



SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2000-2012

Under the
**Support for Lebanon's Accession to the World Trade
Organization Project**

Funded by:
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Presented by Zouha Sakr- Chief Of Party, Booz Allen Hamilton USAID
funded WTO Project

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Summary of WTO Assistance (1)

- ▶ The U.S. Government has invested 12 years and over \$12 million to assist Lebanon to achieve full integration into the world economy and the multilateral trading system by securing membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- ▶ Technical and material support initiated in May 2000 and ends November 2012
- ▶ Due to the complexity of the accession process and the demands of the WTO negotiating partners, USAID's technical assistance has been very flexible and responsive to the needs of the Government of Lebanon
- ▶ During the past few years, the unstable situation shifted Lebanon's priorities and resulted in a protracted submission of WTO required documentation and a lag in legal and regulatory reforms



Summary of WTO Assistance (2)

- Although Lebanon has yet to accede to the WTO, the project has positioned the country to accede to the International Organization
- The WTO Accession Process has reached a point where political decisions have to be made to move forward
- Major WTO required documentation has been submitted to the WTO secretariat and draft laws have been provided
- However, some issues are yet to be addressed to fully bring Lebanon's foreign trade regime into conformity with WTO
- Bilateral negotiations are still at early stage. (The Project does not provide technical assistance in this domain)
- Legal reform has been slow and many WTO related law are still pending Parliament approval



Five main objectives of US Assistance to the Government of Lebanon for WTO Accession

1. Assist Lebanon with implementing key reform to bring its foreign trade regime into conformity with agreements
2. Assist Lebanon in preparing and finalizing required accession documents (ACC/4, ACC/5, ACC/8, and ACC/9)
3. Assist Lebanon in preparing for WTO working party meetings
4. Assist Lebanon in implementing recently enacted laws through training and institutional capacity building
5. Raise awareness and build private and public sector support for WTO accession



1. Assist Lebanon with implementing key reform to bring its foreign trade regime into conformity with agreements

US Assistance provided draft laws and assisted the Ministry of Economy and Trade in the drafting/ revision of nine major laws for compliance with WTO. More than 15 international experts were deployed on short term missions for this purpose. Examples include:

- Law on International Trade and Licensing
- Law on Standards and Technical Regulations
- Law on Food Safety
- Law on Animal Quarantine
- Law on Plant Quarantine
- Law on Anti-Dumping, Countervailing, and Safeguards measures
- Law on Competition
- Amendments to the Copyright law for conformity with TRIPS, Berne Convention, the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCP), and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT)
- Draft law to regulate the Cable TV sector and a draft interim law/Council of Ministers decision to regulate the Cable TV sector on an interim basis
- Reviewed the intellectual property rights section of the draft law on e-commerce for conformity with TRIPS
- Preparation of draft decisions to cancel profitability control and some import licenses
- Assistance in preparing the relevant legal document to enable Lebanon to join the PCT (The Patent Corporate Treaty)



2. Assist Lebanon in preparing and finalizing required accession documents (ACC/4, ACC/5, ACC/8, and ACC/9)

- ▶ As part of the accession process, acceding countries are required to submit a number of documents describing their trading regimes. These are: ACC1 (Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime), ACC/4 (data on agricultural domestic support), ACC/5 (data on services regime), ACC/8 (data on TBT and SPS measures), and ACC/9 (data on trips related laws)
- ▶ The USAID Project prepared a road map for Lebanon's Accession to the WTO in May 2000, (The Accession Master Plan)
- ▶ Through USAID's assistance the Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) was drafted in 2000 and submitted to the WTO. The MFTR is the key document that launches a country's multilateral negotiations to accede to the WTO.
- ▶ ACC/4, ACC/8, and ACC/9 were prepared, revised many times, and submitted to WTO Secretariat
- ▶ Lebanon has decided against submitting ACC/5 to the WTO
- ▶ Accession documents require constant updates subject to legislation change



3. Assist Lebanon in preparing for WTO Working Party meetings (1)

- ▶ Supported the planning and follow up of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Working Party meetings (**More than 1500 questions answered**)
- ▶ Provided on-the-job and formal training on negotiation skills with simulation exercises
- ▶ Assisted in proposing legal reform measures to conform with WTO member countries requests (i.e. amending Minister of Industry Decision No. 33/1 of 1977 on prior licenses and amending Minister of Labor Decision No. 147/1 of 2002 on the restriction of foreign natural persons to engage in import/export activities)
- ▶ Prepared and regularly updated list of laws/regulations that need to be amended per WTO member countries requests
- ▶ Sponsored members of the Lebanese delegation to the Working Party Meetings



3. Assist Lebanon in preparing for WTO Working Party meetings (2)

- ▶ Prepared numerous studies to prepare for Working Party meetings per request of the Ministry of Economy and Trade (i.e. A Comparative study on the protection on the protection data exclusivity)
- ▶ Prepared impact studies to empower decision makers to take appropriate negotiations positions, such as a study on data protection, a study protection of secret data, a study on the impact of WTO accession on selected services sectors (i.e Maritime transportation and courier services), etc..
- ▶ USAID developed a special econometric model for Lebanon (a unique, first of its kind model for the country) and used it to assess and document the impact of WTO accession on key sectors in Lebanon



4. Assist Lebanon in implementing recently enacted laws through training and institutional capacity building

- ▶ Provided extensive assistance and training to help establishing the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Enquiry Point at LIBNOR (Assistance including training of Staff and data collection and synchronization)
- ▶ Organized training courses on customs and copyrights
- ▶ Organized seminars on TBT and SPS
- ▶ Organized more than 4 seminars on Cable Piracy
- ▶ Organized more than 10 training courses on Intellectual Property Rights
- ▶ Organized more than 5 training courses on the implementation of the anti-dumping law
- ▶ Organized a training course on the international trade law dedicated to members of the Parliament



5. Raise awareness and build private and public sector support for WTO accession

- ▶ Developed and disseminated brochures on WTO, process of accession, requirements, benefits and challenges

- ▶ Provided training on topics related to WTO and WTO related legislation, including:
 - Trade negotiation skills
 - Subsidies in the agricultural and industrial sector
 - Anti-dumping, countervailing and safeguards International trade and licensing
 - Intellectual property Rights Week
 - General WTO issues
 - Cable Piracy
 - Participated on training on WTO and the ICT sector

- ▶ Met periodically with private sector (mainly chambers of commerce and representative of the pharmaceuticals sector) to discuss issues and concerns relating to WTO accession

- ▶ Briefed 14 parliamentarians on general WTO principles, process and impact of accession and disseminated written briefings



Remaining steps to achieve Accession

If Lebanon's highest political leadership is mobilized to back the necessary changes in the country, Lebanon can position itself for membership to the WTO. The following activities must be undertaken:

- Request a new Working Party Meeting and close the multilateral track of negotiations
- Address WTO member countries concerns
- Move WTO related reforms forward (i.e. send all draft laws to the Parliament and enact draft laws that are pending in front of Parliament)
- Identify legal texts that need to be amended as a result of the multilateral and/or bilateral negotiations and propose amendments
- Submit official revised offers on goods and services and engage in serious bilateral negotiations
- Continue public awareness and the raising of public support for the accession process
- Continue other WTO compliance activities (such as establishing an SPS enquiry point and designing effective system of inter-ministerial transfer of data and enhancing transparency through publication of all trade related legislation and draft legislation)