



**Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program  
Consultation Meeting with the CAREC National Focal Points  
Bangkok, Thailand  
28 September 2012**

**Summary**

**I. Introduction**

1. A Consultation Meeting (the Meeting) with the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) National Focal Points (NFPs)<sup>1</sup> was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 28 September 2012.<sup>2</sup> The moderators of the Meeting were Mr. Klaus Gerhaeuser, Director General, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and Mr. Robert Wihtol, Director General, East Asia Department, ADB. The objectives of the Meeting were to discuss: (i) the recommendations on the future of the CAREC Institute; (ii) a proposed approach for transport facilitation in the CAREC region; and (iii) preparations for the 11th CAREC Ministerial Conference. The agenda and list of participants are in the Appendix.

**II. Meeting Highlights**

2. **CAREC Institute.** Subregional workshops on the CI assessment were held in Beijing and Almaty in August 2012, and, on the basis of these as well as further written inputs provided by CAREC countries, a recommendations paper was prepared and discussed at the Meeting. The Meeting confirmed the endorsement by the CAREC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in June 2011 of the CI Strategic Knowledge Framework. The Meeting agreed to endorse the CI Work Plan (2013-2017) to the SOM and Ministerial Conference, and noted that the tentative work plan for 2015-2017 will be further developed in coordination with the sector coordinating committees.<sup>3</sup> The Meeting broadly agreed:

- (i) that the CI physical base, which is temporarily located in ADB, will be moved to the CAREC region;
- (ii) on the requirements that the host country for the CI physical base will need to satisfy, namely, accessibility, availability of physical and information technology infrastructure, and availability of an accommodating legal framework;
- (iii) on the guiding principles for CI operations, which include ownership and regionality, and fairness and balance;
- (iv) on the general features of the CI governance structure, including the governing body, consensus-based decision making, rotation of key management position(s), and possible establishment of advisory board/forum; and
- (v) that further discussions on the above items (ii) to (iv) are needed, for which ADB will prepare a discussion paper for circulation before the SOM on 30 October.

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<sup>1</sup> NFPs or their designated representatives attended the Meeting.

<sup>2</sup> The NFPs/NFP representatives of Afghanistan and the Kyrgyz Republic were not able to attend the Meeting. The NFP Advisor for the Kyrgyz Republic conveyed the views of his NFP to the CAREC Secretariat.

<sup>3</sup> Any changes to the CI work plan arising from the Energy Sector Coordinating Committee meeting, taking place simultaneously in Bangkok (28-29 September 2012), will be appropriately reflected.

3. The Meeting noted the need to further analyze and for the CAREC Secretariat to prepare possible options for financing the CI. In this context, IFI financial contributions should also be taken into account. The financing issue will also be addressed in the discussion paper to be prepared.

4. The Meeting took note of the offer of Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Kazakhstan to host the physical base of the CI in Baku, Urumqi, and Almaty, respectively. The delegations of PRC and Kazakhstan gave brief presentations of their respective proposals. The Meeting agreed that the three countries prepare their respective full proposals for submission to the other CAREC countries before the 11th CAREC Ministerial Conference for consideration at the SOM before the Conference. The CAREC Secretariat will provide some guidance to the countries on the scope and format of such proposal.

5. **Transport facilitation in CAREC.** The Meeting broadly agreed to endorse a pragmatic, corridor-based, and results-driven approach to transport facilitation in the CAREC region. It will build on ongoing and planned transport facilitation measures covering the six CAREC corridors, and/or forge new, simple bilateral/plurilateral agreements on a voluntary basis to serve the transport facilitation needs of these CAREC corridors. They agreed that, with the assistance of ADB, key preparatory steps need to be undertaken including: (i) identification of countries to participate in the piloting of transport facilitation arrangements, (ii) conduct of detailed analyses and identification of potential issues, (iii) if applicable, amendment of existing agreements, and (iv) establishment of a sound business case for corridor-based transport facilitation. The Meeting noted the importance of effectively functioning national transport and trade facilitation bodies in the successful implementation of corridor-based transport facilitation arrangements. Possible candidate countries that will adopt the proposed approach to transport facilitation are Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. During the SOM on 30 October, CAREC delegations may still nominate candidate corridors along which transport facilitation arrangements will be implemented on a pilot basis.

6. **11th CAREC Ministerial Conference.** The Meeting was informed of the preparations being made by the PRC, with the assistance of ADB, for the 11th CAREC Ministerial Conference (11MC) to be held in Wuhan, PRC on 30 October to 1 November 2012. The Meeting agreed on the agenda of the 11MC and its theme of "Implementing CAREC 2020: Vision and Action". The Meeting was informed by the PRC delegation that a business forum will be organized and hosted by the Hubei Provincial Government on 31 October to which all CAREC delegations will be invited. It was clarified that Session 4 (Views of CAREC Multilateral Institution Partners and Bilateral Donor Agencies and Responses of CAREC Delegations) in the afternoon of 1 November, will focus on the CAREC 2020 action plan consisting of: (i) medium-term priority projects in transport, trade facilitation, and energy; (ii) future of the CAREC Institute and its work plan (2013-2017); and (iii) transport facilitation arrangements for selected CAREC corridors. The Meeting agreed that, if necessary, discussions on the CAREC Institute could be held on Day 2 of the 11MC (31 October). The Meeting agreed that, if feasible, the "Wuhan Action Plan" will be attached to the 11MC Joint Ministerial Statement, a draft of which will be shared in advance to the CAREC NFPs to allow internal review and approval.

7. **Acknowledgement.** The NFPs thanked ADB for organizing the Meeting.

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