



Regional Policy Dialogue
On

Regional sustainable development cooperation in Central Asian countries

Jointly Organized by:

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute

Webinar

16 November 2023

15:00 – 16:10 (Beijing time, UTC+8)

I. Background

In today's interconnected world, regional cooperation stands as a pivotal driver of economic growth and sustainable development. However, its potential can only be fully harnessed through the implementation of the right policies. Regional economic cooperation and integration (RECI) is the mandates of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). At the First Ministerial Conference, held in December 2013 in Bangkok, participants adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific. The Bangkok Declaration called for ESCAP to continue pursuing enhanced RECI, with focus in four areas: (a) moving towards the formation of an integrated market; (b) the development of seamless connectivity across the region in the areas of transport, energy and information and communications technology; (c) enhancing financial cooperation; and (d) increasing economic and technical cooperation to address shared vulnerabilities and risks.

Regional economic cooperation and integration is also an important agenda of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Thus, the ADB has supported the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program, a partnership of 11 countries, since its inception in 2001, and is involved in all priority sectors of CAREC – transport, trade facilitation, trade policy, and energy. The ADB also co-hosted with the UN-ESCAP the Second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (21-24 Nov, 2017).

In the spirit of cooperation between the UN-ESCAP and the ADB for promoting regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific. The UN-ESCAP's flagship bi-annual policy-oriented journal, *Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Journal* (APSDJ) and the CAREC Institute have jointly co-edited

a special theme section, **Regional sustainable development cooperation in Central Asian countries**, in its Vol 30, Issue No. 2 (November 2023). The theme section contains five research papers, various aspects of regional cooperation ranging from low-carbon energy development to trade, and transport and digital connectivity. Originated from the research programs of the CAREC Institute, these papers have enormous policy implications for regional cooperation among CAREC member countries to achieve sustainable development for shared prosperity and resilience.

Within this context, the CAREC Institute, in collaboration with UNESCAP, has scheduled a policy dialogue on November 16, 2023, to coincide the release of the *Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Journal (APSDJ)*, Vol. 30, Issue 2. Its primary objective is to gather policymakers and interested audiences to exchange views, discuss practical recommendations, and engage with experts and country representatives on the implementation of suggested policy measures in the CAREC region.

II. Key Objectives

The key objective of the webinar is to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for regional within the CAREC region and to equip them with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement recommended policy measures to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. To accomplish these objectives, the webinar aims to:

1. Present the main findings of the Theme Papers of APSDJ Vol. 30, Issue No. 2
2. Enhance participants' capacities to analyze complex issues pertaining to enhanced regional cooperation for sustainable development, low carbon energy transition, participation in regional value chains, intra-region trade and transport corridors.
3. Increase awareness among government officials regarding the trends, prospects, and options available for supporting regional economic cooperation and integration.
4. Offer policy guidance based on rigorous analysis of current status, barriers and challenges to regional economic cooperation and integration for sustainable development, and for shared prosperity.

III. Expected Outcomes

The webinar aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Provide policymakers with a deeper understanding of the importance of regional economic cooperation and integration.
2. Offer a platform for policymakers to network, fostering connections and collaboration, to share experiences, and engage in discussions regarding the challenges and opportunities in regional economic cooperation and integration.
3. Develop and disseminate policy-oriented educational materials, such as presentations and proceedings, that capture and convey key discussion points raised by experts and country representatives during the webinar, with the aim of promoting broader impact and knowledge sharing.

IV. Target Participants

The target participants are mid and senior-level government officials/experts from relevant ministries/agencies of CAREC member countries (3-4 from each country). Further criteria for target

participants will be reflected in the invitation letter communicated with the CAREC National Focal Point Offices for participant's nomination. International experts and representatives from international organizations and regional research institutes engaged in regional cooperation development are also welcome to attend.

V. Webinar Methodology

The webinar will be conducted online in a dialogue mode to ensure maximum participant engagement in detailed discussions. The first session will feature expert from the CAREC Institute who will inform the audience about research findings and policy recommendations on the subject. The second session will be a panel discussion format. Experts from ADB/ADBI and UNESCAP will summarize the findings. The facilitation methods used in the workshop will encourage active participation and engagement from all participants through open discussion and dialogue. The webinar will provide a platform for policymakers to exchange views with leading experts and country representatives on the subject. After the event, participants will be encouraged to visit an e-learning platform to access webinar recordings and attend a forum to ask questions. The webinar will be delivered in English, with simultaneous interpreters available for English-Russian and vice versa to keep the virtual dialogue effective and engaging for multilingual participants. The material presented will be in English as well, and the Russian version of the written material will be uploaded later on the e-learning platform. All participants are required to have access to the internet and webinar software like Zoom. They are also required to have either English or Russian proficiency.

Registration link: https://carecinstitute-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_P-l8SnllQ4eg08NJeibhmw

VI. Tentative agenda

16th November 2023 (Beijing time)

15:00-15:13

Opening Remarks

Mr. Kabir K. Jurazoda, Director, CAREC Institute
Representative of UNESCAP (TBC)

Moderator: Dr. Anis (Anisuzzaman) Chowdhury, Managing Editor, Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal, Co-editor, Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy, Adjunct Professor, School of Business, Western Sydney University

15:13-15:15

Group Photo

15:15-15:25

Introduction by Dr. Ghulam Samad

Dr. Ghulam Samad, Senior Research Specialist, Research Division, CAREC Institute

15:25-15:45

Panel Discussion

Mr. Roman Mogilevskii, Senior Economist, CWRC, ADB
UN-ESCAP

Moderator : **Dr. Hans Holzacker**, Chief of Economist team, acting chief of Research Division, CAREC Institute

15:45-16:00

Q&A Session

Moderator : **Dr. Hans Holzacker**, Chief of Economist team, acting chief of Research Division, CAREC Institute

16:00-16:10

Concluding remarks by TBC