



Fifth CAREC Institute Annual Research Conference

Theme: CAREC Connectivity: Promoting Trade and Trade Facilitation

Date: May 29–30, 2025

Venue: Mövenpick Hotel, Islamabad, Pakistan.

DAY ONE – 29 May 2025

09:00 – 10:00 | Opening Remarks & Keynote Speeches

- Opening Remarks (5 mins each):
 - Charymuhammet Shallyyev, Director CAREC Institute
 - Mr. Kadir Basboga, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Jeddah
 - Mr. Syed Aftab Haider, CEO, Pakistan Single Window
 - Asian Development Bank (ADB) RM Country Director
- Keynote Speaker (TBC).
- Chief Guest (15 mins)
 - Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Pakistan.

10:00 – 10:30 | Group Photo & Coffee Break

PANEL SESSION 1: Port Connectivity and Trade Facilitation

Moderator: Ms. Ketevan Oragvelidze, Marketing Director at Batumi International Container Terminal (Confirmed)

Panellists

- Mr. Max, CEO and Connectivity and Trade Facilitation Expert, Singapore (confirmed).
- Mr. Davit Paghava – Business Advisory Head at BDO Georgia.
- Ms. Salome Danelia (PhD), Commercial Head at HEGELMANN Multimodal (Confirmed)
- Ms. Tamar Sakheishvili, Chief Investment Officer at Poti Free Industrial Zone (Confirmed).
- Mr. Chaudry Mudassar Naveed (CEO) Universal Service Provider (USP), Islamabad, Pakistan (confirmed)
- Mr. Ali Raza Hanjra, Project Director, Regional Improvement of Border Services (CAREC-RIBS). (confirmed)
- Mr. Jamil Ahmed, Chairman PIFFA (confirmed)

Relevance

Efficient port connectivity is a cornerstone of regional trade facilitation and economic integration. The CAREC region faces unique challenges in optimizing port operations, reducing trade barriers, and improving transit efficiency. Developing streamlined port logistics, digital customs integration, and infrastructure development can significantly lower trade costs and enhance economic competitiveness. This session will discuss the role of ports in trade facilitation, logistics efficiency, public-private partnerships, and the importance of digitalized customs systems.

10:30 – 11:30 | Discussion Topics:

- The Role of Port Connectivity in CAREC Trade Facilitation – Challenges and opportunities for improving port efficiency.
- Reducing Trade Costs through Improved Logistics and Border Efficiency – Addressing regulatory and operational barriers.
- Private Sector Participation in Port Development – Public-private partnerships and investments.
- Digitalization of Ports and Customs – Enhancing operational efficiency and transparency.

PANEL SESSION 2: Energy Investment Eco-System

Moderator: Mr. Safdar Sohail (Trade & Commerce expert, Pakistan)

Chair/Chief guest: Mr. Awais Leghari – Federal Minister of Energy, Pakistan (TBC-DAI)

Panellists

- Mr. Jamil Ahmed Qureshi – Secretary, Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) (TBC-DAI)
- Mr. Kadir Basboga, IsDB, Jeddah (Confirmed).
- Mr. Guo Jie, Division Head at the Ministry of Transport, China (Confirmed)
- Mr. Shah Jahan Mirza, Private Power & Infrastructure
- Mr. José Henrique Vieira Martins, Chief Expert at WAIPA (confirmed)
- Mr. Syed Akhtar Ali, Former Member Energy Planning Commission MPDR Islamabad (TBC)
- Mr. Malik Ahmad Khan – CEO, Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A) Pakistan (TBC-DAI)
- Mr. Jan Ping Thia, Manager Economic Ecosystem, Beijing, AIIB. (confirmed).
- International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Central Asia (invited)

Relevance

This session will explore the renewable energy investment ecosystem in Pakistan and Central Asia, guided by the FDI framework developed by CAREC Institute and IsDB. The discussion will focus on emerging investment trends in solar and wind power, the role of SMEs in the supply chain, and strategies to attract medium-level investors. It will also address the capacity-building needs of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) to expand investment beyond solar and wind and integrate water management in energy planning, emphasizing hydropower and climate-resilient systems.

11:30 – 12:30 | Discussion Topics:

- Assessing the Renewable Energy Investment Ecosystem in Pakistan
- Strengthening Policy and Regulatory Frameworks for Renewable Energy Investment
- Integrating SMEs into the Renewable Energy Supply Chain
- Capacity Building for Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs)
- Integrating Water Management in Renewable Energy Planning

12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch Break

PANEL SESSION 3: Connecting South Asia to Central Asia under the TIR System

Moderator: Mr. Kazem Asayesh, Senior Advisor TIR and Transit, IRU (confirmed)

Panellists

- Mr. Wajid Ali, Member Customs (policy), FBR (confirmed)
- Mr. Tariq Rangoonwala, Chairman Pakistan National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC-Pakistan) (confirmed).
- Representative from Ministry of Transport of Kyrgyzstan (TBC)
- Mr. Andrei Markovtcev, X-Border & Multimodal General Manager, Greater China, CEVA Logistics (Confirmed)
- Mr. Ramiz Ali Rabbani, Managing Director, Best Trans (PVT) LTD (confirmed)

Relevance:

The accession of Pakistan and China to the TIR Convention in 2015 and 2016 has significantly improved transit facilitation in CAREC. The TIR system now connects China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, enhancing trade efficiency. However, challenges remain in fully leveraging these corridors. This session will bring together key public and private stakeholders to address operational hurdles and explore strategies for strengthening transit connectivity.

14:00 – 15:00 | Discussion Topics:

- Expanding TIR corridors for seamless regional connectivity
- Overcoming regulatory and operational barriers in transit facilitation
- Best practices from China, Pakistan, and Central Asian exporters & logistics hubs
- Public-private partnerships for transport and trade efficiency
- Digital and electronic customs solutions for improved trade flow

PANEL SESSION 4: Digital and Transport Connectivity in the CAREC region.

Moderator: TBC

Panellists

- Mr. Aasim A Siddiqui, MD Marine Groups of Companies.
- Mr. XXXX, Secretary Pakistan Railway (TBC)
- Mr. Jamil Nasir, Chief Collector of Customs. (confirmed).
- Mr. Naveed Abbas Memon, Chief Domain Officer Pakistan Single Window (confirmed).
- Mr. Valery Virkovski (Azerbaijan) (confirmed).
- Mr. Irakli Danelia, the Central Asia & Caucasus Region Business Development Head at A.P. Moller – Maersk (confirmed).

Relevance

Digital trade connectivity is transforming global commerce, and the CAREC region is making strides in this space. Pakistan Single Window (PSW) has emerged as a model initiative for reducing trade bottlenecks and enhancing regional integration. Linking PSW with Central Asian trade corridors can be a game-changer for digital trade and supply chain efficiency. This session will discuss the role of PSW, its integration with Central Asia, and how multilateral development banks (MDBs) can support digital trade facilitation.

15:00 – 16:00 | Discussion Topics:

- PSW Initiative – Its role in trade facilitation.
- PSW Integration with Central Asian Trade Networks – Enhancing regional trade efficiency.
- Rail networking and regional rail connectivity initiatives.
- The Role of MDBs in Building Trade Facilitation Capacity – Supporting Regional Efforts.
- Digital Trade and E-Customs Initiatives in CAREC Countries – Case studies and best practices.

16:00 – 16:30 | Coffee Break

Parallel Sessions

16:30 – 18:30 | Research Papers Presentation

Parallel Session 1: Digital Innovation for Trade and Logistics Facilitation in CAREC

Moderator: TBC

Discussant: TBC

Participating Topics & Presenters:

1. Economic Analysis of Corridor Development Projects – Dina Azhgaliyeva (Kazakhstan)
2. Role of Chabahar and Gwadar Ports – Fayazuddin Ghiasi (Tajikistan)
3. A Case Study of Customs Clearance on Guangxi to ASEAN – Bin Zhang (China)
4. Leveraging CASA-1000 for Energy Transition – Asjadullah Qureshi (Pakistan)
5. Strengthening the capacity for sustainable development of CAR countries through harmonised technology policies – Sergey Chepel (Uzbekistan)
6. Industrial Trade, Environmental Innovations, and SDGs: Dynamics of CAREC countries trade flows- Irfan Saleem (Bradford University, United Kingdom UK/Pakistan)
7. The Role of Azerbaijan and the Middle Corridor – Vusala Jafarova (Azerbaijan)
8. SWOT Analysis of Digital Trade Growth in Central Asia- Ilma Sharif (Pakistan)

Parallel Session 2: Sustainable Trade Corridors and Green Logistics

Moderator: TBC

Discussant: TBC

Participating Topics & Presenters:

1. Central Asian countries' journey towards decarbonisation of transport – Madina Junussova et al. (Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan)
2. Pakistan Single Window's Airport Community System – Laraib Ghaffar (Pakistan)
3. Transport Corridors Digitalization for Green Logistics – Valery Virkovski (Azerbaijan)
4. Critical Corridors: Geopolitics of Raw Material – Dana Ubaidolla (Kazakhstan)
5. Bridging Eurasia: Russia, Central Asia, Pakistan – Sundas Khizar, Faisal Javaid (Pakistan)
6. Advancing CMR Transition in E-Logistics – Berdimyrat Orazov (Turkmenistan)
7. A New Era of Digital Trade in South Asia – Madiha Riaz (Pakistan)
8. Ukraine's Role in the Middle Corridor – Olena Makarova (Turkey)

Parallel Session 3: Multimodal Transport and Regional Trade Integration

Moderator: TBC

Discussant: TBC

Participating Topics & Presenters:

1. Digitalization for Trade Facilitation and SWOT Analysis of FCAS – Jamil Nasir (Pakistan)
2. Exploring Digital Currency Adoption – Masood Sarwar Awan, Shamrez Ali (Pakistan)
3. Connecting CAREC through Multimodal Logistics – Jovid Ikromi (Tajikistan)
4. Creation of National eLogistics Systems – Tofiq Babayev (Azerbaijan)
5. Regional Connectivity of Central Asia and Beyond – Nikolai Podguzov et al. (Kazakhstan)
6. CAREC connectivity: promoting trade and trade facilitation - "multimodal logistics" - Zubia Raza (Pakistan)
7. Transport Corridors for Southern Corridor Growth – Kubat Umurzakov (Kyrgyzstan)
8. Transport System of Turkmenistan – Ruslan Jumayev (Turkmenistan)
9. The New Silk Road: BRI & CAREC – Ayesha Khan (Pakistan)

Country and Gun Club Islamabad

19:30 – 21:30 | CAREC Institute 10th Anniversary & Networking Dinner (By Invitation Only)

DAY TWO – 30 May 2025

PANEL SESSION 1: Connecting CAREC to the GCC via Intermodal Transport – Opportunities and Challenges

- Ms. Tatiana Rey-Bellet, Director TIR and Transit, IRU (Confirmed).

Panellists

- Mr. Shoaib Khakwani, General Manager TIR, National Logistics Cell (confirmed).
- Mr. Shaukat Abbas, General Manager, Gerry Logistics (confirmed)
- Mr. ZHANG Minghao, Executive Assistant of Chairman, Zhengzhou Hongyi Transportation Co, Ltd (confirmed).
- Mr. Burak E. ERDOGAN, Expert, TOBB – Department of Transport & Logistical Systems, TIR Operations Division (confirmed)

Relevance:

With growing trade links between China, Central Asia, and the GCC, intermodal transport is crucial. Pakistan is emerging as a regional transit hub, especially following the NLC-DP World agreement. Stakeholders are already exploring how the TIR system can enable smoother trade routes. This session will examine the latest developments, challenges, and policy solutions to optimize intermodal transit.

10:00 – 11:00 | Discussion Topics:

- Intermodal transport & TIR: Connecting Central Asia with the GCC
- Pakistan's transit hub potential: Infrastructure and policy perspectives
- The NLC-DP World agreement: Trade and logistics implications
- Addressing logistical and regulatory hurdles in transit operations
- Key policy recommendations to enhance connectivity with the GCC

11:00 – 11:30 | Coffee Break

PANEL SESSION 2: Catalyzing Private Investment in Business Services for Intra-CAREC Trade

Moderator: Ms. Shehribano Jamali Niazi, Senior Associate (DAI)

Panellists:

- Country Director or high-level representative, World Bank
- Development Director FCDO, Jo Moir
- Senior Representative Ministry of Commerce (either Minister or Secretary)
- Central Asia Perspective; Yerzhan Kistafin, Kazakhstan Ambassador
- Mr. Arsalan Ali Faheem, Country Director, DAI (Confirmed)

Relevance

While CAREC's physical infrastructure has improved, critical service gaps—like logistics, aviation, digital payments, and customs—still limit trade. This panel focuses on unlocking investment in these overlooked but essential business services. It will highlight opportunities for private-sector engagement and the regulatory tools needed to foster a supportive investment ecosystem.

11:30 – 12:30 | Discussion Topics:

- Closing the “missing middle” in trade services
- Private-sector investment opportunities and barriers
- Government and DFI roles in enabling business services
- Immediate priorities for CAREC-level coordination and reform

PANEL SESSION 3: Accelerating Regional Cooperation and Integration through Digital Trade and Connectivity in CAREC

Moderator: Mr. Nasruminallah Mian, Head of Programs/ICT/Digital, ADB Pakistan Resident Mission

Panellists:

- Mr. Khalid Umar, Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB
- Dr. Jordanka Tomkova, Team Lead, ADB Digital TA
- Mr. Mohammad J. Sear, Digital Governance Expert
- Mr. Osman Nasir, Digital Economy Expert
- Mr. Pervez Iftikhar, Digital Infrastructure Expert

Relevance

Digital trade and connectivity can serve as powerful tools for accelerating regional cooperation in the CAREC region. Despite progress, digital gaps remain—such as low internet access, uneven regulations, and weak e-commerce readiness. This panel will explore how CAREC countries can overcome these challenges together and build a shared digital future through policy coordination, innovation, and cross-border digital platforms.

12:30 – 13:30 | Discussion Topics:

- Digital strategies to enhance regional integration
- Overcoming connectivity and regulatory gaps
- Best practices in e-government and e-commerce
- Regional collaboration for inclusive digital transformation

13:30 – 14:30 | Lunch Break

PANEL SESSION 4: URAAN Pakistan and CAREC: Reimagining Regional Trade for Next Decade

Session Chair: Dr. Nadeem Javaid, Vice Chancellor PIDE, Islamabad

Moderator:**Panellists:**

1. Mr. Khalid Mansoor, Former Special Advisor to Prime Minister on CPEC
2. Mr. Haroon Sharif, Former Chairman, Board of Investment.
3. Mr. Manzoor Ahmed, Former Ambassador to WTO
4. Dr. Muzammil Zia, CPEC Secretariat, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Islamabad.

Relevance:

This session will explore how CAREC countries, especially Pakistan, can rethink regional trade by improving market access, boosting export diversification, and strengthening infrastructure links. Guided by the "URAN Pakistan" vision, the discussion will highlight practical strategies to increase exports, lower trade costs, and build strong economic corridors that connect to global markets.

14:30 – 16:00 | Discussion Topics:

- Unlocking CAREC export potential through market access, competitiveness, diversification, and regional integration—URAAN Pakistan's export strategy.

- Strengthening Pakistan's trade footprint in the intra-CAREC Free Trade Agreement by advancing FTAs, promoting competitiveness, and exploring high-value sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture.
- Establish transit trade agreements, upgrade logistics infrastructure, and integrate Gwadar and Karachi into CAREC's multimodal transport network.
- Streamlining customs and logistics and promoting paperless trade for greater efficiency by expanding Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and developing integrated border management systems.
- Mobilizing the SIFC to attract FDI in CAREC-aligned infrastructure projects, streamlining approval processes for investors, and developing SEZs to promote regional trade and industrial growth.
- CPEC's potential to transform trade corridors and logistics networks
- Building inclusive, resilient, and future-ready regional cooperation frameworks

Parallel Session

16:00 – 18:00 | Research Papers Presentation

Parallel Session 1: Strategic Cooperation and Trade Connectivity

Moderator: TBC

Discussant: TBC

Participating Topics & Presenters:

1. Does Intra-Industry Trade Support Growth? – Elvira Kurmanalieva (Kyrgyzstan)
2. Critical Analysis of Commerce in Central Asia – Syed Abbas Ali Sherazi (Pakistan)
3. Role of Private Investment in CAREC – Zahoor Khan, Sajjad Ahmad Jan (Pakistan)
4. CAREC-ASEAN Cooperation – CAO Yejun (China)
5. Public-Private Partnerships for Logistics – Asif Pervez (Pakistan)
6. Cross-Border Freelancing in CAREC – Vaqar Ahmed, Asif Javed (Pakistan)
7. Harnessing AI for Trade Facilitation – Maria Idrees (Pakistan)

Parallel Session 2: Private Sector Engagement for Trade and Infrastructure

Moderator: TBC

Discussant: TBC

Participating Topics & Presenters:

1. Pakistan-CAREC Geo-economic Nexus – Muhammad Amjad Raza (Pakistan)
2. Construction of China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway – Jildiz Nicharapova (Kyrgyzstan)
3. CAREC Connectivity: Promoting Trade Facilitation – Khurram Hussain Hidayatallah (Pakistan)
4. Bridging South and Central Asia: Multimodal Logistics – Adeel Kadri (Pakistan)
5. Enhancing Trade Facilitation in CAREC: eTIR Implementation – Hafiz Muhammad Ahmad, Masood Sarwar Awan (Pakistan)
6. Characteristics of Cooperation Between China's Xinjiang and Pakistan Under the "CPEC" Framework- Huiling Li (China)
7. Sustainable Agriculture through Green Transport – Sundas Ashraf (Pakistan)

Parallel Session 3: Inclusive and Ethical Dimensions of Trade Facilitation

Moderator: TBC

Discussant: TBC

Participating Topics & Presenters:

1. Animal Welfare and Trade: Evidence – Anwar Hussain (Pakistan)
2. Global Sustainable Green Infrastructure – Asif Mehmood Qaisrani (Pakistan)
3. Decarbonizing Road Transport: Electric Mobility in CAREC – Khalil Raza (Pakistan)
4. Do Animal Protection Laws Matter for Trade? – Abida Bibi (Pakistan)
5. Unlocking Borders: Cross-Border Digitization – Amjad Massod (Pakistan)
6. Assessing Threats to Pakistan Single Window – Ashfaq Ahmad Shah et al. (Pakistan)

CLOSING SESSION

18:00 – 18:30 | Closing Remarks

- CAREC Institute Director or Deputy Director
- TBC

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- **19:30 – 21:30 | Networking Dinner at Country and Gun Club Islamabad (By Invitation Only)**
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