



**USAID**  
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# 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

Since 2016 USAID's Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs activity has facilitated over \$106 million of export trade deals and transport and logistics services. USAID has been partnering with key private and public sector actors in each of the five Central Asian countries in the following areas:

### 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 policy and institutional reform as well as cost-shared trade facilitation initiatives with private firms. Recent examples in 2021 include consulting services that led to a doubling of yields for [apple growers in Turkmenistan](#); support for [expanded trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan](#); and [helping women artisans and entrepreneurs expand digital trade](#). USAID has selected 40 novel and innovative ideas from among concepts submitted by 150 companies across the five countries of Central Asia and contributed one-fourth (about \$1.95 million) of the total cost of almost \$8 million to realize these ideas. Winning ideas ranged from [preserving handmade carpetmaking techniques](#) in Bukhara, Uzbekistan to the trial production and [export of a new variety of watermelon](#) from Tajikistan to Lithuania, and the [modernization of apricot processing lines in Tajikistan](#).

### C5+1

C5+1 is a diplomatic platform that brings together the five states of Central Asia and the United States to cooperate in areas of common concern. USAID supports C5+1 initiatives with technical assistance on trade cooperation in the region. This assistance includes working with customs and sanitary and phytosanitary authorities to improve trade facilitating services. Results have included the training of 254 customs officials on Authorized Economic Operator programs, transit, goods classification, and integrity as well as 115 phytosanitary officials on pest management.

With USAID's support, Uzbekistan joined the [International Plant Protection Convention](#) and the Revised Kyoto Convention. USAID partnered with national export promotion agencies to develop a ten-step [horticulture export guide](#) and conduct four training courses on the diversification of horticulture export sales. USAID also developed an electronic [Directory of Central Asian Horticulture Exporters](#) showcasing export-ready growers, processors, and trading companies interested in new markets outside the region.

### **THE CENTRAL ASIA TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP**

USAID is supporting this important regional partnership as it responds to the needs of its members. Within the C5+1 initiative, USAID has continued to support the [Central Asia Transport and Logistics Partnership](#) and its 140 members from all five countries and Afghanistan 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. Supported by members from Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, a newly launched "Kostanay – Herat" transport-food center based in Kazakhstan facilitated the export of 10,000 tons of flour from Kazakhstan to Afghanistan. In addition, [adoption of cutting edge transport and logistics standards in Kazakhstan](#) will be replicated in other countries of the region. USAID and the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transportation supported the launch of the first branch of "Women in Logistics and Transportation" (WiLAT) in Central Asia and Afghanistan. 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 national committees](#) towards the recovery of the travel industry in the region and to increase connectivity to a global adventure tourism network. In 2021 it supported a six-month social media marketing campaign that reached more than 14 million viewers with over 21 million post impressions crafted to inspire future travel to the region. USAID is supporting [local tourism stakeholders](#) in promoting regional adventure tourism to a global audience. As part of this campaign, USAID's Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs activity worked with [WideOyster magazine](#) to create a dedicated magazine issue on Central Asia. Overall, 52 social media posts generated 2,037,867 social media impressions and 695,380 views of country specific magazine articles in four languages. A series of USAID-supported summer and winter familiarization tours by 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 tour products and strengthen service delivery. Hundreds of tour operators and guesthouses have benefited from online marketing training.

### **SUPPORTING THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) ACCESSION PROCESS**

The WTO facilitates global trade through the consistent application of rules and procedures. USAID is helping the Government of Uzbekistan in its quest for WTO membership with assistance in various areas including customs modernization and in the preparation of 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. The tenth forum, the first-ever virtual event, took place from November 16-20, 2020. Recent forums have been held in Almaty, Tashkent, and Shymkent. Save the date for the eleventh forum scheduled for October 4-8, 2021.

### **COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a global shift from in-person to remote delivery of assistance. In addition to conducting over 169 webinars for more than 5,300 participants between April 2020 and April 2021, several unique virtual activities have been developed. These include virtual matchmaking exercises between 30 Central Asian growers and 43 buyers from across the world.

## **CONTACT**

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