



CAREC Digital Corridor:

Scoping Study:

Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan

Special CAREC High-Level Meeting on
CAREC Digital Strategy 2030 Midterm Review (MTR)
26th June 2025
Manila, Philippines





Scoping Study Background

At the CAREC National Focal Points (NFPs) Strategic Planning Meeting 2025 – Green and Digital CAREC – held in Manila from 5–7 March 2025, Pakistan proposed the initiative “Pakistan as a Digital Corridor for CAREC Countries,” in alignment with ADB’s CAREC Digital Corridors initiative.

The proposal was endorsed for a Scoping Study, which is currently underway.

Later in this session, we will share insights and preliminary findings from the ongoing study to gather feedback and guide its development.

Pakistan's Advantages

Competitive market

- 6 domestic fibre operators (PTCL, Transworld, Cybernet, Wateen, Jazz, Multinet)
- 3 Pakistani Fibre Operators are already connected (PTCL, Jazz, and Wateen) with 2 Afghan Fibre Operators (Afghan Wireless (AWCC) and Afghan Telecom (AFTEL))
- The above connections are at 2 border crossings. Torkham (Peshawar–Kabul Route) and Chaman (Quetta–Kandahar Route)
- Both Afghan Fibre networks connect to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

Pakistan's Advantage...

Route Diversity by leveraging other Infrastructure

- Leverage the China-Pakistan CPEC Cable (North-South Pakistan)
- Leverage the Electricity Transmission Line CASA (Fibre-Embedded Ground Conductor)
- Leverage Gas Pipeline TAPI (Optic Fibres Buried Alongside the Pipeline)

Other Possible Alternatives

- China, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan
- **Challenges**
- Long, complex terrestrial/submarine routes
- Geopolitical risks
- Regulatory barriers



Access to 9 high-capacity submarine cables

- 2Africa
- Asia-Africa-Europe-1 (AAE-1)
- PEACE
- Transworld
- IMEWE (India-Middle East-Western Europe)
- SeaMeWe-4 (Southeast Asia, Middle East, Western Europe)
- SeaMeWe-5
- SeaMeWe-6 (2026)
- Africa-1 (2026)

One overland cable to China

Challenges

- Access to Pakistan via Afghanistan
- Rugged terrain on shortest route (Wakhan corridor), other routes available
- Infrastructure limitations
 - Roads, railways, power
- Geopolitical security risks
- **However, Afghanistan has reliably served as a data transit country between Central Asia and Pakistan continuously for more than a decade**

Planned Stakeholder consultations

With the interested CAREC Countries to:

- Check Market readiness in the target countries
 - Market penetration, demand, and service affordability
- Propose new fibre routes
 - Align with other development projects/plans (AIIB, EBRD, IMF, IsDB, UNDP, World Bank, AusAID...)
 - Avoid duplication
- Identify Synergies
 - Roads, railways, power grid, pipelines...
- Collaboration models, financing options
 - Consortia, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)
- Regulatory Reforms