



6th TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON CAREC ADVANCED TRANSIT SYSTEM AND INFORMATION COMMON EXCHANGE (CATS/ICE) PILOT PHASE IMPLEMENTATION

8-9 September 2025, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

The Cluster Technical Assistance (TA) 0069 continues to support the implementation of the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030 by strengthening the capacity of customs agencies and the CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC) to respond to a rapidly evolving trade environment and increasing private sector demand for efficient and predictable border services.

Regional transit development remains a key priority for the CCC, particularly for landlocked CAREC countries. Under TA0069, efforts are underway to assist Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan in finalizing the testing phase of the CAREC Advanced Transit System (CATS) and Information Common Exchange (ICE) and eventually launching the formal operationalization of the system. CATS/ICE is a harmonized electronic system for managing the movement of goods in transit across CAREC countries. It enables the secure and streamlined exchange of transit data through a single platform and supports a comprehensive regional transit guarantee mechanism, where national legislation permits. These efforts are designed to enhance trade facilitation and bolster CAREC's integration into regional and global supply chains.

Encouragingly, good progress has been made in Georgia in implementation of European Union's (EU) New Computerized Transit System (NCTS), while Azerbaijan has advanced in building familiarity with the NCTS framework—both important steps in aligning CATS/ICE with NCTS. Additional CAREC countries have expressed strong interest in joining the initiative, while international models such as ASEAN's ACTS (ASEAN Customs Transit System) based on the same concept of NCTS are now fully operational, offering valuable insights for CAREC. Notably, the Multi-country Agreement has been circulated to participating countries for legal review, marking a major milestone toward full regional implementation.

OBJECTIVES

Building on the outcomes of the 5th Technical WG Meeting held on 12–13 March 2025 in Baku, Azerbaijan, this Technical Working Group meeting aims to discuss:

- (i) **Comprehensive Review of CATS/ICE Pilot Activities to Date.** The meeting will provide a thorough assessment of the progress achieved under the CATS/ICE pilot to date. Participants will evaluate the overall readiness of the pilot countries and review the ongoing legal review process for the Multi-country Agreement, which is moving toward ratification. Experiences from Georgia's tangible steps toward operationalizing the New Computerized Transit System (NCTS), as well as Azerbaijan's efforts to build institutional and technical familiarity with NCTS will be shared. New expressions of interest from other CAREC member countries will also be acknowledged as a positive signal of expanding regional momentum and support.
- (ii) **Planning and Launching the Last Round of CATS/ICE Parallel Testing.** This meeting will present the detailed plans for the next phase of CATS/ICE testing, scheduled to begin in September 2025. The tests will involve participation from traders and guarantors in

Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan. Testing participants will test key operational elements, procedural workflows, and system requirements identified in earlier testing sessions, with a special focus on the role and feedback of private sector actors. Emphasis will be placed on practical experiences from customs authorities, traders, and guarantors to ensure the system accurately reflects real-world transit conditions.

- (iii) **Review of Key System Updates Since March 2025.** Participants will examine significant technical and legal updates made to the CATS/ICE platform since the previous WG meeting in March 2025. These include improved data model and data exchange protocols, and refinements to the transit guarantee mechanisms. The discussion will focus on advances in system interoperability, data security, and alignment with international best practices, showcasing the platform's strengthened capacity for regional implementation.
- (iv) **Defining the Next Steps in CATS/ICE Pilot and Eventful Launching.** The meeting will conclude by laying out a roadmap for the transition from prototype testing to formal system launch. This includes defining roles and responsibilities for customs authorities and private sector actors, finalizing technical prerequisites, and concluding legal arrangements. The group will also explore strategies for a phased expansion to other interested CAREC countries and identify priority areas for capacity building.

PARTICIPANTS

- Members of the three working groups (from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan), namely, (i) Information and Communication Technology (ICT), (ii) Customs Control Facilitation, and (iii) Legal.
- Asian Development Bank staff and consultants.

Agenda

DAY 1	8 September 2025, Monday
08:30-09:00 (30 mins) Tashkent Time	Registration
	Opening Session
09:00-09:10 (10 mins)	Ms. Zulfia Karimova , Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, Regional Cooperation and Integration Unit, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank
09:10-09:40 (30 mins)	Group photo and coffee break
	Session 1: Introduction of the Agenda and Updates on the Status of Implementation of the CATS/ICE Development Pilot Phase
09:40-10:10 (30 mins)	Presenter: Ms. Zulfia Karimova , Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, Regional Cooperation and Integration Unit, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (20 minutes) Open Discussion (10 minutes)
10:10-10:40 (30 mins)	Session 2: Presentation of the Comprehensive Review of CATS/ICE Pilot Activities

	<p>Speaker: Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant (20 minutes)</p> <p>Open Discussion (10 minutes)</p>
10:40-11:20 (40 mins)	<p>Session 3: Review of Key System Updates Since March 2025</p> <p>Speakers: Mr. Viboon Chaojirapant, GUUD System Design/ICT Expert and Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant (20 minutes)</p> <p>Open Discussion (20 minutes)</p>
11:20-12:00 (40 mins)	<p>Session 4: Updates on the Multi-country Agreement Ratification Process</p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Ying Qian, Trade Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant (15 minutes)</p> <p>Open discussion (25 minutes)</p>
12:30-13:30 (90 mins)	Lunch
13:30-14:10 (40 mins)	<p>Session 5: Presentation of the Proposed CATS-ICE Workplan (Sep. 25 – June 2026)</p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant (20 minutes)</p> <p>Open Discussion (20 minutes)</p>
14:10-16:10 (120 mins, including coffee break)	<p>Session 6: Breakout Sessions: Working Group Discussions</p> <p>Group 1 – ICT Working Group AND Customs Control Facilitation Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of action points arising from the 5th TWG Meeting • Data Models, data fields which allow amendments after filing • Pending data model requirements, e.g., custom office names and codes, etc., • Discussion of system guidance for CATS-ICE Prototype Version 2 • Plans for parallel testing including insurers / guarantors and trade operators • Plans for capacity building activities and preparation of training materials <p><i>Facilitators:</i> Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant Mr. Viboon Chaojirapant, GUUD System Design/ICT Expert</p> <p>Group 2 – Legal Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on country level legal reviews of the Multi-country Agreement • MOU for extending the pilot phase and for accepting new participating countries • Plans for capacity building activities and preparation of training materials. <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Mr. Ying Qian, Trade Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant</p>
16:10-16:30 (20 mins)	<p>Wrap-up of Day 1</p> <p>Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRD, ADB</p>

DAY 2	9 September 2025, Thursday
08:30-09:00 (30 mins)	Registration
09:00-10:00 (60 mins)	<p>Session 7: Working Group Presentations</p> <p><i>Working Group facilitators will present a summary of the results of their meeting, including revised terms of reference, agreements reached, and action points. (15 mins each)</i></p> <p>Facilitators: Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant; Mr. Viboon Chaojirapant, GUUD System Design/ICT Expert; and Mr. Ying Qian, Trade Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant</p>
10:00-11:00 (60 mins)	<p>Session 8: Presentation of the CATS-ICE Roadmap and Long-Term Sustainability</p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Aivaras Pigaga, Customs and Transit Facilitation Specialist, ADB Consultant (30minutes)</p> <p>Open Discussion (30 minutes)</p>
11:00-11:15 (15 mins)	Coffee break
11:15-12:15 (60 mins)	<p>Session 9: Country Feedback and Open Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A brief update on the CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee Meeting and the CAREC Ministerial Conference <p>Speakers: (15 minutes each) Azerbaijan State Customs Committee Georgia Revenue Service Uzbekistan State Customs Committee</p> <p>Open Discussion (15 minutes)</p> <p>Facilitator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p>
12:15-12:30 (15 mins)	<p>Session 10: Way Forward, Next Steps, and Closing Session</p> <p>Speaker: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB</p>
12:30-14:00 (90 mins)	Lunch
14:00-17:00	Bilateral Meetings