



Feature Article
April 16, 2026

The Wakhan Corridor's Increasing Role in Central Asia-Afghanistan-China Interaction

Nargiza Umarova

This article addresses the geopolitical and economic dynamics surrounding the development of the Wakhan Corridor as a potential trade route connecting Afghanistan and China through the high-altitude Wakhjir Pass. It highlights the Wakhan Corridor's competitive advantages over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and analyses the risks and challenges posed by political instability, security threats, and infrastructural limitations in the region. It also examines China's cautious stance, Tajikistan's interest, and broader implications for regional connectivity. The primary objective is to evaluate the feasibility of the Wakhan Corridor, its comparative advantages over existing trade routes like CPEC, and its potential implications for regional connectivity. By examining these aspects, the paper seeks to analyze how the corridor could influence the geopolitical and economic landscape of Central Asia, Afghanistan, and China. In this context, the following analysis delves into the intricacies of the Wakhan Initiative, assessing its inherent risks and opportunities, while evaluating its potential for successful implementation.

Due to political instability caused by a protracted sequence of civil wars and conflicts, Afghanistan remained isolated from the global community for several decades. Consequently, the nation faced significant impediments to its integration into the international trade framework and the development of robust transport communications, despite its



*Panorama view of Wakhan Corridor in Tajikistan Pamir mountains with Hindu Kush range in Afghanistan and sandstorm on Panj river.
(Shutterstock)*

exceptional geographical location and strategic significance for both global and regional powers.

The situation underwent a remarkable transformation after the withdrawal of U.S. military troops and the Taliban assuming control in August 2021. Contrary to prevailing expectations, the new but unrecognized government in Kabul did not withdraw into itself but took

the path of intensifying cooperation with its closest neighbors – the other Central Asian republics, Iran and China. Notably, the latter has firmly secured its status as Afghanistan’s main trade and investment partner. The value of trade between the two countries reached almost US\$ 2 billion in 2024.¹ Long-term contracts have been executed with Chinese companies to develop Afghan oil, copper, lithium and gold deposits.

China’s economic expansion into mineral-rich Afghanistan, which commenced in the early 2000s proceeded with differing levels of accomplishment despite significant security risks. The same factor impeded the integration of the volatile neighboring state into the ambitious global initiative “One Belt, One Road,” designed to interconnect China’s neighboring states and regions into a single transport chain similar to the ancient Silk Road.

In April 2023, Beijing announced its “Position on the Afghan Issue,” in which a separate paragraph outlined the importance of Afghanistan’s participation in the Belt and Road Initiative.² Particular emphasis was placed on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multifaceted infrastructure project with a total budget of US\$ 62 billion.³ Within the framework of the CPEC, the high-altitude Karakoram Highway at the Khunjerab Pass has been repaired, while the Indian Ocean port of

Gwadar in Pakistan has undergone substantial modernization. Furthermore, plans are underway to construct a 3,000-kilometer railway from the sea harbor to China’s borders at a cost of about US\$ 58 billion.⁴

It is evident that the capacity of the corridor being created far exceeds the needs of China and Pakistan. This is due to the goals set for the project, initially designed for a broad spectrum of beneficiaries, all of whom ultimately become integral components of the CPEC transport axis. These include Uzbekistan, and indirectly all the countries of the Central Asian region that support the construction of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway corridor along the Termez-Naibabad-Maidanshahr-Logar-Kharlachi route. The forthcoming Trans-Afghan Railway, also known as the Kabul Corridor, will connect Central Asia with Pakistan’s road network and ports, thereby ensuring their participation in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. A similar effect is expected for Afghanistan, which also has no direct access to the sea and is forced to rely on foreign assistance to address this problem. The Chinese side appealed to these circumstances, urging the Taliban to become involved in the economic corridor.

An Alternate Route To China

¹ The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC). 2024. <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/afg/partner/chn>

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. “China’s Position on the Afghan Issue.” April 12, 2023.

³ Chattha M.K, and Sayed M. 2019. “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Where is the money going?” *Journal of Infrastructure Policy and Development* 3 (1): 100. DOI:10.24294/jipd.v3i1.1117

⁴ Chen, Stephen. “China-Pakistan railway ‘worth it’ at estimated US\$58 billion: study.” *South China Morning Post*, April 27, 2023.

The extension of CPEC to Afghanistan was announced in May 2023.⁵ This decision has garnered two distinct interpretations within the public space. According to one version, CPEC will have a branch in the form of a connecting road from the Karakoram Highway to the Wakhan Corridor via the Broghil Pass. Moreover, the Trans-Afghan Railway from Termez to Kharlachi is likely to be considered as an additional option. This project was initially presented in 2018 as the fastest and most direct route between Central and South Asia.⁶

Other sources present a contrasting perspective of Afghanistan's participation in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which rather resembles a circumvention scenario. Media outlets frequently highlight Kabul's plans to utilize Wakhan as a means to establish direct communication with the PRC without entering Pakistan. The last series of such messages appeared in January 2024.

First, Moizuddin Ahmadi, the head of the Information and Culture Department of Badakhshan province, where the Wakhan Valley is located, publicly announced the completion of the construction of a 50-kilometre section of gravel road leading to the Chinese border via the Wakhjir Pass in the Pamirs.⁷ The project cost is US\$ 5

million, including the upcoming asphalt work. Second, in December 2025, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development announced that 70 percent of the road to Xinjiang was complete.⁸ This reflects the Afghan government's persistent pursuit of establishing direct connections with China, despite Beijing's lack of approval for such moves. The revival of the historical Silk Road through the Wakhan Corridor could potentially diminish the importance of Pakistani transit, and with it the very concept of the CPEC in cargo transportation between Afghanistan and China, which has demonstrated remarkable growth due to the intensification of mutual trade.

This development is particularly significant for the Taliban government in light of the intensified military escalation along the border with Pakistan. In an effort to put economic pressure on Kabul, Islamabad has suspended the movement of goods from Afghanistan through its territory and seaports in the Indian Ocean, resulting in significant financial and reputational losses for both sides. Ongoing tension with its southern neighbor will likely increasingly encourage the Afghan government to minimize the use of Pakistani transit for exports and imports, and to promote alternative routes to foreign trade partners,

⁵ Najafzada E., and Dilawar I. "China's Belt and Road to Enter Afghanistan in Taliban's Victory." *Bloomberg*, May 7, 2023. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-05-07/china-s-belt-and-road-to-enter-afghanistan-in-taliban-s-victory>

⁶ Uzbekistan railways. 2018. "New transport corridor, new opportunities and large-scale prospects." https://railway.uz/en/informatsionnaya_sluzhba/novosti/12643/?sp_hrase_id=7334559

⁷ Rahmati, Fidel. "Wakhan Corridor officially connects Afghanistan to China: Taliban." *The Khaama Press News Agency*, January 16, 2024. <https://www.khaama.com/badakhshan-province-officially-connects-afghanistan-to-china-via-wakhan-corridor-official/>

⁸ "Wakhan Corridor Project 70% Complete, Aims for Economic Boost." *Tolo News*, December 16, 2025. <https://tolonews.com/business-197057>

including China and other Central Asian states. Consequently, the Taliban may intensify their efforts to establish the Wakhan Corridor project, presenting it as a viable solution to the issues arising from Pakistan's restrictive transit policy.

A direct route to China could provide Afghanistan with another outlet for maritime trade, in addition to Iran's southern ports, toward which Afghan businesses have recently begun actively redirecting their export flows. However, the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran currently threatens the smooth operation of trans-Iranian trade and transport corridors, forcing shippers to resort to alternative routes.

At the same time, the launch of the Wakhan Corridor could have certain implications for Central Asian transit. Some countries, including non-regional players, are likely to benefit from this development.

The Wakhan Corridor can prospectively improve the interconnectedness between China and the Middle East by decreasing the timeframe for the transport of goods. In addition, improved economic links may also deepen political and security cooperation between the parties, thus gradually changing the existing power balance on the Eurasian continent and having longer term

implications for the contemporary political economy and order of the region.

The Wakhan Corridor represents a unique intersection of historical legacy and modern strategic potential. As a crucial link between Central, South, and East Asia, its development holds the promise of enhanced trade and connectivity. However, the corridor is also fraught with challenges, including security risks, geopolitical rivalries, and infrastructural limitations. This duality underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of its role in the broader regional framework. The growing importance of the Wakhan Corridor in the triangular interactions among Central Asia, Afghanistan, and China reflects a complex interplay of political, economic, and security interests that have developed in recent years.

Origins of the Wakhan Initiative

The history of the restoration of the trade route from Badakhshan to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), known as the Wakhan Corridor dates back to 2009.⁹ Kabul and Beijing then agreed to study the feasibility of constructing a road through the ancient Wakhjir Pass at an altitude exceeding 4 kilometers, intersecting their shared border.¹⁰ However, due to the complexity of the terrain, the parties considered this task unattainable, despite China's extensive expertise in building

⁹ The Wakhan Corridor is a narrow strip of land in the Pamirs, sandwiched between China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The length of the territory is 350 km, the width varies from 13 to 65 km. There are 110 villages inhabited by about 12,000 people in the area of Wakhan

¹⁰ "Factbox: Relations between Afghanistan and China." *Reuters*. October 4, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-china-fb/factbox-relations-between-afghanistan-and-china-idUSTRE79325D20111004/?ref=hir.harvard.edu>

roads in challenging landscapes. Therefore, obstacles to the realization of the Wakhan route were likely political rather than technical in nature.

China has been reluctant to open its border with Afghanistan even for trade and transit due to concerns about the potential infiltration of Uighur militants affiliated with the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) into its territory. From Beijing's perspective, separatists could use the remote Wakhan Corridor as a launching point to attack and foment unrest in the XUAR. However, such rhetoric has little correspondence with reality. According to a UN Security Council report, the ETIM force numbers no more than 500 and does not have the capabilities or weaponry to pose a significant threat to China.¹¹

Nevertheless, the Wakhan initiative was discarded. By 2015, the concept of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor appeared, which became known as the flagship and most expensive project of the One Belt, One Road initiative.¹² Neglecting the route through the Wakhjir Pass, Beijing persuaded Kabul to join the CPEC in the ensuing years. However, Afghanistan has not relinquished its aspirations and will most likely not give up the idea of developing the logistical potential of the Wakhan Corridor for direct access to China.

This process accelerated under the Taliban, which established close ties with the eastern neighbor, including through diplomacy.

Beijing's wait-and-see stance

In 2019, Afghanistan began the construction of a 60-kilometer road from Sarhad-e Broghil, the previous termination point of the only road in Wakhan, to Bozai Gumbaz, the main Kyrgyz settlement in the Lesser Pamir.¹³ This was an access road for local residents, which Afghan authorities planned to pave and turn into a transit and trade route by attracting Chinese investment. However, Beijing has adopted a wait-and-see stance, while simultaneously amassing substantial funds to create transport infrastructure in Pakistan.

Despite this, the Afghan government moved on, initiating the construction of the second segment of the route from the Lesser Pamirs to the Wakhjir Pass one year later. According to the Afghan Ministry of Public Works, the road was 20 percent complete by mid-2021.¹⁴ The remaining part was expected to be finished by 2022.

The unexpected change of government in Afghanistan in August 2021 delayed the project's timeline. The Taliban resumed construction of the road through the Wakhan Corridor in September 2023, while seeking financial support from China to

¹¹ Zhao, Ziwen. "Why China is wary of opening up Afghanistan's new road to Xinjiang." *South China Morning Post*, January 26, 2024. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3249931/why-china-wary-opening-afghanistans-new-road-xinjiang>

¹² Houreld, Katharine. "China and Pakistan launch economic corridor plan worth \$46 billion." *Reuters*, April 20, 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0NA12T/>

¹³ Marty, Franz J. "High road to China? A road to the Afghan-Chinese border is not what it might seem." *9dashline*, July 21, 2021. <https://nine-dash-line.squarespace.com/article/high-road-to-china-a-road-to-the-afghan-chinese-border-is-not-what-it-might-seem>

¹⁴ Ibid.

make the future trade route viable.¹⁵ The issue was the topic of a behind-the-scenes conversation between Afghanistan's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Mutaki and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at the Trans-Himalayan International Forum in October 2023 in Tibet.¹⁶ It was later discussed at the Belt and Road anniversary forum in Beijing, which was attended by a Taliban delegation led by Afghan Minister of Trade and Industry Nuriddin Azizi.¹⁷ However, the Chinese side currently does not approve of opening the border with Afghanistan. The reason is the same "Uyghur threat", fueled by the activities of terrorist groups in the territory of a neighboring nation.¹⁸

From a pragmatic perspective, integrating the Wakhan Corridor into the international transit system would undoubtedly benefit China, which is already exploiting Afghanistan's natural resources and increasing the volume of supplies to the country. Therefore, China has a clear interest in reducing the cost of transporting goods in and out of Afghanistan. Theoretically, the road through the Wakhjir Pass, with all its complexity, seems to be the most optimal solution to the dilemma of transport communication between the two states. It is important to note that this route shortens the distance not only between China and Afghanistan, but also between

Pakistan and Tajikistan, whose borders are woven into the Pamir Node.

The current discourse does not sufficiently cover Dushanbe's position on the Wakhan issue and its role in strengthening the transport and logistics chain Central – South – East Asia. Analyzing this aspect in light of the interests of all Central Asian countries provides a better understanding of the potential risks and opportunities of the Wakhan route for the region.

The Tajikistan factor and possible risks and benefits for Central Asia

As previously mentioned, the Wakhan Valley, cut off from the outside world, serves as a buffer zone between Afghanistan, China, Tajikistan and Pakistan. Despite its unique location, as well as the growing demand for interregional connections amid global tensions, its transit potential remains unrealized although earlier attempts were made in this direction, including by Tajikistan's authorities.

At the core of Dushanbe's interest in the Wakhan Corridor is its goal of gaining the shortest route to the Chinese and Pakistani markets, as well as to more distant countries and continents through Pakistani ports in the Indian Ocean. In this situation,

¹⁵ *Sirf Pakistan*. "China-Afghanistan Wakhan Corridor May Reduce Dependence on CPEC: Analyst." September 20, 2023. <https://sirfpakistan.net/2023/09/20/china-afghanistan-wakhan-corridor-may-reduce-dependence-on-cpec-analyst/>

¹⁶ Uddin, Islam. "Chinese, Afghan foreign ministers discuss opening of strategic Wakhan Corridor." *Anadolu Ajansı*, October 6, 2023. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/chinese-afghan-foreign-ministers-discuss-opening-of-strategic-wakhan-corridor/3008982>

¹⁷ D'Souza, Shanthie Mariet. "China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Taliban's Economic Dreams." *The Diplomat*, October 19, 2023. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-and-the-talibans-economic-dreams/>

¹⁸ Raj, Verma. "Taliban 2.0 and China's Counterterrorism Diplomacy in Afghanistan". *Middle East Policy*, February 22, 2023. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/mepo.12677>

Tajikistan has a remarkable opportunity to become a pivotal link in the Central Asia – South Asia supply chain and compete for transit currently going through Uzbekistan.

Within the Wakhan Corridor region, Pakistan and Tajikistan are separated by several mountain passes that partially cross the territory of Afghanistan. For the development of transport communications, the Dorah Pass with a height of 4,550 meters was selected. In the first half of the 1990s, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement to launch a corridor through the Dorah Pass, connecting Pakistani Chitral to Tajik Ishkashem via a 200-kilometer road.¹⁹ The plan was to construct a tunnel through the mountains, which would reduce the length of the route to 150 kilometers.²⁰ However, the agreement failed to be implemented due to the deterioration of the political situation in Afghanistan. In 2009, the parties returned to the postponed plan. In addition to the already announced option, the possibility of connecting Chitral with Tajikistan through the Brogit and Shandur passes was also considered.

In 2015, the leaders of Tajikistan and Pakistan approved three cross-border highway projects in the directions Gwadar-Peshawar-Kabul-Kunduz-Dushanbe, Khunjerab-Kalasu-Murghab and Chitrol-Eshkahem-Dushanbe (construction of the

facility has not been completed), which marked Tajikistan's accession to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.²¹

Extending CPEC to Tajikistan has several advantages. First, cargo from China, Pakistan and Afghanistan will swiftly reach Tajikistan and further into Central Asia, resulting in substantial cost and time savings. Second, the emergence of a network of modern roads in the Pamirs will give impetus to the economic development of border areas: the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan, the Wakhan district of Badakhshan province in Afghanistan, the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China and the city of Chitral in the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a result, the level of prosperity, literacy and mobility of the local population will increase. Third, improved infrastructure will contribute to greater stability and security in the region.

At the same time, the implementation of the Wakhan initiative with the active participation of Tajikistan carries several risks. First, if the Wakhan trade route becomes operational, current transit options through Central Asia may lose significance for various stakeholders. For example, China will be able to transport goods from Kashgar to Afghanistan faster than through the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, potentially undermining the prospects for

¹⁹ Ahmad, Afaq. "The Wakhan Corridor: a gateway to strategic opportunities." *The Nation*, June 16, 2023. <https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Jun-2023/the-wakhan-corridor>

²⁰ *Gilgit Baltistan Tribune*. "Tajikistan completes its link-road to Gwader: Pakistan building Gilgit to Durrah Pass." March 3, 2013.

<https://gbtribune.blogspot.com/2013/03/tajikistan-completes-its-link-road-to.html>

²¹ *The News International*. "Three highway projects to connect Pakistan with Tajikistan approved." November 14, 2015. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/15662-three-highway-projects-to-connect-pakistan-with-tajikistan-approved>

the future China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway, on which Tashkent has placed high hopes. Second, the launch of the Wakhan route will provide Iran with the opportunity to connect with China through Afghanistan, bypassing the rest of Central Asia. Considering the impressive volume of trade turnover between the two powers (US\$ 13,37 billion in 2024), the region's losses will be significant.²² Iran has almost finished the construction of the Khaf-Herat railway line and intends to extend it to Wakhan. Kabul is ready to assist in this matter.²³ In November 2023, during the visit of a Taliban delegation to Tehran, the parties agreed to create joint groups to intensify the process.²⁴

Third, Afghanistan itself is not averse to reducing its dependence on its Central Asian neighbors in trade with China. Local entrepreneurs, who are extremely interested in minimizing transport costs, persistently demand this from the government.²⁵ Afghan businesses have serious complaints against Islamabad, which has repeatedly created obstacles against transporting goods across the shared border. A major impediment was introduced in September 2023, when

Pakistan tightened its transit policy towards the neighboring state.²⁶ Restrictions were introduced on the transit of 14 commodity items, and the period for their customs inspection was increased. Consequently, thousands of containers with Afghan cargo have accumulated in the Pakistani port of Karachi.²⁷ Following armed clashes with the Taliban in October 2025, Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan.²⁸ In November 2025, Kabul responded by suspending all trade with Islamabad. Tensions escalated sharply in February 2026, when the Pakistani Air Force launched airstrikes on several Afghan provinces.

Increasing squabbles with Islamabad are fueling Kabul's efforts to find alternative routes. One of them is the aforementioned Khaf-Herat railway, which provides access to southern Iranian ports, as well as overland access to Turkey and the EU.

Conclusion

Despite its attractiveness, the launch of a trade route through the Wakhjir Pass in the Pamirs remains unlikely in the near future. Much depends on Beijing's goodwill and

²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "China and Iran."

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/gjhdq_665435/2675_665437/2818_663626/

²³ *TOLNews*. "Herat-Khaf Railway Planned to Be Completed in 18-24 Months: Official." May 24, 2024. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-188993#:~:text=Afghanistan-Herat%2DKhaf%20Railway%20Planned%20to%20Be%20Completed%20in%2018%2D24,in%20less%20than%20two%20years.>

²⁴ *ReportAZ*. "Taliban ready to provide Iran with Wakhan Corridor for transit of goods to China." November 7, 2023. <https://report.az/en/other-countries/taliban-ready-to-provide-iran-with-wakhan-corridor-for-transit-of-goods-to-china/>

²⁵ Hakimi, Bibi Amina. "Wakhan Corridor Important for Trade: ACCI". *TOLNews*, November 29, 2023. https://tolonews.com/business-186256#google_vignette.

²⁶ Ali, Shahnawaz. "Pakistan tightens control around Afghan Transit Trade; but why now?" *Profit*, October 4, 2023. <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/10/04/pakistan-tightens-control-around-afghan-transit-trade-but-why-now/>

²⁷ *The Hindu*. "Afghanistan urges Pakistan to release thousands of containers from port." November 14, 2023. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/afghanistan-urges-pakistan-to-release-thousands-of-containers-from-port/article67533452.ece>

²⁸ Shah, S., Yawar, M.Y., and Ali, M. "Dozens killed in Pakistan-Afghanistan clashes, border closed." *Reuters*, October 12, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghanistan-claims-58-pakistani-soldiers-killed-clashes-border-closed-2025-10-12/>

willingness to invest in this project. Given the actual security situation in Afghanistan, exacerbated by a new round of armed conflict with Pakistan, which accuses the Taliban of inaction against the terrorist group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), China seeks to avoid taking hasty decisions on the Wakhan issue, enthusiastically promoted by Kabul. However, it is premature to conclude that the Chinese side has completely abandoned the construction of a road from Badakhshan to the XUAR.

Beijing has long assessed the possibilities of the Wakhan Corridor and, given a convenient situation, is unlikely to miss the chance to take advantage of them. While the right moment has probably not yet arrived, the ground is being prepared. A clear indication of this is the Taliban's construction of a gravel road along the corridor.

Moreover, in the context of increasing confrontation with the U.S., it is important for China to develop existing and create new multivariate land routes with an emphasis on strengthening its own geostrategic dominance in the surrounding regions. Against this background, it would be highly unlikely for Beijing to ignore the logistics potential of Wakhan.

As for investments in the project, if the "Uyghur threat" is neutralized, the PRC will not save on the costs of launching the Wakhan route, which will certainly be

dwarfed by the US\$ 794 million for the modernization the Karakoram Highway or the US\$ 4.2 billion to build the China-Tibet Railway.²⁹

The Central Asian states should carefully prepare for any scenarios for the development of the Wakhan Initiative. It is advisable to consider options for benefiting from each of them, while simultaneously consolidating efforts to strengthen intraregional connectivity and positions in the global transport services market.

Against this backdrop, it is crucial to accelerate the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway corridors and their subsequent connection, which will turn the Central Asian region into a vital link in the international supply chain from East Asia to South Asia and vice versa. The Wakhan Corridor can potentially become part of these larger connectivity projects linking Central Asia and China.

In addition to Uzbekistan, it is important to achieve the active participation from other Central Asian countries in the implementation of the Trans-Afghan route with access to Pakistan. Initiating negotiations on this issue within the framework of multilateral formats, such as the Consultative Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Economic

²⁹ *Business Recorder*. "China to undertake Karakoram Highway project soon." September, 2006.
<https://fp.brecorder.com/2006/09/20060901470485/>

Cooperation Organization and others would be beneficial.

It would also be timely to consolidate efforts to develop the competitive potential of Central Asian transit, including implementing a flexible tariff policy and eliminating bottlenecks (technical, institutional and organizational barriers) in cross-border cargo transportation. The attraction of foreign investments into these expensive infrastructure projects is directly linked to the creation of favorable conditions for regional trade, quicker economic growth and the regional political environment.

About the Author

Nargiza Umarova is a Head of the [Center for Strategic Connectivity](#) at the Institute for Advanced International Studies (IAIS), University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) and an analyst at the Non-governmental Research Institution 'Knowledge Caravan', Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Her research activities focus on developments in Central Asia, trends in regional integration and the influence of great powers on this process. She also explores Uzbekistan's current policy on the creation and development of international transport corridors. She can be contacted at nargiza.umarova@iais.uz.

