



**Chief Negotiators' Meeting on
CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement (CARTIF)
8 May 2026
Virtual**

Concept Note and Agenda

Background

On 20 November 2025, the CAREC countries adopted the Bishkek Ministerial Declaration, officially launching negotiations on the CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement (CARTIF). This marked an important milestone in CAREC countries' efforts to advance regional economic cooperation and integration in trade and investment.

Since 2020, ADB has assisted CAREC countries to pursue the agenda of further trade integration with the help of the dedicated project. Building on the institutional experience, knowledge acquired and work conducted during the previous years, CAREC countries are well-positioned to move forward with the implementation of the Bishkek Declaration.

The virtual Inaugural Meeting on the Negotiations for the CARTIF Agreement was held on 11 March 2026. The meeting focused on detailed discussions of the CARTIF implementation plan, the operations of the working groups, and the next steps in the negotiation process. CARTIF country delegations expressed strong support for the initiative and emphasized their readiness to begin the CARTIF Zero-Round negotiations at the earliest opportunity. CARTIF participating countries were kindly reminded to formally nominate their Chief Negotiators and National Focal Points, where this has not yet been completed.

In this context, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will be holding the first regional meeting of CARTIF Chief Negotiators from **2:00PM to 4:00PM Manila** time on **8 May 2026** to provide an opportunity to review the negotiation structure and modalities, ensure readiness for the launch of negotiations, and prepare for the CARTIF Zero round of negotiations. ADB will kindly request all appointed Chief Negotiator to join this virtual meeting.

Participants:

CARTIF Chief Negotiators, CARTIF Focal Points, development partners, international experts, ADB staff and consultants.

Zoom link:

<https://adb-org.zoom.us/j/96304867736?pwd=IJEbIMWxc4saFeBv1JSVFehtPXvY02.1>

Meeting Agenda
8 May 2025
14:00-16:00 Manila time

Moderator: Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, Regional Cooperation and Integration Unit, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

Time (Manila)	Session
13:30 - 14:00	<i>Signing up, checking audio and video connection</i>
14:00 - 14:05	Welcome Remarks <i>Speaker: Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration Unit, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (5 min.) (TBC)</i>
14:05 - 14:20	Short Introduction of Participants
14:20 - 14:25	Group Photo
14:25 - 14:30	Session 1: Key takeaways of the CARTIF Inaugural meeting and introduction to meeting's agenda <i>The Session will share the key takeaways of the CARTIF Inaugural meeting held on 11 March 2026 virtually and provide an introduction to the agenda</i> <i>Speaker: Zulfia Karimova, ADB (5 min.)</i>
14:30 - 15:05	Session 2: Presentation on the CARTIF negotiation structure and modalities <i>The Session will provide an opportunity to review the CARTIF negotiation structure and modalities, and the updated negotiation text.</i> <i>Speaker: Mikheil Janelidze, CARTIF Team Leader (25 min.)</i> <i>Moderator: Zulfia Karimova, ADB</i> Q&A (15 min.)
15:05 – 15:50	Session 3: CARTIF Chief Negotiators Statements <i>Each CARTIF Chief Negotiator is requested to review and provide feedback on the proposed CARTIF negotiation structure and modalities. Additionally, each member state should ensure readiness for the launch of negotiations and move to fully operational negotiation framework.</i> <i>Speaker: CARTIF Chief Negotiators (5 min per CAREC Country)</i> <i>Moderator: Zulfia Karimova, ADB</i>
15:50 – 16:00	Next Steps and Concluding Remarks <i>Speakers: Mikheil Janelidze, CARTIF Team Leader (5 min.)</i> <i>Speaker: Zulfia Karimova, ADB (5 min.)</i>