



# Capacity Building



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# Capacity Building

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program has an active capacity building program for senior and mid-level officials of the countries Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, People's Republic of China (PRC), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and recently, Turkmenistan.

The CAREC Comprehensive Action Plan endorsed at the 2006 Ministerial Conference is guided through the implementation of four "action" pillars. The knowledge/capacity building pillar is focusing on training senior and mid-level officials to form a cadre of officials skilled in regional cooperation. This pillar also aims to develop the research and analysis strength in the region through both institutions and individuals.

The capacity building program hopes to broaden and deepen the knowledge shared in regional cooperation processes for the purpose of designing and implementing regional initiatives and projects with shared economic benefits.

## Capacity Building Achievements

The knowledge and capacity building activities from 2005–2007 are in technical topics related to the objectives of the CAREC

Program sector committees in trade policy, customs, transport, and energy. The training activities covered topics such as trade facilitation, trade logistics development, electricity regulation, e-government, Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) customs transit system, and joint customs control. The training activities have been successful in providing information and building skills for furthering the work of the sector committees.

During 2007, the training activities were broadened to include second tier activities,<sup>1</sup> and covered topics on pandemic influenza, working with nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and economic development zones. Poor management of these issues can adversely affect all countries, and for this reason such topics are included in the capacity building activities. Refer to Figure 1 for a summary of the capacity building activities by sector.

The number of capacity building training days by year has increased from 23 training days in 2005 to 50.5 days in 2007. In 2006, there was a surge of training in the area of customs and regional information dissemination in trade policy. In 2007, there were a number of training activities in the energy sector, including the CAREC Mem-

bers Electricity Regulators Forum (CMERF), and participation at the 6<sup>th</sup> Energy Regulation and Investment Conference.

The CAREC Program in 2007 offered longer training activities in comparison with the earlier 2 years. Refer to Figure 2 for a summary of the annual number of participants and training days.

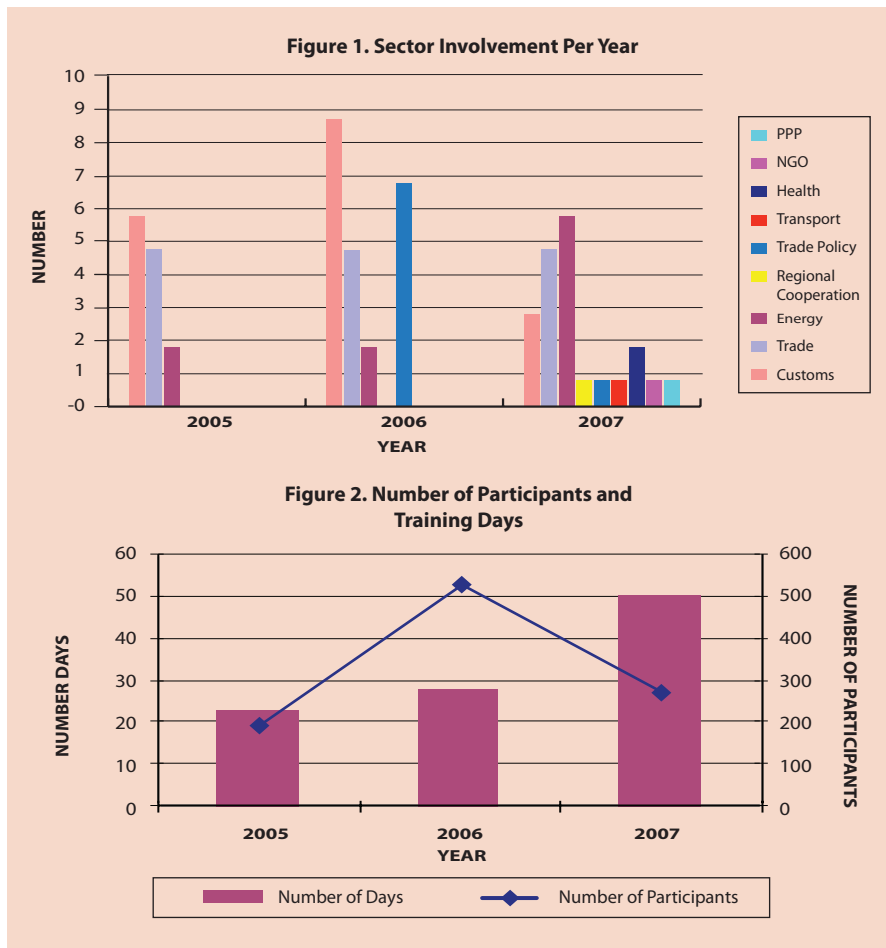
Although there are benefits achieved through short duration training activities, the ability to effect sustained skill development in the participants is limited. For this reason the capacity building program opted for longer duration training activities in 2007.

## Training Needs Assessment

The training needs assessment is an important input in the CAREC training activity work plan from 2008–2010. It ensures that the training programs meet the needs identified by CAREC senior and mid-level officials. For this reason a comprehensive approach was taken when conducting the training needs assessment.

From 26 April to 10 May 2007, consultative meetings with about 100 senior and mid-level officials were held in Beijing, PRC; Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic; Tashkent, Uzbekistan; Dushanbe, Tajikistan; and

<sup>1</sup> The second tier activities are in the new sectors, such as human development, agriculture, environment, tourism, and health.



Astana, Kazakhstan in preparation for the CAREC training needs assessment. Other consultations were held after the Senior Officials' Meeting in Manila, Philippines on 26–27 March 2007. A survey questionnaire was also given out at all the consultative meetings, and to the national and sector committee focal points.

The consultations identified a need for three types of courses for senior and mid-level officials. Leadership programs for senior officials, and courses in negotiation for regional agreements, public policy, foreign policy, and public sector reform. Mid-level officials need sector specific training in topics related to the CAREC sector committees and the second tier project areas. These officials also need courses in general management, economic development, project management and implementation, leadership, governance and ethics.

### CAREC Institute

During 2007 the CAREC program examined the establishment of the CAREC Institute with a purpose of building stronger capacities for regional cooperation in Central Asia. It is proposed for capacity building to be undertaken through the Institute's three main activities: training for government officials and other stakeholders, research on regional cooperation issues and opportunities, and outreach initiatives. The CAREC Institute prospectus was endorsed at the Senior Officials' Meeting on 8-9 September 2007 in Manila, Philippines and recommends a virtual setup for the first three years under the management of the CAREC Secretariat. The approach will be to implement activities in the region to not only build the capacities of CAREC government officials but also to enhance the capacity and transfer knowledge to existing regional institutions.

### Research Grants Program

Launched in 2007, the CAREC Research Grants Program<sup>2</sup> involves grants of up to \$20,000 to research institutions and individuals to prepare research on regional economic cooperation issues or themes directly relevant to CAREC's objectives. One of the benefits to the subregion is the creation of a network of research institutions and experts that combine regional knowledge with the expertise of the multilateral institutions.

Forty proposals were received and after a rigorous selection process, eight proposals were selected to receive a research grant. For the studies that yield significant findings, CAREC will disseminate the research conclusions and recommendations through forums and publications. This program has the potential to support CAREC's capacity building objective and share relevant knowledge with the broader CAREC community.

The research topics selected for funding in 2007 are:

1. Regional Cooperation Possibilities in the Supply of Renewable Energy in the Central Asia Region Using the Kyrgyz Republic as a Case Study
2. Mechanisms and Potential for Agricultural Commodities Trade in Central Asia
3. Training in Trade, Transportation and Transit for Better Business between Chinese and Kyrgyz Entrepreneurs
4. Analysis of Transit Trade Barriers for Kyrgyz Transit Transport through the Republic of Kazakhstan
5. Gender Measurement in Central Asia in Relation to Accession to the World Trade Organization
6. Monitoring of Transport Corridors of Central Asia
7. Eco-Tourism Based on Transport Corridors in China and Kazakhstan
8. Investigation of the Development of Modern Transport and Logistics Center in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

<sup>2</sup> Funded by ADB's Technical Assistance for Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation: Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation in CAREC Participating Countries, Phase I (cofinanced by PRC)



# Trade Policy Challenges

## Global and Regional Perspectives

27 June 2007, Almaty, Kazakhstan

By Katrin Elborgh-Woytek and Azim Sadikov

**H**ow can trade policy help Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) member countries better integrate into the world economy? At the end of June, CAREC officials discussed this question at a joint International Monetary Fund (IMF)-Asian Development Bank (ADB) workshop on “Trade Policy Challenges: Global and Regional Perspectives” in Almaty. The presentations by Ms. Elborgh-Woytek and Mr. Sadikov from the IMF’s Trade Policy Division focused on multilateral and preferential trade liberalization, the relationship between trade policy and foreign direct investment (FDI), and the benefits of trade facilitation in the CAREC region.

Trade liberalization allows for more efficient resource allocation and positive spillover effects into other policy areas. The World Trade Organization (WTO), as a multilateral platform for trade liberalization, promotes integration into the global trading system. Greater predictability of access to foreign markets and a rules-based system for dispute resolution are key ad-

vantages of WTO membership. For those CAREC countries that have embarked on the WTO accession process, accession modalities, including transition periods, remain important issues. For all CAREC members, regional implications of WTO membership and compatibility with regional trade agreements are critical. Over the past few years, preferential trade agreements in the CAREC region have gained importance. While such agreements encourage trade and investment among their members and serve as a commitment mechanism for future policy makers, they discriminate against non-members and often lead to welfare losses from trade diversion. Many overlapping agreements with differing tariff structures and rules of origin cause inconsistencies and lack of transparency.

Trade policy plays a key role in attracting and maximizing the benefits from FDI, such as technology and knowledge transfers, the development of backward and forward linkages, and more intense competition. However, these benefits may not materialize if a country’s trade regime

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remains restrictive and high import barriers attract FDI into sectors without comparative advantage. High tariffs on intermediate goods could also hurt the competitiveness of local firms. Many countries provide tax incentives to attract FDI, although experience has shown that fiscal competition is not a very effective instrument. Instead, host countries should direct resources into the improvement of human capital and physical infrastructure.

Trade facilitation remains critical for CAREC countries. While tariffs have been reduced substantially over the past two decades, the region’s trade potential is reduced by excessive regulations, bureaucratic procedures, and low-quality infrastructure. Trade facilitation is particularly important because most CAREC countries are landlocked and shipments have to overcome long distances and multiple borders. Accordingly, the physical and administrative infrastructure of all countries in the region are essential, and conditions in one country, particularly a transit country, affect all others. These challenges call for coordinated efforts in the region. CAREC policy makers need to cooperate on establishing and strengthening routes to major markets to exploit economies of scale, harmonize national policies, and simplify border crossing regulations.



# Benefits of Regional Cooperation

6–10 August 2007, Hue, Viet Nam  
By Ronald Butiong and Natasha Davis

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) program, an ADB-supported regional economic cooperation program established in 1992, aims to promote sustainable socioeconomic development through increased regional cooperation and integration. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program, initiated in 1997 has achieved 10 years of cooperation since its inception. There is much to be learned by sharing knowledge between regional cooperation programs, and this was the impetus to send a delegation of CAREC senior and mid-level officials to Hue, Viet Nam.

The GMS program has had a great number of achievements. The program has helped enhance connectivity, competitiveness, and community in the subregion. Increased connectivity through the development of subregional transport infrastructure has accelerated market-driven economic integration and has enhanced access to basic social services, especially for the poor in the border areas. Improved competitiveness arising from increased connectivity, simplification of rules and processes, to the cross-border movement of goods and people, development of trade logistics systems, establishment of a regional power market to rationalize energy supply, and the harnessing of information and communication technology (ICT) linkages are providing the foundations for sustainable and accelerated economic growth. Over 15 years of close cooperation and considerable economic progress has engendered a greater sense of community among the Mekong countries and a groundswell of



goodwill. This, in turn, has given them the impetus to mutually recognize and jointly address shared environmental and social concerns. The “peace dividend” of the GMS program has contributed to regional stability and better understanding among neighboring countries.

“It is absolutely necessary for smaller countries, under the current international and political environment where competition is strong, for them to unite. This cooperation, in turn, positively contributes to the region in strengthening economic and social consolidation,” said Noritada Morita, Keynote Speaker, Chairman and CEO of the Asia Strategy Forum, and former ADB Director General of Programs West.

The CAREC officials were briefed on the history of the GMS program, the project achievements, the development and implementation of the cross-border transport agreement, including the implementation of single stop/single window inspections at the borders, and the development of economic corridors. The CAREC delegates also shared with each other transport and transit achievements in their countries.

Hoang Viet Khang, Deputy Director General of Viet Nam’s Ministry of Planning and Investment, said his country would not have achieved an 18% growth rate in exports without regional economic cooperation. Viet Nam has received \$215 million worth of assistance through the GMS program for six investment projects since 1994. He explained in the GMS that “first we sit together and understand and then we cooperate”.

The East-West Corridor connects Viet Nam, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Thailand, and Myanmar. A briefing was provided by Mr. Math Sounmala, Director General, Planning and International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, Lao PDR. The field



visit brought the class room discussion of the last few days into perspective. The bus left early in the morning and set off for Danang City, the start of the East-West Corridor involving a transit through a 6-kilometer tunnel that has reduced travel times through the mountains from an hour to 10 minutes.

A briefing was given by the Danang Port Authority at the Tiensa Port followed by briefings by the Investment Promotion Center and Danang Industrial and Export Processing Zones Authority. It was explained that in 2002 there was little investment coming into Danang City, but with the establishment of good infrastructure, including ICT and improvements to the licensing and procedures, investments are now coming into the city. The tour through the Hoa Khanh Industrial Zone and the master plans for the city confirmed that investment and trade in Danang City is impressive.

The exploration of the East-West Corridor continued with a joint briefing at the Lao Bao/Dansavanh Border from the Vietnamese custom officials and Mr. Bounsoum Somsikhkhom, Deputy Director General, Transport Department, Ministry of Transport and Public Works, Lao PDR. The improvements in processing a truck are already considerable: what used to take 240 minutes on the Lao PDR side of the border now takes only 90 minutes. On the Viet Nam side, the 140 minutes truck processing time has been reduced to 40 minutes.

The CAREC officials left Viet Nam impressed with the achievements of the country, the GMS program, and the hospitality of the people.

# Seminar on Customs Automation

23–25 May 2007, Beijing, People’s Republic of China

By Arlan Brucal

During the first Customs Co-operation Committee (CCC) Meeting in Urumqi, People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 2002, the CCC endorsed a Common Action Plan comprising seven notable priority sectors. One of which is the simplification and harmonization of customs procedures, which is primarily being achieved mainly through member countries’ efforts to reform customs codes in line with the Revised Kyoto Convention.<sup>3</sup>

Recognizing the need to complement the efforts to simplify and harmonize customs procedures, the CCC included the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for automation of customs services and data-sharing. The initiative aimed to reinforce the member countries’ customs legal reforms and improve transparency and efficiency in customs services.

Since its inception in 2002, there have been significant capacity building initiatives in these fields within the CAREC region. In fact, under the auspices of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) trade facilitation program, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has had the opportunity to support capacity building seminars, forums, and consultation workshops centering on customs modernization/automation, simplification and harmonization of customs procedures, and e-Governance and trade facilitation, among others.

The most recent of which is the Seminar on Customs Automation, which was held in Beijing, PRC on 23–25 May 2007. The seminar was co-sponsored by ADB and the General Administration of Customs of the PRC.

The seminar focused on recent developments in business processes and data harmonization, including those of international organizations and countries

belonging to the Central Asian region. The program included Working Group discussions and bilateral consultations to develop an action plan to advance the bilateral initiatives in customs automation. The seminar also included a field visit to China Customs’ E-Port and Information Center, which allowed the participants to exchange views with customs officials and learn more about automated customs processes with the high technology and modern customs facilities of the China Customs.

Customs automation is one of the most important measures for facilitation of international trade. One has already seen emerging trends in advanced customs organizations and offices, such as paperless environment, internet utilization, single window processing, and harmonization and standardization of customs procedures. These trends will soon be seen in the CAREC region, arising from close collaboration among CAREC participating countries, ADB, and other allied organizations,” said Klaus Gerhaeusser, Deputy Director General of ADB’s East Asia Department.

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The seminar incorporated in its program knowledge-sharing, which centered on customs automation and associated tools, techniques, and methodologies. Included in these topics were the recommendations and guidelines on customs automation discussed thoroughly by World Customs Organization (WCO). The topic emphasized WCO’s recent initiatives in the business process and data harmonization, and provided a detailed update on country experiences and lessons learned on customs automation and data model implementation outside the CAREC program.

Another topic pointed to the need and the necessary steps towards business process and information modeling. Mr.



<sup>3</sup> The International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs procedures entered into force in 1974, was revised and updated to ensure that it meets the current demands of governments and international trade, and entered into force on 3 February 2006.



Dietmar Jost, a consultant from Booz Allen Hamilton, pointed out that the CAREC data model should include an information model with which CAREC countries could work together to come up with data sets for use in all participating countries. Frameworks of several widely used models were introduced, including the Unified Modeling Language (UML) and the UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology (UMM), and briefly enumerated WCO's UML business process models. Although the benefits of setting up a data model are overwhelming, there are a number of issues that need to be resolved. Many of these issues revolve around the effects of change in customs services' relationships with trade and other government agencies. Notwithstanding, these concerns can be mitigated by working closely with trade and other stakeholders, and by taking advantage of international standards and best practices.

The seminar also noted with great interest the developments in the China Customs administration in the area of ICT, particularly the application of ICT for risk management. China Customs has established the 3E Structure comprising E-administration, E-customs, and E-port. Benefits arising from this initiative include, among others, increase in trade, suppression of smuggling, and rise in customs revenue. In the future, China Customs intends to set up a unified risk database and propagate the application of risk targeting and selectivity system, among others.



As part of the seminar, the participants, during working group discussions and consultations, agreed that the CCC needs to:

- initiate the development of a CAREC Data Model for the import/export procedures of customs, based on the Revised Kyoto Convention and the WCO data model;
- strengthen efforts to implement the Revised Kyoto Convention as the basis towards modern application of ICT and risk management; and
- discuss and agree on a concrete work program for the development of the CAREC Data Model, and to accelerate the regional development process of harmonized and interoperable risk management procedures and IT systems at its next ICT Working Group meetings.

As a whole, the seminar effectively com-

bined knowledge sharing, policy forums, and bilateral consultations to provide participants with the opportunity to learn more on customs automation while centering on modern best practices, success factors, and implementation challenges, as well as to discuss outstanding issues on their initiatives in this area.

To further support the initiative under the CAREC Trade Facilitation Program, ADB is currently considering making provision in its technical assistance program for related activities for the next 12 months. Very recently, ADB, in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), organized a follow-up seminar to center on data harmonization and single administrative document in October 2007 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

# ADB, Mongolia Host Meeting for Central Asian Energy Regulators

10–14 September 2007; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

By Bayanjargal Byambasaikhan

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) electricity regulators forum held its Third Annual Meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 10–14 September 2007. The 5-day event, which brought together 60 representatives from CAREC energy regulatory bodies, policy makers, power industry specialists [from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China (PRC), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan], and international institutions, was co-hosted by the Energy Regulatory Authority (ERA) of Mongolia and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Annual Meeting kicked off with a 3-day training workshop on principles of effective energy regulation, which was facilitated by international energy regulation experts. The training workshop was designed in response to the direct request by the Forum participants to strengthen their understanding of economic and incentive regulation and various tariff setting methods and practices.

The training workshop was followed by a plenary session where the country delegates briefed their counterparts on the progress of power regulatory reforms since the annual meeting held in Kazakhstan in September 2006. They also led an open session on planning future activities, and shared views on how the CAREC Members Electricity Regulators Forum (CMERF) can serve its members' needs more effectively. The country delegations supported and accepted the Kyrgyz Republic's offer to chair the Forum in 2008 and to host the fourth annual meeting. It was also agreed that the next training workshop will be organized in Azerbaijan in early 2008.

During the last day of the annual meeting, ERA also showcased Mongolia's

experience in energy regulation. Mongolia has a relatively advanced energy regulatory framework and ERA, which has been in existence for 6 years, is known as the most independent regulatory agency in the CAREC region. ERA presented case studies from its experience in tariff setting and public consultations process that is followed prior to making regulatory decisions. The delegations also visited the National Dispatch Center and observed its operations.

At the conclusion of the annual meeting, the participating countries stressed the importance of coordination and facilitation of activities and the need for greater ownership of the Forum. The country delegations reiterated that the Forum was not simply an annual gathering, but an effective and functional forum, and that training activities provided direct and practical support to their work. The exchange of ideas during annual meetings was indeed something that the regulators need, and it should be continued, as it fosters active cooperation among experts and regulators, and builds professional relationships between the CAREC region's regulatory bodies.

The CAREC electricity regulators forum was established in 2005 with assistance from ADB and the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility to support regional cooperation and integration in the energy sector under the CAREC program. The Fo-

rum aims to develop its members' capacity to provide improved regulation and regulatory support of power sector reforms. This will help promote more efficient production and use of energy domestically, and will be crucial for supporting the development of electricity trade in the CAREC region.

During the Forum's second annual meeting, held in Kazakhstan in September 2006, the participating countries reaffirmed the practical value that the Forum adds to the process of harmonizing energy regulations, encouraging and facilitating regional trade, and developing the capacity of both regulators and regulatory bodies. The countries requested that ADB further support the CMERF program in 2007–2008, and advised that CMERF focus on providing training to participants on specific regulatory topics.

In March 2007, ADB began a regional technical assistance (TA) with the support from the PRC's Regional Cooperation and Poverty Reduction Fund. This TA is a continuation of ADB's efforts in support of the Forum to further strengthen its participants' capacity to provide sound regulation of and regulatory support for energy sector developments. The TA also builds on the outcomes of previous efforts under the Forum and provides direct hands-on support for regulatory bodies, by designing and implementing tailor-made training programs for regulatory staff.





# Training and Planning on Strategies to Face Influenza Threats

By Faig Mammadzade, Cai Chunhe, and Yon Fleerackers

How can the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) member countries best be prepared against the multiple threats arising from outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza caused by the H5N1 virus? And how can one reinforce country level interventions by collaboration among neighboring countries and at the regional level? In July, September and November 2007, three workshops were organized to assist human and animal health sectors with the control of avian influenza outbreaks and with improving human influenza pandemic preparedness. The CAREC program and the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Avian Influenza Task Force provided technical and financial support to these training workshops, which were organized by United Nations system agencies responsible for animal and human health—the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and by the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

At the end of these workshops, two meetings of CAREC officials were organized (on 6 July and 26 September for human and animal health experts respectively), which were co-chaired by delegates from Tajikistan (Mr. Nazarov Kholmamad and Mr. Mahmashoev Abdurahmom), together with local hosts from PRC and Kazakhstan. During these meetings, opportunities were taken to enhance cross-border collaboration and to follow up on the Almaty Declaration of 13 June 2006, a consensus document on strategies to face influenza threats in 10 countries (CAREC participating countries, the Russian Federation, and Turkmenistan; [www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2006/avian-influenza-control/](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2006/avian-influenza-control/)).

Particularly during the regional meetings, but also during training sessions,

senior and mid-level officials from the ministries of health and of agriculture built a true team spirit. This made bold planning of sustainable initiatives that enhance access to regional public goods possible. They proposed the creation of a regional task force on communicable disease control that includes experts from both ministries, the institution of a mechanism for quarterly exchange of information with standard indicators, and the creation of a regional website where country-specific data and information on capacity building initiatives can be shared. An animal or human public health institute should be identified in a CAREC country where one could host the team in charge of information management and reporting. They also promoted the expansion of training for rapid response teams at both regional and national levels, the enhancement of collaboration among national reference laboratories, and requested for an assessment of the need for regional stockpiling of antiviral medicine, and/or vaccines. Delegations from several countries (including PRC, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), seized the opportunity of these meetings to plan for strengthening infectious disease control across their borders. These delegations started designing public health programs that can address this need in pilot districts. Ayana Yeneabat of WHO's South-East Asia Regional Office shared with those attending the Almaty meeting his experience with establishing early warning and response systems. John Moran of the Center for Disease Control's Central Asia Office highlighted some of the benefits of regular information sharing in the region.

Other global leading experts, among them WHO's Paul Gully, FAO's Giancarlo Ferrari, and PRC virologist Hualan Chen, presented topics for discussion at the three

training workshops. In Qingdao and Harbin, PRC, participants visited national reference laboratories, disease surveillance and control centers, vaccine production plants, and a new farm where 3 million poultry are raised, functioning under the highest levels of biosecurity. In Almaty, Kazakhstan, participants gained through interactive scenario planning exercises a hands-on understanding of ways to comply with the new International Health Regulations and of gaps in containment strategies to be applied in the event of an influenza pandemic. In Ankara, Turkey, participants planned for enhanced surveillance of infectious diseases in birds based on their epidemiological characteristics.

The November 2007 training is part of a series of regional trainings organized by FAO's "Central Asia Regional Network for Avian Influenza", and the July 2007 training is part of WHO's global initiative to increase countries' capacities for rapid implementation of containment in the event of an influenza pandemic. The training module used in July was adapted from earlier versions used in Southeast Asian countries which had been affected by avian influenza.



# Capacity Building to Strengthen Tripartite Partnerships

10–12 October 2007 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

By Suzanne Nazal and Jennifer Francis

After more than a decade of economic restructuring, countries in Central Asia have a unique opportunity for growth. As each country works through transition from command economy to market-driven economy, Central Asian economies need to identify outlets for products and services beyond their domestic markets. Countries from the region have to both work together and link up with world markets through regional cooperation. In line with this, the ADB's Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program was initiated to improve living standards and to reduce poverty in CAREC countries through more efficient and effective regional economic cooperation. The CAREC Program represents a concrete example of countries and institutions cooperating to achieve sustained economic growth and long-term stability.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and other nongovernment organizations (NGOs) began to appear in Central Asia in the transition period. Their numbers have increased rapidly over the past years with governments providing a much more "enabling environment" to CSOs as partners in pursuit of cultivating an indigenous civic culture that responds to Central Asia's own problems, opportunities, and legacies. In this context, NGOs provide the forum for civil society to participate and express their views corporately on development issues at the community or national levels. One can certainly find positive examples of cooperation between NGOs and governments in areas such as the rights of women and persons with disability, measures to prevent the spread of tuberculosis and AIDS, and retraining for the unemployed, among others.

The CAREC Program presents an opportunity to build concrete mechanisms for civil society involvement in development, and sets a precedent with implications for broader calls for government's role in transformation of public service delivery. With the increase of NGO participation and attention in Central Asia, improving staff ability to work effectively with NGOs is crucial. In addition, involvement by NGOs alongside government at the early stages of ADB programming and project development facilitates a deeper tripartite partnership required for project and program sustainability.

ADB recognizes that strong tripartite partnership between ADB, the government, and civil society contributes to making projects more effective in meeting the priorities and needs of the intended beneficiaries. To facilitate closer operational relationships within a tripartite framework, ADB is committed to: (i) strengthening its internal capacity for civil society cooperation; (ii) strengthening CSO capacity to work with ADB; and (iii) nurturing government-NGO cooperation in ADB programming and project development through training, skills development activities, and other specific activities.

In collaboration with the Tajikistan Resident Mission and CAREC, the NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) organized a training program on "Working with ADB-Government-NGOs: Strengthening Tripartite Partnerships for Development Results." The training was held from 10-12 October 2007 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. This is NGOC's fourth offering, having delivered the program at ADB Headquarters, Indonesia, and Mongolia which included participants from the People's Republic of China.

The aim of this program was to provide ADB staff, government representatives, and selected NGOs from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, with an improved practical understanding of the benefits and challenges of working within a tripartite framework involving ADB, government, and civil society. The training helped build participants' skills in assessing and engaging NGOs in consultative and participatory processes during key stages of ADB's project cycle.

Discussions on NGO trends and developments in Central Asia highlighted the increasing acceptance of NGOs since the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, deeply rooted perceptions are difficult to change overnight and certain NGOs continue to be perceived as political opponents and suffer interference with their activities. Nevertheless, positive trends are also emerging with the influence of international actors in the adoption of laws to better regulate NGOs and available funding to NGOs. ADB has substantially increased its collaboration with NGOs in Central Asia in the past years, recognizing them as vital partners in addressing the development challenges in the region. One example among several, highlighting good ADB-Government-NGO cooperation was a project on "Improving Nutrition for Poor Mothers and Children in Central Asian Republics". Recognizing that it takes time to establish trust and partnerships, ADB is encouraging the gradual development of a culture of consultation between authorities and NGOs. This training offered a unique opportunity for all partners to discuss interests, needs and skills required and tailor partnerships into a country models

## CAREC Training Programs

Date	Program	Location
<b>2005</b>		
26–28 January	Forums on Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernization	Singapore
7–10 June	Seminar on Risk Management and Post-Entry Audit	Shenzhen, People's Republic of China (PRC)
4–6 July	CMERF First Annual Meeting	Beijing, PRC
27–29 July	Seminar on Trade Facilitation and One-Stop Service	Bangkok, Thailand
7–9 September	Customs Cooperation Committee Meeting (including forum on capacity building for customs administration and ASEAN single window initiative)	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
19–21 October	Forum on TIR Customs Transit System	Shanghai, PRC
5–8 December	Seminar on Trade Facilitation and E-Governance	Daejeon and Seoul, Republic of Korea
<b>2006</b>		
7 February	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Almaty, Kazakhstan
8 February	Mongolia Trade Logistics Consultation Seminar	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
9 February	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
9 February	Finalization Workshop on Customs Modernization	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
9 April	In-Country Workshop on Xinjiang Trade Logistics Development	Urumqi, PRC
13 April	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Beijing, PRC
17–19 April	Forum on Trade Facilitation and Customs Reform and Modernization	Tokyo, Japan
12–14 July	Seminar on WCO's Framework of Standards and Customs Data Model	Urumqi, PRC
11–13 September	CMERF Second Annual Meeting	Almaty, Kazakhstan
26 September	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Tashkent, Uzbekistan
28 September	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
28 September	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Baku, Azerbaijan
2 October	IMF: Trade Policy Outreach	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
11–13 October	Customs Cooperation Committee Meeting (including forum on logistics development and integrated border management)	Astana, Kazakhstan
10–11 November	International Conference on the PRC and Mongolia Trade Facilitation and Trade Logistics Development	Erenhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, PRC
<b>2007</b>		
7–9 February	Seminar on Implementation Challenges in Joint Customs Control, Risk Management and Post Entry Audit	Bangkok, Thailand
29–30 March	New Ventures in Regional Cooperation: Learning Program for CAREC Senior Officials	Manila, Philippines
21–22 May	6 <sup>th</sup> Energy Regulation and Investment Conference	Istanbul, Turkey
23 May	Energy Regulators Regional Association General Assembly	Istanbul, Turkey
24 May	Licensing/Competition Committee Meeting	Istanbul, Turkey
25 May	USAID Regional Energy Markets Assistance Program for Central Asia Workshop	Istanbul, Turkey
23–25 May	Customs Automation	Beijing, PRC
27 June	IMF: Trade Policy Challenges—Global and Regional Perspectives	Almaty, Kazakhstan
2–5 July	Pandemic Influenza—Rapid Containment International Workshop	Almaty, Kazakhstan
6–10 August	The Benefits of Regional Cooperation: An Exchange Learning Program between CAREC and the GMS	Hue, Vietnam
22–24 August	Policy and Management Mechanisms for Economic Development Areas	Urumqi, PRC
10–14 September	CMERF Energy Regulation Training Workshops	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
17–28 September	Workshop on Avian Influenza Control Technology for CAREC Countries	Beijing, Qingdao, Harbin, Urumqi, PRC
24–28 September	Seminar on Cooperation with Central Asian Chambers of Commerce	Hangzhou, PRC
1–3 October	Working with ADB-Government-NGO/CSOs: Strengthening Tripartite Partnerships for Development Results	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
14-23 November	Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases	Ankara, Turkey



## **About the CAREC Program**

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program was established in 1997 and now represents a true, robust development partnership; a concrete example of countries and institutions cooperating to achieve a common purpose. The Program's overarching goal is development through cooperation, leading to accelerated economic growth and poverty reduction. By promoting and facilitating regional cooperation in transport, trade, energy, and other key areas of mutual interest, the CAREC Program helps the countries of greater Central Asia realize their immense potential in an increasingly integrated Eurasia.

Spanning nearly 4,000 kilometers across Central Asia, the CAREC Program includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China (focusing on Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. CAREC is also an alliance of multilateral and other international agencies active in promoting economic cooperation in Central Asia, namely the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and World Bank. ADB serves as the CAREC Secretariat. This wide partnership enables CAREC to fulfill its role as a proactive facilitator of practical, results-based regional projects and policy initiatives critical to trade expansion, sustainable development, and meeting new challenges.

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