**guidelines for applicants**

**THE STUDENT COMPETITION FOR RESEARCH**

**INTRODUCTION**

The student competition for research focuses on capacity building and training of the young generation of specialists in the water, agricultural and hydrometeorological sectors in the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. The competition covers all Central Asian countries and Afghanistan and is offered for master’s students and undergraduates with programs on water, land and power resource management and sustainable use.

The competition facilitates the development of the students’ research and areas of expertise in these countries, and enhances collaboration between would-be young specialists of the water sector, government bodies and the academia in Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

The competition is scheduled for 2017-2020 with funding from CAREC’s current projects. The finalists’ works will be developed under the auspices of the management of university departments and CAREC program teams. To ensure sustainable partnerships with universities, memoranda of cooperation will be signed. Results of the research conduced will be published in printed media of CAREC and partner universities.

If needed, this concept is subject to annual revision.

**GOAL OF THE COMPETITION**

The main goal of the competition is to establish and enhance proper conditions for the training of young specialists in the water, agricultural and hydrometeorological sectors through intensification of scientific research, participation of students in applied research providing an opportunity to meet the needs when addressing practical tasks in pilot areas.

**TOPICS OF THE COMPETITION**

The competition will be held in Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. Eventually, three to four winners will be selected from each country under **USAID’s Smart Waters** project, **WB’s** “**Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin”** project, and **GIZ’s** “**Strengthening Capacities of Regional, National and Local Level Institutions and Sustaining the Experiences Gained in the Previous Phases”** project.

**A call for proposals on implementing research**

The applicants, jointly with their research advisor and with support from local partners, will formulate topics of their scientific research to meet the following areas:

**Main topics of the competition:**

1. **Water Resources, Water Services:**

* Water management: IWRM, institutional measures, water management at the community level;
* Water law: international and national laws, policy development;
* Economic efficiency of water use;
* Current water conservation technologies in irrigation farming; automation of water accounting systems; alternative water supply sources for agriculture;
* Water management transboundary basins;
* Water supply for rural areas: provision with drinking water, etc.;
* Waterworks: operation and upgrade.

1. **Climate Change:**

* Climate modeling and climate risk assessment;
* Assessment of vulnerability of people and sectors to climate change;
* Adaptation to climate change in agriculture and water sector;
* Low-carbon development;

1. **Ecosystem Services and Economics of Nature Use**
2. **Sustainable Development**
3. **Opportunities of Multi-Sector Development:**

* [Interrelation between water, food and energy security](http://www.cawater-info.net/bk/14-4.htm);
* Gender and gender policy in management of natural resources.

The applicants are invited to carry out research as part of the projects “**Smart Waters”,** “**Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin”**, and “**Strengthening Capacities of Regional, National and Local Level Institutions and Sustaining the Experiences Gained in the Previous Phases”**. Topics of the competition will be specified on an annual basis according to the priorities set.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Mandatory Requirements**

The competition invitees include 1st year master’s students of respective specializations from universities of the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, as well as undergraduates from the universities that do not have master’s programs for respective specializations.

The competition application must include information on the partners to be involved in the research. These could include:

* The applicant’s university;
* Research institutes and applied research organizations that can provide a specific service for the research;
* “Research subjects” that provide all necessary information and support for the research, and then use the research results.

The application may be submitted in the Russian/English language or in the national languages; however, the abstract must be translated into the Russian/English language.

The research proposed for the competition must be part of the master’s work by the applicant and must be completed within 3 months or within another period as agreed with the CAREC team.

The application format is given on the CAREC web site: [www.carececo.org/student competition 2017-2018/](http://www.carececo.org/student%20competition%202017-2018/); <http://riverbp.net/innovation/research/>.

**THE SELECTION PROCEDURE**

**Milestone Dates**

* The deadline for submission of documents: **by October 30.**
* Competition winners will be contacted **by November 31.**

**Restrictions**

The KGU experts/interns/student covered by the Smart Waters grant, as well as any other persons directly collaborating with CAREC, are not eligible for applying to this competition in order to avoid any conflict of interests.

**The Evaluation Process**

The process of evaluating research proposals will involve representatives of the CAREC head office, CAREC country offices, national partners and representatives of partner international organizations - USAID, WB, etc.

**The evaluation process** will involve two stages:

1. Initial evaluation in the applicant’s country. The national evaluation commission will consist of one or more national partners, a representative of USAID, WB and CAREC, based in the applicant’s country. The national commission will assess application for compliance with technical requirements, topics, feasibility and partnership.
2. Approval of candidates at the regional level. The regional evaluation commission will consist of one or more national partners, regional bodies, academic institutions, a representative of USAID, WB and CAREC. As needed, additional consultations will be held with members of national commissions and interviews with applicants.

**Evaluation Criteria**

* relevance of the research proposed;
* clarity and validity of the goals, problem selection and methodology of the research;
* balance between the application content and the requested funding amount;
* feasibility of the goals set, research timelines and budget (up to US$ 2,500), and availability of additional funding in excess of the budget;
* implementability;
* novelty of the research proposed and the working potential for the Central Asian region;
* partnership (the organization to co-implement the research).

Extended criterion:

* interdisciplinary approach.

**AWARDS FOR THE CONTESTANTS**

The competition winners will receive financial support to carry out their research in the amount of up to US$ 2,500 (according to the research budget being part of the application). The grant covers the costs needed to carry out the research such as: transportation costs, laboratory tests, procurement of reagents, printing of the abstract, etc.

The budget will be concurred individually for each selected application. The financial support will be based on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by the students during the research.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

The application must be sent in the electronic format by not later than **October 30, 2017** to the applicant’s CAREC country office, respectively.

Afghanistan – [ffarjaad@carececo.org](mailto:ffarjaad@carececo.org); fsameem@carececo.org

Kazakhstan – kazakhstan@carececo.org;

Kyrgyzstan – kyrgyzstan@carececo.org;

Tajikistan – tajikistan@carececo.org;

Turkmenistan – turkmenistan@carececo.org;

Uzbekistan – uzbekistan@carececo.org.

The name on the application letter must include a note that it is for the research application competition, and specify the type of the research and the applicant’s country:

An example of the letter name: **“The student application competition for research. Uzbekistan”**

Please see the CAREC web site for the application template: [www.carececo.org/student competition 2017-2018/](http://www.carececo.org/student%20competition%202017-2018/); and also <http://riverbp.net/innovation/research/>.

**AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

The information on the competition will be disseminated by electronic mail and distribution of information materials at universities.

The information on the competition will also be posted on the CAREC web site: [www.carececo.org](http://www.carececo.org) и портале <http://riverbp.net/innovation/research/>.

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