



CAREC Second Tier Activities: An Update

**Senior Officials' Meeting on
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
26-27 March 2007
Manila, Philippines**

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1. The *CAREC Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP)* endorsed at the 5th CAREC Ministerial Conference in October 2006 includes plans to broadening and deepening the program. The CAP states that a two-tiered approach to CAREC activities will be followed. The first tier of activities will be on a sector-wide basis related to transport, trade and energy. The second tier of activities will be in new sectors, but limited to highly focused projects.

2. Potential second-tier areas were proposed in the *Report of Senior Officials to the 5th Ministerial Conference*:

“Upon Ministerial endorsement of the two-tier approach to broadening the CAREC Program, Senior Officials will consider in more detail special initiatives regarding human development (training of officials and measures against communicable diseases such as avian flu and HIV/AIDS), the environment (through information exchange and capacity building, for example), disaster management, tourism and agriculture.”

3. This proposal was endorsed by Ministers in the *Urumqi Declaration*:

“Under the Comprehensive Action Plan, we will broaden the CAREC Program following a two-tiered approach. The first-tier will continue to focus on sector-wide initiatives in our priority areas: transport, energy, and trade. The second-tier activities will include special initiatives in new sectors, including human development, environment, agriculture and tourism.”

4. Second-tier projects will have the following characteristics:

- Unlike first-tier initiatives, not sector wide
- Limited to highly focused projects
- CAREC coordinating committees not required
- CAREC Secretariat to monitor and report on second-tier activities
- Second-tier activities could involve new development partners

5. This brief will provide a short update on ongoing activities in the following second-tier areas: (i) human development; (ii) environment; (iii) agriculture; (iv) tourism; and (v) disaster management.

A. Human Development

1. Capacity Development Program

6. Work has been initiated to formulate a CAREC Capacity Development Program.¹ The program will seek to (a) train senior and mid-level government officials involved in regional cooperation in the skills needed to identify, plan, and effectively implement mutually beneficial initiatives; and (b) deepen understanding of the importance of regional cooperation and the costs of noncooperation. Learning activities will involve both formal training programs and

¹ The work is being conducted under regional technical assistance grant “Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation: Capacity Development for Regional Cooperation in CAREC Participating Countries, Phase 1.” This RETA is co-financed by the People’s Republic of China and was approved on 18 December 2006.

learning experiences in relevant countries and subregions with experience in regional cooperation.

7. To ensure the Capacity Development Program meets the needs of target officials, an Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Needs will be conducted. The assessment will determine the relevant needs of senior and mid-level officials (what they need to know to be more effective in promoting practical, project-based regional cooperation) and how best to help them meet these needs. Country consultations will be conducted in April and May.

8. The program will seek to develop an appropriate series of events for National Focal Points. Detailed input from National Focal Points will be critical to ensuring an appropriate (in terms of content, timing, length, location, etc.) series of practical events can be developed and implemented over the coming year.

2. Cooperation with Central Asian Gateway Project

9. ADB has signed a grant agreement to provide the Central Asian Gateway Project (CAG) with financial support to expand its coverage and strengthen efforts to build a network of research institutes in Central Asia and neighboring countries. Under a memorandum of understanding agreed among ADB, CAG, its implementing partner the Uzbekistan Center for Economic Research (CER), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ADB will provide \$76,500 for the joint project. The UNDP and CAG will support the agreement through \$13,450 worth of inputs of staff time and office facilities.

10. The grant will help (i) expand CAG coverage to include all CAREC participating countries; (ii) expand an existing electronic directory of think tanks; (iii) pilot an informal forum of think tanks to support regional cooperation efforts; and (iv) broaden the project's database of statistical information on socio-economic development and cooperation in the CAREC region.

3. Regional Communicable Disease Surveillance (Avian Influenza – HIV/AIDS)

11. On 28 December 2006 the Avian and Human Influenza Facility of the World Bank approved a \$5 million project in Afghanistan to control infection among poultry and prepare responses for possible human infections and related emergencies. A \$1.5 million project was approved for Tajikistan to minimize threats to humans for pandemics and other zoonoses.

12. At the International Pledging Conference on Avian Influenza in Beijing in January 2006, ADB committed to closely coordinate its activities at the country level with other development partners, and in particular with the World Bank. ADB also offered to focus its assistance to DMCs at the regional level. On 14 March 2006, ADB approved a \$38 million grant, *Control and Prevention of Avian Influenza in Asia and the Pacific Project* (Grant 0041/RETA 6313). The Project has supported activities in animal and human health sectors, with technical support and under the supervision of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). With FAO support, representatives from Central Asian countries have developed draft work plans to standardize diagnostic surveillance and reporting systems. WHO organized regional training on rapid response and containment in the event of an AI outbreak for representatives from Central Asian countries.

13. Donor agencies and major implementing partners have held three meetings to facilitate donor coordination for influenza control programs in Central Asia. The meetings were held in

Almaty, Kazakhstan, in March, June, and December 2006. Twelve international agencies and institutions agreed that regional donor coordination needs to be facilitated by a secretariat, to be established with a long-term perspective; and produced together a matrix of programmatic activities on influenza control. Donor agencies advised that the secretariat should liaise with a regional technical advisory group.

14. In response, ADB has recruited (as of end February 2006) a long-term consultant who is working from the CAREC Secretariat to develop regional cooperation among countries and agencies/institutes, and to help harmonize national policies and action plans for communicable disease control.

15. As a first priority the CAREC Secretariat will seek cooperation to assist in the establishment of coordination and communication mechanisms to enable sharing of epidemiological and programmatic information; to monitor implementation of regional activities (including laboratory capacity development and feasibility studies to enhance the quality of disease surveillance); and to facilitate cooperation for the production of standardized training packages for the region, particularly for those working on surveillance and laboratory diagnosis at sub-national levels.

16. On 10 - 11 December 2006, the first Central Asian forum of partners, entitled "Working on HIV Prevention" was organized by UNAIDS in organized in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, jointly with the Central Asia AIDS Control Project (funded by World Bank and DFID) and with USAID-funded organizations. The forum provided an opportunity to exchange information about actions planned in Central Asia countries for 2007, with the purpose to streamline actions planned in Central Asia countries in 2007.

17. Between March and December 2006, the World Bank, jointly with other UN agencies, conducted country assessments to scale up efforts for the control of avian influenza in five CAREC participating countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and in Turkmenistan.

18. H5N1 Avian influenza (AI) continues to cause significant economic losses in Asia, severely affecting the livelihood of poor rural households who are most at risk, but the main threat is the potential for this animal disease to trigger a human influenza pandemic. According to the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE),² AI outbreaks in animals have recently been reported in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia. As of 12 March 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed human cases in CAREC countries in Azerbaijan (8 cases, 5 deaths) and China (23 cases, 14 deaths).³

19. The AI virus does not stop at the borders. Migratory birds, carriers of the virus, and trade of poultry and poultry products that may be infected can – and have – spread the virus widely across borders. Controlling the spread of communicable diseases requires not only country level interventions but also regional interventions and regional collaboration. All countries have an interest in ensuring that each country, and in particular their neighbors, are able and do implement suitable and effective responses to AI and other communicable diseases.

20. This implies that health systems must have the capacity to respond effectively and efficiently to emerging diseases, which is not the case in many countries, including in CAREC

² http://www.oie.int/download/AVIAN%20INFLUENZA/A_AI-Asia.htm

³ http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/country/cases_table_2007_03_08/en/index.html

countries. Weak capacity, especially in disease early warning systems, surveillance, and disease control increases the risk of a human influenza pandemic in the region and world-wide.

21. HIV/AIDS is also a communicable disease spreading across borders, which requires regional collaboration for its control and prevention. An ADB and UNAIDS joint project supports the development of new epidemiological tools for monitoring the spread of HIV and other aspects related to the HIV epidemic, and for disseminating appropriate information for evidence-based interventions.

B. Environment

1. Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM)

22. Land degradation⁴—over grazing, soil erosion, salt damage to irrigated land, desertification—is a serious economic, social, and environmental problem in Central Asia.

23. The Central Asian region, comprising Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, has a fragile ecosystem with arid and semi-arid areas of very low natural productivity. Agricultural and other land-use practices aimed at maximum production with limited regard for sustainability have resulted in severe land degradation.

24. Land degradation directly affects the livelihood of nearly 20 million rural inhabitants by reducing the productivity of land resources and adversely affecting the stability, functions, and services derived from natural systems. Agricultural yields are reported to have declined by 20–30% across the region since these countries achieved independence over a decade ago.

25. The five Central Asian countries have organized themselves, with the support of the international donor community,⁵ to work towards sustainable land management and reverse land degradation through the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM).

26. Total program financing is to up to \$1.4 billion over 2006—2015. Committed funding up to end of 2008 is approximately \$155 million, of which the Global Environment Facility will contribute \$20 million in grant co-financing.

27. CACILM's goal is the restoration, maintenance, and enhancement of the productive functions of land in Central Asia, leading to improved economic and social well being of those who depend on these resources while preserving the ecological functions of the land.

⁴ Land degradation is defined by GEF as "...any form of deterioration of the natural potential of land that affects ecosystem integrity either in terms of reducing its sustainable ecological productivity or in terms of its native biological richness and maintenance of resilience." Cited in GEF. 2003. *Operational Program on Sustainable Land Management (OP 15)*.

⁵ CACILM involves the following development partners: (i) Asian Development Bank (ADB); (ii) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); (iii) CCD Project of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ); (iv) UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); (v) Global Environment Facility (GEF); (vi) Global Mechanism (GM); (vii) International Center for Agricultural Development (ICARDA); (viii) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), (ix) Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC); (x) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); (xi) United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and (xii) World Bank. Other participating organizations include: the Islamic Development Bank, and the UNCCD Secretariat.

28. The CACILM Steering Committee will take the lead in coordinating and directing CACILM. Its tasks include:

- (i) approval of changes in CACILM work and financial plan;
- (ii) endorsement of proposals for funding;
- (iii) monitoring CACILM performance; and
- (iv) reports to and updates partners.

29. National Coordination Councils supported national secretariats have been created in each member country. A CACILM secretariat at ADB supports the work of CACILM Steering Committee. ADB is responsible for overall coordination of CACILM activities.

30. CACILM program areas and activities are being implemented in a multicountry framework, which includes a 10-year program of activities in each country, based on each country's National Programming Framework (NPF). Each country prepared an NPF, which has projects/activities in the following areas:

- (i) Capacity building for strengthening the enabling environment;
- (ii) Capacity building for integrated land-use planning and management;
- (iii) Sustainable agriculture in rainfed land;
- (iv) Sustainable agriculture in irrigated land;
- (v) Sustainable forest and woodland management;
- (vi) Sustainable pastureland management;
- (vii) Integrated resource management;
- (viii) Protected area management and biodiversity conservation; and
- (ix) Remediation in the region of the former Aral sea.

31. At the multi-country level, activities include:

- (i) Capacity building for mainstreaming sustainable land management and integrating them into planning and management;
- (ii) Development of sustainable land management information system;
- (iii) Sustainable land management research; and
- (iv) Knowledge management and information dissemination.

32. The CACILM partnership will showcase an initial eight priority national projects and two multi-country projects, as follows:

- Kazakhstan: Rangeland Ecosystem Management
- Kyrgyz Republic: Integrated Agricultural Development and Land Improvement, and Mountain Pasture Management in Susamir Valley
- Tajikistan: Rural Development and Demonstrating Local Responses to Combating Land Degradation and Improving Sustainable Land Management in SW Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan: Capacity Building and On-the-ground Investments for Integrated and Sustainable Land Management
- Uzbekistan: Achieving Ecosystem Stability on Degraded Land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert and Land Improvement
- CACILM Multi-country Partnership Framework Support and CACILM Multi-country Capacity Building Project

C. Agriculture

1. Partnership on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Pesticide Management for Agricultural Production in Central Asian

33. The Central Asian region faces a great challenge to reduce and eliminate the use of POPs Pesticides. For countries with limited resources for pest and pesticide management, POPs pesticides are a cost-effective means of pest control. To eliminate their use in agriculture, the countries will need alternative options, farmer education and training, public awareness of adverse effects of these chemicals on human health, effective monitoring, and enforcement of regulatory measures. At the same time, countries with less capacity to address pest management in cotton crops will benefit from help from those with better capacity or successful experiences. A long-term regional cooperation strategy and partnership with development agencies can help these countries eliminate POPs pesticides and clean up contaminated sites.

34. It is expected that this TA will facilitate the reduction of POPs pesticide use in agriculture and sound integrated management of POPs pesticides. The expected outcome is a partnership on POPs pesticides management for agricultural production in Central Asia countries, involving several countries and developing partners. The main outputs of this TA will be

- (i) a regional working group established for IPM application and sound POPs pesticide management in agricultural production;
- (ii) a report prepared on international experience and its implications for the region;
- (iii) alternative pest management options developed (including IPM and substitute chemicals), and pilot demonstration program designed; and
- (iv) an investment program and funding mechanism designed for clean up and management of sites contaminated with POPs pesticides.

35. The project is starting up. International Consultant team leader is being recruited and expected to begin inception activities in April 2007. Each participating country has been asked to nominate representatives for a task force that will guide the technical assistance. The first task force meeting is tentatively planned for May 2007 in Urumqi, PRC.

2. Agricultural Trade and Market Development in Central and Eastern Asia

36. ADB is developing a technical assistance grant on agricultural trade and market development in Central and Eastern Asia. The TA will identify key constraints and opportunities for expanding agricultural trade between Central Asian countries and the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a way of reducing rural poverty. The study will identify: commodities and niche products with potential for trade and needs for developing markets along the value chain; policy issues that affect regional agriculture trade, institutional issues that agriculture trade facilitation and market development; priority areas of investment in relation to on-going national and regional efforts. Two regional workshops will be held for senior officials from Central Asian countries and PRC to discuss the study's interim findings and policy, institutional, and investment implications.

D. Tourism

37. The UNDP's Silk Road Initiative (SRI) has been promoting tourism in the Silk Road region under the following three prime threads of activities established as new traditions in the region:

- Silk Road Investment Forum. Facilitation of investment for the tourism sector has become one of the central focal points for discussion of the *Silk Road Investment Forum*. Sustainable tourism development and cultural tourism were in the centre of discussion during the first Forum in June 2006 (Xi'an, China) and tourism development is planned as one of main topics for the second Forum in Kyrgyzstan this year. Last year's Investment Forum was followed by a 2-day study tour to Urumqi and Turpan (Xinjian Autonomous Region, China) for follow-up discussions on tourism development by Forum's participants. This component is implemented in close collaboration with the UNCTAD;
- Silk Road Mayors' Forum. First *Silk Road Mayors' Forum* in Tashkent last year was a platform for information and experience exchange on sustainable tourism development in the region by Mayors and other representatives of Silk Road communities. This thread of activity will be continued during the second Mayors' Forum in Lanzhou in 2007. In addition to representatives of cities in China and Central Asia, the dialogue already includes cities in Pakistan, Japan, Korea and Iran. The Tashkent Mayors Forum was followed by a study tour to Bukhara and Samarkand, where participants learned about the cities' historical significance at times of the ancient trade route.
- Competition for the title of "UN Silk Road City". The Silk Road Initiative is opening a competition for the official titles of *UN Silk Road Cities*. For this purpose an Eminent Persons Group of independent international judges is being formed who will approve selection criteria and will allocate awards each year. The prize will award cities that are inspired by the unique tradition of the Silk Road in a most creative way and successful development of tourism is one of the leading criteria for awarding the title.

38. Related initiatives include:

- The Silk Road visa. A re-opening of a regional discussion on facilitation of a regionally synchronized, *multi-country entry visa* is among main objectives of the tourism component of the Silk Road Initiative. The idea is to establish a *Silk Road Visa* that would be regionally recognized;
- Regional maps. Silk Road Initiative has also prepared a mini *Silk Road regional map*, which can be used by travelers in the region and the project is in the final stage of publishing a full-size folded regional map (covering both historical and contemporary information on the region), which should be ready in the second half of the year;
- Region's branding. SRI has prepared a *study in branding* of the Silk Road region (also for tourism development purposes), which was distributed and discussed at the 2006 Investment Forum in Xian;
- Cultural dimension. SRI is also promoting *cultural exchange* as a basis for capacity building for regional integration, including regional tourism development. Each major event has been accompanied by study tours to places of special tourist significance and by specially prepared cultural programme from countries in the region. This tradition will be kept, as much as possible, in 2007.

39. 2007 calendar of activities:

- May 2007 – First *Silk Road Eminent Persons* meeting on UN Silk Road City Award. In cooperation with UN World Tourism Organization, the SRI will award up to 10 cities each year with the title of Official UN Silk Road City. An Eminent Persons' Panel will convene in May 2007 in Madrid to discuss selection criteria and the city-candidates;
- July 2007 - *Silk Road International Symposium and 2nd Regional Mayors' Forum*. In cooperation with the Chinese National Silk Road project, an annual Silk Road International Symposium together with the 2nd regional Silk Road Mayors' Forum will take place in Lanzhou;
- August 2007 - *2nd Regional Silk Road Investment Forum*. Organised in cooperation with the UNCTAD and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the second regional Silk Road Investment Forum is planned to convene at the Issyk-kul Lake in Kyrgyzstan.

E. Disaster Management

1. Drought Management and Mitigation Assessment for Central Asia and the Caucasus: Regional and Country Profiles and Strategies

40. The World Bank published a report, *Drought Management and Mitigation Assessment for Central Asia and the Caucasus: Regional and Country Profiles and Strategies*, based on research and consultations conducted in eight countries over the past two years.

41. The report was prompted by a severe and prolonged drought in the region in 2000-2001, as well as the knowledge that exposure to drought will only increase in Central Asia, and with people in all eight countries vulnerable to drought conditions due to lack of careful planning and poverty. Thus far, disaster-management agencies have not adequately addressed the severity of long-term drought impacts, focusing instead on more immediate disasters.

42. The Canadian International Development Agency, under the Canada Climate Change Development Fund, supported the World Bank's research and publication of the report. In 2005-2006, a team of consultants examined in-depth each country's exposure and vulnerability to drought in sub-regional and country drought profiles and strategies. The results of these assessments were incorporated into Draft National Drought Plans for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. On the heels of these assessments, the World Bank held sub-regional conferences in Tbilisi for the Caucasus countries and in Tashkent for the Central Asian Countries during mid-2006.

2. Development of new disaster risk management framework

43. ADB is currently developing a framework for sustainable approaches to disaster risk management that will present a set of actions to be undertaken over the next 3-5 years. The framework is expected to be approved by ADB management in June 2007. It focuses on:

- Building organizational awareness and capacity to support disaster risk reduction activities more effectively
- Enhancing country programming and portfolio management; and

- Engaging proactively in regional initiatives.

44. This framework will build on and seek to implement ADB's Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy (DEAP). DEAP is a wide-ranging course of actions that bring together natural and non-natural disaster as well as post-conflict situations. It has two inter-related objectives:

- To strengthen ADB's effectiveness in supporting DMCs to manage risks related to natural hazards by reducing vulnerability, and by preventing and mitigating disasters before they occur
- To facilitate rapid and adequate assistance by ADB to its DMCs in response to disasters and post-conflict situations in an effort to efficiently revitalize their development efforts.

45. DEAP is a partnership between ADB and DMCs that is designed to mainstream disaster risk reduction as an integral part of ADB's development process:

- Adopting a systematic approach to reducing disaster risk
- Working more closely with DMCs to help them adopt an approach that emphasizes preventive measures
- Strengthening other partnerships to maximize synergies among development and specialized relief organizations
- Using resources more efficiently and effectively to better support pre- and post-disaster activities
- Improving organizational arrangements within ADB for planning, implementing and communicating affectively about disaster and emergency-related assistance.