

Implementation Roadmap for the Memorandum of Understanding on CAREC Regional Tourism Development

Executive Summary

- **Objective:** This roadmap translates the CAREC Regional Tourism MoU (endorsed on 20 November 2025) into a sequenced 2026-2027 work program that (i) re-establishes coordination, (ii) produces priority knowledge products and a portal upgrade, and (iii) identifies pilot interventions and an initial regional project pipeline.
- **How delivery will happen:** The CAREC Tourism Working Group (TWG) provides strategic direction; national tourism focal points provide country inputs and coordination; ADB/CAREC Secretariat support implementation, convening, and reporting.
- **2026 outputs:** Confirmed TWG focal points and priority themes; TWG reactivation and first in-person meeting (planned Aug 2026, Istanbul); initial capacity-development activities; two knowledge products (Digital Readiness Assessment and Sustainability Benchmarking); Phase 1 upgrade of the “Visit Silk Road” tourism portal and a portal governance framework; shortlist of pilot projects; initial list of priority, investment-ready concepts for a CAREC tourism project pipeline.
- **Expected deliverables:** Agreed regional priorities, improved coordination mechanisms, and a credible pipeline of cross-border and national tourism initiatives ready for further concept development and potential financing consideration.

2026 Roadmap Overview

Phase	Timing (2026)	Primary deliverables	Lead / coordination
1. Preparation & readiness	Q1–Q2	Focal points nominated; country inputs consolidated; initial bilateral consultations; priority thematic areas confirmed	National focal points, TWG; supported by ADB/CAREC Secretariat
2. TWG/CTCO & capacity development	Q3–Q4	TWG reactivated; first in-person meeting planned (Aug 2026, Istanbul); recommendations on coordination mechanisms; initial trainings/workshops delivered	TWG and CAREC Secretariat; supported by ADB/TA team
3. Knowledge products & portal upgrade	Q2–Q3	Digital Readiness Assessment; Sustainability Benchmarking; “Visit Silk Road” portal Phase 1 upgrade; portal governance framework agreed	ADB/TA team with country inputs; TWG validation
4. Pipeline & pilot identification	Q3–Q4	Pilot shortlist (digitalization/sustainability); initial identification and prioritization of investment-ready project concepts across CAREC	TWG + national focal points; ADB/TA team support
5. Capacity building & pipeline concept development	Ongoing	Workshops/trainings and knowledge sharing; develop prioritized project ideas into concepts for screening and consideration	TWG, Secretariat, team CAREC ADB/TA

Governance and Coordination Structure

The implementation of this roadmap is guided by a multi-layered governance structure designed to ensure effective coordination among all stakeholders.

- The CAREC Tourism Working Group (TWG) is the main platform for tourism policy and strategic coordination.
- Support: ADB, CAREC Secretariat
- Participants: National tourism focal points, relevant ministries, private sector. Each CAREC country designates national tourism focal points to represent country interests, provide inputs and assist in local coordination
- CAREC Secretariat supports regional coordination, Tourism Working Group (TWG) facilitation, and reporting to Senior Officials

Key Phases and Outputs:

Phase 1 – Preparation and Readiness (Q1–Q2 2026)

- TWG established; national tourism focal points confirmed and operationalized
- Country inputs consolidated (priorities, pipeline, needs)
- Agreed initial scope of cooperation
- Priority thematic areas confirmed (connectivity/corridors; digital & data; sustainability/resilience; investment & project development)

Phase 2 – TWG Reactivation, CTCO, and Capacity Development (Q3–Q4 2026)

- TWG reactivated and 2026 workplan/priority themes/coordination arrangements confirmed
- First in-person TWG meeting held (planned Aug 2026, Istanbul; subject to confirmation)
- Recommendations developed for a regional coordination framework (CTCO) including roles, information flows, and reporting
- Initial capacity-development workshops/trainings delivered (with scope refined after the TWG meeting as needed)

Phase 3 – Knowledge Products and “Visit Silk Road” Portal Upgrade (Q2–Q3 2026)

- Digital Readiness Assessment completed (barriers + recommended solutions, incl. AI-enabled tools)
- Sustainability Benchmarking completed (barriers + recommended solutions/interventions)
- “Visit Silk Road” portal Phase 1 upgrade delivered (content/functionality/UX/SEO-GEO/integration improvements) and potential AI tool(s) assessed for piloting
- Tourism portal governance framework agreed (responsibilities + country update mechanism)

Phase 4 – Pipeline Identification and Potential Pilot Projects (Q3–Q4 2026)

- Pilot projects identified/shortlisted (digitalization and sustainability), using agreed selection criteria
- Priority, investment-ready project concepts initially identified and prioritized for a CAREC tourism project pipeline (incl. cross-border, digital, sustainability/climate action; public+private sector)

Phase 5 – Capacity Building and Project Pipeline (Ongoing)

- Ongoing workshops/trainings/knowledge sharing delivered (priority topics: policy, digitalization, sustainability, crisis communications)
- Prioritized pipeline ideas further developed into concept notes for screening and potential ADB consideration.

Phase 1 – Preparation and Readiness (Q1–Q2 2026)

Key activity	Key output	Owner(s)	Target timing
Nomination of TWG focal points by CAREC countries	TWG established; tourism focal points confirmed and operationalized	National tourism focal points (nomination); CAREC Secretariat (confirmation list)	End Q1 2026
Circulation of questionnaire and collection of country inputs	Country inputs consolidated (priorities, pipeline, needs)	ADB/TA team (questionnaire, consolidation); national focal points (responses)	Q1–Q2 2026
Initial bilateral consultations with member countries	Agreed initial scope of cooperation	ADB/TA team + CAREC Secretariat (consultations); national focal points (inputs)	Q2 2026
Preparation work for TWG reactivation; validation of priority areas under the MoU (connectivity and corridors; digital and data cooperation; sustainability and resilience; investment and project development)	Priority thematic areas confirmed	TWG (validation); national focal points (endorsement); ADB/TA team (facilitation)	End Q2 2026

Phase 2 – TWG Reactivation, CTCO, and Capacity Development (Q3–Q4 2026)

Key output	Owner(s)	Target timing
TWG reactivated and 2026 workplan / priority themes / coordination arrangements confirmed	TWG (decision); CAREC Secretariat + ADB/TA team (facilitation and documentation); national focal points (inputs)	Q3 2026 (validated by TWG)
First in-person TWG meeting convened (planned Aug 2026, Istanbul; subject to confirmation)	CAREC Secretariat (convening); TWG members (participation); ADB/TA team (agenda, technical inputs, logistics support as needed)	Aug 2026 (Q3)
Recommendations produced for regional coordination framework (CTCO): roles, information flows, reporting	TWG (review/endorsement); CAREC Secretariat + ADB/TA team (drafting); national focal points (country inputs)	Q4 2026
Initial capacity-development workshops/trainings delivered (public and private sector)	ADB/TA team (design/delivery); CAREC Secretariat (coordination); national focal points (country-level arrangements); private sector partners (participation)	Q3–Q4 2026

Phase 3 – Knowledge Products and “Visit Silk Road” Portal Upgrade (Q2–Q3 2026)

Key output	Owner(s)	Target timing
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Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) completed (barriers + recommended solutions, including AI-enabled tools)	ADB/TA team (analysis/reporting); participating countries (data/inputs); TWG (validation)	End Q2 2026 (draft) / Q3 2026 (final)
Sustainability Benchmarking completed (barriers + recommended solutions/interventions)	ADB/TA team (analysis/reporting); participating countries (data/inputs); TWG (validation)	End Q2 2026 (draft) / Q3 2026 (final)
“Visit Silk Road” portal Phase 1 upgrade delivered (content, UX, functionality, SEO/GEO, integration)	ADB/TA team (implementation management); portal technical vendor/consultant (delivery); national focal points (content inputs); TWG (review)	Q3 2026
Potential AI-enabled itinerary-building (or other) tool(s) assessed for piloting in Phase 4	ADB/TA team + portal vendor/consultant (assessment); TWG (review)	Q3 2026
Tourism portal governance framework agreed (roles + country update mechanism)	TWG (agreement); CAREC Secretariat (coordination); national focal points (update process); ADB/TA team (drafting support)	Q3 2026

Phase 4 - CAREC Tourism Pipeline Identification and Potential Pilot Projects (Q3-Q4 2026)

Key output	Owner(s)	Target timing
Pilot projects identified/shortlisted (digitalization and sustainability), applying agreed selection criteria	ADB/TA team (screening and proposals); TWG (review/endorsement); national focal points (country inputs); private sector partners (as relevant)	Q3–Q4 2026
Priority, investment-ready project concepts initially identified and prioritized for a CAREC tourism project pipeline	National focal points (pipeline concepts); ADB/TA team (concept structuring and prioritization support); TWG (validation)	Q4 2026

Phase 5 - Capacity Building and Project Pipeline (Ongoing)

Key output	Owner(s)	Target timing
Ongoing workshops/trainings and knowledge-sharing activities delivered (priority topics: policy, digitalization, sustainability, crisis communications)	ADB/TA team (design/delivery); CAREC Secretariat (coordination); TWG (topic prioritization); national focal points (country-level arrangements)	Q3 2026 onward
Prioritized pipeline ideas developed into project concept notes for screening and consideration by ADB	ADB/TA team (concept development support); national focal points (concept ownership); TWG (prioritization/validation); ADB (screening)	Q4 2026 onward

Expected Outputs

The successful implementation of this roadmap is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

- Stronger digital capabilities among tourism SMEs and destination managers
- Improved sustainability practices and policies in selected destinations
- Greater visibility of the CAREC region in international tourism markets
- More coordinated cross-border tourism development

- Better regional cooperation through the CAREC Tourism Working Group