



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 agreement was used by the Government of Uzbekistan to negotiate 22 investment agreements that leveraged approximately \$2 billion in investments from the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, Turkey, UAE, and other countries.
- The program supported the development of recommendations to incorporate international best practices into several legislative acts, including on civil legislation, intellectual property,

licensing and permits, international arbitration, the establishment of an Ombudsman for children, and gender equality.

- The program has trained over 11,000 specialists of the Ministry of Support of Mahalla and Family, government officials, journalists, and representatives of NGOs on implementation of gender legislation. In addition, over 200 members of Parliament improved their knowledge on gender approaches to law making and budgeting.

LEGAL EDUCATION

- Almost 3,000 legal professionals improved their skills and knowledge of international best practices in the following legal subjects through study visits and training: trial skills, judicial ethics, enforcement of arbitration decisions and foreign court judgments, provision of free legal services, mediation, legislative drafting, and intellectual property rights.
- Thirty-six new courses, including Legal English, Common Law, Legal Research, Legal Writing and Legal Clinics and others, have been included in the permanent curriculum of leading legal education institutions such as the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, the Tashkent State University of Law, and the Academy of the General Prosecutor's Office. These courses will enhance law graduates' skill sets in line with international practices.
- Almost 400,000 citizens benefited from the program-supported free legal website *advice.uz*, which hosts information on basic legal issues covering all areas of public life. Over 4,000 entrepreneurs received free legal advice from online consultants through the interactive online portal *Advice for Business*.
- The program supported capacity building for the Ombudsman's Office and its regional representatives through training on working on citizen appeals on human rights violations, monitoring observance of human rights, and working with civil society, law enforcement, and judicial bodies. To ensure access to justice across the country, the program provided equipment to the Ombudsman's Office that has already enabled over 600 citizens to apply online for legal assistance.
- The program supported the creation of the *Club of Judges* under the Supreme Judicial Council, composed of acting and retired judges, which issues general advisory opinions on the correct application of existing substantive and procedural law, and provides guidance on the application of ethics rules, at the request of individual judges. This is the first and only such institution in Uzbekistan.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

- The program facilitated signing of a trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation among the Ombudsman, the Chamber of Advocates, and national NGOs to establish a sustainable system of free legal aid for citizens with a focus on vulnerable populations as a follow-up to the national conference "Collaboration between Government and Civil Society on Legal Reform."
- Through the program, NGOs have provided free legal advice to over 120,000 citizens and increased the awareness of over 40,000 citizens about their rights and opportunities to access justice.

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