



Proposed deliverables for the 17th CAREC Ministerial Conference

TRADE SECTOR

- **CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030 and Rolling Strategic Action Plan (RSAP) 2018-2020**

Under the framework of *CAREC 2030* strategy, CITA 2030 will integrate trade work by combining trade policy and trade facilitation and including cross-cutting trade priorities in CAREC 2030's operational clusters. CITA 2030 and its accompanying RSAP 2018-2020 was developed on the basis of a consultation paper and a series of sub-regional and national stakeholders consultations from December 2017 to May 2018. Consultations confirmed the relevance and alignment of CITA 2030 with CAREC members' development and trade priorities. CITA 2030 will adopt a phased and pragmatic approach implementing a three-year RSAP of investment projects, policy dialogues and cooperation, and knowledge product and services. The CITA 2030 working paper will incorporate guidance from SOM as well as inputs from NFP in June and October 2018, respectively, and finalized for endorsement at the 16th MC.

- **Establishment of the Regional Trade Group (RTG)**

As envisioned under *CAREC 2030*, the RTG will be established to discuss and deliberate on the increasingly intertwined issues of trade policy and trade facilitation in a synergistic manner. The inaugural meeting of the RTG is held back-to-back with the SOM in June 2018 in Bangkok. The RTG is expected to finalize its terms of reference (including function, composition and arrangements) as the coordinative and consultative body for the trade sector in the CAREC Program. The Customs Cooperation Committee will continue to carry out customs cooperation functions related to trade facilitation and ad-hoc working groups and expert groups may be organized in new technical areas such as in SPS measures and technical barriers to trade (TBT), and other areas (e.g., services and investment). Aside from CITA 2030, the RTG will also deliberate on trade sector results framework as provided in the *CAREC 2030*.

- **Inter-subregional Forum on Enhanced Implementation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)**

As a follow-up to the TFA workshop jointly organized by ADB and CAREC Institute in Bangkok in December 2017, an inter-subregional forum planned in early November 2018 will promote knowledge-sharing and expand inter-subregional networks of customs and

relevant trade agencies to enhance implementation of TFA provisions among WTO members. Support to strengthen National Committee on Trade Facilitation of CAREC countries continue to be a priority.

- **CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM) Report**

Trade Facilitation Indicators (TFIs) under the CPMM provide a benchmark to assess the improvements in terms of time and costs along the CAREC corridors. The 2017 CPMM Annual Report, reported modest reductions in border clearance and road transport costs along the CAREC corridors. Outcomes of a pilot methodology and workshop of behind-the-border indicators in July 2018 will supplement CPMM analysis.

- **Implementation of the CAREC Common Agenda for Modernization of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures for Trade (CAST)**

A regional SPS workshop held in May 2018 identified regional priorities in plant health, animal health and food safety including – pest list development program through regional collaboration; designating specific regional animal health reference laboratories for selected analyses; and setting up an electronic food safety rapid alert system for the region. Country work plans towards CAST implementation were drafted. SPS Working Groups are expected to be formalized to coordinate the country work plans and selectively include SPS projects and activities in the three-year RSAP 2018-2020 of CITA 2030. Establishing or strengthening existing SPS working groups at national and regional level will be critical to align CAREC countries regulations with international SPS standards and institutional capacity development. A CAREC food safety network is proposed to enhance information-sharing via online portal and support regional risk analysis and standard-setting on food safety regulations.