

# CAREC Institute Progress Report

Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)

30-31 May 2024, Astana

Kabir Jurazoda, CAREC Institute Director



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# 2023 Key Highlights

- New Deputy Director Two – Mr. Kuat Akizhanov – a Kazakhstan national joined CI.
- The Mid-term Review of CI's Strategy 2021-2025 undertaken.
- ADB's ongoing TA extended until 30 September 2025.
- 7th Think Tank Development Forum under the theme "Embracing Digital Technology for Sustainable Economic Development" held on 16-17 August in Urumqi, PRC.
- CI's Third Annual Research Conference "Prospects for an Inclusive Green Growth and Sustainability in the CAREC Region" on September 20-21 in virtual format.
- CI's Second Annual Book "Resilience and Economic Growth in Times of High Uncertainty" published.
- 4 Quarterly Economic Monitors (QEMs), 2 economic briefs and 5 policy briefs.
- 7 in-house research projects, 3 CTTN RGP and 5 ADB-CI VFP publications, 5 policy briefs, 3 research publications with partner organizations.
- UNESCAP-CI Joint Special Issue for the Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal, 2023.
- 20 capacity-building activities were conducted in key thematic areas.
- All CB activities recorded, customized, and uploaded on CI's E-Learning platform, made available and accessible for target audience.
- 12 monthly newsletters produced and disseminated.
- Five knowledge adaptations published, with a total of 24 CI knowledge adaptations and inputs.
- New partnership with the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD), Beijing Technology and Business University (BTBU) and Beijing National Accounting Institute (BNAI), the Center for Analysis of Economic Reforms and Communication (CAERC) of Azerbaijan, China Export and Import (EXIM) Bank, Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) signed.
- Project partnerships and joint webinars with ADB, ADBI, IsDB, RKSI, UNICEF, UNESCAP, EFSD/EDB, BNAI, BTBU, CAAC and etc.

# 2024 Work Plan Progress Update



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## Governance

- **Mid-Term Review (MTR)** report shared with the Governing Council (GC) for review and feedback. After GC's review CI will prepare a comprehensive action plan to implement key recommendations.
- **Governing Council (GC)** – to hold the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GC combined with the Ministerial Conference (MC) tentatively in November in Kazakhstan.
- **Advisory Council (AC)** – The Sixth AC meeting is tentatively scheduled for October in an online mode.
- CI has commenced the process of recruiting a **new Director** from Turkmenistan, as the current Director Mr. Kabir Jurazoda – a Tajikistan National – completes his tenure in November.

# Financial Management

- **Resource Mobilization** – the fourth meeting of the Financial Sustainability Working Group (**FSWG**) is scheduled in June to deliberate on financial contribution framework within the “voluntary contribution” principle outlined in the IGA.
- **The financial contribution** – contribution from PRC is expected to be at the same level as in 2023, the contribution for 2024 is in the process. CI is also actively pursuing contributions from other countries including Tajikistan and Kazakhstan.
- In **addition to contributions** from member countries, Technical Assistance (TA) from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been another critical support for CI.
- For its flagship think tank forum, CI has **mobilized financing** from IMF CCAMTAC, EDB, EFSD, ERI. Discussions with more sponsors are underway.
- CI has **mobilized financing** from IsDB, UNICEF for new project activities, and has also explored opportunities for collaboration with other organizations such as Zhejiang University.
- **External Audit** for the year 2023 is underway.

# CAREC Institute Think Tank Network Activities

- **CTTN Blog** – an interactive knowledge-sharing platform for CTTN members operationalized – *CESD, Azerbaijan made first contribution analyzing the tourism potential*. The blog offers an opportunity for CTTN member think tanks and universities to share their county-specific knowledge focusing on CAREC priority clusters with a larger audience. Blog postings are accepted in two languages – English and Russian.
- **Eighth CAREC Think Tank Development Forum (CTTDF)**, the eighth forum is scheduled for 27-28 August in Almaty, Kazakhstan on "*The Climate Challenge: Thinking Beyond Borders for Collective Action*". TTF is CI's flagship annual event. Starting in 2016, the forum has become an attractive regional gathering of renowned think tanks, universities, government officials, and development partners to deliberate on pressing regional issues.
- **CTTN Research Study "*From Ideas to Impact: Accelerating Climate Solutions through Innovative Development*"** is underway. CI has awarded five grants on topics closely aligned with the thematic focus of Climate Change. The final paper will be presented at the TTF in August. Commissioned in the context of CAREC Climate Change Vision/Action and TTF thematic focus, the grants focus on exploring ideas for sustainable economic growth, regional climate vulnerabilities, climate financing, and regional cooperation to tackle climate challenges.
- **CTTN Dialogue Series** – CTTN Virtual Dialogue series brings together shared views, opinions, and analysis of CAREC regional think tanks on global and regional emerging issues that impact the economic and social development of CAREC member countries. This year's first dialogue is tentatively scheduled in June to discuss "*Trade Diversification in the CAREC Region: Opportunities and Challenges*".

# Chief Economist Team Activities

- **Quarterly Economic Monitor (QEM)** – a well-received knowledge product published in three languages (i.e. English, Russian and Chinese) on a regular basis; one published and three more to come.
- **Project “Household access to energy in the Fergana Valley”** – Project report published.
- **Research project Innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises** – Concept note under discussions with ADB and partners (UNIDO, ADBI).
- **Economic Briefs** - Economic brief “Promoting Electric Vehicles (EV) Deployment in the CAREC Region” and “Navigating Digital Transformation in the CAREC region: An Organizational Approach to E-Government Implementation” published, two more to come in 2024; one more on EVs, one on the fiscal role in green investment.
- **Contribute to CI’s flagship annual report** – title and methodology are under discussion.

# Research Activities

- **Comparative Analysis of CAREC Corridors: Policy Recommendations for Middle Corridors"** Completed (joint project with AZE state customs).
- **Trade and Transit Infrastructure: The Middle Corridor Overview,** completed (joint project with AZE think tank).
- **Containerization in the CAREC region: Trends, Developments and Recommendations,** Concept note submitted to ADB for approval.
- Submissions under **ADB- CI Visiting Fellows Program** are in process – working papers are planned in the rest of the year.
- **Trans-Continental (CAREC+EU)Trade Corridors: An Initial Exploration -** planned for the last quarter of the year.
- **Digital and Trade Facilitation Report** – a joint project with UNESCAP - completion deadline is end of May; publication may take some time. It is planned to be launched at CI's annual research conference in August.
- With ADB, **Fintech Cooperation Development for CAREC region,** is completed. The discussion paper/s are planned for this year for wider dissemination.
- With Eurasian Development Bank (EDB), a working paper on **Debt and Interest Rate** is in progress. Hopefully, will be completed by end of June.



# Research Activities

- **Fourth Annual Research Conference** - paper submission are in process. Selecting final papers, tentative agenda finalization, conduction of the conference are planned for the rest of the year.
- With EDB, a CN preparation on **Climate Financing** is kicked off. We may have some output for COP 29 in Azerbaijan.
- **Renewable Energy Investment Ecosystem Project** has been approved by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICDT). It has been advertised for national consultants and will commence in May.
- **A blended learning framework for Central Asia** - data collected and is expected to be completed in three months.
- **The impact evaluation of the Made in China 2025 strategy on corporate innovation** is ongoing at the ADBI. The findings will be published here as a working paper, while the policy brief will be published by CI.
- **Socio-economic inequality, informal and low-paid jobs in Central Asia: causes and consequences revisited** – at concept stage.

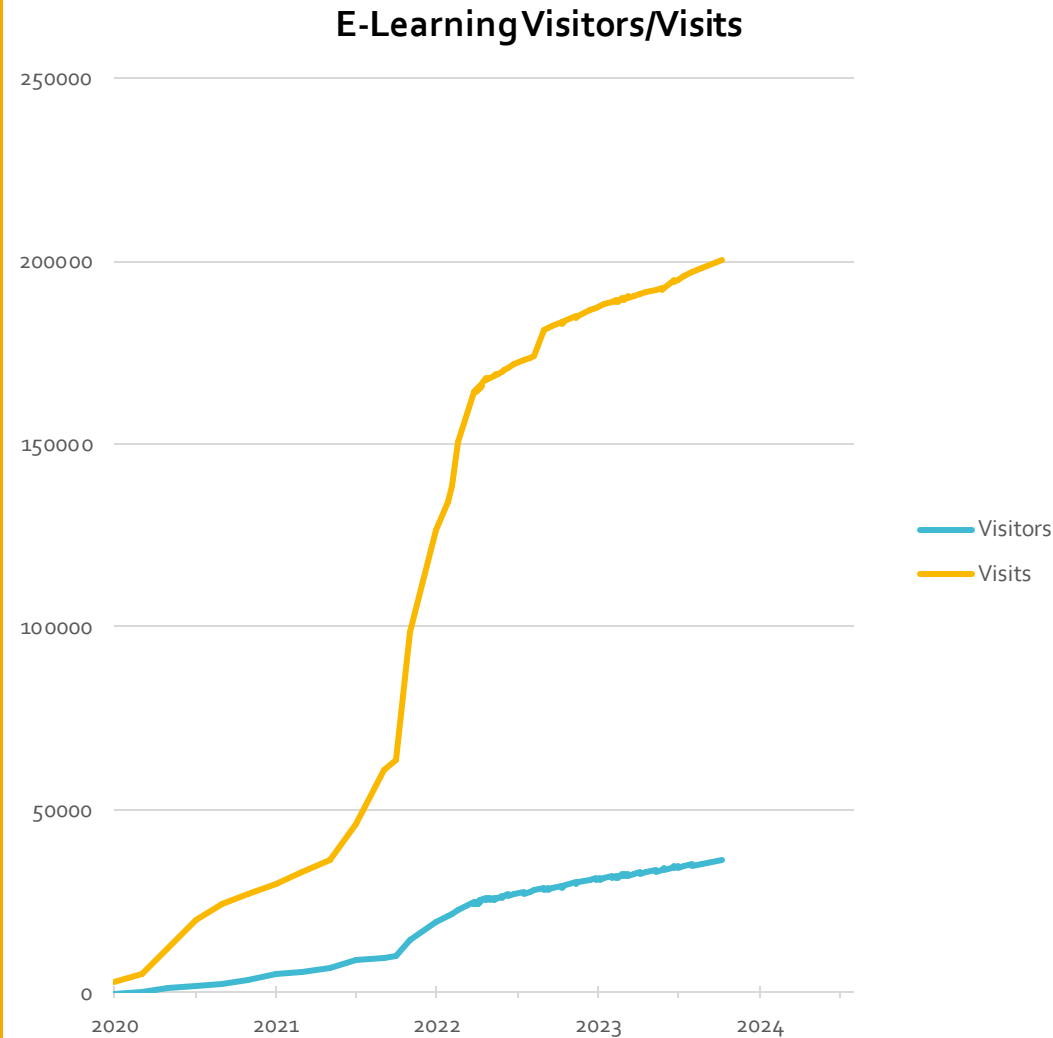
# Capacity Building

- In the first half of 2024, CI significantly expanded its capacity-building (CB) efforts by **delivering 10 workshops out of 21 scheduled**.
- **50% were conducted entirely virtually**, enhancing accessibility and cost-efficiency, remaining activities were delivered in a hybrid format, with **over 50% of events directly linked to the CI's research projects** in 2023.
- **Focus areas:** Water management, Climate change, Digitalization (digital economy, e-commerce, fintech), Trade Facilitation, Regional connectivity, Transport corridors, Road Safety and Road Asset Management Tourism, Human Development.
- **Target group:** senior CAREC government officials, local researchers
- **Objective** - sustainable transfer of practical knowledge accumulated by international development partners and explore best practices for formulating policy recommendations for governments.

# Capacity Building

- CAREC Regional WASH Forum (**in progress**)
- Digital Economy Training (**in progress**)
- 8th World Cross-border E-commerce Conference and Commodity Exhibition: Cross-border E-commerce Talent Cultivation and China-Central Asia Education Cooperation Forum (**in progress**)
- Free Trade Zones: New opportunities for the CAREC region – **planned**
- CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement, Time Release Study and Behind-the-Border Indicators – **planned**
- Green Energy – **planned**
- Two Road Asset Management (ToT) – **planned**
- Tourism Development in CAREC Region – **planned**
- Water Sector Financing Improvement Action Plan – **planned**
- Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture Training Programs – **planned**
- Digital CAREC: EdTech Development - **planned**

# Capacity Building



CAREC Institute E-Platform Statistics 2020-2024

- The platform's popularity is evidenced by the surge in visitors, totaling over 37,000, and visits exceeding 210,000 recorded in the first half of 2024.
- While these figures indicate a positive trend, the CI acknowledges the importance of further development in collecting data on user demographics and platform usage patterns.

# Knowledge Management

- **E-Newsletter & Promotional material** – Created two issues of the monthly Newsletter, CI booklet, factsheet, and the major publications catalogue for 2024, as well as infographics for key activities.
- Created and disseminated the **Annual Report of 2023** in English and Russian to GC members for review.
- **The Third Annual Book of CI** – based on research conference papers – is in the process of publication.
- **Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy, and Brand Guidelines** – with ADB’s support, consultant’s hiring is in the process.
- **Website Upgrading and Function Optimization** - with ADB’s support, consultant’s hiring is in the process.
- **Virtual CAREC WASH Center** - An online survey and a scheduled online consultation on the establishment of a virtual WASH Center are in progress, An in-person regional WASH forum on shaping the future of WASH in Central Asia is set for May 21-24.

Thank you!



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