

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS

I. BACKGROUND

1. The proposed regional technical assistance (TA) will strengthen food security in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) member countries. It will support the commitment of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to achieving resilient and sustainable food security in the region. Specifically, the TA will support the implementation of priority activities identified under the Cooperation Framework for Agricultural Development and Food Security in the CAREC Region,¹ which was endorsed by the CAREC Ministerial Conference on 24 November 2022.² Building on the outcomes of key regional cooperation priority activities, the TA will help identify business opportunities for bankable food security related investment projects relevant to the focus areas stated in the cooperation framework. The TA is intended to support CAREC member countries (i) increase knowledge sharing in agriculture modernization and food security, (ii) prioritize the planned and/or proposed activities under the existing CAREC initiatives in terms of their significance for agricultural development and food security in the CAREC region, (iii) design and undertake additional CAREC activities to foster agriculture modernization and/or enhance food security in the region, (iv) increase synergies among these activities, and (v) amplify their overall positive impacts on agricultural development and food security in the CAREC member countries.³ The TA is sectoral by nature and no other ongoing transaction TA can be used to support the planned activities.

2. The TA is aligned with the following impact: productive, resilient, and sustainable agriculture, and enhanced food security in the CAREC region increased (footnote 1). The TA will have the following outcome: regional cooperation among the CAREC member countries in agricultural development and food security increased. The proposed TA will be aligned with the priorities identified in the national strategies on agriculture and food security national programs of CAREC member countries. It will also consider ongoing and planned projects of development partners in the region to avoid duplication.

3. **Output 1: Effective implementation of regional cooperation priority activities supported.** The TA will support implementation of priority activities identified under the cooperation framework. Specifically, this output will support implementation of high-impact regional activities under all five thematic areas, namely (i) deepening modernized, inclusive and climate smart agriculture; (ii) strengthening policy frameworks; (iii) developing food value chains; (iv) harnessing international trade in food products; and (v) strengthening food security information sharing. The output will support initiatives across major crosscutting priorities including innovation and digitalization, environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation, improvement of food safety, private sector development, and promotion of gender equality and youth employment. Following the demand-driven approach, the TA will facilitate technical cooperation, formulation of knowledge solutions (and knowledge products), study and

¹ CAREC Secretariat. 2022. [Cooperation Framework for Agricultural Development and Food Security in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Region](#). Manila.

² ADB. 2022. [CAREC Ministers Endorse New Green Recovery, Food Security, and Clean Energy Cooperation Initiatives](#). News release. 22 November.

³ CAREC member countries covered under this TA are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, People's Republic of China (PRC), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. For Afghanistan, ADB placed on hold its regular assistance effective 15 August 2021. [ADB Statement on Afghanistan](#) (published on 10 November 2021). Manila. References and studies pertaining to Afghanistan will be considered if a complete picture of the CAREC member countries is required. The TA will have no direct engagement with the de facto government.

exchange visits, harmonization of regulations and practices, and knowledge and data exchanges. To further advance CAREC regional cooperation in agricultural development and food security, the TA will support the preparation of the CAREC's agricultural development and food security cooperation strategy based on the lessons learned from past and ongoing regional cooperation initiatives.

4. Output 2: Readiness of climate-resilient agriculture and food security investments improved. Building on the outcomes of regional cooperation priority activities as stated in output 1, the TA will help identify business opportunities for suitable investment projects relevant to the focus areas stated in the cooperation framework. Specifically, under output 2, the TA will support formulating pipelines of high-impact and inclusive investment projects and/or initiatives that may include regional projects and/or country-specific projects with regional cooperation features (e.g., cross-border trade facilitation, replication of the regional best practices). These projects may encompass various financing assistance modalities such as sovereign, sub-sovereign, nonsovereign, blended concessional finance, and public–private partnerships. To ensure the project's viability for financing and readiness, the TA will finance upstream assessments for formulation of lending and nonlending pipelines. This will include upstream climate risk assessments for the sector and/or projects, project scoping studies, and theme-specific studies such as women empowerment and entrepreneurship, gender equality and youth engagement in agriculture, innovative technologies, among others.

II. CONSULTING SERVICES

5. The TA will require 65 person-months of international consulting services and 148 person-months of national consulting services. The consulting firm and individual consultants will be recruited in accordance with ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and/or staff instructions.

A. Consulting Firm: Preparing Agricultural Development and Food Security Strategy

6. A consulting firm will be recruited to help prepare the CAREC agricultural development and food security cooperation strategy. A total of 9 person-months of international consulting services and 40 person-months of national consulting services will be included in this package. The scope of services include: (i) conducting country and regional assessment on agricultural operations, associated sectors and trade, value chain links, and food security; (ii) analyzing constraints in policy and operations; (iii) formulating recommendations on strategies and implementation roadmap for each country and regional cooperation. Indicative consulting service inputs are outlined in Table (below) and terms of reference for each individual are presented thereafter. The consulting firm can propose a mix of expertise based on its approach and methodology. The consulting firm may be retained to provide ad-hoc support during the TA period. Contract variations may be proposed to include more specialist resources in the consulting firm contract, subject to the required scope of work, appropriateness of expertise, and cost efficiency.

Table 1. Schedule of Indicative Consulting Service Inputs

Positions	International (person-months)	National (person-months) ^a
Package 1: Firm – Preparation of agricultural development and food security strategy		
Agricultural Economist/Team Leader	4	10
Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialist	2	10
Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialist	1.5	10

Positions	International (person-months)	National (person-months) ^a
Climate-Smart and Digital Agriculture Specialist	1.5	10
Total	9	40

^a National consultants from the following CAREC members countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
Source: Asian Development Bank.

1. International Specialists

7. **Agricultural Economist/Team Leader.** The International Agricultural Economist will have at least a master's degree, preferably a PhD, in agricultural economics or agriculture, with strong knowledge on agricultural policy, inclusive and climate-smart agriculture, food regulations and trade, food safety and global food value chains. The specialist should have at least 15 years of experience, including at least 5 years of experience as Team Leader, in agriculture sector assessments, agricultural policy and strategy development, agribusiness, climate-smart agriculture, agricultural mechanization, and/or global/regional food safety and value chains. She/he must have experience of working in any of the CAREC members countries.

8. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (i) provide overall team leadership for supervision and coordination of activities of the consultants, liaising with governments, and reporting to ADB;
 - (ii) lead the regional consultation, workshops, and policy dialogues to collect inputs from CAREC member countries to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy;
 - (iii) analyze and assess relevant data from consultants and stakeholders taking into consideration similar sector issues, gaps, challenges, and opportunities;
 - (iv) consolidate and analyze inputs and reports from all consultants and based on these, recommend inputs to the draft strategy based on international experience;
 - (v) be responsible to collect expert inputs from other thematic experts for the agricultural development and food security strategy;
 - (vi) be responsible to secure agreement on different aspects of the agricultural development and food security strategy from CAREC member countries, and/or a subset of CAREC member countries as applicable;
 - (vii) provide team leadership in the conduct of meetings, workshops, and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
 - (viii) be responsible to draft and finalize the agricultural development and food security strategy and deliver to ADB.

9. **Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialist.** The specialist will have at least a master's degree in agriculture, economics, finance, or other relevant fields, with extensive experience in agricultural policy and institutional support structure in the CAREC region. The specialist should have at least 10 years of experience in the development of projects related to agricultural policy and strategy, agribusiness, climate-smart agriculture, agricultural mechanization, and/or global/regional food safety and value chains. S/he must have prior experience of working in any of the CAREC member countries.

10. The specific tasks of the Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialist are as follows:
- (i) review existing agriculture sector policy and regulations and identify aspects that constrain the agricultural development and food safety harmonization in the CAREC region;

- (ii) analyze collected data and information and identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities from regional perspective;
- (iii) compile and assess country and/or subset of countries level information and data on agricultural policy and institutions, and provide recommendations/inputs to the agricultural development and food security strategy based on the results of the analysis and the specialist's international experience;
- (iv) participate in meetings, workshops, and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
- (v) participate and provide inputs in the regional consultation, workshops, and policy dialogues; and
- (vi) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

11. **Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialist.** The International Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialist will collaborate with the Team Leader to appropriately include the trade facilitation value chain development in the agricultural development and food security strategy. The international specialist should have at least a master's degree in agriculture, economics, international trade, business, or a related discipline, and at least 10 years of work experience on food regulations and trade, sanitary and phytosanitary prerequisites, non-tariff barriers to food trade, and global food value chains. Experience in any of the CAREC member countries is preferred.

12. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) review the existing legal and institutional environment, and state of agro-logistics pertinent to agricultural trade in CAREC countries to identify capacity and infrastructural deficits that hinder regional agricultural integration and trade;
- (ii) analyze the existing tariff and non-tariff barriers, including safety, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, to food trade among the CAREC countries;
- (iii) analyze collected data and information and identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities from regional perspective;
- (iv) based on the results of the analysis, consultations with stakeholders and international experience, prepare recommendations for inclusion in the strategy from regional perspective;
- (v) participate in meetings, workshops, and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
- (vi) participate and provide inputs in the regional consultation, workshops, and policy dialogues; and
- (vii) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

13. **Climate-Smart and Digital Agriculture Specialist.** The Climate-Smart and Digital Specialist will collaborate with the Team Leader to appropriately include the climate-change aspects and digital solutions in the agricultural development and food security strategy. The international specialist should have at least a master's degree in agriculture, economics, digital science or a related discipline, and at least 10 years of work experience in any of the CAREC member countries on climate change, precision agriculture and digital solutions. The specialist should have good knowledge and understanding of key international policies, priorities, guidance and action plans on climate adaptation and mitigation in the CAREC region. Experience in conducting upstream climate assessments in the region is highly preferred.

14. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) compile and analyze data regarding climate change impacts in the region;
- (ii) analyze collected data and information and identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities from regional perspective;
- (iii) based on the results of the analysis, consultations with stakeholders and international experience, prepare recommendations for inclusion in the strategy from regional perspective;
- (iv) analyze the contexts of the CAREC member countries to introduce international best practices on climate-smart agriculture;
- (v) identify a menu of options to mainstream application of digital solutions in all segments of agricultural value chains in the CAREC region;
- (vi) lead country level consultation and discussions on climate-smart agriculture and digital solutions; and
- (vii) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

2. National Specialists

15. **National Agricultural Economists** (10 positions) The national agricultural economists will work in close coordination with other international and national consultants under the leadership of the International Agricultural Economist. They will have at least a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics or related discipline, with strong knowledge on agricultural policy, inclusive and climate-smart agriculture, food regulations and trade, food safety and global food value chains. The economists should have at least 7 years of experience in the conduct of agriculture sector assessments and development of agricultural policy and strategy. They must have relevant in-country experience and experience working with international financial institutions or development partners, including ADB.

16. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (i) collect and compile relevant national and regional information and documents required for the development of the strategy;
 - (ii) compile and analyze country level agriculture sector data on the five thematic areas, including sectoral issues and areas for improvement and prepares comprehensive reports;
 - (iii) collect country(ies) level information, including conduct of surveys and/or interviews to relevant stakeholders, to support the preparation of regional strategy and project proposal to promote agricultural development and food security of the respective country;
 - (iv) based on the results of the analysis, consultations with stakeholders, and national experience, prepare recommendations for inclusion in the strategy from country-level perspective;
 - (v) participate in meetings, workshops and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
 - (vi) provide overall coordination support from in-country and/or subset of countries perspective, liaise with the respective governments and ADB's resident missions;
 - (vii) assist the knowledge event management specialist to organize national/regional consultations, meetings, dialogues and workshops as needed; and
 - (viii) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

17. **Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialists** (10 positions) will work in close coordination with the International Policy and Strategy Specialist under the leadership of the

International Agricultural Economist. They will have at least a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics or related discipline, with strong knowledge of agricultural policy and strategy. They should have at least 7 years of experience in the development of agricultural policy and strategy in their respective CAREC member countries. Experience working with international financial institutions and development partners including ADB is preferred. They will report to the team leader as well as the International Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialist.

18. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (i) compile and analyze existing country level agriculture sector policy and regulations, identify aspects that constraint the agricultural development and food security in the relevant subset of CAREC member countries, and prepare comprehensive reports;
 - (ii) conduct surveys/discussions with relevant stakeholders, as needed;
 - (iii) based on the results of the analysis, consultations with stakeholders, and national experience, prepare recommendations for inclusion in the strategy from country-level perspective;
 - (iv) collect and analyze the country(ies) level relevant information to support the preparation of regional strategy;
 - (v) participate in meetings, workshops, and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
 - (vi) assist the knowledge event management specialist to organize national/regional consultations, meetings, dialogues, and workshops as needed by identifying the appropriate stakeholders to engage; and
 - (vii) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

19. The **Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialists** (11 positions) will work in close coordination with the International Agricultural Trade Facilitation Specialist. They will have at least a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics or related discipline, with strong knowledge of agricultural trade. They should have at least 7 years of experience in any of the CAREC member countries. The specialist should have experience working with international financial institutions and/or developing partners including ADB on agricultural and food trade and regional/global value agricultural value chains. They will report to the team leader as well as the International Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialist.

20. The specific tasks of the national Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialists include, but not limited to, the following:
- (i) review the existing legal and institutional environment, and state of agri-logistics pertinent to agricultural trade in relevant subset of the CAREC member countries to identify capacity and infrastructural deficits that hinder regional agricultural integration and trade, and prepare a comprehensive report;
 - (ii) analyze the existing tariff and non-tariff barriers, including safety, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, to food trade among the relevant subset of CAREC countries;
 - (iii) conduct surveys/discussions with relevant stakeholders, as needed;
 - (iv) based on the results of the analysis, consultations with stakeholders, and national experience, prepare recommendations for inclusion in the strategy from country-level perspective;
 - (v) assist the knowledge event management specialist to organize national/regional consultations, meetings, dialogues and workshops as needed by identifying the appropriate stakeholders to engage; and

- (vi) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

21. **Climate-Smart and Digital Agriculture Specialists** (10 positions). The specialists will work in close coordination with the International Climate-Smart and Digital Agriculture Specialists under the leadership of the International Agricultural Economist. S/he should have at least a master's degree in agriculture, economics, digital science, or a related discipline, and at least 7 years of work experience in the relevant subset of CAREC member countries on climate change assessment, precision agriculture and digital solutions.

22. The specific tasks of National Climate-Smart and Digital Agriculture Specialists include, but not limited to, the following:

- (i) compile and analyze data regarding climate change impacts in the region;
- (ii) analyze collected data and information and identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities from country perspective;
- (iii) based on the results of the analysis, consultations with stakeholders and international experience, prepare recommendations for inclusion in the strategy from country perspective;
- (iv) review the existing situation and support structure pertinent to climate-smart and precision agriculture in the relevant subset of CAREC countries to provide input to the agricultural development and food security strategy;
- (v) analyze the digital capacity and infrastructure in the relevant subset of CAREC countries to identify measures to improve them;
- (vi) assist the knowledge event management specialist to organize national/regional consultations, meetings, dialogues, and workshops as needed by identifying the appropriate stakeholders to engage; and
- (vii) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy.

B. Individual Consultants: Supporting implementation of the Cooperation Framework for Agricultural Development and Food Security on as needed basis

23. Individual consultants (56 person-months of international consulting services and 108 person-months of national consulting services) may be recruited on a needs basis to help implement the cooperation framework for agricultural development and food security. The consultants will prepare a list of possible investment opportunities for ADB and CAREC member countries in 5 thematic areas of the cooperation framework, namely (i) modernization of agriculture, (ii) strengthening of the policy framework, (iii) development of food value chain, (iv) harnessing of international trade in food products, and (v) strengthening of food security information sharing.

24. In addition to expertise/positions stated in Section A, it is anticipated that other expertise/positions to be required for TA implementation may include: financial management, project financial analysis, project economic analysis, social and environmental safeguards assessment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, agribusiness development, on-farm productivity, agro-product quality and safety standards, digital agriculture, agricultural engineering and modernization, procurement, and knowledge management. Detailed terms of reference will be prepared for such recruitments *as and when needs are defined*. As the TA will support member country and regional cooperation operation in the CAREC on as needed basis, it is proposed that memorandum for change in scope will not be required for utilization of the foregoing tentative

allocation of consulting service expertise.

III. DELIVERABLES

25. The consultants are expected to submit the following key deliverables:

Table 2. Consultants' Key Deliverables

Document	Description	Date of Submission
Draft Inception Report		Month 1
Final Inception Report	Includes comments from ADB and governments	Month 2
Interim Report 1		Month 6
Draft Mid-term Report		Month 12
Final Midterm Report	Includes comments from ADB and governments	Month 13
Interim Report 2		Month 18
Draft Final Report		Month 20
Final Report	Includes comments from ADB and governments	Month 22
Inception Workshop		After submission of draft inception report
Midterm Workshop		After submission of draft midterm report
Pre-Final Workshop		After submission of draft final report
Completion Workshop		Month 24
Workshop Reports	Report on proceedings of the workshops conducted	Within 2 weeks from conduct of workshop

ADB = Asian Development Bank.

Source: ADB.

26. All reports will need to be translated to Russian and Chinese languages. Soft copies of the reports to be submitted to ADB.