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ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FAIR 2026

21-24 SEPTEMBER 2026 | ADB HEADQUARTERS, MANILA

VALUE FOR MONEY: DRIVING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional and cross-border Tourism

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Overview of CAREC Program

Open and inclusive platform to promote shared and sustainable development through **regional cooperation**

- Member countries: Afghanistan*, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
- Development partners: ADB, AIIB, EBRD, IMF, IsDB, UNDP, the World Bank, and expanding
- Promotes **policy dialogue**, supports **project development** and financing, provides **technical assistance**, and advocates **South-South cooperation**.



ADB serves as
the **CAREC
Secretariat**



CAREC Institute
supports knowledge
generation and capacity
building



Rotating chairmanship
annually: **Mongolia** as
chair country in 2026



*ADB has placed its regular assistance to Afghanistan on hold effective 15 August 2021.



CAREC 2030 Strategy



Economic and
Financial
Stability



Trade, Tourism
and Economic
Corridors



Infrastructure and
Economic
Connectivity



Agriculture and
Water

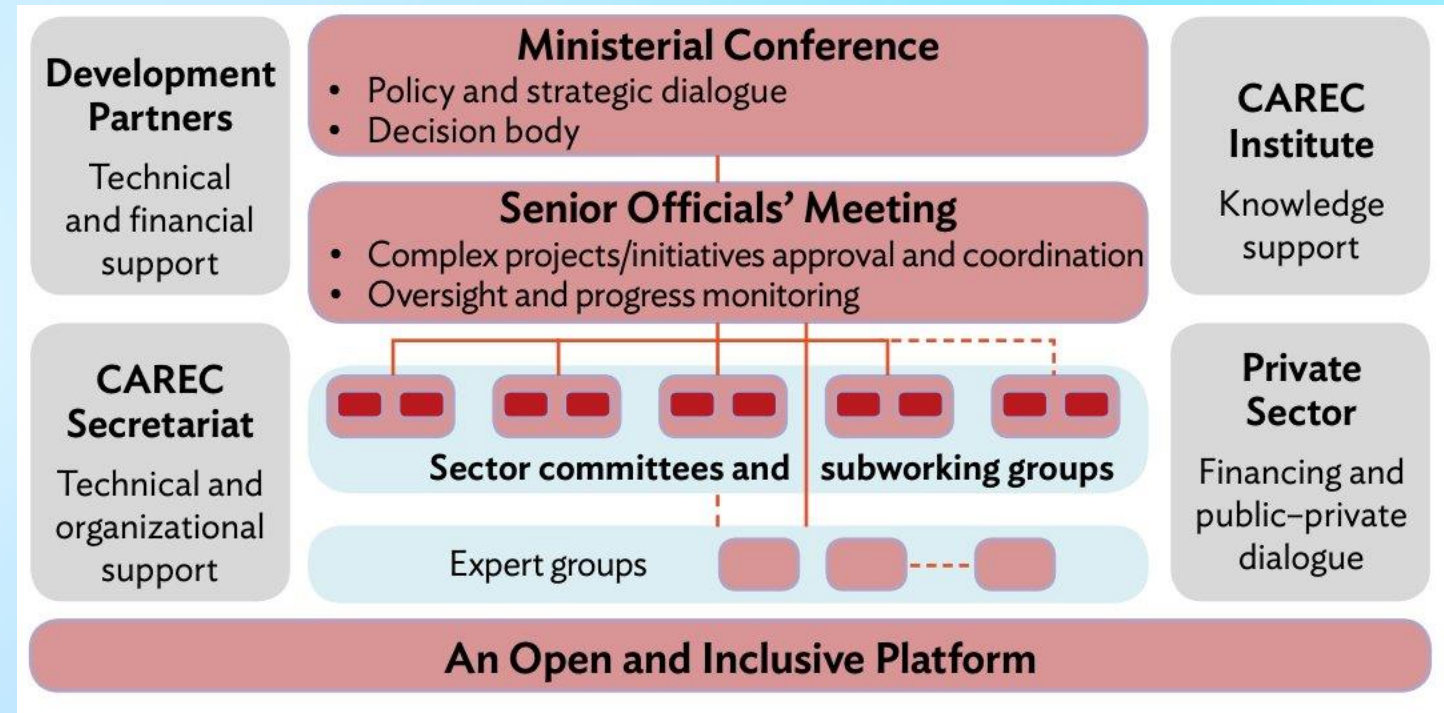


Human
Development



Cross-cutting Themes

- Climate Change
- Digital/ICT
- Gender

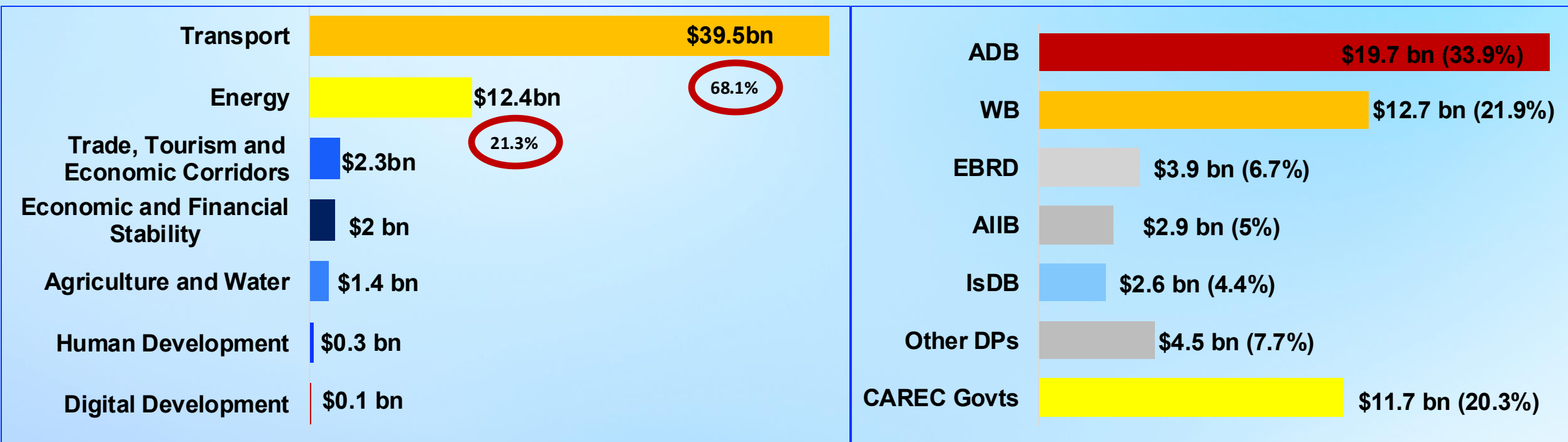


Institutional Framework



57.9 billion in CAREC-Related Investments

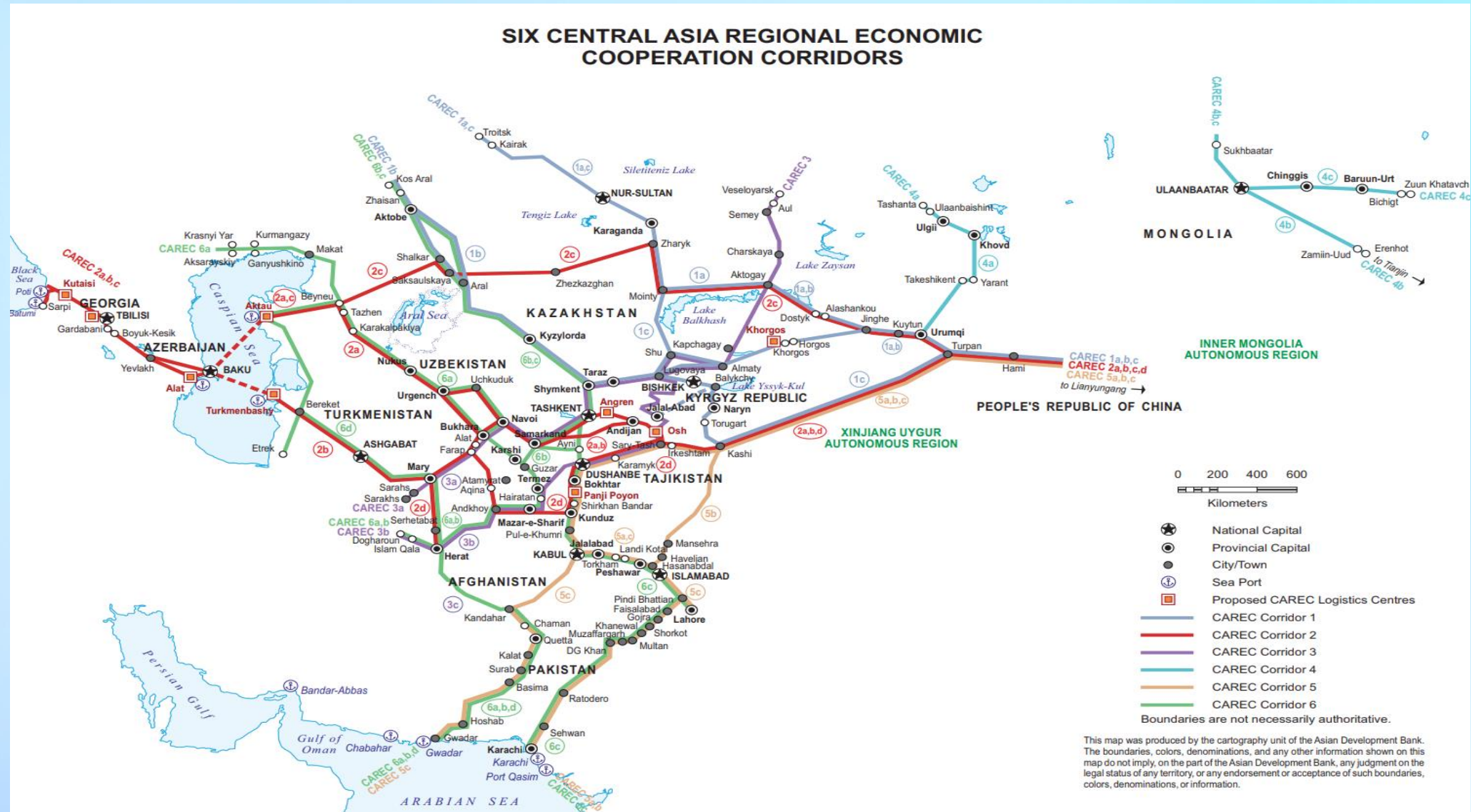
ADB's support to CAREC: **\$19.7 B** in investments
43 active CAREC TA projects. = **\$58 M** in TA support





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CAREC work in Tourism



Five milestones moved CAREC toward delivery





ADB TA 9776 built the regional foundations

2019–2024



A regional toolkit—not only a strategy

It created shared instruments, tested practical approaches and gave countries a forum cooperation

Next: operationalize, update, and finance.

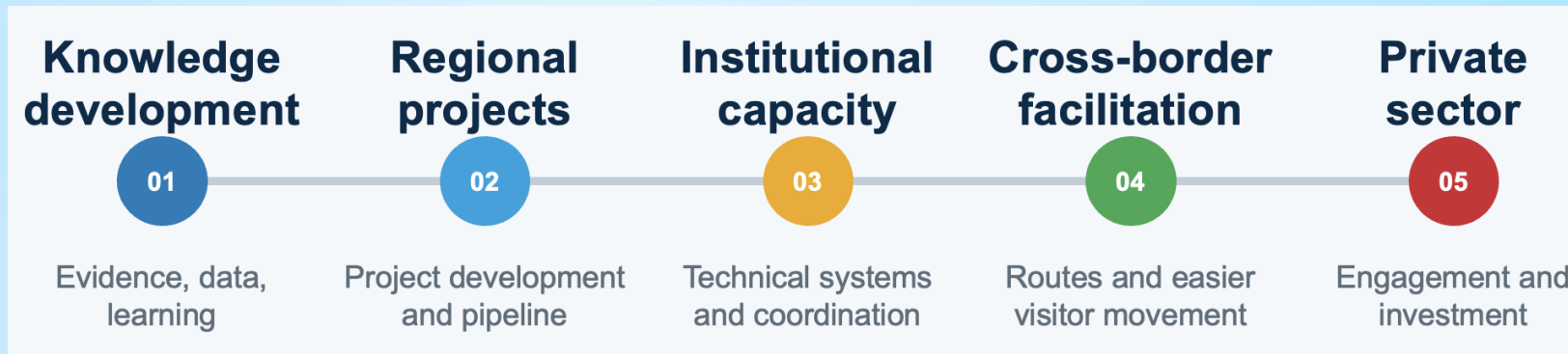
- 01 Strategy + investment framework**
Tourism Strategy 2030 + Investment Framework 2021–2025
- 02 Regional brand + digital platform**
Visit Silk Road brand, country content, and tourism portal
- 03 Clusters, routes + project concepts**
Priority clusters; infrastructure, heritage, data, branding
- 04 Working Group + country dialogue**
Focal points, regional meetings, knowledge and capacity work
- 05 Targeted pilots + diagnostics**
Visa facilitation, health and safety, standards, data, climate



The 2025 MoUs are a standing mandate for delivery

Two tourism MOUs were signed on 20 November 2025 at the 24th CAREC Ministerial Conference in Bishkek

MOU on Regional Tourism Development



MOU between KYZ and UZB to cooperate in cross-border tourism development



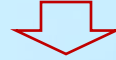


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MOU on Regional Tourism Development



TA on Sustainable Tourism and Services Trade

OUTPUT 1

Knowledge

Digital Readiness + Sustainability
Benchmarking: the diagnostics and findings support Projects and Capacity Building.



OUTPUT 2 · PROJECTS

The TA's biggest priority is to develop a regional project pipeline.
Visit Silk Road portal upgrade + pilot projects.

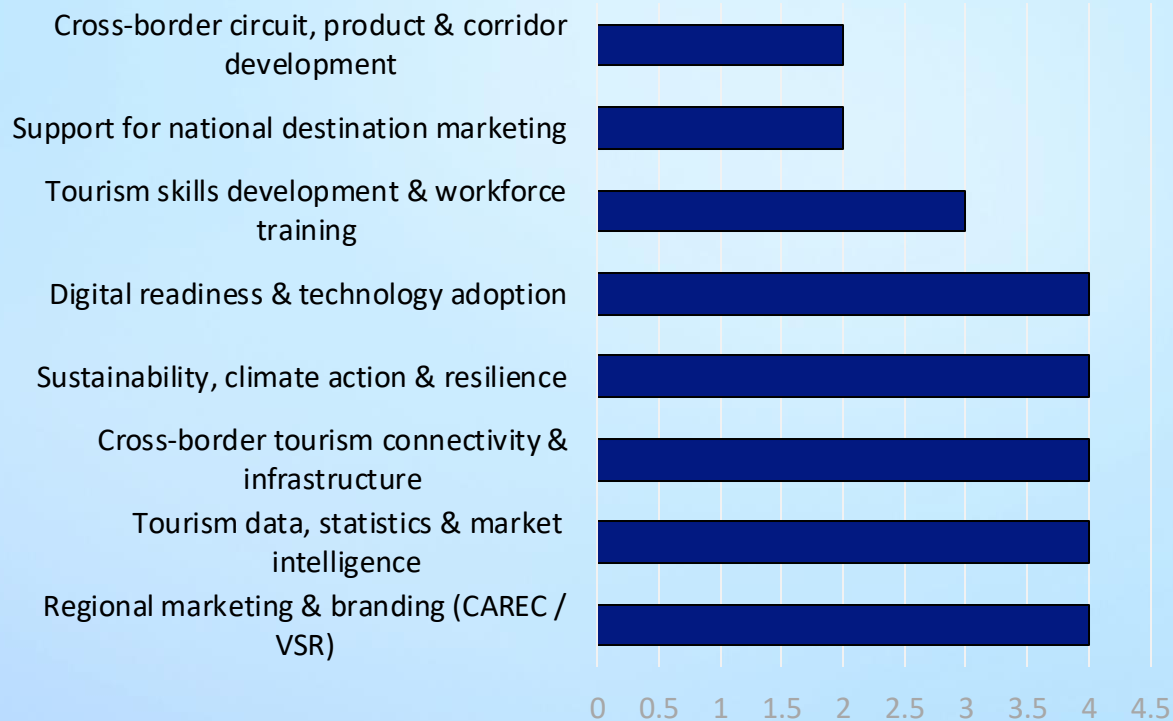
OUTPUT 3 · CAPACITY

Coordination with the CAREC Tourism Working Group for joint planning and collaboration, policy dialogue. **Training programs with public and private tourism stakeholders** focused on digitalization and sustainable development.

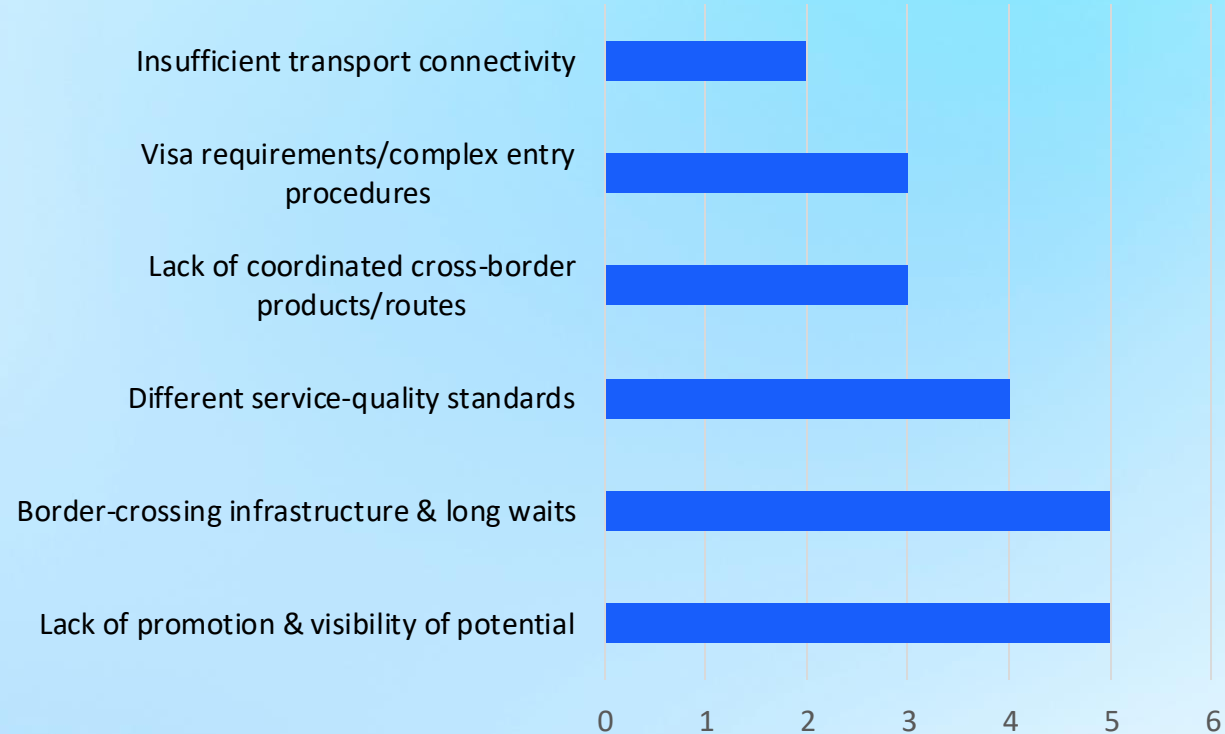


Countries Priorities and Challenges

Highest Priority TA Topics



Obstacles to cross-border tourism





MOU on KYZ and UZB cooperation on tourism

Vision and Objective

Prepare a Tourism Strategic Action Plan for Chatkal District as a catalyst for a sustainable Kyrgyz Republic–Uzbekistan cross-border tourism cluster.

TA – 10741

Key Outcomes



Outcome 1:
Shared Vision for
a Cross-Border
Tourism Cluster
Established



Outcome 2:
Priority Tourism
Investments
Identified



Outcome 3:
Sustainable
Destination
Development
Framework
Established



Outcome 4:
Cross-Border
Connectivity and
Visitor Experience
Enhanced



Outcome 5:
Local Economic
Development
Opportunities
Expanded



Geographic location



Primary Area: Chatkal District (Kyrgyz Republic)

Linked Destinations: Amirsoy and Chimgan (Uzbekistan)

Development concept: an integrated cross-border destination leveraging complementary mountain, nature, adventure, and cultural tourism assets.



Scope of work

- 1 Inception and stakeholder engagement
- 2
- 3 Tourism market assessment and cross-border analysis
- 4 Infrastructure, environmental and social assessment
- 5 Sustainability and climate resilience assessment
- 6 Destination development and tourism product planning
- 7 Demand forecasting and accommodation analysis
- 8 Strategic Action Plan and investment pipeline
- 9 Validation and finalization





Beyond the Strategic Action Plan...



A shared Kyrgyz Republic-Uzbekistan tourism destination

A pipeline of public and private investment opportunities

Future feasibility studies and project preparation

Sustainable and climate-resilient tourism infrastructure

Future investment mobilization by governments, ADB, development partners, and the private sector



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Tourism in the Almaty-Bishkek Economic Corridor



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What is ABEC?

CAREC economic corridors are about making neighbouring cities and regions function as a single market. ABEC is CAREC's first pilot: launched in 2014 by Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic with ADB support, linking two regional hubs. Tourism is one of five workstreams, alongside connectivity, agribusiness, environment, and health.

ABEC is implemented by the ABEC Subcommittee, chaired by the CAREC National Focal Points, and overseen by the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Council, which is headed by both countries' prime ministers.



Why supporting tourism under ABEC?

Creating one tourism destination market makes both countries more attractive as a destination. Linking winter sports on the mountain range with summer tourism around Issyk-Kul reduces seasonality and hence reduces investment risks. Year-round flows change the business case for ski resorts, hotels and the roads serving them.





A joint accommodation classification system

One rulebook covering every accommodation type on both sides of the border — hotels on the Hotelstars scale, and guest houses, hostels, campsites and yurt camps on categories adapted to local conditions.



Hotels



Guest houses



Hostels, campsites...

Dec 2024

Memorandum of understanding signed to implement the system in both countries

Mar 2025

System formally endorsed by parliament in the Kyrgyz Republic

Dec 2025

First training for classification experts held in Bishkek — 17 trainees

Jun 2026

Advisory Council convenes for the first time; agreements signed by both tourism agency heads

Where each country stands

- **Kyrgyz Republic:** approved and in implementation.
- **Kazakhstan:** adapting the system to national arrangements.
- **Both:** aligning approaches so the two systems stay compatible.



Skills and professional standards

8,500

trained tourism
professionals missing
each year across the
corridor

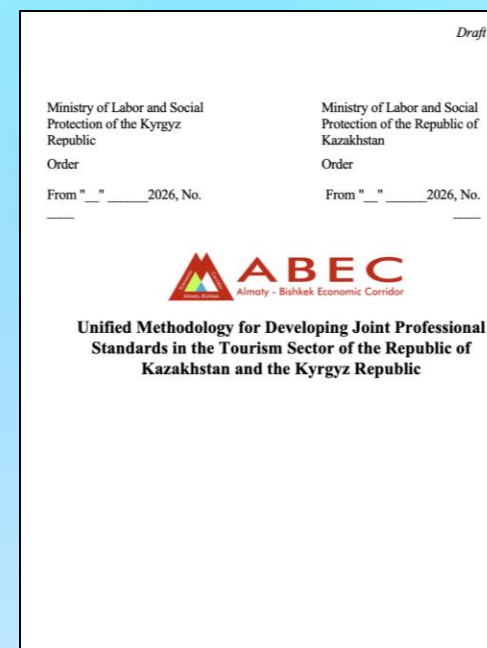
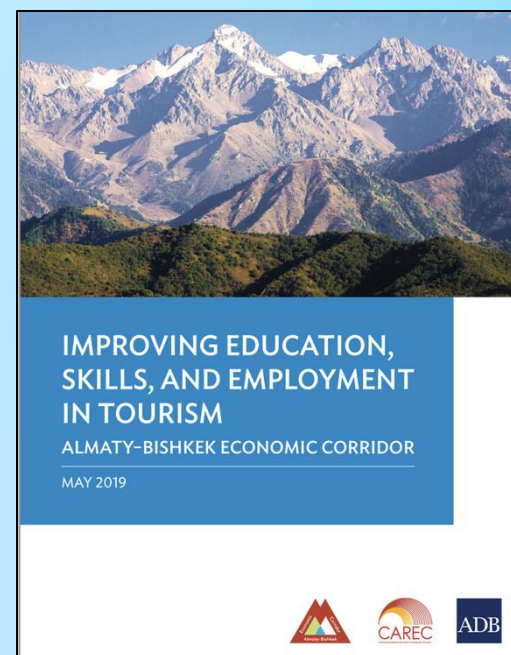
\$30m+

estimated opportunity
cost of that gap,
every year



What was done about it

- A skills gap analysis quantified the shortage and its cost
- A business and institutional plan for an Almaty Tourism Skilling Center, for up to 600 students a year under the International University of Tourism and Hospitality.
- Joint professional standards for tourism occupations developed, with phased application within ABEC targeted by end 2026.





From planning to investment



\$56 million

Issyk-Kul Environmental Management and Sustainable Tourism, approved 2024: climate-resilient wastewater, a museum, a tourism information centre, bike and walking trails, parks and waste collection.



40%

shorter travel time promised by the Almaty–Issyk-Kul alternative road. Today the trip runs via Bishkek — over 460 km and roughly eight hours to Cholpon-Ata. Capital cost is estimated at \$80–120 million, toll-financed.



\$30.7 million

ABEC Regional Improvement of Border Services, approved 2025, rebuilding the Karkyra, Kichi-Kapka and Ak-Tilek crossings, which will also benefit tourism.

And a pipeline behind them: a pre-feasibility study and development strategy for the Turgun mountain resort, five public–private tourism projects identified in the Kyrgyz Republic, and an Almaty–Bishkek electric bus service in preparation.



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The Future of Regional Tourism in CAREC

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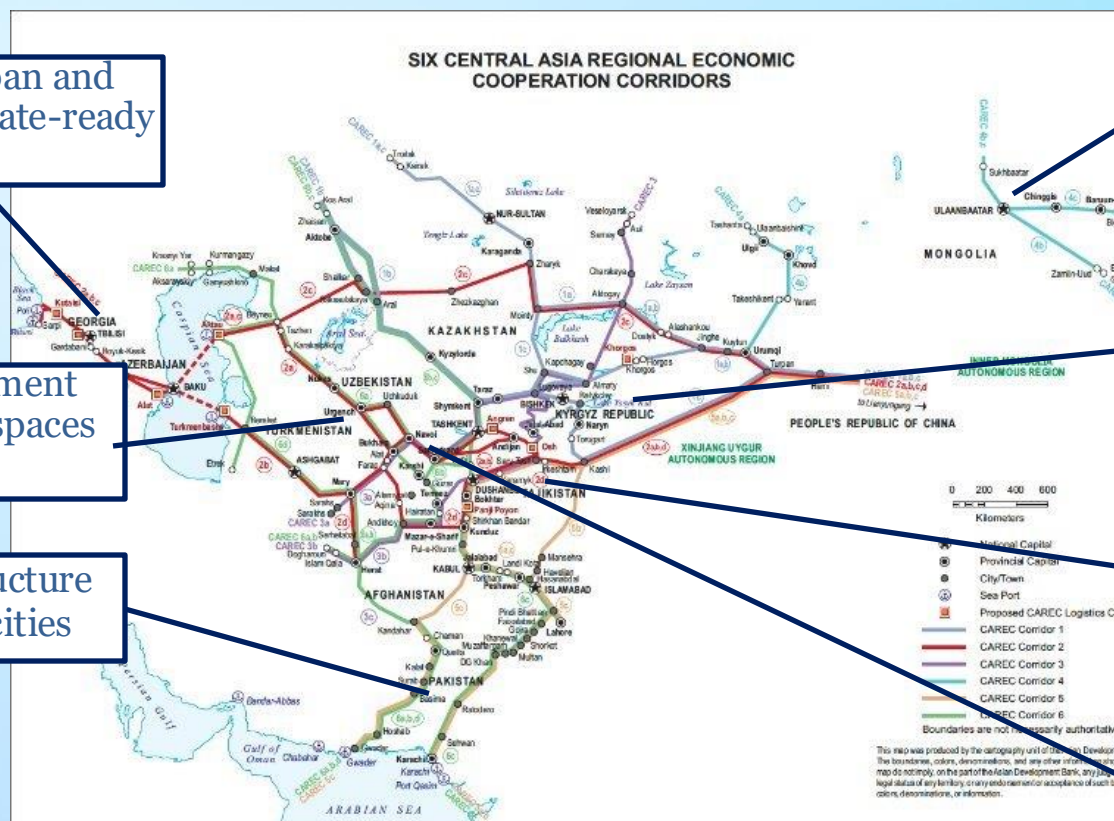
From corridors to destinations: the indicative 2026–2030 pipeline

Over 10 pipeline projects for nearly \$1B across 7 countries — urban, water and skills investments that build tourism-ready destinations

Georgia (2027–2028): resilient urban and coastal infrastructure for livable, climate-ready destinations

Turkmenistan (2029): urban development strengthening city services and public spaces for visitors

Pakistan (2026): green urban infrastructure raising service standards in gateway cities



Mongolia (2029): green, resilient infrastructure for a new satellite city at the international airport gateway, anchoring visitor services and tourism-linked business

Kyrgyz Republic (2026): skills system reform building the hospitality and services workforce

Tajikistan (2028–2030): tourism, water and waste investments with green-economy skills for destination readiness

Uzbekistan (2026–2029): corridor nodes, green urban modernization and vocational reform linking cities to tourism



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Thank you!

For any queries, please reach me out at: lcasanueva@adb.org

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