



**Inaugural Meeting for the Negotiations of the  
CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement**  
11 March 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.

Guided by CAREC 2030 and the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030, CAREC member countries reaffirmed their shared commitment to expanding trade, strengthening economic resilience, and promoting inclusive growth across the region. Building on years of cooperation and responding to the interest expressed by members to explore deeper regional trade integration, Ministers recognized the evolving global and regional context, the diversity of economic structures, and differing stages of WTO engagement across CAREC countries. While reaffirming support for the multilateral trading system, Ministers acknowledged the complementary role of flexible regional initiatives in enhancing connectivity, 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. Under the project various research, consultative and capacity building activities were implemented. With the technical support of the Asian Development Bank, CAREC countries have undertaken preparatory work and inclusive consultations toward the development of CARTIF and developed the concept and the zero draft text of the agreement.

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.

In this context, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will be hosting an online Inaugural Meeting on CARTIF negotiation process **2:00PM to 5:00PM Manila** time on 11 March 2026.

**Participants:**

CARTIF and CAREC Trade Focals, development partners, international experts, ADB staff and consultants.

**Zoom link:**

<https://adb-org.zoom.us/j/97097374498?pwd=HcEUTVyeNPKV0WsP3O6diQI4FTOaOc.1>

Meeting ID: 970 9737 4498

Passcode: meeting11

**Inaugural Meeting for the Negotiations of the  
CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement**

11 March 2026 | 14:00-17:00 Manila time | via [Zoom](#)

**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 | <b>Welcome Remarks</b><br><i>Speaker: <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration Unit, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (5 min.) (TBC)</i>  |
| 14:05 - 14:10 | <b>Group Photo</b>  |
| 14:10 - 14:30 | <b>Session 1: Overview of the CARTIF progress for the period of 2024-2025 and introduction to the agenda</b><br><br><i>The session will provide the overview of the CARTIF Progress for the period of 2024-2025 and introduction to the agenda</i><br><br><i>Speaker: <b>Zulfia Karimova</b>, ADB (20 min.)</i>   |
| 14:30 - 15:15 | <b>Session 2: Presentation of the CARTIF implementation plan</b><br><i>The session will discuss the implementation plan that sets out a detailed, action-oriented roadmap for launching and conducting negotiations on the CARTIF, in line with the Bishkek Ministerial Declaration. The implementation plan focuses on operational readiness, capacity building, structured negotiations, and delivery of agreed outputs, while ensuring inclusiveness and flexibility for CAREC countries at different stages of development and WTO engagement.</i><br><br><i>Speaker: <b>Mikheil Janelidze</b>, CARTIF Team Leader (30 min.)</i><br><br><i>Moderator: <b>Zulfia Karimova</b>, ADB</i><br><br><b>Q&amp;A (15 min.)</b> |
| 15:15 – 15:45 | <b>Session 3: CARTIF Working groups establishment and operation</b><br><i>The session will discuss the establishment, operation and composition of the CARTIF working groups for each initial CARTIF protocol.</i><br><br><i>Speaker: <b>Mikheil Janelidze</b>, CARTIF Team Leader (20 min.)</i><br><br><i>Moderator: <b>Zulfia Karimova</b>, ADB</i><br><br><b>Q&amp;A (10 min.)</b>   |
| 15:45 – 16:35 | <b>Session 4: CAREC Country Statements</b><br><i>Each CAREC member state is requested to review and provide feedback on the proposed CARTIF Implementation Plan chapters. Additionally, member states should indicate their interest in participating in the CARTIF working groups.</i><br><br><i>Speakers: <b>CARTIF Focals</b> (5 min per CAREC Country)</i>  |

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|               | <i>Moderator: <b>Mikheil Janelidze</b>, CARTIF Team Leader</i>  |
| 16:35 – 16:55 | <p><b>Session 5: Next Steps</b></p> <p><i>This session will outline the next steps for CARTIF negotiation process.</i></p> <p><i>Speakers: <b>Mikheil Janelidze</b>, CARTIF Team Leader (10 min.)</i></p> <p><i><b>Zulfia Karimova</b>, ADB (10 min.)</i></p> |
| 16:55 – 17:00 | <p><b>Concluding Remarks</b></p> <p><i>Speaker: <b>Zulfia Karimova</b>, ADB (5 min.)</i></p>  |