



**Regional Workshop on
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Trade & Investment Facilitation
(CARTIF)
Istanbul, Türkiye
19-20 June 2024**

Concept Note and Agenda

Background

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program has been instrumental in facilitating regional trade and investment among its member countries.

Established initiatives like the Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC) in 2002 and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Regional Working Group (RWG) are pivotal in addressing challenges such as limited market access and economic diversification. The CCC, responsible for all customs-related matters, focuses on customs reforms, modernization, strengthening inter-agency coordination, and enhancing partnerships with the private sector to eliminate trade barriers. Meanwhile, the SPS RWG oversees the implementation of the Common Agenda for the Modernization of SPS Measures for Trade (CAST), adopted during the 2015 CAREC Ministerial Conference.

In 2018 CAREC MC took a significant step by endorsing the “[CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda](#) (CITA) 2030” – a long-term strategy document aimed at supporting CAREC countries integration in the global economy. This agenda established the Regional Trade Group (RTG), a lead consultative and coordinating body with full operational authority over CAREC trade initiatives, as outlined in CITA 2030. Notably, amid the varying political and trade-economic integration processes in the region, CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda CITA 2030 has sparked interests among member countries in exploring the establishment of a potential regional trade agreement, on a voluntary basis, among three or more countries.

Since 2020, ADB has supported CAREC’s efforts to advance its trade integration agenda through the regional [Technical Assistance \(TA\) 6558 REG](#). This project has delivered a range of research, consultative, and capacity-building activities aimed at Strengthening Knowledge and Capacities for the Design and Implementation of Free Trade Agreements among CAREC countries. among CAREC countries.

Building on the achievements of previous initiatives and the outcomes of recent projects, ADB is committed to continuing its support for CITA 2030. ADB will assist CAREC countries in developing a regional partnership aimed at promoting cross-border trade and facilitating investment in the region through regional commitments within a modern and comprehensive institutional and regulatory framework.

The CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership (CARTIF) will create a solid framework for moving the trade agenda to a new level. CARTIF will further support economic diversification in the region through increased market access, and provisions to

facilitate cross-border trade and investment. This framework will enhance the investment and business climate, making it easier for investors and economic operators across all sectors of the economy to invest, conduct their day-to-day business and expand their operations.

CARTIF will be designed as a flexible, modular, and open plurilateral partnership agreement. A modular structure enables countries to commit to specific areas of cooperation without being obligated to participate in all aspects of the framework. This allows for broader participation by tailoring commitments to specific needs and capacities of individual CAREC countries, while also fostering regional cooperation on shared interests. CARTIF will therefore provide CAREC economies with options for engaging in different critical cross-border trade and investment issues, and to clarify the relationship between the parties and their respective roles in securing mutually beneficial results from regional integration. CARTIF will build upon the principles and rules negotiated under the World Trade Organization (WTO), including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, as well as on best practices drawn from other regional agreements, and will be tailored to the CAREC needs.

The overall concept, workplan and methodology of CARTIF was presented at the Regional Trade Group meeting held in Astana on 18 April 2024. The CAREC countries expressed their overall support to the CARTIF concept and showed interest in holding more detailed and in-depth discussions on the Agreement's structure, priority chapters, and institutional arrangements.

In this regard, ADB is organizing **a two-day regional workshop in Istanbul (Türkiye) on 19-20 June 2024.**

Objectives of the event:

This regional workshop is organized with the following purposes:

- to review existing regional trade and investment agreements/arrangements;
- to share the CARTIF concept, workplan and methodology, and get CAREC countries' reflections on these;
- to conduct in-depth discussions on proposed priority chapters of CARTIF;
- to provide CAREC countries with sufficient information about the potential benefits of CARTIF, enabling them to make an informed decision about whether to join the partnership agreement;
- to share the views from Development Partners (DPs) on regional trade agreements;
- to present trade and socio-economic dynamics in the CAREC region

Participants:

CAREC officials representing trade and national economy ministries, CAREC trade focals, representatives of research centers/think tanks, export/import companies from CAREC countries, development partners, international experts, ADB staff.

Registration link for online participants (by ZOOM):

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://adb-org.zoom.us/j/94708147694?pwd=cXF6UWp2a0RQZjVWU3Nqd3gyU016UT09>

Workshop Program

Venue: Shangri-La Bosphorus Istanbul Hotel, Bosphorus Ballroom.

Day 1 – 19 June 2024 (Wednesday)	
09:00 - 09:30	Registration of Participants, House rules and General Announcements Workshop Secretariat*
09:30 - 09:40	Welcome and Opening Session <i>Lyaziza Sabyrova, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration Unit, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB)</i>
09:40 - 10:10	Session 1: CARTIF Rationale and Concept <i>Speakers: Richard Pomfret, Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of Adelaide, Australia</i> <i>Mikheil Janelidze, Team Leader, PMCG</i> <i>Moderator: Pramila Crivelli, Economist, Regional Cooperation and Integration Division, Economic Research and Development Impact Department, ADB</i>
10:10 - 10:30	Group Photo Session and Coffee Break
10:30 - 11:25	Session 2: CARTIF Priority Chapters – Trade in Goods <i>Speakers: Jan Bohanes, Senior Counsel, Advisory Centre on WTO Law – ACWL (Tariffs)</i> <i>Stefano Inama, Chief, Technical Assistance, Trade and Customs in the Division on African and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), UNCTAD (Rules of Origin)</i> <i>Discussion: Mariam Gabunia, Head, Foreign Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia</i> Q&A <i>Moderator: Pramila Crivelli, Economist, ADB</i>
11:25 - 12:10	Session 3: CARTIF Priority Chapters - Trade Facilitation, NTM, SPS

	<p>Speakers: Richard Pomfret</p> <p>Yann Duval, Chief of Trade Policy and Facilitation Section, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (virtual)</p> <p>Alexey Kravchenko, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section of the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP</p> <p>Discussion/Q&A</p> <p>Moderator: Hans Holzacker, Chief Economist, CAREC Institute</p>
12:10 - 13:15	LUNCH
13:15 - 14:00	<p>Session 4: CARTIF Priority Chapters - Trade in Services</p> <p>Speaker: Jane Drake-Brockman, Visiting Fellow, Institute for International Trade, University of Adelaide (virtual)</p> <p>Discussion: Martin Roy, Counsellor, Trade in Services and Investment Division, WTO (virtual)</p> <p>Q&A</p> <p>Moderator: Nurlan Kulbatyrov, First Deputy Director General, JSC “Center for Trade Policy Development “QazTrade”</p>
14:00 - 14:45	<p>Session 5: CARTIF Priority Chapters - Investment Provisions</p> <p>Speaker: Julien Chaisse, City University of Hong Kong (video presentation)</p> <p>Discussion: Tengiz Asanov, Deputy Head, Investment Climate and Ratings Department, Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade, Uzbekistan (virtual)</p> <p>Moderator: Pramila Crivelli, ADB</p>
14:45 - 15:00	Coffee break
15:00 - 15:45	<p>Session 6: CARTIF Implementation Arrangements – institutional mechanism, dispute settlement mechanisms and other matters</p> <p>Speakers: Jan Bohanes, ACWL (Dispute Settlement)</p> <p>Mikheil Janelidze, PMCG (Institutional Mechanism)</p> <p>Discussion/Q&A</p> <p>Moderator: Richard Pomfret</p>

15:45 - 16:30	<p>Session 7: CARTIF Priority Chapters - Digital Trade/E-commerce</p> <p><i>Speaker: Henry Gao, Singapore Management University (virtual)</i></p> <p><i>Discussion: Jane Drake-Brockman (virtual)</i></p> <p>Q&A</p> <p><i>Moderator: Ms. Weina Wang, Director, Department of International Trade & Economic Affairs, MOFCOM, PRC</i></p>
16:30 - 17:00	<p>Summary of Day 1</p> <p><i>Speaker: Pramila Crivelli, ADB and Mikheil Janelidze, PMCG</i></p>

Day 2 – 20 June 2024 (Thursday)	
09:00 - 09:30	Registration
09:30 - 10:30	<p>Session 8: CAREC Countries Perspectives - Open discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each CAREC country’s views and perspectives for CARTIF (5 min each) - Open Discussion on CARTIF Concept and Chapters <p>Each CAREC country is requested to share their reflections on whether the country wants to join the CARTIF. Each country shall be represented by the trade focal, ministry of national economy or trade, representative of research center or export/import company.</p> <p><i>Moderator: Mikheil Janelidze, PMCG</i></p>
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee - break
10:45 - 11:15	<p>Session 9: Development Partners Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stefano Inama, UNCTAD - Camille Flechet, WTO (virtual) - Hans Holzacker, CAREC Institute - Alexey Kravchenko, UNESCAP <p><i>Discussion/Q&A</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Pramila Crivelli, ADB</i></p>
11:15 - 11:30	<p>Wrap-up and Next steps</p> <p><i>Speakers: Pramila Crivelli, ADB, and Mikheil Janelidze, PMCG</i></p>

11:30 - 12:00	<p>Session 10: Trade Intelligence and Negotiation Adviser (TINA) for CAREC countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New TINA functionality for CAREC countries <p><i>Speaker: Alexey Kravchenko, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section of the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP</i></p> <p>Q&A</p> <p><i>Moderator: Rovshan Mamurov, TA Coordinator, ADB</i></p>
12:00 - 13:45	<p>Lunch and Networking</p>
13:45 - 14:00	<p>Knowledge Management for Trade and Investment Facilitation <i>Speaker/Facilitator: Honey May Manzano Guerzon, Knowledge Management Officer, CWRC, CWRD, ADB</i></p> <p>This session will focus on the importance of effective knowledge management in facilitating trade and investment, and how it can help CAREC countries to better share information, collaborate, and make informed decisions. The session could also cover best practices and tools for knowledge management, and how they can be applied in the context of CARTIF.</p>
14:00 - 15:30	<p>Special Virtual Session: Trade and Socio-Economic Dynamics in the CAREC Region Amid External Shocks</p> <p><i>Moderator: Roman Mogilevskii, Senior Economist, CWRC, CWRD, ADB</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External shocks' key transmission channels and the response of the economies of Caucasus and Central Asia <i>Speaker: Dmitry Chervyakov, Berlin Economics</i> - The impact of shocks on Kazakhstan <i>Speaker: Ainur Tleuova, consultant</i> - The impact of shocks on Uzbekistan <i>Speaker: Yuliy Yusupov, consultant</i> - Trade Flows and Transport Routes in the CAREC Region Amid External Shocks <i>Speaker: Roman Mogilevskii</i> <p>Q&A</p>

15:30 - 15:35	Closing <i>Speaker: Pramila Crivelli, ADB</i>
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***Regional CARTIF Workshop Secretariat:**

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