

## TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAMME IN TAJIKISTAN

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### Information for Press

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For the first time in Tajikistan and the Central Asian region two Tajik fruit and vegetable processing enterprises- Elita Istaravshan and Ilmi Istehsoli after external audit were certified for ISO 22000 standard-Food Safety Management System. Both companies are the pilot enterprises under the Trade Promotion Program in Tajikistan implemented by the International Trade Center (ITC) and funded by SECO (Government of Switzerland).

The certification process was executed by Det Norske Veritas AS (DNV Norway), which is an global independent certification body with headquarters in Norway. The audit was done by Ms. Sapna Shukla, Lead Auditor of the India Branch of Det Norske Veritas AS. DNV is one of the world's leading certification bodies, which was established in 1864 and has about 9,000 employees in 300 offices in 100 countries.

During the certification audit, the enterprises were assessed for their commitment and implementation to ensure that they are providing safe products to the consumers. The involvement of the Top Management along with their team was also assessed to ensure that the organizations have planned to continuously improve their systems keeping in mind the fast changing scenario in the food sector, while taking care that the consumer health safety is not compromised through their products.

The certification will definitely assist in building a brand image and further strengthening the market positions of the enterprises. Being associated with a world class certification body as DNV adds value to the brand image of the enterprises.

It should be noted that at present most of the food products produced by Tajik fruit and vegetable processing enterprises are not competitive in the world markets because they do not meet the international standards for food safety and quality.

According to Dr. Namrata Wakhaloo, ITC international consultant, implementation of the Food Safety Management System based on ISO 22000 standard and HACCP principles is considered one of the primary conditions for the production of foodstuffs and entry into developed countries' food markets. The number of developed countries has been increasing annually, and implementation of this system in Tajikistan food production companies is essential. Implementation of ISO 22000 standard will improve the product safety and quality and the level of customer satisfaction and makes companies products more competitive in local and international markets.

Mr. Bahridin Khojaev, Deputy General Director of Ilmi Istehsoli LLC noted that collaboration with ITC gave them a lot of benefits and implementation of the new Food Safety Management System according to ISO 22000 requirements could be as a good example. He says, "*we hope that ISO 22000 certification will significantly improve the image and reputation of our company, increase partners and clients' trust, hence open a new window of opportunities for exporting our products to foreign markets*".

*The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the technical cooperation agency of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). ITC supports developing and transition economies and particularly the business sector in efforts to realize full potential for developing exports.*

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