



VIRTUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON CAREC FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

13:00–15:00 (MANILA TIME), 19 MAY 2021

ВИРТУАЛЬНЫЙ УСТАНОВОЧНЫЙ СЕМИНАР ПО ПРОЕКТУ ТЕХНИЧЕСКОЙ ПОМОЩИ
ПО СОГЛАШЕНИЯМ О СВОБОДНОЙ ТОРГОВЛЕ В ЦАРЭС

13:00–15:00 (ВРЕМЯ МАНИЛЫ), 19 МАЯ 2021 Г.

BRIEFING NOTE

This briefing note contains basic information about the summary of issues that will be discussed during the Inception Workshop.

Introduction

This ADB technical assistance (TA) will strengthen capacities for designing, negotiating, implementing, and monitoring free trade agreements (FTAs) involving the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) countries. Its mission is consistent with the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030 (CITA 2030), enhancing the evidence base for decision-making regarding trade negotiations, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing for the new generation of FTAs.

CAREC countries have expressed keen interest to pursue FTAs as effective tools to boost the region's economic growth and integration with the global economy. However, the 2019 share of intra-subregional trade for Central Asia was only 3.3%, compared with 35% in East Asia and 23% in Southeast Asia. There is clearly potential to boost intra-regional trade, as well as overall trade and investment.

Issues

- Knowledge and capacity constraints - FTAs design, negotiation, and implementation are complex and information intensive policy activities.
- Uneven participation and limited geographic reach – Initial levels of integration are very low in the region. Initiative like this TA are needed to build momentum and experience for learning-by-doing.
- The complexity of regional FTAs – Current arrangements, compounded by post-Soviet adjustments, are a mosaic of ad hoc and partially conflicting agreements. This TA will use a CAREC-wide FTA as a reference point to improve policy coherence among less inclusive FTAs.



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- Strategic fit – This TA supports the CAREC 2030 strategy, which recognizes the role of FTAs in facilitating regional cooperation, connecting the region’s people, policies, and projects for shared and sustainable development

Impact and Outcomes

- (i) CAREC countries’ capacities for designing, negotiating, implementing, and monitoring of FTAs improved.
- (ii) Regional trade, investment, and inclusive growth opportunities will be expanded

Outputs, Methods, and Activities

- Output 1: Evidence-based policy recommendations and action plans.
- Output 2: Strengthen capacity of CAREC member countries to design, negotiate, implement, and monitor FTAs.
 - National workshops in select CAREC countries.
 - Regional events where countries can share their FTA experience and best practices
 - Regional training of trainers on how to design, negotiate, and implement FTAs.
- Output 3: Prepare a roadmap to establish a CAREC wide FTA, deepening economic integration for more inclusive and sustained regional prosperity.