



## TERMS OF REFERENCE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COMMITTEE

### **Background:**

The CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC) was established in January 2002 and endorsed by the Ministerial Conference on Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Program promoted by the Asian Development Bank. The CCC has made significant achievements in bilateral cooperation and country specific customs modernization and has been successful in creating an environment of trust and cooperation among the customs services of the participating countries. Recognizing the need to comprehensively address the trade facilitation challenges in the region, CCC recently endorsed a new Trade Facilitation Strategy.

### **Objectives:**

The main objective of the CCC is to promote cooperation among the customs organizations of the CAREC countries and support the development and implementation of the integrated trade facilitation strategy as a means to accelerate economic growth and improve living standards among the CAREC member countries. Specifically, the CCC aims to promote regional trade facilitation initiatives through concerted customs reforms and modernization, strengthened inter-agency coordination and enhanced partnerships with the private sector in order to eliminate trade and other barriers to development. The CCC also serves as the regional forum for addressing issues of common interest relevant to trade facilitation.

### **Participation:**

The CCC is currently composed of the heads and deputy heads of customs organizations of the CAREC member countries namely: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

### **Scope of Work:**

The major areas of work for the CCC include:

- (i) Concerted customs reform and modernization – continued focus on existing priority areas<sup>1</sup> and a systematic approach in complementing individual member countries' customs simplification and harmonization as well as modernization efforts through promotion of (a) bilateral agreements and cooperation initiatives, and (b) training and knowledge forums/seminars, in cooperation with international and customs organizations involved in the region.
- (ii) Provide leadership in promoting integrated trade facilitation initiatives –expanding the scope of the work program from customs cooperation to a deepened

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<sup>1</sup> Priority areas of the CCC : (i) Simplification/Harmonization of Customs Procedures and Documentation, (ii) ICT for Customs Modernization and Data Exchange, (iii) Regional Transit Development, (iv) Risk Management, Post Entry Audit and Customs Intelligence, (v) Joint Customs Control, (vi) Others (Trade logistics; Transport corridor performance measurement; capacity building)



interagency collaboration and enhanced partnerships between the public and private sectors to address broader issues of trade facilitation and encouraging the involvement of other sector committees to foster inter-committee collaboration and coordination within the region.

- (iii) Coordinate with key stakeholders, including the CAREC Transport Coordination Committee and facilitate the development of an efficient regional trade logistics industry, including (a) establishment of a regional forum to harmonize and plan logistics development; (b) support for national level trade logistics assessments; and (c) facilitation and financing of key investments including public-private partnerships.

### **Detailed Tasks:**

#### **Customs Priority Areas:**

- (i) Coordinate, facilitate and support concerted customs reform and modernization efforts of member countries including bilateral agreements and regional cooperation initiatives. In cooperation with international organizations and other customs administrations, continue to focus on existing priority areas of the CCC:
  - (a) Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures
  - (b) ICT for Customs Modernization and Data Exchange
  - (c) Risk Management and Post-Entry Audit
  - (d) Joint Customs Control and One-Stop Services
  - (e) Regional Transit Development
  - (f) Other areas where customs agencies play a significant role (e.g., trade logistics, transport corridor performance measurement and capacity building)
- (ii) Direct and supervise the implementation of the new trade facilitation strategy/action plan including the establishment of an appropriate organizational structure to ensure effective leadership and efficient implementation. Regularly review progress of work and formulate policy recommendations for the consideration of their respective governments.
- (iii) Serve as a regional forum to raise, discuss and resolve issues of common interest relating to barriers to trade and development.

#### **Working together with Other Key Stakeholders**

- (iv) Coordinate with the other sector committees such as transport coordination committee and the trade policy committee and with regional cooperation mechanisms such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization, European Asian Economic Cooperation and others.
- (v) Encourage the participation and involvement of allied development partners, multilateral development agencies and the private sector in the implementation of



the goals of the trade facilitation program and foster inter-committee collaboration and coordination within CAREC

- (vi) Supervise and review the conduct of studies that support the effective and efficient implementation of the trade facilitation action plan including the conduct of surveys to establish benchmarks, identify inefficiencies and provide basis for policy and implementation decisions.
- (vii) Supervise the design and conduct of capacity building programs (trainings, seminars and knowledge sharing) to strengthen implementation capabilities of customs organizations and other involved agencies