

Experience-Sharing Workshop on WTO Accession of Selected Asian Countries in Support of Uzbekistan's Accession

Uzbekistan first made a request for a membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 8 December 1994 and the Working Party for its accession was established on 21 December 1994. Fifteen years later, the formal process of accession was initiated, leading to the fourth meeting of the Working Party in July 2020. Uzbekistan has started the process to negotiate its obligations/binding commitments on liberalising goods and services, compliance with other WTO agreements like TRIPS, Trade Facilitation Agreement, SPS, TBT, Customs Valuations, TRIMS etc. To comply with the process and later with the negotiated obligations and bindings, it will be necessary for an update or introduction of several domestic laws and regulations. On 29 July 2021, the Factual Summary of Points Raised so far in the process, prepared by the Secretariat, was circulated to the Working Party.

The objective of this workshop is to bring policymakers and negotiators of other selected ESCAP member States which have acceded to WTO to share their experience with Uzbekistan, both in terms of the accession process itself as well as the benefits and challenges post accession. In this context it is important to note that the accession of the least developed countries follows 2002 Guidelines on Least-developed country (LDC) accessions (WT/L/508 & WT/L/508/Add.1) and that their experiences therefore may be taken as illustrative.

The sessions will focus on three distinct yet interrelated set of issues:

1. Process of negotiations (interaction with the Working Party and its Chair; plurilateral and bilateral processes of negotiations; reports; accession package and acceptance; and similar).
2. Within a country process (a) management of necessary reforms; coordination with relevant ministries; (b) communication with business sector and public, and other stakeholders (c) preparation of evidence-based impact analyses.
3. Implementation of accession package and management of challenges including through access to technical assistance and capacity building (especially in the area of transparency commitments).

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Session I - 22 Nov 2021 from 09:30 am to 12:00 pm (GMT+5)

Session II – 24 Nov 2021 from 09:30 am to 12:00 am (GMT+5)

Meeting platform: Zoom with interpretation into Russian

Session I	22 Nov 2021
09:30-09:40	Welcome remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Rupa Chanda, Director TIID, ESCAP • Local host
09:40-10:00	Presentation on the current status of the country's accession to WTO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of Government of Uzbekistan
10:00-11:00	Sharing experiences 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia (Dr. Sok Siphana, Founding Partner of Founding Partner SokSiphana&associates and a member of ZICO Law) • Lao PDR (Dr. Buavanh Vilavong, Director General, Department of Industry and Handicraft, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR) • Afghanistan (Mr. Mozammil Shinwari, former Chief Negotiator for Afghanistan accession) <p>Moderator: Dr. Mia Mikic, Advisor at Large, Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT)</p>
11:00-12:00	Q&A, Discussion
Session II	24 Nov 2021
09:30-09.45	Brief welcome and a reflection on session I from the local host
09:45-10.45	Sharing experiences 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mongolia (Mr. Suren Badral, Former Ambassador-at-Large and Deputy Permanent Representative to WTO) • Viet Nam (Mr. Nguyen Anh Duong, Director, Department for General Economic Issues and Integration Studies, Central Institute for Economic Management) <p>Moderator: Dr. Mia Mikic, Advisor at Large, Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT)</p>
10:45-11.45	Q&A, Discussion
11:45-12:00	Closing (ESCAP and the local host)