LEGAL REFORM PROGRAM (LRP)

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2021 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2022
(including Quarterly Report July 1 - September 30, 2022)
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Submitted By: Sara Buchanan, Chief of Party and Rakhima Nazarova, Interim Chief/Deputy Chief of Party
Tetra Tech DPK
Tashkent 100015, Mirabad District
Nukus Street, 29

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COVER PHOTOS: LRP-supported international forum “Cooperation of Central Asian Ombudspersons in Ensuring Human Rights and Freedoms,” June 29, 2022, and LRP-supported Uzbek Arbitration Week, September 19-23, 2022 /Photo credit: LRP
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<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
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<td>CCI</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<td>COR</td>
<td>USAID Contracting Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>Cabinet of Ministers</td>
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<td>COP</td>
<td>Chief of Party</td>
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<td>COR</td>
<td>USAID Contracting Officer's Representative</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>DCOP</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Party</td>
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<td>DSC</td>
<td>Development Strategy Center</td>
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<td>EAHEA</td>
<td>European Agency for Higher Education &amp; Accreditation</td>
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<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>GPO</td>
<td>General Prosecutor's Office</td>
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<td>GONGO</td>
<td>Government-organized NGO</td>
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<td>GOU</td>
<td>Government of Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>IPR</td>
<td>Intellectual Property Rights</td>
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<td>LRP</td>
<td>Legal Reform Program</td>
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<td>LLM</td>
<td>Master of Laws (Degree)</td>
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<td>LPRI</td>
<td>Legislation and Parliamentary Research Institute under the Oliy Majlis</td>
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<td>LTC</td>
<td>Lawyers’ Training Center</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>MEL</td>
<td>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</td>
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<td>MIFT</td>
<td>Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade</td>
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<td>MOJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MSMOG</td>
<td>Ministry for the Support of the Mahalla and the Older Generation</td>
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<td>PLWHA</td>
<td>People living with HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>RFA</td>
<td>Request for Applications</td>
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<td>ROL</td>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>TIAC</td>
<td>Tashkent International Arbitration Center</td>
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<td>TOT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
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<td>TMC</td>
<td>Tashkent Mediation Center</td>
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<td>TSUL</td>
<td>Tashkent State University of Law</td>
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<td>TRIPS</td>
<td>Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>UNICTRAL</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on International Trade Law</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USG</td>
<td>United States Government</td>
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<td>UWED</td>
<td>University of World Economy and Diplomacy</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth annual report for the Legal Reform in Uzbekistan Program (LRP or “project”) provides a summary of the programmatic activities and outcomes achieved during the fourth year of implementation from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. This report also serves as the fourth quarterly report, covering the period from July 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022.

USAID launched LRP to support the efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan (GOU) to develop the legal framework, enhance the legal profession and improve the legal operating environment for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the country. In alignment with the United States Government (USG) assistance goals and the June 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established between the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and USAID, LRP activities contributed to the GOU’s objectives as defined in Uzbekistan’s strategic documents. These include: the Five Pillar Action Strategy for 2017-2021; the May 4, 2018 Presidential Decree “On Measures to Drastically Increase the Role of Civil Society Institutions in the Process of the Country’s Democratic Renewal”; the April 12, 2018 Law on Public Control; and the July 3, 2018 Law on Mediation. LRP also served as a mechanism through which the USAID/Central Asia Mission and Uzbekistan Country Office (UCO) responded to priority requests from the GOU.

This annual report tracks the progress of LRP program activities against the approved Years 4 and 5 work plan and the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan. It includes a summary of cumulative accomplishments for Year 4, situational background information concerning the project’s objectives, a description of progress against planned accomplishments in the work plans and deviations thereof, as well as an overview of progress against MEL Plan targets.

HIGHLIGHTS OF YEAR 4 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During Year 4, LRP achieved important milestones contributing to the advancement of gender equality, expanding access to justice, and improving the investment climate, including the following:

Gender: Revealing new aspects of gender equality
LRP’s gender activities in Year 4 supported the GOU in the implementation of international standards on gender equality as part of Sustainable Development Goals and the realization of national gender policy. To sustain gender reforms, LRP continued to create a pool of professionals who apply a gender approach to their work throughout Uzbekistan. The pool of trained professionals includes local community leaders, lawyers, journalists, and government officials. Specifically,

- Over 550 specialists, government employees, and decision-makers took part in LRP-supported training events across Uzbekistan on the implementation of international
standards of gender equality, gender legislation, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention.

- LRP conducted an international conference with the participation of national and international experts on gender equality during the campaign “16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women and Girls”;
- LRP printed out the handbook “Gender Equality: From Idea to Law,” a resource for representatives of government bodies, in charge of the implementation of the gender equality law, gender experts, lawyers, professors, and other interested professionals. The handbook was distributed to national partners, stakeholders, law faculties of universities and technical law schools, experts, and NGOs;
- Over 200 journalists, bloggers, and students of the Faculty of Journalism received training on gender-sensitive reporting;
- LRP supported national partners and, together with national and international experts, conducted two studies on violence against women on domestic violence, and workplace harassment.

Objective 1: Supporting Rule of Law Development in Uzbekistan

This year, LRP supported a number of large-scale legislative changes in various legal areas, including: administrative justice, entrepreneurship, anti-corruption, and cooperatives, among others. LRP, in cooperation with MOJ and other government partners, assisted in the development of regulatory measures in administrative justice reform. LRP lent its expertise to GOU efforts to enhance the economic climate by promoting legislative changes and public awareness-raising activities to increase trust in governmental institutions. Major LRP accomplishments in Year 4 included:

- Supported an International Conference on Legal Analysis of Strategic Reforms in Uzbekistan;
- Uzbekistan’s legal reform results were presented at the World Justice Forum with LRP support;
- Almost 1,000 regulations were reviewed to eliminate the possibility of corruption and conflicts of interest conducted;
- Drafting of the Presidential Decree on measures to limit state interference in business activities and reduce the regulatory burden on private businesses supported;
- The international review of the draft new Law on the Ombudsperson was supported;
- The International Forum “Cooperation of the Central Asian Ombudspersons in Ensuring Human Rights and Freedoms” conducted;
- Supported the Business Ombudsman’s International Forum on strengthening the mechanisms for protecting business rights;
- Handbook on legal gender scrutiny of (draft) legislation developed;
- Legislative drafting training delivered by an international expert, Professor Helen Xanthaki; and
• Study trip to better understand the French administrative justice system and practices and policies that might help strengthen administrative justice in Uzbekistan.

Objective 2: Developing the Legal Profession
In Year 4, LRP focused on improving training opportunities for legal educators and providing them with updated teaching materials. Through LRP’s expertise, legal educators in Uzbekistan are improving their professional outcomes. Some of the major activities LRP accomplished this year included:

• Supported Lawyer’s Training Center (LTC) by conducting a training course on modern teaching methodologies, enabling faculty members to bridge knowledge gaps and improve teaching skills;
• Delivered Basic, Elementary, and Pre-Intermediate Training Courses on Legal English for LTC and Chamber of Advocates to help LTC lecturers and advocates gain access to legal literature in English and communicate with English-speaking counterparts on legal issues;
• Assisted the Chamber of Advocates in conducting a training course for young advocates addressing marriage contracts, including instruction on considering amendments as well as annulment and dissolution.
• Conducted training courses on judicial ethics for the Higher School of Judges. Thirty-seven regional judges from civil, criminal, administrative, and economic courts attended in Sirdariya and Jizzakh.
• Assisted IPA to build the capacity of its staff to implement intellectual property laws effectively by conducting a training event on trademark registration;
• Supported a judicial training course on the enforcement of intellectual property rights;
• Supported an International Forum attended by over 500 representatives of state and international organizations and entrepreneurs both in-person and remotely “Integrated Approach to Promoting the Development of the Business Climate in Uzbekistan: Mechanisms for Protecting Business Rights, Reforming State Control”;
• Supported two research projects: an Analysis of the Hague Choice of Court Convention, and an Analysis of the Hague Principles on Choice of Law in International Commercial Contracts and printed 100 copies of each research paper for TSUL and UWED;
• Assisted 14 technical law schools to conduct online training courses attended by more than 200 professors to develop skills and expertise in distance learning/teaching methods. A result is that technical law schools now offer distance learning courses on criminal, administrative, and civil law studies;
• Supported the development of a manual on “Innovations in Legal Research Methods, Scientific and Practical Skills”;
• Delivered a week-long ToT as a follow-up activity for TSUL’s professors and students on international investment law and international private law by an international expert. LRP developed English-language courses to replace outdated courses offered
in Russian;

- Supported the development of an updated Intellectual Property Rights course in both Uzbek and Russian languages as a response to the request from 14 Technical Law Schools. The new course is uploaded to the server provided by LRP in the previous years and all 14 technical law schools have access to it;

- Conducted a training course on “Implementing the Bologna Process” for the faculty’s management and academic staff of UWED, which is critical for UWED to realize its international accreditation goals;

- Supported the development of a course and ToT on the support and protection (through legislation and practical methods) of crime victims for GPO Academy. The course was integrated into the Academy’s curriculum;

- Conducted a ToT and pilot training on the “Methodology of Teaching Anti-Corruption Studies” for GPO Academy with the engagement of an international expert;

- Assisted the GPO Academy to finalize a strategy to secure international programmatic accreditation and supported the development of a road map and documentation on self-evaluation for submission to the EAHEA - European Agency for Higher Education & Accreditation;

- Delivered a training course on “Modern Methods and Distance Learning Tools into Law Teaching Practices” and “Competency-based Learning for Academic Performance in Legal Studies” for TSUL, its Center for professional training of lawyers by international standards, as well as the Technical Law Schools and lyceums;

- Supported the NGO “Madad” through the development of a handbook for legal aid providers with general information and tips, including case studies and strategies for assisting vulnerable populations.

Technical capacity-building activities included:

- Donated 15 video conferencing equipment sets, valued at approximately $54,000 USD, to the Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Rights and Legitimate Interests of Entrepreneurs under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Business Ombudsman) to connect the Business Ombudsman’s Office and its regional branches and facilitate access for entrepreneurs across the country. The Business Ombudsman informed LRP that the video conferencing equipment is now used daily to conduct meetings and consultations and used during the annual meeting of the President of Uzbekistan with entrepreneurs;

- Provided equipment to five (5) Technical Law Schools in Karakalpakstan, Andijan, Samarkand, Termez, and Tashkent Region. This support includes 10 LCD monitors, 50 computers, and 10 cameras. Equipment will be used for distance learning training courses for 14 Technical Law Schools;

- Successfully completed the development of an online system of student records and their performance for GPO Academy;

- Supported TSUL and UWED’s libraries by donating more than 600 legal textbooks purchased in the United States. The books allow Uzbek students the opportunity to
understand an international perspective from original sources. This textbooks are used by professors to supplement the curriculum;

- Printed 200 copies of the manual “Innovations in Legal Research Methods, Scientific and Practical Skills” in Russian and Uzbek and presented it to TSUL, UWED, and Regional Law Schools. The manual provides clear and practical techniques for legal research;
- Supported printing an Energy Law textbook. The Energy Law Course textbook is the first book on energy law in the Uzbek language ever published. Two hundred (200) copies were published and presented to TSUL, UWED, and regional law schools.
- Supported the development and launch of an online version of the Legal Clinic of the GPO Academy. The online Legal Clinic improves access to justice for Uzbek citizens and serves as a resource for academic research.

Objective 3: Developing a Legal Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organizations/NGOs

Access to justice is one of the fundamental human rights guaranteed by both international legal norms and the Constitution of Uzbekistan. In Year 4, LRP strengthened organizations, including some of its grantee NGOs, to provide legal aid and advice to citizens. This legal assistance focused on vulnerable groups including women, labor migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), victims of domestic violence, and people with disabilities. Major achievements of Year 4 are listed below:

- Provided free legal aid to 42,035 people and information on a variety of legal issues to 48,142 individuals who attended awareness-raising events across Uzbekistan;
- Distributed a total of 96,845 leaflets and booklets on rule of law issues;
- Conducted awareness-raising events on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for 34,245 beneficiaries in 10 Regions and distributed 19,823 copies of informational materials (leaflets, brochures, booklets);
- Developed and conducted a ToT on ongoing reforms and media law for media representatives from all regions of Uzbekistan;
- Monitored 35 cases of violation of journalists’ rights;
- Developed and conducted a webinar on the rights of PLWHA and the availability of free legal aid;
- Held a joint roundtable with the GPO Academy on the results of research examining barriers that prevent the population of Uzbekistan from accessing legal services;
- Organized two training courses for its grant-recipient NGOs on project management;
- Conducted a training course on the legal framework regulating civil society organizations’ activities for its grant-recipient NGOs;
- Conducted an international conference on constitutional reforms and the role and status of civil society organizations;
• Conducted a round table “Constitutional reforms: the foundations of the democratic development of society.”

II. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Uzbek society has experienced a period of significant transformation over the last several years. Changes liberalizing social and political life while respecting human rights and freedoms affect all aspects of sociopolitical and economic life.

In October 2021, elections for the President of Uzbekistan took place. Shavkat Mirziyoyev assumed his second presidential term and Uzbekistan’s ambitious reform agenda is continuing and accelerating. The following regulations directly related to LRP’s support to national partners have been issued by the Government of Uzbekistan during the reporting period:

• October 6 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on “Additional measures to improve suicide prevention, as well as the rehabilitation and adaptation of women who have been victims of violence.” Counselors for women at the district and city levels (khokimiyats) and the “Inspectors for Women’s Affairs” of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are anticipated to work together to provide comprehensive support to victims of violence against women and women who have attempted, or are likely to attempt, suicide.

• October 21 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on “Measures for further improvement of the population’s social protection system.” This resolution aims to establish effective methods to identify people in need of assistance and provide appropriate support.

• October 22 – Presidential Resolution on “Measures for further improvement of the assessment of laws and draft laws on the basis of anti-corruption criteria.” This resolution paved the way for the introduction of a new procedure (presented in January 2022) to ensure that any new law satisfies the principle of “corruption-free legislation,” including the (re-)assessment (between 2022 and 2026) of more than 20,000 existing laws and regulations.

• November 22 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on “Measures for further improvement of the activities of educational institutions under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan.” This resolution aims to improve the quality of education for legal professionals by engaging highly qualified international teachers to deliver legal education in Uzbekistan. The Resolution also established a rating system for legal colleges.

• February 21 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers: “Additional Measures to Accelerate the Implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals and Tasks for the Period up to 2030.”

• March 1 – Presidential Decree: “Measures to Further Accelerate Work on Systematic Support for the Family and Women.” This decree established the State Committee for Family and Women and renamed/transferred the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support into the Ministry for the Support of the Mahalla and the Older Generation.
• March 17 – Presidential Decree: “Measures to further improve the efficiency of the activities of Ministry of Justice bodies and institutions in ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as in the provision of legal services.” This Decree made the Public Services Agency and the Agency for Intellectual Property part of the Ministry of Justice’s central apparatus.

• March 26 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers: “Measures to carry out the anti-corruption examination of regulations and legal acts in 2022.” This resolution contains an action plan for a review of 1,894 pieces of legislation to identify possible, unintended regulatory corruption or fraud risks.

• April 26 – Resolution of the President: “Additional measures for the further development of the intellectual property sphere.” The resolution adopts the “Strategy for Developing the Intellectual Property Sphere in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022 – 2026.”

• May 5 – Resolution of the Senate: “Protection of the rights of women and children, as well as issues related to violence against them.” The resolution envisages an action plan for the elaboration of legislation to protect the rights, freedoms, and interests of women and children, as well as establishing a Working Group for this purpose.

• May 18 – Resolution of the President: “Measures to ensure harmonization of scientific potential and practice in work with international ratings and indices.” The Resolution establishes a new procedure for interaction between state organizations and scientific institutions in developing measures to improve Uzbekistan’s position in international ratings and indices, including the Rule of Law Index.

• May 30 – Resolution of the President: “Measures for the wide implementation of modern information and communication technologies in the legal profession.”

• June 13 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers: “Procedure for the interaction of local non-governmental organizations with public administration bodies in the implementation of international grant projects.” This resolution establishes the procedure for attaching a state organization as a national partner to a local NGO to assist the local NGO in establishing “roadmaps” for the implementation of international grant projects.

• July 21 – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers “On measures for further regulation of the legal framework”. The Resolution envisages repealing of more than 400 regulations.

• July 23 – Resolution of the President “On measures for the systematic reforming of the state activities of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy.” According to this Resolution, the University activities will be transformed based on the Concept of “Smart University.” Several research centers (think tanks) were established within the University to provide analytical support for the ongoing reforms, including in the legal sphere.

A process initiated by the Ministry of Justice resulted in the canceling 422 government decisions in accordance with the GoU decision, “On measures to further systematize the legal
framework” dated July 22, 2022. As a result of the systematization of regulatory legal documents through the “regulatory guillotine” method, 422 decisions of the government have lost their validity. 90% (331) of the invalidated documents are complete decisions, and 10% (91) are some clauses of the documents. https://lex.uz/pdfs/6124323

Since the start of the project, LRP has maintained working relationships with the government, international donors, other projects funded by USAID, and civil society partners. After careful consultation and discussion with national partners, activities were adapted to fit the new context. This resulted in joint road maps that were added to LRP’s work plans. LRP completed most of the planned activities in a timely manner despite frequent shifts in the external environment that created obstacles to proper planning. This was accomplished by remaining flexible and responsive to opportunities to leverage and enhance project impact.

III. SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR OCTOBER 2021 – JUNE 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE

According to USAID’s Climate Strategy 2022-2023, USAID “has a longstanding commitment to support our partners to respond to the threat of climate change and seize on the opportunities to define resilient, low-emission pathways that meet development objectives. […] USAID’s work on climate change mitigation aims to ensure that global emissions are sufficiently reduced such that a robust range of adaptation options remain possible.” LRP is committed to identifying and implementing opportunities within planned activities that mitigate the impact of climate change.

During the reporting period, LRP supported USAID’s Climate Strategy by reducing the carbon footprint of surveys, training courses, and legal aid provision via online options (e.g., the paperless survey on harassment in the workplace; development of the GPO Academy’s online Legal Clinic and NGO Madad’s website advice.uz; development of the IT environment at universities allowing for more distance learning; and design of a course on Environmental Law). Utilizing virtual/online meeting options reduces the need for travel to meeting locations, thereby reducing carbon emissions. When participant and staff travel is required, LRP frequently uses mass and shared transportation to reduce the total number of trips required. The project continues to seek out opportunities within all activities to mitigate the impact of climate change.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of interventions remains a major priority of all international organizations/donors. Ensuring the sustainability of its activities is one of the pillars of LRP’s work. During the reporting period, the following activities were implemented to promote the sustainability of LRP interventions:

- Provided distance learning equipment that connected the Chamber of Advocates’ main
office in Tashkent with its branches in the regions across Uzbekistan. This has resulted in considerable cost savings: from October 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. The overall cost savings from avoided travel amounted to approximately $190,000 USD.

- The distance learning equipment provided by LRP enabled advocates to take part in online court sessions and international conferences, work more efficiently, access information more quickly, and better protect client interests.

- Development of durable educational resources (courses, handbooks, textbooks, manuals).

- Roundtable and training sessions to share lessons learned and best practices between LRP grantees, and the participants of a study trip to the UK on free legal aid provision.

- Memorandum of Understanding signed between TSUL and Roma Tre University that sets forth the creation of joint training programs and exchange of students between the two institutions, and the involvement of specialists of Roma Tre University in research and educational processes at TSUL.

**GENDER**

The main objective of gender equality policies and laws is to create a society where people of both genders equally have the opportunity to enjoy their fundamental rights and realize their full human potential. However, to achieve real equality between women and men, passing a law on gender equality alone is not enough—it is necessary that government also ensures their full and faithful implementation along with international standards and obligations. In addition, laws should not only serve as a legal measure for equal protection of human rights, but also act as a means of initiating social change that targets deeply rooted gender stereotypes and changes existing social attitudes, norms, and established practices.

The following activities and events demonstrate LRP’s commitment to promoting gender equality during the reporting period.
MINISTRY OF SUPPORT MAHALLA AND OLDER GENERATION

Capacity building of specialists

LRP continued strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of the Support of Mahalla and the Older Generation (MSMOG) to implement gender legislation by conducting a ToT session focusing on a strategy for achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan. Thirty representatives from regional khokimiyats, their training centers, and branches of the MSMOG attended.

LRP developed a Training Module on the implementation of gender legislation, which was presented during the ToT. The module is designed to help trainers improve the legal literacy of the chairs of mahallas, who are usually the first to connect with victims of gender-based violence. The training module is now incorporated into the curriculum of the Andijan Regional Khokimiyat’s training center as a pilot initiative.

Support Global Campaign “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence”

On November 30, 2021, LRP held the “International Cooperation in Promoting Gender Equality” conference. The event brought together more than 100 representatives from parliament and other governmental institutions, international experts from Ukraine, Georgia, and Kazakhstan, and local experts from civil society organizations and the academic community. The conference discussed best practices in promoting gender equality, including in the prevention of gender-based violence, and strengthening of the role of women in public and social life. The conference discussed the implementation of new gender legislation in Uzbekistan, including the Gender Equality Law and the Law on Protection from Gender-Based Violence.

“This conference will be the starting point for tracking the progress of the country in achieving gender equality.” – Lola Saidova, professor
Handbook “Gender Equality: From Idea to Law”

LRP developed the handbook “Gender Equality: From Idea to Law” in Uzbek and Russian. The handbook offers a historical and sociological overview of gender equality issues and the development of gender legislation in the country. The handbook is aimed at specialists involved in law-making and implementing gender legislation and awareness-raising among the population. LRP printed 2,500 copies of the handbook for distribution among interested national partners.

STATE COMMITTEE FOR FAMILY AND WOMEN AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE “FAMILY AND WOMEN”

Gender Equality Issues and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence

Part of the functions of the former Ministry of Support Mahalla and Family was transferred to the State Committee of Family and Women (State Committee). These functions include protecting the rights and interests of women, promoting the role of women in the socio-political life of the country, ensuring gender equality, and supporting the activities of women's NGOs.

In response to a request from the State Committee for Family and Women, LRP developed a training module and conducted a two-day ToT for representatives of the Committee, gender trainers, and NGO representatives from all over the country. The participants will go on to deliver training courses to women activists in mahallas. The training module covered the latest changes in gender legislation, international standards in this area, and tools and methods of preventing and eliminating violence against women.
Raising Awareness of CEDAW

In response to a request from national partners, LRP conducted a three-day training course on gender equality issues and implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Representatives of state bodies, including the State Committee of Family and Women, the GPO Academy, the Chamber of Advocates, the Higher School of Judges, the Lawyers Training Center, the National Center for Human Rights, the Scientific-Research Institute "Family and Women" and the Ministry of Public Education took part in the training. Participants increased their knowledge on gender indices and indicators as critical components of gender policy monitoring, and best practices for improving gender legislation. By the end of the training, participants drafted a roadmap for the implementation of CEDAW recommendations in their respective organizations.

Research on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

LRP supported the Scientific Research Institute “Family and Women” and the GPO Academy in conducting research on gender-based harassment in the workplace.

The research assessed the occurrence of workplace sexual harassment and developed recommendations for prevention. The recommendations and research will be made available to governmental institutions, NGOs, and private sector entities to combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

Three hundred and twelve people participated in the social survey conducted with support from Nemolchi.uz (Do not be Silent), a volunteer-run website/platform featuring statistics, victim stories, and tools for support for those affected by gender-based discrimination. This survey provided the foundation for the research and associated recommendations.

The results of the research were announced at several events and LRP training events, as well as at the Republican Scientific and Practical Conference “Current Issues on Implementation of Gender Equality in Uzbekistan: Status, Challenges and Outlook” conducted by the Research Institute “Family and Women”.

Presentation of the research results

Participants created roadmaps for implementation of gender policies in their respective organizations
Analysis of Gender Legislation and Development of Recommendations to Combat Gender – LRP, in coordination with the National Center for Human Rights, conducted research on the effectiveness of protecting women’s rights and preventing violence and the effectiveness of judicial practice in considering cases of gender-based violence.

As part of this research, social surveys were conducted on awareness of domestic violence, surveys among victims of domestic violence, as well as among NGOs. Support for the survey for victims of domestic violence was provided by an independent information project, Nemolchi.uz. In addition, data was requested for 2020-2021 on the number of protective orders and criminal cases from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Supreme Court related to domestic violence.

Gender-Based Violence

An analysis of the gender legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan was conducted by a national expert on gender equality and an international expert from Georgia. In the analysis promising international preventative practices were examined.

Results of the research were presented at the round table "Improvement of Gender Legislation: National Experience and International Practice" with the participation of representatives of UN agencies, Senate, government organizations, the academic community, civil society, and local and international experts. The recommendations received during the round table were submitted to the General’s Prosecutor Office, where work is underway on a new version of the Criminal Code.
**HIGHER SCHOOL OF JUDGES**

**Ensuring Equal Access to Justice for Women**

Twenty-five judges participated in an LRP-supported post-academic training, developed for the Higher School of Judges under the Supreme Judicial Council, to increase their knowledge of gender equality issues and capacity to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into their cases and decisions. The goal is that as judges focus more on issues that affect access to justice, women’s trust in the judicial system will improve and they will feel more confident bringing issues to court.

**CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES**

**Eliminating Gender Bias in the Legal Profession**

During a training event for the Chamber of Advocates in the Fergana region, LRP led a discussion on the persistence of gender bias in attorneys’ practices and ways to avoid it. The 22 participating lawyers improved their knowledge about gender legislation and how to adopt a “gender approach” in legal practice. Raising awareness about these unconscious biases helps guarantee the most vulnerable groups can receive better-tailored legal services and advice.
LAWYERS TRAINING CENTER UNDER THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Empowering Legal Professionals to Use Gender Approaches

Continuing LRP’s support of mainstreaming gender-sensitive approaches in legal education and the work of legal professionals, LRP conducted a two-day training course entitled “Gender Equality Legal Framework and Gender Mainstreaming in Legal Education” for the Lawyers’ Training Center under the Ministry of Justice. The 20 participants learned how to integrate gender issues into the education of legal professionals and were equipped with practical techniques to address gender equity through *de facto* application of laws.

OTHER GENDER ACTIVITIES

Resources to Advance Gender Legislation
LRP conducted a two-day ToT for 20 regional trainers on gender equality legislation and the prevention of gender-based violence. The ToT included a discussion of existing issues in this area and the possible development of more educational tools and resources to support trainers. As a result of the discussions, three teaching modules for different target groups were developed to build the capacity of institutions involved in the implementation of gender-related policies and legislation. Each of the modules will continue to be used to raise awareness of legal instruments and increase the understanding and capacity of national institutions on gender equality.
**Strengthening the Capacity of the Media to Promote Gender Legislation**

The media are key players in presenting information about gender legislation to the population and effecting change in how the general public views gender equality issues. During the reporting period, LRP conducted a two-day training for 36 journalists and bloggers working for national and local media outlets on gender equality issues, overcoming stereotypes, and gender-sensitive reporting. The event was organized as a dedication to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) and the associated global campaign “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence”. After the training, the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism of the National University requested that the training be available for students. Subsequently, another two-day training course on gender equality issues in the media (including social networks) was attended by 50 journalism students.

**Adopting Human-Rights-Based and Gender-Responsive Approaches to Journalism**

In times of rapid change, it is essential to prepare the next generation of journalists and other media professionals to be fully gender-sensitive both in their workplaces and in the results of their work. Clearly, the media and social media can play a key role in both addressing gender inequality and promoting greater equality. It follows that gender-sensitive journalism can directly contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

*Students of the Faculty of Journalism with their presentation*
LRP, in cooperation with the National University of Uzbekistan, conducted a series of training events for students of the Faculty of Journalism on gender equality and gender-sensitive reporting.

“It is already necessary today to prepare gender-sensitive graduates who can influence the future communication environment in order to make it inclusive, diverse, and open”.
Professor Y. Mamatova.

Combatting Domestic Violence Together

LRP grantees provide legal support to women in all regions of the country. During the reporting period, representatives of USAID’s offices in Washington and Tashkent met in Bukhara with LRP grantees, two NGOs from Samarkand and Bukhara. The parties discussed the situation regarding domestic violence and violence against women in general, as well as the implementation of gender equality and women’s rights legislation. Particular attention was paid to the sustainability of the NGOs and the services they provide to women.

The Bukhara-based NGO, Oydin Nur, as well as representatives of several other NGOs, helped host the representatives from Washington, who visited a women’s shelter to get a first-hand look at the shelter and meet with some of the women and children residing there.

OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORTING RULE OF LAW DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

To ensure the rule of law, governments should put in place effective laws, institutions, and procedures that guarantee accountability, stability, equality, and access to justice for everyone. Respect for human rights and the environment is the natural consequence of this strong foundation in the long run. In addition, supporting the development of the rule of law helps reduce incidences of violent conflict and levels of corrupt behavior. LRP is engaged in a wide variety of initiatives, some of which are listed below, with the goal of establishing the rule of law in Uzbekistan.
LRP supported the MOJ to conduct an international conference bringing together roughly 150 participants and including LRP-engaged experts from the USA, the UK, and Croatia. The conference analyzed the legal aspects of the implementation of Uzbekistan’s comprehensive development strategy (National Action Strategy for 2017-2021). Under this Strategy, numerous laws and regulations were introduced or rewritten to drive reforms and modernize Uzbek society in its economic, political, legal, educational, and other aspects.

Participants discussed progress and trends in law-making, and the digitalization of legislative activities, as well as the new tasks and challenges facing the legal community under Uzbekistan’s strategy for the next five years, the “Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026.”

“Adhering to the Rule of Law in any country is important because it ultimately leads to better economic development and political participation, and therefore to a more just society in which people can develop their full potential.” Mikaela Meredith, USAID’s Mission Director.
Uzbekistan’s Legal Reform Results Presented at the World Justice Forum

LRP supported an Uzbek delegation’s participation in the World Justice Forum 2022. At the event, representatives shared their experiences and achievements regarding legal reforms in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek delegation consisted of the Minister of Justice of Uzbekistan, Ruslanbek Davletov, representatives from the Administration of the President of Uzbekistan, and other officials. Participation in the Forum allowed the Uzbek delegation to collect useful input and advice from leading experts to improve Uzbekistan’s position in the Rule of Law Index. The Forum brought together approximately 500 participants from more than 100 countries.

Minister Davletov gave remarks at the plenary session, “Identifying What Works,” where he provided the audience with information on the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan in the areas of: ensuring transparency in administrative justice; digitalization of licensing and provision of public services; elimination of bureaucracy; systematization of legislation; reduction of the regulatory burden; and improvement of mechanisms for citizens’ participation in local decision-making.

Supporting Wide-Scale Review of (Draft) Legislation to Eliminate the Possibility of Corruption and Conflicts of Interest

The government of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution providing for the review of almost 2,000 laws in order to detect, prevent, and minimize the risk that their form or content might allow corruption and conflicts of interest to occur. During the reporting period, LRP supported the MOJ in conducting a review of 969 laws. As a result, 109 laws and bylaws will be amended, and 76 will be repealed.

Business Regulations to Be Codified

In accordance with the State Program for 2021, the MOJ produced a draft Entrepreneurship Code which was shared with all interested organizations in the country for feedback. An LRP-supported working group started to review the draft Code based on the received comments and recommendations and in light of international experience and best practices.

The Entrepreneurship Code is expected to significantly contribute to the liberalization of
Uzbekistan’s economy, as it will reduce government overreach and strengthen the protection of private ownership.

**Encouraging Competition through Legislative Initiatives**

In alignment with Uzbekistan’s development strategy for 2022-2026, the MOJ is charged with developing regulations to improve competition and foster entrepreneurial activity. The government intends to create a radically improved new legal framework for private business to meet international standards, limits state interference, and prevent waste.

At the request of the MOJ, LRP contracted national experts who worked with Ministry staff to prepare a Presidential Decree on measures to limit state interference in business activities and reduce the regulatory burden on private businesses. The decree introduces conditions for the establishment of public companies so as not to infringe upon free competition, the criteria for differentiating small, medium, and big enterprises, and a general prohibition of tax customs exemptions and other types of preferential treatment for public companies. The decree sets forth a framework under which some public functions/services will be transferred to the private sector.

**Administrative Justice Reform**

Despite the creation and subsequent reform of the administrative courts, Uzbekistan has yet to achieve a capable administrative judiciary. There are significant shortcomings in the existing Code of Administrative Procedure, coupled with general institutional weaknesses in the judicial system, including inadequately trained judges. Decisions of administrative courts are often of dubious quality. Moreover, the courts’ decisions are often not enforced. It is not surprising that citizens have little trust in the judiciary and turn to the administrative courts in very low numbers.

In response to MOJ’s request, LRP supported the MOJ and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) to conduct research to examine the possibility of a pre-trial administrative justice system, including developing drafts of the regulatory acts necessary for its implementation. LRP supported the drafting of a policy paper on “Opportunities and Prospects for Development of Pre-Trial Administrative Justice In Uzbekistan” for submission to the President’s Office. It is expected to lay the foundation for a new law introducing the pre-trial administrative justice system in the country.
In line with LRP’s continuing assistance to improve the Uzbek administrative justice system, LRP supported a study trip to France for representatives of the MOJ, the Administration of the President, and UWED.

The French system was formed under a strongly centralized government, i.e., under conditions similar to those existing currently in Uzbekistan, which makes the French model readily applicable to the Uzbekistan context.

The study tour’s focus on the experience of the French administrative justice system and procedures has been of great value for those involved in administrative justice reform in Uzbekistan. The French model of administrative justice has many unique advantages, including the similarity with Uzbekistan’s institutional conditions at the time it was formed. This commonality is valuable in the further development of the administrative justice system in Uzbekistan.

**OMBUDSPERSON**

**Enhancing the Role of Ombudsperson Based on International Best Practices**

The current Law on the Ombudsperson was adopted in 1997, has been amended four times to date, and consists of 32 articles. It is insufficient to ensure the independence of the institution and allow it to fulfill its role in protecting victims of human rights violations. On September 10, 2021, the President issued a decree on “Measured to improve the activities of the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Human Rights (Ombudsperson)”, whereupon the Ombudsperson’s Office requested LRP assistance in finalizing the first draft of a new Law on the Ombudsperson.

During the reporting period, LRP supported the Ombudsperson’s Office in conducting the requested revision of the draft new Law on the Ombudsperson. The final report and recommendations provided by the international expert engaged by LRP will serve to finalize the new version of the law, which will be submitted to the Oliy Majlis in 2022.

The new law expands the Ombudsperson’s powers and provides the basis for an improved institution to operate independently and defend and protect the rights and freedoms of Uzbek citizens more effectively.
Strengthening Engagement between Central Asian Ombudspersons

LRP supported the International Forum “Cooperation of the Central Asian Ombudspersons in Ensuring Human Rights and Freedoms,” organized by the Office of the Authorized Person for Human Rights of the Oliy Majlis (Ombudsperson). The event brought together 150 participants, including Ombudspersons from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, and other interested governmental, civil society, and international organizations.

“Today’s signing of the Tashkent Declaration on human rights will provide an impetus for future action to promote human rights. When backed by action, it will demonstrate that the signatories are committed to building upon our shared progress upholding human rights and freedoms. The Declaration will also promote strengthening the rule of law and good governance.” Mikaela Meredith, USAID’s Mission Director.

The Forum aimed to strengthen cooperation between the Central Asian region’s Ombudspersons while sharing common experiences. Such information sharing is indispensable to achieve adequate human rights protection in the respective countries, while also keeping the international community abreast of ongoing reforms.

A memorandum of cooperation between the Central Asian Ombudspersons was signed during the event. Another vital outcome of the Forum was the Tashkent Declaration on Human Rights, which reaffirms the commitment of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan to protect human rights, take measures to prevent torture, and raise legal awareness of human rights for the region’s citizens.
Protecting the Rights of Businesses

LRP supported the International Forum “Integrated Approach to Promoting the Development of the Business Climate in Uzbekistan: Mechanisms for Protecting Business Rights and Reforming State Control,” organized by the Business Ombudsman’s Office. The event brought together 500 representatives of state and international organizations and entrepreneurs, both in-person and remotely.

“Supporting inclusive, sustainable, and rapid economic growth in Uzbekistan is a cornerstone of USAID’s work here. USAID’s partnership with the Business Ombudsman’s Office is instrumental in this. The Ombudsman’s Office and its regional representatives play an essential role in protecting the rights of entrepreneurs. USAID has worked with its Uzbek partners to fight corruption and to create an environment that is friendly to business, investment, and entrepreneurs. We have made great progress, but there is still much to be done.” Marcelo Arellano, USAID Deputy Mission Director.

The international forum provided a platform to discuss the rights of businesses in Uzbekistan and the ongoing efforts to remove barriers to the development of entrepreneurial activities such as certain administrative restrictions and state control mechanisms in addition to combatting corruption in state organizations.

During the forum, an international expert from Singapore, Aloysius Goh, engaged by LRP, shared best practices and innovations implemented in Singapore in pre-trial mediation.

At the event, LRP donated video conferencing equipment that will connect the Business Ombudsman’s Office and its regional branches and will enable entrepreneurs from across the country to apply for help online. The equipment will strengthen protection mechanisms for private enterprises and improve entrepreneurs’ access to justice.
ANTI-MONOPOLY COMMITTEE

Strengthening the Legal Framework for Competition

On July 6, 2020, the President of Uzbekistan signed a decree on “Additional Measures for Further Development of a Competitive Environment and Reduction of State Intervention in the Economy.” The decree aims to stimulate competition in commodity and financial markets, create fair and equal conditions for the activities of business entities, and ensure transparency and further improvement of public procurement procedures. One of the results of the decree is that the Anti-Monopoly Committee of Uzbekistan (the Committee) now reports to the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, and no longer to the executive branch of government.

During the reporting period, LRP supported the Anti-Monopoly Committee in implementing commodity derivatives trading with the advice of an international expert, Kevin Piccoli, who developed a Derivatives Market Assessment Strategy that was submitted to the Committee.

International Ratings Forum in Tashkent

Over the past several years, Uzbekistan has risen by eight positions in the Rule of Law Index of the World Justice Project; by 52 positions in the Index of Economic Freedom of the Heritage Foundation; by 19 in the Logistics Performance Index of the World Bank; and by 18 in the ease of doing business index/Doing Business report (formerly of the World Bank). These results are the outcome of the many reforms implemented in the country aimed at guaranteeing the protection of human rights, raising the population's living standards, ensuring freedom of economic activity, and improving material and procedural norms in the judicial and legal spheres.

Nonetheless, the position of Uzbekistan in several other priority international ratings and indices, including the Corruption Perceptions Index (by Transparency International) and the Global Corruption Index (by “Global Risk Profile”, a Switzerland-based company in the risk management sector), remains low. To address these issues, LRP supported the MOJ by arranging for the participation of an international anti-corruption compliance expert, Martin Kreutner, in the Third International Ratings Forum held in Tashkent on May 7th, 2022. He shared foreign best practices and innovations in combatting corruption and their implications for international ratings and indices. The Forum’s participants learned about the differences between the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Global Corruption Index and their respective importance as well as about the specific methodologies that are used in developing the indices, which is helpful in determining targets for improvement.
Anti-Corruption Training for Anti-Monopoly Regulators

Recently, Uzbekistan adopted a number of key anti-corruption laws and policies. The Anti-Corruption Law, which came into force in early 2017, established the legal framework for implementing measures for preventing and responding to corruption. Statements consistently made at the country’s highest levels pledging commitment to fight corruption have improved the perception of the public regarding openness and transparency of government, including at the local level. This perceived openness has provided a basis for dialogue with representatives of the non-governmental sector. In response to a request of the Anti-Monopoly Committee, LRP supported a training course for more than 30 Committee staff members on tackling corruption in the area of anti-monopoly regulation. The training improved the participants’ knowledge on the most effective mechanisms for combating corruption and white-collar crime.

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUPPORT

Handbook on Gender-Legal Scrutiny Under Development

On September 2, 2019, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees Concerning Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”, was adopted and paved the way to establish legal grounds for equal rights and opportunities for women and men at the highest legislative level. As one of the tools to achieve this goal, the Law introduces gender-legal scrutiny of normative legal acts and their drafts.

In the wake of the law’s adoption, in March 2020, the government took up a resolution on the “Procedure for Gender-Based Legal Review of Normative Legal Acts and Their Drafts.” However, there remained a need to outline the process and methodology in more detail for those tasked with conceptualizing and formulating legislation. LRP supported the Legislation and Parliamentary Research Institute under the Oliy Majlis (LPRI) by developing a handbook on this matter. The draft was discussed with state bodies and civil society representatives during a roundtable.
INSTITUTIONALIZING COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING PROGRAM

Professional Development in Legislative Drafting for the Ministry of Justice

The legislative drafting process in Uzbekistan is fairly well-developed. Some quality control mechanisms applied in the legislative drafting process include an anti-corruption screening of legal texts (i.e., reviewing the legislation with the purpose to detect, prevent and minimize the risk that its form or content might inadvertently allow corruption and conflicts of interest to occur) and limited regulatory impact analysis (RIA - used to examine and measure the likely benefits, costs, and effects of new and existing regulation).

Room for improvement still exists which offers an opportunity to enhance the capacity of MOJ staff. LRP, at the MOJ's request, supported legislative drafting training delivered by an international expert, Professor Helen Xanthaki. The training covered subjects such as: what is high-quality legislation and how to create it; common misconceptions about drafting legislation; and the importance of using clear, universally understood, legislative language. Professor Xanthaki analyzed the Uzbek Law on Citizenship, along with participants and pointed out some of its deficiencies and ways to improve it.

Other Legislation

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), financial cooperatives serve 857 million people (i.e., 13% of the world’s population), and agricultural cooperatives produce 50% of all agricultural products. In Uzbekistan, however, the role of cooperatives is insignificant. According to the results of research conducted by the Research Institute of Legal Policy under the MOJ, cooperative activities in the country are severely restricted by existing legislation.

During the reporting period, the MOJ requested LRP support in providing a platform for discussion of the role of cooperatives in the Uzbek economy by supporting the organization of an international conference. LRP supported the engagement of three international consultants at the conference. The main goal was to discuss the importance of cooperatives for socio-economic development and receive comments and recommendations from international experts on developing legal and other conditions conducive to the effective operation of cooperatives in various economic sectors. The conference participants submitted its conclusions and recommendations, including legislative proposals, to the government of Uzbekistan.
LEGAL DATABASES AND WEBSITES

LRP assisted the National Legal Information Center “Adolat” under the MOJ to develop legal documents and templates to add to the website yurxizmat.uz (a.k.a. Legal Tech Platform). This website hosts a variety of documents and templates (e.g. contracts, applications, claims, wills, etc.) and allows citizens to prepare correct legal documents without needing the input of a lawyer. During the current reporting period, national experts finalized their assignments and provided Adolat with more than 100 digitalized texts of laws and regulations which are now publicly available via the website.

Capacity Building for National Legal Information Center “Adolat”

Since the Legal Tech Platform (yurxizmat.uz) allows citizens to prepare legal documents without the participation of a lawyer, the number of users is growing significantly and the workload of Adolat’s technical staff is increasing accordingly. During the reporting period, LRP supported Adolat by purchasing equipment (including eight monoblocs and two printers) to help Adolat's specialists continue to improve the website and field questions from the public.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

LRP continued supporting legal professionals through capacity-building of the Ombudsman’s Office, the Chamber of Advocates, the Business Ombudsman’s Office, law universities, regional and technical law schools, and NGO Madad.

LRP provided comprehensive support to bolster the skills of legal practitioners who work directly with beneficiaries. The programmatic and technical support by LRP given to on-the-ground providers has an immediate impact on access to justice and will shape legal standards in Uzbekistan for future generations.
Strengthening GPO Academy’s Programs and Strategic Planning and Development

LRP continued to support the GPO Academy in strengthening its academic programs and its strategic planning and development. In line with recent reforms in higher education, the GPO Academy requested LRP’s assistance to help prepare itself for international accreditation of its LL.M. program. International accreditation is an important achievement that will allow the GPO Academy’s students to transfer academic credits internationally.

During the reporting period, LRP assisted the GPO Academy to develop a strategy to secure international programmatic accreditation. Moving forward, an international consultant, engaged by LRP, coordinated the activities of a GPO Academy working group to develop a Road Map and documentation on self-evaluation for the future submission of a request for accreditation.

Strengthening GPO Academy’s Capacity in Developing Accreditation Strategy and Planning

Responding to recent reforms in higher education, the GPO Academy requested LRP’s assistance in preparing an application for international accreditation of its LLM programs. International accreditation of its programs will allow students to pursue studies in other countries and help attract foreign students and lecturers to Uzbekistan. LRP’s engaged international and national consultants worked together with a GPO Academy Working Group on the preparation of a road map for international accreditation.
**Victim’s Rights Course for GPO Academy’s Master’s in International Human Rights Program**

LRP continued supporting the development of the GPO Academy LL.M. programs. A previously developed course on the protection of the rights of crime victims was introduced in the Master’s in International Human Rights curriculum. A ToT was conducted to ensure sustainable course delivery in the future.

The course was developed by LRP in response to a request by the GPO Academy as a part of the latter’s series of initiatives to improve the legal environment for vulnerable citizens. The course was first introduced into the curriculum in the fall 2021 semester. It consists of classroom sessions as well as field trips, including visits to the Center for Rehabilitation and Adaptation of Victims of Violence (shelter). The pre- and post-test results showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 32 percent.

**International Accreditation of GPO Academy Programs**

LRP continued to help strengthen the capacity of the GPO Academy’s staff in strategic planning and development. In response to recent reforms in higher education, the GPO Academy requested LRP’s assistance in preparing an application for international accreditation of its LL.M. programs. International accreditation of the GPO Academy’s programs will allow Uzbek students to pursue studies in other countries while helping attract foreign students and lecturers to Uzbekistan.

Previously international and national consultants, engaged by LRP, collaborated with a GPO Academy working group preparing a road map for obtaining international accreditation. The working group with the guidance of LRP’s consultants finalized self-assessment documents that will inform the next steps requisite to obtain international accreditation.
STRENGTHENED AND INSTITUTIONALIZED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR JUSTICE SECTOR PERSONNEL AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

ACADEMY OF GENERAL PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE

Legal Research Methods Training for GPO Academy

LRP continued to support the GPO Academy in providing post-graduate training of prosecutors and other legal professionals, as well as conducting legal research and developing legislative proposals and amendments to existing legislation.

During the reporting period, LRP provided training on legal research methods for the GPO Academy’s lecturers, which included the lecturers presenting a pilot training to students. This empowered the lecturers to more effectively guide students through the research process, as well as conduct research while drafting legislation.

The results of the tests administered before and after the training demonstrated that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 46 percent.

Raising LLM in Anti-Corruption Teaching Expertise of the GPO Academy staff

During the reporting period, an international expert engaged by LRP conducted a ToT and pilot training on the “Methodology of Teaching Anti-Corruption Studies”. The ToT educated participating lecturers about teaching techniques, assessment methods, principles of case method scenario development, and other specifics of teaching anti-corruption studies. After the ToT, the foreign expert conducted pilot training for master’s degree students of the Academy. The contribution of the expert and his approach was highly appreciated by the participants and the administration of the GPO Academy. A positive result is that an LLM with a focus on anti-corruption studies, developed with the support of LRP, now has been added to the GPO Academy’s curriculum. The results of short tests administered before and after the training demonstrated that participants’ knowledge increased by 31 percent.
Empowering the GPO Academy’s teaching staff

In response to a request by the GPO Academy, LRP developed a ToT on the critical evaluation of legal courses. During the training, teachers were asked to create a report on the overall impact of one of the courses they teach and present their findings to the group. The participants received feedback on the teaching and student assessment methods used.

The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the subjects increased by 33 percent.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Building Capacity of MFA Training Center

In Year 4 (from October through December 2021), LRP supported the MFA by increasing the technical and IT capacity of its Training Center. LRP equipped the MFA Training Center with necessary IT equipment, furniture, and books on international law. The MFA makes frequent use of its LRP-equipped Training Center by hosting training events and roundtable discussions on matters of international legislation. During the reporting period, a roundtable with representatives from the academic community and practicing international lawyers was conducted in the Training Center to discuss the latest developments in the area of treaty law.
Building Capacity of the MFA Treaty Law Staff to Conduct Multilateral Negotiations

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Treaty Law department is entrusted with conducting multilateral negotiations of international contracts and conventions. LRP supported the Treaty Law Department by building the capacity of its legal staff and providing a platform for discussion of developments in the sphere of International Law.

LRP supported the design and development of a training course on “Principles of Conducting Multilateral Negotiations of International Contracts and Conventions,” which was subsequently taught to the staff of the Treaty Law department. During the training, an LRP-engaged international expert also provided a short lecture on aspects of specific bilateral trade agreements currently under negotiation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The course provided information on how treaty law enforcement and disputes are handled in the United States. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 33 percent.

“In the light of Uzbekistan’s growing international engagement, negotiating expertise is in high demand and this training comes at a very timely moment indeed. We are profoundly grateful to LRP for its constant dedication to support and build the capacity of our staff.” Komil Rashidov, Head of the Treaty Law Department

Strengthening the MFA’s Training Center

Previously, LRP provided the MFA’s Training Center with IT and video conferencing equipment as well as furniture so that they may host virtual training events and round table discussions on matters of international law. During the reporting period, LRP increased the capacity of the Training Center further by supplying up-to-date textbooks on International Law.

“Thanks to the support of USAID’s Legal Reform Project the Training Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its library were equipped with furniture, IT equipment and books. The range of books on international law raised the level of knowledge and skills of the staff of the Treaty Law Department who
wish to take this opportunity to express their gratitude to USAID.” Komil Rashidov, Head of the Treaty Law Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF LAWYERS BY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS UNDER TASHKENT STATE LAW UNIVERSITY

Modern Teaching Methods for Effective Learning

The Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards under TSUL (Center) requested LRP to conduct training for their teachers on modern interactive teaching methods as a part of its LRP-supported professional development program. The training improved the knowledge and teaching skills of the teachers by familiarizing them with modern legal educational methodologies. The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 30 percent.

“I would like to express my deepest gratitude for this training which made the participants reflect on the flaws in their teaching and allowed them to obtain new knowledge and skills.” Akhtam Yakubov, Center’s Director.

Developing Distance Learning Courses

LRP continued support for the Center for Professional Training of Lawyers under TSUL. LRP helped to build the Center’s capacity to conduct distance learning courses by providing expert advice as well as equipping the Center’s offices with distance learning equipment. An expert engaged by LRP helped to develop a distance learning curriculum and conducted ToTs on distance learning methodologies. With this support, the Center conducted seven distance learning courses on different subjects, including mediation and teaching/learning approaches, for 230 students and teachers.

Professional development of the Center’s teaching staff

LRP supported the Center by conducting a training course for 30 members of its teaching staff to familiarize them with modern educational methodologies in legal education. The material included Bloom’s Taxonomy (a hierarchical classification of different levels of thinking that should be applied when creating course objectives), as well as methods and tools (including distance-learning approaches) for developing self-motivation of students, and for improving the effectiveness of and
interest in classes. The training elaborated methods and tools to evaluate students’ ability to solve real, practical legal problems.

The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 32 percent.

LAWYERS’ TRAINING CENTER UNDER THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Distance Learning for Legal Professionals

LRP continues to support the Lawyers Training Center under the MOJ (LTC) which is responsible for the post-graduate training of legal professionals by developing the capacities of its faculty and supporting the development of new training courses.

LRP supported a training course on modern teaching methodologies, enabling 20 of 61 LTC faculty members to bridge gaps in their knowledge and improve teaching skills. The results of the tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 26 percent.

Basic Training Course on Legal English for the Lawyers’ Training Center’s Academic Staff

The Lawyers’ Training Center requested LRP’s assistance in the development of a Legal English course to help its lecturers gain access to legal literature in English and communicate with English-speaking counterparts on legal issues. In February-March, a national expert engaged by LRP developed the requested course, consisting of six sessions. The results of short tests administered before and after the training demonstrated that participants’ knowledge increased by 30 percent.
Enhancing Legal English proficiency
In response to a request from the Lawyers’ Training Center, LRP supported the development of training courses on Elementary and Pre-Intermediate Legal English for the Center’s teaching staff to expand their access to legal literature in English while making it easier for them to communicate with English-speaking counterparts. The two courses, consisting of eight sessions each, were presented in May and June. Fourteen (14) teachers participated in the Elementary Legal English, and 16 in the Pre-Intermediate Legal English course.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ legal language skills increased by respectively 30 percent (Elementary English), and 26 percent (Pre-Intermediate English).

HIGHER SCHOOL OF JUDGES
Empowering Judges in Judicial Ethics
The ethical conduct of judges is essential to build and maintain the trust and confidence of citizens in the entire justice system. It is vital that new judges receive instruction on ethics during their legal studies, and that judges continue to refresh their knowledge and awareness of ethical conduct, boundaries, and issues throughout their judicial career.

LRP supported training courses on judicial ethics for 37 regional judges from civil, criminal, administrative, and economic courts in Sirdariya and Jizzakh. The training covered a wide range of issues that judges may face daily, including questions of judicial independence and impartiality and conflict of interests. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 27 percent.
**STRENGTHEN CAPACITY OF CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES AND LEGAL AID PROVIDERS**

**CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES**

**LRP Supports Young Advocates**

In July 2020, the Chamber of Advocates developed a distance learning program with LRP support. To ensure the effective setup of the distance learning provision, the Chamber of Advocates requested LRP assistance to improve its educational program through the development and conducting of training on “Preparing Marriage Contracts.” On November 26, LRP supported a training course for young advocates addressing marriage contracts, including instruction on considering amendments as well as annulment and dissolution of marriage contracts.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 18 percent.

**Basic Legal English for the Chamber of Advocates**

In response to the Chamber’s request, LRP assisted in the development of a Basic Legal English course to equip advocates with the language skills necessary to access legal academic literature in English and communicate with English-speaking customers and partners on legal issues. Advocates learned how to write formal emails and communicate and negotiate effectively with international partners.
The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 29 percent.

To ensure further sustainability and accessibility of the course for advocates across the country, participants asked the Chamber of Advocated leadership to make all handouts and course materials available via an online platform under development with LRP support. Access to digitized materials will allow the Chamber to regularly revise materials as changes occur. LRP will continue to support the Chamber of Advocates in capacity building activities including making educational resources accessible to all its members nationwide.

**Elementary Legal English for the Chamber of Advocates**

The Chamber of Advocates requested LRP’s assistance in the development of an Elementary Legal English training course to strengthen advocates’ language skills to improve their understanding of legal academic literature in English and communicate with English-speaking customers and partners on legal matters. The course was delivered in a hybrid format (in-person and online) to reach 25 advocates who participated in the regions outside of Tashkent.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ legal English skills increased by 31 percent increase.

**ACADEMY OF GENERAL PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE**

**LRP Supports Creation of an Online Clinic**

The Legal Clinic of the GPO Academy established in 2019 with LRP support serves to improve access to justice for citizens, and as a center for academic research. During Year 4, an online version of the Legal Clinic LRP expanded the Clinic’s reach and providing greater access to free legal advice for those unable to travel to Tashkent.

**Online Legal Clinic launched**

LRP continued to support the GPO Academy in building the capacity of the online Legal Clinic [clinic.proacademy.uz](http://clinic.proacademy.uz), developed previously with LRP assistance. During the reporting period, the Legal Clinic was officially launched and is now offering free online legal advice to citizens. The Legal Clinic also serves as an educational tool for the GPO Academy’s students, who are required to spend a certain number of days completing practicum during their studies to gain practical experience in delivering legal services.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AGENCY

Building Capacity of the Intellectual Property Agency

Due to reorganization, 80 percent of the Intellectual Property Agency (IPA) staff were replaced, leaving the IPA lacking in sufficient expertise to implement intellectual property laws effectively. To help build capacity of the new team, LRP assisted IPA by engaging an international expert to improve compliance with international standards.

On October 11, 2021, 22 IPA staff members took part in a training event on trademark registration organized by LRP’s international expert. The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 21 percent.

From October 12 to 15, LRP’s international experts conducted a four-day training course for the staff of IPA’s regional centers. The training covered issues including preparatory actions needed for IP rights registration, use of registered IP rights such as licensing and franchise, and protection from infringement of IP rights. The participants reviewed and discussed international patent practices. Twenty-five (25) participants from 14 Regions participated in the training. Before-and-after test results demonstrated an increase in participants’ knowledge by 28 percent. These training events significantly improved the knowledge and skills of IPA staff.

Empowering the judiciary in the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights in Courts

The IPA requested the support of LRP to conduct a training course for state court judges on the enforcement of intellectual property rights. LRP engaged an international expert to develop a five-day training course, based on the best international practices and WTO policies.

Twenty (20) participants took an active part in discussing the issues of adjudicating trademark, copyright, patent, and trade secret disputes.

The training included such topics as enforcement procedures and measures including injunctions, criminal penalties, and special border measures to protect intellectual property. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training increased by 17 percent.
NGO MADAD

Handbook for Legal Aid Providers

In response to a request by NGO Madad, LRP supported the development of an illustrated handbook for legal aid providers addressing theory and case studies as well as links to recommended literature, including online sources.

In Quarter I, LRP supported the development of the first part of the handbook (“Providing Legal Advice in Uzbekistan: Adviser’s Handbook Part I”) which covers external influences on the adviser-client relationship, strategies for assisting vulnerable populations, client interviewing skills, providing and recording advice, client referrals, and case management. The handbook includes guidance on dealing with conflicts of law and outlines procedures for submitting draft law proposals to legislative authorities.

Developing Handbook for Provision of Legal Aid

NGO Madad runs the website, advice.uz, which allows its regional offices to access online up-to-date legal information. To make sure that the legal advice provided by its staff is consistent, Madad has requested LRP to assist with the development of a second accompanying handbook (“Providing Legal Advice in Uzbekistan: Adviser’s Handbook Part II”) on the most frequently asked legal questions.

The handbook includes information, sources, and guidance on providing advice on social protection and rehabilitation issues and the role of mahallas, family law issues, labor law issues, expropriation issues related to land, and other topics.

“The handbook developed with the help of LRP is invaluable not only to Madad staff but to all who are engaged in providing legal advice to citizens. The handbooks will assist NGO Madad and other legal aid providers in training legal consultants to provide free legal advice to the population”. Sanjar Atakhanov, NGO Madad deputy director.
DEVELOPMENT OF THE DATABASE “E-BIZNESS-OMBUDSMAN MAMURIY”

Amendments dated January 11, 2022, to the “Code on Administrative Responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan” conferred to the Business Ombudsman the general power to consider cases of administrative offenses and impose administrative penalties.

A Presidential Decree dated September 3, 2020, set out that claims, applications, and complaints to the courts by state authorities, local governments, economic authorities, and lawyers are filed only in electronic form. However, the Business Ombudsman lacks the technology to fulfill this requirement in an effective manner. One important missing element is an archive/electronic database where information about claims and claimants/offenses and offenders is stored. During the reporting period, LRP helped to write Terms of Reference for the development of such an archive.

LRP Donates ICT Equipment to Connect Business Ombudsman and Entrepreneurs

LRP distributed 15 video conferencing equipment sets to the Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Rights and Legitimate Interests of Entrepreneurs under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Business Ombudsman). The equipment, valued at approximately $54,000 USD, will connect the Business Ombudsman’s Office and its regional branches and will enable entrepreneurs from across the country to apply for, and receive, assistance more easily and rapidly.

LEGAL EDUCATION

TASHKENT STATE UNIVERSITY OF LAW (TSUL)

Supporting Tashkent Mediation Center

The Law on Mediation entered into force on January 1, 2019, introducing mediation into the national legal system. The Tashkent Mediation Center (TMC) is an NGO promoting mediation procedures
as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) tool. The TMC was established in September 2020 by TSUL and the Lawyers’ Training Center under the MOJ. During the reporting period, in response to a request from TSUL, LRP provided equipment for the TMC and organized training courses, including ToTs for mediators.

**International Perspective for Uzbek Law Students**

From October through December 2021, LRP donated 342 law books purchased in the United States to the TSUL law library. These books enable Uzbek students to expand their legal knowledge and gain an international perspective on a wide range of legal issues. The books are in frequent use by students, and TSUL teachers use them to expand the curriculum.

**Research Papers on Hague Conventions**

The MOJ had requested LRP’s assistance for two research projects: an analysis of the Hague Choice of Court Convention, and an analysis of the Hague Principles on Choice of Law in International Commercial Contracts, both against the background of Uzbekistan’s existing legislation and the GOU’s intentions to improve the investment climate. During the reporting period, and in response to a request by TSUL, LRP printed 100 copies of each research paper which will be used by students and teachers of TSUL and UWED within the framework of their international private law courses.

**International Investment Law and International Private Law for TSUL**

LRP continued to assist TSUL in the modernization of its curriculum via the development of two new courses - International Investment Law and International Private Law - both to be taught in English. The new courses replaced outdated courses available only in Russian. As a follow-up activity, LRP supported a ToT and pilot training by an international expert for lecturers and students. The course is now available to all interested students of TSUL in English.
Handbook on Case-Study Method in Legal Education

TSUL requested LRP support for the development of a handbook on the application of internationally recognized best practices in the use of case-study methodologies in legal education. Instructors have found that using case studies improves the analytical skills of law students and helps them relate theoretical concepts to the real world. The handbook covers the selection and preparation of cases, incorporating case studies into lectures and seminars, methods of evaluating teaching objectives, and other concepts.

Handbook on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

LRP continued to support the implementation at TSUL of an academic credit system, based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). TSUL requested LRP’s support for the development of a handbook on ECTS to include issues related to the organization of the educational process in accordance with the requirements of ECTS, the development of curricula and syllabi, and the procedure for calculating and registering credits. The handbook will help students organize independent study and will assist the university’s staff to develop methods and instruments for assessing students’ knowledge, methods of modular teaching, and compliance with the rules of academic honesty.

The “Handbook on ECTS” also will contribute to the upcoming introduction of the academic credit system and the expected improvement of the quality of the overall education system at TSUL.

Code of Scientific Ethics

TSUL asked LRP to support the development and printing of a Code of Scientific Ethics. The Code covers such topics as: academic integrity; plagiarism; and ethics of scientific research; including ethical conduct requirements for researchers, scientific supervisors, reviewers, and others. The Code will reinforce the consistent application of international standards and will contribute to improving the quality of scientific research and the overall quality of education at TSUL.

Modernizing TSUL’s curriculum

LRP maintained its support for the modernization of TSUL’s curriculum by expanding course offerings while applying international best practices in curriculum development. To this end, LRP supported a ToT and a pilot training by an international expert on both International Commercial Arbitration and International Investment Arbitration.
The course included a moot court competition.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 20 percent.

**Handbook on Hague Choice of Court Convention and Hague Principles for TSUL**


**TECHNICAL LAW SCHOOLS**

**Credit-based System for Technical Law Schools**

LRP continues to support distance learning training at 14 Technical Laws Schools. These schools requested LRP to conduct training courses to better understand how to work in a credit-based system as this system is new for most educational institutions in Uzbekistan.

LRP supported online training for 101 teachers of the 14 Technical Law Schools to ensure a successful introduction of an academic credit system based on best international practices. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topic increased by 26 percent.

**Intellectual Property Course for distance-learning**

The 14 Technical Law Schools requested LRP's assistance in the development of a remotely taught intellectual property rights course for beginners. The Technical Law Schools also requested LRP support in building the capacity of teaching staff on intellectual property rights and digital technologies. In response, LRP engaged a national expert to develop the requested course.
Advancing Gender Approach to Education in Technical Law Schools

The Technical Law Schools provide a two-year course for mid-level legal professionals playing key roles in protecting the rights of citizens.

These legal professionals are often directly involved in implementing gender laws by, for example, assisting women to gain access to domestic violence shelters or helping them obtain a restraining order against violent partners.

LRP continues to support the Technical Law Schools by training their academic staff, helping them to augment their curriculum, and providing distance learning equipment. On January 14 and 15, LRP conducted groundbreaking training courses on gender equality and the application of gender approaches in education for almost 300 teachers at the Technical Law Schools. The participants improved their knowledge about the national gender legislation, approaches to gender-based violence in other countries, pitfalls of gender stereotyping, and related subjects. During the training, teachers discussed approaches and strategies for teaching any subject through the prism of gender sensitivity.

Capacity Building of Technical Law Schools

LRP continued to support 14 Technical Law Schools from all Regions of Uzbekistan via online training courses. During the online courses, 237 professors learned about innovative distance teaching methods. They will use the acquired knowledge and skills while teaching the Criminal, Administrative, and Civil Law Courses.

In response to a request from the Technical Law Schools, LRP assisted in the development of a basic distance learning course on Intellectual Property Rights. The course was paired with a newly devised ToT to strengthen the professors’ capacity for further work with students based on new knowledge of Intellectual Property Rights and digital technologies. This new course will serve as a sustainable educational legal resource for the students to professionally navigate the growing area of legal issues in the intellectual property area. Looking forward, initiatives in this area will increase international confidence in Uzbekistan’s ability to address intellectual property protections.
Distance-Learning Course on IP Rights for Technical Law Schools

LRP helped design an intellectual property rights course, in both the Uzbek and Russian languages, in response to a request from the Technical Law Schools. To supplement the course, LRP developed a ToT for the professors to strengthen their knowledge of intellectual property rights, as well as to improve their skills in distance-teaching methods and technologies.

UNIVERSITY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND DIPLOMACY (UWED)

New Legal Books for UWED’s library

In the reporting period, in response to UWED’s request, LRP supported UWED by donating 82 legal books purchased in the USA.

The list of books was based on recommended titles compiled by an international expert recruited by LRP in 2019 to support the strengthening of UWED’s curriculum. The books are currently in use for classes, such as the International Investment Law Course developed by LRP.

Introduction of a Credit-Based System

A credit-based academic system was adopted in UWED starting in the fall of 2020, and more than 550 out of 1,500 UWED students are now studying under this credit-based system. The change has contributed to the university’s improved national ranking, moving up from 17th to 12th position. The university is now better equipped to prepare legal and other professionals at the caliber needed in Uzbekistan amid ongoing comprehensive reforms and ambitious development goals.
The introduction of a credit-based system has brought about a shift towards a more targeted, demand-based education, with lectures and theory making room for an increase in practice-based lessons, giving students greater exposure to real-life challenges and allowing them to gain practical skills at a much earlier stage.

After one year of work in a credit-based system, UWED still has some challenges to achieve full system operationalization. In response to UWED’s request, LRP conducted a training course for its teachers and academic staff where participants received information on crucial aspects and issues related to the credit-based system in academia. The results of short tests administered before and after the training demonstrated that participants’ knowledge increased by 24 percent.

“Academic mobility is one of several great advantages that can be gained by adopting a credit-based system. With academic credits being recognized by foreign educational institutions, students have more opportunities to participate in international exchange programs and to continue their education abroad. It also makes it easier to engage foreign professors.” 

Fuzail Makhmudov, Head of the UWED Academic Department.

LRP also supported training on Bologna Process qualifications framework for the faculty’s management and academic staff.

Due to some remaining issues with adapting to the credit-based system and implementing the Bologna Process qualifications framework, LRP conducted a training course on this subject for the faculty’s management and academic staff.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the subjects increased by 26.3 percent.
Credit-based System for Regional Law Schools

The Regional Law Schools of Termez, Samarkand, and Namangan, and the Law Faculty of the State University of Karakalpakstan asked LRP to conduct a ToT for their teaching staff to ensure a successful introduction of a credit-based study system based on best international practices. Credit-based systems are new for most Uzbek educational institutions. In November 2021, LRP provided the requested ToT. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 18 percent.

During the ToT, the participants asked LRP to develop a handbook on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) to support their work in strengthening regional law schools.

Innovations in Legal Research Methods

During the reporting period, LRP supported the Regional Law Schools of Termez, Samarkand, and Namangan, and the Law Faculty of the State University of Karakalpakstan in the development of a manual entitled “Innovations in Legal Research Methods, Scientific and Practical Skills in Research Activities”. At this time, the manual has been published in Russian and Uzbek languages.

Additional Legal Resources for Regional Law Schools, TSUL and UWED

As a follow-up activity after the LRP-provided training “Innovations in Legal Research Methods, Scientific and Practical Skills” on June 21, 2021, the Regional Law Schools of Nukus, Termez, Samarkand, and Namangan requested LRP’s help in the development of a manual on innovative legal research methods. LRP supported the writing and printing of 200 copies of the manual in both Russian and Uzbek. The manual provides real-world examples practitioners can follow in a concise guide.
**Energy Law Textbook**

All law schools in the country face the issue of scarcity of up-to-date educational resources in the Uzbek language. Both TSUL and the Regional Law Schools offer an elective Energy Law course for bachelor’s degree students and have requested LRP support for the printing of related course material. The Energy Law course textbook is the first published textbook on energy law in the Uzbek language. During the reporting period, two hundred copies were published and presented to TSUL, UWED, and Regional Law Schools.

**OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOs**

**AWARENESS OF LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND PROCEDURES RELEVANT TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND CSOS**

**Empowering National Think Tanks**

From March 6-13, LRP supported a study tour to Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy for representatives of government bodies including the Administration of the President and the Ministry of Justice, and civil society organizations such as the Strategy Development Center and the NGO Madad. The delegation studied the activities and experience of foreign think tanks and their interaction with government organizations, most importantly in the field of the monitoring the implementation of government decisions.

**Belgium**

In Belgium, the delegation met with Egmont – The Royal Institute for International Relations, Carnegie Europe, Press Club Brussels Europe, European Policy Center, International Crisis Group, and the Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS). The delegation met with Europe's most prestigious NGOs and think tanks based in Belgium which research global and regional issues, European foreign policy, building relationships with Europe's neighbors, climate change and environmental transformation, as well as other issues.
The parties agreed to maintain regular contact and expressed their readiness to share experiences in civil society participation in governance by conducting joint studies and events. They expressed interest in conducting joint research on the impact of global challenges such as climate change, water shortages, and environmental pollution on Central Asia societies and their socio-economic development.

**Netherlands**

In The Hague, the delegation met with the think tank, Links Europe, which has the mission “to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the process of transition in Europe’s neighborhood” and conducts research on international security, political and economic processes, foreign policy, rule of law issues, and digital and economic diplomacy.

During the meeting, the parties discussed in detail the possibilities of cooperation between Links Europe and relevant institutions in Uzbekistan. The delegation requested feedback from Links Europe experts on the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan. The head of the think tank expressed his readiness to support the development of analytical centers in Uzbekistan, providing training and organizing joint events.

The delegation also visited the intergovernmental organization the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) to study rules of private international law that can encourage foreign investment in Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the parties discussed issues of possible cooperation between HCCH and the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. Emphasis was placed on organizing training courses for the Uzbek academic community and researchers involved in the incorporation of rules of private international law in Uzbek law.
Italy

The delegation met with members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group “Italy-Central Asia.” The parties expressed their readiness to cooperate to make progress on goals outlined in the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026. Meeting with the Italian Ministry of Justice, the parties discussed issues such as public consultations on draft legislation, the creation of an enabling regulatory environment for the operation of civil society organizations, and the development of mechanisms to prevent corruption in legislation and policy development. The parties agreed to maintain regular contact, expand cooperation, and exchange experiences among representatives of the Ministries of Justice of both countries.

Possible collaboration in political and economic research was one of the topics discussed in the delegation’s meeting with the Mediterranean Institute for Asia and Africa (ISMAA). Participants proposed ideas that were taken up during the Tashkent International Investment Forum (March 24-26, 2022). As a note, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Italy, Mr. Otabek Akbarov, and members of the ISMAA board traveled to Uzbekistan to participate in the forum where further discussions on Italian-Uzbek cooperation were held.

During a meeting at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry representative recommended several Italian research centers with which Uzbek partners might cooperate.

A meeting was organized with the leadership of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the promotion of the rule of law. A presentation was given on IDLO’s activities in Central Asia and the delegation noted that IDLO expressed interest in establishing cooperation with LRP and the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan to ensure coordination of the different projects while avoiding duplication.
Empowering NGOs to Provide Legal Aid

LRP provided two training courses on new and existing legislation to its grant-recipient NGOs as well as for NGO Madad. These courses focused on legislation governing house and land ownership and labor relations. LRP conducted the training based on the needs of the NGOs to improve their skills in resolving legal issues of vulnerable populations including labor migrants, people living with HIV, victims of domestic violence, and people with disabilities. The results of the tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 28 percent.

Empowering NGOs to Manage Legal Aid Sub-projects

During the reporting period, LRP drew participants from across Uzbekistan to two training courses on project management. The training courses responded to the need of LRP’s grant-recipient NGOs to improve their skills in planning, managing, monitoring, and evaluating sub-projects to improve organizational sustainability. The results of tests conducted before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 30 percent.
LRP Empowers NGOs to Navigate the Legal Environment

LRP delivered a training course for its grant-recipient NGOs and the National Association of NGOs of Uzbekistan on the legal framework regulating their activities. Participants learned more about the existing subsidies available to NGOs, common legal issues, mandatory reporting, and other regulations, thereby equipping the organizations to better navigate the rapidly changing legal environment in the country. The results of tests conducted before and after the training showed that participants' knowledge subject materials increased by 28 percent.

Access to Justice

On March 18, LRP and the GPO Academy, held a joint roundtable on the results of research examining barriers that prevent the population of Uzbekistan from accessing legal services. Recommendations were developed to improve and accelerate the implementation of legal reforms targeting access to justice while improving the access of vulnerable citizens to free legal assistance.

More than 50 representatives of the Academy of the Prosecutor General’s Office, the National Center for Human Rights, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, the Center for Development Strategy, and other public organizations, as well as representatives from academia, civil society organizations, and international experts from the United States, Sweden, and Kazakhstan took part in the mixed format (in-person and remote) event.
Improving the Legal Framework for Civil Society Institutions

LRP, jointly with the National Center for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Center for Sustainable Development, and the National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan (NANNOUz), organized an international conference on constitutional reforms and the role and status of civil society organizations. More than 50 representatives of the International Center for Non-Profit-Law (ICNL), the Uzbek Parliament, governmental organizations, NGOs, and the media attended the event.

The conference gave the participants an opportunity to discuss how to strengthen the constitutional and legal status of civil society, as well as what role civil society institutions can play in the implementation of constitutional reforms. The participation of international experts in Constitutional Law, Natalia Borzheilli and Daria Miloslavskaya, both from ICNL, allowed participants to learn about international experience in adapting and improving a constitution through amendments and additions.

Constitutional Setting - Role and Status of Civil Society Institutions

LRP, jointly with the Yuksalish National Movement and the NGO Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, organized a round table entitled “Constitutional reforms: the foundations of the democratic development of society.” Representatives of the MOJ, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, NANNOUz, the media, and NGOs from all regions of Uzbekistan, as well as other national and international experts, took part in the event. The participants discussed issues of constitutional reform in Uzbekistan and developed
recommendations to strengthen the constitutional and legal foundations for the activities of civil society institutions.

During the event, it was noted that the reforms initiated in this field require specific changes and additions to the Constitution.

“This is one of the first significant steps to discuss the new version of the country’s basic law - the Constitution. It is also very important that representatives of the legislative and executive authorities, as well as NGOs and the international community take part in it. At the conference, during the debate, everyone had the opportunity to speak. […] Today I shared with the participants international experience, which, from my point of view, has practical application for the modernization and improvement of the Constitution of Uzbekistan. I cited as an example several specific articles in the Constitution of Uzbekistan, which should be reviewed from the point of view of modern needs.” Natalya Borzhelli, Vice-President of ICNL for Eurasian countries.

IMPLEMENT LOCALLY LED GRANTS

In Year 4, the 18 NGOs that received LRP grants continued the implementation of their respective projects. The grantees provided free legal aid to vulnerable populations (including those impacted by domestic violence, low-income families, and people with disabilities) across the spectrum of civil and administrative cases, including, but not limited to, domestic violence, family disputes, violations of the Labor Code, migration, subsidized housing, financial support for low-income families, and other social payments.

The grantees’ activities are summarized in the sections below. By the close of the reporting period, the grantees had undertaken the following activities:

- Provided free legal aid to 42,035 people and information on a variety of legal issues to 48,142 individuals who attended awareness-raising events across Uzbekistan.
- Distributed a total of 96,845 leaflets and booklets on rule of law issues.
- Conducted awareness-raising events on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for 34,245 beneficiaries in 10 Regions and distributed 19,823 copies of informational materials (leaflets, brochures, booklets);
- Developed and conducted a two-day training of teachers (ToT) on ongoing reforms and media law for media representatives from all regions of Uzbekistan.
- Monitored 35 cases of violation of journalists’ rights
• Developed and conducted a webinar on the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and the availability of free legal aid;

This map shows the location of LRP grantees that provided free legal assistance to vulnerable citizens and awareness-raising activities by July 2022.

By the end of Quarter 3, nine LRP Grantee NGOs covering Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, Tashkent, Fergana, Andijan, Khorezm regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan completed their two-year project activities. However, the demand in legal aid in these regions has increased dramatically and the population in these regions continue applying for lawyers’ assistance in-person, online and on phone.
IV. FOURTH QUARTER REPORT

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS FOR JULY-SEPTEMBER 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE

According to USAID’s Climate Strategy 2022-2023, USAID “has a longstanding commitment to support our partners to respond to the threat of climate change and seize on the opportunities to define resilient, low-emission pathways that meet development objectives. […] USAID’s work on climate change mitigation aims to ensure that global emissions are sufficiently reduced such that a robust range of adaptation options remain possible.” LRP is committed to identifying and implementing opportunities within planned activities that mitigate the impact of climate change.

During the reporting period, LRP supported USAID’s Climate Strategy by reducing the carbon footprint through surveys, training courses, and legal aid provision via online options (e.g., the paperless survey on harassment in the workplace; development of the IT environment at universities allowing for more distance learning). Utilizing virtual/online meeting options reduces the need for travel to meeting locations, thereby reducing carbon emissions. When participant and staff travel is required, LRP frequently uses mass and shared transportation to reduce the total number of trips required. The project continues to seek out opportunities within all activities to mitigate the impact of climate change.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of interventions remains a major priority of all international organizations/donors. Ensuring the sustainability of its activities is also one of the pillars of LRP’s work. During the reporting period, the following activities were implemented to promote the sustainability of LRP interventions:

- Legal English distance-learning course made available online on the Chamber of Advocates’ educational platform.

- Videoconferencing equipment for the Business Ombudsman to connect the office with entrepreneurs across the country. The equipment facilitated 32 meetings of the Central office with its regional branches and allowed 450 applications to be submitted and processed online. This resulted in considerable cost savings: from July 1 to September 30, 2022, the overall cost savings from avoided travel amounted to approximately $42,000 USD.

- The distance learning equipment provided by LRP connects the Chamber’s main office in Tashkent with its regional branches across Uzbekistan. This has resulted in considerable cost savings: from July 1 to September 30, 2022, the overall cost savings from avoided travel amounted to approximately 60,000 USD.

- The distance learning equipment enabled advocates to take part in online court sessions and international conferences, work more efficiently, access information more quickly, and
better protect clients’ interests more effectively.

- Development of durable educational resources (e.g. handbooks, textbooks, manuals).

During the last quarter of Year 4, several themes guided LRP activities: gender as a cross-cutting objective, regulatory impact assessment, development of regulations on cooperatives, and access to justice.

In the fourth quarter, key LRP accomplishments included the following:

**Gender**
To ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, the Gender Strategy of Uzbekistan set the goal to develop a system of continuous education, encouraging women and men to learn throughout their lives, enhancing their professional experience, and encouraging research activities. LRP undertook as series of activities in furthenance of these goals including:

- During the last quarter, more than 90 specialists of the State Committee for Family and Women, the MOJ, and other state agencies were trained on the international obligations of Uzbekistan in the field of gender equality;
- More than 20 journalists and bloggers took part in a Summer School for journalists focused on gender-sensitive reporting;
- 20 researchers and doctoral students received training on gender aspects of state policies, and the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data;
- 25 employees of the MOJ and its divisions were trained on the methodology of international rankings and indices in the field of gender equality.

**Objective 1**

- Conducted an international conference to discuss the draft Entrepreneurship Code with the participation of more than 150 representatives of state and civil society organizations, entrepreneurs, and international experts;
- Developed a comprehensive baseline assessment report on Uzbekistan’s legal framework and the capacity of its legal institutions to carry out social impact assessments of (proposed) laws and regulations;
- Supported a round table to discuss the implementation of a system of pre-judicial review of administrative complaints;
• Developed legislation for debt collection to provide financial support for minors and disabled adults;

• Supported the elaboration of a draft Presidential Decree on improving the cooperatives industry in Uzbekistan and draft Law “On Cooperation” in the new edition;

• Supported the Second Uzbek Arbitration Week.

Objective 2:

• Supported a training course on international investment law and EU law for TSUL;

• Supported development of a new course on Administrative Law for the Regional Law School named after Berdakh in Nukus, Karakalpakstan;

• Supported a study tour to Rome, Italy for TSUL, UWED, and Regional Law Schools staff to learn the educational process and discuss further cooperation with several Law Universities in Italy;

• Supported development of the Manual on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS);

• Supported a training on “Legal Writing and English” given by an international expert for UWED, LTC, and GPO Academy staff;

• Supported assistance by international experts to UWED in preparation for the international program and institutional accreditation;

• Provided distance learning equipment to five Technical Law Schools;

• Enhanced the capacities of 23 GPO Academy professors to select topics and plan, research and write articles on legal issues for publication in international journals by organizing a workshop on “Legal Writing and Research”;

• Successfully piloted a distance course on legal English for advocates on the platform of the Chamber of Advocates at www.eduparuz.uz;

• Supported LTC by developing an International Sales Law course;

• Supported professional development of 90 professors of TSUL, its Center for professional training of lawyers by international standards as well as its law schools and lyceums by organizing and delivering training courses on “Modern methods and distance learning tools in law-teaching practice” and “Competency-based learning for academic performance in legal studies”;

• Successfully rolled out an online student performance registration system for the GPO Academy.
Objective 3:

- Provided free legal aid to 8,014 beneficiaries, and an additional 8,946 people took part in legal awareness-raising events. 18,875 informational leaflets were distributed;
- Conducted a two-day sub-training course on ongoing reforms and new legislation relevant to the media, for the media representatives from the Andijan, Namangan, and Fergana Regions;
- Monitored 24 cases of journalists being prosecuted or harassed;
- Trained 3,000 people in remote areas of the country on ADR and mediation;
- Held a round table on “Mechanisms for Providing Effective Free Legal Aid Based on the Experience of the National Association of Citizens Advice and other UK civil society organizations”;
- Provided three training courses on "Mechanisms of Interaction Between the State and Civil Society" in the Jizzakh, Fergana and Karshi Regions;
- Conducted a roundtable “Legal Mechanisms for the Interaction of State Bodies with NGOs and Other Civil Society Institutions”

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

GENDER

In the pursuit of political, social, and economic modernization, the GOU has made significant structural changes, reducing bureaucratic impediments to growth and development, and adopting a policy of conforming with international standards and best practices in the field of governance and the protection of human rights. Gender policy has become a priority issue, with increased opportunities and incentives for women to pursue higher education and professional and entrepreneurial careers. There is also an increasing number of women in public administration and parliament.
**Summer School for Scientists**

In the framework of LRP’s support of the Scientific Research Institute “Family and Women” under the State Committee for Family and Women, LRP has supported, jointly with UNFPA, a five-day Summer School for researchers and doctoral students. The topic of the Summer School was “Modern Trends in Research: Methodology and Tools”.

The 20 participants learned about demographic and gender aspects of public policy and discussed the importance of gender statistics and the need for - and methods to - collect sex-disaggregated data in Uzbekistan. Other discussion topics included international experience and best practices in gender equality mainstreaming in public policy, institutions, and legislation.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training course demonstrated that participants’ knowledge of the training topics increased by 24 percent.

**Capacity-Building on International Rankings and Indices on Gender Equality**

LRP supported the State Committee for Family and Women by conducting a three-day training course on the international obligations of Uzbekistan in gender equality. The 20 specialists of the State Committee for Family and Women and the Scientific Research Institute “Family and Women” who participated in the training course learned about the methodologies used by the main bodies publishing international rankings and indices in the field of gender equality and related to Uzbekistan’s position. Participants practiced analyzing gender indicators and their relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). They also developed recommendations on how to improve Uzbekistan’s performance on gender-related metrics.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training course demonstrated that participants' knowledge of the training topics increased by 22 percent.
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

International Obligations in the Field of Gender Equality

LRP and the MOJ conducted a three-day training course on the international obligations of Uzbekistan in gender equality (United Nations’ Social Development Goal Number 5) and gender indicators. Twenty-five representatives from the central office and territorial departments of the MOJ and the Research Institute of Legal Policy under the Ministry of Justice participated in the training course and developed recommendations to improve Uzbekistan’s performance in international rankings.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training course demonstrated that participants’ knowledge of the training topics increased by 20 percent.

OTHER GENDER ACTIVITIES

Gender-Sensitive Journalism

As stated in the “National Strategy To Achieve Gender Equality by 2030,” today “gender analysis of media products is absent, traditional views on the role of women and men in the family and society are present, and the contribution of women to the development of society is not sufficiently covered in print, electronic and mass media.” Upgrading the professional standards of journalists is important for unlocking the potential of the media to promote democracy, dialogue, sustainable development, and gender equality.

More than 20 competitively selected journalists and bloggers took part in a Summer School on gender-sensitive reporting. The purpose of the Summer School was to raise awareness of the participants about existing gender legislation, help recognize instances of gender discrimination and violence against women and study the general image of women projected in the media and how media can impact that image.

The results of short tests administered before were high among all participants – 73 percent and increased by 2 percent after the training, reaching 85 percent.
Soime participants have gone on to post articles and social media posts challenging suggestions that women might have “provoked” violence, rape, and even murder perpetrated against them. From an article by one of the journalists: “Did you stop to think that calling her an adulteress could be slander? [...] with laws in place, who gave anybody the right to slander, to insult, to sentence to death, and to justify the murder?” LRP is proud to have trained this cohort of media representatives who have joined the fight against gender-based violence and the pervasive stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding it.

**OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORTING RULE OF LAW DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN**

LRP promotes rule of law principles in Uzbekistan which ensure the protection of personal rights, ownership of property, enforcement of contracts, and redress of grievances by binding legal processes. The rule of law limits the exercise of power without accountability. With this comes stability, and an environment in which long-term prosperity can be achieved.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK REFORM**

**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

**Entrepreneurship Code - for the Interests of Entrepreneurs**

Currently, entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan is regulated by multiple laws and regulations that put a heavy administrative burden on business owners while impeding the development of business in the country. Liberalizing the economy, by reducing the state’s presence in economic relations and strengthening the protection of private ownership, is among the government’s top policy priorities.

The Ministry of Justice has been tasked with developing a new Entrepreneurship Code to create an up-to-date legal framework that stimulates rather than stymies business activities in the country.

In the previous reporting periods, LRP has provided technical support in drafting the Entrepreneurship Code. On September 7, LRP supported an international conference to discuss the draft Code with the participation of more than 150 representatives of state and civil society organizations, entrepreneurs, and international experts.

The conference facilitated discussions about the legal relationship between private business entities and the state; legal measures that can facilitate business development and investment; and options for the government to support private enterprise to make it internationally competitive.
The national and international experts participating in the conference shared their knowledge and recommendations for improving the draft Entrepreneurship Code by incorporating best international practices that serve the needs of businesses and improve the state-business relationship.

The MOJ is expected to submit the draft Entrepreneurship Code to Parliament by the end of the 2022. Once adopted, the Code will lead to the revision or abolishment of more than 100 existing laws and regulations and make it easier for Uzbek citizens to start and grow their own private enterprises.

“…drafting the Entrepreneurship Code is only the beginning. To reach its intended beneficiaries, there must be a commitment to adopting and implementing the code and continuing to eliminate the barriers to private sector growth.” United States’ Deputy Chief of Mission Paul Poletes

Introducing Regulatory Impact Assessment

The government is dedicated to improving all regulation and control as a tool of government policy. In this framework, it aims to introduce regulatory impact assessments (RIA) and public consultations in the rule-making process. RIA is a process to analyze the expected outcome of a proposed piece of regulation, law, or policy on a particular target group (e.g. SMEs). RIA allows the government to evaluate whether the potential benefits of introducing that particular piece of legislation outweigh its likely costs.

The MOJ has requested LRP to support the development of a legal framework for RIA. National experts produced a comprehensive baseline assessment of Uzbekistan’s legal framework and capacity to implement RIA. Their report included an analysis/case studies of foreign experiences with RIA and recommendations on the necessary legal and institutional framework required to introduce RIA in Uzbekistan.

Administrative Justice Reform Measures Discussed by Experts

The GOU initiated constitutional reform with the objective of strengthening the rights of the individual citizen vis-à-vis the government and public authorities. According to official data, the draft amendments number 200 and would affect 64 articles of the current Constitution.

To achieve these reforms, LRP, in cooperation with the MOJ and UWED, conducted a roundtable to discuss the introduction of a pre-trial administrative justice system in Uzbekistan and to complement ongoing constitutional reform efforts.

Roundtable participants discuss proposals to improve the administrative justice system in Uzbekistan
Participants in the roundtable discussed the LRP-supported policy paper: “Opportunities and Prospects of Development of Pre-trial Administrative Justice in Uzbekistan” and formulated recommendations that were submitted to the government.

OTHER LEGISLATION

Legislation on Alimony to be Improved

Uzbekistan is carrying out large-scale reforms to promote gender equality, to protect the rights of women, increase their participation in the workforce and in politics, and improve their health and education. The government is in the process of improving the procedures for collecting alimony and child support debts. Currently, state bodies responsible for collecting such debts report that 20 percent of the men required to pay alimony and/or child support to a former spouse do not fulfill their financial obligations.

To improve the remittance of support payments, LRP has helped draft a regulation for the collection of debts to benefit minors and disabled adults. These measures include: the temporary restriction of the debtor’s right to drive a vehicle; temporary inability of the debtor to access state services of a licensed and permissive nature; and inability to marry due to outstanding alimony debt.

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUPPORT

LRP Supports the Development of Legislation on Cooperation

In January 2022, LRP supported the Research Institute for Legal Policy under the Ministry of Justice (RILP) by providing a platform for discussion of the role of cooperatives in the Uzbek economy. As a logical continuation of LRP’s support, national consultants engaged by LRP developed a draft Presidential Decree on Improving the Cooperative Industry in Uzbekistan and a new edition of the draft Law on Cooperation. The draft regulations aim to strengthen the role of cooperatives in the socio-economic development of the country and to improve their legal mechanisms. In the next reporting period, LRP will engage an international consultant to revise the draft law and provide recommendations based on international best practices.

Anti-Corruption Analysis of Code on Administrative Offences of Uzbekistan

GOU implemented anti-corruption scrutiny of draft and existing legislation to improve the legal environment. However, experts note that there are many provisions allowing for corruption, including in the Code on Administrative Offences of Uzbekistan. In this regard, LRP supported the analysis of the Code on corruption risks in terms of administrative offenses. National experts developed recommendations to eliminate unlimited discretion granted to officials, to exclude lack of certainty of the norms, as well as a large number of evaluation categories qualified as corruption risks.
INSTITUTIONALIZING COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING PROGRAM

Publishing of the Handbook on Legal-Gender Scrutiny of Legislation

During the preceding reporting periods, LRP assisted the Legislation and Parliamentary Research Institute under the Oliy Majlis (LPRI) in its efforts to develop a handbook on legal-gender assessments for proposed legislation. The document provides those who are responsible for drafting legislation with a detailed overview of the process and technique of performing legal-gender examinations of legislation.

LRP supported the publication of a handbook and encouraged its dissemination among legal professionals to encourage all relevant state agencies to incorporate the most recent innovations in the analysis of legislation through a legal and gender lens.

OTHER AREAS OF LEGISLATIVE AND RELATED SUPPORT

Second Uzbek Arbitration Week

September 19-23, LRP, in partnership with the MOJ and the Tashkent International Arbitration Center (TIAC), conducted the second Uzbek Arbitration Week (UzAW). This event brought together national and international arbitration professionals and educators to promote the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Central Asia. During the week, international expert Kirsten Teo facilitated a workshop on “Arbitrating at TIAC: Features and Advantages” and held a presentation entitled “Introduction to the English legal system, Legal Profession and TIAC Arbitrations Under English Law.”

“USAID is committed to promoting an enabling environment that is friendly to business, investment, and entrepreneurs. The use of ADR as a time- and cost-efficient alternative to traditional court cases is vital to supporting Uzbekistan’s entrepreneurs and gaining the confidence of foreign investors.” Marcelo Arellano, USAID Deputy Mission Director in Uzbekistan

The expanded use of ADR across different sectors is necessary to address the steadily rising number of cross-border commercial transactions and a corresponding rise in disputes. This year’s UzAW spotlighted opportunities to expand the use of ADR in different industries including construction, infrastructure, and sports to streamline the adjudication of legal disputes.
OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS STRATEGIC PLANNING

ACADEMY OF GENERAL PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE

Modernization of Education Management Platform

Responding to a request from the GPO Academy, LRP rolled out the development of an online system of student records. The system will allow the GPO Academy, and the students themselves, to generate individual reports on academic performance as well as individualized recommendations for further study and professional development. The system is expected to contribute significantly to improvement of the educational process in the GPO Academy.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR JUSTICE SECTOR PERSONNEL AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

ACADEMY OF GENERAL PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE

Legal Writing and Research Workshop for GPO Academy Professors

LRP continued to help enhance the capacity of GPO Academy professors to write theses, dissertations, and academic articles. During Quarter 4, LRP conducted a workshop for 23 GPO Academy professors on “Legal Writing and Research in English.” The event was facilitated by Professor Laurel Oates from Seattle University’s School of Law; consistently rated as one of the best legal training programs in the US. The participants in the workshop improved their skills and knowledge in performing legal analysis, research methods, the requirements of scientific journals, planning and drafting English documents, and general writing techniques.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 22 percent.
During Quarter 4, LRP continued to support the professional development program of the Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards under TSUL (Center). The Center requested LRP assist in the delivery of a ToT on “Competency-Based Learning Approach for Academic Performance in Legal Disciplines.” The training course improved the ability of professors to design and teach legal courses.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the subjects increased by 33 percent.

**Digitalization of the Educational Process**

The Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards under TSUL (Center) requested help in improving the efficiency of its distance learning programs and student outreach. In response, LRP supported the development of a Technical Task outlining a strategy for the digitalization of the educational processes of the Center, including the digitalization of student assessments, study guides, course schedules, and training materials. The digitization makes materials and information immediately available to students while facilitating learning and self-guided study.

**LAWYERS’ TRAINING CENTER UNDER THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

**Training on Legal Research and Writing**

The LTC reached out to LRP to enhance the writing and research skills of its professors, academicians, and lawyers and assist them in expanding their knowledge of legal terminology to enable them to contribute articles to well-regarded international legal journals. Inclusion in peer-reviewed journals elevates the standing of Uzbek legal scholars while demonstrating the progress Uzbekistan is making in legal reforms and research.

The training was designed to guide the participants through the five steps of drafting a thesis, dissertation,
or academic article. Fifteen LTC professors took part in the training conducted by international consultant Professor Laurel Oates.

Results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ research and writing knowledge increased by 50 percent increase.

**STRENGTHEN CAPACITY OF CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES AND LEGAL AID PROVIDERS**

**CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES**

*Pre-Intermediate Legal English for the Chamber of Advocates’ Staff*

Following a training course on elementary-level legal English for advocates held in March and May 2022, the Chamber of Advocates requested LRP’s assistance in setting up a pre-Intermediate legal English course. The course will help legal practitioners to better understand legal materials that are limited to the English language. The course was delivered in a hybrid format (in-person and online) to 18 advocates from Tashkent and other parts of the country. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ legal English knowledge increased by 21 percent.

*Legal Writing for the Chamber of Advocates*

The Chamber of Advocates requested LRP’s support to conduct a training course to improve the writing abilities of its members while expanding their knowledge of legal terminology to communicate successfully with English-speaking clients and counterparts on legal issues.

The training course was also delivered by international consultant Professor Laurel Oates.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 16 percent.

*Distance Learning Platform for the Chamber of Advocates*

The Chamber of Advocates requested LRP’s support in the development of a distance learning platform for its members. The platform will enable the Chamber’s members to take part in asynchronous (recorded) classes without having to travel to Tashkent. The developed learning management system was tested and handed over to the Chamber of Advocates.

The IT company that developed the distance learning platform will also advise the Chamber of Advocates’ IT specialists on how to upload the materials and manage the platform, and will provide hosting as well as technical support for the first year.
Legal English Course on the New Platform

The Chamber of Advocates requested LRP’s support in the development of online training courses for its members to improve their legal English and extend understanding of legal terminology to communicate successfully with English-speaking clients and peers on legal issues.

A workshop where the new platform on the online legal English course developed by LRP was tested took place at the Chamber of Advocates’ office in Tashkent on September 29, 2022. Sixteen (16) advocates from the Tashkent Region and Tashkent city participated in the workshop. Today, the course and the course materials are available online for the benefit of the Chambers’ members throughout the country.

LEGAL EDUCATION

TASHKENT STATE UNIVERSITY OF LAW (TSUL)

Modernizing TSUL’s curriculum

LRP assisted TSUL in updating and expanding its curriculum by developing an up-to-date training course on international investment law and EU law, given by international expert Professor Marc Bungenberg. Dr. Bungenberg reviewed TSUL programs and provided recommendations to modernize coursework and training materials to reflect the changing legal-economic landscape.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 27 percent.

Supporting a Comprehensive Manual on ECTS

In Quarter 4, TSUL requested LRP’s support for the development of a comprehensive guidebook for the implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The guidebook covers the organization of the educational processes in accordance with the requirements of the ECTS, including the development of curricula and syllabi, and the procedures for calculating credit hours.
The LRP-developed guidebook includes steps for the students’ independent study, the development of methods and instruments for student assessment, and methods of modular teaching, and includes guidance on compliance with the rules of academic honesty.

Understanding and application of the ECTS will help TSUL to attract international law students while improving its reputation as a top-level institution that adheres to international standards.

**Establishment of International Cooperation in Legal Education**

From September 19-23, LRP supported a study visit to Roma Tre University in Rome, Italy for a delegation of TSUL, UWED, and Regional and Technical Law Schools to explore future joint research projects and possible exchange of students, staff and faculty for training and internships.

During the visit, TSUL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Roma Tre University. The MoU sets forth the creation of joint training programs and exchange of students between the two institutions, and the involvement of specialists of Roma Tre University in research and educational processes at TSUL.

Following the visit, the study trip participants held an online briefing for more than 60 representatives of UWED, TSUL, Regional Law Schools, and 14 Technical Law Schools. During the meeting, participants discussed the establishment of cooperation between Italian and Uzbek universities, future implementation of research projects to improve the quality of research in the law schools in Uzbekistan, share experiences on strengthening international rankings, and create opportunities for teachers and students to participate in training and internship programs.

Rector of Roma Tre University Massimiliano Fiorucci and the rector of TSUL exchanging signed Memorandum of Understanding

Participants and stakeholders discuss further Italian-Uzbek cooperation during a follow-up online meeting
TECHNICAL LAW SCHOOLS
Equipping Five Technical Law Schools

In 2019, LRP provided 14 Technical Law Schools with one server and 14 computers to create an initial distance learning platform, which was subsequently used for distance learning classes in 2021. An analysis of the status of implementation, however, found that five of the Technical Law schools, namely those in Nukus, Karakalpakstan, and the Termez, Samarkand, Andijan and Tashkent Regions, needed additional IT equipment to upgrade their distance-learning rooms. In response, LRP provided an additional 11 computers, a camera, and one smart LCD monitor for each school to improve distance learning opportunities.

UNIVERSITY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND DIPLOMACY (UWED)
Training on Legal Writing and Research

LRP continues to support UWED in improving its course offerings. In Year 2, LRP engaged the international expert Professor Laurel Oates to support the development of a new Legal Writing and Research course for UWED in English. However, due to COVID19 restriction measures, the visit of the expert was postponed. The course was finally taught from September 5-9, 2022. UWED professors were trained on how to teach the new Legal Writing and Research Course to improve students’ analytical, writing, and argumentation skills.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 34 percent.
UWED International Institutional and Program Accreditation

During the reporting period, LRP maintained its support for UWED to strengthen the capacity of its academic programs while improving strategic planning and development procedures. Responding to recent reforms in higher education, UWED requested LRP’s assistance in the preparation for international institutional and program accreditation. International accreditation demonstrate that UWED’s programs meet quality standards, which would allow it to attract international students, transfer academic credits globally, and enable graduates to have better employment prospects.

To support this initiative, LRP engaged two international experts from the Kazakh State University of Law (KAZSUL) with experience in international accreditation. In the next reporting period, these consultants will advise UWED’s working group on the preparation of a road map towards accreditation and assist in gathering documentation to be submitted to the relevant international accreditation agency.

TASHKENT MEDIATION CENTER (TMC)
Development of the first Code of Mediators

During the reporting period, the MOJ and the Tashkent Mediation Center requested LRP support the development of a first Code of Conduct for Mediators based on best international practices. LRP devised the first-of-its-kind Code of Conduct for Uzbekistan mediators in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice and the Tashkent Mediation Center under the Tashkent State University of Law. The Code outlines guiding ethical principles for mediators’ activities while enhancing protections for mediation participants. The draft Code will be presented to an international audience at Istanbul Arbitration Week from October 10 to 14 to solicit feedback on the guidelines and demonstrate Uzbekistan’s commitment to alternative dispute resolution. Adoption of the Code of Conduct will improves the professionalism of mediators while increasing the public’s trust in alternative dispute resolution and easing the burdens on courts.
REGIONAL LAW SCHOOLS

Supporting a new, innovative course on Administrative Law

In response to a request from the Law faculty of Karakalpak State University, LRP helped develop a new course on Administrative Law that will replace an outdated one and meet modern international standards of teaching administrative law. National experts who developed the new course conducted a ToT for the professors who will teach the course to students. The course will provide instruction on executive branch rule-making, adjudication, and enforcement of laws—areas where there have been few related courses available in the past. The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 60 percent.

A formal presentation of the new course to representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, TSUL, UWED, 14 Technical Law Schools, and Regional Law Schools is scheduled for October 20, 2022. During this presentation, LRP’s national experts will discuss the possible incorporation of the new course in the curricula of law schools, universities, schools, and other institutions across the country.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS

The existing system of government-provided legal aid in Uzbekistan is still imperfect and limited to criminal cases. Access to justice is remains quite limited for vulnerable groups including low-income citizens such as labor migrants, victims of domestic violence, and people with disabilities. NGOs have an important intermediary role between citizens and state, both as overseers of the functioning of state institutions and as partners of state institutions in delivering justice to citizens, and LRP continues to support national efforts to improve the legal framework allowing NGO’s to fulfill that role.
AWARENESS OF LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND PROCEDURES RELEVANT TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND NGOs
Participation of Civil Society Institutions in Legislative Activities

LRP, together with the National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations of Uzbekistan (NANNOUz), the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, and the Institute for Problems of Legislation and Parliamentary Studies under the Oliy Majlis, conducted a roundtable on the topic “The Impact of Civil Society Institutions on the Process of Establishing a Legal Statehood: The Place and Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Other Civil Society Institutions In Law-Making And Law-Enforcement Processes.”

The event was attended by over 200 representatives of the MOJ, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, NANNOUz, the media, academic institutions and universities, and NGOs from all parts of Uzbekistan. Discussions focused on civic participation in legislative drafting and highlighted that recently participation of NGOs in law-making has increased significantly, and currently includes active NGO participation in the development of a new version of the Constitution of Uzbekistan.

Partnership between the State and Civil Society

LRP, jointly with NANNOUz, conducted two-day training courses in the Jizzakh, Fergana and Kashkadarya Regions on the topic "Mechanisms for Interaction Between the State and Civil Society." Representatives of NGOs, members of public councils, deputies of the local Kengash of People’s Deputies, and representatives of NANNOUz and of the media took part in the events.

During the training, the participants agreed that systematic and sustained collaborative activities will increase the level of mutual trust and the effectiveness of joint efforts in addressing urgent social, socioeconomic, and other issues in accordance with the principle “from a strong state to a strong civil society”.

Participants discussed topical issues of lawmaking

Participants receive practical knowledge in conducting public hearings
The training courses helped 88 participants to increase their knowledge on how to develop mechanisms that allow the state and civil society to collaborate in an effective manner. The participants gained practical skills in holding public hearings, analyzing the problems of the region in the context of joint actions of NGOs and state bodies, and developing an action plan to strengthen this type of interaction.

The results of short tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge increased by 41 percent.

**Interaction between Authorities and Civil Society Institutions**

LRP, jointly with Yuksalish and NANNOUz, conducted a hybrid-format roundtable on the topic “Legal Mechanisms for Interaction Between State Bodies and Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations and Other Civil Society Institutions.” The event was attended by more than 80 representatives of the MOJ, the MIA, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, NANNOUz, the media, academic institutions and universities, and NGOs from all parts of Uzbekistan.

Participants discussed the development of effective social partnerships between state bodies on the one hand, and NGOs and other civil society institutions on the other. Discussions also centered around the important role of civil society organizations in spreading awareness of rule of law principles through different means. The recommendations formulated by participants were subsequently submitted to the GOU.

**Implementation of Innovative Tools and Approaches in the Provision of Legal Services in Uzbekistan**

In June 2022, LRP supported a study trip to London, UK to examine international best practices for the provision of free legal aid to the population. Eight representatives of national NGOs had an opportunity to get first-hand experience from the UK’s National Association Citizen’s Advice activities in providing free legal aid. The Uzbek delegation learned more about Citizens’ Advice’s approach to assisting vulnerable groups, internal monitoring of activities, volunteer engagement, and the system of protection of beneficiaries’ personal information. Participants established cooperation with Citizens’ Advice for continued learning and collaboration in the future.
As a follow-up to the study trip, LRP conducted an online roundtable for 70 representatives of state institutions and NGOs to discuss the mechanisms for providing free legal aid in an effective manner, based on the experience gained during a study visit.

The participants discussed the benefits of the British approach, which has local Citizens Advice agencies focus on one specific form of advice. The participants also discussed the way in which the Citizens Advice agencies’ work is monitored and financed. The participants developed recommendations for monitoring Uzbek NGOs engaged in providing free legal advice, and upgrading the funding/fundraising system to strengthen their sustainability. The participants recommended expanding cooperation between NGOs and state organizations. As a result of this roundtable, the guidelines used by Citizens Advice in the UK have been adapted to the local Uzbek context and distributed to all interested organizations.

IMPLEMENT LOCALLY LED GRANTS

During the reporting period, nine LRP grantees covering the Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, Tashkent, Fergana, Andijan, Khorezm Regions, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan successfully completed their two-year project activities. However, the demand for legal aid in these regions has increased dramatically and the population in these areas continues to need and seek the help of lawyers in person, online, and by telephone.

LRP grantees have provided free legal aid to vulnerable citizens, including women, migrants, victims of domestic violence, low-income families, and people with disabilities. Legal aid services focus largely on matters of domestic violence, family and property disputes, labor code violations, employment, slander, and migration. The grantees help beneficiaries in getting subsidized housing, securing financial (state) support, and finding solutions to problems obtaining alimony payments, and various subsidies and pensions. The grantees raise citizens’ awareness of their own legal rights as well as of the legal obligations of governmental institutions.

To improve collaboration among the grantees and local government counterparts with regard to victims of domestic violence, LRP shared the contact information of the relevant grantees’ legal clinics/experts with the Gender Commission (a governmental body), as well as with the Ministry for the Support of the Mahalla and the Older Generation.
Grantee activities are summarized in the sections below. By the close of the reporting period, LRP grantees had:

- Provided free legal aid to 8,014 beneficiaries, while an additional 8,946 people took part in legal awareness-raising events. A total of 18,875 informational leaflets were distributed;
- Conducted a two-day training course on relevant ongoing reforms and new legislation for media representatives from the Andijan, Namangan and Fergana Regions;
- Monitored 24 cases of journalists being prosecuted or harassed;
- Trained 3,000 people in remote areas of the country on ADR;
- Held a roundtable on the topic “Mechanisms for Providing Effective Free Legal Aid Based on the Experience of the National Association “Citizens Advice” and Other UK Civil Society Organizations.”

Dramatic Increase in Demand for Legal Aid

Since the launch of the LRP grants program, the number of cases of free legal aid provided has increased significantly. The growth is attributed to the large number of awareness-raising events organized by grantees throughout the country. These events have increased the legal literacy of the population on both existing legislation and the ongoing reforms and made it widely known that in-person and online free legal aid is available throughout the country.

The following sections detail the achievements by individual LRP grantees.

**YUKSAK SALOHIYAT, SAMARKAND**

**Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Citizens in the Samarkand Region**

The NGO Yuksak Salohiyat provides free legal assistance to vulnerable citizens in Samarkand and three Districts of the Samarkand Region (Samarkand-Selskiy, Toylok, and Oqdarya) and raises awareness of citizens’ civil rights.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,761 and psychological aid to 26 beneficiaries. In addition, the grantee distributed 4,849 copies of booklets with information on legal issues during awareness-raising events in mahallas. A total of 1,885 citizens participated in the awareness-raising events.
WOMEN OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF UZBEKISTAN

Increased Availability of Legal Aid for Vulnerable Citizens and Awareness-Raising in the Tashkent Region

The Association of Women of the Agricultural Sector of Uzbekistan (AWAS) focuses on providing free legal aid to vulnerable citizens, including the unemployed, migrants, women who have experienced violence, and people with disabilities. The NGO operates in the Akhangaran, Parkent, and Yukorichirchik Districts of the Tashkent Region and endeavors to raise legal awareness among the population.

During the reporting period, AWAS provided free legal aid to 715 beneficiaries and distributed 1,925 copies of a publication entitled “Legal Questions and Answers” which contains information on civil rights and the availability of legal aid services in the Tashkent Region. With its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, the grantee reached 1,248 people. In addition, the grantee conducted a roundtable with the participation of state organizations and NGOs to discuss project results.

Impact of Women of the Agricultural Sector of Uzbekistan’s work

Bahtinisa Sultanova had been unemployed for several years and was thinking of starting her own small business. She knew that there were preferential loans available for people like her, who lacked the funds to start their own private business, but she had no idea how to apply for one. She approached AWAS whose lawyer helped her to prepare all the paperwork and submit a successful application which allowed her to start a confectionary shop. “My dream came true! I am now running my own business and can contribute to my family’s income” – says Bahtinisa proudly.
MEHR KO’ZDA, TASHKENT
Legal Services for People with Speech and Hearing Impairments

Mehr Ko’zda’s project is aimed at providing both remote and in-person legal aid to people with speech and/or hearing impairments. During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,359 people with speech and hearing impairments and distributed 1,500 copies of informational booklets.

In September 2022, Mehr Ko’zda held a roundtable with the participation of state organizations and NGOs to discuss project results and develop amendments for improving legislation related to protection of the rights of speech and hearing-impaired people.

Impact of Mehr Ko’zda’s work

Mamur Ahliddinov lost his hearing in early childhood. Today he is a father of two, and supports his family by working for a magazine. As a disabled person with a family and a regular full-time job, Mamur was eligible for a supplement to his regular disability pension, however, his employment records for the last ten years had gone missing – through no fault of his own – which made it seemingly impossible for him to claim this supplementary allowance. Mehr Ko’zda’s lawyer, with the help of the NGO’s sign language interpreter, conferred with Mamur and helped him to submit all the necessary paperwork to obtain a dispensation. As a result, Mamur is now receiving his pension supplement in the amount of 2,000,000 soms per month (around 190 USD), which represents a significant uptick in income for him and his family.

ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD, NAMANGAN
Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Citizens in the Namangan Region

LRP’s grantee, the NGO Istiqbolli Avlod, provides free legal aid to vulnerable people in the Namangan Region, including survivors of human trafficking, migrants, and survivors of domestic violence. The NGO conducts awareness- raising events about citizens’ rights, the availability of free legal aid, and the ongoing legal reforms in Uzbekistan. The NGO’s lawyers offer information and legal assistance to people that congregate at border-crossing points, Namangan International Airport, and the Agency for External Labor Migration. During the reporting period, Istiqbolli Avlod provided free legal aid to 549 beneficiaries.
Through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, it reached 1,059 people and distributed 2,736 copies of informational materials.

During the reporting period, the USAID Mission Director in Uzbekistan visited NGO Istiqbolli Avlod, Namangan. The parties discussed the achievements of the grantee during its two-year project; as well as the situation related to the increasing number of migrants arriving in Uzbekistan and the consequences of this issue. Particular attention was paid to the sustainability of the NGO and enhancing its activities.

ISHONCH VA HAYOT, TASHKENT
Human Rights and HIV/AIDS

Ishonch va Hayot provides free legal aid to people living with or otherwise affected by HIV/AIDS and works to increase public awareness among the general population of the issues faced by this vulnerable group, with the aim to reduce and prevent stigma and discrimination.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 634 beneficiaries, reached 961 people through awareness-raising activities in mahallas, and distributed 1,528 copies of informational materials.

Impact of Ishonch va Hayot’s work

Iroda is HIV positive. When her fiancé discovered this, he walked out on her. Lonely, afraid and miserable, Iroda confided in a friend. The friend, unfortunately, repeated what Iroda had told her to one of Iroda’s neighbors – who in turn abandoned all discretion and told everyone else in the apartment building. This led to a nightmare scenario: whenever Iroda left her apartment, she was exposed to public ridicule, aggression and insults because of her HIV status and wild and unfair speculation about the cause of it. Fortunately, in the midst of her despair and increasing social isolation, Iroda was given a leaflet of the NGO “Ishonch va Hayot” and learned that this organization is dedicated to standing up for the rights and dignity of people affected by HIV/AIDS. She approached the NGO whose lawyer helped her file a lawsuit against the gossipy neighbor who had caused all the harassment to which she had been exposed. The courts rewarded Iroda’s immense courage by imposing a penalty of around 50 USD on the neighbor, and, when this did not lead to the desired result (the neighbor continued to slander and harass Iroda), a second penalty in the more substantial amount of 1,800 USD did the trick. Even though Iroda may not be viewed or treated with kindness by her neighbors today, at least they have stopped harassing her so that she may live in dignity.
RAHMDILLIK, SAMARKAND
Legal Services for Vulnerable Women in the Samarkand Region

Rahmdillik focuses on protecting the rights of victims of domestic violence in the Pastdargom and Jambay Districts and the town of Kattakurgan, all in the Samarkand Region, as well as on raising awareness of domestic violence issues among the general population in these areas.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,096 beneficiaries and reached 1,485 people through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas. The grantee distributed 3,041 copies of informational materials.

CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN JOURNALISM OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
Legal Reforms in the Media

The Center for the Development of Modern Journalism of the Republic of Uzbekistan focuses on increasing journalists’ and bloggers’ capacity to provide quality coverage of the legal reforms in Uzbekistan, and on increasing their knowledge about their own rights as representatives of the media and empowering them to address and monitor cases related to violations of these rights.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided legal assistance to 320 journalists and bloggers with guidance on how to identify misleading information and protect themselves from harassment while reporting. The Center also conducted a training on the ongoing reforms and on media law for 15 media representatives from the Andijan, Namangan and Fergana Regions. The grantee distributed 347 copies of informational materials and submitted a report to the government describing 24 cases of harassment or prosecution of journalists.

ISTIQLOL AVLODI, JIZZAKH
Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable People in the Jizzakh Region

Istiqlol Avlodi focuses on providing legal aid in five remote districts of the Jizzakh Region (Gallaaral, Zamin, Zarbdor, Dustlik, and Pahtakor) as well as in Jizzakh city, through in-person, online (including Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook), and phone consultations. The grantee conducts awareness-raising events on legal issues for the general population as well as for representatives of partner organizations. During these events, information is provided on employment, legal migration and acquiring official residence permits in destination countries, illegal migration and human trafficking, violations of human rights, and other relevant topics.
During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,151 beneficiaries and distributed 2,949 booklets with information on legal issues and the availability of legal aid services in the Jizzakh Region. Through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, the grantee reached 1,798 citizens.

**Impact of Istiqlol Avlodi’s work**

Maftuna is a single mother of two. Her marriage was never officially registered, and when her husband decided to walk out, she and her two small children were left with nothing and nowhere to go: her own parents had divorced and each had started a new family, neither of which was willing to take in Maftuna and her children, and there was nobody else who could help. Maftuna had no choice but to find jobs and places to live wherever she could. She was never able to keep a job for long because she was not able to have enough money to pay for the twin necessities of rent and babysitters. Things usually ended with her losing her job because she was not able to regularly attend work, having to stay home with her children, or with the family being evicted from yet another dwelling because she could not pay the rent. It was a miserable vicious cycle.

When she learned that the local NGO “Istiqlol Avlodi” provided free legal aid, she approached its lawyer with a plea for help. The NGO’s lawyer was able to determine that Maftuna, as a homeless single mother with no means to support herself and her children, was eligible for government assistance for housing and various other expenses. The lawyer helped Maftuna submit the necessary paperwork and, not long after, she was able to get a mortgage for the purchase of a modest one-bedroom apartment, with 30% of the initial costs being covered by government assistance. Early in September she and the children moved into their new home. Maftuna found a job close to the apartment, and today she is grateful and at peace, knowing that with the prospect of receiving the continuing government assistance payments to which she is entitled, she is now able to offer her children a stable home.
ASSOCIATION OF ARBITRATION COURTS OF UZBEKISTAN

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) for Improving Access to Justice

The grantee, Association of Arbitration Courts of Uzbekistan, focuses on training arbiters in remote areas of Uzbekistan and raising public awareness of ADR. The grantee received a seven-month extension of its project on June 21, 2022.

Activities are implemented under two objectives:

1. Update the distance-learning program and training module for an in-person course on ADR with a module on mediation. Give in-person training to beneficiaries in remote areas of twelve Regions of Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, Khorezm, Navoi, Jizzakh, Andijon, Syrdarya, Bukhara, Samarkand, Fergana, and Namangan) and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, where distance-learning opportunities are not accessible, and in Tashkent city; and
2. Raise public awareness of mediation as an effective instrument in resolving legal disputes and of the benefits of mediation for improving access to justice for the most vulnerable citizens.

During the reporting period, the grantee conducted awareness-raising events focused on ADR for 3,000 beneficiaries in Kashkadarya, Khorezm, Surkhandarya, Namangan, Fergana, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

OYDIN NUR, BUKHARA

Joining Forces to Address Domestic Violence

Oydin Nur’s grant focuses on providing legal aid to victims of domestic violence in Bukhara. Activities are implemented under three objectives:

1. Improve the capacity of the Bukhara Chamber of Advocates’ lawyers to provide free legal assistance to victims of domestic violence.
2. Protect the rights of victims of domestic violence in the city of Bukhara and four Districts of the Bukhara Region.
3. Raise awareness of domestic violence issues among the citizens of Bukhara and the Bukhara Region.

This quarter, the grantee provided free legal advice to 429 and psychological aid to 164 citizens. The grantee also held awareness-raising events in local communities across the Bukhara Region, reaching 510 citizens.
COMMERCIAL LAW ACTIVITIES

This section is added at the request of USAID to collate activities in the commercial law sphere and is duplicative of the information found above.

Entrepreneurship Code - for the Interests of Entrepreneurs

Currently, entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan is regulated by multiple laws and regulations which put a heavy administrative burden on business owners and impedes the development of business in the country. Liberalizing the economy, which means reducing the state’s presence in economic relations, and strengthening the protection of private ownership, are among the government’s top policy priorities.

The Ministry of Justice has been tasked with developing a new Entrepreneurship Code to create an up-to-date legal framework that stimulates rather than stymies business activities in the country.

In the previous reporting periods, LRP has provided technical support in drafting the Entrepreneurship Code. On September 7, LRP supported an international conference to discuss the draft Code with the participation of more than 150 representatives of state and civil society organizations, entrepreneurs, and international experts.

The conference facilitated discussions about the legal relationship between private business entities and the state; legal measures that can facilitate business development and investment; and options for the government to support private enterprise to make it internationally competitive.

The national and international experts participating in the conference shared their knowledge and recommendations for improving the draft Entrepreneurship Code by incorporating best international practices that serve the needs of businesses and improve the state-business relationship.

The MOJ is expected to submit the draft Entrepreneurship Code to Parliament by the end of 2022. Once adopted, the Code will lead to the revision or abolishment of more than 100 existing laws and regulations and make it easier for Uzbek citizens to start and grow their own private enterprises.
Second Uzbek Arbitration Week

From September 19 to 23, 2022, LRP, in partnership with the MOJ and the Tashkent International Arbitration Center (TIAC), conducted the second Uzbek Arbitration Week (UzAW). This event brought together national and international arbitration professionals and educators to promote the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Central Asia. During the week, international expert Kirsten Teo facilitated a workshop on “Arbitrating at TIAC: features and advantages” and held a presentation entitled “Introduction to the English legal system, legal profession and TIAC arbitrations under English law”.

The expanded use of ADR across different sectors is necessary to address the steadily rising number of cross-border commercial transactions and a corresponding rise in disputes. This year’s UzAW spotlighted opportunities to expand the use of ADR in different industries including construction, infrastructure, and sports.

PLANNED MAIN ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT YEAR

GENDER:

• International conference “Combating Violence Against Women in Uzbekistan: Achievements, Challenges, and Perspectives” – organized in the framework of the global campaign “16 days against violence against women and girls.”
• Publish and distribute brochures with results of research on harassment in the workplace.
• Conduct research aimed at improving the migration policy of Uzbekistan from a gender perspective: protecting the rights of women migrants, and raising public awareness about the gender aspects of migration processes.
• Conduct research into the problem of gender inequality in rural areas.
• Together with national partners and UNFPA: conduct Summer School for scientists and doctoral students.

Objective 1:

• Develop methodology on social impact assessment of draft legislation.
• Develop a handbook on interparliamentary diplomacy for local council deputies.
• Develop a handbook on pre-trial administrative justice mechanisms.
• Review of 832 laws and regulations from an anti-corruption perspective.
• Develop a draft Law on the Administrative Council under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other legislation to further reforms in pre-trial administrative justice.
• Develop a draft Law on Cooperation.
• Conduct research on new legislation related to the legal interpretation of by-laws.
• Conduct research on new legislation related to conducting scientific expertise in rulemaking.
• Conduct a roundtable on the new *Law on the Ombudsman*.
• Develop guidelines on the methodology of the Public Law Laboratory as an innovative learning model.
• Develop a brochure on the topic: “State programs to support the ‘Third Sector’ in Uzbekistan.”
• Conduct training on human rights protection by the Ombudsman.

**Objective 2:**

• Support the second Tashkent International Conference of Advocates with the theme “Prospects for the development of the bar: experience of Uzbekistan and foreign countries.”
• Assist in international accreditation (preparation for accreditation) of TSUL and UWED’s programs.
• Publish a manual on ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) for TSUL, Regional Law Schools, and UWED.
• Conduct training for teachers of *Academic Lyceum under TSUL* on innovative and online teaching methods.
• Support curriculum development and ToT of two new courses on international transportation law and international construction law for UWED.
• Support the development of the textbook “Basics of private international law” for Bachelor and Master students of UWED.
• Conduct four LL.M. courses and associated ToTs for the GPO Academy, namely “Legal Aspects of Artificial Intelligence”, “Protection of and Access to Justice for People with Disabilities”, “Environmental Law” and “Research Methods.”
• Support the development of a handbook on Legal Research Methods for GPO Academy.
• Support the development of an online professional development program for professors of GPO Academy.
• Support the development of a manual on legal services for the Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards under TSUL.
• Training for MFA staff on UN registration of international contracts.
• Conduct capacity building and professional development training on a number of topics for NGO Madad.
• Finalize upgrade of NGO Madad’s online portal, adding a live chat with legal consultants from advice.uz and yurxizmat.uz, allowing improved efficiency and access to justice for vulnerable citizens.
• Conduct training on regulatory impact assessment (RIA).
• Conduct training on pre-trial administrative justice for government officials.
• Conduct training on anti-corruption expertise.
• Provide capacity building for the Ombudsman’s Office and its regional offices.
• Conduct ToT for staff of the UWED Public Law Laboratory.

Objective 3:
• Conduct capacity-building training courses for NGO/LRP grantees on project implementation topics, including planning, management, and sustainability.
• Conduct public hearings of draft legislation regulating the activities of NGOs.
• Provide free legal aid to 3,500 people from vulnerable groups (by LRP grantees).
• Provide free psychological aid to 400 people from vulnerable groups (by LRP grantees).
• Reach 5,000 people through awareness-raising events and distribute informational materials on a range of legal topics (by LRP grantees).
• Distribute 10,000 leaflets/booklets with legal information (by LRP grantees).
• Conduct training courses on ongoing reforms and media law for media representatives.
• Conduct a webinar on the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and the availability of free legal aid for this group.

V. INDICATOR PROGRESS (ATTACHMENT D)

The project monitors activities that utilize 18 performance indicators. In Year 4, LRP met all targets. The Indicator Summary Table in Attachment D with a Summary of Results provides an overview of progress against the MEL Plan targets.

VI. CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OR TIMING OF SERVICES

During the time period covered by this report, the following occurrences had a substantial impact on the delivery times of LRP’s activities:

- Constitutional reform initiated by the President of Uzbekistan required almost all national partners to focus their attention on the drafting of amendments to the Constitution of Uzbekistan, and the processing of proposed amendments;

- Demonstrations in the Republic of Karakalpakstan against the amendments concerning the status of Karakalpakstan. For instance, the Ombudsman’s Office was actively engaged in all aspects of investigations into alleged abuses of human rights in Nukus and other districts of Karakalpakstan. Activities that were supposed to have taken place with these national partners during the reporting period have been postponed until the next quarter;
- Due to the Constitutional reform, revision of some legislative acts, such as the Code on NGOs, was postponed;

- According to the Chamber of Advocates the Constitutional reform postponed the adoption of the new Law on Advocates. Therefore, corresponding LRP activities also were put on hold;

- In accordance with a new presidential decree of March 17, 2022 # UP-89, the Intellectual Property Agency (IPA) was reorganized and became a department of the Ministry of Justice, which influenced the timely implementation of activities planned with IPA;

- A planned study trip for staff of the MFA’s Treaty Law Department and other agencies to attend the 43rd session of the Working Group III on Investor-State Dispute Settlement Reform of UNCITRAL in Vienna was postponed to January-March 2023 due to belated confirmation of the list of participants by national counterparts.

- Review of the draft Law on the Diplomatic Service is under discussion with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since the government is still working on the completion of the final draft of the law and related LRP activities have been postponed;

- The delivery of several LL.M. courses, namely “Legal Aspects of Artificial Intelligence,” “Protection and Access to Justice for People with Disabilities,” “Environmental Law” and “Research Methods” and associated ToTs were postponed due to anticipated government decisions on the large-scale transformation of the GPO Academy’s status and mandate.
## VII. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<table>
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<th>COST LINE ITEM</th>
<th>AUTHORIZED CONTRACT BUDGET</th>
<th>AMOUNT INVOICED July 1 – September 30, 2022</th>
<th>TOTAL AMOUNT INVOICED Life of Project</th>
<th>REMAINING UNEXPENDED FUNDS</th>
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## VARIANCE ANALYSIS

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<th>COST LINE ITEM</th>
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## VIII. ANNEXES

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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Report on Preparation of International Investment Law Course</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Modern Administrative Law Course</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Indicator Progress and Summary of Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Success Story – Maftuna Finds a Home</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>List of LRP Reports, Analyses, and Other Key Documents Produced during the Year</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>List of Commodities Procured and Revised Inventory</td>
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<td>Personnel as of September 30, 2022</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>List of Subcontracts</td>
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