



International
Trade
Centre



Funded by
the European Union

Ready4Trade Central Asia

Supporting inclusive development through trade
and digitalization

By: Silva Yerznkyan, Project Officer, ITC
Date: 18 October 2022

Ready4Trade Central Asia in a nutshell

Objective

Promote Central Asia trade - intra-regional and international - through enhanced business environment, empowered business and enabled cross-border e-commerce

Project Scope

4 years' intervention: 2020 to 2023

5 CA countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Country presence: one local office in each country

2-phase approach: inception + implementation - to custom fit countries' priorities

Ready4Trade's main components

- **TRADE FACILITATION**

- Establishing Trade Facilitation Portals
- Addressing obstacles to trade
- Training and coaching SMEs on export management and other export-related topics
- Fostering women's participation in trade

- **E-COMMERCE**

- Supporting SMEs' engagement in e-commerce
- Developing National E-commerce Strategies (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan)

ALSO: supporting Turkmenistan in the process of accession to the WTO; supporting Kazakhstan in reforming its e-commerce legislation

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

Trade Facilitation Portals

Launched in:

- Kazakhstan, 4 July 2022, 1,592 users reached
- Kyrgyzstan, 11 November 2021, 12,000 users reached
- Tajikistan, launched as part of GTEX project, 82,867 users reached

To be launched in:

- Turkmenistan (Dec 2022 or Q1 2023)
- Uzbekistan (November 2022)

The project will also implement a **Regional Trade Facilitation Portal**.

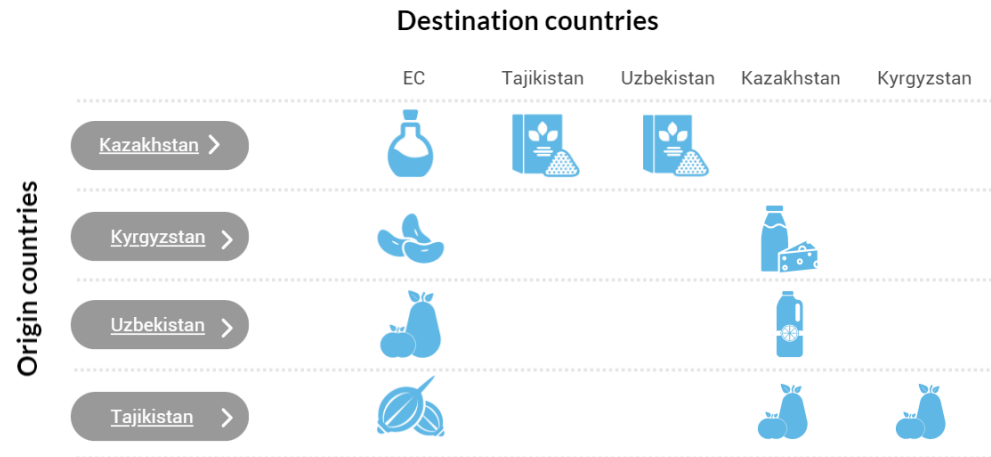
Products mapped:

- Kazakhstan – 55
- Kyrgyzstan – 57
- Tajikistan – 54
- Turkmenistan – 23
- Uzbekistan – 40

Addressing obstacles to trade

Key **procedural** and **regulatory obstacles to trade** across selected trade flows identified in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Reforms are being developed now to address these obstacles.



Regional activities:

- Regional Meeting on Simplification of Trade Procedures in Central Asia was conducted in Astana, Kazakhstan in May 2022.
- Study tour to Estonia and France to get acquainted with the E-queue management systems was organized in September 2022.
- Peer learning initiative is being facilitated by the project. It brings together professionals from the same field to exchange knowledge and experience.

Cross-Border Management Curriculum

- 4 courses already developed:
- Rules of world trade
 - Export process
 - EU market requirements
 - Quality and conformity standards

Virtual Learning Space (VLS)
platforms launched in:

- Kazakhstan (September 2022)
- Uzbekistan (September 2022)

VLS platforms to be launched in:

- Kyrgyzstan (October 2022)
- Tajikistan (October 2022)
- Turkmenistan (November 2022)

In-person and online courses already started in all 5 countries.

More than 500 participants already covered by the trainings.

Export Management Coaching Initiative

Already **completed** in all five Central Asian countries.

Five-day tailored on-the-job training delivered for:

- 44 SMEs in Kazakhstan
- 44 SMEs in Kyrgyzstan
- 48 SMEs in Tajikistan
- 41 SMEs in Turkmenistan
- 34 SMEs in Uzbekistan

E-commerce strategies

E-commerce strategies are being developed in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The launch of the Kyrgyz strategy is scheduled for 21 October 2022.

In Uzbekistan, the strategy awaits formal approval by the Government.

E-commerce legislation in Kazakhstan

Implemented jointly with UNCTAD.

UNCTAD prepared three technical reports to contribute to the development of the legislation:

- Report on the WTO Electronic Commerce Negotiations
- Report on the JSI (Joint Initiative on E-commerce) Negotiating Text and International, Regional and National Approaches
- Recommendations for Reform

E-commerce support to SMEs

SMEs in all five Central Asian countries supported through [group trainings](#) and [advisory services](#):

- 40 SMEs in Kazakhstan
- 75 SMEs in Kyrgyzstan
- 60 SMEs in Tajikistan
- 14 SMEs in Turkmenistan
- 40 SMEs in Uzbekistan

Through so-called [eLabs](#), SMEs are supported to improve their [digital identity](#) as well as their [online presence in leading marketplaces](#), such as [eBay](#) (eBay Central Asia Hub), [Etsy](#), etc.

Recently, ITC signed an MOU with [NOVICA](#) to create the [Artisans Empowerment Hub](#) for five Central Asian countries + [Central Asia e-commerce store](#).

Gender component

1,500 women were surveyed to identify the main challenges they face while trading.

Two series of trainings on gender-responsive topics were delivered in all five Central Asian countries:

- Customs officials as well as other relevant stakeholders were trained on gender-responsive trade facilitation.
- Public sector stakeholders were trained on collecting gender-disaggregated data.

A series of training on confidence building and advocacy on trade issues for women traders has started in September 2022.

Support to Turkmenistan with WTO accession

Trainings were conducted for the Government on the following topics:

- Commercial diplomacy and trade negotiations
- WTO legal framework and accession negotiations (one-week training)
- General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
- Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)
- Agreement on Agriculture and preparation of DS Tables

Thank you!