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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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WTO accession and implications for agriculture in the post-Soviet countries (B)

Type:	Course
Location:	Web-based
Date:	4 Sep 2017 to 29 Sep 2017
Duration:	4 Weeks
Programme Area:	Public Finance and Trade
Website:	http://fao3.unitar.org
Price:	\$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	pft-elearning@unitar.org
Partnership:	Food

BACKGROUND

The transformation of agricultural markets as a result of political and economic transition in the post-Soviet countries was accompanied by the process of greater integration with world markets. The majority of the post-Soviet countries have been actively pursuing WTO accession after becoming independent states, creating new opportunities for fostering growth in agricultural trade. Eight of the countries are now members (Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Tajikistan), while Azerbaijan, Belarus and

Uzbekistan are still negotiating their accession. The region has a strong potential for expanding agricultural production, and therefore a reduction in trade barriers would reinforce the important role that some of these countries play as suppliers of agricultural commodities to world markets.

Benefitting from opportunities that WTO membership provides requires an informed and weighted approach in the post-accession period, both by the authorities and the private sector. Understanding and applying the provisions of the relevant agreements is the first step towards the implementation. But taking the full advantage of the participation in the global trading system also requires updating regulatory frameworks and adopting accompanying measures at the national level to improve the overall competitiveness of the agricultural sector.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

The course aims to equip participants with better understanding of WTO principles and rules that regulate global agricultural trade and accession commitments in agriculture assumed by the new WTO member states among the post-Soviet countries. It also seeks to raise awareness among the participants of the relationship between the changes in trade policy and domestic policy reforms in the agricultural sector.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course aims to equip participants with a better understanding of both WTO principles and rules that regulate global agricultural trade, and the accession commitments in agriculture assumed by the new WTO member states among the post-Soviet countries. It also seeks to raise awareness among the participants of different options for agricultural policy reforms and support programs needed to smooth the transition to a new trade regime.

By the end of the course, participants will be better able to:

Describe the WTO agreements and country-specific accession commitments related to agriculture and food security;

Assess the challenges and opportunities that the WTO membership poses for

their country's agricultural sector;

Identify areas where adjustments in agricultural policy and regulatory frameworks would be needed to comply with the accession commitments and to ease the transition to greater trade openness.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

This is the third and revised edition of course. Two previous versions were concluded in 2014.

The course is composed of three modules:

Module 1: The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) of the WTO

Module 2: The Agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS Agreement) and other relevant WTO agreement

Module 3: WTO and the CIS countries: Accession and implementation issues in agriculture

Fees: The course is offered free of charge. Limited slots are available and will be subject to a selection process conducted by FAO. Please register early to be considered.

METHODOLOGY

The course will be conducted in Russian over a period of four weeks, organized in three modules. The course will be delivered via the e-learning platform developed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) using training materials developed by FAO. This pedagogical tool will help participants meet the course's learning objectives through a self-paced study routine with optional and required readings, case study exercises, discussion forums and assessment quizzes. The course will be facilitated and mentored by international experts who have a wealth of practical experience to ensure that real-world examples which facilitate experiential learning are integrated into the coursework.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

This course is designed to assist representatives from Ministries of Agriculture as well as other government ministries and officials directly involved in the formulation and implementation of agricultural policies and programs in the post-Soviet countries, including national food safety and phytosanitary authorities. Private sector participants such as representatives from producer associations and agro-industry will also benefit from the course. Researchers and students with interest in agricultural policy and trade analysis are also encouraged to participate. Priority will be given to policy makers, practitioners who impact agricultural trade through regional, national or sector-level actions, and professionals who are able to convey information and provide technical advice to their constituencies (trainers, professional staff of producer organizations, extension officers etc.).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course is offered free of charge as part of training activities under FAO's Regional Initiative on Agrifood Trade and Market Integration. Limited slots are available and will be subject to a selection process conducted by FAO, taking into account in particular, the geographical distribution and gender balance. Priority will be given to the focus countries of the Initiative: Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

In the preparation of this course FAO draws from its extensive experience with providing guidance, capacity building and technical advice to its member countries on agricultural trade policy and multilateral trade negotiations, as well its normative work on the SPS issues.

A certificate of completion will be issued to participants who successfully complete all course-related assignments and assessments.

Participants who will show the strongest learning results as evidenced by assessments and meaningful participation in course discussions will be invited by FAO to a follow-up face-to-face workshop on WTO accession issues. The organizers will also consider in the selection process how the participants will sustain their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of a wider audience in the post-Soviet countries. The workshop will take place on 5 October 2017 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Up to ten slots for participants from this course are available. The organizers reserve the right to select eligible participants based on recommendations by the course mentors as well as availability of resources for

the workshop.