



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID'S COMPETITIVENESS, TRADE AND JOBS ACTIVITY FACT SHEET

USAID's Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs activity facilitates trade and employment in horticulture, tourism, transport, and logistics across the five Central Asian economies. By incentivizing firms to become more regionally competitive and by addressing cross-border impediments to trade, USAID helps to develop a more diverse and competitive private sector and generate export-driven growth.

MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS INCLUDE

USAID is partnering with key private and public sector actors in each of the five Central Asian countries to enhance competitiveness in the horticulture, tourism, and transport and logistics sectors – thereby increasing exports and employment. This work is being conducted through:

INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS AND FACILITATING TRADE

USAID identifies interventions needed to increase competitiveness, exports, and employment in target sectors. It supports trade-related government agencies with both policy and institutional reform as well as cost-sharing trade facilitation initiatives with private firms. USAID has selected 35 innovative ideas from among concepts submitted by 150 companies and contributed one-fourth (USAID's contribution is about \$1.9 million) of the total cost of almost \$8 million to realize these ideas. Winning ideas ranged from the first charter flights between Tashkent and Lake Issyk Kul, to establishing a pilot cooperative of small farmers in Tajikistan, to trial the production and export of a new variety of watermelon to Lithuania. The charter company will fully fund the flights in 2021 while consumers enjoyed the watermelons so much that the farmers are expanding production from 12 to 50 hectares.

C5+1

C5+1 is a diplomatic platform that brings together the five states of Central Asia and the United States to cooperate in the areas of common concern. USAID provides technical assistance to support trade cooperation in the region. This assistance includes working with customs and sanitary and phytosanitary authorities in the region to improve services that facilitate trade. Results include the training of 120 customs officials on new Authorized Economic Operator practices and 90 phytosanitary officials on pest management.

With USAID's support, Uzbekistan has joined the International Plant Protection Convention, which sets global pest management standards. USAID is also partnering with national export promotions agencies and has developed a ten-step [horticulture export guide](#) and sixteen-hour training courses to diversify horticulture sales. Over the past year, 178 growers have been trained. A directory profiles these growers and their products for buyers across the world. In total, more than \$10 million of export contracts have been signed with the support of USAID's Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs activity.

THE CENTRAL ASIA TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP

USAID is supporting this important regional partnership as it responds to the needs of its members. USAID established a partnership of 15 private sector transport and logistics operators at the 2015 Central Asia Trade Forum to improve the quality of transport and logistics services throughout the region. Within the C5+1 initiative, USAID has continued to support the partnership – now with 140 members from all five countries – to advocate policy reform and share information. Over the past four years members have supported each other, negotiating over \$85 million in contracts for the transport of goods across the region. USAID is also working with specialist organizations and the partnership to build the capacity of the sector's workforce by delivering a robust and sustainable system of transport and logistics training on topics including cold storage.

TOURISM

USAID is working with local tourism stakeholders to promote adventure tourism in the region to a global audience. A series of summer and winter familiarization tours for leading travel bloggers generated 5.6 million views and prompted travel publishing company Lonely Planet to name Central Asia the number one travel region for 2020. USAID is also building soft and hard infrastructure and the capacity of tour operators and guesthouses to develop new products and strengthen service delivery. USAID is working with national committees to improve regional tourism statistics, install road signs, produce free audio guides, and connect to a global adventure tourism network. Hundreds of tour operators and guesthouses have benefited from online marketing training. Thirty-five guest houses now receive online reservations for the first time.

SUPPORTING THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) ACCESSION PROCESS

The WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. WTO membership encourages trade through consistent application of rules and procedures throughout the world. USAID has assisted the Government of Uzbekistan to prepare its memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime.

CENTRAL ASIA TRADE FORUM

USAID continues to host the [Central Asia Trade Forum](#), an annual event where national governments and business leaders discuss opportunities for increased trade, share innovation success stories, and network with potential customers. Recent forums have been held in Almaty, Tashkent, and Shymkent. The tenth forum, the first-ever virtual event, took place from November 16-20, 2020. The theme of the forum was "Central Asia – Growth and Prosperity", which explored new trends and market reactions in Central Asia during the post COVID-19 economic recovery. The five-day intensive program gathered over 100 inspiring speakers, 7,000 unique visitors from 39 countries including the U.S., Afghanistan, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE, the UK, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, among others.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged USAID's Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs activity to pivot from in-person to remote delivery of assistance. In addition to conducting over 80 webinars between April and December 2020 for more than 3,000 participants, several unique virtual activities have been developed. These include a virtual matchmaking exercises between 30 Central Asian growers and 43 buyers from across the world.

CONTACT

Svetlana Golovatskaya, Project Management Specialist, USAID Central Asia, Email: sgolovatskaya@usaid.gov