

Advancing Transit in CAREC Countries: From Concept to Pilot Implementation

DRAFT PROGRAMME

15:15 – 16:35 (UTC+7), 10 June 2026, MR-G, UNCC, Bangkok and Online

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program is a partnership of 11 countries and development partners, supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), working to promote development through regional cooperation, accelerated economic growth, and poverty reduction. A key pillar of the CAREC strategy is trade facilitation, aimed at reducing the cost and complexity of moving goods across borders in one of the world's most strategically important trade corridors.

The CAREC Advanced Transit System (CATS) and Information Common Exchange (ICE) represent a transformative initiative to modernize customs transit across the CAREC region. CATS/ICE is a harmonized, risk-based digital system that uses a single digital transit declaration to control and facilitate the movement of goods in transit through CAREC member states. The system aims to enhance supply chain security, facilitate smoother and more efficient cross-border trade flows, and reduce the overall cost of trade.

Aligned with international standards and drawing on the best practices of the EU's New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) and the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS), CATS/ICE replaces fragmented manual processes with a unified digital system. The initiative is governed by a Multi-Country Framework Agreement (MCFA) currently under development, establishing the legal framework for regional transit operations. Operational and technical aspects of the system are governed by CATS Procedural Manual and Common System Specifications respectively, being developed as well.

This session will bring together government officials, regional transit system experts, and international partners to:

- Present the evolution, current status, features, technical capabilities, and future development roadmap of the CATS/ICE system, including its alignment with digital and paperless trade facilitation principles.
- Showcase first-hand experiences from champion countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan) in piloting and implementing CATS/ICE.
- Facilitate a cross-regional dialogue by drawing on the operational experiences of the EU's New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) and the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) and to identify best practices and lessons learned.
- Explore the future roadmap for CATS/ICE expansion, interoperability, and alignment with the next generation of trade digitalization.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness and understanding of CATS/ICE among Asia-Pacific trade facilitation stakeholders, including customs administrations, international organizations, and the private sector.
- Knowledge exchange on digital transit systems through cross-regional comparison of CATS/ICE, ACTS, and NCTS, identifying common challenges and transferable solutions.
- Strengthened commitment from participating and new CAREC member states toward the full operationalization and expansion of CATS/ICE.
- Identification of potential partnerships and collaboration opportunities for future interoperability between regional transit systems.

This event is part of the [APTFF x PTW 2026](#), co-organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program.

10 JUNE 2026

PART 1: CATS/ICE PRESENTATION (20 minutes)

15:15–15:20	Opening remarks
15:20–15:35	<p>Presentation <i>CATS/ICE: Evolution, Current Status, Features, and Future Development Roadmap</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, Asian Development Bank• Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist

PART 2: PANEL DISCUSSION (60 minutes)

15:35–15:40	Introduction to panel and discussion topics
15:40–15:55	<p>Discussion 1: Implementation Experiences from CAREC Champion Countries <i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Fuad Aslanov, Head of the General Department for Digital Management of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan• Ms. Gultamze Balanchivadze, Chief Analyst, Customs Transit Division of the Customs Department of the Revenue Service, Ministry of Finance of Georgia• Mr. Ramazon Kubayev, Senior Inspector of International Cooperation Department, State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan <p>The discussion will focus on the key motivations and potential benefits emerging from the pilot phase, as well as the institutional, technical, and regulatory challenges encountered during implementation. Panellists will also examine the expected impact of CATS/ICE on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of transit operations.</p>
15:55–16:10	<p>Discussion 2: Best Practices and Lessons from NCTS and ACTS <i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Aji Bhaskara, Senior Officer, Trade Facilitation Division, The ASEAN Secretariat• Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist <p>The discussion will highlight the critical success factors and lessons learned during the development and roll-out of NCTS/ACTS. It will further consider approaches to multi-country governance, system interoperability, and data exchange standards across diverse national customs environments. In addition, the conversation will address pathways for scaling from pilot implementation to full regional deployment, including mechanisms for legal harmonization and securing stakeholder buy-in.</p>
16:10–16:30	<p>Discussion 3: Open Discussion <i>All panellists and audience</i></p> <p>The discussion will examine how CATS/ICE can leverage emerging technologies such as AI and IoT to further enhance the efficiency, safety, and security of transit operations. It will also consider the potential for interoperability between CATS/ICE, NCTS, and ACTS as part of the development of a broader Eurasian transit ecosystem. Furthermore, the discussion will address mechanisms to support the scaling of digital transit systems in developing regions.</p>
16:30–16:35	Closing remarks and key takeaways