

CHINA WTO ACCESSION INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME ALUMNI STORY

please tell us...



Where are you from, and what have you studied before joining the China Programme?

I come from Uzbekistan. My academic journey has been defined by an interest in international governance, beginning with a Bachelor of Social Science in International Relations and Peace Studies from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan. There, my research focused on the WTO Appellate Body crisis and the legitimacy of the multilateral trading system's adjudicatory body. Then, I moved to Geneva to pursue a Master's degree in International Law at the Geneva Graduate Institute. My internship took place during the second year of this Master's degree, which meant balancing a full-time role at the WTO with evening classes and writing my graduation dissertation on sustainable development clauses in investment agreements, including the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement at the WTO.

Why did you apply?

International trade law became even more interesting to me through competing in the 2024 John H. Jackson WTO Moot Court Competition, where I co-authored a legal submission on the compatibility of a quasi-CBAM measure with the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This experience, combined with my background in peace studies, made the Accessions Division's "Trade for Peace" (T4P) initiative the optimal fit, as part of my internship experience. Above all, I wanted to contribute directly to Uzbekistan's historic accession process while exploring the legal intersection of trade, environment, legitimacy, and extra-WTO discussions during the accession process.

What kind of work were you assigned to during your internship?

The scope of my work was broad, igniting consistent enthusiasm and diversity as well as spanning technical and/or legal analysis of accession documents and high-level event management. I supported the accession dossiers of Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, more specifically analyzing how their domestic laws harmonized with WTO

rules. One of the major highlights was co-organizing the annual T4P Week, where our intern cohort helped the Division with smooth operation of the Week's events through stakeholder coordination ranging from representatives of governments to those of private sector, administrative and communications support. My role also involved assisting with the T4P project through facilitating youth debate events, and co-delivering T4P presentations to WTO visitors. Beyond policy work, I co-edited two Accessions Newsletters, and created social media content shedding light on daily work of the Division. With generous inputs from fellow interns, I also drafted practical guidelines to help future interns navigate the work experience at the Division.

Looking back, what do you think of your work experience at the WTO, and as a participant of the China Programme?

The experience was a demanding but highly fulfilling and rewarding 10-month marathon. Balancing the responsibilities of the Accessions Division with my Master's studies—often heading straight from the office to 6:15 PM lectures—kept my discipline and time management skills sharp. The China Programme provided a front-row seat to the engine of global trade, allowing me to co-liaise with partner international organizations and high-level delegates. One of the defining highlights was assisting in the execution of Uzbekistan's 9th and 10th Working Party Meetings, where I firsthand witnessed the country's tangible progress and the technical resilience required to overcome systemic challenges on its path toward integration into the world trading system. Working within the Secretariat transformed my perspective from that of a student to that of a practitioner, showing me how trade can be a tangible tool for peace and stability. Above all, it was an honor to share this work experience with a welcoming, empowering and supportive team of the Division's accession experts and make life-long friends with second-to-none intern and young professional cohort.

What have you done since?

Since completing my internship and my Master's degree, I have remained dedicated to the field of international economic law, through self-driven upskilling training and joining the TradExperettes Network to remain actively involved within the trade community. The technical expertise I gained in services trade, investment facilitation, and legislative harmonization will keep informing my further work and research interests. I aim to continue supporting transition economies as they navigate the complexities of global integration, ensuring that trade policy remains a cornerstone of sustainable development and international cooperation.

Thank you!