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# LEGAL REFORM PROGRAM FACT SHEET

The USAID Legal Reform Program supports Uzbekistan's efforts to ensure further development of rule of law principles, build the capacity of legal professionals and training institutions, enhance citizens' access to justice, improve the legal operating environment for civil society, promote gender equality, and create a healthier investment climate. USAID partners with the Ministry of Justice, Chamber of Advocates, Academy of the General Prosecutor's Office, Uzbekistan's Higher Education Institutions, and key actors in civil society to meet these objectives.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Support for rule of law development in Uzbekistan
- Development of the legal profession
- Development of the legal enabling environment for civil society and non-governmental organizations

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### RULE OF LAW DEVELOPMENT

- The Legal Reform Program provided expert input to prepare a draft Model Investment Agreement for the Ministry of Justice. This Model Investment Agreement was used by the Government of Uzbekistan to negotiate 22 Investment Agreements that leveraged

approximately \$2 billion in investments from the U.S., Turkey, Germany, Russia, Canada, UAE, France, China and other countries.

- With assistance from the Legal Reform Program, the Government of Uzbekistan adopted the first ever gender equality law on “Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” in September 2019, which provides for equal treatment of women and men in all areas of life and prohibits gender-based discrimination. The Program’s national and international legal experts provided analysis on the draft law, and the Program facilitated public hearings throughout the country to give citizens an opportunity to discuss with Members of Parliament and other GOU representatives, key provisions of the draft law.
- Recommendations have been submitted to the relevant law-making bodies to revise Uzbekistan’s legal framework to bring it in line with international standards and best practices in the following areas: intellectual property rights, international arbitration, mediation, enforcement of foreign court decisions, and creating an Ombudsman for Children.
- Awareness-raising events for businesses and legal professionals on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) brought together national and international arbitration and mediation experts and more than 500 people to discuss the advantages of ADR as a cost-effective and time-efficient alternative to court proceedings.

## **LEGAL EDUCATION**

- Almost 800 legal professionals improved their practical skills and knowledge of international best practices in the following legal subjects through participation in study visits and trainings: trial skills, judicial ethics, enforcement of arbitration decisions and foreign court judgments, provision of free legal services, mediation, legislative drafting and intellectual property rights.
- Five new courses – Legal English, Common Law, Legal Research, Legal Writing and Legal Clinics – have been incorporated as part of the permanent curriculum of leading legal training institutions such as University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent State University of Law and Academy of the General Prosecutor’s Office. These courses will enhance law graduates’ skill set in line with international practices.
- The Chamber of Advocates and Ministry of Justice Lawyers’ Training Center have established mock trial and training rooms which have been fully equipped to conduct distance learning courses that offer cost effective access to legal training for lawyers throughout Uzbekistan.

## **ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY**

- Ten domestic non-governmental organizations signed grant agreements and began implementation of projects aimed at improving access to justice. The grantees will provide free legal assistance to more than 15,000 beneficiaries, raise legal awareness of almost 16,000 people through local events, and distribute 40,000 information leaflets and booklets on a variety of legal topics.

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