



Newsletter

CAREC Institute Quarterly Review Meeting: Comprehensive Overview of Key Initiatives for 2024

On March 19, the CAREC Institute held its Quarterly Review Meeting with the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China. The senior management team and operational staff from all sides engaged in discussions regarding the Institute's key initiatives and strategic planning for the upcoming year, exchanging ideas to shape the future of the organization.

The agenda for the meeting included a detailed discussion on major initiatives such as research projects, economic monitoring and capacity building activities, knowledge management and outreach, preparation for the Financial Sustainability Working Group meeting, the Advisory Council meeting, the Research Conference, and the Think Tank Development Forum for 2024.

The meeting's key highlights encompassed aligning with the CAREC Strategy 2030, conducting country needs assessments for knowledge products, leveraging e-learning capabilities for hybrid and blended learning programs, and exploring best practices for policy recommendations. Furthermore, discussions on organizational restructuring, change management, staff succession and retention plans, and financial stability of the CAREC Institute took center stage on the agenda.

The Quarterly Review Meeting is a regular and effective consultation mechanism among the CAREC Institute, the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China. The meeting reviews progress on key initiatives and exchanges views on improving and accelerating the implementation of the operational and institutional activities. The Quarterly Review Meeting also discusses new geopolitical and geo-economic developments in the region and beyond, as well as how to shape the CAREC Institute's knowledge response in support of CAREC member countries.

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Participants of CAREC Institute's Quarterly Review Meeting.

Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Skills Development: First Meeting of the CAREC Working Group

The CAREC Program hosted the First Meeting of the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development on February 29 – March 1, 2024, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This event brought together high-level officials, decision-makers, academia, think tanks, and experts from CAREC participating countries to discuss and agree on priority areas in strengthening regional cooperation in skills development. The meeting helped define convergence areas for Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education systems, sharing knowledge products, and international best practices.

Key objectives of the meeting included officially launching the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development, agreeing on its future role and action plan for 2024, and identifying areas for cooperation interventions among CAREC participating countries. Participants engaged in interactive discussions, practical learning sessions and the exchange of valuable insights.

During Session IV, focused on boosting regional cooperation for climate-smart agriculture, water resources management, and green skills development in the CAREC region, Dr. Kuat Akizhanov, the Deputy Director Two of the CAREC Institute, presented on the Water-Agriculture-Energy Nexus in Central Asia, considering the impacts of climate change. The session aimed to evaluate the current state of water resources, the challenges posed by climate change and the need for environmental sustainability within the CAREC region, as well as to explore regional strategies for capacity building and strategic planning.

Dr. Kuat Akizhanov urged the education ministries of CAREC countries to focus on enhancing national capacities for climate resilience and sustainable development. He emphasized the importance of equipping the Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education systems with the knowledge and skills necessary for climate-resilient solutions, enabling them to provide education and training for climate-smart agriculture and water management to enhance local expertise and implement innovative technologies. This would not only elevate local expertise but also facilitate the adoption of cutting-edge technologies. “Investing in human capital is crucial for adapting to climate changes and ensuring the sustainability of agricultural and water systems within the region,” said Dr. Kuat Akizhanov.



Participants of the First Meeting of the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development.

CAREC Institute's Quarterly Economic Monitor No.12

The CAREC Institute released its [Quarterly Economic Monitor #12](#) which highlights that despite challenges such as geopolitical tensions potentially causing geoeconomic fragmentation, climate change accompanied by more frequent natural disasters and increasing water scarcity, woes in the PRC's real estate sector, receding but partially still high inflation, real GDP growth in the CAREC region was generally relatively strong in the CAREC region in 2023 and is forecast by main International Financial Institutions to remain so also in 2024 and 2025. This opens a window of opportunity to accelerate required policy re-orientations for adapting to the new realities, take precautionary measures against the impact of climate change, decarbonize, advance modern technologies, promote desirable socio-economic change while mitigating potential negative consequences for the parts of society which might lose out from technological progress. Trade openness has increased in 2022 and 2023 in most CAREC economies. At the same time the polarization between trade surplus countries and trade deficit countries has increased. This calls for measures to increase competitiveness where trade deficit countries might have certain comparative advantages such as in agriculture or downstream production related to mining.



New Research Report Reveals Insights on Household Access to Energy in the Fergana Valley

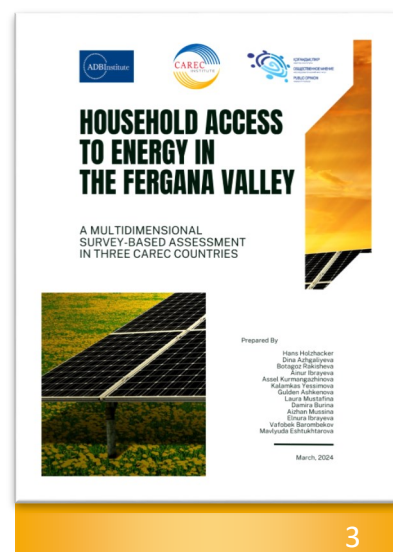
The CAREC Institute has published the research report [“Household Access To Energy In The Fergana Valley.”](#) shedding light on energy challenges faced by households in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Financed by the Asian Development Bank and conducted by the CAREC Institute in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank Institute and the Public Opinion Research Institute of Kazakhstan, the report provides a comprehensive analysis of energy access, usage patterns, and readiness to adopt cleaner energy sources.

Conducted in July-August 2023, the survey interviewed 1,522 respondents across the Fergana Valley region, including Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Batken Regions in Kyrgyz Republic, Sughd Province in Tajikistan, and Fergana, Namangan, and Andijan Regions in Uzbekistan. The report delves into seasonal electricity supply issues, heating systems, off-grid heating practices, household cooling, cooking methods, electricity usage, and awareness of environmental impacts.

Key findings from the report highlight the challenges faced by households in accessing reliable and clean energy sources, emphasizing the need for tailored energy policies to address specific demographic needs. The report documents quite a high awareness in the region about the harm fossil fuels can potentially inflict on the environment and family health. The findings underscore however that for translating this awareness into actual plans for changing heating systems and the ways households use energy, reliable electricity supply and technical and financial support for the transition is required.

For more detailed insights and recommendations based on the survey findings, the report breaks down data by demographic indicators such as income, gender, rural-urban divide, and education levels. The report aims to inform policymakers, energy stakeholders, and the public on the pressing energy issues in the Fergana Valley region and advocate for sustainable energy solutions. A main aim of the report was to generate detailed original data on household energy use. They can be shared with interested researchers upon request.

To access the full research report, visit [the website](#).



CAREC Institute's New Report Highlights Urgency of Addressing Climate Inaction in Central Asia

The Climate Inaction Report ["Implications of Climate Inaction across the Water-Agriculture-Energy Nexus and Potential Benefits of Improved Intersectoral and Regional Cooperation"](#) authored by Dr. Abdurasul Kayumov and Dr. Asif Razzaq, sheds light on the critical implications of climate inaction across the Water-Agriculture-Energy Nexus in Central Asia. This comprehensive report delves into the challenges faced by the region and offers actionable policy recommendations to tackle climate change effectively.

Key findings from the report include:

- Identification of key issues in the water, agriculture, and energy sectors in Central Asia.
- Insights on the impact of climate change on energy systems and glacier mass loss in the region.

- Policy recommendations for improving intersectoral and regional cooperation to address climate challenges.

The report, funded by the Asian Development Bank, involved national consultants and experts in data collection and analysis. It provides a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders working towards sustainable development in the region. This report serves as a wake-up call for Central Asia to prioritize climate resilience and cooperation across sectors..

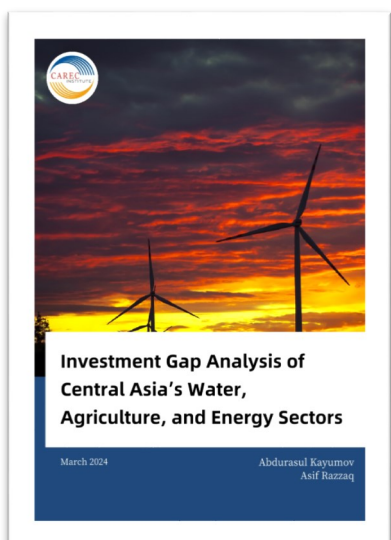
Investment Gap Analysis Report Reveals Critical Insights into Central Asia's Water, Agriculture, and Energy Sectors

The recently published ["Investment Gap Analysis of Central Asia's Water, Agriculture, and Energy Sectors"](#) report sheds light on crucial challenges and opportunities in the region's key sectors. Authored by experts Dr. Abdurasul Kayumov and Dr. Asif Razzaq, this comprehensive analysis provides valuable insights into the impact of climate inaction and the potential benefits of improved intersectoral and regional cooperation.

Authors note that the absence of a National Climate Action Plan that integrates intersectoral activities and climate investments into decision-making and planning poses an obstacle to mainstream climate finance across numerous sectors in Central Asian economies. A well-designed document can aid in identifying investment projects that contribute to climate-aligned growth objectives and sustainable development plans. The lack of such a framework hinders effective coordination among national stakeholders, thus making it challenging to prioritize climatic factors and secure the financial resources necessary to address climate change.

At the regional level, countries could cooperate to increase investment in these sectors by fostering interactions among investment-promotion agencies. Each country in the region has an investment promoting agency that facilitates the inflow and execution of investment programs. These agencies can be instrumental in creating an attractive business environment for climate investment.

The report, funded by the Asian Development Bank, involved national consultants and experts in data collection and analysis. It provides a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders working towards sustainable development in the region.



New Report Highlights Opportunities and Challenges of Digitalization of Infrastructure and Decarbonization in Central Asia

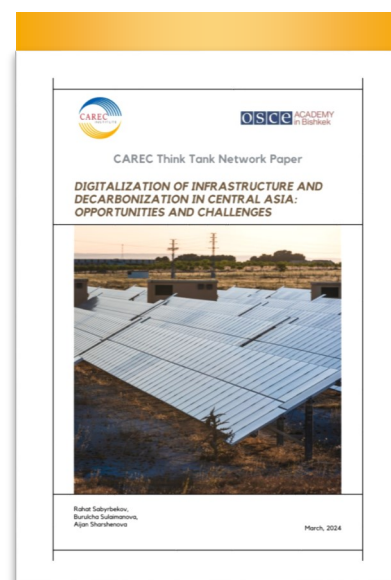
The CAREC Institute published [a new research report on the digitalization of infrastructure and decarbonization in Central Asia](#). This comprehensive study, conducted by esteemed researchers from OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which is a member organization of the CAREC Think Tank Network, delves into the opportunities and challenges in this vital area.

The report aims to investigate the current landscape and future plans for digital infrastructure that promote decarbonization in Central Asia. By identifying key opportunities and challenges, the researchers provide valuable insights for policymakers, industry professionals, and stakeholders in the region.

Report's key findings are:

- Analysis of the current situation in Central Asia.
- Plans for digital infrastructure to support decarbonization efforts.
- Comparative analysis between regions to draw lessons for promoting regional integration.

This research report sheds light on the crucial intersection of digitalization and decarbonization in Central Asia, offering a roadmap for sustainable and inclusive growth in the region. The findings are poised to inform policy decisions, drive innovation, and shape the future of infrastructure development in Central Asia. For more information, access the full report.



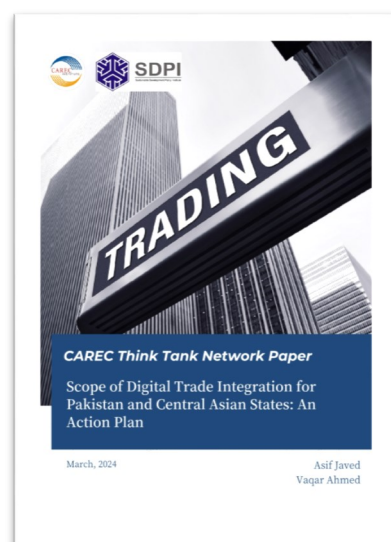
New Report Highlights Strategies for Enhancing Digital Trade Integration in Pakistan and Central Asia

The CAREC Institute is pleased to announce the publication of a new report focusing on digital trade integration between Pakistan and selected Central Asian countries. This report, written by Dr. Asif Javed and Dr. Vaqar Ahmed from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute–Pakistan, a member of the CAREC Think Tanks Network, offers valuable insights and recommendations to promote regional cooperation and economic growth in the digital trade sector.

Titled [“Scope of Digital Trade Integration for Pakistan and Central Asian States: An Action Plan,”](#) the report delves into key objectives such as exploring the role of regional trade agreements, addressing challenges faced by public institutions, and identifying opportunities for SMEs in the digital trade domain. Through in-depth analysis and research methodology, the report provides a comprehensive overview of the current landscape and outlines a strategic action plan for successful regional digital trade integration.

Key findings from the report include recommendations for governments to promote digital payments, streamline customs clearance processes, and enhance cybersecurity measures. The report also emphasizes the importance of increasing investment in digital infrastructure and fostering international cooperation through treaties to boost regional trade activities. By implementing the recommendations outlined in the report, countries in the region can unlock new opportunities for economic growth and collaboration in the digital trade sector.

The report is now available for download on the CAREC Institute website, offering a comprehensive guide for policymakers and industry leaders seeking to enhance digital trade integration in the region.



CTTN Blog Guidelines Released: Promoting Knowledge Sharing in the CAREC Region

CAREC Institute is delighted to announce that the CAREC Think Tank Network (CTTN) Blog Guidelines have been officially released. These guidelines aim to facilitate contribution to the CTTN Blog for promoting regional cooperation and integration in the CAREC region. The CAREC Strategy 2030 underscores the pivotal role of the CAREC Institute in providing knowledge solutions and fostering connections with academic institutions and think tanks in the region. The primary objective of the Blog is to encourage researchers and intellectuals in the CAREC region to create valuable content for the network.

The content of the Blog should be concise, clear, and free of jargon, presenting a well-defined stance on issues relevant to the CAREC audience. It is intended to share the developmental experiences of the

CAREC Institute and its knowledge partners on matters concerning the CAREC region. The Blog content adopts a journalistic approach, focusing on sharing key insights and professional perspectives derived from developmental experiences.

We look forward to witnessing researchers and intellectuals from the CAREC region actively engage in sharing their ideas and knowledge on the CTTN Blog for the collective benefit of CTTN members. The Blog will serve as a digital platform that accelerates knowledge sharing, exchange, and utilization among think tanks in the CAREC region, offering accessibility, affordability, reliability, and user-friendliness. Visit our website to learn more and participate in the knowledge-sharing and exchange on the CTTN Blog.

Policy brief on Development, Environment, Trade, and Technology Nexus in the CAREC Region

The CAREC Institute published the new policy brief ["Exploring the Development, Environment, Trade, and Technology \(DETT\) Nexus in the CAREC Region: A Path Analysis from Technology to Sustainable Development"](#) written by Dr. Rabia Nazir, CAREC Institute Visiting Fellow.

The policy brief explains the relationship between technology and economic growth in CAREC countries by investigating: (1) how technology affects sustainable growth in CAREC countries, (2) how technology indirectly affects regional sustainability

through environmental quality, and (3) how technology indirectly affects regional sustainable growth through trade channels.

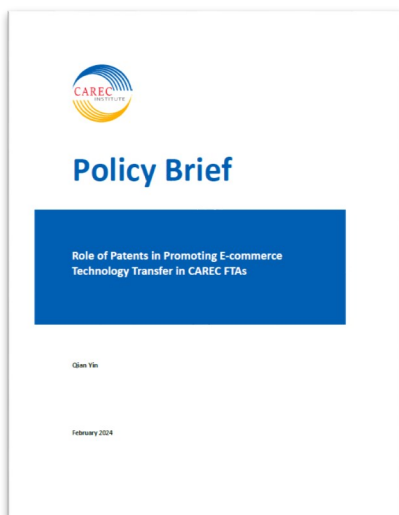
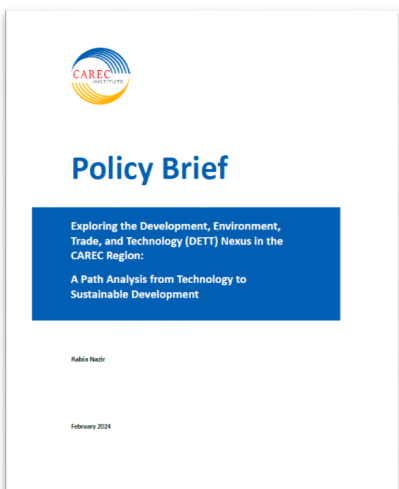
With insightful policy recommendations aimed at improving the integration of trade liberalization, environmental sustainability, and economic growth, this publication serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders interested in advancing regional economic integration in the CAREC region.

Policy Brief on Patents in Promoting E-commerce Technology Transfer

The CAREC Institute published [a new policy brief that delves into the crucial role of patents in promoting e-commerce technology transfer within the CAREC region](#). This policy brief sheds light on the intricate relationship between patents, technology transfer, and e-commerce development. By analyzing the challenges and opportunities faced by CAREC countries in tailoring their patent systems to promote technology transfer while meeting international obligations, this brief offers valuable

insights for policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders.

Key recommendations outlined in the policy brief include the proposal of a pan-CAREC FTA framework to integrate intra and extra bloc economic and technical cooperation, emphasizing technology cooperation alongside IP and e-commerce provisions, and advocating for the technical assistance and capacity building in regional digital trade infrastructure.



Policy Brief on Cross-Country Connectivity and Trade in the CAREC Region

The CAREC Institute releases a new policy brief by Dr. Amjad Masood, focusing on [“Cross-Country Connectivity to Boost Trade in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Region.”](#) This policy brief delves into the critical role of transport infrastructure in driving economic growth and enhancing trade within the CAREC region.

In today’s globalized world, efficient transportation networks are essential for facilitating trade and fostering economic integration. The policy brief sheds light on the challenges faced by landlocked countries in Central Asia, emphasizing the need to address disparities in border clearance times and transport costs to improve regional connectivity.

The policy brief highlights the significant impact of transport costs on different product categories within the CAREC region. It underscores the importance of prioritizing value-added processing of raw materials to reduce transportation costs and enhance economic competitiveness.

With insightful policy recommendations aimed at improving transport infrastructure, streamlining border clearance procedures, and promoting value chain management, this publication serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders interested in advancing trade connectivity in Central Asia.



Policy Brief on Efficiency and Impact of the Participation of CAREC and Eurasian Countries along the Routes in Regional Value Chains

A new policy brief of the CAREC Institute [“Analysis of CAREC Transport Corridors: Efficiency and Impact of the Participation of CAREC and Eurasian Countries along the Routes in Regional Value Chains”](#) is authored Dr. Falendra Kumar, CAREC Institute Visiting Fellow.

Key highlights:

- Emphasizes the importance of both soft and hard infrastructure for promoting efficient CAREC

transport corridors.

- Recommends holistic reforms for lagging transport corridors to improve performance efficiency.
- Advocates for the simplification and harmonization of border clearance procedures and customs documentation to reduce transit costs and trade times.
- Urges the adoption of digital technologies and trade facilitation measures to bolster soft infrastructure and enhance regional cooperation.



Policy Brief on Enhancing Central Asian Trade Growth and Economic Integration

[The CAREC Institute’s new policy brief](#), authored Dr. Mubinzhon Abduvaliev delves into the intricacies of Central Asian trade growth and economic integration, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities faced by the region. The policy brief offers valuable insights into the current state of affairs in Central Asia and provides strategic recommendations for fostering regional cooperation and economic development.

Key Highlights:

- Analysis of trade intensity and shares among Central Asian republics.
- Examination of factors hindering interregional cooperation.
- Impact of limited industrial diversification on export uncertainty.

- Importance of streamlining customs procedures for economic integration.
- Strategies for diversifying exports and reducing market dependence.
- Leveraging partnerships with China for economic growth and infrastructure development
- Role of CAREC regional initiatives in promoting economic integration.

This policy brief serves as a roadmap for policymakers, stakeholders, and businesses interested in unlocking the full potential of Central Asian trade and economic integration. By addressing common challenges and capitalizing on shared opportunities, the region can pave the way for sustainable growth and prosperity.



CAREC Institute Announces Call for Papers for Fourth Annual Research Conference in Almaty

The CAREC Institute is thrilled to invite researchers, academics, and experts to participate in its Fourth Annual Research Conference, scheduled for August 29-30, 2024, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This prestigious event, co-organized with China & Central Asia Studies Center of KIMEP University, will serve as a platform for in-depth discussions and presentations on the theme “Rethinking Development Strategies: Green, Innovative, and Inclusive Development for the CAREC Region.”

Researchers are encouraged to submit original articles, case studies, and reviews focusing on green energy, digitalization, sustainable transportation, Artificial Intelligence for climate resilience, and more. The conference aims to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions to address the complex challenges facing the dynamic CAREC region.

Key Dates:

- **Abstract Submission Deadline: April 22, 2024**
- **Full Manuscript Submission Deadline: June 24, 2024**

Selected papers will be presented at the conference and published in the CAREC Institute’s Fourth Annual Book. Authors will have the opportunity to network with leading experts, policymakers, and industry professionals, gaining valuable insights and feedback on their research. For formatting, structure, style, and referencing guidelines for the paper please see [the following document](#).

For submission guidelines and more information, please contact Ms. Emma Tong at emmat@carecinstitute.org.

Join us in shaping the future of sustainable development in the CAREC region. Together, let’s drive positive change and innovation for a greener, more inclusive future. [Click for more details](#).



CAREC Institute Announces Call for Applications for Visiting Fellow Program

The CAREC Institute is thrilled to announce the opening of applications for its prestigious Visiting Fellow Program (VFP). This program, supported and financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), provides scholars from ADB member countries with the opportunity to conduct research on critical issues in the CAREC region.

The VFP is designed for scholars at all levels who have completed their post-graduate degrees and are affiliated with universities, research institutes, and think tanks in ADB member countries. Fellows will have the chance to delve into topics such as green finance, fintech, migration, socio-economic inequalities, and more, contributing to regional integration and cooperation.

Selected fellows will spend up to a month at the CAREC Institute headquarters in Urumqi, receiving support for visa arrangements, accommodation, and office space. The program culminates in the publication of working papers, policy briefs, and other outputs that contribute to the body of knowledge on regional cooperation.

Opportunities available for researchers through the VFP include:

- Conduct research on key issues in the CAREC region
- Collaborate with experts and scholars from diverse backgrounds
- Publish your work in working papers, policy briefs, and more
- Receive an honorarium of USD 10,000 for the duration of the fellowship

For formatting, structure, style, and referencing guidelines for the paper please see [the following document](#).

A draft proposal not less than 2000 words, the VFP application form and an updated CV (max. two pages) should be submitted online to the following address: emmat@carecinstitute.org by 5 pm Manila/Beijing time on April 30, 2024. Upon receipt of the application, the applicant will receive an acknowledgment and an expected date of the application's outcome. [Click for more details](#).

Call for Applications for CAREC Institute's Visiting Fellow Program

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- Conduct research on key issues in the CAREC region
- Collaborate with experts and scholars from diverse backgrounds
- Publish your work in working papers, policy briefs, and more
- Receive an honorarium of USD 10,000 for the duration of the fellowship

Application deadline

5 pm Manila time, April 30, 2024



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.