

# ONE HEALTH FOR PANDEMIC PREVENTION, FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH IN CENTRAL ASIA

## TERMS OF REFERENCE Consultant on Environmental Sector

### Background

The Central Asian region faces complex challenges in public health, food security, and environmental protection that are transboundary and cross-sectoral in nature. Threats related to the spread of zoonotic diseases, the rise of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and foodborne risks require a systemic, coordinated approach that goes beyond the capacities of individual countries or sectors. In response to these challenges, the governments of the five Central Asian countries signed a Joint Communiqué in 2022 and approved a Framework Programme of Action in 2023, initiating regional cooperation under the "One Health" concept. The One Health approach emphasizes the interconnections between human, animal, and ecosystem health, enabling more effective prevention, preparedness, and response to emerging threats.

Within this initiative, it has been recognized that sustainable progress is only possible with the presence of a regional coordination structure capable of uniting country efforts, facilitating dialogue, promoting knowledge exchange, and supporting joint decision-making. The role of this structure has been entrusted to the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), which has extensive experience in fostering inter-country and cross-sectoral collaboration in the region.

As the regional coordinator, CAREC plays a central role in establishing and operationalizing the coordination framework for the One Health concept. It is responsible for developing and aligning a regional action plan, coordinating technical working groups, and organizing regular consultations with participating countries. Additionally, CAREC will lead the development of strategies for establishing a laboratory network, enhancing the legal and regulatory framework, and strengthening communication mechanisms. It will also organize educational and training activities for relevant specialists. CAREC's efforts will contribute to the formation of a unified approach to managing sanitary-epidemiological and environmental risks in the region.

As the Regional One Health Secretariat, CAREC is responsible for implementing the regional action plan, facilitating coordination among national governments and international partners, supporting knowledge exchange, and ensuring integrated risk reduction and response planning.

### Objectives of the Assignment

Provide expert technical support for the implementation of environmental activities under the One Health project and contribute to the Regional One Health Coordination Structure (ROHCS) and Technical Working Groups (TWGs), offering expert opinions, recommendations, and documentation for the environmental sector.

### Scope of Work

- Assess and evaluate existing systems, capacity, and institutional arrangements within relevant ministries and agencies related to environmental health, ecosystem management, and wildlife monitoring. Identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement .
- Work with relevant ministries and agencies to ensure that effective systems are in place and/or strengthened for:

- Environmental risk assessment;
  - Ecosystem and wildlife monitoring (including population dynamics, movement patterns, health status, and risk assessment);
  - Assessing climate-related health impacts on ecosystems and human populations.
- Develop thematic materials and technical documents related to environmental health, including regional methodologies for environmental risk assessment, operational strategies, and monitoring frameworks and assessments of climate-related health impacts to guide and support these systems.
  - Contribute technical input to the development of the Regional One Health Action Plan, ensuring it reflects practical country-level needs, incorporates strengthened systems in environmental health and wildlife monitoring, and addresses biodiversity, wildlife health, and ecosystem management dimensions.
  - Organize and facilitate country-level consultations with national environmental authorities and relevant stakeholders to gather data and insights, validate findings, agree on priorities, and develop tailored, context-specific recommendations, including those related to wildlife movement, health status, and cross-border risks.
  - Design and deliver targeted training modules (including e-learning content) to build institutional capacity on environmental health, climate impacts, ecosystem management, and integrated wildlife monitoring.
  - Participate in the work of the Regional One Health Coordination Secretariat (ROHCS) and Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), providing technical expertise, contributions on environmental health, transboundary ecosystem issues, and zoonotic risk management feedback, and recommendations based on country-level realities.
  - Prepare and support the drafting of high-quality technical reports, policy briefs, communication materials, and other technical outputs summarizing assessments, capacity-building actions, and progress in strengthening environmental health, biodiversity, wildlife surveillance and monitoring systems, as well as the regional coordination of zoonotic disease monitoring.
  - Ensure integration of issues related to the monitoring and surveillance of zoonotic diseases in wildlife populations, including migratory species such as the Taiga antelope and migratory waterbirds, with emphasis on coordinated regional approaches across Central Asian countries.
  - Facilitate the delivery and dissemination of training modules in collaboration with technical partners, including access to e-learning materials and guidance on climate impacts, ecosystem health, and environmental aspects of zoonotic disease prevention and preparedness (e.g., avian influenza).

## **Deliverables**

- Comprehensive frameworks, strategies, and operational guidelines for environmental risk assessment, ecosystem health monitoring, wildlife (including migratory waterbirds) and biodiversity surveillance, and associated reporting mechanisms.
- Consolidated country consultation reports, including stakeholder feedback summaries, validated findings, agreed priorities, and tailored recommendations, with specific considerations for wildlife movement, health status, and cross-border risks.

- Technical inputs and drafted sections for the Regional One Health Action Plan (Environmental Sector), addressing environmental health, biodiversity, wildlife health, ecosystem management, and climate-related health impacts, along with any related technical annexes or supporting documents.
- Targeted training resources, including e-learning modules, facilitator guides, and other environmental health-related learning materials, covering climate impacts, ecosystem management, wildlife monitoring, and zoonotic disease prevention.
- High-quality technical reports, policy briefs, and communication materials summarizing environmental assessments, capacity-building actions, and regional coordination activities related to environmental health and wildlife monitoring systems.
- Documented participation in ROHCS and Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) meetings, including expert advice, recommendations, and follow-up actions relevant to environmental health and transboundary ecosystem management.

### **Assignment Duration**

The assignment will last for a maximum of 24 months, but will not exceed the project end date. Extension may be considered based on project dynamics.

### **Reporting**

The Consultant on Environment will report directly to the CAREC OH Project Coordinator.

### **Assignment Location**

CAREC Headquarters in Almaty, Kazakhstan or one of the Central Asian countries with the possibility of remote work, with occasional travel within Central Asia for event support and stakeholder engagement.

### **Qualifications**

- Strong background in environmental science, biology, ecology or related field.
- Expertise in developing environmental risk assessments, monitoring frameworks, and sustainable ecosystem management practices.
- Experience in working on cross-sectoral projects involving environmental health and public health sectors.
- Familiarity with regional environmental challenges and policies in Central Asia and / or similar regions.

### **Education**

- Master's degree or equivalent in Environmental Science, Environmental Health, Climate Change, or a related field.

### **Skills and Competencies**

- Expertise in environmental risk analysis, climate change impact assessments, and sustainable ecosystem management.
- Strong ability to analyze and interpret environmental data and integrate it into public health risk assessments.
- Experience in designing and implementing environmental monitoring systems and indicators.
- Ability to develop clear, accessible reports, policy briefs, and technical documents on environmental health.

- Excellent communication and stakeholder engagement skills, with experience in organizing consultations and working groups.
- Familiarity with the principles of One Health and how they apply to environmental health.
- Fluent in English and Russian (spoken and written).
- Strong organizational skills and the ability to manage multiple tasks and deadlines efficiently.