

# WTO NEGOTIATIONS OF ACCESSION: POLICY ADVICE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

29 July 2015. Dushanbe city

## Introducing Tajikistan to the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement

The representatives of the related Tajikistan governmental structures, private sector, business associations, and expert community gathered together to discuss the importance of trade facilitation, and to learn about the provisions of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and Tajikistan's WTO commitments on trade facilitation.

A two-day workshop on Trade Facilitation organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in the framework of the Government of Switzerland funded Trade Cooperation Programme in Tajikistan was concluded today, on 29 July, in Dushanbe.

The workshop is part of the joint efforts of the Republic of Tajikistan and the ITC to establish and launch the Tajikistan Trade Facilitation Committee (TTFC). The TTFC is expected to play the role of a state coordination body to simplify and harmonize international trade procedures. Establishment of this mechanism is required by the WTO as part of the implementation of the TFA's provisions. A report on ["Establishing the National Trade Facilitation Committee in Tajikistan: From Definition to Validation"](#) was prepared and disseminated among the stakeholders by the ITC and is available for the wider audience in English and Russian.

Ms. Octavia Cerchez, ITC International Consultant on Trade Facilitation (TF), emphasizes that *"trade facilitation, especially when concerning at-the-border and behind-the-border issues, requires working with and across many institutions (organizations/agencies) within the country, and at many different levels within these institutions. Not all of these institutions have complete control over their policy and institutional functions. For example, while Customs enforces and collects tariffs, the actual policy on tariffs is set by finance, or commerce, or economic planning ministries. The work of the TTFC requires building consensus between institutions that often have very divergent views of trading across borders. Therefore, national trade facilitation bodies are most effective if they have an authorizing environment such that the various institutions instrumental to facilitating trade clearly understand their accountability towards the trade facilitation body, and its national development agenda, which includes: increasing Tajikistan's competitiveness, increasing trade led growth, creating jobs, and enhancing investment in the economy"*.

In the long-term, the Tajikistan trade environment will benefit from a reduction of the transaction costs of cross-border operations, both financial and time wise.

The ITC, through this technical assistance project, is committed to support Tajikistan's public and private sector in strengthening their knowledge of the opportunities and challenges stemming from WTO membership.

**Swiss support:** Within its Cooperation Strategy for 2012-2015, Switzerland focuses on four sectors in Tajikistan: Health, Rule of Law, Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, and Private Sector Development. The overall goal of Swiss Cooperation in Tajikistan is to support the transition process in the country through contributing to economic development and by helping build institutions and systems which are responsive to the population's needs. [www.swisscoop.tj](http://www.swisscoop.tj), [www.deza.admin.ch](http://www.deza.admin.ch), [www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch](http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch)

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