

Regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Kazakhstan



Needs Assessment

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Foreword

The International Trade Center (ITC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) are pleased to present the needs assessment study of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Republic of Kazakhstan. We would also like to express our appreciation to Kazakhstan's Centre for Trade Policy Development under the Ministry of Economic Development, which cooperated with both ITC and UNECE in preparing the study.

Trade can contribute directly to job creation and productive capacity development by stimulating investment and technology transfer. Some countries, including Kazakhstan, do not derive all of these possible benefits owing to their distance from global markets and owing to complex regulatory and procedural measures that inflate transaction costs and undermine competitiveness.

In Kazakhstan, such measures tend to create trade barriers of greater significance than tariffs. This study analyses these barriers in depth. It also makes practical recommendations for the Government to consider, in order to generate more inclusive and diversified economic growth.

ITC carried out a survey of non-tariff measures to ascertain which areas in the domestic business environment could be improved, and identify obstacles faced by companies in foreign markets. It also trained national experts on the implementation of the survey. For its part, the UNECE carried out a survey of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade using a detailed questionnaire that was attached to the ITC survey. The UNECE also carried out face-to-face interviews with relevant State agencies, service providers and trade support institutions using actor-oriented questionnaires based on its evaluation methodology. The UNECE also trained national and regional experts on the use of the evaluation methodology.

This study is especially timely as Kazakhstan's recent advances in regional and multilateral integration promise to create new opportunities for trade. Kazakhstan has been undertaking comprehensive reforms to ensure the successful implementation of its Customs Union with Belarus and the Russian Federation and to achieve complete adherence to the World Trade Organization-administered multilateral trading system.

We hope that the recommendations proposed in this joint report will provide an impetus for further improving the regulatory and procedural framework that governs export and import activities in the Republic of Kazakhstan.



Michael Møller
Acting Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



Arancha González
Executive Director
International Trade Centre

Preface by the Secretariat

The Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the UNECE recommended at its thirty-fourth session in February 2010 that the Committee on Trade carry out three trade needs assessment studies in selected UNECE member countries and/or sub-regional groupings with economies in transition.

These studies focus on procedural and regulatory barriers to trade in goods, with an eye to on-going development efforts in the areas of trade facilitation, technical regulations and standardization policies. The findings of the studies will be used to: assist countries in their efforts to achieve greater regional and global economic integration; inform donors as to where assistance might be required; and strengthen policy discussions within the Committee on Trade and its subsidiary bodies on where additional work is required.

This study summarizes the findings of the second UNECE trade-needs-assessment, which focuses on the Republic of Kazakhstan. The study was conducted in 2011-2012 pursuant to a request by the Government, and is based on a review of trade facilitation and quality assurance development efforts leading up to the establishment of the Customs Union (CU) of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation until 2012, as well as the results of in-depth face-to-face interviews with 57 stakeholders using the UNECE evaluation methodology.

The stakeholders comprise 24 representatives from State agencies, enterprise support institutions, logistics service providers and transport operators, who were approached in 2011 by UNECE regional consultants. The traders were approached in 2012 by a national consulting company, the Institute of Social and Political Research - (ISPR) within the context of a joint UNECE – International Trade Centre (ITC) assessment of non-tariff measures and technical regulations in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The ISPR carried out face-to-face interviews with traders from priority non-resource based sectors identified by the Government using the joint ITC-UNECE questionnaire that combined the ITC Company Survey with a special UNECE annex on trade facilitation. Budgetary constraints meant that the annex on trade facilitation was addressed to 28 only traders. This study draws on the results emerging from the interviews with these traders. The UNECE also conducted follow-up interviews with an additional 5 traders, who were approached by a regional consultant to gain clarity on specific issues and fill in information gaps.

The UNECE trade needs assessment study also includes an in-depth examination of administrative and regulatory procedures underpinning the export of priority food products identified by the Government, using the UNECE Business Process Analysis Methodology. The analysis focused on four products (pasta, flour, biscuits and candies), and the results are provided in Annex 1.

The needs assessment was implemented in close consultation with the Kazakh National Advisory Committee (NAC), which was established from the start of the assessment process to act as the UNECE and ITC counterpart. The NAC brings together representatives from relevant ministries and private sector support institutions under the leadership of the Kazakh Minister for Economic Integration.

This study was prepared by the Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division of the UNECE to serve as a basis for consultations with key stakeholders. It takes into account the comments and recommendations emerging from the 2012 session of the Committee on Trade, and from a national stakeholders workshop, "Stakeholders Meeting on Evaluation of Existing Non-Tariff and Technical Regulations in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Results and Suggestions", which was organized on 14 March 2013 by the Centre

for Trade Policy Development of the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning in Astana to solicit feedback from national stakeholders and development partners. The study also takes into account comments received during bilateral meetings and written comments received from the Government after the workshop.

The practical action-oriented recommendations from the assessment provide an important input to the Republic of Kazakhstan's trade development efforts, and to the UNECE's work with the CU of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

Acknowledgments

Part I of this study was undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It was prepared by Ms. Hana Daoudi under the supervision of Mr. Mika Vepsäläinen. The UNECE Secretariat would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following consultants: Gulnara Sultanalieva, who conducted face-to-face interviews with officials and other key stakeholders involved in supporting trade facilitation; Nuritdin Dzhambankulov, who conducted face-to-face interviews with State agencies responsible for Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology; and, Oleg Samukhin, who carried out the Business Process Analysis.

Part I was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Russian Federation.

Part II of this study was prepared by The International Trade Center (ITC). ITC is deeply grateful towards the enterprises and experts that agreed to be interviewed and shared their experiences on the issue of trade barriers. This report was authored by Madina Kukenova under the supervision of Olga Solleder. Olga Solleder managed the survey implementation with the help of the ITC non-tariff measures team. The interviews were conducted by a local consulting firm, Institute of Social and Political Research (ISPR) and Madina Kukenova. Gaukhar Balykbaeva, Nina Bezrukova and Yergaly Toleuov greatly supported Madina Kukenova in carrying out additional interviews with companies and stakeholders in Kazakhstan. Anders Aeroe, Mika Vepsäläinen and Hana Daoudi provided helpful comments. Érika Álvarez edited selected parts of the report, Adbellatif Benzakri calculated tables and statistics, while Alina Gilmanova and Samidh Shrestha provided research assistance.

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ECE and ITC would like to acknowledge the contribution of all national stakeholders, who proposed concrete policy recommendations during the “Stakeholders Meeting on Evaluation of Existing Non-Tariff and Technical Regulations in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Results and Suggestions”, which was organized on 14 March 2013 by the Centre for Trade Policy Development of the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning in Astana to solicit feedback on the preliminary findings of the joint study. The ECE and the ITC would also like to extend their gratitude for the Centre for Trade Policy Development, which hosted and organized the Stakeholder Meeting.

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