



Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development  
in Transition Economies

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### **Challenges of Agricultural Trade Policies in Central Asia and the South Caucasus**

Samarkand Conference brings regional and international research exchange to the region

**Halle (Saale), 10 November 2016 – On 2 to 4 November, in cooperation with the Samarkand Agricultural Institute and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IAMO organized an international conference on ‘Regional and International Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: Recent Developments in Agricultural Trade’. The conference held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, proposed four plenary sessions and 22 parallel sessions in which more than 230 participants were able to discuss the development and consequences of agricultural trade in the Central Asian and Caucasus countries. Throughout the three-day event, regional and international experts, as well as representatives of companies involved in agricultural trade, and representatives of ministries and local government agencies were provided with a platform for scientific exchange and thereby strengthened future research activities in the region.**

Professor Toshtemir Ostonakulov, Rector of the Samarkand Agricultural Institute and Talantjon Esirgapov, Deputy Mayor of Samarkand city, welcomed guests to the Samarkand Conference from a total of 28 countries including Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Russia, Israel and China. IAMO Director Professor Thomas Glauben introduced the topics of the conference in his opening speech. He particularly highlighted the importance of regional and international cooperation as well as the future development of the food economy and the rural areas of Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Plenary and parallel sessions on the first day discussed the challenges of agricultural trade in the landlocked countries of Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, as well as options to overcome these challenges by developing trade infrastructure. The conference also provided a productive environment to discuss the performance and challenges of agricultural trade policies in recent years. A further topic central to the conference was the impact of climate change on agricultural trade. Policy recommendations provided during the first day included the reduction of transportation time by designing more efficient customs

declaration procedures at the borders, diversification of export products, as well as diversification of import sources.

Keynote speeches, as well as paper and poster presentations on the second day of the conference covered a wide range of topics related to regional cooperation, supply chains and agricultural resource use. These highlighted the achievements in regional cooperation as well as the remaining challenges to be solved. Existing challenges in developing value chains were discussed and suitable policy measures towards increasing production efficiency provided. The second day was finalized with a field trip to historical places of the Silk Road city of Samarkand and a visit to agricultural producers and processors involved in the export of agricultural products from Uzbekistan.

The importance of regional cooperation and trade in reducing poverty and increasing food security in the region and the impact of climate change on household welfare were discussed on the third day of the conference. Furthermore, the impact of macroeconomic shocks on food security as well as the effect of changing macroeconomic policies (e.g. Russian import ban) on the agricultural sectors of the Central Asian and Caucasus countries were addressed. The ambassador of Germany to Uzbekistan, Neithart Höfer-Wissing, participated in several sessions of the conference on this day.

The conference was supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), Kazakhstan, and the Coordinating Committee for Science and Technology Development under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It received wide media coverage both in Uzbekistan and internationally.

Please find the conference webpage and photo gallery here: [www.samarkand.iamo.de](http://www.samarkand.iamo.de).

*Text: 4,114 characters (incl. spaces)*

## **About IAMO**

The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) analyses economic, social and political processes of change in the agricultural and food sector, and in rural areas. The geographic focus covers the enlarging EU, transition regions of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, as well as Central and Eastern Asia. IAMO works to enhance the understanding of institutional, structural and technological changes. Moreover, IAMO studies the resulting impacts on the agricultural and food sector as well as the living conditions of rural populations. The outcomes of our work are used to derive and analyze strategies and options for enterprises, agricultural markets and politics. Since its founding in 1994, IAMO has been part of the Leibniz Association, a German community of independent research institutes.

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