

**REPORT OF THE 3rd ANNUAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING OF
THE COMCEC WORKING GROUPS
(10-11 June 2015, Ankara)**

1. The 3rd Annual Focal Points Meeting of the COMCEC Working Groups was held on 10-11 June 2015 in Ankara.

(The programme of the Meeting is attached as Annex-I)

2. The Meeting was attended by the COMCEC Working Group Focal Points and COMCEC National Focal Points of the 33 Member States of the OIC.
3. The Meeting started with a recitation from the Holy Quran. It was followed by the COMCEC 30th Anniversary Video screening.
4. At the outset, Mr. M. Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office delivered his opening remarks. He welcomed the participants to the meeting and highlighted that COMCEC activities have gained a new impetus with the implementation of new COMCEC Strategy. He informed the participants about the two important implementation instruments of the Strategy, namely Working Groups and COMCEC Project Funding. He concluded his remarks through introducing the program of the Meeting.

I. COMCEC Strategy and Its Implementation: The Status of Progress

5. Under this agenda item, Mr. Kağan AKDOĞAN, Expert at the COMCEC Coordination Office made a presentation on the COMCEC and COMCEC Strategy. In his presentation, he provided general information about the COMCEC and introduced the COMCEC Strategy with particular emphasis on its principles, cooperation areas and implementation mechanisms as well as main achievements.
6. Mr. AKDOĞAN pointed out that a new period for the COMCEC has begun with the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy in 2013. He continued his presentation by mentioning the implementation mechanisms introduced by the Strategy. Regarding the progress in the implementation of the Strategy, he stated that the Working Groups have completed their fifth round of Meetings. Mr. AKDOĞAN concluded his presentation with some figures with a view to better reflect the progress in the implementation of the Strategy. In this regard, it was pointed out that with the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy, 18 COMCEC meetings is realized in 2015, while the same figure in the pre-Strategy period was 3 for a given year. Similarly, COMCEC makes around 32 publications annually since 2013, indicating a dramatic increase from 3 annual publications in the years before.
7. The presentation was followed by Questions and Answers session. The participants raised the following points in their questions and comments:
 - In the field of transport, COMCEC may consider improving transportation networks in the OIC region with a view to strengthening regional trade.
 - 2 WG meetings in a year is not sufficient to elaborate on comprehensive issues. In this respect, dialogue among the WG members may continue through online platforms and COMCEC may facilitate this by creating such platforms.

- WGs have made many policy recommendations. The active follow-up of the implementation of these recommendations would be beneficial for their realization.
- Policy recommendations should be tangible and concrete in order for the member countries to implement them properly.
- COMCEC may highlight success stories and concrete positive results in the implementation of the policy recommendations during the Ministerial Sessions as an incentive for other Ministers to adopt those policies.

10. In response to these comments, the CCO underlined that it took note of the recommendations and suggestions made by the participants and would take necessary actions to the extent that it has the required means and resources. The CCO also stressed that it will take necessary steps to improve the follow-up of the policy recommendations made by the WGs.

II. Enhancing Communication and Coordination: Effective Engagement of the COMCEC Working Group (WG) Focal Points and COMCEC National Focal Points in the Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy

11. The Session was moderated by Mr. Mas Aidiff MAS'UT, Assistant Director at Economic and Trade Relations Division of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Malaysia.

12. In this session, Ms. Aylin ŞENOL GÜN, Expert at the COMCEC Coordination Office made a presentation on the Role of the COMCEC WG Focal Points and COMCEC National Focal Points for the Effective Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy. In her presentation, Ms. GÜN introduced the main actors at the country level, namely WG Focal Points and National Focal Points. She stated that within the framework of the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy, WG focal points has been notified by the Member Countries from the relevant Ministries for each of the six cooperation area. On the other hand, for many years, each member country has had National Focal Point, particularly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Economy or Trade, for coordinating the preparations at the national level for the COMCEC Ministerial Meeting and Follow-up Committee Meetings. She informed the participants in detail about the roles of WG focal points in three phases: before the WG meetings, during the WG Meetings and after the WG meetings. Regarding the roles of the National Focal Points, Ms. GÜN pointed out that National Focal Points could play a crucial and more active role for enhancing coordination at country level for effective implementation of the COMCEC Strategy and specified some possible actions/steps towards that end.

13. After the presentation, the Moderator summarized some of the key issues mentioned during Ms. GÜN's presentation and opened the floor for Questions and Answers session. The participants raised the following points in their questions and comments:

- The need for more effective consultations at the country level, (i.e. creating a national committee to enhance communication and coordination at the country level)

- Importance of following up the developments in different sectors
- Getting feedback about the outcomes of the COMCEC Ministerial Meetings regarding the policy recommendations
- Complementarity between the COMCEC activities and the other important documents such as new TYPOA
- Low level of response rates by the Member Countries to the surveys, questionnaires.

14. The CCO emphasized the importance of effective communication and coordination between the WG Focal Points and National Focal Points at country level. It was also pointed out that CCO gives due regard to ensure complementarity among cooperation efforts and avoid duplication between the COMCEC activities and other activities and tries to reflect the COMCEC perspective to the preparations of the new TYPOA. Regarding the low level of response rates, it was emphasized that WG focal points are expected to encourage the relevant stakeholders to respond to inquiries of the CCO in a timely manner. It was highlighted that CCO took note of the recommendations and suggestions made by the participants and would take necessary actions to the extent possible.

III. Facilitating the Policy Approximation among the Member Countries

15. The Session was moderated by Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ, Senior Expert at the COMCEC Coordination Office.

16. The Session started with the presentation of Mr. Kağan AKDOĞAN, Expert at the COMCEC Coordination Office. In his presentation, Mr. AKDOĞAN informed the participants about the policy approximation through policy recommendations, its cycles and means of implementation. He shared the suggestions of the COMCEC Coordination Office on the possible roles of focal points for the realization of the policy recommendations at the country level. In this regard, it was proposed that the National Focal Points could come together with sectoral focal points twice a year, and review the progress in the implementation of the policy recommendations made by the WGs. Such reviews may be communicated to the CCO through a template provided by the CCO so that a uniform reporting mechanism may be established.

17. After the presentation, the Moderator summarized the key issues in the presentation and started the deliberations on this important topic. The questions and comments focused on three issues: the relevance of policy recommendations for the member countries, how to improve their quality and substance and the views of the participants on the proposed coordination and follow-up mechanism in the member countries.

18. During the discussions, the member countries made the following points:

- Active follow-up of implementation of WG policy recommendations is crucial to accrue full benefits from the policy debate sessions and the practice of adopting policy recommendations in WG meetings.
- Policy recommendations should be concrete and practical and coherent with the national plans of the member countries, as well as with the policies and programs of the relevant international and regional organizations.
- Considering the heterogeneity of the member states, recommendations should be more specific and tailored, addressing the specific situations of different country groupings (such as LDCs).
- WG meetings should also review the implementation of previous policy recommendations. In the meetings, concrete positive results and success stories in the implementation may also be highlighted.
- Member countries may consider utilizing PCM for implementation of policy recommendations as well.
- For better coordination at national level, COMCEC National Focal Points -may come together with sectoral focal points i.e. twice a year to facilitate, among others, the implementation of WG policy recommendations and their follow-up.
- As some of the recommendations are of general nature, COMCEC may also elaborate on individual policy recommendations and the ways and means of their implementation.

19. In response to the comments and suggestions, the CCO has informed the Meeting that in order to improve the follow-up of the policy recommendations, the CCO is in the process of preparing a template which will facilitate the reporting of the developments in the Member States regarding the implementation of the policy recommendations. The CCO also stated that it will try to improve its coordination and communication with the regional and international organizations with a view to improving the coherence of policy recommendations with the existing initiatives.

IV. Briefing and Discussion on the Themes of the Working Groups for 2016-2018

20. In six different discussion groups, the COMCEC Coordination Office briefed the participants about the potential themes of the Working Groups for 2016-2018 period. The participants shared their views and comments on these proposed themes and modified some of them as they deemed necessary. It was suggested that these themes may be reviewed if deemed necessary by the annual focal point meetings on a rolling basis, and changes may be made as appropriate.

(The list of themes for each working group for 2016-2018 period is attached as Annex-II)

V. Training on COMCEC Project Funding

21. The Training Session on COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism was moderated by Ms. Juldeh CEESAY, Deputy Executive Director of Ministry of Women's Affairs of The Gambia. Opened with the brief introductory presentation on the very basics of COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism by Mr. Fatih KAYA, Head of COMCEC

Project Funding Department, this session was preceded with the presentations on the details of identification, submission and appraisal phases of COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism by Mr. Deniz GÖLE, Expert at the COMCEC Coordination Office.

22. Subsequently Ms. Eda AKÇA, specialist at the Development Bank of Turkey, continued the session with a presentation on implementation, payments, monitoring and evaluation stages of COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism. In the rest of the session, Mr. Deniz GÖLE made an introductory presentation on the rationale and the basics of log-frame matrix in project preparation phase. Furthermore, the CCO answered questions coming from the focal points on the Project Funding Mechanism regarding hardships arising from ex-post project payments, and language barriers of Francophone countries in project processes.

VI. Workshop for Preliminary Project Preparation

23. Workshop for preliminary project preparation was designed to make focal points familiar with the basic formats of COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism and to increase their knowledge on project preparation. During this workshop, focal points were separated into six different groups in line with the COMCEC Working Group themes. Each group was given preliminary project fiche and a brief budget by the CCO to be filled within the workshop time. Upon deliberations on the project idea and filling the necessary forms by the focal points, CCO experts took notes and prepared their comments to share with the focal points in the next day.

VII. Presentations on Preliminary Project Preparation and Evaluations by the Trainers

24. Second day of the meeting started with the presentations of the group speakers to their groups on their project idea, completed project fiches and project budgets. Presentations were held within six different working groups, and upon completion of the presentations CCO specialists shared their comments with the groups with regard to project preparation exercise.

VIII. Lessons Learnt during the 1st and 2nd Call for Project Proposals and Expectations from WG Focal Points and National Focal Points

25. This session was moderated by Mr. A.H.M. Ahsan, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh. The Session started with the presentation of Mr. Deniz GÖLE, specialist at the COMCEC Coordination Office. In his presentation, Mr. GÖLE gave brief information on the 1st and 2nd Project Calls, shared CCO's ideas on advantages possessed, challenges faced and lessons learnt during the implementation of COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism, and highlighted CCO's expectations from the working group focal points. Then the session continued with comments, suggestions and questions of the focal points as regards to the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism. Within the time allotted for comments and questions in the end of the

session, focal points raised several comments on ex-post payments, language barriers (which is specifically valid for Francophone countries of Africa), communication problems among the project partners.

IX. Closing Session

26. The meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. M. Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office. Mr. EKER stressed that all the presentations made during the sessions were available on the COMCEC website (www.comcec.org). During the closing session, the importance of preparing a guideline for the roles and responsibilities of the COMCEC WG Focal Points and National Focal Points for the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy was stressed. In this respect, it was requested from the COMCEC Coordination Office to prepare the above-mentioned guideline and circulate it among the Member Countries. In line with this request, based on presentations and discussions made during the Meeting, the COMCEC Coordination Office has prepared a guideline as a summary of the agreed roles and responsibilities of the WG Focal Points and National Focal Points in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy.

(The above-mentioned guideline is attached as Annex-III)

- **Social Program**

27. As part of the social program, the participants visited Konya, City of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi and the OIC City of Tourism 2016.

ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME OF THE MEETING



DRAFT PROGRAMME 3rd ANNUAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING OF THE COMCEC WORKING GROUPS (10-11 June 2015, Ankara)

June 10th, 2015 (Wednesday)

- 08:45-09:00 Registration
- 09:00-09:05 Recitation from the Holy Qur'an
- 09:05-09:10 COMCEC 30th Anniversary Video Screening
- 09:10-09:25 Opening Remarks
- 09:25-10:00 COMCEC Strategy and Its Implementation: The Status of Progress

*Presentation: Mr. Kağan AKDOĞAN
Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

Questions & Answers (Q&A)

- 10:00-11:00 Enhancing Communication and Coordination: Effective Engagement of the COMCEC Working Group (WG) Focal Points and COMCEC National Focal Points in the Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy

- Role of the COMCEC WG Focal Points and COMCEC National Focal Points for the Effective Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy

*Moderator: Mr. Mas Aidiff MAS'UT
Assistant Director
Economic and Trade Relations Division
Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Malaysia*

*Presentation: Ms. Aylin ŞENOL GÜN
Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

Q&A

11.00- 11:15 *Coffee Break*

11:15- 12:30 Facilitating the Policy Approximation among the Member Countries

*Moderator: Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ
Senior Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

*Presentation: Mr. Kağan AKDOĞAN
Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

Q&A

12:30- 14:00 *Lunch*

14:00 – 15:00 Briefing and Discussion on the Themes of the Working Groups for 2016-2018
(6 separate discussion groups)

15:00-15:15 *Coffee Break*

15:15- 16:15 Training on COMCEC Project Funding

*Moderator: Ms. Juldeh CEESAY
Deputy Executive Director
Ministry of Women's Affairs of The Gambia*

- Introduction and Purpose of Training

*Presentation: Mr. Fatih KAYA
Director of International Programs and Projects
COMCEC Coordination Office*

Q&A

- Stages of the COMCEC PCM
 - o *Identification*
 - o *Submission and Appraisal*
 - o *Implementation and Payments*
 - o *Monitoring and Evaluation*

*Presentation: Mr. Deniz GÖLE
Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

*Presentation: Ms. Eda AKÇA
Expert
Development Bank of Turkey*

- Preparation of the Log Frame Matrix

*Presentation: Mr. Deniz GÖLE
Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

16:15-16:30 *Coffee Break*

16:30 – 18:15 Workshop for Preliminary Project Preparation
(6 separate discussion groups)

June 11th, 2015 (Thursday)

09:00-10:45 Presentations on Preliminary Project Preparation and Evaluations by the Trainers
(Q&A)
(6 separate discussion groups)

10:45-11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00-12:15 Lessons Learnt during the 1st and 2nd Call for Project Proposals and Expectations from WG Focal Points and National Focal Points

*Moderator: Mr. A.H.M. AHSAN
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh*

*Presentation: Mr. Deniz GÖLE
Expert
COMCEC Coordination Office*

Q&A

12:15- 12:30 Closing Remarks

12:30-13:30 *Lunch*

13:30- *Departure from the Hotel for Visiting Konya, City of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi and the OIC City of Tourism 2016 (Social Program)*

ANNEX II: THEMES OF THE WORKING GROUPS FOR THE 2016-2018 PERIOD

TRADE

Time	Theme
2016/1	Strengthening the Compliance of OIC Member States to the International Technical Standards
2016/2	Improving Border-Agency Cooperation among the OIC Member States
2017/1	Modernization of Border Clearance Processes: Single Window Systems in the OIC Member States
2017/2	Enhancing the Role of Special Economic Zones for boosting growth in the OIC Member Countries
2018/1	Trade in Services in the OIC Member Countries: Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement
2018/2	Creating an Enabling Environment for Maximizing the Economic Benefits of E-Commerce

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Time	Theme
2016/1	Sustainable Investment in Road Maintenance in OIC Member Countries
2016/2	Improving Road Safety in OIC Member Countries
2017/1	Developing a Core Strategic Transport Network for OIC Countries: Review of Global Practices and Methodologies
2017/2	Developing a Core Strategic Transport Network for OIC Countries: Criteria for Identifying Main Axes, Priority Projects and Options for Financing
2018/1	Developing a Core Strategic Transport Network for OIC Countries: Case Study for a Specific OIC Region (such as MENA or Eastern and Southern Africa)
2018/2	Increasing Penetration of Broadband Accessibility in OIC Member Countries

AGRICULTURE

Time	Theme
2016/1	Reducing On-Farm Food Losses in the OIC Member Countries
2016/2	Preventing Post-harvest Losses in the OIC Member Countries
2017/1	Reducing Food Waste in the OIC Member Countries
2017/2	Improving Agricultural Market Performance: Creation and Development of Market Institutions
2018/1	Establishing an Agricultural Market Information System in OIC Member Countries
2018/2	Promoting Market Oriented Agricultural Extension and Consultation Services in the OIC

TOURISM

Time	Theme
2016/1	Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Understanding the Demand and Supply Side in the Member Countries
2016/2	Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Developing and Marketing MFT Products or Services
2017/1	Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT): Regulation, Standardization and Certification
2017/2	Visa Facilitation: Strategic Partnership among Member States on Facilitating the Mobility of Several Categories of People
2018/1	Utilizing the Technology in Visa Facilitation
2018/2	Policies and Instruments Complementary to Visa Facilitation Policies

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Time	Theme
2016/1	Accessibility to Social Protection Programmes for the Vulnerable Groups in the OIC Member Countries
2016/2	The Role of Policies towards Forced Migrants within Poverty Reduction Efforts of the OIC Member Countries
2017/1	Nutrition in the OIC Member States
2017/2	Availability of Water and Sanitation in the OIC Member Countries
2018/1	The Service Capacity in the Health Sector in the OIC Member Countries
2018/2	Universal Health Coverage in the OIC Member Countries

FINANCIAL COOPERATION

Time	Theme
2016/1	Developing Islamic Finance Strategies.
2016/2	Establishing and Improving Institutional Capacity: Infrastructural Problems for Islamic Financial Institutions and Possible Solutions
2017/1	Public Finance and Debt Management
2017/2	Diversification of Islamic Financial Instruments
2018/1	More Harmonized Contracts and Regulations in Islamic Finance
2018/2	Government Cash Management in the OIC Member Countries

ANNEX III: GUIDELINE FOR THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WG FOCAL POINTS AND NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMCEC STRATEGY

In line with the request made during the Meeting, the COMCEC Coordination Office has prepared this guideline as a summary of the agreed roles and responsibilities of the WG Focal Points and National Focal Points in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy.

1- WG FOCAL POINTS:

1.1. Working Groups Related Roles

- Representing their countries with respect to WGs
- Mobilizing institutional and human capacity of the Member Countries towards effective implementation of the COMCEC Strategy through:
 - Informing/Raising awareness of the relevant Ministries/Institutions in the Member Countries about the COMCEC, COMCEC Strategy and its implementation instruments (WGs and COMCEC Project Funding)
 - Actively participating in WG Meetings/Ensuring the participation of qualified/relevant experts to the WGs
 - Actively contributing to the formulation of policy recommendations of the WGs
 - Informing/raising awareness on the agreed policy recommendations of the WGs among the relevant national bodies and encouraging their effective realization in their respective countries.
- Coordinating COMCEC-related work within the relevant Ministries/Institutions in their Countries
- Filling out/responding to or coordinating the responses to the surveys, policy questions, questionnaires, by the relevant stakeholders (i.e. relevant departments, relevant Institutions, private sector, NGOs, etc.)
- Facilitating and coordinating field visits conducted in their respective countries during the preparation of the analytical studies for COMCEC.
- Ensuring that the Ministry representatives participating in the WG meetings thoroughly review the Analytical Studies and Outlook reports in advance of the meetings; so that they can contribute the discussions by making comments, critiques and suggestions during the meeting.
- Ensuring that the relevant expert in the Ministry (depending on the theme of the meeting) participate in the meeting together with the focal point
- Sharing the outputs/policy recommendations of the WG Meetings with the relevant institutions of their Countries
- Providing feedback to the COMCEC Secretariat for improving the quality of the analytical studies as well as organization of the Meetings
- Informing the National Focal Points about the WG efforts and policy recommendations

- Facilitating effective communication and coordination with the COMCEC Coordination Office through:
 - following-up the invitation letters; informing the relevant Ministries/ Institutions/ Departments;
 - timely confirmation of participation;
 - responding to the inquiries of the CCO within the given deadlines;
 - Communicating the updated information regarding Focal Points (changes in focal points and changes in contact details).

1.2. COMCEC Project Funding (PCM) Related Roles

- Raising awareness of the relevant institutions of their Countries about the COMCEC Project Funding
- Having access to online project submission and management system.
- Saving user names and passwords of online project submission and management system.
- Selecting among the project proposals in case there are more than 3 proposals in the same cooperation area.
- Assisting the project owners in case of difficulties in the submission process of the project proposals.
- Ensuring coordination among all the stakeholders during the process of project submission and implementation
- Utilizing relevant COMCEC platforms to communicate with the potential project partners.
- Ensuring the relevance of the proposed projects to the PCM Implementation Guideline as well as to the policy recommendations of the WGs

2- NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

2.1. Working Groups Related Roles

- Raising awareness about the COMCEC in general, COMCEC Strategy and its implementation instruments (WGs and COMCEC Project Funding) in their respective countries
- Having an effective communication and coordination with the WG focal points as well as COMCEC Coordination Office for the effective implementation of the COMCEC Strategy as well as realization of the policy recommendations of the WGs.
- Coordinating the WG focal points in their respective Countries with a view to ensuring regular and active participation of the relevant experts in cooperation efforts
- Having a catalyst role for the realization/implementation of the policy recommendations of the WGs in their respective countries
- Regularly reporting the implementation status of the policy recommendations to the COMCEC Secretariat

- Coordinating the overall work towards COMCEC at the national level.
- Informing the delegates participating in the relevant COMCEC Ministerial and Follow-up Committee Meetings about the WG efforts and, if possible, taking part in these delegations for strengthening the link between the WGs and COMCEC Sessions.
