

SCO Summit 2026: Key Outcomes

8 September 2026

I. Introduction

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit (SCO) was held in Bishkek on 31 August – 1 September 2026. The leaders adopted the Bishkek Declaration and a package of 27 documents covering institutional development and economic, financial and digital cooperation.

The Summit maintained the SCO's existing financial agenda. Work on the SCO Development Bank will continue, but the parties have not yet moved to establish it. Member states also reaffirmed their support for wider use of national currencies and development of the SCO Interbank Consortium.

Outcomes in other economic areas were more targeted. Member states continued work on e-commerce, technical standards, transport connectivity, energy and green technologies.

II. Political Context

The SCO Heads of State Council meeting brought together the leaders of all ten member states: Belarus, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Summit marked the SCO's 25th anniversary and concluded Kyrgyzstan's presidency.

- A broader group of countries took part in the SCO Plus meeting. Participants included Mongolia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Egypt, Laos, Türkiye, Vietnam and Togo, invited by Kyrgyzstan and the heads of the United Nations and several regional organizations.
- The **SCO admitted no new members at the Summit** but continued its institutional reforms launched in 2025. After deciding at the Tianjin Summit to **merge observer and dialogue partner categories into a single SCO partner status**, member states formalized the system in Bishkek by amending the SCO Charter and related documents. Seventeen former observers and dialogue partners received the new status.

Alongside the adoption of joint documents, the Summit remained **an important venue for direct talks between the leaders of SCO countries and their partners**. Discussions in Bishkek covered bilateral relations, regional conflicts and major economic projects.

- The most relevant talks for the economic and payments agenda were held between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov during Xi's state visit to Kyrgyzstan.
- The Summit also hosted a series of bilateral meetings. Talks were held between the leaders of China and Kyrgyzstan, Russia and China, Russia and India, Russia and Iran, Kyrgyzstan and India, and Armenia and Azerbaijan. Discussions focused on trade, investment, energy, transport and regional cooperation.

Pakistan took over the SCO presidency for 2026 - 2027 under the theme «From Vision to Action: Connectivity, Innovation and Shared Prosperity».

III. SCO Development Bank

The proposed SCO Development Bank remained a key financial issue during Kyrgyzstan's presidency. Following the 2025 Tianjin Summit, the parties held four rounds of consultations – the latest in China in June 2026. However, they did not sign a founding agreement at the Bishkek Summit or agree on the Bank's core parameters, including capital, membership, governance, financing priorities and launch timeline.

The headquarters location was also unresolved. Kyrgyzstan promoted Bishkek throughout the year, while Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said at the Summit that Kazakhstan was also ready to host the Bank if consensus were reached. He proposed prioritizing infrastructure, technology and industrial projects.

Thus, **no agreement was reached on either the location or the Bank's broader model.**

In the Bishkek Declaration, member states noted progress toward establishing the Bank «in the format of interested member states» and agreed to continue the work. This format allows the project to move forward without requiring all SCO members to participate.

- The wording is more cautious than at the 2025 Tianjin Summit, when interested member states stated that they had decided to establish the Bank. Despite a year of consultations, that political decision has yet to result in its formal establishment.

Leaders also outlined differing views on the Bank's future. Russian President Vladimir Putin said it should remain independent of financial systems used by some countries as instruments of political pressure. Russia's position, alongside Kyrgyzstan's and Kazakhstan's proposals on the headquarters and financing priorities, will shape further discussions on the Bank's model.

IV. SCO Interbank Consortium

The SCO Interbank Consortium was established in 2005. It brings together banks and development institutions appointed by SCO governments. These authorized banks represent their countries in the Consortium, review joint projects and arrange financing from their own resources.

- Unlike the proposed SCO Development Bank, SCO Interbank Consortium is not a standalone financial institution. It is a coordination platform, while financing decisions remain with its member banks.

On 2 July 2026, the SCO Interbank Consortium Council approved its Development Strategy for 2027 - 2031, following the current strategy for 2022–2026. It also created a working group on environmental, social and inclusive finance. The Consortium therefore now has a programme for the next five years and a dedicated mechanism for developing new areas of financing.

- At the Summit, the member states supported continued practical cooperation through the Consortium and agreed to speed up the admission of an authorized Iranian bank. Once

admitted, the bank will represent Iran in the Consortium and take part in the review and financing of joint projects.

V. Settlements in National Currencies

The Roadmap for Gradually Increasing the Share of National Currencies in Mutual Settlements, adopted in Samarkand in 2022, covered the period from 2022 to 2025.

- The member states did not adopt a separate document for the next period.
- Instead, the Bishkek Declaration provides for **continued implementation of the existing Roadmap** by interested participants.

National-currency settlements remain part of the SCO financial agenda, while practical arrangements continue to develop bilaterally. For example, on the sidelines of the Summit, Kyrgyzstan and China agreed to expand the use of national currencies in trade and investment settlements and support the connection of Kyrgyz banks to China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS).

The use of national currencies in settlements between individual SCO countries continues to grow. Vladimir Putin said that they now account for more than 98% of Russia's transactions with other SCO countries.

Although the Roadmap was not updated, the use of national currencies continues to expand through bilateral arrangements and closer links between banks across SCO countries.

VI. Artificial Intelligence, Digital Infrastructure and Information Security

According to the official list of documents adopted at the Summit, the member states approved:

- the Memorandum between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Artificial Intelligence;
- the Concept for Establishing Regional Data Processing and Computing Centers and Developing the Artificial Intelligence Industry within the SCO.

The two documents establish artificial intelligence and computing infrastructure as distinct areas of SCO cooperation.

China's International Centre for AI Cooperation

At the Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced plans to create an **International Centre for cooperation on the use of artificial intelligence for SCO countries**. China also proposed implementing 100 technology projects with SCO countries over the next three years and continuing to hold the SCO Digital Economy Forum.

- Implementation began immediately after the Summit. On 3 September, the Beijing authorities announced the start of work on the center, coordinated by China's National Development and Reform Commission. Its planned work includes identifying technologies

and practical use cases, supporting projects in overseas markets, researching AI safety, data protection and algorithmic compliance, and training specialists. Around 50 technology projects have already been selected.

Information Security Cooperation

The Summit approved the **SCO Cooperation Plan on International Information Security for 2026 - 2028** and a memorandum between the relevant SCO authorities on cooperation in the information sphere.

- The Bishkek Declaration also set out principles for the safe and responsible use of artificial intelligence and reaffirmed each country's right to regulate its national segment of the internet. The member states also opposed the provision of satellite internet services without approval from national authorities.
- The documents provide for further cooperation on information security while leaving control over digital infrastructure and data at the national level.

VII. Trade, standardization and e-commerce

In the [Bishkek Declaration](#), member states confirmed that they would continue implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy to 2030. The main objectives include expanding trade, strengthening supply-chain resilience and reducing trade barriers.

- Standardization saw the most concrete progress during the year. In May, the heads of national standardization bodies [adopted a joint action plan](#) and agreed to meet regularly. Priorities include digitalization, artificial intelligence, new technologies and the green economy. Over time, this work could simplify technical requirements for business, although mutual recognition of certificates is not yet covered.

At the Summit, the SCO countries agreed to develop **cross-border e-commerce infrastructure**, reduce costs and build trust between companies. The Bishkek Declaration also calls for wider use of digital technologies to protect consumers and for a common approach to online resolution of cross-border commercial disputes.

- These provisions are intended to make e-commerce between SCO countries more predictable. Further work may include bringing national approaches to consumer protection and dispute resolution for cross-border purchases closer together.

VIII. Transport and logistics

The transport section of the [Bishkek Declaration](#) focuses on **road and rail links, multimodal corridors and logistics centres, including the use of digital and energy-efficient technologies**. It sets the direction for further work by the relevant government agencies.

- Large infrastructure projects continue to be developed mainly by individual countries. In their joint declaration, China and Kyrgyzstan [reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the China – Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan railway](#). This bilateral project is important for regional connectivity and trade between China and Central Asia.

IX. Energy and green technologies

On energy, the heads of state adopted two statements: one on **cooperation in energy conservation and efficiency**, and another on **cooperation between energy systems**. The statements were included in the official Summit package. Member states also confirmed that they would continue implementing the SCO Energy Cooperation Strategy to 2030.

- The environmental package included a memorandum on cooperation to address climate change, an initiative on biodiversity conservation and an action plan for 2026 - 2031. The documents identify areas around which national and joint projects may develop, including energy efficiency, resilient energy supplies and clean technologies.

X. Conclusion

The Bishkek Summit maintained the SCO's main areas of economic cooperation but did not mark a turning point in its financial agenda. A year of consultations did not lead to the establishment of the SCO Development Bank. More practical work continues through the Interbank Consortium, bilateral projects and cooperation on standards. The documents on trade, transport, energy and green technologies currently set the direction for future decisions and projects.

For a consultation on these matters,
please contact Evgeny Roshkov, Partner,
at e.roshkov@kesarev.com



Kesarev

Kesarev has been providing steadfast guidance helping companies navigate the complex landscape of government relations, public affairs, and regulatory risk and management across the post-soviet space for more than two decades. With a team of 50 consultants drawn from a broad range of backgrounds, including public administration and crisis communications, the firm provides its services to leading national companies in Russia, Belarus and the EAEU.

Kesarev is the top independent GR consultancy across the region by project volume. The team's key expertise includes legislative drafting, GR support for public-private partnership (PPP) projects, customs tariff and non-tariff regulation, international trade, antitrust and technical regulation within the EAEU and BRICS frameworks. Kesarev has been recommended across a vast number of independent rankings, including Best Lawyers, Mergers.ru, and Pravo-300 as one of the top consultants in the field of government relations and M&A advisory; a testament to the firm's excellent work.

www.kesarev.partners