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Ready4Trade Central Asia

Supporting inclusive development
through trade and digitalization



International
Trade
Centre



Funded by
the European Union

KAZAKHSTAN

NEWSLETTER ISSUE - No. 1

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Dear Readers,

Thank you for your continued support! This is the first issue of the Ready4Trade newsletter in 2022. 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. Just to remind you again that the Ready4Trade Central Asia project is implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and we'd also like to use this opportunity to thank our project donor - the European Union (EU).

Read on to see what we have been up to.

Enjoy!

NEWS

Ready4Trade enhances SME's export potential with the Export Management Coaching Initiative

More than 200 companies in Central Asia were provided with the opportunity to acquire the tools and knowledge to be able to export abroad. This was the result of the 5-day coaching sessions offered as part of the European Union-funded Ready4Trade Central Asia project. The International Trade Center (ITC), the agency implementing the project, organized a closing event to complete the Export Management Coaching Initiative (EMCI) at the regional event on 18 March 2022, in Almaty.



Regional event of EMCI finalization in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Photos taken by ITC.

Mr. Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan, opened the session with his welcoming remarks. “In this context, ITC is organizing this last regional event to celebrate the handover of the EMCI. I am happy to say that we can expect about 50 participants from all over the region, including national EMCI partners, coaches and beneficiary SMEs. As participants, you will be able to share your observations and recommendations regarding the development of EMCI and ways to ensure the sustainability of the new practices introduced for the future,” he said.

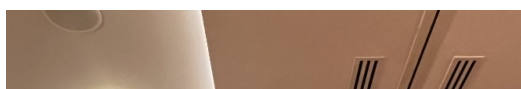
EMCI helps entrepreneurs solve everyday problems they face in managing their export operations. The initiative consists of face-to-face on-the-job training sessions conducted at the premises of beneficiary SMEs. In total, 212 companies in all five countries of Central Asia have benefited from the tools, knowledge and technical assistance provided under the initiative.



Regional event of EMCI finalization in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Photos taken by ITC.

Doing business in Central Asia can become easier



In Central Asia, domestic and foreign enterprises face significant untapped export opportunities if the costs and time of



*Regional event on Trade Facilitation in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
Photos taken by ITC.*

international trade formalities were to be reduced.

Optimizing documentation requirements, simplifying cross-border procedures and digitalization offer prospects in achieving efficient trade. Central Asia is already making considerable progress in this regard. However, the procedural simplification analysis conducted by the International Trade Centre (ITC), through its Ready4Trade Central Asia project reveals even larger potential, with streamlining trade procedures to have a rapid, meaningful impact on small business competitiveness.

Ready4Trade Central Asia therefore developed a list of detailed recommendations for legislative and institutional reforms, which the team presented to public and private stakeholders in workshops held in March 2022 in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.



*Regional event on Trade Facilitation in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
Photos taken by ITC.*

Kazakhstan

Issues highlighted at the workshop include weak integration of information systems of different government agencies, paper-based workflows duplicating electronic documents and resubmissions, and open electronic information registers. To tackle this, the workshop discussed a proposed simplification roadmap and action plan to streamline the workflow of up to 26 export and import documents. Nurlan Kulbatyrov, Deputy Director General of JSC Center for Development of Trade Policy "QazTrade" noted some of the remaining challenges for the country. "Kazakhstan still has work to do to reduce the steps involved in documenting export-import transactions," he said. "One of the acute problems remains mutual recognition of

certificates of origin for goods”, he added. The workshop discussed various optimization reforms, including limiting the time for reviewing and deciding on permit applications to one hour, and introducing an electronic queue management system at the border to speed up the movement of vehicles across the customs border. Proposals also include introducing a digital platform for the transport complex with a marketplace for transport and insurance services, as well as implementing electronic insurance policies.

Regional coordination for reforms

Many of these recommendations will require reforms that involve regional, coordinated action by all Central Asian countries.

For example, related to the implementation of electronic exchange and recognition systems for certificates of origin, phytosanitary and veterinary certificates, electronic use of transport documents (e-CMR) or to the coordinated implementation of electronic queue management systems (eQMS).

Doing business digitally: e-commerce trainings and individual coaching for SMEs

During February and March 2022, Ready4Trade national coaches completed an e-commerce Training of Trainers (ToT) for the Module 4.

The module is primarily focused on customer service and tools on improving buyer communication. Digital marketing techniques were also presented in the program. Search engine optimization, Online advertising (SEM), and Social Media Marketing were the main topics covered during the second session. The separate country webinar was devoted to ‘How to sell efficiently through social media’ topic. The final session of the program was dedicated to Export Logistics. The experts discussed Shipping policy managing, logistics and shipment.

After the completion of TOT, 8 national advisors will provide offline training and individual consultations to the 40 participating companies.

Mission to seaports in Kazakhstan for the upcoming Trade Facilitation Portal launch

In this regard, the first component of the Ready4Trade project develops the ‘Trade Facilitation Portal’ (TFP) to address non-tariff barriers on selected intra and extra regional trade flows and maps trade regulations and procedures. The TFP was included in the ‘National Implementation Plan for B and C of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation’.

In the framework of the Ready4Trade, a joint mission of experts from the ITC, the Ministry of Trade and Integration RK and QazTrade took place from 30 March to 5 April 2022. The experts visited the commercial seaports of the Mangistau region - Aktau Commercial Seaport, Kuryk Port and Aktau Sea Northern Terminal. During the visit, a step-by-step documentation of business processes for import/export operations has been studied and certified to display the precise information at the TFP. The Portal is currently under the development and will reflect trade procedures for import/export and transit of products via road/rail/air/sea transport routs, as well as in a multimodal way. The launch of the portal is tentatively planned for the

upcoming June.



*Joint Mission to seaports in Aktau, Kazakhstan.
Photos taken by ITC.*

“Recently, a similar field mission was organized to checkpoints within the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border. During the visit, the information on trade procedures for exports and imports underwent the comparison with the actual situation at the checkpoints. As a result of the visit, the team concluded the set of recommendations to simplify these procedures. It was also decided to decrease the number of documents, which is currently being discussed with the relevant authorized bodies,” said Nurlan Kulbatyrov, QazTrade Deputy General Director.

As a part of the mission, the team organized an introductory seminar for the exporters of the Mangistau region, representatives of the local executive bodies and the seaport administration. The agenda covered the presentation of the progress made in the implementation of TFP in Kazakhstan, as well as recently launched TFPs in Central Asia: the Kyrgyzstan Info Trade Portal and Tajikistan Trade Portal. The participants also discussed issues relating to the transparency of cross-border trade formalities.





Joint Mission to seaports in Aktau, Kazakhstan. Photo made by ITC.

Turning ancient Kazakh jewellery traditions into business



Dulat Ashimov in his workshop. Photo made by ITC.

Dulat Ashimov, founder of Ashimov.kz, devotes his life to keeping the Kazakh metalworking and jewellery-making traditions alive. Kazakh crafts have an ancient history, dating back to the Bronze Age. The country has a rich tradition of metalworking, producing bronze, gold, silver and copper jewellery, as well as stone carving. Kazakh crafts are becoming increasingly popular in Kazakhstan and beyond. Jewellery makers create new collections with Kazakh ornaments or various accessories with embossed leather patterns and carvings that are back 'in vogue'.

Dulat's path to success

Young artist Dulat Ashimov is passionate about creating jewellery and keeping the Kazakh metalworking traditions alive. "I never thought that I would devote my life to creating jewellery," says the 31-year-old founder of Ashimov.kz and holder of the UNESCO Quality Label. "I had

always dreamed of becoming an architect. But in tenth grade, my uncle, the owner of a jewellery workshop, suggested that I start working as an apprentice for him. That's how it all started.” In 2009, Dulat moved from his hometown Kokshetau to Almaty to study artistic metalworking at the Kazakhstan National Academy of Arts. “I had an amazing professor, who encouraged me to start my own business”, he says. Dulat opened his jewellery workshop in 2015, diving into his brainchild despite lacking any knowledge in business management or marketing. “At first, I made products to fine tune my skills and develop my own metal-processing techniques. Over time, friends and acquaintances began contacting me. The power of word-of-mouth marketing is amazing! It took about two years to get to this level,” he adds.

The power of digital marketing

Over the years, Dulat strengthened his brand on the market, receiving orders despite his challenges in promoting and marketing his brand to a wider audience. “My entire advertising campaign was based on social networks. Probably 50% of clients found me there, and the other half were friends,” he explains. To dig deeper into marketing, e-commerce, and logistics, Dulat applied for the Ready4Trade Central Asia project funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC). Ashimov.kz is one of 40 Kazakhstani companies selected to participate in this initiative. To reach a wider audience and target potential customers, Dulat learned various techniques to enter the online market of Kazakhstan via his corporate website and social media channels, while working on a step-by-step plan to expand his business and increase its visibility.



*Jewellery piece made by Dulat Ashimov.
Photo taken by ITC.*

ITC e-commerce coach Manarbek Abenov recommended Dulat to make his website more user-friendly, which resulted in collaboration proposals and more orders, also thanks to his Instagram account. In addition, Dulat has commissioned a new delivery company to offer better logistics services to his customers.

Moving on to global marketplaces

“I discovered the pros and cons of my business from different perspectives,” continues Dulat. “This has been a great experience for me as I have learned to identify my biggest business challenges, which had held me back from reaching my full potential.”

Dulat further defined his business plan with the support of his coach: “To automate my jewellery production, I had to renovate my workshop and get all the necessary tools to make the production faster, while keeping the same level of quality. I have already found an investor

and bought foundry equipment, so our range of services has increased drastically. I also plan to learn how to work with gold to increase the circle of potential customers.”

In the long run, Dulat is planning to reach a global audience, selling internationally. “The Ready4Trade project allows participants to improve their e-commerce knowledge and skills,” explains ITC coach Abenov. “For instance, Dulat improved the e-commerce content on his website and social media channels. Identifying and defining customer personas helped him reach a new audience and get more orders. Today, Dulat is ready to reach the international audience and participate in the Gems and Jewellery Trade Fair & Exhibition in Monaco. I believe that his major victories are ahead.”

Stay connected: #Ready4Trade #CentralAsia

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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ITC HEADQUARTERS

Elena Boutrimova
Chief, Office for Eastern Europe

ITC IN KAZAKHSTAN

Jalil Bulatov
National Project Manager

EU DELEGATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

Youri Skaskevitch
Programme Manager,

and Central Asia
Ready4Trade@intracen.org
+41 22 730 0111
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

jallil.bulatov@intracen.org
+7 701 960 60 99
32 Kerey Zhanibek Khandar str.,
Business Centre "Grey Plaza"
4th floor 010000,
Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Central Asia Regional Programmes
Cooperation Section
youri.skaskevitch@eeas.europa.eu
+7 7172 97 45 84
62 Kosmonavtov Street, 7th floor
Dist. Chubary, Z05E9E1
Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

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