



Senior Officials' Meeting

28 June 2022

CAREC 2030: Human Development

July 2021 to June 2022

Central Asia Regional Economic
Cooperation (CAREC) Program





CAREC HEALTH SECTOR PROGRESS REPORT AND WORK PLAN JULY 2021 – JUNE 2022

Reference Document
Virtual Senior Officials' Meeting
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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
MC	Ministerial Conference
TA	Technical assistance

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I. KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND RESULTS

1. The CAREC health sector has achieved some key strategic milestones between July 2019 and June 2022 in advancing health cooperation under CAREC including the completion and publication of the CAREC health scoping study and the formulation of the CAREC Health Strategy 2030 which was approved in November 2021 by the Ministerial Conference. Due to continuing travel restrictions, meetings for related consultations on the strategy were conducted virtually. Key achievements during the reporting period as well as the progress on the outcome and outputs indicators included in the CAREC results framework for the health sector are described below.

A. Development, approval and implementation of CAREC Health Strategy 2030

2. Following the recommendations from the CAREC Health scoping study a CAREC health strategy leading to 2030, to further manifest the joint strategic direction for CAREC health cooperation was developed and approved by the CAREC Ministerial Conference in November 2021. During the [virtual regional inception workshop](#) in 4 March 2021 the CAREC Working Group on Health (WGH) was established provide guidance and direction for CAREC health cooperation, and for the formulation and implementation of the CAREC health strategy. Terms of Reference of the WGH have been prepared and presented. A series of virtual consultations with countries and development partners was organized between March and September 2021 to consult on priorities and recommendations for the CAREC Health strategy and ensure the strategy is driven by country's needs and priorities. In addition to the consultations, national assessments were undertaken and existing regional and cross-border initiatives and commitments to regional and global health policy frameworks studied. The [CAREC health subsite](#) has been updated and provides an overview of key milestones in the CAREC health work and outlines the strategy.

3. The CAREC health strategy's vision is that '*Public health threats in the CAREC region are addressed comprehensively, efficiently and sustainably, through adopting a regional approach, while safeguarding the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population.*' With enhancing regional health security as an overarching goal, the strategy makes recommendations across four pillars, namely: (i) Leadership and Human Resource Capacity, (ii) Technical Preparedness (Laboratories and Surveillance), (iii) Access to Supplies and Surge Capacity, and (iv) Vulnerable Population Groups and Border Health. The strategy further outlines enablers for implementation which include a necessary institutional setup, in this case the CAREC-supported Working Group on Health, partnerships and cooperation with stakeholders such as development partners, political commitment and policy dialogue on health cooperation among countries, and multisector coordination. In addition, there must be capacity support through training, research and knowledge sharing.

4. A regional technical assistance (TA) [Addressing Regional Health Threats in CAREC and the Caucasus](#) was approved in July 2020 (more than \$4 million). It covers three outputs, namely: (i) capacity to respond to COVID-19 pandemic enhanced; (ii) capacity to prevent, prepare for, and respond to regional health threats developed; and (iii) regional health cooperation strategy toward 2030 and investment framework (2022 - 2026) developed. The formulation of the CAREC health strategy and investment framework and assessments and capacity development related to regional health cooperation are key components of this TA. Consulting firms and individuals have been mobilized in December 2020 and accompanied the development of the strategy.

5. The TA is supporting the development of the regional implementation framework (previously regional investment framework) to identify areas for implementation. It is planned to be presented and discussed with the WGH in Q3 2022. In addition, some consultations with



countries interested to incorporate cross-border / regional approaches recommended under the CAREC health strategy, in their national health strategies, have started and this work will continue. A number of other regional activities have also started under the TA which are aligned with the recommendations under the CAREC Strategy 2030, while at the same time supporting countries' COVID-19 response. In 2022, a series of regional webinars in close collaboration with TA 9950 has started (topics had been consulted with countries in 2021). Regional webinar series were held on (i) Vaccine Hesitancy and Behaviour Change Communication (16 and 30 March 2022); and (ii) [Strengthening procurement and supply chain management](#), including possibilities for regional collaboration (7 April, 6 May and 2 June 2022). The recording of the webinar series on supply chains can be found on the CAREC Institute's website. Further webinar series are being planned on (i) Practical epidemiology to plan COVID-19 prevention, protection, containment, and case management responses; (ii) Drug regulation: Advancing cooperation among regulatory authorities to strengthen regulation, support universal health coverage, and increase regulatory preparedness to manage public health emergencies; and (iii) Digital Health Foundations and Innovations. In addition, the support to pilot a regional health security dashboard is currently being explored.

B. CAREC 2030 Results Framework: Health Sector

6. The CAREC 2030 Results Framework was endorsed at the 19th CAREC MC on 7 December 2020. It includes outcome and output indicators across the five operational clusters of the CAREC 2030 Strategy. Under operational cluster 5 (human development), the following progress has been achieved in the outcome and output for health indicators from 2017 to 2022:

Table 1. CAREC 2030 Results Framework: Health

Outcome	Indicator	2017	2022
Increased regional cooperation in health	Number of CAREC countries that incorporate joint regional approaches and cross-sector activities in their UHC and/or health sector strategies or plans	N/A	Georgia recently incorporated CAREC health strategy recommendations in their national health strategy. Uzbekistan is currently developing new health sector strategy and consultation to incorporate cross-border recommendations ongoing.
Output	Indicator	2017	2022
Institutional platform for regional health cooperation established	Number of joint regional health solutions developed under CAREC	N/A	CAREC Working Group for Health established; Scoping study includes suggestions for regional health solutions for pursuit through discussions on health strategy and investment framework; Webinars on collaborative procurement and supply



			chains incl. regional solutions held; Further assessments for regional health solutions ongoing; possibility of regional health security dashboard currently being scoped.
CAREC countries' capacity to jointly respond to regional health threats enhanced	Number of CAREC government officials trained on regional health security and number of countries that share information on human infectious diseases with other countries for cross-border surveillance	N/A	About 150 participants from CAREC member countries attended regional health meetings between March 2021 and June 2022 out of whom 54 are women

II. CHALLENGES AND KEY ISSUES

7. The preparation of the CAREC Health Strategy 2030 was launched amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the travel restrictions imposed worldwide, it was not possible to meet in person to consult on the strategy and conduct field research. Thus, all related activities including consultation meetings and assessments in the focus areas have to be carried out virtually. In many countries the health sector continued to be affected by heavy workload and shortages in health staff resources. Nonetheless health sector representatives from all countries have committed time and efforts to provide their inputs to the strategy and participated in the consultations and assessments which is duly appreciated.

8. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has given new impetus and re-emphasized the importance of strengthening cross-border cooperation with joint actions as infectious disease threats cannot be addressed only at the national level. It will be important to gather lessons learnt and leverage funding, infrastructure including digital investments, knowledge and capacity development that have been provided to the CAREC health sector to strengthen pandemic response in the short-term, but also to build pandemic response capacity and resilient health systems to better respond and manage similar health crises in the future.

III. WORK PROGRAM FOR 2022

- Disseminate CAREC Health Strategy 2030 and consult with countries on opportunities to adopt regional/cross-border activities in national strategies/plans
- Development of the Regional Implementation Framework (see para. 3)
- Conduct WGH meeting in Q3/4 2022
- Continue with capacity development workshops (para. 5)

9. In the upcoming months further country consultations at the working level, assessments and information gathering will be conducted to prepare the draft regional investment framework.



IV. DELIVERABLES FOR 2022 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

10. The following list provides an overview of deliverables to be achieved until end of 2022.

Deliverables	Timing (2022)	Description	SOM/MC action
Regional Implementation Framework	Q4	The CAREC Implementation Framework 2030 will be a living document and serve as an implementation guideline for CAREC health cooperation.	For information