

## **CAREC INSTITUTE**

### **Visiting Fellows Program-2026 Announcement**

The Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)<sup>1</sup> Institute (CI), based in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the People's Republic of China (PRC), is pleased to announce an open call for applications under the Visiting Fellow Program (VFP). This VFP is open to citizens of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) member countries<sup>2</sup> who are affiliated with universities, research institutes, and think tanks in these countries. Visiting fellows should have completed their post-graduate degrees, preferably PhDs, at the time of application.

VFP is managed by CI and funded by the ADB Technical Assistance. The fellowships are intended for scholars at all levels to pursue research on a topic relevant to the CAREC 2030 operational clusters priorities<sup>3</sup>. A multi-country analysis approach will be given preference. Strong preference will be given to policy proposals that address cross-border issues in the CAREC region that are considered strategically important to the region's essential policy challenges. In light of the evolving global economic and development landscape, research proposals are invited in the following thematic areas:

1. AI (Artificial Intelligence)-Enabled Transport Connectivity
2. AI for Transport Decarbonization and Green Mobility
3. Intelligent Transport Systems and Smart Cities
4. AI for Transport Resilience, Safety, and Climate Adaptation
5. Transport Governance, Data Regulations, and AI Policy

Sub-themes and cross-cutting themes are added in the appendix for further clarification.

Visiting Fellows are encouraged to develop innovative and policy-relevant research within the overarching theme of AI applications and impacts in the transport sector. Proposals may adopt multidisciplinary approaches where relevant, but should maintain a clear focus on transport-related challenges and opportunities. Preference will be given to studies that examine cross-border or regional dimensions, including comparative or multi-country analyses within the CAREC region or across Asia, where such comparisons provide meaningful insights.

### **Fellowship Term**

For the 2026 VFP, the fellowship will run from **30 June to 30 October 2026**. During this period, fellows will spend up to one month at the CAREC Institute headquarters in Urumqi, China, to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.carecprogram.org>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.adb.org/who-we-are/about>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.carecinstitute.org/background/>

strengthen scholarly and institutional connections. CI may also request visiting fellows to be present at the office during designated periods to facilitate interaction, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among fellows.

As part of the fellowship, fellows will present their work at the CAREC Institute's CAREC Chai, Research Conference, and at research institutes and universities in Xinjiang.

### **Expected Output**

The expected output of the VFP will be a CI's working paper and policy briefs for CI and Development Asia, short stories for CI's podcast, etc. The papers on the selected topics should be of high quality. The papers will be reviewed and approved by the Publication Board of the CI. All papers will go through a plagiarism check per CI's Plagiarism Policy. If deemed necessary, the papers can also be sent to CI External Review Board members to solicit further comments and suggestions.

Before the end of their engagement with CI, fellows are required to present their papers in a events organized by CI. The 2026 public events, physical (CI's conference) and virtual, will be conducted where these papers can be presented. The presentation recording will be uploaded to the CAREC Institute E-Learning Platform. Please note that only high-quality papers, as assessed by CI, will be selected for public presentations.

### **Fellowship Support**

All fellows will receive a fixed remuneration of USD 6,000 for the duration of the fellowship. In addition, CI will provide hotel accommodation in Urumqi for up to one month during the fellowship period. Thirty percent of the allocated remuneration will be disbursed in advance for the fellowship staying in Urumqi, with the remaining amount paid upon successful completion of the deliverables. No additional expenses or benefits will be covered by the CAREC Institute or ADB.

### **Fellowship Arrangement**

The fellows will be attached to the designated task managers/advisors depending on fellows proposed research relevance until the fellowship is completed. For travel to Urumqi, CI will provide visa invitation letters, helping hotel accommodation, and office arrangement support. Fellows are required to comply with the Chinese law and to follow CI's regulations on office and information security during the period they stay at CI headquarters. All fellows are required to have health insurance for sickness, accidents and other medical emergencies for the duration of the fellowship.

## Application Process

The application process involves specific intake dates and submission deadlines. A selection committee comprised of experts will review and select proposals. Reviewers will consider the applicant's background, experience, track record, the paper's contribution to regional integration, and the likelihood of completing the proposed research project. CAREC Institute adheres to the principles of equal ownership, regionality, fairness and balance in the representation of the countries.

For the fellowship program 2026, up to five fellows who meet the selection criteria will be selected.

All draft proposals not less than 2000 words should be submitted online to the following address: **(emmat@carecinstitute.org) by 5 pm. Manila/Beijing time on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026**, with the email subject line "2026 VFP Application". Upon receipt of the application, the applicant will receive an acknowledgment and an expected date of the application's outcome.

The applicant must submit the attached application form (Annex I) and an updated CV (max. two pages with relevant publications).

## Important Dates

<b>Period</b>	<b>Actions</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup> April, 2026	Opening of the call for VFP
20 <sup>th</sup> May, 2026	Abstract submission
30 <sup>th</sup> May, 2026	Selection of the fellows
30 <sup>th</sup> June – 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2026	Visit to the headquarters of the CAREC Institute
Until 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2026	Revision and submission of the final research report, policy brief, and Development Asia summaries

## CAREC Institute Visiting Fellowship Program Application

Full Name (same as in your passport)	Family Name	Given Names
Place of Birth:	Date of Birth:	Gender: Male ___ Female ___
Citizenship (nation from which passport is obtained)		
Email and Telephone number		
Home Address		
Office Address		
Availability for Travel (tentative)	MM / YY _____	
<p>Educational Background:</p> <p>Name of Institution Location of Institution Degree Awarded Date of Degree Awarded</p> <p>Name of Institution Location of Institution Degree Awarded Date of Degree Awarded</p> <p>Name of Institution Location of Institution Degree Awarded Date of Degree Awarded</p>		
<p>Current Institutional Affiliation</p> <p>Address and contact details of Institution</p> <p>Position</p>		
<p>Relevant Past Affiliations/Professional Associations</p>		

<p>Other Fellowships held in the past: Please specify name of fellowship, location, duration, and completed outputs</p>	
<p>Specify any previous research, program, or collaboration with the CAREC Institute.</p>	
<p>REFERENCES (cite 2) including name, title, institutional affiliation, and contact details</p>	
<p>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS: List the five most recent plus other publications that you think demonstrate your research ability and interest in regional cooperation.</p>	

## Proposed Research at CAREC Institute

**TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ABSTRACT

**INITIAL DRAFT GUIDELINES:** Applicants are required to submit an initial structured description of the proposed research project. The document should include a brief introduction with clearly stated objectives, a summary table of the relevant literature, an analytical framework outlining the data definitions, sources, and methodology, and a discussion of the expected findings and contributions. Authors should ensure the availability of the required data at the proposal stage to avoid major changes in the research direction at later stages. The proposal must be no less than 2,000 words. All submissions will undergo plagiarism screening, and only original proposals will be considered for further review.

Specify the CAREC 2030 cluster (s) to which the proposed research aims to contribute and identify policy and knowledge gaps the research seeks to address. Clearly indicate the value-addition of the proposed research, i.e., how it adds to the existing body of knowledge relating to the proposed topic. (not more than 300 words)

### PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

### OTHER INFORMATION RELEVANT TO YOUR APPLICATION

## **Appendix**

### **1. AI-Enabled Transport Connectivity**

- AI Applications in Multimodal transport corridors and regional connectivity gaps in the CAREC region
- AI-assisted border management and customs automation
- AI in digital trade corridors and data-sharing frameworks for cross-border transport
- AI applications in freight and logistics optimization across CAREC corridors
- AI, transport infrastructure investment gaps and financing mechanisms

### **2. AI for Transport Decarbonization and Green Mobility**

- Electric vehicle adoption and AI: infrastructure, policy, and financing barriers in the CAREC region
- AI, rail electrification and low-carbon freight corridors
- AI-enabled energy efficiency and emissions monitoring in transport operations
- Green hydrogen, alternative fuels and AI in heavy transport
- Carbon accounting and climate policy alignment in transport using AI tools

### **3. Intelligent Transport Systems and Smart Cities**

- AI-driven traffic management and urban mobility optimization
- Autonomous and connected vehicles: deployment challenges and regional readiness
- Smart public transport systems and demand forecasting using AI
- Digital twins and simulation tools for transport network planning
- Predictive infrastructure maintenance using AI, machine learning and sensor data

### **4. AI for Transport Resilience, Safety, and Climate Adaptation**

- Climate-vulnerable transport infrastructure and AI-based risk assessment
- Disaster resilience and adaptive transport planning under climate stress
- Road safety analytics using AI and big data
- Cybersecurity risks in AI-enabled transport systems
- Social equity and community impacts in transport and smart mobility transitions

### **5. Transport Governance, Data Regulations, and AI Policy**

- Data governance frameworks for AI deployment in transport
- Regulatory and legal challenges of autonomous and AI-driven transport
- Public-private partnerships in AI-driven transport infrastructure
- Transport, AI, and smart city development in CAREC economies
- Capacity building and technology transfer for AI adoption in CAREC transport systems