

## Addressing Climate Change and Health to Enhance Regional Health Security in CAREC

7-9 April 2025 | Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic



### BACKGROUND

Climate change in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region is amplifying existing health threats and causing new ones. Climate-health risks in the CAREC region are linked to increasing temperatures which are higher than the global average, increased air pollution, extreme weather events, changes in precipitation leading to both flooding and water scarcity, a rise in vector-borne and communicable diseases, heat-stress exacerbating chronic respiratory and vascular health conditions, negative impacts on livestock and agriculture which contribute to food insecurity, and changing migration flows that increase the need for equitable essential service provision especially in urban settings. Mitigating these challenges requires multisectoral cooperation and cross-border coordination to develop regional and national actions which are proactive, systematic, and strategic.

Fostering regional cooperation can facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange, leverage economies of scale, harmonize regulations and standards, and develop joint regional approaches and mechanisms to common climate and health challenges. To this end, the CAREC Working Group on Health (WGH) was established in March 2021 to guide CAREC health cooperation and implement the CAREC Health Strategy 2030 and [the Regional Investment Framework for Health 2022-2027](#) (RIF). The strategy adopted during the CAREC Ministerial Conference in November 2021 focuses on regional health security.

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WGH in November 2023 highlighted the importance of linking climate and health actions with regional health security, the need for closer regional cooperation and opportunities to leverage the CAREC platform. The CAREC country delegates discussed steps to implement the RIF and reached an agreement on joint priorities for health and climate change. Building on ADB's Climate and Health Initiative and aligned with CAREC Climate Change Action Plan<sup>1</sup>, this year's WGH meeting will focus on health system resilience in the context of climate change. Specifically, the aim is to support a regional transition to low-carbon and climate resilient health facilities.

To ensure that CAREC country delegates have the support of relevant technical expertise to draw on when discussing health system resilience in the context of climate change and identifying opportunities for collaboration, the second day of the meeting will be jointly conducted with the Working Group on Climate Change.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- i. Share best practices and advance discussion around regional approaches to enhancing health system resilience and transitioning to low carbon health systems and climate resilient health facilities through cross sector collaboration and targeted health-climate actions;

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<sup>1</sup> [CAREC Ministers Endorse Climate Change Action Plan and 2030 Strategic Priorities, Launch Regional Climate Fund | Asian Development Bank](#)

- ii. Review implementation progress of the CAREC Health Strategy 2023, and comment and endorse the CAREC Sub Working Group (SWG) activities and other work program deliverables;
- iii. Discuss the preferred coordination mechanisms for the WGH and the need for additional sub-working groups e.g. climate and health, regulatory, digital health etc.; and
- iv. Endorse the CAREC health workplan and calendar for 2025 as well as identify financing needs.

## **EXPECTED OUTPUTS**

- (i) Agreed on zero draft of regional decarbonization strategy
- (ii) Agreed on zero draft of regionally aligned minimum requirements for health facility climate readiness and climate resilience transition
- (iii) Endorsed CAREC Health Program Deliverables
- (iv) Potential Pipeline
- (v) Agreed CAREC Health Workplan for 2025, including coordination preferences and Sub Working Groups (SWGs)

## **BACKGROUND FOR CLIMATE AND HEALTH THEMATIC FOCUS FOR JOINT WGH & WGCC (DAY 2)**

Climate change and adverse climate events can have significant impact on health system functioning due to infrastructure damage and an increased demand for health services. Strengthening health system resilience involves supporting health sector systems and infrastructure to become climate-resilient and taking steps to improve emergency preparedness to reduce disruptions to healthcare services during climate events. However, specialized health services and higher levels of health care are known contributors to climate change through the production of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during their patient care and service delivery. This means health operations also need to become aligned with pursuing low carbon footprints. Regional health cooperation provides an opportunity for countries to enable focused knowledge exchange, jointly strengthen climate-resilience of health systems, become sensitized to and share knowledge or evidence from other sectors that can contribute to health system resilience, and develop systems to monitor and reduce healthcare emissions.

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM FLOW AND AGENDA TOPICS

Day & Time (Bishkek/GMT+6)	Program flow and agenda
<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>Topic: Enhancing Health System Resilience and Health Security Through Multisector-Collaboration (WGH only)</b></p> <p><b>Venue:</b> Hyatt Regency Bishkek Hotel, Shayr A Meeting Room (Lobby level)</p>
9:00–09:30	<b>Registration and Welcome Coffee</b>
09:30–10:00	<p><b>Opening Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manas Toktomuratov, First Deputy Minister of Health, Kyrgyz Republic (Host country and co-chair)</li> <li>Leah Gutierrez, Director General, Sector Department 3, Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Co-chair)</li> </ul> <p>Brief overview of objectives of the meeting and agenda – Kirthi Ramesh, Social Sector Specialist, ADB</p>
10:00–10:30	<b>Coffee Break and Group Photo</b>
10:30–12:00	<p><b>Session 1: High level panel on cross sector collaboration opportunities in Climate and Health and beyond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling factors for cross-sector collaboration to achieve health outcomes</li> <li>Implementing One Health through cross-sector collaboration and regional collaboration</li> <li>Social determinants of health in Mountain Areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderators:</b> Brian Riley, Health Specialist, and Kirthi Ramesh, Social Sector Specialist, ADB</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asel Raimkulova, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic</li> <li>Baktygul A. Ismailova, Head, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz Republic</li> <li>Wu Di, Program Officer, National Health Commission, People's Republic of China</li> <li>Leah Gutierrez, Director General, Sector Department 3, ADB</li> <li>Amanda Shriwise, Policy Advisor, World Health Organization</li> <li>Jyldyz Turgunbaeva, Health Specialist, World Bank</li> </ul>
12:00–13:00	<b>Lunch</b>
13:00–15:00	<p><b>Session 2: Exploring cross-sector collaboration</b></p> <p><b>Moderators:</b> Begzod Djalilov, Regional Cooperation Specialist, ADB and Lua Pottier, Regional Health Security and Cooperation Expert, ADB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of regional programme development</li> <li>Group exercise on starting points for multisectoral collaboration</li> </ul>
15:00–15:15	<b>Coffee Break</b>
15:15–17:00	<p><b>Session 3: Review Implementation of CAREC Health Strategy 2030 - Chair: Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz Republic</b></p>

	<p><b>CAREC Secretariat and Program Updates - Kirthi Ramesh, Social Sector Specialist, ADB</b></p> <p>Review of implementation progress by pillar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pillar 1: Leadership and Human Resource Capacity</li> <li>• Pillar 2: Technical Preparedness (Surveillance/Labs)</li> <li>• Pillar 3: Access to Supplies and Surge Capacity (supply chain management and procurement)</li> <li>• Pillar 4: Vulnerable Population Groups and Border Health</li> <li>• Cross-cutting issues (digital health, climate change and gender)</li> </ul> <p><b>Sub-Working Group Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present sub-working group (SWG) progress and deliverables for feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ SWG on HRH - Ms. Tea Bakradze, MOH Georgia, Ms. Asel Kulubek, MOH Kyrgyz Republic</li> <li>◦ SWG on PSCM – Ms Maia Nikoleishvili, MOH Georgia</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Country Updates and Discussions</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> <i>Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz Republic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each country to provide updates on key activities (2 minutes each – alphabetical order)</li> </ul>
17:00	<p><b>Session 4: Outlook for Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the roles of the Working Group for Health and the Working Group for Climate Change</li> <li>• Introduce the potential synergies between the two working groups</li> </ul>
17:30	<b>Day 1 closing</b>
18:30	<b>Joint Social Networking Evening</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<p><b>Topic: Addressing Climate and Health to enhance Regional Health Security through Joint Health and Climate Change Action (WGH &amp; WGCC)</b></p> <p><b>Venue:</b> Hyatt Regency Bishkek Hotel, Shayr A &amp; B Meeting Room (Lobby level)</p>
09:30–10:00	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction to objectives of the day</b></p> <p><b>Welcome:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leah Gutierrez, Director General, Sector Department 3, Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Co-chair)</li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristian Rosbach, Economist (Regional Cooperation), ADB</li> <li>• Kirthi Ramesh, Social Sector Specialist, ADB</li> </ul>
10:00–12:00	<p><b>Session 5: Delivering a Regional Decarbonization Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> <i>Brian Riley, Health Specialist, ADB</i></p>

	<p><b>Lightning Talks on regional decarbonization strategy for health sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing steps towards preparing decarbonization strategy and draft regional decarbonization strategy for CAREC - <i>Nick Watts, Director, Centre for Sustainable Medicine, National University of Singapore</i></li> <li>Country case study of standardized approaches to national health care climate foot-printing (Pakistan) – <i>Irfanullah Khan, Deputy Director on behalf of Mehreen Mujtaba, Director Climate Change, Nutrition and Health, Ministry of National Health Services Regulation &amp; Coordination, Pakistan (virtual)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Group Discussion to provide feedback on draft Regional Decarbonization Strategy</b></p>
12:00–13:30	<b>Group photo and Lunch</b>
13:30–14:45	<p><b>Session 6: Delivering minimum requirements for climate resilience and low carbon transition in health system operations</b></p> <p><b>Panel discussion on concrete collaboration priorities, joint investments and project opportunities relating to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to safeguard communities and vulnerable populations from climate-health risks</li> <li>Public health preparedness, Early Warning Systems and climate-sensitive disease surveillance and data</li> <li>Awareness raising for climate risks and heatwave preparedness</li> <li>Country Experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderators:</b> <i>Kirthi Ramesh, Social Sector Specialist, and Kristian Rosbach, Economist (Regional Cooperation), ADB</i></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Sharshenova Ainash Akynovna, Chief Researcher at the National Institute of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz Republic</i></li> <li><i>Olga Mirshina, Chief Specialist, Sanitation and Hygiene Department, Ministry of Health, Republic of Uzbekistan</i></li> <li><i>Tamar Khomasuridze, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Regional Advisor, United Nations Population Fund (virtual)</i></li> <li><i>Vladimir Kedrowskiy, Technical Officer (Climate Change and Health), WHO Regional Office for Europe (virtual)</i></li> <li><i>Nataly Olofinskaya, Regional Adaptation Adviser, United Nations Development Programme (virtual)</i></li> <li><i>Swati Mahajan, Senior Climate Change Specialist, ADB</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Plenary Discussion</b></p>
14:45–15:00	<b>Coffee break</b>
15:00–16:30	<p><b>Session 6: continuation</b></p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Regional Minimum Requirements for climate-resilient health facilities - <i>Anna Tuddenham, Climate and Health Expert, Arup</i></li> </ul>

	<b>Group Discussion</b> to provide feedback on draft Regional Minimum Standards / Requirements for climate-resilient and low carbon health facilities
16:30–17:00	<b>Next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on establishing sub-working group on Climate and Health</li> <li>• Timelines and next meetings to finalize deliverables</li> </ul>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Topic: Operational planning (WGH only)</b>  <b>Venue:</b> Hyatt Regency Bishkek Hotel, Shayr A Meeting Room (Lobby level)
09:00–09:30	<b>Opening and reflection on insights from previous days</b>
09:30–12:00	<b>Session 7: Work Plan Development, Presentations and Discussions</b>  <b>Moderators:</b> <i>Rukshona Qurbonova, Regional Health Coordinator (CAREC) and Rosebelle May Azcuna, M&amp;E Expert, ADB</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of 2025 workplan</li> <li>• Discussion on addition of sub-working groups (e.g. regulatory, digital health, border health etc.)</li> <li>• WGH coordination preferences &amp; calendar of events</li> <li>• Identification of financing sources for CAREC Health Strategy and Regional Investment Framework implementation</li> </ul>
12:00	<b>End and closing remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sofia Shakil, Director Human and Social Development, East, Central and West Asia, ADB</i></li> <li>• <i>Chair, Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz Republic</i></li> </ul>
12:30–13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
14:00	<b>Session 8: Field Trip</b>