



RETA 6806: Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Skills Development under the CAREC Program:

Key highlights and meeting objectives

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Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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Objectives and desired outcome of the project:

Objectives:

The TA will improve four key areas of:

1. standardization and harmonization in higher education,
2. standardization and harmonization in TVET,
3. governance and regulation of recruitment systems, and
4. development of labor market database and information system.


The TA's main focus is to improve systems and governances at the country and regional levels, considering global best practices, the countries' diverse backgrounds, and geographical context, as well as the countries' agendas, key stakeholders' requests from the previous consultations, and other previous and ongoing initiatives to ensure strong buy-in and synergy while avoiding duplication.

Impact and Outcome:


- **Outcome: Regional cooperation and integration in the CAREC Region strengthened** through better utilization and allocation of human resources, in line with the CAREC 2030 Strategy and Strategy 2030 Operational Plan.
- **Impact: Human development improved through increased quality, mobility, and productivity of the labor force of the CAREC countries**

SWOT analysis of a huge potential for cooperation in skills development in the CAREC region


Strengths

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- **CAREC is well-established; several CAREC countries have strong historical links and systemic similarities;**
 - CAREC can draw on the experience of development partners currently active in the education sector and benefit from the experience of regional cooperation programs.

Weaknesses

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- Education is a new sector and CAREC will need to build up its understanding of regional education and labor–market issues;
 - **There is limited awareness of CAREC among policy makers for TVET and higher education,** and resources may also be limited.
 - To address these weaknesses, **initial cooperation should focus on a few priority areas.**

Opportunities

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- **The harmonization of education standards** offers a potential niche area for CAREC; **cooperation in skill standards and LMI** is also a potential niche; there is also scope for **sharing experiences and mutual learning** in many areas, including education approaches and innovations, labor migration, and remittances.
 - Several countries have made good progress, which provides the basis for mutual support.

Threats

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- **The CAREC countries are economically diverse and geographically dispersed;** their education indicators are divergent, and their education priorities have both similarities and differences; they also have systemic differences; finding a common denominator will not always be easy.
 - To address the threats, **CAREC may need to adopt a differentiated approach, focusing on subgroups of countries.**

Examples of regional cooperations in higher education in the world:

1. **European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Bologna Process** is perhaps the most comprehensive regional cooperation initiative in the education sector worldwide. **EHEA covers a wide range of activities to guide public authorities, universities, teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the internationalization of higher and professional education.**
2. **ASEAN University Network**, which promotes collaboration and exchange among universities in Southeast Asia through joint degree programs, research collaborations, and student exchange initiatives.
3. **The Greater Mekong Subregion** has promoted **cooperation in human resources for over 2 decades**, and has generated lessons on key areas for cooperation, the most appropriate institutional arrangements, and what works and what does not.
4. **In the Pacific region, ADB has developed a model for providing regional loan financing to the University of the South Pacific** that may be of relevance to CAREC.
5. **Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training**, which promotes cooperation and collaboration in higher education among countries in Southern Africa by facilitating the development of joint degree programs, research collaborations, and student exchange initiatives
6. **The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme** under SEAMEO-RIHED, which supports the mobility of students and enhance cooperation in higher education among countries in Asia.



Main objectives of this meeting: #1 – To finalise with your help the Action Plan and key areas to focus for the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development

Why we need the CAREC Working Group on Skills Development?

- ✓ To serve **as a platform for regional cooperation**, integration, and learning among member countries, including on the best practices;
- ✓ To **improve, harmonize and standardize** selected aspects of practices and approaches;
- ✓ To **foster developing bilateral and/or regional qualifications** as part of standardization and harmonization procedures;
- ✓ To **establish institutional networks** for standardization and harmonization systems for selected occupations widely demanded by global and regional markets and relevant to the countries' needs, by favouring women workers;
- ✓ To **foster cross-country collaborations** in selected occupations to be developed through institutional twinning arrangements of bilateral and/or regional collaborations;
- ✓ To **encourage student exchanges**, introduction of joint degree programs, faculty exchanges, research collaborations, **mutual recognition of skills and qualifications**;
- ✓ To support **the functioning of the launched Agriculture university network** initiative activities.

Main objectives of this meeting: #2 – CAREC Agriculture University Network for Innovation and Skills development

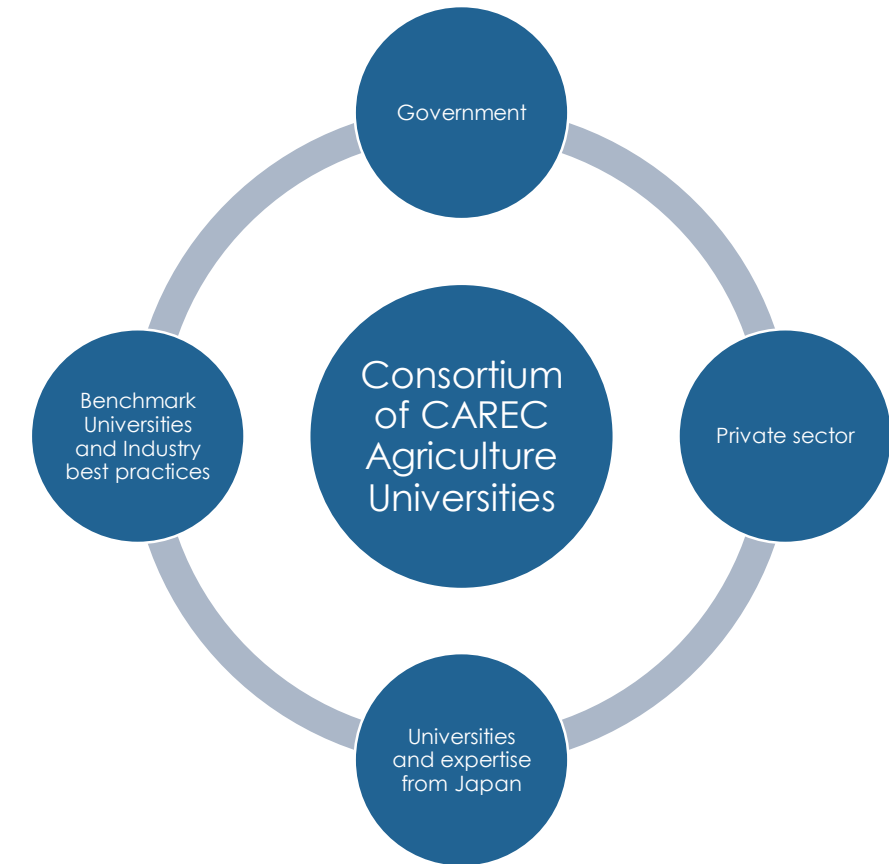
Objectives

- To develop mechanisms to fully maximize the opportunities for global talent and facilitate the exchanges of knowledge and students, staff, and faculty of the top agriculture universities in the CAREC countries.
- To familiarize CAREC practitioners and experts with international research standards within the higher education sector.
- To support multilateral initiatives and workshops on education standards, information access, employability, skills needs assessment, and other related issues in selected CAREC Universities.
- To enhance research and development in the region by capitalizing on the consortium partners' areas of expertise and resources.
- To establish subgroups in the consortium to activate cross-linkages between sectors

Proposed pillars for 2024:

1. Climate-smart agriculture and food security
2. Green skills or environmental sustainability
3. Water resources management

Using Triple Helix model of innovation in facilitating regional cooperation within Higher and TVET education institutions in CAREC



**Thank you for your
attention and wish you
productive meeting!**

