



## **CAREC Policy Dialogue on Digital and Trade Facilitation**

**28 April 2025 (Online)**

**16:00 – 18:00 (Beijing time, GMT + 8)**

### **1. Background**

Trade facilitation serves as a catalyst for regional and global economic growth and development by simplifying and streamlining the processes involved in international trade. Though the consequences of COVID-19 and the surge in regional conflicts, along with the inflation that accompanies them, have led to a rise in trade costs, international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN) have been working on trade facilitation.

Based on the 2023 United Nations Global Survey, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) prepared a report titled '[Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation \(CAREC\)](#)'. This comprehensive report underscores the critical role of digital solutions in enhancing trade facilitation and promoting sustainable practices across the CAREC member countries. It reveals that CAREC countries are actively implementing various trade facilitation measures, emphasizing the necessity of advancing paperless and cross-border trade initiatives. These efforts are essential for making trade more sustainable and climate-smart. Notably, the report discusses the establishment of 25 modules in various CAREC countries aimed at facilitating the exchange of data and electronic documents across all transport modes, including eCMR, eCertificate of Origin, and eTIR.

The CAREC Institute, which played a vital role in supporting data collection and validation within the region, provided valuable insights into the best practices and reviewed the report, ensuring that the findings reflect the realities and challenges faced by the CAREC region. The report underscores the critical need for robust policy actions to enhance trade facilitation and support sustainable economic development within CAREC member countries. It highlights that while significant progress has been made, particularly in the implementation of electronic systems and measures for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), there remains a substantial gap in the comprehensive integration of these initiatives into national trade policies. To fully leverage the potential of digital trade and reduce trade costs, it is imperative for CAREC national policymakers to adopt inclusive strategies that prioritize the capacity building of SMEs and foster collaboration among government agencies and stakeholders. By establishing a cohesive institutional framework and promoting transparency in trade regulations, CAREC member countries can create an environment conducive to increased participation in regional and global value chains, ultimately driving structural growth and sustainable development.

In this regard, the CAREC Institute proposes a policy dialogue, inviting researchers from the UNESCAP and the CAREC Institute to discuss findings in this report with government representatives, experts, and other stakeholders.

### **Key objectives**

The primary objective of this policy dialogue is to actively engage a diverse array of stakeholders, including government officials, private sector representatives, civil society organizations (CVOs), and trade experts, in a comprehensive discussion regarding potential policy actions aimed at enhancing trade facilitation. By fostering an inclusive environment for dialogue, the initiative seeks to gather insights and perspectives from various sectors, ensuring that the resulting policy recommendations are well-informed and reflective of the needs and challenges faced by all parties involved. Specifically, the event will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Present the findings of the report “Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC).”
- Provide a deeper understanding of the current trade facilitation landscape, including regional/global trends, and national policies in CAREC region.
- Recognize and analyze the main challenges and barriers that CAREC countries face in the import-export process.
- Discuss potential policy recommendations to support decision-making on promoting international trade.

### **Expected Outcome**

Through this policy dialogue, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the current trade facilitation landscape within the region, equipping them with valuable insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by their respective countries. By sharing experiences and best practices, stakeholders will be able to identify common barriers to trade and explore tailored solutions that address the unique contexts of each nation.

Moreover, the dialogue is expected to foster enhanced collaboration among participants, encouraging the formation of partnerships that can drive collective action towards improving trade facilitation measures. As a result, stakeholders will leave the dialogue not only with a clearer picture of the regional trade environment but also with actionable strategies and recommendations that can be implemented at both national and regional levels.

Additionally, the dialogue aims to create a platform for ongoing communication and knowledge exchange, establishing a network of stakeholders committed to advancing trade facilitation initiatives. This collaborative effort will ultimately contribute to the development of more effective policies that promote economic integration, enhance competitiveness, and support sustainable development across the region. By the end of the dialogue, participants will be better positioned to advocate for necessary reforms and mobilize resources to implement the identified policy actions, thereby fostering a more efficient and inclusive trade ecosystem.

### **Target audience**

This event is expected to draw attention from a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials from CAREC countries, business leaders in this region, academics from CAREC, and representatives from CVOs.

### **Event format and venue**

The event will be held online via Zoom web conferencing tool. It will include presentations, panel discussions, and a live Q&A session. Panelists will receive a personalized Zoom link to participate.

### **Registration link:**

TBC

### **Time and date**

The event is scheduled for 28 April 2025, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Beijing Time.

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## Agenda

**28 April 2025 (Beijing time, GMT+8)<sup>1</sup>**

**15:50-16:00:** Virtual Connection to the Policy Dialogue  
Introduction to the agenda and group photo  
**Mr. Gary (He) Huang**, Capacity Building Specialist, CAREC Institute

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### Opening remarks

**16:00-16:05** **Dr. Charymuhammet Shallyyev**, Director, CAREC Institute

### Session I: Keynote presentations

Moderator: **Dr. Ilhom Abdulloev**, Chief of Capacity Building Division, CAREC Institute

**16:10-16:20** Trade Facilitation Cost of Regional Uncertainty  
**Dr. Ghulam Samad**, Chief of the Research Division, CAREC Institute

**16:20-16:40** Digital and Trade Sustainability  
**Ms. Soo Hyun Kim**, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section (TPFS), Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (TIID), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

**16:40-16:55** **tbc, Pakistan Single Window**

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### Session II: Panel Discussion and Country Feedback

Moderator: **Dr. Ghulam Samad**, Chief of the Research Division, CAREC Institute

**16:55-17:55** This is a structured brainstorming session with representatives from regional institutions, national governments, and experts to share their comments and feedback on policy recommendations. The allocated time for each participant is 5 minutes.

- **Panel Representative**
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- **Panel Representative**
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- **Panel Representative**
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- **Panel Representative**
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- **Country Feedback**
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### Guiding questions:

1. What are the most pressing challenges currently facing trade facilitation in our region, and how do they differ among participating countries?
2. Which specific policy actions should be prioritized to enhance trade facilitation, and why are these actions critical at this moment?

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<sup>1</sup> Simultaneous Interpretation will be available. Please select your language of preference, English or Russian, from the bottom panel.

3. How can digital technologies be leveraged to streamline trade processes, and what best practices should be considered for effective implementation?
4. What role should the private sector play in shaping trade facilitation policies, and how can governments foster stronger partnerships with businesses?
5. How can countries in the CAREC region collaborate more effectively to harmonize trade facilitation measures and reduce non-tariff barriers?
6. What mechanisms should be established to monitor the implementation of trade facilitation policies and evaluate their impact on trade efficiency?
7. How can trade facilitation policies be aligned with sustainable development goals, ensuring that trade practices are environmentally friendly?

**Closing remarks**

**17:55 – 18.00** Dr. Kuat Akizhanov, Deputy Director Two, CAREC Institute.