



# Connect CAREC: Smart, Sustainable, and Inclusive Regional Tourism

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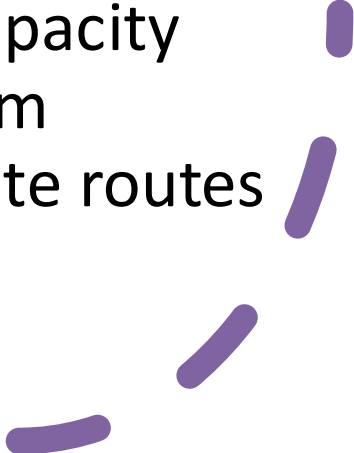
# Rationale – Why Tourism? Why Now?

- Tourism as a growth engine: Cultural heritage, Silk Road appeal, nature-based assets
- Untapped economic potential: Tourism contributes to trade and diversification
- CAREC's momentum: Building on the CAREC 2030 Strategy and Tourism Strategy


# Key Regional Challenges

- Border inefficiencies: Complex procedures, delays, lack of coordination
  - Low digitalization: Weak presence of smart tools, fragmented platforms
  - Environmental risks: Carbon-heavy infrastructure, unsustainable tourism models
  - Limited collaboration: Few joint tourism initiatives across countries
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# Proposed Solutions by TA Project


- Seamless Travel: Integrated e-visas, visa harmonization, smart border pilot
  - Green Infrastructure: Low-carbon transport, eco-lodging, green finance access
  - Smart Tourism Tools: VisitSilkRoad upgrade, AI travel planners, immersive storytelling
  - Stronger Institutions: Capacity building, regional tourism association, public-private routes
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## How Each Challenge Is Addressed

- Border processes → E-visas, mobile apps, green lanes, digital border facilitation
  - Digital gaps → Smart portal, AR/VR tools, AI trip planners
  - Climate risk → Eco-certifications, carbon calculators, electric mobility pilots
  - Coordination gaps → Tourism Working Group, capacity programs, joint products
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Expected  
Transformational  
Impact

- Boost in regional tourism flows through integrated services
  - Smarter destinations with data-driven management and visitor tech
  - Greener sector with measurable carbon footprint reductions
  - Stronger regional identity and joint branding as a Silk Road destination
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# Expected Outputs of the Strategic Approach

## 1. Knowledge Generation

- Digital readiness assessments
- Sustainability benchmarking
- Policy recommendations
- Innovation-focused workshops

## 2. Projects Generation

- Regional pipeline of tourism projects across CAREC
- Upgrading border-crossing efficiency and connectivity (including air travel)
- Implementing digital solutions (e.g., AI-driven marketing via [VisitSilkRoad](#))

## 3. Capacity Building

- Institutional support and coordination for tourism
- Capacity-building initiatives and e-learning courses
- Virtual policy dialogues
- Innovation incubation programs for tourism entrepreneurs

## Implementation Highlights

- Duration: Oct 2025 – Sept 2030
- Budget: \$1.1 million (50% ADB, 50% co-financed)
- Tools & Activities: Training, VisitSilkRoad portal upgrade, pilot demos, policy dialogue
- **Collaborating Countries:** Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Potentially Turkiye.
- **Key Partners:** National tourism boards, private sector stakeholders, regional organizations

Final  
Message  
– The  
CAREC  
Tourism  
Shift

- This TA is more than a project—it's a regional shift to modern, green, and inclusive tourism.
- By addressing old barriers with smart tools and joint solutions,
- CAREC can become a resilient, globally competitive travel destination.

