

# EU Central Asia Invest Newsletter

Nov 2020-Feb 2021



Dear EU CAI Colleagues,

## **Welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> newsletter of the EU Central Asia Invest (CAI) programme's Network.**

Since the beginning of the year Central Asia's economies have, despite new waves of infection and lingering economic insecurities, slowly but surely started to reopen. Doing business remains challenging and social distancing continues to be practices across the region. Newly released data on excess deaths is revealing how hard Central Asia was actually hit by COVID-19. The first version of the 2021 newsletter aims to capture these uncertain developments. EU CAI project managers have kindly shared their perception of the situation on the ground and the challenges of continuing business amidst decreasing government support and general economic hardship. These developments invariably have consequences on the work of the EU CAI projects, but this newsletter shows that EU CAI projects are adapting. In person meetings have been replaced where possible with webinars, and training sessions now focus on digital methods and how to adapt to conditions of crisis.

This newsletter is shared with EU CAI project managers, business associations, EU delegations and partner organisations. to help projects, dispersed as they are across Central Asia, identify common areas and opportunities between their work areas.

We would also encourage you to visit the <http://www.eu-cai.org> website, where you can find updates on the CAI projects and OECD work. Please feel free to share any news or developments with us whenever you can. We are happy to create dedicated posts on your project – please find the example of BOOST's opening conference [here](#).

We would like to thank you for your contributions and we look forward to meeting you in person to discuss your projects and updates as soon as is safe to do so.

Talisa zur Hausen  
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### **1. CAI IV Programme: Funded Projects**

#### **PROMHOUSE – Promoting professional housing management**

##### *Project objectives and implementers*

The overall objective of the PROMHOUSE project is to empower and strengthen private companies in the housing management sector in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The project is implemented by Housing Initiative for Eastern Europe (IWO e.V.), the European educational centre for the housing and real estate industry (EBZ), the Association of the organizations of professionally managing and serving housing funds from Tashkent and the SHANYRAK Association of management entities, services and energy service in housing sector.

##### *COVID-19: What is the current situation in the project countries?*

The housing sector has been primarily affected by the impacts of COVID-19. As many employees have moved to work remotely, the usage of all house systems - water, gas, electricity, heating - has increased and the amount of waste has grown. Also, as a result of the decreasing income of the population, management companies are experiencing a shortage of funds due to the fact that residents cannot pay the full amount for utility services. In addition, professional housing management and maintenance companies continue to intensify maintenance, disinfection and

cleaning of premises and common areas. Thus, management companies did not only cease their activities, but they have worked on an even tighter schedule. In a project article [«Management Companies: Taking Risks, Responding to the Challenge»](#), Uzbekistan's management companies speak about the new challenges to small businesses in the housing and utilities sector posed by the pandemic. But despite all the difficulties, work is stabilising, and new methods of communication via mobile phone, internet, including various messengers and online applications, have been adopted.

#### *How is the situation affecting your work?*

2020 was a difficult year for all of us. The pandemic has not only changed our personal plans, but inevitably affected the implementation of the project, in particular changing the format of the project events. However, it allowed us to obtain new skills and learn previously unused approaches in project management. Moving events online allowed us to nevertheless achieve the planned goals and objectives of the project for 2020.

#### *Latest news and events*

We were able to adapt our project work well to the new conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we could not undertake the Study Tour to Germany for our project partners from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan we instead realized the first phase of the program "Training for Trainers (ToT)", which consisted of 17 webinars on 7 major modules:

- Establishing and managing residential property
- Caretaker
- Teaching methods / Organisation of vocational training
- Digitalisation
- Communication
- Advanced service 'Qualification'
- Building and engineering systems / Energy efficiency

In mid-December 2020, the first phase of the ToT programme was completed. More detail on the trainings can be found online in [Russian](#) and [English](#).

An international seminar on 'Inter-sectoral Cooperation in Energy Efficient Modernisation of Buildings' was jointly organised on 9-10 December 2020, with participants from Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The second day of the event was opened with the section «Experience of energy refurbishment of residential buildings in Central Asian countries». The partners from Uzbekistan - the large management companies Service Company LLC and Facility Management Group LLC - spoke about the need to improve the energy efficiency of new construction. The practical experience of energy modernisation of the housing stock in Kazakhstan, accumulated in international projects of UNDP KAZ (associated partner of PROMHOUSE) was presented. Read more in the article [«Experience in modernisation of housing in Kazakhstan»](#)

### **BOOST - Businesses and Organizations in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan operate sustainably**

#### *Project objectives and implementers*

BOOST's overall objective is to strengthen BIOs in their capacity to offer services specifically in the area of energy efficiency, textile, agri-business and food-processing. It remains a effort of the lead applicant *sequa* and its co-applicants, *the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyrgyzstan*

(CCIK), Voka - Chamber of Commerce and Industry Antwerp-Waasland, and the Uzbekistan Textile and Garment Association as associated partner.

*COVID-19: What is the current situation in the project countries and how is this affecting the implementation of the project?*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, project activities such as project management, meetings, and most of the trainings have been adapted to an online or a hybrid format. The project started with trainings to build the necessary capacity with staff and partners to be able to work and train virtually. From July to December 2020 a regular training programme for BIOs and companies was successfully implemented in a virtual manner or combined online/offline (hybrid) trainings.

#### *Latest events*

- Oct 10-Nov 11, 2020: Training and Workshops on Access2Markets (International Market Regulations and Requirements) with 14 sessions for both BIOs and potential/active exporting companies. The training was conducted by Luc van Looveren from VOKA (Antwerp Chamber of Commerce and Industry) with participants from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
- Oct-Dec 2020: 3 trainings (with 8 modules each) and coaching on Entrepreneurship for Jobseekers and Start-ups in Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken in Kyrgyzstan. These trainings were carried out as a combination of on- and offline trainings.
- Oct 31-Dec 28, 2020: Training and coaching on Entrepreneurship for Jobseekers and Start-ups in Chirchiq, Uzbekistan (hybrid on/offline training).
- Dec 10, 2020: The Opening-Online Conference with offline events in 7 locations in both countries was successfully organized presenting the services BIOs offer to their members and non-members throughout the project.

More information can be found on <https://boost.support> and you can follow our project on <https://www.facebook.com/BoostBusinessSupport/> and <https://www.instagram.com/boost.support/>.

Telegram for Kyrgyzstan <https://t.me/boostsupportkyrgyzstan> and Uzbekistan <https://t.me/BoostSupportUzbekistan>

### **Silk Road CBT initiative: Connecting Central Asian Community-Based Tourism and European Markets**

#### *Project objectives and implementers*

The objective of the project is to boost investment, private sector development and promote economic diversification by strengthening the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) sector in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. To carry out the project, the consortium lead ACTED is working closely with the *Association of Private Tourism Agencies of Uzbekistan* (APTA), the *Kyrgyz CBT Association* (KCBTA), and the *Tajik CBT Association* (TCBTA) as both implementing partners and beneficiaries of the project's capacity building initiatives.

*COVID-19: What is the current situation in the project countries/ sectors?*

In both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the COVID-19 restrictions are easing and the official number of cases in both countries has been decreasing over the past months. However, some restrictions remain in place, including the fact that gatherings above 35 people remain banned, and the use

of face masks and hand sanitizers are strongly encouraged. International travel between the Central Asian countries is possible, but flight options remain limited.

The tourism sector remains of the hardest hit sectors in Central Asia as it is affected not only by national COVID-19 restrictions, but also by restrictions on international travel, restrictions in countries of origin and more general, by a general reluctance and a higher degree of uncertainty of tourists. We have reached out to other tourism projects in all three countries as well as the tour operators in Kyrgyzstan (meetings in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are planned) to ensure sound co-ordination, to avoid duplications and in general help best position the tourism sector in Central Asia for the upcoming seasons.

*How is COVID-19 affecting the implementation of the project?*

We are resuming some face to face activities, following internal COVID guidelines but we still plan for a majority of online activities (meetings, trainings, etc.) to make sure to remain as cautious as possible.

*Latest events*

- Nov 1-20 2020: Participatory needs-assessment: (i) among 11 Tourism Information Centres in Kyrgyzstan; (ii) among 3 Tourism Information Centres in Tajikistan
- Nov 2-3 2020: Training of Trainers on its Grassroots Organization Capacity Assessment (GOCA) tool in three Central Asian countries
- Nov 4-16 2020: Scoping study in Uzbekistan to define the country-specific modalities for adjusting the KCBTA model to the country
- Nov 15-20 2020: Scoping study in Tajikistan to define the country-specific modalities for adjusting the KCBTA model to the country
- Nov 27-28 2020 - Training of Trainers on its Grassroots Organization Capacity Assessment (GOCA) tool in three Central Asian countries
- Dec 2020-Jan 2021: Gap analysis of BIOs capacities in lobbying and advocacy in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. As a follow-up activity, by end of 1 Quarter of 2021, we will organize a 3-day regional training
- Jan 22-24 + Feb 2-4 2021: Training on financial literacy and business plan development to CBT BIOs – AMFI (Silk Road CBT Project Partner) to KCBTA
- Feb 5 2021: Silk Road CBT Partners Project Kick-Off Meeting Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan – ACTED and ECEAT – ONLINE

## **CANDY V - Regional Integration and Capacity Building to Boost Agribusiness MSMEs Competitiveness and Trade Promotion in Central Asia**

*Project objectives and implementers*

The project seeks to contribute to the growth of agribusiness MSMEs in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, thus fostering the integration of CA countries in global trade. This project is implemented in a consortium led by *Hilfswerk International* (HWI) in co-operation with *REDD France*, *Qualityaustria*, and numerous others.

*What is the current situation in the project countries/sectors?*

The Central Asian partners in consortium reported that the situation related to the pandemic is currently getting better. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan there are currently no mobility restrictions, yet meetings are still being conducted predominantly via online platforms. Offline/ in-person

meetings are also possible, even with state stakeholders, with strict sanitary measures in place. In Kazakhstan, 6 out of 14 regions are marked "red" (with high infection rate). In these regions, which also include Nur-Sultan and Almaty mobility restrictions are still in place. Mobility restrictions among the four project countries still exist that occur to be a great challenge for a regional four-country project. Therefore the CANDY V project continues conducting the project activities in a remote online mode.

### *News and latest events*

#### ➤ **Food safety standards (OP2)**

##### 1. Capacity Building in Integrated Management Systems:

- In October and November 2020 the fourth and last block of the training cycle "Integrated Quality Management Systems" (4 blocks x 5 days each) was finalized. The written and oral exams of participants were conducted on December, 3 – 4, 2020 and January 25 – 26, 2021 via Webex and Moodle platforms by the project partner Quality Austria. 20 consultants from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan successfully took the exam and will now receive the Certificate, issued according to the criteria of the EN ISO/IEC 17024, for Representative for Quality, Environment and Occupational Safety Management Systems (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 45001). The trainees are furthermore enabled to introduce the three international standards in an integrated manner.
- The project team will conduct several meetings with the certified consultants in the period of February and April 2021 to plan the start of the process of pilot introduction of integrated management systems in 16 SMEs in the region. The aim is to optimize all processes in the companies, enhance the quality of production and their competitiveness on regional and international markets.

##### 2. Global GAP harmonisation of law regulations:

- In November and December 2020 HWI, UPCT, MIS, AFVE and KASFPI conducted three online round tables: The aim was to agree on the institutional approach, form pre-conditions for the implementation of the Global G.A.P. standard with stakeholders. In a first step National Working Groups were established, which will facilitate the process of development of the National Interpretation Guidelines for Global G.A.P.
  - More details on the Kyrgyzstan version can be found here: <https://yadi.sk/i/5vJzaDwiIpdjiA>
  - More details on the Kazakhstan version can be found here: <https://yadi.sk/i/Su9rMnEaN-aVA>, and here: <https://yadi.sk/i/9NgmXOB9DDjp7g>.

#### ➤ **Product Promotion and Geographical Indication (GI) (OP3)**

- The Feasibility Studies on the 12 selected products with a GI potential are in progress. Two coaching sessions for the national experts, who collect the necessary information for the Feasibility Studies were conducted on 7th October and 5th November 2020 with the expert support of REDD and facilitation. A further feedback coaching session is planned for the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

#### ➤ **Scientific Entrepreneurial Platforms (SEP) (OP4)**

- The second SEP meeting in Tajikistan was held on 26 December 2020 in Khujand, 28 participants attended (26 offline and 2 online) the meeting. The meeting reported on the activities for 2020 and defined the framework of further cooperation for 2021, including practical courses for last-year students, study visits to enterprises and internships in SMEs.

Further information can be found in the following links:

- <http://www.afve.org/>
- <http://agroinform.asia/2020/06/26/kyrgyzstan-otkryvaet-puti-k-vneshnim-ryinkam-rasshiryaya-potentsial-selhozproduktsiy>
- <http://ca-network.org/news-and-events/>
- <https://consulting.tj/news/40.html>
- <http://www.hilfswerk.tj/en/>

## **ELSOFP - Expansion of Local Smallholder Organic Farming & Forest Products from Central Asia**

### *Project objectives and implementers*

ELSOFP Central Asia (*Expansion of Local Smallholder Organic Farming and Forest Products from Central Asia*) – aims to boost the competitiveness of MSMEs in the agri-forest-food sector of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The main implementing organisations are KAFLU, FiBL, RWUAS, CMQ and Ekomaktab<sup>1</sup>. Multiple project advisory partners and market development partners support the work. More information on all partners can be found [here](#).

### *What is the current situation in the project countries/sectors?*

Potential bigger volume contracts are currently under negotiation, as most MSME clients of the project have temporarily reduced production volumes. Some MSMEs temporarily cut their production during the peak of the crisis due to border closures and infected employees, resulting in increased staff turnover. However, during the past months, the situation has been changing for the better. Most sectors of the economy were included in the state anti-crisis plans e.g. in Tajikistan, the tax burden was shifted to the manufacturing and other services sectors. In Uzbekistan, MSMEs had access to credit funds. In Kyrgyzstan, the funds created however seem not always reached MSMEs due to spending on the social sector. Business associations involved in ELSOFP decided to reallocate costs (reduce transport costs and increase communication costs etc), and introduced additional procedures for conducting activities online etc. Timely solutions made it possible to maintain the volume of services performed remotely. All MSMEs / BIOs ELSOFP works with continued their operations and developed their financial sustainability through the provision of commercial on-line services.

### *How is the current situation affecting the implementation of the project?*

The ELSOFP project had to shift/adapt some OP activities (from 2021 to 2020 and vice versa), however, it did not impact the project main goals, so the team works full time and none of the activities were so far cancelled due to COVID-19, with the exception that all face-to-face

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<sup>1</sup> KAFLU (Kyrgyz Association of Forest and Land Users); FiBL (European Research Institute of Organic Agriculture); RWUAS (Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences); CMQ (Center of Quality and Management «Markazi Idorakunii Sifat»); Ekomaktab (Uzbekistan)

events/meetings from March to September 2020 were transferred to on-line mode (Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, etc).

### *News and latest events*

- Overall more than 50 B2B meetings were conducted (incl. face-to-face in January and February) between EU traders (Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Baltic States etc) and CA food producers as well as more than 1000 EU clients and traders were approached for positive CA products image enhancement and awareness (through purchasing value chains).
- Altogether 16 contracts were signed and goods were delivered of around 400 tons of CA food products, and other contracts are under negotiation.
- Via local media, business associations, national chambers of commerce, and through consortia partners mailing lists more than 8 000 forest and land users were approached in Kyrgyzstan, around 10 – 15 000 smallholders were approached in Uzbekistan, and more than 7 000 in Tajikistan.
- The ELSOFP platform was officially launched on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 which contains all the training, marketing, international standards, export, and other useful materials, which can be accessed at any time free of charge. The advantage of such an approach is that none of the users will be strictly participating in any particular training date or time taking into account the busy schedule of farmers/forest users and producers which was their primary feedback. All the materials can be downloaded for free in "shopping-basket" principle, therefore avoiding bulky chapters/documents but forming "manuals" reflecting only topics/questions necessary to each individual.
  - From Nov-Jan the website has had over 20 000 visitors for all modules and sections - for more info please visit - <https://rural-cluster.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/annual-report-elsofp.pdf>
- In 2021, numerous on-line and face-to-face trainings are planned (FSSC 22000, GLOBALG.A.P., EU Organic, NTFP, Geographical Indications), as well as events to promote products from Central Asia to EU markets, organizing the participation of regional MSMEs at international exhibitions, and much more
- The activity focus for 2021 is on-farm and NTFP producers mobilization in groups/clusters, to prepare them for one of the selected international certification schemes, and audit by the end of 2021. The same applies for MSMEs - various application tenders will be launched from February to April 2021.
- Awareness and collaboration with various Government Institutions as well as International Organizations, Research and scientific institutions as well as with MSMEs Unions and groups through the ToT approach are planned: <https://www.facebook.com/ELSOFP>
- New video materials and training modules will be developed, added, and shared not only via the online portal - <https://rural-cluster.org> but also via ELSOFP Youtube channel - [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtBgynK0HJ4\\_TuSFK6ZKWWw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtBgynK0HJ4_TuSFK6ZKWWw)

## **ENGINE - Capacity-building of industry associations serving engineering companies**

### *Project objectives and implementers*

ENGINE aims to improve services offered by industry associations to engineering companies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The project is implemented by the Latvian cluster organization CLEANTECH LATVIA and two partners – *The Association of Consulting Engineers of Uzbekistan*

(UZACE) and *Association of Water Supply and Sanitation Companies of Kazakhstan* (Su Arnasy, Kazakhstan) in close co-operation with local engineers and relevant MSMEs.

*What is the current situation in the project countries/sectors?*

The topicality of COVID-19 is still blooming in **Latvia**, reaching its highest point in November 2020, after which the emergency situation was declared. Shopping malls, restaurants and other public places are closed and on weekends residents must observe curfew. Most offices are working remotely from home, limiting the risks of virus spread. Given these restraints and reduction recommendations a lot of businesses are having a hard time keeping their business open and workforce employed. Although the government is contributing to businesses who are strongly affected by the pandemic, often it is not enough. By January 27 of 2021, the State Revenue Service had received 3637 applications for granting grants; the total amount of claims - 26 million EUR. At present, it is almost impossible to plan the further development of the virus spread, so the economic situation may also develop differently.

According to health authorities, **Kazakhstan** is experiencing a second wave of COVID-19 development, which is expected to peak in the second half of March. The increase in the incidence occurs in waves: some regions are periodically in the "yellow" or "red" zones and vice versa. Starting from February 1, it is planned to start mass vaccination of the population. In some territories, appropriate regimes of restrictions are introduced, up to a lockdown. Businesses, despite the support of the state (subsidizing loans and deferring taxes, other measures of financial support), suffered and continue to suffer losses.

Due to the pandemic, **Uzbekistan** has introduced temporary limitations on movement and restrictions on mass gatherings from early March, 2020 which continued till September, 2020 and started to cease limitations and take-off restrictions step-by-step from October, 2020. At the end of January, 2021 the government requested cafes, restaurants and other public catering places to close at 11pm. It is difficult to forecast how much time it will take to recover the economy, but, we see a slow recovery process of some of the businesses.

*How is the current situation affecting the implementation of the project?*

CLEANTECH LATVIA is continuing work by putting effort in attracting new financing and implementing new services and projects. Biggest challenge for activity implementation is the restriction to travel to partner countries and participate in networking events, but with new challenges comes new opportunities and we also have learned how to organize and hold remote events! The introduced restrictions practically exclude personal contacts, group events, study trips and visits to objects of interest. More than half of the employees work in a remote online format, direct contact meetings have become impossible. All communication is carried out in a remote format using the ZOOM platform. Due to the difficulty of the situation, the topic of the project has lost relevance for the local BIOs members (most of the BIOs representatives are concerned with surviving in difficult conditions). Project BIOs are experiencing the same. Although there are online contacts, their productivity and efficiency are minimal. This cannot but have a negative effect on the activities of the Kazakhstan Su Arnasy Association (AKSA): the volume of compulsory membership fees, the main source of funding, is decreasing, some collective members of AKSA are thinking about leaving it or suspending their membership. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Project in an adjusted state continues: according to the plan for 2021, it is supposed to focus the efforts of the KSA Project working group on conducting analytical work and creating conditions for conducting pilot courses on selected topics.

*Latest and upcoming news*

A year has flew by since the beginning of the project ENGINE and a lot of activities which were planned at the beginning, were transformed to a remote format. Also for 2021, activities of ENGINE are being planned remotely, assuming the large possibility that international flying will not be safe and allowed for the next year as well.

Unfortunately, we have noticed that several participants of our organized seminars lack good quality internet connection and people from far suburbs cannot join the seminars because of the absence of a computer and internet. Few project activities were delayed or pro-longed because of the pandemic, but the implementers of ENGINE are doing everything to catch up and adapt to constantly changing circumstances:

- At the end of 2020, 9 capacity building workshops of industry associations serving engineering companies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were held. Both associations – UZACE and KSA were working on their growth strategies with the help of an expert from Latvia, which specializes in corporate strategy planning, introduces partners to new approaches to promoting development, outlines the development of a sustainable and successful strategy and attraction of new customers. More information can be found here: <http://cleantechlatvia.com/en/2020/12/30/engine-capacity-building-workshops-for-industry-associations/>
- For 2021 both associations UZACE and KSA will work on the development strategic development plans prepared at the capacity building workshops, promote partners' networking, discuss various topics with working groups on certification issues and develop certification programs.

## **2. CAI Programme: OECD Policy Component Activities**

### **Through November-February, the OECD and the European Union organised:**

- Multiple country-specific capacity-building webinars ([Kazakhstan](#), [Turkmenistan](#) and [Uzbekistan](#)) based on the priorities included in the report on *Improving the Legal Environment for Business in Central Asia*. The webinars brought together experts, the private sector and development community representatives. EU CAI stakeholders also attended the webinars to share their feedback on the policy recommendations and their practical implementation
- [The launch of the peer review of Tajikistan](#), which will mainly focus on the country's investment promotion practices. The OECD will closely liaise with the State Committee on Investment and State Property to assess how to best improve its investment promotion framework and practices – particularly against the background of the expected dent in FDI's in the upcoming year.
- The publication of the [monitoring note on access to finance in Mongolia](#) in 2020, which discusses the implementation of recommendations provided by the OECD and endorsed by the government in 2016, and makes recommendations for further progress.
- Capacity-building webinars with the governments of [Mongolia](#) and [Afghanistan](#) to follow up on the recommendations provided in the country-specific peer review notes. Against the background of the recommendations and the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the OECD invited relevant experts to share their perspective.

### Upcoming events and reports:

- In March, the OECD will launch its report on Improving the Legal Environment for Business and Investment in Central Asia. The report presents priority areas for reform in each of the project countries of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.
- To assist project countries with the recommendations made in the report, the OECD will organise capacity-building events throughout 2021. The next one is planned for 25 March on the operational environment for SMEs in Kyrgyzstan.
- Following the release of [three regional reports on the effects of COVID-19 in Central Asia](#), the OECD will produce an overarching account of the pandemic's impact on the region's economies, offering a series of recommendations on ways to move forward from the crisis. The report will be released at the end of 2021 and includes a chapter on BIOs and their work, as to which interviews with EU CAI project partners are planned.
- The OECD is initiating its monitoring review with the Uzbek government on boosting SME internationalisation through better export promotion policies. It follows the [2017 peer-review](#) under the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Roundtable. To launch the work, a first scoping webinar is planned for the 25<sup>th</sup> of February.



All EU CAI project managers and BIOs are welcome to join the events and feed into the analytical process of the reports.

### **3. Calendar overview: 2021 CAI programme events**

All event dates remain tentative, linked to Covid-19 and government restrictions.

- Jan 21, 2021: LEB Capacity-building event on easing SME regulations and improving the operational environment for SMEs in Uzbekistan (OECD Component)
- Jan 22-24 + Feb 2-4, 2021: Training on financial literacy and business plan development to CBT BIOs (ACTED)
- Jan 28, 2021: Launch of the OECD peer review on investment promotion practices in Tajikistan (OECD component)
- Feb 2-4, 2021: Second Phase of Training of Trainers, Course for Caretakers (PROMHOUSE)
- Feb 5 2021 – Silk Road CBT Partners Project Kick-Off Meeting Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan – ACTED and ECEAT – ONLINE (ACTED)
- Feb 18, 2021: Launch of monitoring review and first working group meeting with the Uzbek government (OECD Component)
- Feb–Mar, 2021: Training and coaching on Public Private Dialogue (Advocacy) for BIOs in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (BOOST)

- Feb-March, 2021: LEB Capacity-building webinars with Central Asian governments (OECD Component)
- 10 Feb 2021: Feedback coaching session on Product Promotion and Geographical Indication (CANDY V)
- Apr 2021: Training and coaching on Access2Finance for BIOs and Consultants (BOOST)
- Apr 2021: Online Awareness Raising on Energy Efficiency for Uzbek and Kyrgyz companies (BOOST)

#### **4. FAO's call for proposal: Innovation to transform food systems**

##### **International Innovation Award for Sustainable Food and Agriculture**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the pleasure to inform its Members that the **call for applications for the second edition** of the **International Innovation Award for Sustainable Agriculture** on the theme ***"Innovation to transform food systems"*** is now open. Individuals, private companies and institutions worldwide are being called to submit agricultural innovations that demonstrate concrete results and contribute to the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development: <http://www.fao.org/innovation/awards/en/>. The Prize is sponsored by Switzerland. The call closes on 19 March 2021.

More information is included in the **terms and conditions** and the **application form** can be downloaded from the website.

Please find the details and link to the application in the attached communication.

[Innovation Award En.pdf](#) [Innovation Award Fr.pdf](#) [Innovation Award Es.pdf](#)