



## CAREC National Focal Points (NFPs) Strategic Planning Meeting: Towards a Green and Digital CAREC

**5–7 March 2025, Manila, Philippines**

### Objectives:

- (i) Operationalize the recommendations of the [CAREC 2030 Strategy Midterm Review \(MTR\)](#) and discuss the MTR Implementation Action Plan, with focus on:
  - a. Enhancing the impact of CAREC initiatives through a robust, multi-year rolling pipeline for regional programs, projects, and technical assistance ensuring long-term planning, project prioritization, and resource allocation;
  - b. Reviewing and recalibrating sectoral strategies—transport, trade, energy, digital—to make them more responsive to emerging needs and requirements;
  - c. Pursuing regional public goods and promoting integrated and climate-smart development; and
  - d. Reinvigorating regional ownership and program effectiveness and monitoring.
- (ii) Discuss the planned key activities and initiatives for 2025 and early preparation for the commemoration of CAREC Program’s 25<sup>th</sup> year in 2026.
- (iii) Meet with ADB management and regional management teams (RMT) of Central and West Asia Department (CWRD) and East Asia Department (EARD), Sector Departments, and relevant offices.

### Agenda

4 March 2025   Arrival in Manila	
<b>Day 1, 5 March 2025 (Wednesday)</b>	
Venue: Joy Nostalg Hotel, Nostalg 1&2, 5th Floor	
08:30 – 09:00 <b>(Manila time)</b>	Registration and coffee
09:00 – 09:15	<p><b>Opening Session</b> <i>Opening Remarks</i> Mr. <b>Yingming Yang</b>, Vice-President (South, Central and West Asia), Asian Development Bank (ADB)</p> <p><i>Setting the Stage</i> Mr. <b>Yevgeniy Zhukov</b>, Director General, Central and West Asia Department (CWRD), ADB</p> <p><i>Around the Table:</i> Brief Introduction of Participants and Welcoming New NFPs</p>
09:15 – 10:15	<p><b>Session 1: Overview</b> Moderator: Mr. <b>Muhammad Ehsan Khan</b>, Director General, East Asia Department (EARD), ADB</p> <p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation: CAREC 2030 Strategy Midterm Review, Implementation Action Plan, and Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central and West Asia Department (CWRC), ADB</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Sanzhar Bolotov</b>, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy and Commerce and CAREC NFP for Kyrgyz Republic (CAREC Country Chair)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Yevgeniy Zhukov</b>, Director General, CWRD, ADB</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Bruno Carrasco</b>, Director General, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department (CCSD), ADB</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
10:15 – 10:30	Group Photo and Coffee Break
10:30 – 11:30	<p><b>Session 2: Pursuing Climate Agenda and Regional Public Goods</b> The Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Promote Integrated and Climate-Smart Development</i></li> <li>• <i>Pursue Regional Public Goods to Address Common Issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Operationalize the <a href="#">CAREC Climate Change Action Plan</a> and the CAREC Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund (CSPPF)</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr. <b>Toru Kubo</b>, Senior Director, Climate Change, Resilience, and Environment Cluster, CCSD, ADB</p> <p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation:</b> <i>CAREC Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2027, CSPPF, and planned activities under new TAs in Disaster and Climate Risk Transfer Facility, Agriculture and Food Security, and Water Pillar</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Alтынay Arapova</b>, Economist, CWRC, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Nematullo Khikmatullozoda</b>, Advisor to the President of Tajikistan on Economic Issues, Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and CAREC NFP for Tajikistan</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Inara Mustafayeva-Eyyubova</b>, Head of Department on Cooperation with International Organizations, Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan (<i>virtual</i>)</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Abdulla Khashimov</b>, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Investment, Industry, and Trade, Uzbekistan</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Giap Minh Bui</b>, Principal Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist, Agriculture, Food, Nature, and Rural Development Sector Office, Sectors Department 2, ADB (<i>virtual</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
11:30 – 12:00	<p><b>Special Session: Fireside Chat</b> with Mr. Yingming Yang, Vice-President (South, Central and West Asia), ADB</p> <p>Moderated by Ms. <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central and West Asia Department (CWRC), ADB</p>
12:00 – 13:00	<p>Lunch Venue: Joy Nostalg Hotel, Joy Ballroom 2 &amp; 3, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor</p>
13:00 – 14:00	<p><b>Session 3: Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives: Transport Connectivity, Economic Corridors and Trade Facilitation</b> The Panel Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Streamline Scope for Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives</i></li> <li>• <i>Review and Recalibrate Sectoral Strategies (Transport and Trade)</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop Economic Corridors</i></li> </ul>



	<p>Moderator: Mr. <b>Hideaki Iwasaki</b>, Director General, Sectors Department 1, ADB</p> <p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation: Plans for Midterm Review of CAREC Transport Strategy 2030 and CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Masahiro Nishimura</b>, Principal Rural Development Specialist, Transport Sector Office, Sectors Group, ADB</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Dorothea Lazaro</b>, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Genadi Arveladze</b>, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia and CAREC NFP for Georgia</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Sanzhar Bolotov</b>, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy and Commerce, and CAREC NFP for Kyrgyz Republic</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Saadat Assanseitova</b>, Director, International Economic Cooperation Department, Ministry of National Economy, Kazakhstan (<i>virtual</i>)</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Hiroaki Yamaguchi</b>, Senior Director, Transport Sector Office</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
14:00 – 15:00	<p><b>Session 4: Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives: Energy Connectivity</b></p> <p>The Panel Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Streamline Scope for Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives</i></li> <li>• <i>Review and Recalibrate Sectoral Strategies (CAREC Energy Strategy)</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr. <b>Yevgeniy Zhukov</b>, Director General, CWRD, ADB</p> <p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation: Sustainable energy, energy connectivity and emerging initiatives (e.g., Green Energy Corridor under the Caspian Sea Project)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Altyнай Arapova</b>, Economist, CWRC, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Babanyyaz Yalakov</b>, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Turkmenistan</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Abdulla Khashimov</b>, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Investment, Industry, and Trade, Uzbekistan</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Inara Mustafayeva-Eyyubova</b>, Head of Department on Cooperation with International Organizations, Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan (<i>virtual</i>)</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Priyantha D.C. Wijayatunga</b>, Senior Director, Energy Sector Office</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
15:00 – 15:10	Coffee break
15:10 – 16:10	<p><b>Session 5: Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives: Digital Connectivity</b></p> <p>The Panel Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Streamline Scope for Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives</i></li> <li>• <i>Review and Recalibrate Sectoral Strategies (digitalization/ICT connectivity)</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Stephanie KC Hung</b>, Director General, Information Technology Department, ADB</p>



	<p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation:</b> <i>Plans for CAREC Digital Strategy MTR, the proposed Regional Fund of Funds, potential CAREC digital projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Dorothea Lazaro</b>, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Miran Mohiyuddin Soomro</b>, Joint Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Pakistan and CAREC NFP for Pakistan</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Junjie Su</b>, Division Head, Department of International Economic and Financial Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, PRC</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Antonio Zaballos</b>, Director, Digital Sector Office, ADB (<i>virtual</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
16:10 – 16:20	<p><b>Day 1 Wrap Up</b> CAREC Secretariat</p>
16:20 – 17:00	<p>Courtesy calls with ADB Management or bilateral meetings upon request (<i>tbc</i>) Recording of CAREC NFP Insights (<i>pre-scheduled</i>)</p>
16:30 ( <i>tbc</i> )	<p>Visit at ADB Gallery</p>
17:30 – 20:00	<p><b>Welcome Reception</b> Venue: ADB Multifunction Halls 2 and 3</p>
<p><b>Day 2, 6 March 2025 (Thursday)</b> Venue: ADB HQ Multi-Function Hall 1</p>	
08:30 – 09:30	<p><b>CAREC Espresso Talk</b> on <i>Emerging Goeconomic Developments, their Impact on CAREC Region and the Role of Regional Cooperation</i></p> <p>Speaker: Dr. <b>Stephen Frederick Starr</b>, Founding chairman of the Central Asia - Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program (<i>virtual</i>)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, CWRC, ADB</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>
09:30 – 09:45	<p>Coffee Break Recording of CAREC NFP Insights (<i>pre-scheduled</i>)</p>
09:45 – 09:50	<p><b>Day 1 Recap and Day 2 Objectives</b> CAREC Secretariat</p>
09:50 – 10:50	<p><b>Session 6: Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives: New CAREC Sectors/Clusters</b></p> <p>The Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Promote integrated and climate-smart development including innovative and green finance initiatives and One-Health Approach</i></li> <li>• <i>Pursue regional public goods to address common issues including health and communicable diseases, and developing regional green skills</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Ayako Inagaki</b>, Senior Director, Human and Social Development, Sectors Department 3, ADB</p>



	<p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation: Plans for new CAREC clusters or sectors (economic and financial stability, health, education)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Khalid Umar</b>, Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Zulfia Karimova</b>, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Erdenetuya Darinchuluun</b>, Head of Economic Cooperation, and Acting Director for Trade Policy, Ministry of Economy and Development, Mongolia</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Mohd Sani Mohd Ismail</b>, Director, Finance Sector Office, Sectors Department, ADB (<i>virtual</i>)</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Aziz Haydarov</b>, Unit Head, Project Administration, Human and Social Development (HSD) Sector Office, Sectors Department, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
10:50 – 12:00	<p><b>Session 7: Fireside Chat on Designing and Implementing Regional Projects: Successes and Pitfalls</b></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, CWRC, ADB</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Ananya Basu</b>, Director, Operations Planning and Coordination Division, Strategy, Policy, and Partnerships Department (SPD), ADB</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Yuebin Zhang</b>, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist and OIC, Regional Cooperation and Integration and Trade Division, CCSD, ADB</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Baurzhan Konysbayev</b>, Principal Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, ADB</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Serik Zharkinbayev</b>, Energy Specialist, Energy Sector Office, ADB</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Jiwan Acharya</b>, Principal Energy Specialist, Energy Sector Office, ADB (<i>virtual</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
12:00 – 13:15	<p>Group Photo at ADB Courtyard (tbc)</p> <p>Lunch Venue: Private Dining Room (PDR) 2, ADB</p>
13:15 – 14:00	<p><b>Session 8: Engagement with the Private Sector and Partnership with CAREC Institute</b></p> <p>The Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Strengthen Engagement with Development Partners and Private Sector</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhance CAREC Institute’s role as a Strategic Partner for Knowledge-Driven Development</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr. <b>Kuat Akizhanov</b>, Deputy Director 2, CAREC Institute</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Enrico Pinali</b>, Regional Head, Private Sector Development, CWRD, ADB</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Steven Beck</b>, Director, Trade and Supply Chain Division, Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD)</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Charymuhammet Shallyyev</b>, Director, CAREC Institute</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>



14:00 – 15:00	<p><b>Session 9: Role of Resident Missions and Country Management Teams</b> The Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve Program Effectiveness and Monitoring</i></li> <li>• <i>Strengthen the CAREC Secretariat (Operations)</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Mr. <b>Bobur Alimov</b>, Advisor, EARD, ADB</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. <b>Yevgeniy Zhukov</b>, Director General, CWRD, ADB</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Emma Fan</b>, Country Director, ADB Resident Mission in Pakistan (<i>virtual</i>)</li> <li>• Mr. <b>Zheng Wu</b>, Country Director, ADB Resident Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic (<i>virtual</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Open Discussion</p>
15:00 – 15:10	Coffee break
15:10 – 16:20	<p><b>Session 10: Program Effectiveness and Institutional Strengthening</b> The Session will focus on the following CAREC 2030 MTR recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve Program Effectiveness and Monitoring</i></li> <li>• <i>Strengthen the CAREC Secretariat (Operations)</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, CWRC, ADB</p> <p><b>CAREC Secretariat Presentation:</b> <i>Outline of MTR Implementation Action Plan, CAREC Online Calendar, CAREC Dashboard, mobilizing financing and TA monitoring, Sector focals coordination, improved institutional mechanisms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. <b>Irene de Roma</b>, Senior Programs Officer, CWRC, ADB</li> <li>• Ms. <b>Dorothea Lazaro</b>, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB</li> </ul> <p>Tour de table: All CAREC NFPs</p> <p>Wrap Up by the CAREC Secretariat</p>
16:20 – 17:00	<p>Courtesy calls with ADB Management or bilateral meetings upon request (<i>tbc</i>) Recording of CAREC NFP Insights (<i>pre-scheduled</i>)</p> <p>Visit at ADB Gallery</p>
18:00 – 20:00	<p><b>Dinner</b> Heat Restaurant, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel</p>
<p><b>Day 3, 7 March 2025 (Friday)</b> Venue: ADB HQ Multi-Function Hall 1</p>	
09:00 – 09:10	<p><b>Day 2 Recap and Day 3 Objectives</b> CAREC Secretariat</p>
09:10 – 11:30	<p><b>Session 11: CAREC Flagship Regional Projects, Plans for 2025-2026, Wrap-up and Next Steps</b></p> <p>Moderated by Mr. <b>Yingming Yang</b>, Vice-President (South, Central and West Asia), Asian Development Bank (ADB)</p>



	<p>The Session will discuss the priority regional projects, the planned key activities and initiatives for 2025, and early preparation for the commemoration of CAREC Program's 25th year in 2026.</p> <p>Tour de table: All CAREC NFPs</p> <p>Reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. <b>Yevgeniy Zhukov</b>, Director General, CWRD, ADB</li><li>• Mr. <b>Bobur Alimov</b>, Advisor, EARD, ADB</li><li>• Ms. <b>Lyaziza Sabyrova</b>, Regional Head, CWRC, ADB</li></ul> <p>Open Discussion with NFPs</p>
11:30	<b>Closing Session</b>
11:30 – 12:15	Lunch
14:00 – 20:00	Cultural/Historical Tour and Dinner Cruise hosted by ADB