



Guidelines on structure, style and format of research papers

*(Prepared in the framework of 2009 CAREC Institute
Small Research Grants Program)*

Draft
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The CAREC Institute Small Research Grants Program encourages research by local researchers and institutes that will advance regional cooperation among CAREC countries in the priority areas of transport, energy, and trade.
2. According to the Terms and Conditions of the research grant program, participants of the Program will submit the following documents: (i) mid-term report; (ii) final draft of research paper; and (iii) final research paper.
3. Research papers funded in the framework of this Program are expected to provide practical inputs to support the development of national or regional policies and strategies that would support regional cooperation among CAREC countries. Papers are expected to meet reasonable quality standards in terms of applied methodology, used data, language clarity and reader-friendly presentation. This note offers a brief summary of the required structure and format of outputs under the Program.
4. These guidelines are not intended to influence the content of the papers. The choice of hypotheses to be tested, data, methodology of analysis, and conclusions remains at full discretion of the paper authors.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PRODUCTS

5. The *mid-term report* will include:
 - Title page with final title¹ of the paper, full names of its authors and their institutional affiliation;
 - Table of contents;
 - Background of the study, presentation of the problem under consideration, its importance and relevance to development of transport, energy or trade in the CAREC countries;
 - Literature review on the problem, which, among other things, identifies the knowledge gaps, which are to be filled by the paper;
 - Formulation of the hypothesis/hypotheses to be tested in the paper;
 - Discussion of existing theories and explanation of selected research approach;
 - Description of data used with indication of their source and, if collected by authors, the methodology of data gathering;
 - Preliminary results of data analysis.²
6. A time-bound work plan for completion of the paper (additional data collection if needed, stages of analysis, narrative writing etc.) is to be attached to the mid-term report.
7. *Final draft of research paper* will have the following elements:
 - Updated/refined text of the pieces included into the mid-term report;
 - Full analysis of data and research findings;
 - Conclusions and policy recommendations;

¹ Modifications of the title from that in the selected proposal are possible only before submission of the mid-term report.

² If available by the date of mid-term report submission.

- References;
- List of abbreviations;
- Appendixes with large tables, graphs, maps and methodological details (optional).

8. *Final research paper* is to be based on its final draft and will reflect comments received by authors from the ADB. In addition to the previous draft it will:

- contain a disclaimer as specified in item 6 of the Terms and conditions of the research grants program;
- include an executive summary;
- be fully edited and formatted both in English and in Russian (if original text is in Russian);
- be accompanied with a short note indicating where and how ADB comments on the final draft are reflected in the current text of the paper or why these comments have not been included.

III. LANGUAGE

9. In writing the paper, authors are free to choose between English and Russian.

10. If Russian is the original language of the paper, an English translation of all research outputs is to be submitted together with the original text. It is the responsibility of the authors to ensure Russian language clarity as well as accuracy of translation of papers into English. Papers may be rejected due to unacceptable quality of English translation.

11. In preparing English versions of papers, the authors are advised to consult Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (www.merriam-webster.com) , extensively use dictionary and thesaurus and make computer check of spelling (using the American English setting) before submission of papers.

IV. COMMON ERRORS IN RESEARCH PAPER WRITING³

12. Following are some typical errors that should be avoided.

a. Research objectives

- Overly ambitious (e.g., restructure XXX country's natural resource industries);
- Lack of academic content (e.g., design a regional development strategy, production technology etc.);
- Purely descriptive (e.g., survey of the literature; construction of a typology of ...), no attempt to explain behavior or dynamics;
- Very abstract, no link to economic realities and policymaking.

b. Hypotheses

- Statement of a general topic of research instead of a specific problem ("analysis of the labor market", "enterprise restructuring");

³ This section is largely adopted from the Call for Proposals for Spring 2009 Economics Research Competition issued by the Economics Education And Research Consortium (www.eerc.ru).

- Not testable in principle, or because data are not available;
 - Trivial (e.g., “to grow faster XXX country needs more investment”).
- c. Literature review**
- Just a list of titles and names, does not provide a critical assessment;
 - Focused on general literature (e.g., trade theory) rather than literature specific to the project;
 - Focused on textbooks rather than modern research literature;
 - Focused on national sources only.
- d. Research methodology**
- Description of methodology is purely declarative (e.g., "factor and cluster analysis"); the actual research methods are not described in any detail;
 - Methodology is inadequate (e.g., exclusive use of charts and visual comparisons when studying the determinants of trade);
 - Theory is not linked to the empirical part;
 - Theory is not adapted to the specific country circumstances (e.g. standard text-book theory);
 - The econometric model is not linked to data; not clear how key model parameters are calculated;
 - Data are not adequately described; no discussion of ways to fill in the existing data gaps; questionnaire is not attached to the paper (if data are collected by the authors).

V. STYLE AND FORMATTING

13. The rules provided below are based on common practices of research paper writing and are recommended for use by the Program participants. At the same time, the paper authors may partially deviate from these rules, if there are good (and explained) reasons for that.

14. **Style.** It is advisable to use:
- The third person point of view rather than using the first person point of view;
 - The active voice rather than passive voice;
 - Clear, concise and plain language; be specific in descriptions and explanations, condense information when possible, use simple, descriptive adjectives and minimize the figurative language;
 - Positive rather than normative statements.

Other useful suggestions on writing style could be found in the section “How to write well” of the Greg Mankiw’s blog (<http://gregmankiw.blogspot.com/2006/10/how-to-write-well.html>).

15. Descriptions of complicated methodological and technical details are to be moved to appendixes in order to keep the main text readable for non-academics.

16. Conclusions and policy recommendations are to follow logically from the data analysis.

17. **General formatting issues.** All texts are to be presented in MS Word format with the following settings: paper size – A4, double-spaced, 2.54 cm (1 inch) margins on all sides, Arial

font, font size – 11 pt. Pages are to be numbered; numbering of paragraphs is not mandatory, but may be useful.

18. **Title page.** It has to include the following info: name of the Program, title of the paper, full names of the authors, their institutional affiliation, place and country, month and year.

19. **Executive summary.** It should provide a concise summary of the paper, begin with a new page and should not exceed three pages.

20. **Headings.** To ease reading of the paper, it is advisable to divide the paper into chapters/sections. Section headings are to be numbered. In case sections have some hierarchical structure, multilayer numbering is to be used (e.g., Section 3, Sub-section 3.2).

21. **Citations.** Whenever a source is used, the author's name and the date of publication are to be provided in parenthesis; for quotations and close paraphrases, page number is needed as well. Full description of the source is to be included into the list of references. The same citation style is to be applied throughout the paper.

22. **Footnotes and endnotes.** All footnotes are to be numbered (consecutive numbering throughout the text is preferable); smaller font is to be used for them. Text of footnote/endnote is to be concise, normally limited to one small paragraph.

23. **Formulas.** Formulas are to be presented using available tools (e.g., Microsoft Equation) with all subscripts/superscripts and mathematical operation signs clearly indicated. All variables and parameters in formulas are to be explained.

24. **Tables and figures.** All tables and figures⁴ are to be numbered and have titles. It is mandatory to provide a clear indication of source below them (e.g., reference to publication, or web-page, or “authors’ calculations”). The main text has always to contain a reference to the table or figure (e.g., see table 5). Tables and graphical objects are to be situated near the text, to which they relate. Large tables and complicated graphical objects are to be provided in the appendixes to the main text.

25. **References.** The list of references is to be full, i.e., all sources mentioned in the text are to be included and fully described in this section. All references are to be provided in the same style. To find required reference style details, paper authors may look for examples in the ADB publications or consult existing style guides.

26. Further details on formatting of the papers could be found in formatting and style guides of, for example, American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA), available on internet.

⁴ All visuals/illustrations, which are not tables or formulas (e.g., diagrams, maps etc.).