

PRESS-RELEASE

The Fifth Meeting of the Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Produce from Central Asia

From June 21 to 22, 2021, in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, the fifth meeting of the Central Asian Working Group on Export Promotion of Agricultural Produce from Central Asia (CAWG) was held. The meeting brought together stakeholders from the Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Kazakhstan to discuss plans for further cooperation. The aim was to develop coordinated position and vision on promoting commercial quality standards, food safety of agricultural products, increasing the competitiveness of the region and promoting of export.

The Participants of the Central Asian Working Group jointly summarized the results so far achieved during 2020 - 2021 and considered the following priorities: proposals for amending current UNECE's Standards taking into account products exported from the region, drafting the explanatory materials on fresh and dried agricultural products, discuss the strategies and plans for joint activities to enhance knowledge of UNECE's Standards and food safety (incl. Global GAP) among producers, processors and exporters.

Considering that the promotion of geographical indications (GI) could improve the image of agricultural products in Central Asia, as well as countries in foreign markets, the implementation of the best international practices for the identification and designation of regional agricultural products (GI) was discussed and agreed. The set of planned marketing activities was aimed at promoting a group of goods, the quality of which was determined by their place of origin and the unique combination of local natural resources and cultural values of the production area.

The activities of the CAWG included the harmonization of several methods of product promotion in the following areas:

- *ensuring the compliance of agricultural products with the marketing and commercial quality control standards;*
- *ensuring the compliance of agricultural products with food safety standards;*
- *implementation of the best international practices of identification for agricultural products, which will increase the recognizability of Central Asian products and participating countries in foreign markets.*

The participants of the CAWG meeting was the representatives of the state bodies, e.g., standardization bodies, export agencies, ministries of economy and agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Kazakhstan, business associations and representatives of the private sector - producers, processors and exporters of CA region.

This meeting was organized by the "CANDY V" consortium led by the Austrian internationally active organization Hilfswerk International in the framework of the project "Regional integration and capacity building to boost Agribusiness MSMEs competitiveness and trade Promotion in Central Asia – CANDY V", funded by the European Union program "Central Asia - Invest V" and the Austrian Development Cooperation jointly with the UNDP Regional project "Aid for Trade for Central Asia" funded by the Government of Finland.

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The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 60 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders. To this end the EU is active in Tajikistan since 1992 and provides approximately EUR 35 million annually in development assistance.

The project is funded also by the Austrian Development Cooperation. The Austrian Development Cooperation supports countries in Africa, Asia, South Eastern and Eastern Europe in their sustainable development. The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs plans the strategies. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation, implements programs and projects together with public institutions, civil society organizations as well as enterprises.



Since 1978, the internationally active Austrian non-governmental organization **Hilfswerk International (HWI)**, in close cooperation with local mission offices and partners all over the world combats poverty through the promotion of economic and social development intended to lead to a process of sustained economic growth, linked to structural and social change. In the last twelve years in Central Asia, HWI has been uniting the efforts of 13 regional and EU organizations to substantially contribute to Central Asia's integration into the global economy by developing the fruit and vegetable processing sector and increasing the competitiveness and export capacity of SMEs. Since 2020 HWI implements in equal partnership with Central Asian & EU organizations its fifth project as part of the "Central Asia – Invest" program of the European Union.



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UNDP Regional Project "Aid for Trade for Central Asia"

The project focuses on supporting Central Asian countries in promoting inclusive and sustainable growth patterns in rural areas and within green productive sectors.

The project is working on the **macro** (policy), **meso** (institutions) and **micro** (SMEs & producers) levels ensuring that interventions at the three levels are mutually supportive to ensure a focused impact level. The output levels are targeting the following:

- Supporting an enabling environment for job-rich sustainable growth.
- Supporting market opportunities for all through more efficient and competitive producers and processors.

The main objective of the project is to contribute to human development through advancing trade, with special attention on the crosscutting themes of gender equality, rights of the most vulnerable groups in society, and environmental sustainability, among others. (The project is implemented in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan). UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations. www.undp.org

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:



ASSOCIATION OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ENTERPRISES IN KYRGYZSTAN (AFVE) was established in June 2003 and currently unites most fruit and vegetable enterprises in the country, developing the fruit and vegetable processing sector and enterprises by creating a favorable business environment and developing the market for processed products. The "Association of fruit and vegetable enterprises" is a non-governmental, non-profit organization uniting legal entities engaged in the production and processing of agricultural produce, on the basis of free will and common interests.



MARKAZI IDORAKUNII SIFAT (MIS) – Public Consulting Organization is professional union of specialists, working in the field of introduction of advanced quality control systems, and implementing the activity, aimed at the enhancement of management methods, and as a result, the quality of the services provided. Since 2012 work for contribution in the sustainable economic development of Tajikistan through strengthening organization and institutional potential of the domestic producers via implementation of training programs and provision consulting services.



UNION OF PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS OF TAJIKISTAN (UPCT) is a non-profit organization uniting professional consultants to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of consulting services, increase the level of professional development of consultants and provide high-quality services to government bodies, public associations, business and society as a whole. UPCT was established in 2010. The organization has experience in matters related to: developing economic development reforms by using and implementing international best practices; legal analysis of documents, preparation of legal opinions, development of recommendations and development of regulatory legal acts in many areas of the economy; monitoring legislation and tracking changes in the regulatory framework of the Republic of Tajikistan; facilitating the work of working groups to improve the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of business environment, investment climate and private sector development, as well as simplifying trade procedures and lobbying of private sector interests.



The Association of Legal Entities "**KAZAKHSTAN ASSOCIATION OF SUGAR, FOOD AND PROCESSING INDUSTRIES**" (**KASFPI**) is a non-profit organization established in 2012 that unites the leading producers of white sugar in Kazakhstan, as well as producers and processors of fruits and vegetables. The purpose of the Association is to support and promote the development of enterprises in the food and processing industries of the Republic of Kazakhstan, participation in law-making activities and strengthening business ties with foreign partners.