

## CAREC Health Sub-Working Group (SWG) Updates

April 2025

### I. SWG on Human Resources for Health (HRH)

In the first SWG meeting in September 2024, members jointly discussed three potential focus areas:

- (1) To conduct a **demand analysis** for selected cadres, including mapping of existing human resources against required health workforce competencies for health emergency preparedness and response
- (2) To **develop (sub-)regional standards for selected health professions** to support more mobility for health students and professionals through mutual recognition
- (3) The identification and further ideation of a **regional training center and/or HUBs (Centers of Excellence) for undergraduate and graduate degrees/continuous medical education in public and global health**, including subjects like One Health, Climate Change and Health, useful for increasing health security capacity

During the second SWG meeting in December 2024, members decided to focus on option 3:

- Identifying **five** potential regional **Centers of Excellence for Global Public Health Education (CoGPHE)**, each located in one of the ten CAREC countries, and
- Outlining a **standard curriculum** for Global Public Health.

Consecutively, SWG HRH started to nominate potential candidates from each country, based on two pre-selection criteria:

- Institution/University offers a postgraduate (PG) degree in Public/Global Health
- Institution is open to regional collaboration and knowledge exchange

Early 2025, **seven final criteria** for selecting CoGPHE were identified, out of which **four** must be met to be considered:

- A competence-based education approach is already being applied OR university is open to such an approach (based on WHO competency model for preparing workforce to deliver Essential Public Health Functions (EPHFs)
- Modules of PG degree mostly (80%) in line with EPHFs
- Modules of the PG degree mostly (80%) in line with the core subject domains to be included in MPH Curricula as required by the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA)
- Institution offers or willing to offer Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or Continuing Medical Education (CME) in the field of public/global health
- Instruction is also offered in English and/or Russian
- Institution is nationally and regionally accredited, for example by APHEA <https://www.aphea.be/>
- The Institution is willing to contribute staff time, effort and potentially other resources to the establishment of a regional network (including input at regional meetings for knowledge sharing)

The final selection of the 5 Centers for Excellence should consider the geographical distribution of CAREC member states.

The Long-Term Vision of the CAREC CoGPHE Network is to:

- **Promote and facilitate knowledge exchange** between
  - Students - through student exchange programs
  - Staff members and health experts - through regular field trips, virtual conferences and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- **Support potential CoGPHE to build further capacity** to offer mutually recognized degrees and further education in the subject area
- **Identify topics** within the global public health degrees most relevant for improving health security preparedness

- **Review curricula** and organization of (global) public health degrees in the region and selected universities abroad for potential adoption in CAREC countries

#### **Immediate next steps**

- Until early May 2025, **selection of five Centers of Excellence for Global Public Health Education** in CAREC will be **finalized**
- In May 2025, the HRH SWG will meet for the third time to meet the finalists
- Parallel to this, the five CoE members will get together with staff from the School of Public Health at Hong Kong University (HKU) to plan a five-day Train the Trainer (ToT) Workshop in 2025 on strengthening public health competencies building on the Essential Public Health Functions defined by the World Health Organization (WHO)
- The CAREC/HKU ToT will pair academia (CoE Members) with government officials from all over CAREC to lay the foundation for excellence and exchange in global public health education

## **II. SWG on Procurement and Supply Chain Management**

- Established in March 2024 with membership comprised of government officials from the CAREC countries with expertise in public health procurement and supply chain management
- Main issue the SWG intends to address: Most CAREC countries face a lack of timely and sustained access to affordable quality medicines and medical supplies that are crucial to meet Universal Health Coverage and health security needs.
- Consulting firm hired end of 2023 with funding from funding from the People's Republic of China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund (PRCF) to support developing three outputs together with SWG:
  - develop a regional risk management plan for health supply chains
  - recommend, design, and pilot a fit-for-purpose mechanism/platform that will facilitate regional sharing of market information on selected medical products within the region
  - undertake a situational analysis and feasibility study for cross-border collaborative procurement arrangements in the CAREC region
- Held series of meetings with country representatives, including:
  - Interactive workshop in to gather insights on current procurement and risk management systems and processes in April 2024
  - Technical consultations held between April and June 2024
  - In-person meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, to present, discuss and validate preliminary solutions for regional collaboration on risk management, market information exchange, and collaborative procurement in June 2024
  - Consulting firm handling entered into liquidation in July 2024 and ADB team working on solution to continue work in Q2 2025.

#### **Progress**

- Conducted a situational analysis of the health system and pharmaceutical procurement practices across the CAREC member states
- Developed an outline for the development of a regional risk management plan for health supply chains during public health emergencies
- Completed research and CAREC country consultations to identify a suitable market information mechanism for selected, hard-to-access medical products

#### **Next steps**

- Develop regional action plan for regional cooperation and integration of health supply chains to improve access to essential medicines and medical supplies, especially during public health emergencies, developed and approved by the CAREC WGH
- Pilot a regional market information sharing platform on selected hard-to-access medical products
- Assess viable options for cross-border collaborative procurement arrangements, including financing mechanisms

- Pilot at least one cross-border collaborative procurement mechanism for selected products among interested CAREC countries