



**CAREC 2030: Development Effectiveness Review (DEfR) 2021
Background Note**

(June 30, 2021)

**Virtual Senior Officials' Meeting
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation**

30 June 2021

1. Background

CAREC 2030: Connecting the Region for Shared and Sustainable Development (CAREC 2030 Strategy) was endorsed at the 16th Ministerial Conference in 2017 as a new strategic framework of the program. The Development Effectiveness Review (DEfR) is a process to review and report consolidated picture of progress made towards achieving the objectives of the CAREC 2030 Strategy every three years. The first DEfR will cover the period 2017 – 2020. It will measure the progress as of 2020 using 2017 data as the baseline; highlight achievements; identify areas for improvement; and propose actions to meet emerging challenges and assist in strategic decision making. Considering this is the first progress review under the CAREC 2030 Strategy, the emphasis will be on learning, continuous improvement, and the future direction of the CAREC program.

2. Objective and Scope of Review

CAREC DEfR reports on progress against the CAREC Program Results Framework (PRF) endorsed at CAREC Ministerial Conference in 2020. The PRF covers the five operational clusters: (i) economic and financial stability; (ii) trade, tourism, and economic corridors; (iii) infrastructure and economic connectivity; (iv) agriculture and water; and (v) human development; while integrating the use of information and communication technology (ICT), gender mainstreaming, and climate change mitigation as cross-cutting priorities.

Besides results achieved against PRF, the scope of the review will cover progress made under each cluster towards achieving the objectives of the CAREC 2030 Strategy.

3. Methods and Approaches of the Review

DEfR will focus on the progress towards the achievement of the CAREC 2030 Strategy. As such, the review will assess whether each cluster is “on track”. The CAREC DEfR will assess the five clusters using three **key review criteria**, namely **relevance, progress, and process** (Appendix 1 provides additional details). These have been adopted for DEfR from five OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria¹.

Information sources for the review include (1) data against PRF, (2) secondary sources (CAREC reports, etc.), and (3) interviews and survey of stakeholders including member countries represented by national and sector focal points, ADB staff, development partners and civil society engaged in the CAREC program.

Moreover, the review will assess the institutional arrangements of the CAREC program, covering its various processes like strategic planning (relevance), their efficiency (progress) and coherence (progress). While the DEfR intends to collect quantifiable data (for example, persons/months spent by ADB staff, consultants, and development partners), others are largely drawn from a *non-quantifiable* assessment based on the collection of questionnaires and interviews with stakeholders.

¹ OECD-DAC: The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has defined six evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. For this review, impact will not be considered as it is premature to measure, OECD website: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

To capture the needs of the CAREC region, the DEfR will analyze the overall development trends of the region, considering macroeconomic analysis and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A more in-depth analysis of each cluster and sector will be provided. Throughout the assessment, given the complexity of the CAREC program, various aspects will be considered as follows:

- (i) The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be taken into consideration, given its significant impact on the countries, the program operation and regional cooperation. The review will measure the impact of the COVID-19 and look at how the CAREC adapted the program to the effects of the pandemic.
- (ii) For those clusters under strategy 2030 that are still being scoped out (e.g., water and agriculture, human development), the preparatory work, such as joint dialogues and background analytical work, will be considered to report progress.
- (iii) Unique examples from CAREC portfolio and good practices will be identified and reported for each cluster to bring out aspects not covered by quantitative analysis. These will be identified through consultations and feedback from various CAREC stakeholders.
- (iv) Activities and progress made by the CAREC Institute as the knowledge arm of the program will also be reported.
- (v) Cross-cutting themes will be assessed along with five operational clusters.
- (vi) Based on the findings, the DEfR will provide lessons and recommendations to inform the decision-making process of the program and improve its operation, including PRF, for consideration.

4. Proposed Outline of the DEfR

Executive summary
Section 1. Overview of CAREC Program
Section 2. Status of CAREC Portfolio
Section 3. CAREC Results
3.1. Economic and Financial Stability
3.2. Trade, Tourism and Economic Corridors
3.3. Infrastructure and Economic Connectivity
3.4. Agriculture and Water
3.5. Human Development
Section 4. Key Lessons and Recommendations
Appendix 1. CAREC Program Results Framework (Baseline and Actual)

5. Progress to Date

Key preparatory work has been initiated with the recruitment of a lead consultant to work with the designated team in the CAREC Secretariat. Consultant profile has been shared with the member countries. Consultant and the team have developed an assessment framework, including assessment criteria and data points, along with specific assessment questions. Questionnaires have been prepared and circulated to the sector focal points. Consultations with member country stakeholders are being scheduled by the CAREC secretariat. Secondary data and information are being collected to support the preparatory work through in-depth analysis. The interim report is planned to be prepared by July 2021 and will be discussed and finalized by October 2021. The findings will be presented at the 20th CAREC Ministerial Conference, tentatively planned for November 2021.

6. Timeline

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Inception Report	■							
Assessment Framework	■	■						
Data collection (secondary sources)		■	■					
Circulation of Questionnaire		■	■					
Consultations with stakeholders		■	■	■	■	■		
Interim DEfR report		■	■	■				
Review of the interim DEfR report				■	■			
Final draft DEfR report					■	■		
Review of the final draft DEfR					■	■		
Finalization & submission of the final DEfR						■	■	
Presentation on findings (20 th CAREC MC)								■

Appendix 1: DEfR Review Criteria

Criteria	Data Points
<p style="text-align: center;">RELEVANCE (Strategy)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistency with higher objectives of CAREC 2030 Strategy 2. Whether the program is generating knowledge and lessons learned to ensure the continued relevance towards its stated objectives 3. Consistency with relevant aid objectives of other donors 4. Comparative advantage of ADB-CAREC as Secretariat
<p style="text-align: center;">PROGRESS (Effectiveness and Efficiency)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much progress has been made in terms of resources spent towards achieving its strategic objectives, using financial and human resources as inputs? 2. How much progress has been made in terms of “indicators” of intermediate outputs available? 3. How much progress is likely to be made towards 2030 goals?
<p style="text-align: center;">PROCESS (Coherence and Sustainability)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriateness of Designing Process of CAREC Development Strategies including Needs Assessment, Consultation, and Approval. 2. Appropriateness of Implementing Process of CAREC Development Strategies in terms of transparency and monitoring mechanism. 3. Effectiveness of harmonization with other donors and agencies, especially for ADB-CAREC role played.