



# Newsletter

## Think Tanks Discuss Digital Adoption for Sustainable Economic Development in Central Asia

The Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum was held in Urumqi, the People's Republic of China (PRC), on 16-17 August 2023. The Forum under the theme of "Embracing Digital Technology for Sustainable Economic Development" was organized by the CAREC Institute in partnership with China-Eurasia Expo Secretariat and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Finance Department, and with financial support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the ADB-PRC Regional Knowledge Sharing Initiative.

Mr. Kabir Jurazoda, Director of the CAREC Institute, opened the Forum with welcoming remarks, emphasizing the importance of the work of think tanks in advocating for policies and presenting diverse perspectives and advice to policymakers in promoting the digital economy. He noted that the CAREC region has not yet fully and equitably benefited from the transformation of the digital economy, and coordinated and broad-based approaches are needed to unlock the vast untapped digital potential of the region. "A focus on addressing the existing imbalances in digital development across the CAREC region, regional digital collaboration and sharing of best practices will help CAREC countries to lay the basis for a sustainable and inclusive economic development," said Mr. Kabir Jurazoda.

The Forum consisted of eight thematic sessions with discussions of various aspects of the development of the digital economy. The first session discussed the CAREC region's experience and readiness for digital adoption by reviewing CAREC countries' progresses in formulating necessary digital strategies, developing critical infrastructure, and creating an investment-friendly business environment. Mr. Thomas Abell, Director of Digital for Development Division at the ADB, started the discussion by analyzing the overall role of digital technologies in driving sustainable economic growth. Mr. Talant Sultanov, Chair of the Center for Strategic Initiatives of the Kyrgyz Republic, spoke about digital strategies, infrastructure, and investments for digitalization in the CAREC region. They highlighted that all CAREC countries recognize digital transformation as their key development strategies and are adopting necessary governance frameworks for the ethical use of technologies, supporting the necessary education and training to increase digital literacy and skills for the workforce, and promoting digital entrepreneurship, innovation and the technology start-up ecosystem.

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Participants of the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum in Urumqi, the PRC.

From regional perspectives to country case studies. In the second session, four national think tanks from CAREC countries presented their research on how digital technologies are used for green, sustainable and inclusive growth. Ms. Albina Muratbekova, Senior Research Fellow from the Eurasian Research Institute, spoke about how the special economic zones contribute to the digital transformation in Central Asia, providing tax and trade preferences. Dr. Burulcha Sulaimanova, OSCE Academy Researcher, recommended Central Asian countries to develop policy framework for digitalization and decarbonization, which include specific targets, a supportive legal framework, incentives, and rules to encourage investment in digital infrastructure, renewable energy, energy efficiency, as well as the introduction of smart technologies in different sectors and the development of digital skills. Mr. Asif Javed, Senior Research Associate from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute of Pakistan, spoke about the contributions of regional trade agreements to economic integration of Pakistan and Central Asia, calling for developing Pakistan's priority policy and action plan for achieving successful and sustainable regional digital trade integration. Mr. Farrukh Khakimov, Head of Department on Foreign Policy and Security of Uzbekistan's Development Strategy Center, spoke about Central Asia's experience in the digitalization of trade and the benefits of regional cooperation. He noted that ICT and digital solutions can help reduce trade barriers and facilitate cross-border trade, strengthening CAREC regional economic integration and cooperation.

As rapid technological progress has brought about new opportunities and challenges for the labor market, Forum participants discussed ways to bridge the digital divide and boost digital skills. Dr. Xiaojun Feng, Associate Professor of Sociology from China Agricultural University, explained why technological upgrading leads to job displacements, but also creates new jobs, causing both de-skilling and re-skilling of workers. At the global level, the uneven adoption of technology across countries leads to a digital divide that is reshuffling the global distribution of jobs, increasing the inequalities in labor force participation. Ms. Ana Pashalishvili, Programme Specialist at the Women's Entrepreneurship Acceleration/UN Women, spoke about barriers that women face in the ICT sector, and brought examples of how promotion of social entrepreneurship and ICT trainings for women helps improve the women's participation in the digital economy. Mr. Syed Hassan Alsagoff, Manager of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation and Capacity Development of the Islamic Development Bank, spoke about how the quality of education can be improved using digital technologies. He brought an example of the Flipped Classroom approach — a type of blended learning where students watch and study online videos on their own at home before classes and apply what they have learned at home through exercises in a traditional classroom model.

The Forum also hosted a South-South Seminar, where representatives of governments and the private sector spoke about their experience in application of digital technologies in their activities. Dr. Sherry Tao Kong, Associate Professor at Peking University, suggested CAREC countries to apply China's experience in e-commerce by ensuring the stable and affordable internet access, postal delivery and logistics services, promoting digital finance and working in synergy with local and national stakeholders. Senior Manager Public Affairs of Alibaba Mr. Remon Moes spoke about Alibaba's success story in global e-commerce development. The company promotes public-private collaboration in establishing inclusive global trade, including global digital commerce, finance, logistics and trade standards. Alibaba works closely with governments, entrepreneurs, experts and students, helping them to develop necessary new economic skills. Mr. Syed Shakeel Shah, Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, spoke about Pakistan's experience in introduction of the single window for trade facilitation and regional economic integration. Pakistan Single Window is an integrated digital platform that allows parties involved in trade to lodge standardized information and documents with a single-entry point to fulfill all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. It helped reduce the time and costs of doing business by digitalizing Pakistan's cross-border trade and eliminating paper-based manual processes. Ms. Enkhtulga Ganbat, a Specialist of Cross-Sector Coordination of Mongolia's Ministry of Digital Development and Communication, presented her country's experience in application of ICT tools in optimization of public services. Mongolia uses the e-Mongolia platform to provide 994 public services for citizens and legal entities.

The digital technologies contributed to the development of digital finance. Mr. Khalid Umar, Chief of Strategic Planning Division of the CAREC Institute, spoke about the relationship between financial inclusion, financial technologies, and financial stability. He noted that financial technologies present a tremendous opportunity for reaching out to the financially excluded and underserved segments of the population by offering cost-effective and easily accessible financial services. CAREC countries need to create an enabling environment with appropriate regulations and incentives to encourage financial inclusion, and to expand financial education programs.

China has taken giant leaps in harnessing technology to deepen financial inclusion, presenting numerous policy lessons to CAREC countries. Ms. Jieru Ba, Senior Researcher from the Tencent Research Institute, talked about how China's mobile payment market contributes to financial innovation and inclusion. She suggested CAREC countries to consider the following factors from China's experience in promoting successful digital finance: i) to establish well-developed infrastructure with high-speed, stable and affordable telecom networks; ii) to adopt accommodative and prudential regulations; and iii) to stimulate innovations suited for local conditions.

The CAREC 2030 Digital Strategy reveals a blueprint for how digital tools and applications empower the economy and quality of life in the CAREC region. ADB representatives — Mr. Roman Mogilevskii, Senior Economist, and ADB consultants Mr. Naveed Zafar Durrani, Ms. Shuqi Su and Mr. Eli David, presented an overview of the CAREC 2030 Digital Strategy, various initiatives taken under this strategy to create interactive and collaborative startup ecosystem that encourages innovations. They noted that digital innovation, entrepreneurship and ICT competitiveness lay the foundation for a start-up ecosystem community capable of applying digital technologies to make change and effectively modernize the economy.

Representatives of think tanks — Dr. Zhang Jin, Vice President of the Center for International Knowledge on Development (the PRC), Mr. Zeeshan Salahuddin, Director of the Center for Regional and Global Connectivity, Tabadlab (Pakistan), Dr. Tuvshintugs Batdelger, Director of the Economic Research Institute (Mongolia) and Mr. Mahir Humbatov, Chairman of the Board Economic Scientific Research Institute (Azerbaijan) — shared their thoughts on how think tanks can help countries navigate the uncertainties of the global economy and geopolitical landscape. Through advocacy research and dialogue, think tanks can provide policymakers and stakeholders with the information and recommendations they need to develop effective policies that promote economic growth, stability, and prosperity.

During the closing session, Dr. Huang Jingjing, Deputy Director One of the CAREC Institute, praised the outcomes of the two-day discussion. She noted that the CAREC Institute's annual think tank forum serves as a platform for discussing important regional issues and strengthening cooperation between governments, think tanks and the private sector. The Forum promotes economic cooperation in Central Asia and along the Silk Road through knowledge formation and exchange.



Dr. Huang Jingjing speaks at the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum.



## CAREC Institute Participates in 2023 (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo and Tianshan Forum

On August 17, the opening ceremony of the 2023 (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo and Tianshan Forum took place. The events aim at developing economic cooperation on the Eurasian continent.

Director of the CAREC Institute Kabir Jurazoda delivered a speech at the opening ceremony, emphasizing that both events contribute to closer cooperation in the CAREC region. “The countries of Central Asia and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China have an unprecedented opportunity to become a center of trade and commerce,” said Director.

projects together for the prosperity of the people. Situated as a land bridge connecting East Asia and Europe, the CAREC countries are at the heart of the Silk Road Economic Belt. Both CAREC and the Belt and Road Initiative share common goals of improving connectivity, promoting unimpeded trade, creating a good investment climate, and strengthening financial cooperation between countries. The five operational clusters of the CAREC Strategy are well aligned with the five-pronged approach of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The CAREC Institute is established to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the CAREC partnership by providing evidence-based research, capacity-building services, dissemination of knowledge products, and networking and partnership with research institutions in the CAREC region. The CAREC Institute as an intergovernmental international organization belongs to eleven countries, and the knowledge support arm of the CAREC Program, is in a unique position to promote regional cooperation.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. And the first China – Central Asia Summit was held this year in Xi’an, bringing new growing opportunities for regional economic cooperation. The CAREC Institute works with CAREC member countries to build effective linkages between CAREC and the Belt and Road Initiative going forward through joint research, policy dialogues, knowledge-sharing webinars, tailored capacity-building activities, and networking events.

2023 (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo will last until August 21, 2023, and consists of more than 30 forums and events to promote trade and investment, bringing together participants from 40 countries and regions, and seven international organizations.



Mr. Kabir Jurazoda speaks at the 2023 (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo and Tianshan Forum.

For the same reason, eleven countries have come together to create the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program under the Asian Development Bank to promote regional economic development through cooperation. The CAREC Program is driven by the overarching vision of “Good Neighbors, Good Partners and Good Prospects” and a broader mission of connecting people, policies and infrastructure

## Delegation of the PRC Ministry of Finance Visited the Office of the CAREC Institute

On August 15, a delegation led by Mr. Chen Zhijun, Director-general of the Department of International Economic and Financial Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China (PRC), visited the office of the CAREC Institute. The delegation met with the CAREC Institute Director Mr. Kabir Jurazoda, Deputy Director One Dr. Huang Jingjing, chiefs of divisions and international staff to discuss institutional development, new areas of research and capacity building activities, third-party fundraising, and other aspects of Institute's strategic planning.

Mr. Kabir Jurazoda welcomed the delegation members and shared information on currently published research papers and knowledge sharing activities, and events. He noted the need for institutional strategy review and reorganization to adapt to a changing environment to better meet the knowledge needs of the CAREC member countries. Dr. Huang Jinjing briefed the delegation on the Institute's fundraising activities, budget implementation and operations, reallocation of the Institute to a permanent location, and new partnerships with research institutes and international financial institutions.

Mr. Chen Zhijun commended the Institute for its good work and encouraged its staff to continue to improve institutional effectiveness through improved resource allocation, knowledge products and services, and partnerships with other institutions. He suggested that the CAREC Institute continue to use a demand-driven approach to support member countries and further



Meeting with the delegation of the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China.

strengthen cooperation with them by providing the necessary knowledge support and high-quality policy advice. To this end, the CAREC Institute should continue to collaborate with academia and development institutions to build regional and interdisciplinary research networks that are critical for policy research and knowledge sharing.

## CAREC Institute Conducts Partnership Meetings

During the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum and 2023 (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo, the CAREC Institute hosted a series of partnership meetings with think tanks, universities, international development partners, and financial institutions.

On August 17, the CAREC Institute Director, Mr. Kabir Jurazoda, met with the representative from the Center for Analysis of Economic Reforms and Communication of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ms. Vusala Jafarova, Chief Advisor of the Strategic Planning Division, to discuss potential areas of joint research. Both parties agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding and a roadmap for research cooperation for the next two years.

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Meeting with Ms. Vusala Jafarova.





Meeting with the delegation from Shanghai University of Electric Power.

On August 21, Dr. Huang Jingjing, Deputy Director One of the CAREC Institute, met with a delegation from Shanghai University of Electric Power, led by Professor Zeng Fenyu. During an extended meeting in the office of the CAREC Institute, the two sides discussed the potential areas for capacity building

activities and knowledge sharing between the PRC and Central Asian countries.

The ADB representative, Dr. Roman Mogilevskii, Senior Economist of the Central and West Asia Department, visited the office of the CAREC Institute on August 18 to meet with the Institute's leadership and research team. They discussed the Institute's ongoing research projects and new initiatives planned for 2024.

A delegation led by Mr. Chen Zhijun, Director-general of the Department of International Economic and Financial Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China (PRC), visited the office of the CAREC Institute to discuss the strategic planning and future development of the Institute.

During the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum, the Director of the CAREC Institute also met with representatives of financial institutions — Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice President, the Export-Import Bank of China, and Mr. Artem Levenkov, Head of Socioeconomic Analysis and IFIs, Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development — to discuss the potential economic research projects for CAREC member countries.



Meeting with Mr. Wencai Zhang.

## CAREC Governments and Private Sector Discussion on Promoting Trade and Investment

A breakout session was held during the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum in Urumqi, People's Republic of China (PRC), to discuss the role of governments and the private sector in promoting trade and investment in the CAREC region. The meeting was attended by representatives of governments from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and more than twenty private enterprises.

Mr. Kabir Jurazoda, Director of the CAREC Institute, opened the session by emphasizing the importance of trade and investment in stimulating growth and development in the CAREC region. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted trade and made it difficult for businesses to invest in the region. Businesses have faced challenges in the region such as border closures, travel restrictions and inflation. The Director stressed that a joint effort between the government and the private sector is needed to unlock the full potential of trade and investment in the region. Both stakeholders play different but complementary roles in creating an environment conducive to green growth, innovation and equitable development.

Private sector representatives shared their experience of doing business in the CAREC region. Companies talked about cross-border trade challenges such as lack of infrastructure, inefficient border crossings and long waiting times at customs. They expressed willingness to increase trade between CAREC countries and maintain strong trade relations with other businesses from CAREC region. The private sector representatives also emphasized the need for national governments to improve the business environment in their countries.

Government representatives responded positively to questions and suggestions from the private sector. They reaffirmed their governments' commitments to support trade and investment in the region and work closer with the private sector to address the existing challenges.

The participants made the following suggestions based on their discussion:

- To improve the business environment in the region, including reducing red tape, improving infrastructure and facilitating transit through border crossings.
- To strengthen cooperation between governments and the private sector to promote trade and investment.
- To solve issues faced by businesses in the region, such as high transport costs, inefficient border crossings and long waiting times at customs.



Discussion between representatives of governments of CAREC member countries and private enterprises.



# CAREC Think Tank Network Launches a Blog



During the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum, held by the CAREC Institute on 16-17 August 2023 in Urumqi, the PRC, the CAREC Think Tank Network (CTTN) Secretariat presented the CTTN Blog.

Mr. Dzhovid Khuseinov, Networking and Partnerships Specialist of the CAREC Institute, spoke about the CTTN Blog's functionalities, design, features, and expectations. The CAREC Institute developed the CTTN Blog to enhance systematic sharing and integration of regional knowledge to consolidate development resources for effective collaboration.

The CTTN Blog will accelerate the knowledge sharing, exchange, and utilization by think tanks in the CAREC region by providing accessible, affordable, reliable, and adaptable digital platform. The platform will encourage

researchers and thinkers to generate and share ideas and knowledge for the collective benefits of CAREC Think Tank Network members. As countries focus on acquiring and promoting the use digital technologies, having an open-source knowledge sharing platform becomes even more relevant and essential. The Blog is intended to be used by community of professionals, government officials, think tanks, researchers, and students interested in economic and social development in the CAREC region.

The Blog will share the key lessons and know-how from development experiences, based on findings of CTTN research such as economic analysis, professional insights, policy recommendations, expert opinions, case studies, and summary of research work that contributed to the body of knowledge of the CAREC Program. The Blog will also host the list and calendar of events of CAREC Think Tank Network members and publications.

## Single Window for Trade Facilitation: The Case of Pakistan

During the Seventh CAREC Think Tank Development Forum of the CAREC Institute, which was held in Urumqi, the PRC on 16-17 August 2023, the participants learned about other countries experience on developing the digital governance and commerce. The South-South learning seminar was moderated by the PRC Regional Knowledge Sharing Initiative.

Pakistan's experience on establishment of the single window as a part of digital facilitation agreement of the WTO was presented by Mr. Syed Shakeel Shah, Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister of Pakistan. [The Pakistan Single Window](#), or PSW, is an integrated digital platform that allows parties involved in trade to lodge standardized information and documents with a single-entry point to fulfill all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. The PSW has reduced the time and cost of doing business by digitalizing Pakistan's cross-border trade and eliminating paper-based manual processes.

The special Legal Act for the Establishment of the PSW, which provides a legal basis for the PSW system as well as its governance and operating model, obliges the customs regulatory agencies to integrate with the PSW platform, and makes it mandatory for all participating agencies to align their laws, regulations, processes, procedures, and information requirements to the PSW.

The PSW currently provides such services as online evidence of identity for 57,000 users, use of single declaration, trade information portal, and digital payments. It has international informational integrations with single windows of China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Egypt and Global e-Phyto Hub, and serves as a single point of contact for customs and trade.

The PSW helped reduce the trade transaction costs with potential savings of US\$430 million per year, by connecting Customs and 77 other regulatory agencies for document exchange, and established collaboration between public and private sectors. Business process reforms and data standardization include 100 processes being re-engineered, 76 documents replaced with electronic verification, 143 documents were replaced with electronic submission, 45 documents were eliminated.

The PSW initiative was implemented by the Federal Board of Revenue of Pakistan with assistance from the Asian Development Bank.



## CAREC Institute Director Held a Meeting with CAREC Representatives in Kazakhstan

On August 28, Mr. Kabir Jurazoda, Director of the CAREC Institute, met with Mr. Abish Yerzhan Zharylgasynuly, Director of the Department of International Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan, representatives of CAREC national and sectoral focal persons and the ADB CAREC Program, in Astana, Kazakhstan.

During the meeting, Mr. Kabir Jurazoda informed the other side about the knowledge activities of the CAREC Institute for the development of small and medium enterprises in the CAREC region and expressed Institute's willingness to conduct a joint study with the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan on this topic for country's economic policy. He noted that Kazakhstan will chair the CAREC program from November 2023, and the vision and intended directions of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the program will help the CAREC Institute offer necessary research and capacity building support to CAREC member countries.

Mr. Abish Yerzhan Zharylgasynuly thanked the CAREC Institute for its contribution to the national economic policies of CAREC member countries through analytical research and capacity building activities and expressed his hope for further cooperation. He noted

that the issues of water resources, joint water use of transboundary rivers, development of transport corridors, electronic and border trade are important for Kazakhstan's national development.

Further, the meeting participants discussed organizational issues related to the holding of the CAREC Ministerial Conference and meetings of the Governing Council and the Advisory Council of the CAREC Institute, as well as issues of voluntary financial contributions by member countries for the production of a new and wide range of knowledge products and services by the CAREC Institute.



Meeting with CAREC Focal Persons in Kazakhstan.

## CAREC Institute Participates in Asia-Pacific Anticorruption and Integrity Forum

Deputy Director One of the CAREC Institute, Dr. Huang Jingjing, participated in the Asia-Pacific Anticorruption and Integrity Forum held from 29 to 31 August 2023 in Xiamen Municipality, the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The forum was attended by senior representatives from the multilateral development banks, the PRC's government officials, business leaders, and others. The event was jointly organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Xiamen National Accounting Institute, and co-sponsored by the Secretariat of Maritime Silk Road Central Legal District and China International Contractors Association.

On day one, forum participants deliberated on the anticorruption and integrity policies and practices in the Asia and Pacific region. They provided valuable

insights on a wide array of anticorruption and integrity risk mitigation topics.

During the following two days, a capacity-building workshop on anticorruption and integrity was held. The training discussed the ADB's anticorruption and integrity framework, procurement and bidding management, safeguard policy, asset and financial management, and integrity risks, and shared the PRC's experiences in anticorruption and integrity. The session aimed to increase awareness of the ADB's anticorruption and integrity framework and assist in skills building and developing the strategies for prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, and other integrity risks.

## CAREC Institute Contributes to Discussion on Industrial Policies for Mongolia

Chief Economist of the CAREC Institute, Dr. Hans Holzacker provided inputs to the Workshop "Industrial Policy for Mongolia's Ministry of Economy and Development: Sectoral Performance and Policy Implementation," which was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 14-16 August 2023. The workshop was organized by UNIDO in cooperation with the German Development Cooperation with the goal to facilitate the capacity development of policymakers in Mongolia on industrial policy.

During his presentation, Dr. Hans Holzacker provided an overview of economic developments in the CAREC region with a specific focus on Mongolia. He pointed to the challenges and opportunities of the current disruptive technological and climate change and highlighted the need for diversifying Mongolia's production and export structure. Dr. Hans Holzacker stated that more production downstream of mining would be desirable as Mongolia is highly dependent on a few raw materials, mainly coal and copper, and the development of their export prices. About 25 percent of Mongolia's GDP comes from mining while manufacturing accounts for only about 8 percent of GDP.

Participants of the workshop discussed international best policy practices for industrial diversification, newly emerging sectors, and development of small and medium enterprises. Experts from the Korea Institute of Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET) highlighted the Korean experience. A special section of the workshop was devoted to UNIDO's Evidence-Based Industrial Policymaking and the Enhancing the Quality of Industrial Policies Toolkit, where participants learned how to map the existing industrial policies, to identify policy gaps, duplications, missed synergies, etc., considering the best practices from other countries, and to advocate for industrial policy improvement.



Participants of the workshop on industrial policy for Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

## Representatives of the Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Visited the CAREC Institute

On August 4, representatives of the Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Mr. Nurlan Akkoshkarov, Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the SCO Secretariat, and Mr. Batir Tursunov, Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the SCO Secretariat, visited the CAREC Institute to discuss potential areas of cooperation.

Dr. Huang Jingjing, Deputy Director One of the CAREC Institute, welcomed the guests and spoke about the history of the CAREC Institute, its main outreach activities and services. She noted that the CAREC Institute's knowledge generation activities include research and policy research on key economic cooperation issues that are of regional, country, or sectoral relevance. The Institute publishes research reports and books, quarterly economic reviews, policy and economic briefs. The Institute also supports independent research projects of think tanks and individual researchers from the CAREC countries through grant programs. The Institute promotes knowledge sharing through capacity building activities — trainings and webinars, policy and thematic dialogues, as well as advocacy events such as annual research conferences and think tank forums. The CAREC Institute's e-learning platform provides a self-learning opportunity with access to videos of the



Meeting with the representatives of the Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Institute's capacity building activities, digital learning modules, and training materials.

Mr. Nurlan Akkoshkarov noted the importance of knowledge cooperation for the economic prosperity of the Central Asian region and invited the CAREC Institute to participate in the SCO think tank forums. The parties agreed to work together to develop a roadmap for future cooperation between the two organizations on joint knowledge products and services.

## New Policy Brief on Trade Facilitation in the CAREC Region

The new policy brief of the CAREC Institute on the trade facilitation in the CAREC region, authored by Dr. Ghulam Samad, Dr. Amjad Masood, and Dr. Junaid Ahmed, is available on the Institute's website.

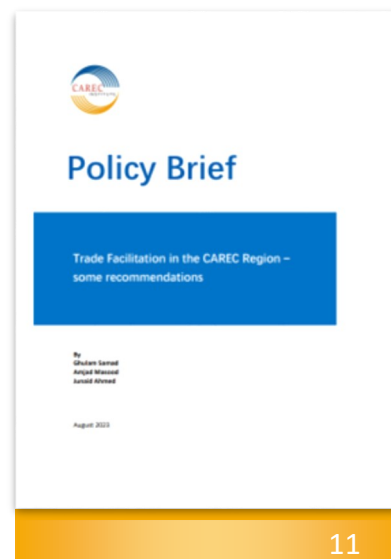
The policy brief discusses why trade facilitation through reducing the time and cost required for border clearance across the CAREC corridors is essential for regional economic integration.

Trade policy plays a crucial role in the flow of goods and services across borders, impacts domestic industries, thus affects overall economic growth and development. However, crafting a trade policy for the CAREC region necessitates consideration of two key factors. First, the presence of landlocked countries poses challenges to their connectivity with the rest of the world. Second, CAREC member countries exhibit significant diversity in economic resources, including population, land, natural resources, market size, and living standards.

Notably, there is considerable variation in the individual country's contributions to the overall regional exports. China dominates, accounting for 94 percent of CAREC's total exports, while Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan are major contributors to the remaining 6 percent.

Intra-CAREC trade is characterized by two main aspects: China dominates as the main trading partner for most CAREC members, except for Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia. Second, trade flows primarily occur between neighboring countries within the bloc, such as Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan-Georgia.

Based on the conditions of the CAREC economies, a policy aiming to improve trade in the region must consider the different aspects including trade facilitation measures to reduce transportation cost and time; regional trade agreements to minimize tariff and non-tariff barriers; and value addition and export diversification.





## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**ADB**  
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10:45-16:20 (UCT+8)  
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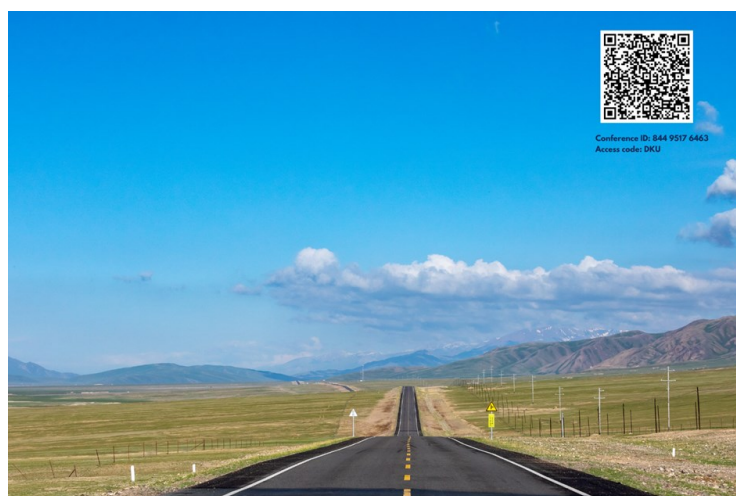
### THE THIRD CAREC INSTITUTE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

### PROSPECTS FOR AN INCLUSIVE GREEN GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CAREC REGION

20-21 September 2023

Language Support: Russian

Virtual Event  
**zoom**  
Register via Zoom



Conference ID: 844 957 6443  
Access code: DKU

#### Workshop on

#### Transport Corridors in CAREC Region: Supply Chain Resilience and Trade Facilitation

##### The overall goal of this workshop is to:

- Stimulate policy dialogue, research, and discussions on transport corridors, supply chain resilience sustainability, and trade facilitation in the CAREC region.
- Provide an academic and expert platform for peer-reviewed feedback to authors of selected research papers which will be compiled as book chapters.
- Identify priority areas for future research and policy development.
- Promote regional cooperation on transport corridors, supply chain resilience and trade facilitation.

26 September, 2023

08:00 am Almaty time

(GMT+6)

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**HYBRID EVENT**



#### About CAREC Institute

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting the economic cooperation in the Central Asia and along the Silk Road through knowledge generation and sharing. The CAREC Institute is jointly shared, owned, and governed by eleven member countries.

The Institute acts as a knowledge connector among the five CAREC themes—economic and financial stability; trade, tourism, and economic corridors; infrastructure and economic connectivity; agriculture and water; human development—to ensure coherence in design and implementation of policies, programs, and projects to promote regional economic cooperation and integration.

