



## Inclusive Sustainable Economic Domain (ISED) Trade Promotion East Program



The Trade Promotion East Program aims to enhance competitiveness and sustainable export growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in agro-processing in SECO's Eastern partner countries.

### Rationale

In SECO's Eastern partner countries agro-processing represents an important sector of the economy, contributing significantly to trade, economic growth and employment. However, SMEs engaged in the sector generally lack competitiveness and diversification in the products they offer as well as the markets they sell to. Sector-specific business support services and coordination between stakeholders are inadequate. Therefore, a need exists for increasing the share of processed and added-value production and strengthening the access to more diversified global markets.

The project will focus on the subregions of the Western Balkans (Albania and Serbia) and Central Asia (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Agrobusiness was identified as a viable priority sector for assistance across all four countries as it additionally provides significant potential for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups and plays a particular role in meeting the SDGs. The selection of specific value chains (fresh and processed fruits, aromatic plants, and vegetables) is based on the potential to export to global markets, the export readiness of SMEs, ongoing in-country trade support by other donors, the public sector and the private business commitment.

### Country:

Albania, Serbia, Uzbekistan,  
Tajikistan

### Duration:

2022-2026

### Total Budget:

CHF 5'500'000

Budget for Uzbekistan

### SECO Contribution:

CHF 5'500'000

### Executing Agency:

International Trade Center ITC

## **Objectives and activities**

The Program aims to improve the capacity, support system and regulatory environment of export-oriented enterprises in the agro-processing sector of the four countries. Essentially, entrepreneurs and institutions are envisaged to be better capacitated and connected, thus creating sustained export growth of SMEs and more decent jobs.

## **The Program will work on micro, meso and macro level with the following expected outcomes**

- Strengthened competitiveness and internationalization of SMEs in the sector. This is achieved by enhancing their understanding of market requirements, introducing quality standards, improving the social and environmental performance of their operations and establishing new business linkages to increase value added production and expand sales.
- Improved performance of business support organizations in the sector (e.g. sector associations, training institutes, private consultants, public service providers). This is done by capacity building of these organizations such that they offer services demanded by SMEs, including market analysis and research, e-commerce, corporate social responsibility, or resource efficiency.
- Better framework conditions and collaboration in the sector. This is achieved by the promotion of regulatory improvements and sector-specific exchange between public and private actors.

## **Expected results**

The program focuses on export-ready/high-export potential SMEs, but will also reach a fairly large number of small or very small enterprises not immediately likely to become active in foreign markets. They will access improved services offered by local BSOs, participate in activities arranged by the associations, systematically access lessons learned by larger group of enterprises, and cooperate with them in marketing or production. Local authorities and other government institutions will benefit from cooperation on regulatory reform and sector-wide coordination and indirectly from the involvement of their staff in trainings and other project activities. Thus the Program will contribute to enhanced competitiveness and sustained export growth of SMEs in selected sectors in Uzbekistan.

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