



Governance, Human Rights & Service Delivery

Empowering government and citizens of Uzbekistan by strengthening access to information, accountability of institutions and media competence



Professional journalism building on international standards and better access to information contributes to a resilient media and information landscape, picture by UNESCO

Switzerland works with UNESCO to support ongoing legal reforms in Uzbekistan, capacities and awareness raising of governmental institutions as duty bearers while empowering media and civil society actors as right holders.

Rationale

With Uzbekistan's recent reforms towards people centred governance and sustainable development, the government aims to address fundamental freedoms to further access to information and democratic governance. Reforms in public administration strengthen rule of law, human rights and create an enabling environment for a more open media landscape in Uzbekistan. However, access to official information continues to be a challenge for citizens and members of the media alike, impeding transparency, public accountability and access to services. Media and information literacy among journalists and the general public is low, and internet penetration stands only at 50%, being particularly low in rural regions. Uzbekistan's World Press Freedom Index has fallen from 133 in 2022 to 148 in 2024, indicating growing restrictions on media, bloggers and freedom of speech, with journalistic censorship, biased reporting, and arbitrary arrest of media workers.

Uzbekistan adheres to the *Tashkent Declaration on Access to Information* (2022) and is currently drafting a new information code.

Country:

Uzbekistan

Duration:

2023 - 2026

Total Budget:

CHF 1'300'000 SDC
contribution to CHF 1'572'000
project

Partners:

Agency for Information and Mass Communication (AIMC), Law Enforcement Academy, Journalism & Mass Communication University, Media and Civil Society Organizations

Implementing agency:

UNESCO

Overall goal

The project will ensure that Uzbekistan's media landscape is more resilient and inclusive. Citizens shall be well-informed and empowered with better access to information, and accountability of key government institutions will be strengthened.

The project is implemented by UNESCO, with the Agency of Information and Mass Communications (AIMC) under the Presidential Administration as main counterpart. The AIMC leads the development of the Information Code and the Media and Information Literacy (MIL). UNESCO supports the ongoing legislative reforms with expertise, ensuring alignment with international standards. Capacity building and awareness raising on the right to access to information and media freedom for key government stakeholders will enhance rule of law, accountability and transparency. Also, the project supports the development of quality media training for students and media professionals.

Outcomes and envisaged results

- An effective mass media legislation is in place.
- Accountability and transparency of the relevant government institutions and access to information for the citizens of Uzbekistan are strengthened.
- Judicial actors, law enforcement and journalism educational institutions have improved their understanding and professional capacities and use international standards and educational instruments related to freedom of expression, access to information and safety of journalists.
- A National Media and Information Literacy Competency Strategy will be developed and consulted with key government and non-governmental stakeholders.

Target groups

The project engages governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and media professionals. Direct beneficiaries of the media legislation are policy and law-making institutions; target groups for capacity building and awareness raising on access to information, freedom of expression and safety of journalist are the Law Enforcement Academy, Security Forces, Prosecutors and the Judiciary. On the right holder side, media professionals (with a focus on female journalists), educators and students of the Journalism University as well as media and civil society organizations will benefit.

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