



Strengthening Green Skills Development under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program” (TA-6806)

Concept note and agenda for the Second Meeting of the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development

3-5 April 2025, Hilton Hotel (Firuze conference-hall), Baku, Azerbaijan

A. Background information

Transitioning to a low-carbon economy comes with major policy challenges for many countries. These policy challenges span multiple sectors, including energy, transport, construction, industry, etc., affecting nearly every aspect of our lives. The transition to a low-carbon (green) economy requires a concerted effort to establish enabling policy frameworks, accessible green finance, and advance sustainable technologies.

All CAREC member countries are already experiencing severe effects of climate change, which are expected to worsen over time. While these countries differ in terms of land area, population size, geographic characteristics, natural resource endowment, per capita income, human capital development, institutional capacity, contribution, and vulnerability to climate change, they must endure the impact of climate change as a ‘lived reality.’

To transit to an inclusive green economy and reach net-zero emissions by 2050, a skilled workforce is needed to drive, implement, and sustain green practices. The workforce will need new skills and competencies integrating sustainability principles, ethical standards, values, attitudes, and behaviours across all fields and areas of applications. Education is critical for raising environmental awareness and promoting pro-environmental behaviour; equipping learners with the knowledge and skills to identify and address environmental challenges and opportunities.

Investment in skills development not only promotes economic growth and facilitates transition but also helps cushion the adverse effects of climate change. Skills attract investments, help green businesses, and enable the deployment of new technologies, including clean and digital ones. Training for greener jobs supports a just transition, improving worker employability and enterprise adaptability.

In response to these pressing global challenges, **the ADB technical assistance project, “Strengthening Green Skills Development under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program”** is strategically designed to establish a sustainable mechanism for capacity building and ownership in the broader effort to green education and skills. Integrating green education and skills development is essential to the success of CAREC countries’ initiatives supporting their climate change vision. **Output 1** of the ADB project envisions the development of an Institutional framework for regional cooperation for green skills development, **Output 2** focuses on the strengthening of climate-smart agriculture university education in the CAREC region, while **Output 3** focuses on building awareness and capacity of governments, education institutions, and the private sector in the CAREC region on green skills, climate change, and just transition.

To promote regional multi-stakeholder dialogue towards collective actions, such as agenda setting, investments for projects with regional significance, policy coordination, capacity building and research, knowledge exchange, and technology transfer in HE and TVET among CAREC member countries, **the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development (CAREC SDWG) has been established**, whose first meeting was conducted on 29 February-01 March 2024 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Its second meeting is scheduled for 3-5 April 2025, in Baku, with Azerbaijan as the Chair for 2025, recalling that as per Article 7, draft Memorandum of Understanding, the chairmanship of the working group rotates every year in alphabetical order.

B. Objectives and expected outputs

The Second Meeting of the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development will comprise of **four parts**:

1) High-level meeting of Deputy Ministers of education of the CAREC participating countries, signing of the Memorandum of understanding

- ✓ To discuss the CAREC 2030 Strategic framework: Human development operational pillar
- ✓ To discuss the “Regional Action on Climate Change: A Vision for the CAREC program”, including a regional platform for climate action
- ✓ To elaborate on the future role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Higher education systems in addressing the current climate change challenges
- ✓ To review action taken to date under the green skills development project
- ✓ To sign the Memorandum of Understanding “On strengthening regional cooperation in skills development among CAREC member countries.”
- ✓ To discuss and approve the project action plan for 2025-2026.

2) Workshop on mainstreaming green skills and just transition (led by ITCILO)

- ✓ To build the capacity of the CAREC WGSD and regional agricultural universities on climate change and its social dimensions, link between skills development and just transition
- ✓ To launch the Agricultural university accelerator program.

3) Technical workshop on climate-smart agriculture for the CAREC region (led by Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research)

- ✓ To validate the needs assessment results of 9 public agricultural universities to be supported by Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research (Netherlands)
- ✓ Local climate-smart agriculture demonstration project development.

4) Site visit of relevant research and development facilities in Baku

Format of the meeting

Around **40 high-level officials** from among the CAREC participating countries¹ and regional agricultural universities² will take part in the meeting. The meeting will feature plenary sessions followed by interactive discussions and hands-on learning experiences. Participants are encouraged to share their opinions, knowledge, and insights to enrich the discussions.

AGENDA

Day 1: 3 April 2025, Thursday

¹ 10 countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

² 9 universities: Azerbaijan Technical University, Georgian Technical University (GTU), Kazakh National Agrarian Research University, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K.I. Skryabin, Mongolian University of Life sciences, Faisalabad university of Agriculture, Pakistan, Tajik Agrarian University, Turkmen Agricultural University named after S.A. Niyazov, Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers, National Research University

**High-level meeting of Deputy Ministers of education of the CAREC participating countries,
signing of the Memorandum of understanding**

Time	Activity
09:30-10:00	Registration of participants, welcome coffee
10:00-10:30	<p>Opening remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ms. Lyaziza Sabyrova</i>, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank - <i>Ms. Sofia Shakil</i>, Director, Human and Social Development Sector Group, Asian Development Bank - <i>H.E. Mr. Watanabe Katsuya</i>, Ambassador, Embassy of Japan, Azerbaijan - <i>Mr. Gasan Gabib ogly Gasanli</i>, Deputy Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan <p>Moderator: <i>Ms. Hyun Joo Youn</i>, Senior Social Development Specialist, Human and Social Development Department, Asian Development Bank</p>
10:30-10:45	<p>Introduction of participants and Key objectives of the High-level meeting</p> <p><i>Ms. Altynay Arapova</i>, Economist, Regional Cooperation and Integration, ADB <i>Ms. Zulfia Karimova</i>, Principal Regional Cooperation specialist, ADB</p>
10.45-11:00	Group photo
11:00-11:45	<p>High-level meeting: Bridging the Human Development and Climate change agenda in the CAREC region</p> <p>Presentation: “Human development as a priority sector within the CAREC 2030 strategy”, <i>Ms. Sofia Shakil</i>, Director, Human and Social Development Sector Group, ADB</p> <p>Presentation: “Climate Education Playbook: Making Education Climate-Ready in Asia and the Pacific”, <i>Mr. Alexander Tsironis</i>, Education Specialist, Human and Social Development Department, ADB</p> <p>Discussion of the Action plan for 2025-2026, <i>Ms. Zulfia Karimova</i>, Principal Regional Cooperation specialist, ADB</p> <p>The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding “On strengthening regional cooperation in skills development among CAREC member countries”</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr. Gasan Gabib ogly Gasanli</i>, Deputy Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan</p>
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee-break
12:00 – 13:00	<p>Panel discussion: “The role of the TVET/ HE systems in addressing climate change challenges: status “quo” and future plans”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mr. Kanan Karimzada</i>, Deputy Minister of Science and Education, Azerbaijan - <i>Ms. Baya Kvitsiani</i>, Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth, Georgia - <i>Mr. Azamat Naimanbaev</i>, Advisor to the Minister of education and science, Kyrgyz Republic

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Oyunaa Purevdorj, Director-General of the Education Policy Planning Department, Ministry of education, Mongolia - Mr. Sohail Akhtar, Senior Joint Secretary-IC, Ministry of Federal education and professional training, Pakistan - Ms. Abdulkholiqzoda Lutfiya Abdulkholiq, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, Tajikistan - Mr. Azat Ataev, Deputy Minister of Education for Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Turkmenistan - Mr. Daliev Shokhrukh Khozhiakbarovich, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Higher education, science and innovation, Uzbekistan <p>Reflections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Elsevar Guliye, Expanding green and digital trade and transport in the Eastern Partnership program, GIZ, Azerbaijan <p>Moderator: Ms. Hyun Joo Youn, Senior Social Development Specialist, Human and Social Development Department, ADB</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break at Lazurit restaurant

Day 1: 3 April 2025, Workshop on green skills, just transition and climate-smart agriculture (led by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization)

Time	Activity
14:00-14:15	<p>Opening remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Sunniya Durrani-Jamal, Country Director, Azerbaijan Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank <p>Moderator: Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation specialist, ADB</p>
14:15 – 15:45	<p>Session I: A Pathway towards sustainable learning and a just transition: laying a theoretical background</p> <p>Presentation: Climate change and its social dimensions: framing the issue, defining challenges, overview of sustainable development, Ms. Chandni Lanfranchi, Programme officer on green jobs and just transition, International training center of the International Labor Organization</p> <p>Presentation: Just transition to low-carbon economies and societies: concepts, entry points for action, case studies, Ms. Chandni Lanfranchi, Programme officer on green jobs and just transition, International training center of the International Labor Organization</p> <p>Presentation: The role of infrastructure projects in developing a climate-smart agriculture in the Aral Sea basin”, Ms. Saule Serikovna Shalmaganbetova, Head of information and analytical unit, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea</p> <p>Reflections from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Kanan Karimzada, Deputy Minister of Science and Education, Azerbaijan - Ms. Baya Kvitsiani, Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Youth, Georgia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Azamat Naimanbaev, Advisor to the Minister of education and science, Kyrgyz Republic - Mr. Oyunaa Purevdorj, Director-General of the Education Policy Planning Department, Ministry of education, Mongolia <p>Presentation: Jobs, environment and decent work: defining decent work and green jobs, Ms. Chandni Lanfranchi, Programme officer on green jobs and just transition, International training center of the International Labor Organization</p> <p><u>Reflections from Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Sohail Akhtar, Senior Joint Secretary-IC, Ministry of Federal education and professional training, Pakistan - Ms. Abdulkholiqzoda Lutfiya Abdulkholiq, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, Tajikistan - Mr. Azat Ataev, Deputy Minister of Education for Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Turkmenistan - Mr. Daliev Shokhrukh Khozhiakbarovich, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Higher education, science and innovation, Uzbekistan <p>Moderator: Ms. Liliia Kachkinbaeva, Consultant, ADB</p>
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Session II: Leveraging the link between skills development and a just transition: Country perspectives</p> <p>Presentation: Skills development for green jobs and towards a just transition: skills development for green jobs in the framework of a brighter, greener and more inclusive future, financing mechanisms, social dialogue, greening TVET, Ms. Chandni Lanfranchi, Programme officer on green jobs and just transition, International training center of the International Labor Organization</p> <p><i>Reflections from the participants</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Hyun Joo Youn, Senior Social Development Specialist, Human and Social Development Department, ADB</p>
17:30 – 17:40	<p>Wrap-up and summary of key findings of Day 1</p> <p>Ms. Zulfia Karimova, <i>Principal Regional Cooperation specialist, ADB</i></p>
19:00- 20:30	Networking dinner at Sky Grill Restaurant

**Day 2: 4 April 2025, Workshop on green skills and climate-smart agriculture
(led by the Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research (Netherlands))**

Time	Activity
09:30-10:00	Registration of participants, welcome coffee
10:00-10:10	Recap of Day 1 and objectives of Day 2
	- Ms. Zulfia Karimova , Principal Regional Cooperation specialist, ADB
10:10-11:10	Session III: Facilitating climate-smart agriculture in the region

	<p>Validation of the results of the assessment of ongoing green skills development projects, green skills development capabilities, gaps, needs and requirements of participating regional agricultural universities, Ms. Irene Koomen, Mr. Herman Snel, the Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research</p> <p><i>Reflections from the floor, Q&A session</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Monika Sopov, Senior Advisor Sustainable Food Systems, Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research</p>
11.10-11.30	Coffee-break
11:30 – 12:15	<p>Session IV: Building successful university linkages support faculty/student exchange and joint research</p> <p>Presentation: “Methodology and criteria for selection of regional agricultural universities for participation in the Acceleration Agricultural Universities’ program”, Ms. Monika Sopov, Senior Advisor Sustainable Food Systems at Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research</p> <p><i>Q&A session, open discussion</i></p>
12:15-13:30	<p>Group work</p> <p><i>Reflections from the universities on how the current project adds value to the overall climate-smart agriculture strategy of the university, to manage expectations and to reflect on achieved results</i></p> <p>Group work presentations</p>
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch break at Cilantro Restaurant
14:30 -15:30	<p>Session V: Building successful demonstration projects</p> <p>“Introduction of demonstration projects in climate smart agriculture and just transition from other projects”, selected CAREC universities present 1 project each to inspire others (tbc)</p> <p>Review of the concept note template to be filled in by regional agricultural universities, Ms. Irene Koomen, Mr. Herman Snel, Wageningen University for Social and Economic Research</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Liliia Kachkinbaeva, Consultant, ADB</p>
15:30 - 15:45	Coffee-break
15:45-17:30	Brainstorming and writing workshop to identify ideas for the proposal development (group discussions, writing and presenting of initial ideas)
17:30-18:00	<p>Closing remarks and discussion of next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Sofia Shakil, Director, Human and Social Development Sector Group, Asian Development Bank - Mr. Gasan Gabib ogly Gasanli, Deputy Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan

	Moderator: Ms. Hyun Joo Youn, Senior Social Development Specialist, Human and Social Development Department, ADB
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Day 3, 5 April 2025, Site Visits

Time	Activity
08:45 - 09:00	Departure from Hilton Hotel
09:30 – 10:30	Visit of SOCAR’s Training-Education and Certification Department
10:30 – 11:00	Travel to Baku Industry and Innovation State Vocational Education Center
11:00 – 12:00	Visit of Baku Industry and Innovation State Vocational Education Center
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch (venue tbc)
14:00 – 14:30	Travel to Azerbaijan Technical University and/or Baku Tourism and Social Services State Vocational Education Center
14:30 – 15:30	Visit of Azerbaijan Technical University and/or Baku Tourism and Social Services State Vocational Education Center
15:30 – 16:00	Departure to hotel