



DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS DIALOGUE:
Advancing Trade, Tourism and Regional Competitiveness
 Jointly organized by ADB and UNDP
 28 September 13:00 – 17:00 | Shangri-La Ulaanbaatar

12:30–13:00	Registration Emcee: Ms. Lucia Casanueva, Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB
13:00–13:10	Welcome Remarks <i>Ms. Davaasuren Sodnomdarjaa</i> , Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy and Development, Mongolia <i>Mr. Yingming Yang</i> , Vice-President, (South, Central, and West Asia), ADB <i>Mr. Lionel Laurens</i> , UNDP Resident Representative in Mongolia
13:10–13:45	Session 1: Economic Integration and Shared Growth in CAREC Countries Moderator: Moderator: <i>Mr. Muhammad Ehsan Khan</i> , Director General of the East Asia Regional Department at ADB, ADB <i>Speaker:</i> <i>Mr. Subir Lall</i> , Deputy Director, Middle East and Central Asia Department, IMF Moderated Q&A
13:45–15:00	Session 2: Enabling Regional Trade and Tourism: From Policy and Regulatory Reforms to Regional Competitiveness <i>Moderator: Vesna Djuteska-Bisheva</i> , Regional Team Leader, Inclusive Growth, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub This session will explore the policy and institutional reforms needed to strengthen trade and tourism competitiveness across the CAREC region, including trade facilitation, customs modernization, digitalization, regulatory cooperation, and tourism-related measures. It will also examine how these reforms can support investment, value chains, MSME competitiveness, economic diversification, and higher-value tourism. <u>Presentations</u> <i>From Evidence to Reforms: Unlocking Regional Trade, Value Chains and Competitiveness in CAREC region (15 min)</i> Speaker 1: <i>Ms. Vesna Djuteska-Bisheva</i> , Regional Team Leader, Prosperity and Wellbeing Hub, UNDP Istanbul regional Hub Speaker 2: <i>Mr. Philip Schellekens</i> , Chief Economist, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub <i>How Regional Cooperation Supports Policy Coherence and Policy Reforms: Experience from the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030 (5 min)</i>

	Ms. <i>Dorothea Lazaro</i>, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central and West Asia Department, ADB <i>Unlocking Tourism Investment in Mongolia: Projects, Partnerships, and Opportunities (10 min)</i> Speaker: Ms. <i>Vanchindorj Batchimeg</i>, Director General, Tourism Policy and Coordination Department, Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth of Mongolia <u>Part 2: CAREC Countries Discussion</u> <i>From National Reform to Regional Market: What Will It Take to Make CAREC Trade and Tourism Work Across Borders?</i> Senior representatives from CAREC countries will share examples of nationally led reforms and initiatives with cross-border relevance and discuss how greater regional cooperation, harmonization, and interoperability can help unlock trade, tourism, and economic opportunities across the region. ○ <i>Tajikistan</i> Mr. <i>Abdurahmon Abdurahmonzoda</i>, Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan ○ <i>Uzbekistan</i> Mr. <i>Ilzat Kasimov</i>, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Investment, Industry, and Trade ○ <i>Kazakhstan</i> Mr. <i>Assan Darbayev</i>, Vice-Minister of National Economy of Republic of Kazakhstan ○ <i>Mongolia</i> Ms. <i>Vanchindorj Batchimeg</i>, Director General, Tourism Policy and Coordination Department, Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth of Mongolia ○ <i>Kyrgyz Republic</i> Mr. <i>Bek Subankulov</i>, Director of Organizational and Legal Support Department, State Tourism Agency. ○ <i>Turkmenistan</i> Mr. <i>Myrat Myradov</i>, Head of the Legal Regulation of Foreign Economic Relations and Coordination Division, Foreign Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations <u>Presentation</u> <i>Main Line-1 (ML-1) Railway Project (5 min)</i> Speaker: Mr. <i>Ahsan Iqbal</i>, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives of Pakistan
15:15–15:45	Group Photo and Coffee/Tea Break

15:45–16:45	Session 3: Advancing Regional Trade and Tourism Projects and Investment Opportunities Moderator: <i>Ms. Dorothea Lazaro</i>, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central and West Asia Department, ADB Building on the policy discussions from Session 1, this session will showcase priority regional projects, initiatives, and investment opportunities in trade and tourism across the CAREC region. Discussions will focus on how governments, development partners, and the private sector can translate policy reforms into concrete investments and implementation actions, mobilize technical and financial support, and accelerate sustainable and inclusive regional development. <u>Part 1: Presentations (5 min each)</u> ○ <i>From Reform to Results: Trade and Investment in Central Asia</i> <i>Ms. Indu John-Abraham</i>, Operations Manager for Central Asia, World Bank ○ <i>Border Upgrades for Integration, Logistics, and Development Facility</i> <i>Mr. Ari J. Kalliokoski</i>, Principal Transport Specialist, ADB ○ <i>Introducing the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance</i> <i>Mr. Philip Vernon</i>, Senior Platform Specialist, MCDF ○ <i>The Aid for Trade in Central Asia Program</i> <i>Mr. Dilshod Akbarov</i>, Policy Specialist, UNDP – Istanbul Regional Hub <u>Part 2: Development Partners Discussion</u> <i>From Reforms to Results: How Can Development Partners Better Support Trade and Tourism Competitiveness in CAREC?</i> Building on Sessions 1 and 2, the panel will discuss how development partners can better align policy support, technical assistance, knowledge, and financing to help implement regional trade and tourism priorities and deliver tangible results. Guided discussion (30 mins) ○ <i>Mr. Philip Schellekens</i>, Chief Economist, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub ○ <i>Ms. Indu John-Abraham</i>, Operations Manager for Central Asia, World Bank ○ <i>Mr. Jahan Shamsiev</i>, Head of Mongolia, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) ○ <i>Mr. Anzheng We</i>, Senior Investment Officer, Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) ○ <i>Mr. Charymuhammet Shallyyev</i>, Director, CAREC Institute ○ <i>Mr. Philip Vernon</i>, Senior Platform Specialist, MCDF
16:45 – 17:00	Wrap up and Closing <i>Ms. Leah Gutierrez</i>, Director General, Central and West Regional Department, ADB

Annex for presenters and panelists

Session 2 - Country-specific guiding questions (tentative).

- **Kazakhstan:**

(or own address)

Kazakhstan recognizes the economic potential of the Trans-Caspian route not only as a transport corridor, but as a strategic platform for investment, production and regional value creation. Could you share some of the most significant reforms and initiatives Kazakhstan is pursuing to develop the economic ecosystem around the corridor - for example through logistics hubs, industrial zones, supplier development or investment facilitation etc. Where do you see the need for collective, inter-governmental action by countries along the corridor?

- **Kyrgyz Republic:**

The Kyrgyz Republic has already established itself as an attractive tourism destination and is putting in place a range of policies and measures to further develop the sector. At the same time, there is clear potential to scale this national offer into a stronger regional tourism proposition. What country and region-wide measures - for example on connectivity, border procedures, digital information and payments, service standards or joint tourism products - would have the highest impact in building genuinely multi-country tourism and services value chains?

- **Tajikistan**

Tajikistan has achieved major milestones in advancing reforms and investments related to adoption of international standards, processing, logistics and border management to better connect producers and border regions to wider markets. Could you share some of the most important measures currently being implemented, and what additional regional or development-partner support would help scale their impact and connect more Tajik firms to CAREC value chains?

- **Turkmenistan**

Turkmenistan's strategic location gives it an important role in connecting Central Asia with the Caspian and wider markets. Beyond transit and logistics, which domestic sectors or services do you see as having the greatest potential to capture additional value from the region's improved connectivity, and what policy or institutional measures could help local firms participate more strongly in these new opportunities for the region.

Uzbekistan

1. What are the main directions of reforming Uzbekistan's foreign trade policy aimed at developing regional cooperation?
2. In the coming years, can Uzbekistan be considered not only a participant in regional projects, but also a regional platform for promoting investment opportunities in Central Asia?

Mongolia

Mongolia is seeing remarkable growth of tourism in 2026, and the sector has significant potential to grow. Could a more integrated regional tourism offer scale this momentum? From your perspective, what concrete actions can be taken nationally and at the regional level to develop multi-country tourism products - for example through joint routes, easier mobility, digital connectivity, common information and service standards, and stronger participation of local SMEs?

Session 3: Guiding questions for development partners (tentative).

1. World bank: Regional public goods

Many of the highest-value reforms - cross-border data exchange, paperless trade, mutual recognition of standards and regional tourism products - cannot be delivered by one country alone. How should development partners finance and govern these regional public goods when traditional assistance remains largely country-based?

2. CAREC INSTITUTE: Knowledge

From your perspective, how can knowledge cooperation among countries and development partners support more effective connectivity and facilitate greater regional trade integration?

3. EBRD: Mobilizing private investments across CAREC countries

Mobilizing private investment remains critical to meeting the region's development needs. From EBRD's perspective, what are the most important reforms or enabling conditions that CAREC countries should prioritize to attract greater private sector participation in regional projects and cross-border investments?

4. MCDF: From connectivity to economic value

CAREC has attracted major investment in transport and border infrastructure. What should development partners do differently to ensure that these investments create productive activity around the corridors - regional value chains, local suppliers, private investment and jobs - rather than primarily increasing transit capacity?

5. AIIB: Linking hard and soft infrastructure

How can development partners better combine and sequence infrastructure finance with customs reform, digital interoperability, standards, skills and enterprise upgrading so that the "hard" and

“soft” sides of regional connectivity are designed as one investment proposition rather than separate projects?

6. **UNDP:** From diagnostics to execution

The region already has substantial analytical work identifying trade costs, bottlenecks, and investment needs. What is preventing us from moving faster from diagnostics to agreed reforms, prepared projects and financed implementation - and which institution should take responsibility for closing that gap?