

Ready4Trade Central Asia

Supporting inclusive development
through trade and digitalization



International
Trade
Centre



Funded by
the European Union

UZBEKISTAN

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Dear Readers,

Thank you for your continued support! This is the third issue of the Ready4Trade newsletter. The Ready4Trade Central Asia project is implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and funded by the European Union (EU). Since our last publication, we have had plenty to report on from our various events. We've made a lot of progress and we're starting to see great results from some of our beneficiaries. Read on to see what we have been up to.

Enjoy!

NEWS

#LearnFromNeighbour: Tajik delegation visits Tashkent Border Control

Uzbekistan welcomed a delegation from Tajikistan to the capital city of Tashkent on 12 August 2021, to study the work of local modern customs terminals and meet border agencies. The visit allowed the Tajik delegation to learn about local measures to improve customs administration and transport and logistics activities, as well as initiate closer cooperation between the two groups. The

delegation, composed of six government agencies, two business associations, and two border transport companies met with Uzbek counterparts during an intense one-day study tour.

The Tajik delegation visited the customs point, "Ark-Bulak" and the customs terminal LLC, "Highway Logistics Center", both located in the Tashkent area. The group got acquainted with the infrastructure and functioning of the two locations. The overall aim of the visit was to learn about the practices of their Uzbek border agency counterparts in reducing the time and costs at border terminals and how to improve overall terminal operations.



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Ready4Trade conducts gender-responsive trade facilitation workshops for border officials in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan



Photo Credit: Ready4Trade - One of the gender-responsive trade facilitation workshop in Uzbekistan

Ready4Trade initiated a series of awareness-raising gender workshops for customs officials in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in September and October.

In Uzbekistan, the workshops took place in Tashkent (September 14), Tashkent region (September 21) and in Bukhara (September 28 and 29).

More than 130 participants attended the seminars. The sessions were delivered by local customs experts with the intention of training participants to then share their knowledge with their colleagues in various customs administrations and other relevant trade agencies.

Sobir Avezov, First Deputy of the Bukhara Oblast Department of the State Customs Committee, in his opening speech expressed gratitude to the experts and organizers in attendance, noting that special attention is being paid to ensuring women's rights in the Republic of Uzbekistan and their role in the development and management of state and society.

Chairman of the Regional Department Bukhara of the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Uzbekistan "Tadbirkor Ayol" M. Sadigova stated: "Important measures are being taken in the direction of wide involvement of women in entrepreneurship; reforms which are being implemented in the field have a positive impact on the position of our country in international ratings, in particular, in the World Bank's the Women, Business and the Law Index Uzbekistan

was among 27 states in 2020, which carried out significant reforms on women's rights and gender equality”.

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Designing a successful national e-commerce strategy for Uzbekistan



Photo Credit: Shutterstock/Legend Valley

E-commerce is an important means to boost trade in a country. Online access to international markets opens many opportunities for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to overcome borders and trade faster. The concept of e-commerce is not new in Uzbekistan, as there are already several established online shops and market platforms. However, many MSMEs, especially within the handicraft sector still face challenges in using online trade services, often because they have limited knowledge and experience on how to sell their goods on the Internet.

In order to further support e-commerce development in Uzbekistan, Ready4Trade and the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade (MIFT) are joining their forces to develop a National E-Commerce Strategy which will define the key priorities and activities for progress in the sector. On 28 July 2021, the two partners hosted the first meeting of the National E-Commerce Strategy working group. During the meeting, the participants discussed the process of designing the National E-Commerce Strategy as well as findings from an assessment examining the e-commerce ecosystem in Uzbekistan. The participants also set goals for the future of e-commerce development in the country.

Doing business digitally: Uzbek businesses benefit from e-commerce training and coaching



Photo credit: Shutterstock/Roman Samborskyi - a couple choosing products on the internet

This September, the Ready4Trade project invited over 50 Uzbek SMEs from the handicraft, textile and garments sectors to attend webinars on e-commerce. The webinars, which have been part of Ready4Trade's e-commerce program launched in January this year, offered Uzbek companies the opportunity to learn about various e-commerce platforms and relevant e-payment solutions.

The webinars covered several topics, such as website creation with Octo.uz, overview of domestic and international marketplaces with Zoodmall, a platform for online shopping, logistics options for shipments and small parcels with Uzpost and Fargo.

Uzbek coaches and enterprises also joined two webinars that were held for the Central Asian region. On 20 September 2021 guest speakers from Qoovee, a B2B platform, and Satu, a B2C platform for online shopping, hosted a webinar covering opportunities for regional trade. On 27 September, Payoneer, an international digital payment service, discussed their solutions for cross-border transactions.

Further offline sessions will be held in Tashkent, Bukhara and Fergana until the end of the year to showcase various online channels and help select the ones most relevant to SME beneficiaries, depending on their business models and target markets.

Uzbek public-private validation meeting on improving trade flows at the border

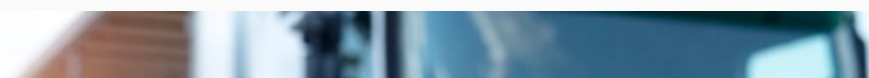




Photo Credit: Shutterstock/Aleksandar Malivuk

Over the last 6 months, Ready4Trade has conducted a complex analysis of key obstacles that impact businesses engaged in cross-border procedures in Uzbekistan for three selected intra-regional and international trade flows, namely: the export of fresh fruits and vegetables to the European Union, the export of juice to Kazakhstan and the import of wheat flour from Kazakhstan.

The analysis involved comprehensive survey interviews with key private and public stakeholders, expert focus group discussions and a public-private validation meeting organized jointly by ITC and the Center for Economic Research and Reforms (CERR) on 19 August 2021.

The meeting took place in a hybrid format with the participation of Uzbek governmental agencies and served as a good opportunity to discuss results of the survey and key challenges reported by businesses. The survey indicated that MSMEs involved in the selected trade flows struggle the most with delayed goods inspection and extended waiting times at the borders, lack of insurance for products, transportation problems arising due to seasonality and demand, and financial problems related to the relatively high interest rates on commercial bank loans.

Participants brainstormed potential solutions to address the identified obstacles to trade and explored electronic documentation systems for trade management in Uzbekistan among others, like:

- electronic waybills for goods transported by rail and more opportunities
- “Uzrailway”, a new transport control system which is being developed to establish a faster document flow in which the custom officers will receive preliminary information about goods in advance
- establishing an ‘electronic queue system’ at the borders

Nodira Kurbanbaeva, a representative of CERR, concluded that Uzbekistan public-private validation meeting was a success and that CERR will take into consideration all recommendations from the meeting going forward.

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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. Beneficiaries of the Ready4Trade Central Asia project include governments, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), in particular women-led enterprises, and Business Support Organizations (BSOs). The project operates in five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Ready4Trade Central Asia in a nutshell



International
Trade
Centre

Implementing Agency



Funded by the
European Union



5 Central Asian Countries
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan



4 Objectives

- ✓ Address regulatory and procedural obstacles to international trade
- ✓ Improve SMEs capacities to comply with cross-border requirements
- ✓ Improve SMEs readiness to conduct cross-border e-commerce
- ✓ Increase opportunities for women-led enterprises to participate in international trade

3 types of Beneficiaries



Governments



SMEs



BSOs

3 Sustainable Development Goals

The project contributes to the realization of SDGs:



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