

Energy Corridors: CASA-1000

The Central Asia-South Asia power project also known as ‘CASA-1000’ is a renewable energy infrastructure project that aims to bring 1300 MW of hydroelectric power from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in Central Asia to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Under an investment worth USD 1.2 billion, CASA aims to facilitate regional trade between the participating countries by developing a shared renewable energy market. Along with improving energy access and grid connections in Pakistan and Afghanistan, this will also allow Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to boost revenues by exporting previously stranded generation capacity, thereby strengthening regional market opportunities.

For effective implementation, partnering countries, financing institutions and development agencies have shown substantial support in implementing the required frameworks. However, while CASA-1000 was initially expected to be completed in 2022-23, it has faced multiple challenges in its implementation, ranging from development delays due to COVID-19 imposed lockdowns to political instability and economic crisis. This has consequently impacted the project’s financial activities and development objective indicators such as transmission lines, institutional mechanisms, and commercial frameworks. The project is now expected to achieve its Commercial Operation Date (COD) by 2024.

In the backdrop of these challenges, the mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation would play a key role in regional growth. Thus, while going forward with economic recovery, the revival and timely completion of CASA-1000 is immensely important for clean energy access and regional economic development in Central and South Asia. To reduce any potential upcoming risks and address the bottlenecks in its implementation, stakeholders across all four countries would have to play a critical role.

This panel would, therefore, bring together a group of high-level experts and key stakeholders working to ensure effective implementation of CASA-1000, to address the following key questions:

- How would CASA-1000 enable socioeconomic development in central and south Asian countries?
- What has been the current progress on different phases of CASA-1000 implementation?
- What are the key regional challenges (financial/political/others) that are limiting timely and effective completion of the project?
- How can effective regional cooperation between partner countries address the existing bottlenecks for developing an effective Regional Energy Corridor?

Bibliography

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