the technical team in charge of maintaining the online portal, and encompassed orientation training for the portal establishment process, including its strategic alignment to existing websites, user interface review, data collection methodology, and content management.

Turkmenistan’s Trade Facilitation Portal is set to increase transparency, harmonize trade procedures, and promote a coherent business environment for traders and SMEs in the region. Based on the existing ITC-UNCTAD model, Turkmenistan's national trade portal will be a key addition to the existing 20+ portals worldwide, allowing for a better understanding of procedures among all those countries.

Commodity-specific, this online portal will be a one-stop shop of Turkmen cross-border laws, regulations, duties and taxes. Export and import procedures information will be available on the platform, making it easier for traders, particularly in the textiles, carpets, household chemicals and agricultural sectors, to understand cross-border trade-related procedures for their products.

The initiative also broadly resonates with Turkmenistan’s recently obtained status of observer at the World Trade Organization.
The trickle-down effect: coaching the coaches in export management for Turkmen SMEs

Sanjar Khudaynazarov, ITC lead coach and national consultant.
Ashgabat, 04 December 2020. Photo by ITC

ITC has concluded a Training-of-Trainees (ToT) on how to best provide support to SMEs of Turkmenistan in their export activities within the framework of the Ready4Trade-Central Asia project.

Held late last year, this training, consisting of 5 different sessions, was attended by 4 national coaches who will in turn provide on-the-job support to more than 40 companies across the country.

Issues discussed included: packaging and labeling of goods, certification, customs procedures, international transport and export planning. These topics trigger the most interest among novice exporters, hence their choice. During the training, participants reviewed export issues that had been encountered by SMEs representatives in the past, to create the most realistic conditions to prepare them for their work with exporters and to learn of corresponding solutions.

With its trickle-down effect, the main objective of this coaching initiative is to support Turkmen SMEs, namely export-oriented companies, to both enter international markets and successfully perform on a global level.

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Turkmen SMEs in a better position to export with the support of Ready4Trade

Export Coaching session at IE Halk Hazyna.
Ashgabat, 17 February 2020. Photo by ITC

Ready4Trade Central Asia has officially launched its export coaching initiative in Turkmenistan to boost the export potential of SMEs. Local experts tutored by ITC late last year through a ‘Training-of-Trainees’ (ToT) have now completed their first coaching mission for the export-oriented enterprises selected to participate in the initiative.

With the ToT, local coaches had honed their knowledge on packaging and labelling of goods, certifications, customs procedures, international transport and export planning, which they now passed on to an array of Turkmen SMEs. Increasing Turkmenistan’s export potential by improving the capacities of Turkmen SMEs to reach out to new regional and international markets is crucial for its economic growth.

Overall, 40 SMEs are expected to participate in the year-round export coaching initiative in Turkmenistan, with the hope that all selected SMEs will be able to boost their export potential with Ready4Trade's support. The initiative also pays special attention to women-led enterprises, which face specific challenges in their cross-border management operations. Last but not least, to ensure its sustainability, the project is implemented in partnership with the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan.

READ MORE
KEY NUMBERS: READY4TRADE ACTIVITIES IN TURKMENISTAN IN 2020

4 Workshops
19 Workshop participants from the government and the private sector
4 Draft regional curriculum modules
Gender and trade survey conducted with 200+ participants
1 Documented product group in TFP
1 Customized coaching manual

ABOUT READY4TRADE CENTRAL ASIA

With the project ‘Ready4Trade Central Asia’, the European Union (EU) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) are joining forces to contribute to the overall sustainable and inclusive economic development of Central Asia by boosting intra-regional and international trade in the region.

Stay connected and share your thoughts: #Ready4Trade