



## **An Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism and Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) in the CAREC region**

**Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute**

**Webinar**

**30 November 2021**

**2:50 – 5:00 PM (Beijing time)**

*draft as of 11 November 2021*

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused serious global economic shock concurrent with the negative consequences in various areas, including an enormous global supply and demand concussion, an emergency situation in the tourism sector, and disruptions of smaller businesses. At the same time, we have observed that the pandemic contributed to the intensive use of high technology that in some measure helped to get out of the difficult economic situation during lockdowns. The pandemic has provided an opportunity to use technological advances not only to promote safe and hygienic destinations but also helped to solve some trade challenges and paved the way for the economic recovery of the countries through the technological advancements that provide additional benefits.

Given the importance of maintaining the sustainable development of the tourism sector and MSMEs of the CAREC countries, the CAREC Institute has initiated and published a series of research reports that highlighted key findings to address some issues related to the pre-pandemic situation and with recommendations for the post-pandemic development of member countries.

The paper on “Harnessing the role of technology in promoting safe tourism destinations in CAREC” overviews losses incurred in the industry owing to the pandemic, discusses some deep-rooted challenges, lists benefits of technology application, and provides recommendations for CAREC members, also for multilateral development partners to revive the tourism industry and enhance its experience post-COVID-19.

Focusing on the MSME sector to the countries studied, the CAREC Institute commissioned “Impact of COVID-19 on Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) in Selected CAREC Countries” report to look specifically at how smaller firms coped with the pandemic and see what lessons can be learned for policymakers in the region.

The policy brief on “E-commerce infrastructure development in CAREC region” examines the economic factors and conditions in CAREC in terms of affordability and access to ICT to engage in online transactions, bandwidth availability, availability of online payment options, e-commerce platforms, delivery and logistics, economies of scale, etc. and draws conclusions to overcome challenges.

The CAREC Institute webinar will help policymakers from the CAREC member countries and interested audiences to exchange views about the difficult circumstances in the economies during the pandemic situation and think about how to smoothly tackle the negative consequences of the current situation

in highlighted areas through a virtual expert roundtable discussion. The participants will be able to share their thoughts and questions with a panel of international experts and discuss the strength and opportunities of the tourism sector, MSMEs, and e-commerce for the region.

Useful links:

<https://www.carecinstitute.org/publications/policy-brief-harnessing-the-role-of-technology-in-promoting-safe-tourism-destinations-in-carec/>

<https://www.carecinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CI-e-commerce-infra-policy-brief-May-2021-1.pdf>

<https://www.carecinstitute.org/publications/research-impact-of-covid-19-on-micro-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-msme-in-selected-carec-countries/>

<https://www.adb.org/publications/e-commerce-carec-laws-policies>

<https://www.carecinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2-CI-Policy-Brief-e-Commerce-Framework-in-CAREC-25-Apr-2020.pdf>

Registration link: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Ri53sC9NT26JP8p5yzosEg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ri53sC9NT26JP8p5yzosEg)

## Agenda

### 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (Beijing time)

#### 14:50-15:00 Introduction (Technical Guidance) and speakers' group photo

Gary Huang, E-learning Specialist, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute

#### 15:00-15:10 Opening Remarks

Syed Shakeel Shah, Director, CAREC Institute

Emma Fan, Director, Public Management, Financial Sector, and Regional Cooperation Division, ADB

### Session: Presentations of the CAREC Institute research reports

Moderator: Ayoob Ayoobi, Chief of Capacity Building Division, CAREC Institute

#### 15:10-15:20 COVID-19 and CAREC Tourism Sector: Harnessing the Role of Technology in Promoting Safe Tourism Destinations

Qaisar Abbas, Chief of Research Division, CAREC Institute

#### 15:20-15:30 Impact of COVID-19 on Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) in Selected CAREC Countries

Ghulam Samad, Senior Research specialist, CAREC Institute

#### 15:30-15:40 E-commerce infrastructure in the CAREC countries

Tumurpurev Dulambazar, Research specialist, CAREC Institute

#### 15:40-15:55 Q&A

#### 15:55-16:50 Panel discussion

During this session, panelists will be invited to highlight their key takeaways, main findings, policy implications, as well as suggestions for future studies.

Moderator: **Iskandar Abdullaev**, Deputy Director Two, CAREC Institute

- **Dorothea Lazaro**, Regional Cooperation Specialist, East Asia Department, ADB
- **Ghulam Samad**, Research Specialist, CAREC Institute
- **Hans Holzacker**, Chief Economist, CAREC Institute
- **Kamalbek Karymshakov**, Economist, CAREC Institute
- **Peter Morgan**, Senior Consulting Economist and Vice Chair for Research, ADBI
- **Sanjay Saxena**, Managing Director, Total Synergy Consulting Private Limited, India

#### **16:50-17:00 Closing remarks**

Iskandar Abdullaev, Deputy Director Two, CAREC Institute

ADB (TBC)

#### **Notes:**

##### **Time limits**

Presentations of chapters – 10 minutes each

Interventions by the panelists - 5 minutes each

Questions and answers - 15 minutes. The chair/moderator will pick up some questions from the floor for the panelists from 'Q&A' box or from 'raised hands'.

Panel open discussion – 55 minutes.

##### **Questions**

Questions will be welcomed during the workshop. After presentations, there will be a live discussion. Attendees may use 'Q&A' at the bottom of your screen to type their questions. Speakers, please type answers to the questions in 'Q&A' after your presentation.

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**Simultaneous Interpretation by Zoom will be available. Please select from the bottom panel which language for interpretation you would like, English or Russian.**