



BRIEFER ON A STRATEGY FOR HEALTHCARE DECARBONIZATION IN THE CAREC REGION: 2026-2030

FOR DISCUSSION

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Executive Summary

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the healthcare sector currently account for approximately 5-8% of global emissions and, without decisive action, are expected to triple by 2050. Countries within the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme (CAREC) are home to two billion people, 18% of global gross domestic product, and contribute approximately 40% of healthcare sector emissions. Given the region’s vulnerability to climate impacts and its contribution to global emissions, healthcare decarbonization is both a necessity and a significant economic opportunity, estimated at USD 95-125 billion by 2030¹. The CAREC Health Strategy 2030 underscores the importance of regional health cooperation and the necessity for robust, coordinated responses to cross-border health threats, including those driven by climate change.

This briefer provides an overview of the strategic approach to healthcare decarbonization for countries within CAREC that can serve as the foundation for transformational decarbonization action across health system delivery in the region. This approach was initially presented at joint meeting of the CAREC Working Groups on Health and Climate Change meeting on 8 April 2025. Feedback from that consultation process has been incorporated into the full-length healthcare decarbonization strategy which accompanies this briefer. The strategy provides a comprehensive package of work to build an evidence base, highlights actionable initiatives, and emphasizes the importance of establishing a regional community of practice among healthcare stakeholders.

The recommended approach aligns with the CAREC Health Strategy 2030 and Regional Investment Framework, the CAREC Climate Change Action Plan and supports regional objectives of addressing climate change impacts, enhancing regional health security, and promoting sustainable healthcare practices. In line with these overarching frameworks, a regional decarbonization strategy is pivotal in advancing sustainable, climate-resilient health systems.

Overview of the approach

The strategy focuses on actions to be taken in three strategic areas: 1) Evidence base for investment, 2) Targeted high impact “no regret” actions, and 3) Collaborative network in the form of a regional community of practice. Together these three areas are mutually reinforcing, support immediate progress and lay the foundation for accelerated healthcare decarbonization across the CAREC region. The table below gives a summary overview of each of the strategic areas. For detailed discussion of each area and the co-benefits they offer, please refer to the full-length strategy document.

Strategic Area	Main activities	Deliverables	Requirements
1. Evidence base for investment	Gain understanding of current baseline emissions in individual countries to inform cost-benefit analysis and	CAREC country specific: a. Baseline emissions inventory b. Decarbonization roadmap including	Strong country ownership Clear data sharing protocols

¹ Estimated from potential global green economy economic opportunity estimate of \$9-12 trillion by 2030 (McKinsey, 2022), multiplied by the estimated amount spent on healthcare globally (about 6% of GDP) as an indicator of the level of economic activity in that sector, multiplied by CAREC region’s estimated amount share of global GDP (about 18%).

	<p>emission scenario trajectories.</p> <p>This can be used to set emission target goals, define metrics for success and prioritize actions to implement.</p>	<p>emissions scenario modelling</p> <p>c. National action plan tailored for policymakers and decision-makers with recommended short-, medium-, and long-term priorities for healthcare decarbonization</p>	<p>Continuous engagement between ministries of health, the ADB, and technical partners</p>
2. Implement targeted “no-regret” actions	<p>Interventions related to improving resource sustainability and cutting longer-term operational costs by enhancing healthcare facilities’ climate resilience. Sample “no-regret” interventions can be found in the full strategy document.</p>	<p>Initial findings from the activities above can be a starting point for identifying practical, low- or cost-saving measures that can and should be rolled out before a full baseline, roadmap, or action plan are finalized.</p>	<p>Readiness support might be needed in developing a business case to secure financing required for implementation</p>
3. Regional community of practice	<p>Knowledge sharing and collaboration during the process of implementing decarbonization measures in healthcare</p>	<p>Network of health policymakers and practitioners mobilised across the region. Training and mentoring sessions on identifying, monitoring and troubleshooting decarbonization measures as needed</p>	<p>Hosting and initial facilitation within the CAREC platform, perhaps through a Sub-Working Group on Climate and Health</p>

Timeline for implementation

The healthcare decarbonization strategy for CAREC spans 2026 to 2030 and is structured in three deliberately overlapping phases, enabling countries ready to move quickly to begin at once, while allowing other countries sufficient time to build capacity before fully engaging.

