



**CAREC 2030 STRATEGY MIDTERM REVIEW:  
ROLLING IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN  
2025-2030**

**FOR DISCUSSION**

Senior Officials' Meeting  
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program  
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## CAREC 2030 STRATEGY MIDTERM REVIEW: Rolling Implementation Action Plan 2025–2030

### I. Background

1. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program has been a cornerstone for regional cooperation and integration in Central Asia, South Caucasus, East Asia, and South Asia since its inception in September 2001. The *CAREC 2030: Connecting the Region for Shared and Sustainable Development* ([CAREC 2030 Strategy](#)), endorsed in 2017, aims to ensure the program's continued relevance in the fast-changing landscape of member countries. The strategy expanded its scope from three sectors (transport, energy, and trade) to five operational clusters: economic and financial stability; trade, tourism, and economic corridors; infrastructure and economic connectivity; agriculture and water; and human development. Additionally, climate change, digital/information and communications technology, and gender are cross-cutting themes under the Strategy.

2. In 2024, the CAREC Ministerial Conference endorsed the [Midterm Review \(MTR\) of the CAREC 2030 Strategy](#), which covers ten key recommendations:

- (i) Streamline Scope for Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives;
- (ii) Review and Recalibrate Sectoral Strategies;
- (iii) Pursue Regional Public Goods to Address Common Issues;
- (iv) Reinvigorate Regional Ownership for Sustaining Outcomes;
- (v) Promote Integrated and Climate-Smart Development;
- (vi) Strengthen Engagement with Development Partners and Private Sector;
- (vii) Improve Program Effectiveness and Monitoring;
- (viii) Strengthen the CAREC Secretariat;
- (ix) Enhance CAREC Institute's role as a Strategic Partner for Knowledge-Driven Development; and
- (x) Prepare MTR Implementation Action Plan (IAP).

3. In March 2025, the National Focal Points (NFPs) met in Manila to discuss strengthening the program's initiatives through [strategic planning](#) and prioritization and provide guidance on the implementation of the MTR recommendations. NFPs also discussed the alignment between the CAREC 2030 Strategy and [ADB Strategy 2030 MTR](#), which sharpens ADB's strategic focus and support for key priorities: climate action, private sector development, regional cooperation and public goods, digital transformation, and resilience and empowerment.

4. Based on the discussions at the NFP meeting, updates from sector groups, and ongoing programming consultations, the CAREC Secretariat prepared the draft rolling IAP to operationalize the MTR recommendations. This paper seeks feedback from CAREC member countries and development partners on MTR operational actions and activities, which will be the basis of monitoring, updating, and progress reporting to the 24th CAREC Ministerial Conference in November 2025 in the Kyrgyz Republic.

## II. Rolling Implementation Action Plan of the CAREC 2030 Strategy Midterm Review

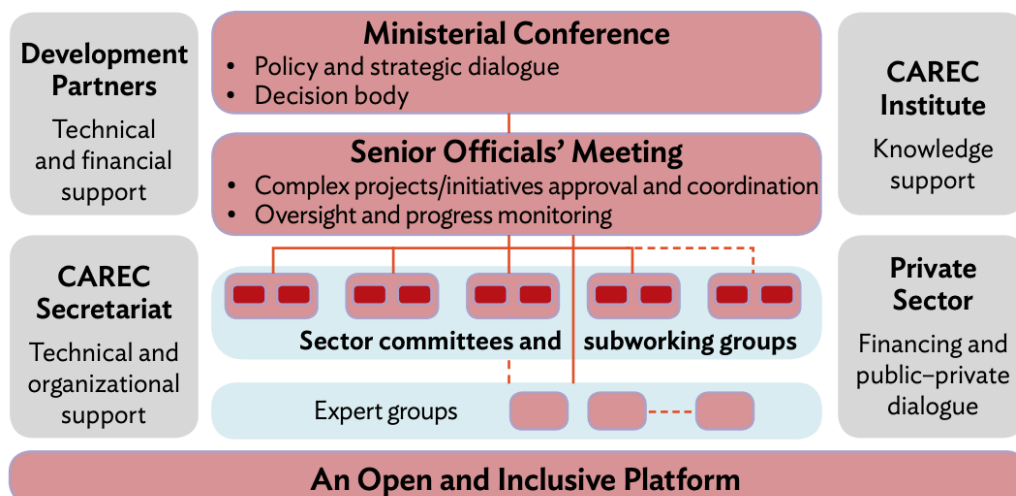
5. The rolling IAP consolidates the actions, activities, projects, initiatives, timeframe and responsible CAREC sectoral bodies or focals to help operationalize the MTR recommendations (see **Table 1**). The IAP will be carried out during the remaining years of the CAREC 2030 Strategy (2025–2030) and updated annually to ensure its alignment with ongoing and planned initiatives and emerging regional and national priorities. The rolling IAP includes:

- **Strategic goals**, which refer to high-level goals, typically involving long-term planning and guidance on the overall direction and priorities of the CAREC operations, and
- **Operational actions and activities**, which include concrete projects and initiatives to implement the MTR recommendations.

6. **Promoting linkages and synergies between sectors and themes.** The MTR recognizes the need to adopt a more targeted approach of CAREC interventions to enhance the Program’s development effectiveness. This includes measures to maximize cross-sectoral initiatives, enhance coordination among CAREC sector institutions, and develop synergies with similar regional and international initiatives.

## III. Institutional Arrangement

7. The MTR calls for the CAREC Program to be more dynamic, effective, and responsive to evolving global and regional development. This requires strengthening the CAREC Program’s institutional arrangements including enhanced capacity of the CAREC Secretariat and CAREC Institute; improved coordination mechanism among CAREC members and development partners; and deepened engagement with the private sector and the Program’s beneficiaries. The IAP will be implemented through existing institutional structure and mechanism (see below Figure and **Appendix 1**).



**Table 1: CAREC 2030 Strategy MTR Implementation Action Plan 2025–2030**

Strategic Goals	Operational Actions and Activities	Projects and Initiatives	Status and Timeline	Responsibility	
<b>1. Streamline Scope for Enhancing Impact of CAREC Initiatives</b>					
Adopt a more targeted and narrow approach	1.1	Conduct needs assessment at national, regional, and sectoral levels	In-country CAREC sector focals meetings led by NFPs to identify topics, areas, and focus of needs assessment or scoping studies	Regular, determined at country level	NFPs, CAREC sectoral bodies, RMs
			Periodic meetings between NFPs and CAREC Secretariat, with participation of SG and RMs as appropriate, to identify assessment needs	Quarterly/biannual	CAREC Secretariat, NFPs, SG, RMs
Ensure long-term planning, project prioritization, and resource allocation	1.2	Establish a multi-year rolling pipeline for regional programs, projects, and technical assistance in each sector	Integration of CAREC proposed projects in ADB Country Programming exercise	Ongoing (annually)	CAREC Secretariat, RMs
			Preparation and update of high-quality flagship regional projects	Ongoing; SOM and NFP meetings	CAREC Secretariat; NFPs
Focus on projects with greatest regional impact, benefits, and transformational outcomes	1.3	Undertake impact assessments of projects and review activities based on impact and relevance to program objectives	CAREC Program Development Effectiveness Review	Every 3 years	CAREC Secretariat; SG
			Finalization of DeFR 2021-2023	Q1 2025	
			Completion reports of CAREC TAs and projects; IED validation on ADB support; development partners evaluation of CAREC related projects	Annually	Project teams, DPs, IED
Prioritize interventions that are demand-driven and aligned with country programming	1.4	Refocus on subregional cooperation (2+X principle), enhance cluster approach, and maximize cross-sectoral initiatives	CWRD–Transport SG joint consultation mission for MTRs of transport, trade and digital strategies	Ongoing (Q1-Q3 2025)	CAREC Secretariat, SG-TRA
			Joint or parallel meetings among sector groups (e.g., Health and Climate Change nexus)	Ongoing (May 2025)	WGCC and WGH
Enhance specialization and in-depth engagement	1.4		Bilateral and subregional arrangements to pursue common trade and economic priorities (e.g., Pakistan-Turkmenistan, C5+1, etc)	Ongoing	NFPs and CAREC sectoral bodies
			Developing investment projects to accelerate digital transformation and connectivity and leveraging use of emerging technologies in CAREC sector work, including on cross-border paperless measures, e-payment systems, or smart mobility (trade, transport, ECD).	Ongoing	DIG, CAREC sectoral bodies
			1.5	Accelerate regional connectivity and	Almaty–Bishkek Economic Corridor (ABEC): • Regional Improvement of Border Services Project

Strategic Goals	Operational Actions and Activities		Projects and Initiatives	Status and Timeline	Responsibility
		develop economic corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Almaty–Issyk-Kul Alternative Road Project (feasibility study)</li> <li>Cross-Border Transport Master Plan (completion)</li> </ul>		
			CAREC Corridor 2 (Middle Corridor) Development 2025-2028 Indicative Pipeline Investment Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AZE: Railways Digital Transformation Project</li> <li>AZE: Railway Signaling and Electrification Project</li> <li>GEO: Batumi-Sarpi Road Project</li> <li>GEO: Tbilisi Bypass Project</li> <li>KGZ: Transport Development Project BCP/Railway</li> <li>TKM: Trans-Turkmenistan Railway Modernization Project (Phase 1 and Phase 2)</li> <li>UZB: CAREC Road Corridor 2 Resilience and Modernization Project</li> <li>UZB: CAREC Corridors 2 and 6 Road Modernization and Safety Project and Program</li> </ul>	2025 2026 2025 2026 2028 2025 & 2027 2025 2027 & 2028	SG-TRA, CAREC Secretariat
			KGZ–UZB Cross-border Sustainable Tourism Cluster Development Project (scoping)	2025/2026	Project teams, RMs
			AZE–GEO: Proposed Joint Border Control Project (scoping/feasibility study)	2026	Project teams, RMs
			TAJ–UZB: Enhancing Trade Facilitation through joint BCP Project (scoping)	2026	Project team
<b>2. Review and Recalibrate Sectoral Strategies</b>					
Align with evolving regional developmental context and be more responsive to emerging needs and requirements  Embed climate change actions	2.1	Sector/Theme MTRs:	Consultation with relevant CAREC sectoral working groups and during related other key events	Q1-Q2 2025	CAREC Secretariat
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAREC Transport Strategy 2030</li> </ul>	Presentation of draft sector MTRs to SOM and finalization for 24 <sup>th</sup> CAREC MC endorsement in 2025	2025	TSCC, RTG, DSCC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030</li> <li>CAREC Digital Strategy 2030</li> </ul>	Preparation of investment plans as part of sector specific MTRs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAREC Priority Investment Projects in Transport CITA Rolling Strategic Action Plan including PBL or sector program on trade and economic diversification, CARTIF, transit and trade facilitation, e-commerce platforms, WTO accession, services trade expansion, including in logistics, digital, and tourism and travel services.</li> <li>CAREC Digital Strategy Investment Plan including proposal to develop fiber optic corridor, digital data platforms, regional green data centers, and use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence</li> </ul>	Ongoing	

Strategic Goals	Operational Actions and Activities		Projects and Initiatives	Status and Timeline	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAREC Energy Strategy 2030</li> </ul>	CAREC Energy Strategy 2030 MTR including key investment projects promoting sustainable energy, regional energy security, energy trade and cooperation	2026	ESCC
<b>3. Pursue Regional Public Goods to Address Common Issues</b>					
Promote RPGs in infrastructure and economic corridors, trade and trade facilitation, health and communicable diseases, environmental sustainability and climate change, water resources management, and sustainable energy transition	3.1	Develop a multi-hazard early warning system	Regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for detecting, forecasting, and communicating multiple hazards	2026	WGCC, DPs
	3.2	Pursue cross-border sustainable energy projects and transboundary water management systems	CAREC Climate Change Action Plan implementation	2025–2027	WGCC
			KGZ: Advancing Green Investment and Resilient Economic Growth Program (Subprogram 1)	2025	Project team
			KGZ: Kamarata-1 Hydropower Plant Project, Phase 1	2026	Project team, DPs
			GEO: Energy Storage and Green Hydrogen Gas Development Project	2025	Project team
			TAJ: Enhancing Sustainability: Financing for the Rogun Hydropower Project	2025	Project team
			UZB: Accelerating the Climate Transition for Green, Inclusive and Resilient Economic Growth, Subprogram 2	2026	Project team
			KGZ: Integrated River Basin Management	2027	Project team
			TAJ: Climate-Resilient Water Resources Sector Development Program (scoping)	2027	Project team
			AZE-KAZ-UZB: Development of the Green Energy Corridor under the Caspian Sea (feasibility study)	2026	Project team
			AZE-GEO-KAZ-KGZ-PAK-TAJ-TKM-UZB: Glaciers to Farms (G2F) Regional Program: Advancing Climate Resilience & Sustainable Development in Central and West Asia, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAK and KGZ: Climate Adaptation in Mountainous Areas</li> <li>TAJ and TKM: Regional glacier risk assessment and water forecasting (preparatory assessments)</li> <li>UZB–KAZ–TKM: Irrigation, Reservoir Restoration, and River Basin Monitoring in Central Asia (scoping)</li> </ul>	2026-2028	Project teams, RMs, CAREC Sectoral bodies
<b>4. Reinvalidate Regional Ownership for Sustaining Outcomes</b>					
Foster national sense of ownership and sustainability of TA and investment projects, through strategic approach	4.1	Engage all country stakeholders from the outset and increase frequency of meetings, feedback mechanisms, and dialogues	In-country CAREC sector focals meetings led by NFPs with participation of RMs and CAREC Secretariat	Regular, determined at country level	NFPs, CAREC sectoral bodies, RMs
			CAREC Project Dashboard and Online CAREC Calendar to reflect CAREC DPs support	2026	CAREC Secretariat

Strategic Goals	Operational Actions and Activities		Projects and Initiatives	Status and Timeline	Responsibility
for engagement and coordination	4.2	Tell and display impact stories and tangible benefits of projects	CAREC Impact Stories published online and available in Russian languages (translation in national/local language forthcoming)	Q2 2025	CAREC Secretariat, RMs, NFPs
Tailor the program to address each country's unique circumstance	4.3	Increase engagement with businesses, civil society organizations, and local communities	CAREC Business Development Forum as side event to the 24 <sup>th</sup> CAREC MC	Nov 2025	CAREC Secretariat, KGZ
			Regular consultations with chambers of commerce, private sector and business groups	Annual	RMs, NFPs
			Outreach activities to local communities and beneficiaries to share project results, incorporated in the CAREC Communications Plan	Annual	CAREC Secretariat, RMs
Promote transparent and open stakeholders communication					
<b>5. Promote Integrated and Climate-Smart Development</b>					
Accelerate economic growth and diminish carbon footprints	5.1	Integrate CAREC climate change, digitalization, and trade initiatives	Decarbonization of CAREC transport and trade corridors	2025	WGCC, RTG, TSCC
			COP29 Declaration on CAREC Partnership for Trade, Climate, and Innovation (various initiatives and pilot projects)	Ongoing	RTG, CCC, WGCC, DSCC
Mainstream climate change actions across sectors	5.2	Align and develop synergies with similar regional and global initiatives	CAREC Climate Change Action Plan 2025–2027 implementation, including CAREC Climate Platform	2025–2027	WGCC
			5.3	Enhance capacity and coordination among sector institutions, focusing on areas like water-energy-agriculture nexus, "One Health" approach	Regional Decarbonization Strategy for Healthcare in the CAREC region
	Regionally agreed Minimum Standards for Climate Resilient Health Facilities	2025			WGH
	One-Health component in CAREC BCPs projects	As needed			CCC, TSCC, WGH
	Regional strategy to promote food security through agriculture modernization, safe food trade, climate-smart agriculture and sharing of information	2025-2026			AFSWG
	Establishment of regional centers of excellence (green skills, health, scientific institutions)	2025			Skills WG
	5.4	Promote innovative and green finance initiatives	CAREC Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund (CSPPF) call for proposals and approval of funding allocations	Ongoing (biannual)	CAREC Secretariat
			KGZ and TAJ: Risk Layered Disaster Relief Finance Sector Development Program	2025	Project team
Carbon markets or carbon taxation (MON and KAZ)			2025/2026	Project team	
<b>6. Strengthen Engagement with Development Partners and Private Sector</b>					

Strategic Goals	Operational Actions and Activities		Projects and Initiatives	Status and Timeline	Responsibility
Enhance role and involvement of development partners and the private sector in delivering complex, multi-country projects	6.1	Form multi-DP teams for impact assessment of projects	Framework for CAREC DPs collaboration on pipeline development, cofinancing, sector strategy formulation, project monitoring and evaluation, and project impact assessment	Ongoing	CAREC Secretariat
	6.2	Involve CAREC DPs in proposed multi-year project pipeline, regional priorities, and identify complementarities	Improved CAREC Project Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in consultation with DPs	Q4 2025	
Develop strategies to overcome potential barriers such as internal procedures, priorities, and resource constraints	6.3	Promote regular DP engagement	CAREC Development Partners Forum	2025/2026	CAREC Secretariat
	6.4	Mobilize additional or co-financing with DPs and explore innovative financing options to support critical regional infrastructure projects	Potentially for the Development of the Green Energy Corridor under the Caspian Sea Project and others to be determined	Ongoing	CAREC Secretariat
	6.5	Prioritize Public-Private Partnerships to leverage private sector expertise and investment	Expand non-sovereign operations, including under ADB's Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program	Ongoing	Project team, PSOD
			ABEC Almaty–Issyk-Kul Alternative Road Public Private Partnership Project	2026	Project team
			ABEC Electric Bus Project	2026	Project team
Explore feasibility of CAREC Fund of Funds (FOF), to catalyze deployment of venture capital for startup ecosystems			Ongoing	DIG, PSOD, CAREC Secretariat	
<b>7. Improve Program Effectiveness and Monitoring</b>					
Improve transparency to allow for informed program adjustments and evidence-based decision-making processes	7.1	Develop a real-time operational dashboard to track project progress and KPIs	CAREC Project Dashboard (prototype under development)	Ongoing	CAREC Secretariat
			Review and update of CAREC Program Results Framework	Q4 2025	CAREC Secretariat, SG
Enhance return on investments and economic dividends	7.2	Establish a feedback loop for periodic progress review involving all stakeholders	Institutional mechanism for periodic reporting on CAREC interventions/TAs through periodic CAREC Sector Focals meeting organized by NFPs with participation by RMs (Actions 1.1, 4.1, 8.1)	Quarterly/biannual	NFPs, CAREC Secretariat, RMs
	7.3	Improve the CAREC website	CAREC Communications Plan, including CAREC Impact Stories (Action 4.2) and make communication products available in local languages, utilize various innovative communications solutions and channels	Ongoing, 2026	CAREC Secretariat
Promote and	7.4	Make monitoring and	Dissemination of the reports to CAREC NFPs	Annually	CAREC

Strategic Goals	Operational Actions and Activities		Projects and Initiatives	Status and Timeline	Responsibility
facilitate south-south knowledge sharing		evaluation reports available to stakeholders	(Action 1.3)		Secretariat
	7.5	Facilitate knowledge exchange programs and develop communities of practice to collaborate and share best practices	Knowledge exchange initiatives incorporated in CAREC Sector work and CAREC Institute Strategy 2026–2030	2025-2028	CAREC Secretariat, CAREC Institute
<b>8. Strengthen the CAREC Secretariat</b>					
Foster national-level engagement and development of regional projects  Optimize resource allocation, enhance regional collaboration, bridge distance from regional partners, and address the program's expanding roles and needs	8.1	Engage closely with ADB country directors, country management teams, and sector experts in CAREC countries	CAREC Secretariat assigned to CMTs and sectors joining CPM missions	2025–2030	CAREC Secretariat
			Institutional mechanism for periodic reporting on CAREC interventions/TAs with CAREC sector focals meeting organized by NFPs with participation by RMs (Actions 1.1, 4.1, 7.1)	2026	CAREC Secretariat, NFPs, RMs
	8.2	Strengthen field presence, enhance ADB Resident Missions in CAREC countries	Phased CAREC Secretariat staff outposting to RMs and assignment of RCI staff in RMs	Phased	RMs, CAREC Secretariat
			Enhanced roles and responsibilities of Advisors to NFPs and RCCs and engagement with RMs	Ongoing	CAREC Secretariat, RMs
	8.3	Develop joint financing modalities with other development partners and stakeholders (e.g., CAREC multi-donor trust fund)	CAREC Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund (CSPPF) establishment	Completed (Oct 2024)	CAREC Secretariat
			Fund mobilization for potential new partners for CSPPF, and various trust fund support to CAREC operations	2025–2030	CAREC Secretariat
<b>9. Enhance CAREC Institute's Role</b>					
Strengthen the CAREC Institute's role as a key partner in fostering regional economic cooperation	9.1	Implement the revitalization plan of the CAREC Institute	Preparation of the CAREC Institute Strategy 2026–2030, incorporating proposed actions for revitalization  Preparation of a new ADB TA support CI reforms	Q4 2025	CAREC Secretariat, CAREC Institute
	9.2	Integrate CAREC Institute's role in CCAP and sector strategy MTRs to identify knowledge and capacity-building requirements	Participation at consultations for MTR of CAREC 2030 sector strategies (transport CITA, energy, and digital) (Action 2.1)  Institutional mechanism for CAREC Institute's participation in country and sector consultations	2025	CAREC Secretariat, CAREC Institute, CAREC sectoral bodies

AFSWG = Agriculture and Food Security Working Group; CAREC = Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program; CARTIF = CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation; CCAP = Climate Change Action Plan; CCC= Customs Cooperation Committee; CITA = CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda; CMT = Country Management Team; COP29 = 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference; CPM = Country Programming Mission; CWRD = Central and West Asia Department; DEFR = Development Effectiveness Review; DIG = Digital Sector Office of ADB; DP = development partners; DSCC = Digital Strategy Steering Committee; ESCC= Energy Sector Coordinating Committee; IED = Independent Evaluation Department of ADB; KPI = key performance indicators; MC-24 = 24<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference; MTR = Midterm Review; NFP = National Focal Points; PBL = Policy-Based Loan; PSOD = Private Sector Department of ADB; RCC= regional cooperation coordinator; RCI = regional cooperation and integration; RM = Resident Missions of ADB; RTG = Regional Trade Group; SG = Sector Group; SOM = Senior Officials Meeting; TA = technical assistance; TRA = Transport; TSCC = Transport Sector Coordinating Committee; WGCC = Working Group on Climate Change; WGH = Working Group on Health; WTO = World Trade Organization.

**Note:** Project list is indicative and non-exhaustive.

## **Appendix 1: Institutional Arrangement under the CAREC 2030 Strategy and MTR Rolling Implementation Action Plan**

The rolling IAP will be implemented through existing institutional structure and mechanism with the following roles and responsibilities:

1. **Ministerial level.** The CAREC Ministerial Conference (MC) serves as platform to deliberate on high-level policy and strategic issues of regional relevance and provide continuing guidance on the program's strategic direction towards CAREC 2030 and beyond. The MC will continue to provide high-level strategic guidance and endorsement for implementing the IAP.
2. **National Focal Points.** The NFPs will ensure effective coordination at country level between and among relevant government agencies and development partners and raise awareness on the CAREC Program, identifying concrete opportunities for regional cooperation. At regional level, the NFPs meet annually, including through Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and NFP Consultation Meeting, to oversee the implementation of IAP.
3. **CAREC sector committees and working groups** will lead the implementation of operational actions and activities relevant to their respective sectors or themes, including identification and conceptualization of regional projects and initiatives that may be introduced at country level programming and presented to MC through the SOM.
4. The **CAREC Secretariat** will be responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the IAP, and the periodic reporting to the MC through the SOM on progress on the IAP. The CAREC Secretariat will coordinate with sector committees and working groups in each of the IAP actions and activities and with development partners and ADB's relevant departments and resident missions in the technical and financial resources required to operationalize the IAP.
5. **Development Partners** are integral to effective implementation of the CAREC 2030 Strategy and will contribute financing and technical expertise to implement the operational actions and activities in the IAP, creating synergies of initiatives to the extent possible.
6. The **CAREC Institute** will strengthen its knowledge and capacity building activities and align them to better support the IAP MTR recommendations.
7. **Monitoring.** The list of IAP projects, activities and deliverables will be reviewed and updated annually.