



AGRICULTURAL TRADE EXPERT NETWORK

IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Background

The FAO Regional Initiative “Improving Agrifood Trade and Market Integration in Europe and Central Asia” focuses on strengthening capacities of governments for implementing the main trade agreements in the region and dealing effectively with the challenges posed by greater trade integration.

It does so by developing better evidence on trade implications, improving the capacity of the countries to use this evidence, facilitating neutral forums and dialogues on trade agreements, and supporting the design and implementation of appropriate trade policies and programmes at country level.

The WTO agreements form a basis for global trade rules, and thus are a key element of any program to improve the policy environment for exports. The initiative builds capacity of civil servants and private industry in the region on WTO issues, including market access, domestic support measures, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues, technical barriers to trade, trade dispute resolution and trade facilitation.

Through this Initiative, FAO is supporting the Agricultural Trade Policy Expert Network in Europe and Central Asia. The Network has been created in 2014, bringing together experts in governments, private sector and academia who conduct research, carry out training programs and advise governments and private sector on issues related to agricultural trade and trade policy in the above-mentioned areas.

Objectives

- Provide a neutral and independent platform for knowledge and experience exchange on agricultural trade issues affecting Europe and Central Asia;
- Enhance the quality and relevance of agricultural trade research and strengthen collaboration among experts for analysis, capacity development and other initiatives in the region;
- Strengthen the capacities to provide technical advice and policy recommendations to governments and the private sector and improve communication and information sharing on trade policy issues with the wider community.

Expected outcomes

- A consolidated expert community actively involved in addressing the challenges associated with the promotion of agricultural trade in Europe and Central Asia;
- Improved quality of agricultural trade policy research and advisory services to governments on trade agreements and agricultural trade policy;
- Private sector and civil society more informed about the implications of trade policy changes on agriculture and engaged more effectively in dialogue with governments on agricultural trade issues.

Activities

Workshops, seminars, conferences, online training courses, publications, technical assistance, exchanges among researchers and experts as well as support to public-private dialogue on directions of agricultural trade policy.

Network participants

Today, the group includes 65 experts from leading academic institutions, government agencies and the private sector from most of the countries in the former Soviet Union.

Main activities during 2015 and 2016

■ Conference

Integration processes in the CIS region and their implications for agricultural trade in Kaliningrad, Russian Federation, 26-27 March 2015.

■ Training workshop

Agricultural technologies and trade policy in Central Asia: Issues and Prospects in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 26-27 May 2015.

■ Annual Meeting of the Agricultural Trade Policy Network in Europe and Central Asia

Minsk, Republic of Belarus, 8-9 October 2015.

■ FAO-UNITAR E-learning course

Resolving Agricultural Trade Issues through International and Regional Trade-related Agreements in the CIS region, 4-28 April 2016.

■ Expert Round Table- Best practices in export promotion

Experiences in Latin America, Europe and Central Asia in IAMO Halle (Saale), Germany, 24-25 May 2016.

Upcoming events

■ FAO-UNITAR E-learning course: Ensuring Agricultural Trade Policy Transparency in the post-Soviet countries, 12-30 September 2016

Transparency is an essential WTO principle stipulating that a country's policies and regulations affecting foreign trade should be clearly communicated to its trading partners. Prompt and comprehensive information about the conditions of trade is crucial for agricultural businesses involved in trade in post-soviet countries that are looking for predictability of market access. This course will assist participants in mastering domestic support and SPS transparency toolkits as well as WTO information databases and will allow them to benefit from the application of the transparency principle.

■ Workshop on Agricultural expert promotion in Kyrgyzstan, 18-19 October 2016

Kyrgyzstan has developed a new Export Development Plan (EDP) for the period of 2015-2016, which has as its main goal the development of the competitive export potential for sustainable economic growth. The dialogue event on export promotion will be held with the objective to contribute to the operationalizing of the EDP for the agricultural and food export from Kyrgyzstan through knowledge sharing among national and international experts and authorities.

■ Conference on regional and international cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: recent developments in agricultural trade in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 1-4 November 2016

The aim of the three-day conference is to mobilize the research capacities in the Caucasus and Central Asian countries through the exchange of knowledge and research findings among regional and international experts in areas related to market development, trade policy and food security.

Publications

■ Review of Agricultural Trade Policies in former Soviet Union countries 2014-15

A comprehensive study of the agricultural trade policies of 12 post-Soviet countries, in which moderate growth in the agriculture sector's share in total trade was observed across the region; however, the study revealed significant differences in national trade policies. The study is comprised of twelve chapters, one for each country¹, which begin with a brief introduction of the country's agriculture, following with an evaluation of recent trends in agricultural trade, information on the structure of exports and imports, tariff protection of internal market and the regulatory framework.

■ Monthly Newsletter "Overview of trade policy Europe and Central Asia" produced in Russian since May 2015

The Newsletter covers agricultural trade policy changes in the region, such as various trade measures and trade agreements, and includes trade statistics and articles by experts on pressing issues in their countries.

<http://www.fao.org/economic/est/international-trade/europe-and-central-asia/cispubs/en/>

¹ Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

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Agricultural Trade Policy Expert Network: www.fao.org/economic/cistrade/
Regional initiative: <http://www.fao.org/europe/regional-perspectives/agri-food-trade/en/>