

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### TA 10258: Resilient and Inclusive Agricultural Development and Food Security in the CAREC Member Countries – Preparing Agricultural Development and Food Security Strategy

#### I. BACKGROUND

1. The approved regional technical assistance (TA) will strengthen **food security** in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) member countries.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> which was endorsed by the CAREC Ministerial Conference on 24 November 2022.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 2). 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.

#### II. TA OUTPUTS

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

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/reg-57033-001-tar>

<sup>2</sup> CAREC Secretariat. 2022. *Cooperation Framework for Agricultural Development and Food Security in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Region*. Manila.

<sup>3</sup> ADB. 2022. *CAREC Ministers Endorse New Green Recovery, Food Security, and Clean Energy Cooperation Initiatives*. News release. 22 November.

<sup>4</sup> **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.

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 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.

### III. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

**5. Purpose of the assignment.** ADB requires the services of a suitably qualified and experienced consulting firm (the "Consultant") to support ADB and the CAREC member countries to achieve the TA Outputs 1 and 2.

**6. Structure of the assignment.** The Consultant will be engaged through a Framework Contract under which the main terms and conditions governing the provision of the services will be agreed. The Framework Contract will serve as an umbrella agreement under which ADB will engage the Consultant to deliver consulting services throughout the life of the Framework Contract by means of individual call-off orders (Outputs 1 and 2).

**7.** Under each call-off, ADB will request the Consultant to prepare a specific technical and financial proposal to deliver the services contained in the call-off terms of reference. Subject to agreement between ADB and the Consultant on the terms and conditions of the assignment, a call-off order will be signed under the Framework Contract. The call-off order is the binding agreement between the parties for the provision of services within the scope of the Framework Contract.

**8.** The overall activities supporting the assignment are broadly separated into call-offs comprising groupings of selected assignments. ADB reserves the right to cancel/adjust/add call-offs at its sole discretion.

9. The table below provides an indicative list of call-off orders.

**Table 1: Call-offs Order and Timeline**

<b>First Call-off: CAREC agricultural development and food security cooperation strategy prepared Security</b>	
Indicative Outputs and Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. conducting diagnostic study and needs assessment to identify priority areas for regional cooperation to promote food security in the region</li> <li>ii. analyzing alignment of agricultural and food trade policies of CAREC member countries, and mechanism of information sharing among them, if any</li> <li>iii. Conduct climate risk assessments, women's participation, youth engagement, and use of digital solutions to promote inclusive precision agriculture among CAREC member countries</li> <li>iv. identifying the key actions and formulating the roadmap with country-specific actions to implement regional cooperation for food security</li> </ul>
Indicative Implementation Period	July 2024 – June 2026
<b>Second Call-off: A comprehensive pipeline of lending and nonlending projects and knowledge products prepared<sup>5</sup></b>	
Indicative Outputs and Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Identify the country-specific priority areas aligned with regional cooperation roadmap in consultation with the respective CAREC member countries for ADB's investment</li> <li>ii. Identify the country-specific non-sovereign opportunities to promote food security</li> <li>iii. Provide recommendations for policy and institutional modification/reform required for the implementation of the identified priority areas per country</li> <li>iv. Recommendations for upstream assessments for formulation of lending and nonlending pipelines</li> </ul>
Indicative Implementation Period	June 2025 – November 2025

<sup>5</sup> 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 regional best practices). These projects may encompass various financing assistance modalities such as sovereign, subsovereign, nonsovereign, blended concessional finance, and public-private partnerships.

<b>Third Call-off: At least five high-impact regional lending initiatives assessed and identified to improve inclusive agricultural development and enhance food security in the CAREC region.</b>	
Indicative Outputs and Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Select at least 5 high-impact regional lending projects from Comprehensive pipeline of lending and nonlending projects (2<sup>nd</sup> Call-off assignment)</li> <li>ii. Conduct pre-feasibility study of selected projects.</li> <li>iii. Improve readiness of selected projects (covering relevant upstream sector and thematic assessments and due diligence)<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
Indicative Implementation Period	November 2025 – November 2026

10. For avoidance of doubt, the finalization of a Framework Contract does not represent a commitment by ADB that the Consultant will be engaged for any minimum number or value of Call-off orders. Similarly, the existence of a Framework Contract between the parties does not bind the Consultant to respond to a call-off order request or sign a call-off order with ADB.

11. The ADB Agriculture, Food, Nature, and Rural Development Sector Group (SG-AFNR) will manage and administer the Contract.

12. **Duration and location of the Services.** The duration of the Framework Contract will be 28 months with a commencement date anticipate in July 2024. The Consultant is expected to have a presence in one or more CAREC member countries to facilitate the provision of regular field inputs, when required, facilitate close coordination with government counterparts in the selected cities. This presence may be through the Consultants firm, its JV partners, associated firms, or key experts, as relevant, and shall be described in the Consultant's technical proposal.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

13. Under the Framework Contract, individual call-off requests will be issued to the Consultant to deliver services for the preparation of the Sustainable Agrifood Systems Sector Project. ADB will provide the Consultant with a specific TOR for each Call-off (including the scope, duration, detailed outputs/deliverables, and indicative payment milestones). For each Call-off, the Consultant will be required to prepare a technical and financial proposal. Upon approval of the Consultant's proposal by ADB, ADB will issue the call-off contract and notice to proceed. The call-off contract will contain: (i) the finalized TOR for the task; (ii) agreed outputs; consultant's methodology, team and workplan, and (iv) the agreed financial proposal.

14. Upon signature of Call-off orders, the Consultant shall seek ADB approval prior to the deployment of international personnel to the project country, providing details relevant to the

<sup>6</sup> Upstream assessments for formulation of lending and nonlending pipelines, including upstream climate disaster and safeguard risk assessments for the sector and/or projects as appropriate and feasible, project scoping studies, financial and economic analysis, and theme-specific studies such as empowerment of and entrepreneurship for women, gender equality and youth engagement in agriculture, and innovative technologies.

deployment. The Consultant shall not incur travel-related costs prior to receipt of ADB travel approval.

15. If the parties agree that the scope of a Call-off order requires adjustment, or if some other adjustment to the terms of a Call-off order is required, a variation to the Call-off order may be initiated to incorporate any required changes. Changes in scope requiring cost adjustments shall be fully substantiated and based on the remuneration rates and per diem rates stated in the Framework Contract.

16. Call-off orders may be either time based or lump sum, at the discretion of ADB. The Call-off modality will be detailed in the call-off TOR. Once signed, ADB will closely coordinate with the respective government agencies in relation to the approval of deliverables.

17. While the detailed scope of work of each task will be defined in the respective Call-off Orders, the broad scope of work for activities is described in this ToR.

18. Any assets purchased in the execution of Call-off orders will be handed over to the government. The Consultant shall consult with ADB when identifying the intended recipients of the assets.

19. Where required, ADB shall provide reasonable assistance in obtaining any necessary clearances and government no-objections required by the Consultant to deliver the services detailed within call-off orders. While ADB will facilitate field visits and provide support in the arrangement of meetings with relevant authorities and agencies, the primary responsibility for doing so rests with the Consultant and ADB will not be held responsible for any delays incurred in arranging such meetings.

20. Where surveys or other services requiring third parties are included in the TOR for the Call-off, the Consultant shall be responsible for the procurement and contract management of all goods, works and services necessary to undertake the third-party activities. Direct costs of these activities will normally be covered under a provisional sum included in the call-off. All procurement shall be in accordance with the competitive procurement principles contained in the ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time). The Consultant shall solicit three quotations for the execution of the project activities and award contracts based on the “technically acceptable, lowest price” evaluation principle, unless specifically agreed otherwise with ADB. The requirement to solicit three quotations may be waived for small purchases (i.e. less than USD 10,000). ADB’s Request for Quotation standard bidding document may be used to engage firms. All activities will be subject to the terms of reference and specific deliverables agreed with the ADB prior to the solicitation of offers.

21. Travel costs shall be priced based on economy fare to the project location(s). All other expenses shall be reimbursable based on the submission or receipts for the expenses incurred, unless specifically agreed otherwise with ADB.

## **V. SCOPE OF SERVICES AND REQUIRED PERSONNEL**

22. ADB will engage a consulting firm in accordance with ADB Procurement Policy and Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and staff instructions. Consulting firm will be engaged through a quality-based selection (QBS). Areas of expertise required for this assignment would include: (i) agricultural development; (ii) agricultural value chain; (iii) food security; (iv)

agricultural economics; and (v) regional agricultural cooperation. The consulting firm will help prepare the CAREC agricultural development and food security cooperation strategy, pipeline of investment projects, and pre-feasibility studies for selected projects (please refer to Table 1). The consulting firm can propose a mix of key and non-key experts based on its approach and methodology.

23. The consultant would need to procure office equipment, organize workshops, trainings, and conferences. The consulting firm will organize in-person meetings with ADB project team at different stages described in the specific TOR under each Call-off assignment. Locations of the in-person meetings will be determined in consultation with ADB.<sup>7</sup>

24. Table 2 below summarizes required experts, which is followed by the qualification requirements and inputs/activities.

**Table 2. Required Key Experts**

Positions	International	National <sup>a</sup>
Agricultural Economist/Team Leader	1	
Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialist	1	10
Agricultural Trade Facilitation and Value Chain Specialist	1	
Climate-Smart and Digital Agriculture Specialist	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>a</sup> 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.

#### **A. International Specialists (Key Experts)**

25. **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.

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

- (i) provide overall team leadership for supervision and coordination of activities of the firm's consultants and the individual national 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

<sup>7</sup> These meetings must be held in the following geographic areas: (i) Caucasus, (ii) Central Asia, (iii) PRC/Mongolia.

- (v) these, recommend inputs to the draft strategy based on international experience;
- (vi) be responsible to collect expert inputs from other thematic experts for the agricultural development and food security strategy;
- (vii) 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;
- (viii) provide team leadership in the conduct of meetings, workshops, and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
- (ix) be responsible to draft and finalize the agricultural development and food security strategy and deliver to ADB.
- (ix) lead identification of bankable projects for preparation of investment pipeline and pre-feasibility assessments.

27. **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.

28. 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, pipeline of bankable projects, and pre-feasibility studies.

29. **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.

30. 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, pipeline of bankable projects, and pre-feasibility studies.

31. **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.

32. 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, pipeline of bankable projects, and pre-feasibility studies.

## **B. National Specialists (Non-key Expert)**

33. **National Agricultural Policy and Strategy Specialists** (10 positions – 1 from each CAREC member country) 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.



34. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (i) act as focal for the pool of experts in each country, accountable to the recruited consulting firm and ADB
  - (ii) 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;
  - (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) collect and analyze the country(ies) level relevant information to support the preparation of regional strategy;
  - (vi) participate in meetings, workshops, and discussions with stakeholders to discuss each stage of the draft strategy;
  - (vii) 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
  - (viii) other activities as deemed necessary to prepare the agricultural development and food security strategy, pipeline of bankable projects, and pre-feasibility studies.

### **C. Non-Key Experts**

35. In addition to the required key experts, the shortlisted firms should also include in their technical proposal, in the personnel work plan and in their financial proposal the “non-key experts” required for successful implementation of this framework contract assignment in accordance with their proposed approach and methodology.

36. The CVs of the selected key experts will not be scored and will not contribute to the Personnel Evaluation score.