



CAREC Tourism Working Group Meeting

9–11 September 2026 | Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Meeting Objectives

• Reactivate and operationalize the CAREC Tourism Working Group (TWG) and agree on its working arrangements.	• Review progress and next steps following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on CAREC Regional Tourism Development.
• Discuss the work program under the regional technical assistance on Sustainable Tourism and Services Trade.	• Identify country priorities, key constraints, and potential tourism project ideas.
• Explore practical approaches to develop a CAREC tourism investment pipeline.	• Agree on next steps, responsibilities, and deliverables for 2026–2027.

Reference Documents

▸ CAREC Tourism Strategy 2030
▸ Memorandum of Understanding on CAREC Regional Tourism Development
▸ TA Work Program: Sustainable Tourism and Services Trade

Participants

Appointed representatives of CAREC member countries to the Tourism Working Group, ADB staff and consultants, development partners, and invited resource persons.

Agenda

Day One — Wednesday, 9 September 2026	
09:00–09:30	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:30–09:45	Opening Session Moderated by Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB Recorded welcome remarks by Mr. Asad Aleem, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration, CWRD, ADB
09:45–10:10	Session 1: CAREC Tourism Cooperation — Where We Stand Overview of CAREC Tourism Strategy 2030, key achievements under the previous TA, and the 2025 MoU on CAREC Regional Tourism Development. Presenter: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB
10:10–10:30	Session 2: New TA on Sustainable Tourism and Services Trade Overview of TA outputs, including digital readiness, sustainability benchmarking, Visit Silk Road portal upgrade, capacity building, and tourism project pipeline development. Presenter: Ms. Audrey Scott, Consultant (TA Tourism Development Lead), ADB
10:30–11:00	Discussion and Q&A for Sessions 1 and 2

	Preliminary feedback from countries on the role of the TWG, TA work program, and priority areas for cooperation. Moderator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB
11:00–11:20	Group Photo and Coffee Break
11:20–13:00	Session 3: Country Updates — Tourism Priorities and Key Constraints Each country will provide a brief update based on questionnaire responses, covering priority tourism initiatives, key constraints, capacity-building needs, and possible project ideas. Moderator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB Country Order: Uzbekistan → Turkmenistan → Tajikistan → Pakistan → Mongolia → Kyrgyz Republic → Kazakhstan → Georgia → People's Republic of China → Azerbaijan Expected Output: Shared record of national tourism priorities, constraints, and candidate project ideas.
13:00–14:00	Lunch Break
14:00–14:45	Session 4: ADB Tourism Project Development Process ADB's tourism project portfolio and process with practical advice on how to effectively navigate the project pipeline process. <i>Expected Output: Understanding of developing a project pipeline aligned with ADB's process and tourism priorities.</i> Presenter: Mr. Begzod M. Djalilov, Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB and Ms. Jessie McComb, Senior Industry Tourism Specialist, SD2, ADB
14:45–15:15	Session 5: Lessons from ASEAN Tourism Investment Outlook and ADB's Tourism Projects Presentation on the ASEAN Tourism Investment Outlook initiative, including methodology, country engagement, project screening, and investment pipeline development. Lessons learned from ADB's tourism projects review. <i>Expected Output: Country interest and initial guidance on adapting an ASEAN-style approach to create a CAREC Tourism Investment Outlook.</i> Presenter (virtual): Ms. Jessie McComb, Senior Industry Tourism Specialist, SD2, ADB
15:15–15:45	Coffee Break
15:45–16:30	Session 6: Priority Areas for Regional Tourism Cooperation Summary of key themes emerging from country updates, followed by discussion on priority cooperation areas, including cross-border tourism routes, digital tourism, sustainability, tourism data, skills development, private sector engagement, and tourism infrastructure. <i>Expected Output: Initial list of priority regional cooperation areas</i> Moderator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB
16:30 – 17:00	Session 7: Knowledge Management's Role in Tourism Sector Development Discussion on how Knowledge Management is a strategic enabler of tourism sector development. Presenter: Ms. Honey May Guerzon, Regional Cooperation Officer, CWRC, ADB
17:00–17:15	Day 1 Wrap-Up Summary of key points and guidance for Day 2 discussions. Moderator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB

Day Two — Thursday, 10 September 2026

09:00–09:30	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:30–10:15	Session 8: Visit Silk Road Portal Upgrade and Regional Visibility Presentation and discussion on improving the Visit Silk Road portal, including a governance and ongoing content update process. cross-border routes, country content updates, private sector engagement, and potential AI-enabled travel tools. Discussion on visibility gaps, challenges and opportunities for the CAREC region and Visit Silk Road brand for regional marketing activities. <i>Expected Output: Initial content commitments and shared view of regional visibility needs, gaps, and challenges as input for the portal upgrade and Visit Silk Road strategy.</i> Presenters: Mr. Kenzhekhan Abuov, Senior Project Officer for Kazakhstan Resident Mission, ADB and Ms. Audrey Scott, Consultant / TA Tourism Development Lead, ADB
10:15 - 11:00	Session 9: Private Sector Engagement and Enabling Conditions for Tourism Development Discussion on practical barriers faced by tourism businesses, tour operators, investors, and service providers, and how the public sector can improve enabling conditions for tourism development. Topics may include cross-border packages, service quality, investment readiness, digital tools, destination management, and public-private cooperation. <i>Expected Output: Prioritized list of private sector barriers and enabling conditions with opportunities for cooperation, capacity building and interventions.</i> Moderator: Ms. Audrey Scott, Consultant (TA Tourism Development Lead), ADB
11:00 –11:15	Coffee Break
11:15–12:00	Session 10: Discussion on CAREC Tourism Coordination Brief presentation from Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office on their roles and responsibilities, organizational structure and financing. Discussion on a coordination mechanism for regional tourism cooperation, including the proposed CAREC Tourism Coordinating Office. <i>Expected Output: Recommendations and commitments for CAREC Tourism coordination structure and activities.</i> Presenter and moderator: Mr. Steven Schipani, former ADB Tourism Focal Point for GMS
12:00–12:30	Session 11: UN Tourism Silk Road Thematic Office and International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027 Presentation on potential synergies between CAREC tourism cooperation, the UN Tourism Silk Road Thematic Office, and the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027. <i>Expected Output: Ideas for cooperation with UN Tourism's activities in the CAREC region and for IYSRT.</i> Presenter: Mr. Jaime Mayaki, Director of Technical Cooperation, UN Tourism
12:30–14:00	Lunch Break
14:00–14:20	Session 12: Lessons Learned from GMS Regional Tourism Cooperation Lessons and examples of effective regional tourism cooperation, developing more seamless travel and connectivity, and cross-border routes. <i>Expected Output: Ideas for different types of regional tourism cooperation and development from other ADB tourism activities.</i> Presenter: Mr. Steven Schipani, former ADB Tourism Focal Point for GMS
14:20–14:40	Session 13: GSTC Sustainability Frameworks and Standards Presentation and discussion on GSTC sustainability standards and frameworks and how they can be used for national / regional sustainability certification programs,

	capacity building, and improving sustainability practices in the tourism sector in a systemic way. <i>Expected Output: Examples of ways to use sustainability standards and best practices to advance sustainable tourism development.</i> Presenter: Dr Mihee Kang, GSTC Chief Assurance Officer, GSTC
14:40–15:30	Session 14: Discussion on Regional and Cross-Border Tourism Projects Interactive discussion on potential regional and cross-border tourism projects, including tourism corridors, shared routes, visitor infrastructure, digital solutions, and private sector opportunities. This session will include presentations on the Almaty–Bishkek Economic Corridor (ABEC) and Uzbekistan – Kyrgyz Republic Cross Border Sustainable Tourism Cluster projects of ADB. <i>Expected Output: Initial list of regional and cross-border project ideas for further screening</i> Presenter/Moderator: Kristian Rosbach, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, and Mr. Begzod M. Djalilov, Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB
15:30–16:00	Coffee Break
16:00–16:45	Session 15: Agreement on Next Steps and 2026–2027 Work Program Discussion and agreement on follow-up actions, including TWG working arrangements, country inputs, project idea submission, Visit Silk Road content updates, assessment participation, and deliverables for the CAREC Ministerial Conference. Moderator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB
16:45–17:00	Closing Session Summary of meeting outcomes and closing remarks by ADB / CAREC Secretariat. Moderator: Mr. Begzod M. Djalilov, Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC, ADB

Day Three — Friday, 11 September 2026

08:00–17:00 <i>Assembly time in the hotel lobby at 7:30am</i>	Field Visit to UN Tourism Academy and Tourism Committee in Uzbekistan <i>Field Visit Objective: To provide participants with firsthand exposure to the host destination's tourism assets, infrastructure, and management practices, facilitating knowledge exchange, peer learning, and discussions on opportunities for sustainable tourism development and regional cooperation.</i> Facilitator: Mr. Umid Khudoyberdiev, Consultant (TA Coordinator), ADB
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Expected Outputs

By the end of the meeting, participants are expected to agree on:

1. Reactivation and working arrangements of the CAREC Tourism Working Group.
2. Priority areas for regional tourism cooperation under the new TA.
3. Initial list of country and cross-border tourism project ideas.
4. Proposed approach for developing a CAREC tourism investment pipeline.
5. Country inputs for the Visit Silk Road portal upgrade.
6. Priority topics for digital readiness, sustainability, data, and capacity-building activities.
7. Follow-up actions and deliverables for 2026–2027.