



**AGRICULTURE**



**CCO BRIEF**  
**ON**  
**AGRICULTURAL**  
**COOPERATION**

**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE**  
**November 2020**

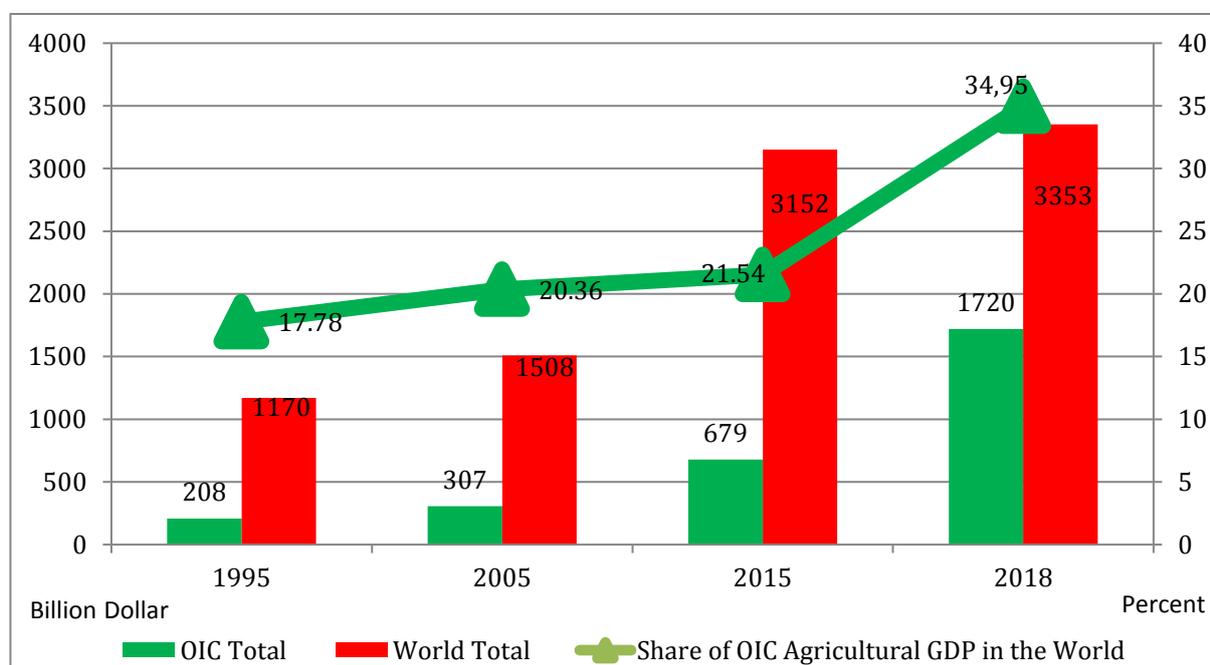
## BRIEF ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION

Agriculture with its intrinsic nature plays a distinctive role in ever increasingly connected world economies. It is seen as an important engine of growth and unique source for poverty reduction in most of the developing world. Empirical studies demonstrate that agriculture is the most effective sector in generating income for the poorest segments of the population. Hence, it is accepted as a key sector for economic growth, reducing poverty and sustainable rural development especially in developing countries.

### Agriculture in the OIC Member Countries

In many member countries of the OIC, agriculture is one of the leading sectors in terms of income, employment and trade. As shown in Figure 1, while the OIC’s agricultural GDP was US\$ 208 billion with a share of 17.78 percent in the world’s agricultural production in 1995, it reached to US\$ 1720 billion with a share of 34.95 percent in the world’s agricultural production in 2018.

**Figure 1. The OIC Agricultural GDP and its Global Share**

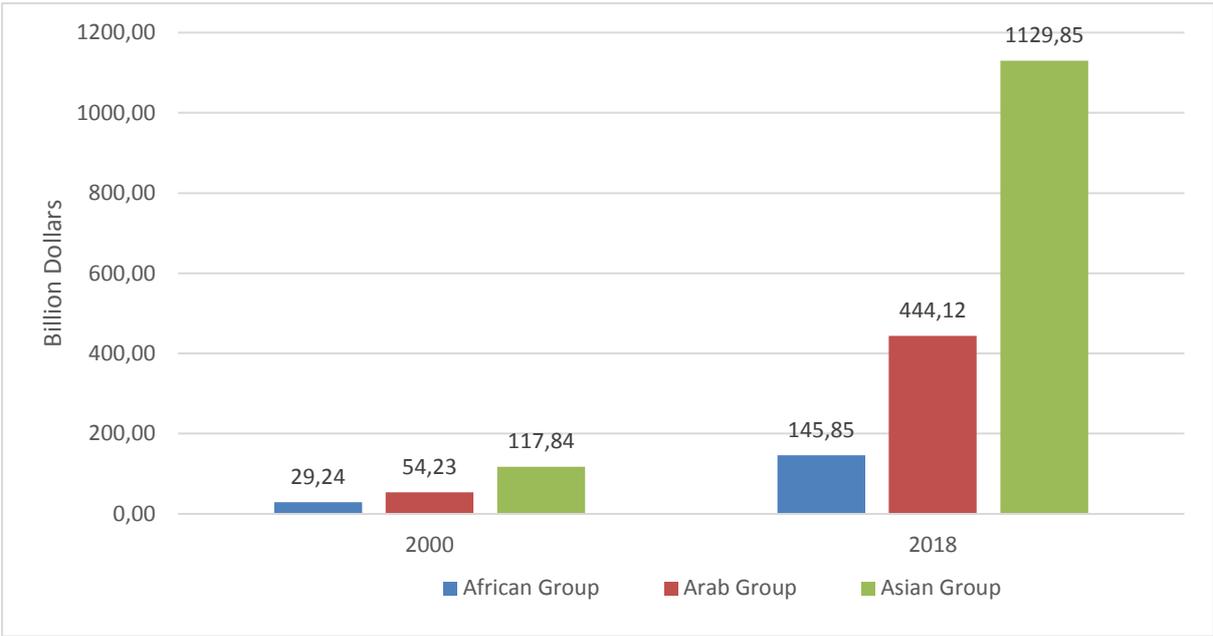


*Source: COMCEC Agriculture Outlook 2020*

Figure 2 demonstrates the share of agricultural GDP in total GDP of the three official regional groups of the OIC (African, Arab and Asian). 2000-2018 period, the performance of the African Group strengthened compared with the Arab and Asian Groups; nevertheless, over the years, the Asian Group has made the highest contribution to agricultural production.

As of 2018, the total OIC agricultural GDP reached to 1719.82 billion US Dollars and the contribution of the Asian group to this value is 1129.85 billion US Dollars, which is around two thirds of the total agricultural GDP of the OIC member countries. Hence, the Asian Group has the highest amount of the agricultural GDP, followed by the Arab Group and African Group with approximately 444.12 and 145.85 billion US Dollars, respectively.

**Figure 2. Agricultural GDP by Sub-Regions and their share by current price**

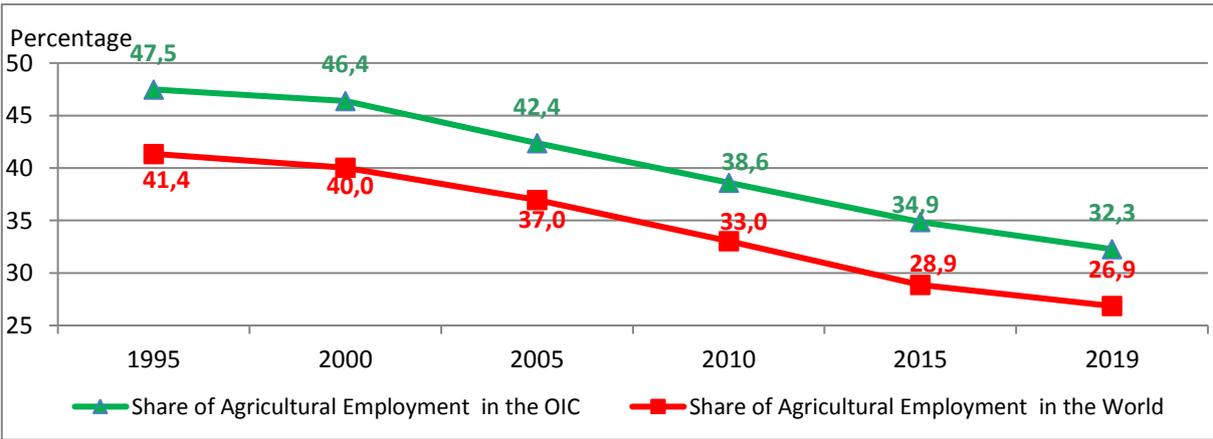


Source: COMCEC Agriculture Outlook 2020

As with many developing countries, the agriculture sector is a significant source of employment in the OIC member countries. In 1995, the agricultural sector of OIC member countries employed 177.4 million people. Up to 2019, 35 million agricultural labor have been added, increasing the number of people employed in agriculture to 212.4 million people.

Despite the increase in agricultural employment, over time the share of agricultural employment is decreasing. In 1995, agriculture accounted for almost 47.5 percent of total employment in the OIC. At the beginning of the 2000s, the contribution of agricultural sector to total employment decreased to around 46 percent in the OIC and 40 percent globally. In 2019, the proportion of agricultural employment was 32.3 percent in the OIC and 26.9 percent worldwide as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Share of Agricultural Employment in the OIC and World**

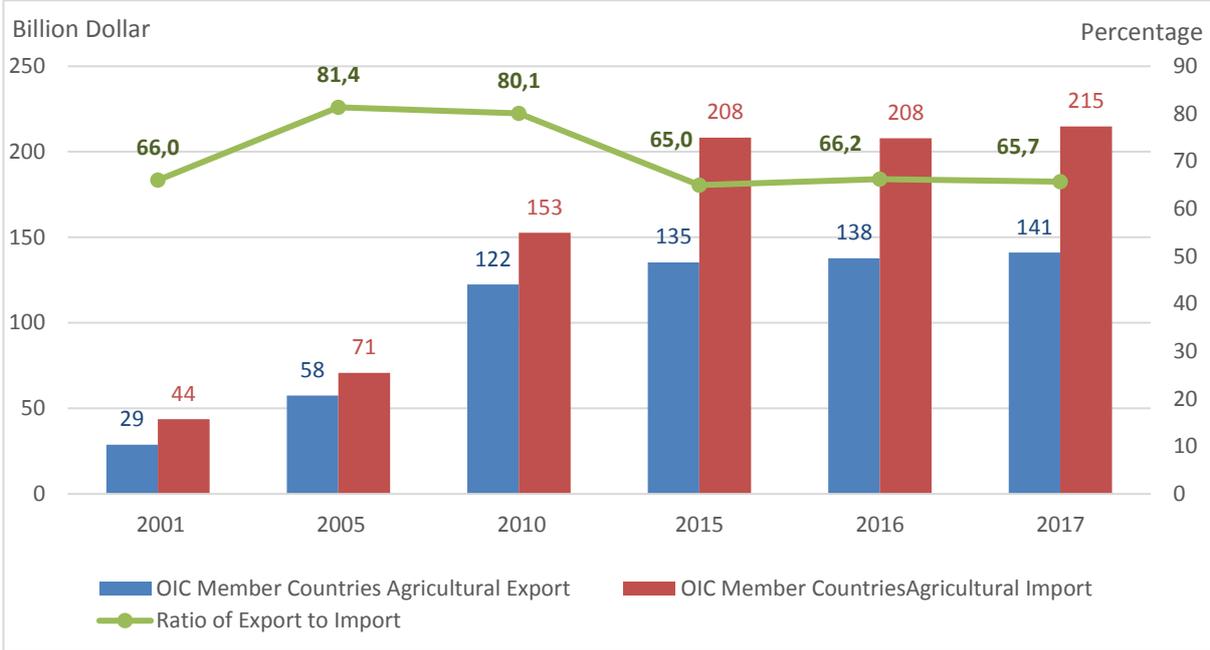


Source: COMCEC Agriculture Outlook 2020

Agricultural commodity trading of the OIC Member Countries has increased considerably in the last decade up to 2015. Total agricultural trade in the OIC member countries grew by more than 4 times during this period, reaching 355 billion USD in 2017 (Figure 4). The total agricultural imports of OIC member countries reached to 214 billion USD in 2017, from 43 billion USD in 2001. Correspondingly, total agricultural

commodity exports of OIC member countries was 141 billion USD in 2017 compared with 29 billion USD in 2001.

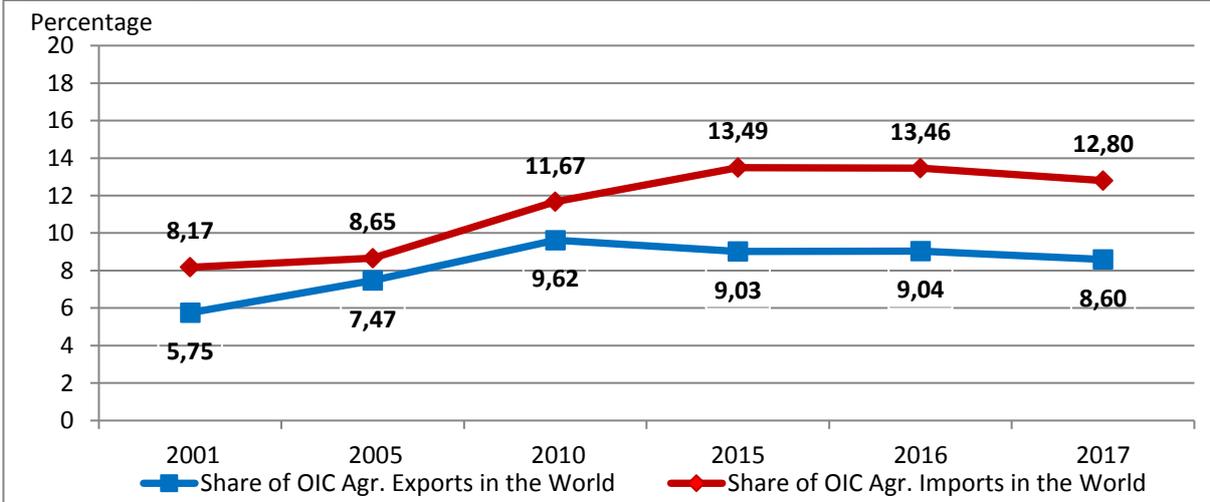
**Figure 4. Agricultural Exports and Imports in the OIC**



Source: COMCEC Agriculture Outlook 2019

The global share of the OIC member countries’ agricultural imports increased to 12.8 percent in 2017 from 8.17 percent in 2001. Correspondingly, the contribution made by the OIC agricultural exports to world agricultural exports reached 8.6 percent. Both agricultural imports and exports have risen significantly during the 2001-2010 period. During the 2010-2017 period, while the share of agricultural commodity exports of the OIC Member Countries had been stabilized, the contribution made by the OIC agricultural imports to global agricultural imports began to decline (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. OIC Agricultural Trade Performance of OIC Member Countries in the World**

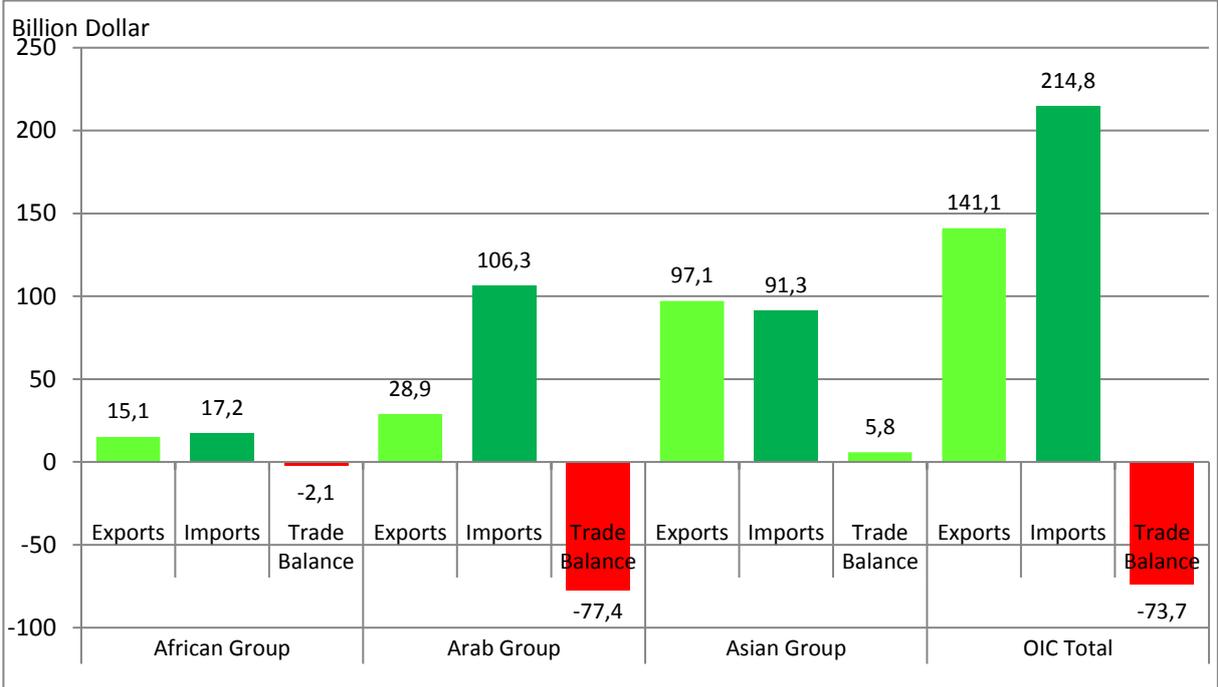


Source: COMCEC Agriculture Outlook 2019

As can be seen in the Figure 6, most of the OIC member countries have trade deficits in agriculture. As of 2017, 74 billion US Dollars trade deficit occurred in the OIC. Said figure also illustrates the agricultural trade balance in the OIC Sub-Regions in 2017. The only group, which had a positive trade balance, was the Asian

Group with 5.8 billion US Dollars. On the other hand, African and Arab Groups have registered trade deficits of 2.1 and 77.4 billion US Dollars, respectively.

**Figure 6. Agricultural Products Trade Balance in the OIC by Sub-Regions, 2017**



Source: COMCEC Agriculture Outlook 2019

**“The Impacts of COVID-19 on Food Security and Agriculture in the OIC Member Countries” (Consultative Meeting on COVID-19)**

While hundreds of millions of people were already suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition, the world is encountering an unprecedented global crisis: the COVID Nineteen (COVID-19) pandemic. Besides its adverse effects on human life, the pandemic has also become a humanitarian crisis threatening the food security and nutrition of millions of people all around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic is directly affecting the food systems through its impacts on food supply and demand. A great number of food supply chains in various parts of the world have already been broken or heavily damaged.

The pandemic has also indirect effects such as decrease in purchasing power of consumers and the capacity to produce and distribute food. Furthermore, its impacts on the movement of agricultural labor and the availability of key inputs may pose critical challenges to food production. Hence, this may jeopardize the food security for the people all around the globe, especially for those living in the poorest countries. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) estimates that the COVID-19 will double the number of people suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide, pushing it to 265 million by the end of 2020. Therefore, it has utmost importance to come up with a sound policies and strategies to eliminate and mitigate the disrupting effects of the pandemic on food security and nutrition.

Within this framework the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group organized a Consultative Meeting with the theme of “The Impacts of COVID-19 on Food Security and Agriculture in the OIC Member Countries” on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in a virtual-only format, and discussed the current and potential future impacts of the pandemic on food security and agricultural policies, exchanged expertise and good practices, as well as deliberated on the cooperation opportunities based on the needs and experiences of our member countries.

During the Consultative Meeting the participants also deliberated on the cooperation opportunities based on the needs and experiences of the member countries and highlighted some ideas/policy options for future cooperation initiatives.

All documents related to the Consultative Meeting are available on the COMCEC web page ([www.comcec.org](http://www.comcec.org)).

### **“Good Governance for Ensuring Food Security and Nutrition in the OIC Member Countries” (15th Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group)**

Good governance at all levels - global, regional and particularly national- is a primary necessity for the progress in the fight against food insecurity and malnutrition. Policy and legal framework, coherence and coordination, implementation and enforcement, and information, monitoring and evaluation are the key aspects of good food security governance. Furthermore, the principles such as transparency, effectiveness, accountability and collective action are inextricable parts of good governance for ensuring food security and nutrition. Therefore, governments naturally have a leading role in ensuring good governance with an inclusive approach.

In this respect, the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Agriculture Working Groups was held virtually on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with the theme “Good Governance for Ensuring Food Security and Nutrition in the OIC Member Countries” and a research report prepared on the same subject was considered by the Working Group.

The said report presents the food security governance performance of the OIC Member Countries based on four levels of good governance: (i) Policy and Legal Framework, (ii) Coordination and Coherence, (iii) Implementation, and (iv) Information-Monitoring-Evaluation. The Research Report also reveals that many countries suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition problems in the OIC have governance gaps in coordination and monitoring mechanisms. Besides, several countries have governance gaps in terms of integration of food security and nutrition targets with their national development plans.

The Agriculture Working Group, in its 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting, came up with the following policy recommendations:

- Developing a comprehensive national food security and nutrition strategy and/or strengthening the existing food security policies and strategies to extend their reach and inclusiveness so that everyone can reap the benefits, including the poorest and the most vulnerable to achieve food security and nutrition for all.
- Establishing a high level national coordination mechanism (i.e. an inter-ministerial or presidential council) for ensuring a healthy and sustainable multi-stakeholder dialogue for the effective coordination of all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the processes of policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring; and endowing it with significant execution power and sufficient human and financial resources.
- Improving the coordination and coherence of policy actions on food security and nutrition in turbulent times (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic) at all levels ranging from sub-national to national; national to bilateral or multilateral; sub-regional to regional, and finally, from OIC-level to global level.
- Designing a detailed and transparent implementation plan for the national and sub-national tasks and equipping the fieldwork personnel with relevant know-how and allocating sufficient financial resources to each and every step of the implementation process.
- Establishing an online platform/food information systems (e.g. vulnerability atlas, food security fora) that ideally transmits real-time information on monitoring food security and nutrition governance with a view to generating credible data and statistics and formulating evidence-based policies.
- Promoting capacity building and knowledge/experience sharing among the OIC Member Countries in the four levels of good governance of food security and nutrition (i.e. (i) Policy and Legal Framework (ii) Coordination and Coherence (iii) Implementation, and (iv) Information-Monitoring-Evaluation.)

All the reports submitted to the Meeting and the presentations made during the Meeting are available on the COMCEC web page ([www.comcec.org](http://www.comcec.org)).

## **COMCEC Project Funding**

COMCEC Project Funding (CPF) is the other important instrument of the Strategy. Projects financed under the CPF need to serve multilateral cooperation and must be designed in accordance with the objectives and the expected outcomes defined by the Strategy in its agriculture section. Projects also play important roles in realization of the policy recommendations formulated by the member countries during the AWG meetings.

Under the 6th Call under the COMCEC Project Funding, two projects were implemented by the Malaysia and Turkey in 2019. The project titled “Capacity Building on Warehousing and Storage Management” was implemented by Malaysia with the partnership of Indonesia, Bangladesh and Turkey. The project aimed at increasing technical knowledge of farmers and farmer associations on warehousing and storage management. In this framework, a study visit was organized to Turkey to gain information about warehouse and storage of seeds and fresh products. Also, a training program on warehouse and storage of selected crops (seeds and fresh produces) was organized in Malaysia. In addition these activities, a workshop on improving current status of the partner countries on the project issue was realized with the participation of the partner countries.

The second project titled “Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in the OIC Countries” was implemented by Turkey with the partnership of Indonesia, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia. Purpose of the project was strengthening human and institutional capacity and raising awareness on reduction of food loss and waste with a holistic approach. During the implementation period of the project, a study visit to Indonesia was conducted to understand current situation on reducing food losses and waste such as legal infrastructure, standards, studies, good practices etc. Also, a five-day training program, which was focusing on food loss and waste concept, international organizations’ approaches to the issue, applications for reducing food loss and waste, food banking approaches and applications to reduce on food loss and waste, methodology for food loss and waste index etc, was realized in İzmir, Turkey. Besides, challenges and opportunities above mentioned issues were handled by the partner countries during the workshop organized right after the training program.

Moreover, under the 7th Call for Project Proposals made in September 2019, 5 projects were selected to be financed by the CCO in 2020. These projects, however, are yet to be completed due to delays arising from international travel restrictions imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic. Hence, all the agriculture projects are expected to be finalized in 2021. The selected agriculture projects to be completed under the 7th Call are as follows;

The project titled “Enhancing Capacity for Warehousing and Storage of Cereals and Cowpeas” will be implemented by Benin in partnership with Niger, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. The project aims at increasing the awareness and knowledge of the stakeholders on good practices for warehousing and storage of grains in West Africa.

The second project titled “New Breeding Technologies for Food and Nutritional Security” will be implemented by COMSTECH in partnership with Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The project aims at increasing public and private sector institution’s capacity on nutrition and food security through advanced breeding technologies.

The third agriculture project titled “Capacity Building on Cereals and Cowpeas Storage” will be implemented by Niger with the partnership of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. This project aims at sharing knowledge and good practices on warehousing and storage of grains among the partner countries.

Other important project titled “Enhancing Food Security through National Food Balance Sheets” will be implemented by SESRIC in partnership with Bangladesh, Djibouti, Indonesia, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Suriname, Turkey and Uganda. Purpose of the project is promoting reliable and up-to-date data collection so as to ensure sound analysis of food security through increasing the capacity of the member countries on developing and preparing the annual food balance sheets.

Also, Surinam will implement the project titled “Capacity Building on Irrigation Systems in Vegetable Crops” with the partnership of Indonesia and Turkey. This project aims to contribute to ensuring food security and food safety for the populations in the project partner countries by increasing capacity of the stakeholder on water management.

8th Call for Project Proposals on the other hand started on September 1st, 2020. Relevant documents are available on the COMCEC website. ([project.comcec.org](http://project.comcec.org))

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