Initiatives Under Cross-Cutting Theme – Digital and ICT
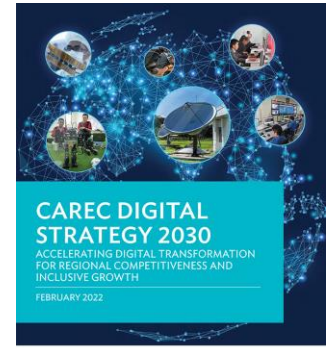
Dorothea Lazaro

Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist,
Asian Development Bank

Senior Officials' Meeting
30-31 May 2024
Astana, Kazakhstan

CAREC Digital Strategy 2030

VISION: A COMMON CAREC DIGITAL SPACE
MISSION: A DATA-DRIVEN DIGITAL ECONOMY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	THE DIGITAL PILLARS
• Promote **investment** into broadband infrastructure • **Harmonization** of digital and data legislature • Reduce barriers to cross-border **trade** • Develop digital **skills** and competencies • Strengthen CAREC's **innovation** ecosystem • Empower digital **transformation** at the sectoral level	• **Leadership**, Governance, and Investment • Digital Policy **Enablers** and Safeguards • Digital **Infrastructure**, Resilience, and Platforms • Digital **Skills** and Competencies • Innovation, **Entrepreneurship**, and ICT Competitiveness

"Integrating ICT across the spectrum of CAREC operations will be a cross-cutting priority."

I. Updates — Institutional

2nd CAREC Digital Strategy Meeting and related events (17-19 April 2024, Astana)

I. Updates — Countries Alignment with CAREC Digital Strategy 2030

Leadership Governance Investment	Digital Policy Enablers and Safeguards (Data AI, Cybersecurity)	Broadband Infrastructure Resilience Digital Platforms	Digital Skill and Competencies	Digital Innovation Entrepreneurship ICT Competitiveness
Establishment of CAREC Digital Strategy Steering Committee (DSSC) 10 CAREC members actively participate	**National Digital Transformation Strategy** 10 CAREC members	**Investments in improving Digital Infrastructure** 10 CAREC members	**Digital Literacy Initiatives** 10 CAREC members	**Regional Startup Grants and Development of Tech Parks** 10 CAREC members
	Open Data Portal 8 CAREC members	**E-Government Platforms** 10 CAREC members	**Small and Medium Enterprises Transformation** 5 CAREC members	**Freelance Workforce Development** 3 CAREC members
	Cyber Security Strategy 8 CAREC members	**Digital Trade Portal** 9 CAREC members		

CAREC

Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program

I. Updates — Supporting Startup Ecosystem

CAREC Startup Map

Database of 6,884 start-ups, 63 accelerators, 293 coworking spaces, and 159 unicorns

CAREC Innovation Network (CIN)

MOUs and letter of intent signed at the sideline of CAREC Innovation Week (Nov 2023, Hangzhou)

CAREC Innovation Decoded

Success Stories with 5 virtual workshops attended by over 250 participants

University Open Innovation Challenge

Over **800 students** participating since 2021, 2023 cohort launched in May 2024

University Innovation Exchange Program

2-week **training** on innovation and entrepreneurship (4 countries) for pre-seed startups

CAREC Startup Bootcamp

Bootcamps for 3 countries for seed-stage startups

CAREC Business Angel Network

Network of Business Angels interested in investing across the borders.

Ecosystem Health Check

Case Studies and share lessons

II. Key Priorities or Plans for 2024-2025

- University as Enablers of Vibrant Startup Ecosystems (Feb 2024, Seoul)
- 2nd CAREC Digital Trade Forum (April 2024, Astana)
- University Startup Generator (July to Aug 2024)
- Series of CAREC Innovation Network Workshops
- Business Angel Network Workshops and CAREC Digital Ecosystem Health Checklist
- Support for other CAREC sectors/themes

III. For SOM Guidance or Endorsement

- *For information*: CAREC Digital Strategy Progress Report and Plans

- *For guidance/suggestion*:

(i) Interventions that will provide value-added of CAREC Digital/ICT work in national strategies

(ii) Scoping of potential regional ICT projects

(iii) Priority support to other CAREC clusters or sectors, including mainstreaming climate actions

Digital/ICT Events in CAREC Countries

Azerbaijan	BAKUTEL (Dec 2024)	INMERGE Innovation Summit (Oct 2024)	
PRC	Digital Trade Expo (Sep 2024)	International Conference on ICT (May 2024)	
Georgia	Georgian ICT Forum (Mar 2024)	Tbilisi Digital Transformation Summit (Sep 2024)	
Kazakhstan	Digital Bridge (Sep 2024)	Kazakhstan International Digital Week (Oct 2024)	
Kyrgyz Republic	Digital Plus Forum - Digital Kyrgyzstan (Feb 2024)		
Mongolia	ICT Expo - MINDGOLIA (Jun 2024)		
Pakistan	Future Fest (Jan 2024)	ITCN Pakistan (Aug 2024)	Pakistan Future Tech Meet
Tajikistan	E-Gate Conference (Mar 2024)		
Turkmenistan	TURKMENTEL (Nov 2024)	Digital Solutions (Nov 2024)	
Uzbekistan	ICT Week Uzbekistan (Oct 2024)	International Investment Forum (May 2024)	