

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2019



COMCEC Coordination Office November 2019







Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)

COMCEC ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2019

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE November 2019



For further information please contact:

COMCEC Coordination Office

Address: Necatibey Cad. No. 108, Ankara 06100, Turkey

Tel: 90.312.2945710

Fax: 90.312.2945777

E-mail: comcec@comcec.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CHAPTER I: COOPERATION AREAS	4
1. Trade	4
2. Transport and Communications	13
3. Tourism	20
4. Agriculture	26
5. Poverty Alleviation	34
6. Financial Cooperation	41
7. Private Sector Cooperation	49
CHAPTER II: KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION EFFORTS: COMCEC PUBLICATIONS	51
CHAPTER III: COMCEC POLICY FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM WAS LAUNCHED	53
CHAPTER IV: COMCEC PROJECT FUNDING AS A POLICY SUPPORT INSTRUMENT FOR COMCEC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	55
CHAPTER V: 35th MEETING OF THE COMCEC FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE	61
CHAPTER VI: 34th MEETING OF THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE	62
CHAPTER VII: 7th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMCEC FOCAL POINTS	63
CHAPTER VIII: PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS SESSION	65
CHAPTER IX: SPECIAL SIDE EVENTS OF THE 35th COMCEC SESSION	66





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) has been continuing its efforts towards enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among the 57 OIC Member Countries since 1984. The main objective of the COMCEC is to address the economic challenges of the Islamic Ummah, to contribute to their development efforts and to enhance trade among the Member Countries. In this regard, COMCEC serves as a policy dialogue forum for producing and disseminating knowledge, sharing experience and best-practices, developing a common understanding, and approximating policies among the Member Countries.

In order to make the COMCEC a more fruitful platform to meet the growing needs of the OIC Member States, the 4th Extra-ordinary Islamic Summit Conference held on 14-15 August 2012 in Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has adopted the COMCEC Strategy. The 14th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 31 May 2019 in Makkah al-Mukarramah, "highly commended the successful implementation of the COMCEC revised statute and the strategy adopted at the 4th Extraordinary Summit Conference. It called on Member States to enhance the implementation of the revised COMCEC statute and strategy, in close coordination and cooperation with the General Secretariat and in accordance with the OIC Charter, and requested Member States to continue to actively participate in the work of the COMCEC under the chairmanship of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Turkey." Moreover, the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held on 1-2 March 2019 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates "commended the COMCEC for its efforts for enhanced cooperation among the OIC member states in the fields of trade, agriculture, transport and communications, tourism, finance, poverty alleviation and private sector development in the light of the COMCEC Strategy coordinated by COMCEC Coordination Office and in collaboration with various OIC Institutions in the economic domain."

Since the operationalization of the COMCEC Strategy, the efforts under the COMCEC have gained a new dynamism and visibility. The Annual Progress Reports are submitted to the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions to present the progress in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy. This progress report



provides an overview of the major achievements in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy, since the 34th Session of the COMCEC. Accordingly, for each cooperation area, the Report provides the outcomes of the most recent meetings of the relevant COMCEC Working Group. Moreover, the progress in the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations is included in this report. The activities of the OIC Institutions serving to the mission of the Strategy are also highlighted.

Since the 34th Session of the COMCEC, held in İstanbul, on 26-29 November 2018, 12 Working Group (WG) Meetings have been held successfully. For these meetings, 12 research reports and 6 sectoral outlook documents have been published by the COMCEC Coordination Office. After each WG Meeting, a proceedings document was published in order to reflect the outcomes of the meetings including the summaries of the presentations and discussions made during the meeting. All publications regarding the working group meetings namely the research reports, sectoral outlooks and the meeting proceedings are available in e-book format on the COMCEC website: (http://ebook.comcec.org).

The working groups have continued to conduct policy debate sessions in their deliberations. The Member Country experts discuss policy recommendations on the theme of the meeting based on intensive research. These policy recommendations are then referred to the Ministerial Session for consideration and adoption. Accordingly, the policy recommendations of the 13th and 14th rounds of WG meetings will be submitted to the 35th Session of the COMCEC for consideration and necessary action.

Through the COMCEC Project Funding, other instrument of the Strategy for the realization of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations, the institutional and human capacity of the Member Countries and the relevant OIC Institutions is mobilized towards the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy. The projects conducted under this mechanism are closely linked with the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations. Thus, this mechanism provides an important policy support instrument for the project owners and beneficiaries.

During its fifth implementation year, 17 projects were successfully implemented in 2018 and 34 countries reaped the benefits of COMCEC Project Funding. On the other hand, in 2019, the sixth year of the implementation of COMCEC Project Funding, 22 projects were implemented. With the partner countries, 35 member



countries benefited from the COMCEC Project Funding in 2019. The Seventh Project call was made in September 2019 and final list of successful projects is going to be announced at the end of January 2020 through the COMCEC web site.

Furthermore, the 7th Annual Meeting of the COMCEC Focal Points was held in 15-17 July 2019 to discuss the substantive issues pertaining the COMCEC Working Groups and COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism with the Member Country focal points. During this meeting, the participants had the chance to discuss the ways and means for active coordination of the COMCEC issues at the national level. Moreover, the participants elaborated on the issues and challenges in the implementation of the policy recommendations and their effective follow-up. In this regard, the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System was launched as an electronic-based platform for facilitating the effective follow-up of the implementation of the Ministerial Policy Recommendations in the Member Countries.

On the sidelines of the Meeting, a training session on the COMCEC Project Funding was also conducted, whereby the participants were informed on the details of the project submission under the seventh project call, which would to be made in September 2019.

The activities of the OIC institutions aligned with the COMCEC Strategy play a crucial role for the effective and successful implementation of the Strategy. This report also gives information regarding various activities held over the course of last year that are in line with the COMCEC Strategy and organized by the relevant OIC Institutions, namely, COMCEC Coordination Office, ICCIA, ICDT, IDB Group, SESRIC, SMIIC and OISA.



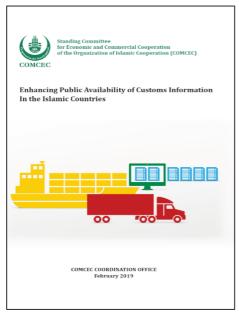
CHAPTER I: COOPERATION AREAS

1. Trade

1.1. Trade Working Group

Trade facilitation has become one of the important topics in the global economic agenda. The COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) has been focusing on trade facilitation issues in its recent meetings, which is also one of the important output areas of the COMCEC Strategy.

Trade facilitation can reduce trade costs prominently. According to OECD estimations, harmonizing trade documents, streamlining trade procedures, making trade-related information available and using automated processes can reduce total trade costs by 14.5 % for low-income countries, 15.5 % for low-middle-income countries and 13.2 % for upper-middle-income countries.¹



Moreover. accessing the information regarding the customs regulations, formalities, procedures and other relevant issues timely and properly is vital for traders. Lack of well-timed and accurate information brings about higher costs on commercial operations. Public availability of information on trade-related laws, regulations and procedures enables traders to take their decisions accordingly and operate in a more predictable trading transparent environment. Therefore, in the first four articles of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, publication and availability of information, consultations with the relevant

stakeholders, advance ruling systems, and appeal procedures are highlighted as the important necessities of trade facilitation.

¹ COMCEC Coordination Office, Single Window Systems in the OIC Member Countries, 2017.



In this respect, the TWG has convened on March 7th, 2019, in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Facilitating Trade: Enhancing Public Availability of Customs Information in the OIC Countries." During the Meeting, the participants deliberated on the global practices and trends in customs information dissemination and the status of the OIC Member Countries regarding the publicizing trade and customs information. According to the OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators, the OIC average score is above the world average with respect to information availability. However, regarding the involvement of trade community and advance rulings, the OIC average scores are below the world average.

Moreover, within the framework of the report submitted to the meeting, field visits were conducted to three OIC member countries namely Bangladesh, Morocco and Senegal to get insights about the policy environment on the subject.

The research report also highlighted the major challenges faced by the Member Countries, among others:

- Need for effective coordination among the border agencies involved in export/import processes.
- Lack of the required capacities and human resources for implementation of custom information system.
- Weak consultation of stakeholders on new draft regulations prior to finalization.
- Insufficient advance publication/notification of new regulations prior to implementation.
- Lack of an effective advance ruling mechanism.

In this regard, the 13th Meeting of Trade Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

- Encouraging the establishment of a formal consultation mechanism between regulatory authorities and trade community towards ensuring an efficient trade environment for the interest of various stakeholders at the national level.
- Utilizing Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) effectively for the dissemination of trade, especially customs related information.
- Encouraging the development of an effective Advance Ruling System in order to enhance the certainty and predictability of customs operations
- Promoting integrated Single Windows (SW) Systems and Trade Information Portals for combining the transaction processing functions of SW Systems with a comprehensive repository of trade-related laws, regulations, rules and procedures.
- Leveraging international and regional cooperation and making use of successful country experiences for promoting trade information availability.

Moreover, effective customs transit systems is one of the most important aspects of the trade facilitation. Lack of an efficient transit system increases trade costs significantly and constitutes a major hurdle for international trade especially for landlocked countries, which depend on transit countries to access international markets. While an efficient custom transit system can reduce trade costs and boost trade, a well-performing custom transit regime can be a key driver of regional integration. In this regard, the 14th Meeting of the Trade Working Group held on October 24th, 2019,





focused on the theme of customs transit systems in the OIC Member Countries.

According to the research report prepared for this meeting, the implementation status of customs transit measures in the OIC Member Countries, on average, is as follows: 41.17% fully implemented, 35.36% partially implemented, 4.54% planned, and 18.94 not implemented. The major challenges faced by the Member Countries, among others:

- Need for effective coordination among the border agencies involved in export/import processes,
- Need for an inclusive and adequate legal framework which is aligned with international standards,
- Lack of a well-functioning guarantee management and monitoring system for customs transit,
- Lack of the required capacities and human resources for implementation of custom transit system,
- Lack of an efficient risk management systems for customs transit,
- Weak ICT and transit information management systems.

In this regard, the Trade Working Group, during its 14th Meeting, has come up with the following policy recommendations:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

- Designing an appropriate legal and procedural framework for national customs administrations through, among others, utilizing international conventions on customs transit regimes,
- Establishing/Developing an efficient electronic exchange of information system among all relevant agencies, particularly among neighboring countries
- Developing an efficient guarantee management and monitoring system for Customs Transit Regimes
- Simplifying the formalities and documentary requirements for facilitating transit operations



- Developing integrated risk management systems to manage and facilitate transit customs procedures
- Ensuring a well-coordinated border management through enhancing cooperation among different border control agencies and with the neighboring countries as well as assigning a national transit coordinator.
- Developing necessary mechanisms (i.e. a Customs-Business Partnership programme) for promoting partnership with private sector while designing policies and procedures related to transit.

1.2. COMCEC Funded Projects in Trade Area for the Realization of the Ministerial Policy Recommendations

For the 2019 implementation period, four projects were implemented under the COMCEC Project Funding. The first project is titled 'Empowering Halal Industry to Boost Intra-OIC Trade' implemented by the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia. This project aims to increase the awareness and compliance of industry to Halal concept, essential rules, and regulations applied by the OIC Member Countries. The project activities consisted of a training, workshop and study visit to Turkey. While the study visit was about learning the Turkey's experience in this field, the workshop and training focused on understanding Halal Product Concept and essential rules and regulations applied by the OIC Member Countries.

The second project implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Trade of Lebanon is titled 'Supporting Cooperatives to Enhance Their Access to OIC Markets'. The project involved a study visit to Turkey and a training and workshop with a view to expand economic opportunities for Lebanese, Jordanian and Turkish producers through the support of income-generating activities. The project aimed at acting as a basis to build up infrastructure pillars for the beneficiaries' resilience and most importantly, promoting quality infrastructure as a tool to reduce trade barriers.

Ministry of National Economy of Palestine carried out the third project under the 2019 implementation period of the COMCEC Project Funding. The project is titled 'Introduction of Palestinian Export Products to Selected OIC Countries'. The activities consisted of two study visits to Indonesia and Iraq with a view to



discuss all tariff and non-tariff barriers in each target country. There were various stakeholder meetings in order to seek ways to facilitate the movement of goods between Palestine, Iraq and Indonesia. In the end, detailed plans of actions were developed jointly with the counterparts to be implemented in the following year.

The fourth project in 2019 was implemented by the SMIIC with the partnership of Turkey and Malaysia. The project is titled 'Increasing Public Halal Awareness in OIC countries'. The purpose of the project was to increase Halal awareness and knowledge among public and private sector specialists by producing high quality, and knowledgeable multimedia materials. The project included production of short films, one illustrated halal training manual and one comics and coloring book to that end.

1.3. Member Countries' Efforts for the Realization of the COMCEC Trade Policy Recommendations

In order to improve the follow-up of the policy recommendations, the CCO has prepared and circulated an evaluation form to the COMCEC Trade Focal Points before the 7th Annual Meeting of the COMCEC Working Group Focal Points. Moreover, the CCO has established COMCEC Policy Follow-up System (PFS) for ensuring more effective follow-up of the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations. The evaluation forms and PFS aim to facilitate the reporting of the developments in the Member States regarding the implementation of the policy recommendations adopted by the COMCEC Ministerial Meetings, especially its 34th Meeting.

According to the feedbacks received from the Member Countries, the following national efforts in line with the COMCEC Policy Recommendations have been reported.

 Regarding the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on improving the border agency cooperation, Indonesia has initiated legal and/or administrative measures in line with their national policies and the efforts of ASEAN. Moreover, Indonesia has shown its willingness to receive and provide technical assistance in the field of border agency cooperation, including exchange of experts, workshops or seminars.



- Concerning Policy Recommendations on Strengthening the Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards, Indonesia and Turkey have ongoing administrative or legal measures, particularly in order to implement the policy recommendation on "Strengthening the SMIIC for the Adoption of Harmonized Standards and Development of Quality Infrastructure in the OIC for Enhancing Intra-OIC Trade".
- With respect to Single Window Systems,
 - Indonesia conducts workshops, study visits and exchange of experts in order to implement the policy recommendations.
 - Morocco has a Single Window System, called PORTNET, which is an effective mechanism to integrate the complete foreign trade supply chain.
 - Palestine is preparing a feasibility study to establish a single window system and needs technical assistance in this regard.
- Regarding Policy Recommendations on Special Economic Zones (SEZ),
 - Indonesia has some ongoing efforts for producing strategy on this field.
 Moreover, Indonesia conducts various activities, such as workshops, seminars, conferences and study visits in this area.
 - Azerbaijan has approved a Strategic Road Map on National Economy and this strategy envisages establishing new economic areas according to the development priorities. Azerbaijan has also necessary regulations regarding the SEZ.
 - Palestine has a Industrial Estates Strategy and has prepared a draft regulation by taking into consideration the relevant COMCEC Policy Recommendations.
- Concerning Customs Risk Management,
 - Palestine is working on developing a customs strategy and has some administrative as well as regulative constraints in this respect. Moreover, they need technical assistance, such as training programs, for this purpose.



- Indonesia has ongoing efforts for preparing a strategy on customs risk management with regards to the implementation of COMCEC Policy Recommendations in this field.
- Sudan has some ongoing efforts for initiating a strategy on customs risk management in line with the COMCEC Policy Recommendations and expressed the need for technical assistance, such as study visit and training programs.
- Regarding Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programs,
 - Indonesia has ongoing efforts for preparing a strategy on AEO Program and conducted a workshop in this regard.
 - Jordan has an AEO Program and shared its willingness to provide technical assistance to other countries, such as exchange of experts.
 - Palestine has not an AEO program and expressed some challenges such as lack of institutional and human capacity as well as technical expertise, and the need for a technical assistance for addressing these challenges.
 - Sudan highlighted the need for technical assistance, such as study visit and exchange of experts on AEO programs. Moreover, some challenges, including Regulative and administrative constraints, financial constraints, lack of institutional and human capacity, and technical expertise were underlined in this regard.
 - Turkey has covered the majority of the Policy Recommendations on AEOs, especially with respect to administrative measures in line with the international agreements and standards such as, EU Community Customs Code, World Customs Organization SAFE Framework of Standards and WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation.

1.4. Other Trade-Related Developments and Activities Organized by OIC Institutions

TPS-OIC:

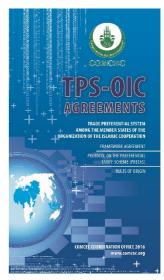
TPS-OIC is the most important project of the COMCEC in the field of trade, based on three agreements, namely the Framework Agreement, the Protocol on



Preferential Tariff Scheme (PRETAS) and the Rules of Origin. With the ratification of all three agreements by at least 10 Member States, the legal basis of the System was completed in August 2011.

In order to make the TPS-OIC system operational, 10 Member States have to fulfill two conditions at the same time: The ratification of the three TPS-OIC Agreements and the submission of the list of concessions to the TNC Secretariat. In this regard, the required number of member countries for the operationalization of the System has been reached by the end of 2014.

However, for the entry into force of the System, there are some practical steps need to be taken by the participating member states. The most important step in this context is updating the concession lists. As of September 2019, 13 Member Countries, namely Turkey, Malaysia, Pakistan, Jordan, Bangladesh, Iran and Morocco as well as Gulf Cooperation Council Secretariat on behalf of its six Member Countries (Bahrain, Kuwait Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) have conveyed their updated concession lists to the TNC Secretariat. The 34th Session of the COMCEC held on November 26-29th, 2018 in İstanbul, has requested the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Secretariat to communicate with the concerned participating Member



States to ensure the submission of the concession lists in the same format and circulate them among the concerned Member States accordingly.

Moreover, following the submission of the updated concession lists by the required number of the Member Countries, the preferential trade will start under the TPS-OIC with some arrangements to be made in the customs authorities of each participating state in accordance with the relevant provisions of TPS-OIC Rules of Origin. The List of the Member Countries signed/ratified TPS-OIC Agreements can be reached at: http://www.comcec.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TPS-OIC-List-of-Signature-and-Ratification-EN.pdf

In addition to the technical preparations for operationalization of the TPS-OIC System, the relevant OIC Institutions have been organizing various activities towards increasing awareness on the potential benefits of the TPS-OIC. In this



regard, ICDT organized the "Regional Workshop on TPS-OIC and the Multilateral Trading System" in collaboration with the COMCEC Coordination Office on 17-18 December 2018 in Khartoum/Sudan.

Moreover, on the sidelines of the 7th Annual Coordination Meeting of the COMCEC Focal Points held in July 2019, the CCO organized a training seminar on TPS-OIC for the Gambia, Cameroon and Somalia.

Islamic Trade Fairs:

Islamic Trade Fairs are organized for increasing intra-OIC trade and promoting the products, industries and services of the OIC member countries. The 16th Islamic Trade Fair was held on 7-13 April 2019 in Baghdad, Iraq.

In addition to the Islamic Trade Fairs, sector specific fairs and exhibitions are also organized by the Member Countries in cooperation with ICDT. In this regard, in line with the relevant resolution of the 34th Session of COMCEC, the "6th OIC Halal Expo" was held on 29 November-2 December 2018 in İstanbul/Turkey in collaboration with SMIIC and "4th OIC Health Expo" was held on 7-9 December 2018 in Abidjan/Cote d'Ivore.

2. Transport and Communications

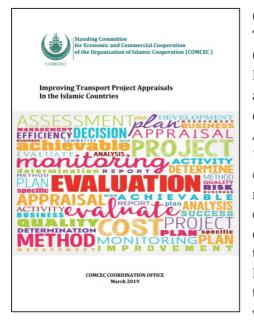
2.1. Transport and Communications Working Group

Transport and communications infrastructure is a critical component of economic and social development of countries. The economic and productivity growth of a given region is tied closely to its transport infrastructure and transport systems which enable higher productivity through lower logistics costs, inventory savings and access to larger supply and labor markets.

In view of the strategic role of transport in a country's economic development, large transport investments require careful project appraisals and effective transport coordination among the planning agencies and other relevant authorities. In this respect, transport project appraisals are of critical importance to obtain the expected result of an investment as well as preserve the scarce resources of a country. Furthermore, project appraisal is indispensable for determining the value and cost of the transport projects to be funded and implemented. It essentially aims to figure out which projects offer the best value for money. Therefore, improving transport project appraisals is observed among



the most important factors affecting the success of a transport investment in a country.



Given its critical importance, the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) has devoted its 13th Meeting to the subject of transport project appraisals. Accordingly, the 13th Meeting of TCWG was held on March 21st, 2019, in Ankara, with the theme of "Improving Transport Project Appraisals in OIC Member Countries". During the meeting, representatives of the Member States discussed and shared their views and experiences on how to enhance the transport project appraisals in the OIC Member States. Moreover, they discussed the global trends and best practices in the world in order to draw concrete lessons

from them.

The research report prepared for this meeting, identified a conceptual framework on the appraisal of transport projects, investigated the global trends and current practices and proposed concrete recommendations for better transport project appraisals in the OIC member countries. Within the framework of the report, three OIC member countries were visited (Iran, Jordan and Nigeria) and transport project appraisal practices in these countries were deeply analyzed. Additional in-depth analyses are also conducted for Afghanistan, Mozambique and Saudi Arabia. Next to these case studies, a survey has been carried out focusing on the OIC member countries and international practices in order to assess their practices with respect to transport project appraisals².

² COMCEC Coordination Office, Improving Transport Project Appraisals in the Islamic Countries, 2019.



The research report highlighted the following major setbacks related to transport project appraisals practices in the OIC geography:

- Lack of cooperation and coordination among the relevant public authorities,
- Lack and deficiency of accurate data and statistics,
- Unclear legal and institutional framework, and lack of necessary guidelines on content of project appraisals,
- Poor governance system defining clear and separate roles for the institution that reviews and approves the appraisal of projects,
- Inadequate institutional and human capacity to effectively implement project appraisals,
- Lack of ex-post evaluation.

In light of the main findings of the report and the deliberations during the 13th TCWG, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

- Designing a systematic framework for transport project appraisals, indicating the objectives, types and the utilized methodologies.
- Developing/ Improving manuals and guidelines for ensuring having effective and harmonized transport project appraisals as well as effectively implementing the existing ones.
- Applying transport project appraisals as a main part of a full project cycle and making use of quality data/information as well as the lessons generated from the implementation of the previous project(s).
- Encouraging the enhancement of Improving transport project appraisals capacity through a system of official certification of competences, exchange of experience, training programs, seminars, conferences and workshops etc.

On the other hand, the network characteristic of transportation requires shared efforts and cooperative decision-making processes to plan and manage an

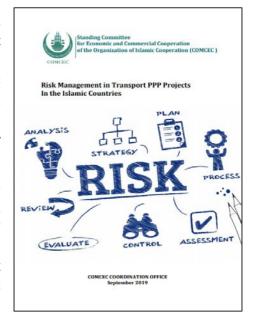


effective and efficient transport system. In recent years, the increasing need for the development of infrastructure and budgetary constraints in some developing and developed countries have led governments to seek new ways of financing infrastructure investments.

One of the options is to involve private sector finance and expertise in the provision of public infrastructure and services through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiatives. PPPs are the instruments where public sector bodies enter into long-term contractual agreements with private sector entities for the construction or management of public sector infrastructure facilities. In this framework, making use of PPP implementations in developing countries has become increasingly popular as a way of involving the private sector in the development of public infrastructure. The main characteristics of PPPs are competitive bidding processes, private sector innovation and expertise, and risk-sharing between public and private sectors. However, due to the high degree of risks affecting PPP projects, effective risk-management remains a critical issue to be addressed. In this respect, risk management in transport PPP projects bear great importance for increasing the quality of national transport infrastructure and transport services.

Given its significance, the COMCEC TCWG, in its 14th Meeting, has focused on risk management in transport PPP projects. In this respect, the 14th Meeting of TCWG was held on October 3rd, 2019 in Ankara, with the theme of "Risk management in Transport PPP projects in the OIC Member Countries".

The research report prepared for the meeting revealed important findings in terms of risk management in transport PPP projects in the world as well as in the OIC member countries. Within the framework of the report, three OIC member countries were visited (Turkey, Cote d'Ivoire and



Jordan) and risk management practices in transport PPP projects in these countries were deeply analyzed.



In this framework, the report highlighted the following major setbacks related to risk management in transport PPP projects practices in the OIC geography:

- Weak legal framework,
- Poor governance system defining the division of labor among the various stakeholders,
- Limited institutional and human capacity to deal with the risk management in transport PPP projects with its all dimensions,
- Lack of the necessary guidelines on the content of risk management in transport PPP projects.

In light of the main findings of the report and the deliberations during the 14th TCWG, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

- Encouraging to develop/improve the legal framework through adopting a PPP tailored legislation.
- Allocating clear responsibilities for the management of PPPs over the course of their life-cycle and establishing/strengthening a unit/department within the government to that end.
- Supporting the use of appropriate technical tools, analyses etc., and development of strong database and competences for minimizing risks during the implementation of the PPP projects
- Developing/Improving risk management guidelines and checklists for the betterment of the implementation of the PPP projects



2.2. COMCEC Funded Projects in Transport and Communications Area for the Realization of the Policy Recommendations

Regarding the COMCEC Funded Projects for the realization of the COMCEC Policy Recommendations, three projects in the Transport and Communications cooperation area were implemented in 2019 by the Gambia, Jordan and Iran under the COMCEC Project Funding. The Gambia implemented the project "Improving Human and Institutional Capacity for Integrated Database Management System in the OIC Countries" with the partnership of Senegal, Nigeria and Turkey. The project aimed at developing an integrated transport database management for The Gambia with the support of the project partner countries. In this regard, a study visit was organized to Turkey to gain experience on transport database management system of Turkey. A training was also organized in the Gambia for analyzing and learning the standards, procedures and functions of transport database management system.

Jordan implemented the project titled "Reconstructing the Old Ottoman Hejaz Railway Line - Phase 2" with the partner countries Egypt and Turkey. The project aimed at discussing the funding opportunities for reconstructing the Hejaz Railway Line and sharing experiences on railway planning with the project partner countries. In this respect, a training was organized on feasibility studies, railway engineering and planning along with a workshop for discussing opportunities and challenges on funding requirements of the Hejaz Railway Line.

The third project titled "Increasing Seaborne Transport and Trade within the Framework of the TPS-OIC" was implemented by Iran with the valuable contributions of partner countries Oman, Pakistan, Qatar and Turkey. The project intended to seek practical solutions within the framework of the TPS-OIC to facilitate trade by decreasing international seaborne transportation costs. During the project lifetime, a research report was produced based on study visits to the partner countries and desk-based analyses. The report mainly consists of current situation of seaborne trade and transport in the world and in the OIC, detailed analysis of sector in respective countries, concrete strategies and policy recommendations for the whole OIC community.



2.3. Member Countries' Efforts for the Realization of the COMCEC Policy Recommendations in Transport and Communications

According to the feedbacks received from the Member Countries to the evaluation forms and COMCEC Policy Follow-up System, the following national efforts in line with the COMCEC Policy Recommendations have been reported.

- Regarding the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on Increasing Broadband Internet Penetration in the OIC Member Countries,
 - Maldives has been considering to develop a strategy/action plan/road map and regulation/law/ administrative measure with the objective to enhance digital literacy in the country. In this respect, Maldives has shown its willingness to receive technical assistance, especially training programs on broadband internet penetration and to provide exchange of experts to the requesting member countries.
- Concerning the policy recommendations on Governance of Transport Corridors in OIC Member States,
 - Indonesia is considering to develop a strategy/ action plan/ road map with the objective to provide an enabling legal, institutional and regulatory framework for ensuring effective coordination and cooperation among the relevant countries.
 - Turkey has been working towards having such a regulative framework.
 - Jordan has an Executive Secretariat to facilitate Transport and Trade Strategy which aims to ensure effective coordination and cooperation, and simplification as well as harmonization of procedures and processes in transport and trade.
 - Jordan and Turkey have conducted activities such as training, workshop, study visits, exchange of experts, conferences, and seminars with the aim of implementing the concerned policy recommendations. Jordan and Turkey expressed they can provide technical assistance through seminar and exchange of expert programs to the other requesting member countries for implementation of the policy recommendations in this field.



- Lack of institutional and human capacity and technical expertise as well as financial constraints are some of challenges highlighted by Indonesia to implement the concerned policy recommendations. Indonesia needs study visit and training program as the technical assistance for implementation of the policy recommendations in this area.
- Concerning policy recommendations on the Planning of National Transport Infrastructure:
 - Jordan and Turkey have a strategy/ action plan/ road map with the with respect to the preparation and implementation of national transport master plans. Indonesia has an ongoing efforts towards this end.
- Moreover, Turkey and Indonesia are exerting efforts towards identifying comprehensive and relevant key performance indicators for the effective monitoring and evaluation of the performance of transport plans and their outcomes, and sharing the results with the relevant public and private sector stakeholders.
- While Indonesia has expressed its need for training programs as technical assistance for the implementation of the policy recommendations in this area, Jordan can provide exchange of experts to the other requesting member countries for implementation of the policy recommendation.
- Indonesia, Jordan and Turkey have conducted activities such as workshop, study visit, training, exchange of experts with the aim of implement the policy recommendations concerned.

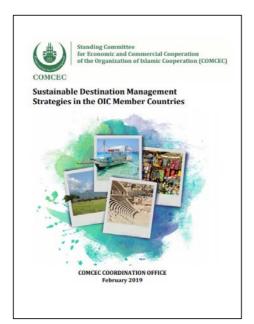
3. Tourism

3.1. Tourism Working Group

For a successful tourism development, tourism activities need to be properly planned and managed in a sustainable manner. Sustainability reflects the long-term development of a destination, and a balance between economic, social as well as environmental benefits and costs.

In this regard, the COMCEC Tourism Working Group, in its 13th Meeting held on February 13th, 2019, in Ankara, has focused on "Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries".





According to the research report submitted to the Meeting, in recent years, tourism has accounted for the largest movement of people across the globe. However, with an estimated 1.5 billion people travelling the world every year, their consumption of natural resources, especially energy and water, is placing severe demands on the resources of many countries. If not properly planned, tourism growth can have negative impacts on a destination's natural assets, environment, local communities. Sustainable tourism aims to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of a destination as well as ensure the well-being of local

communities and the satisfaction of tourists. This requires efficient destination management, continuous monitoring, and the cooperation of tourism stakeholders.

Within the framework of the above-mentioned research report, field visits were conducted to Maldives, Oman and Uganda. On the other hand, desk based studies were fulfilled for Palestine, Jordan, Denmark and Italy.

In light of the findings of the research report, the following challenges were highlighted by the Working Group:

- Limited engagement and consultation with stakeholders,
- Lack of an umbrella body/organization for facilitating coordination among the key stakeholders,
- Lack of awareness.
- Insufficient resources allocated to tourism sustainability,
- Lack of formal procedures for continuous monitoring and reporting on destination sustainability.

The 13th Meeting of Tourism Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

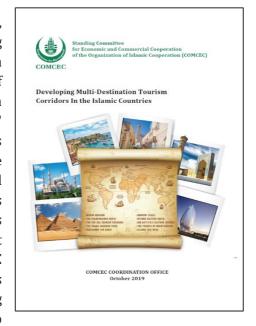
- Improving community participation fair representation by offering human resources training, capacity building and certification programs, enhancing local value chain, integrating local production into procurement and minimize leakages, encouraging local entrepreneurship in tourism, conducting media campaigns as well as raising tourist awareness about tourism sustainability.
- Identifying KPIs for sustainable tourism development based on international standards and climate change agreement to monitor each country's performance against a set of pre-determined indicators and to encourage remedial actions when targets are not met.
- Identifying current and potential tangible and intangible tourism resources by taking into consideration destinations carrying capacity, and their long term protection and survival while avoiding over tourism.
- The required mechanisms (e.g. voluntary contribution, tourist tax, environmental fees) might be introduced to fund the sustainability activities that aim to protect, preserve the local quality of life and minimize the costs associated with tourism.
- Ensuring effective destination planning and marketing in such a way that the supply and demand meet at the optimum level and diversified.

The OIC member countries share common natural and cultural resources, which would be basis for the development of multi-national tourism corridors and brands. The OIC Region's various natural and cultural tourism products spreading over four continents require a holistic approach for managing tourism products, marketing destinations, creating shared brands, and improving the visitors' experiences. Creating various potential multi-national tourism corridors in the OIC Region and integrating these corridors into tourism planning and development policies of individual countries would result in joint development, marketing and management of these multi-national destinations and would be



helpful for the member countries to cooperate and create synergies in developing their tourism industries.

Considering the importance of the subject. the 14th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group was held on October 31st, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Developing Multi-Destination Tourism Corridors in the OIC Member Countries " and a research report on the subject was considered by the TWG. According to the report, the presence of solid infrastructure is one of the critical success factors for establishing corridors. In this respect. infrastructure development represents a challenging area for the OIC multi-destination tourism corridors (MDTCs), especially for countries facing financial constraints. The efforts to



improve connectivity are underway in the OIC geography, which can enhance mobility for tourists along MDTCs in these regions. Engaging local stakeholders and ensuring their support of the corridor is the key for the success of MDTCs. Moreover, successful planning and establishment of MDTCs requires extensive research from historical, cultural and practical perspectives to formulate the corridor's theme and assess its potential tourism assets. Funding is also a major challenge for MDTCs in general, with global MDTCs trying to diversify funding sources, both external and internal, to ensure the sustainability of MDTCs.

Within the framework of the above-mentioned research report, field visits were also conducted to Silk Roads Tourism Corridors (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan) as the OIC Member Countries' practices and Danube Tourism Corridors (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, and Moldova) as non-OIC examples. On the other hand, desk-based studies were fulfilled for Holy Family Tourism Corridor (Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine) and the Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Corridor (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and parts of the People's Republic of China).



In light of the findings of the research report, the following challenges were highlighted by the Working Group:

- Limited research and data collection efforts,
- Poor Infrastructure.
- Needed for assistance in formulating corridor themes and identifying tourism resources to be included,
- Monitoring performance lags behind global best practices,
- Limited use of uniform branding and digital marketing or integrated marketing communication,
- Insufficient funding sources.

The 14th Meeting of Tourism Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

- Planning corridors based on thorough SWOT analysis, infrastructure assessment, and social value analysis and identifying assets through expertled research.
- Making use of public-private partnership models for the effective planning and management of Tourism Corridors and encouraging the participation of and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.
- Identifying a comprehensive set of indicators, promoting harmonized tourism related data collection as well as analysis for monitoring the corridor performance effectively and feedback into the corridor strategy to create synergies.
- Improving branding and marketing of the tourism corridors in the OIC Region through among others, joint interactive marketing platforms and user-generated content (storytelling) in ICT platforms to create unique brands.
- Creating and Diversifying funding sources of tourism corridors with a view to ensure the sustainability of their management and marketing.



3.2. COMCEC Funded Project in Tourism Area for the Realization of the Policy Recommendations

Regarding the COMCEC Funded Projects for the realization of the COMCEC Policy Recommendations in tourism area, five projects were implemented in the tourism cooperation area within the context of the COMCEC Project Funding in 2019.

The first project titled as "Destination Management Organization: Conceptual Framework for Azerbaijan, Cameroon, and Iran" was implemented by Azerbaijan State Tourism Agency. The project aimed at developing a conceptual destination management organization framework for Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Iran. The project consisted of producing a research report in which the output of the field visits conducted within the project was reflected.

The second project, "Training of Accommodation Providers in the OIC Member Countries on Muslim Friendly Tourism Standards and Quality Service Provision", was implemented by the Gambia. The purpose of this project was to familiarize the accommodation service providers in the Gambia and in other OIC Members with the Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) and to make these countries capable of regulating their accommodation establishments in line with MFT standards. The training program, which included inputs gathered through the study visit to Malaysia, was held in the province of Banjul. With a 5-day training program, 20 trainees from the Gambia, Nigeria, and Senegal were trained on MFT standards for hotels in terms of necessary customer services for Muslim customers.

The third project titled "Improving Human Capacity on Muslim Friendly Tourism for Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries" was implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Mozambique with the partnership of Malaysia, Nigeria, Sudan, and Uganda. The aim of this project was to enable participants to regulate the accommodation establishments in the light of MFT Guidelines, to establish a national level harmonization platform for halal products and therefore increasing Member Countries' institutional capacities. In this context, a training program was organized for enhancing capacity of the 15 participants from the public sector, tour operators, and travel agents on the Muslim Friendly Tourism.

The fourth project titled "Developing Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) in Guyana and Suriname" was implemented by ICDT. The purpose of this project was to



raise awareness of MFT in Guyana and Suriname with a view to enhance the MFT ecosystem in these two countries through a training program. The training program was organized to raise awareness about the standards and guidelines of MFT with the participation of 63 trainees from Guyana and Suriname.

The last project titled "Capacity Building on Destination Management Organizations of OIC Member Countries" was implemented by Mali with the partnership of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The project aimed at equipping the relevant actors in charge of the management and tourism promotion of eight West African countries with destination management skills by conducting a training program. The training program on destination management organizations was held in the province of Bamako with 22 participants from the beneficiary countries.

3.4. OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum

OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum provides a regular communication channel for the private sector representatives of the Member Countries. In this regard, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, which serves as the Secretariat of the Forum, organized the 7th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum on September 5th, 2019 in İstanbul, Turkey with the theme of "Prospects for the Development of Health Tourism in the OIC Member Countries". The Forum elaborated on the various aspects of health tourism from the private sector perspective.

3.5. The Islamic Conference of the Ministers of Tourism

The 10th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) held on 5-7 February 2018 in Dhaka/Bangladesh, approved the selection of Dhaka (Bangladesh) as the OIC City of Tourism for 2019, and Gabala (Azerbaijan) as the OIC City of Tourism for 2020. The session also welcomed the offer by the Republic of Azerbaijan host the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) in 2020.

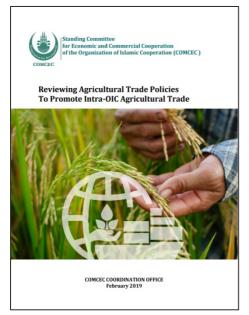
4. Agriculture

4.1. Agriculture Working Group

While international trade promotes economic growth and creates welfare gains, many developing countries, including the OIC member countries, face serious difficulties that prevent them from fully reaping the benefits of international



trade. Design and implementation of better agricultural trade policies require reviewing the existing state of policies thoroughly and in such a way to allow for identification and removal any inefficiencies and weaknesses. In this respect, COMCEC Agriculture Working Group has held its 13th Meeting on February 21st, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of "Reviewing Agricultural Trade Policies to Promote Intra-OIC Agricultural Trade" and a research report on the same subject was considered by the WG.



According to the research report, there exists considerable protection through high tariff rates within the OIC for certain critical product divisions and products such as sugars and oil seeds, and exporters of these products face high applied tariffs imposed by importers.

On the other hand, some other key product divisions such as meat are not subject to high tariff protection but still represent low share of intra-regional agricultural trade within the OIC region. Thus, non-tariff measures may also be responsible for limited intra-OIC agricultural trade in certain products.

Moreover, the report indicates that, the OIC member countries have, on average, fewer trade agreements with other OIC countries than their non-OIC trade agreements. In other words, on average, each OIC member country has 22 preferential trade agreements, and 8.73 of them are with other OIC Member Countries.

Within the framework of the research report, field visits were conducted in Turkey, The Gambia and Morocco and desk based studies were made on Chad, Brazil and Thailand.

The research report identified some factors adversely affecting agricultural trade flows. These are, among others:

- Poor status of marketing knowledge and information;
- Limited financial resources:



- Inadequate technical adaptability of producers and lack of standardization of the products;
- Limited data availability and data reliability in the realm of agricultural trade flows and agricultural trade policy measures (including both the tariff rates and the NTMs);
- Widespread smallholder farming practices across the OIC.

In line with the main findings of the aforementioned report and the discussions during the 13th Meeting, the Agriculture Working Group put forward the following policy recommendations:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

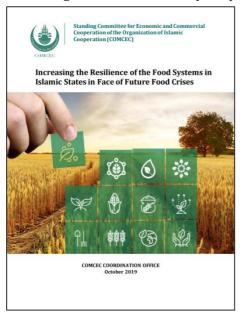
- Promotion of Niche Agricultural Products and Halal Certification through product diversification, trademarking, marketing strategies and advertising campaigns.
- Promotion of Commercial Cooperation (e.g. enhancing agricultural investments, removal of business visas, etc) and Non-Commercial Cooperation (e.g. sharing best practices and technical expertise, developing safety standards, etc.) among the OIC Member Countries in the areas related to agricultural trade.
- Promotion of Tariff Reductions and Bilateral Arrangements in key products (e.g. sugar, meat, feeding stuff for animals, oil-seeds, live animals)
- Developing and implementing multilateral trade arrangements (e.g. TPS-OIC Trade Preferential System among the Member States of the OIC)) with a view to contributing to collaborative and sustainable agricultural trade development.
- Enhancing the capacity of the Member Countries in collection, management and dissemination of agricultural trade data with a view to designing sound and evidence-based agricultural trade policies.



Furthermore, sustainable food systems are at the heart of economic prosperity. A sustainable food system is defined as "a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised."

In this regard, the 14th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group was held on 9-10 October 2019, in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Increasing the Resilience of the Food Systems in the OIC Member Countries in Face of Future Food Crises". In line with the relevant resolution of the 34th Session of the COMCEC, this WG meeting also served to the preparations for the Exchange of Views Session of the 35th COMCEC Ministerial Meeting.

According to the research report prepared for this meeting, 28 OIC countries



were among the world's 54 low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). majority of LIFD-classified countries suffer from high undernourishment, intricate political conditions, and low income. Moreover, in 2018, 64.7 million people in OIC member states were estimated to be facing food crisis or worse, facing either food consumption gaps with high acute malnutrition or marginally minimum food requirements with rapid livelihood asset erosion. Many of these people were in a state of food emergency, suffering from acute malnutrition or extreme loss of livelihood assets.

Some factors adversely affecting

sustainable food systems are:

- Low level of agricultural and labor productivity
- Lack of reliable and up-to-date data on food security
- Price fluctuations of food products
- Limited/low level of intra trade for food products in the OIC region due to high tariff and non-tariff barriers



- Adverse effects of climate change on agriculture and food systems (drought, water scarcity)

Considering the findings of the research report and deliberation made during the meeting, The Agriculture Working Group has come up with a number of policy recommendations which will be submitted to the 35th COMCEC Session, under the following headings:

- Legal and regulatory framework
- Improving Agro-production and Agricultural Productivity
- Development of Infrastructure
- Financing and Investment
- Market Performance and Market Access
- Promotion of intra-OIC agricultural trade/ Reducing barriers to trade
- Human and institutional capacity
- Monitoring and evaluation of food security
- Adaptation and mitigation strategies for reducing the adverse effects of climate change, man-made disasters, etc.
- International and Regional Cooperation

4.2. COMCEC Funded Projects in Agriculture Area for the Realization of the Policy Recommendations

Two projects were implemented in agriculture cooperation area within the context of the COMCEC Project Funding in 2019. The first 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 regard, study visit to Turkey was conducted by the project team for gathering information about Turkey's experience on the issue. In addition, a training program was held in Malaysia with the participation of experts from the partner countries. In the program, participants were trained on various issues related with the warehouse and storage management.

The second agriculture project titled "Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in the OIC Countries" was implemented by Turkey with the participation of Indonesia, Palestine, Morocco, Qatar, and Tunisia. The project purpose was to strengthen



human and institutional capacity and to raise awareness on reduction of food loss and waste with a holistic approach. Within the scope of the project, project team conducted a study visit to Indonesia for understanding current situation on reducing food losses and waste such as legal infrastructure, standards, studies, good practices etc. Furthermore, a training program was organized in Turkey for the officials and experts from the partner countries. The program focused on various issues such as food loss and waste concept, international organizations' approaches to the issue, applications for reducing food loss and waste, food banking. Immediately after the training program, current situation in the partner countries on food loss and waste, findings of the study visit, cooperation opportunities among the partner countries were also discussed during the workshop organized under the project.

4.3. Member Countries' Efforts for the Realization of the COMCEC Agriculture Policy Recommendations

According to the feedbacks received from the Member Countries to the evaluation forms and COMCEC Policy Follow-up System, the following national efforts in line with the COMCEC Policy Recommendations have been reported.

- Regarding Policy Recommendations on Reducing Food Waste,
 - Afghanistan has Comprehensive Agriculture Development and National Priority Program(CADNPP), Food security and Nutrition Agenda and strategy, and Food Safety Law. They established food security and Agriculture cluster committee as well as Food security and Nutrition working group. Moreover, they organized various trainings for the families, farmers, engineers, gardeners, etc. in the issues ranging from consumption, cold storage designing to food security.
 - Benin has developed a strategy on collecting and selling cereals (maize, rice, sorghum, etc.) to vulnerable populations.
 - Recently, Turkey has taken the issue of reducing of food losses and waste in
 a sustainable way to its agenda and has conducted several studies in this
 area at the national and international level. Turkey also plans to initiate the
 Save Your Food Campaign at the global scale. Moreover, Turkey has
 prepared draft national strategy, action plan and road map on reducing



food loss and waste and promotion of food banks and food distribution networks within scope of Save Your Food Campaign.

- Jordan has modified the instruction of quality control of fresh fruits and vegetables and organized workshops on reducing post-harvest losses.
- Palestine has prepared the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP) which is a strategic policy consisting of a comprehensive and coordinated set of measures needed to ensure food and nutrition security in Palestine over the years 2019-2030.
- Concerning the implementation of COMCEC Policy Recommendations on Market performance,
 - For improving agricultural market performance, Afghanistan has enacted a cooperative law and established farmer learning resource centers. Seed distribution new coupon system as pilot project has also been launched. Furthermore, Afghanistan has established the Market Information System which provides traders and stakeholders to use relevant and up-to-date data. The market information database is regularly updated and compared with other internal market prices. A specific department has been also established with a view to inform government, private sector and agriculture producers in a timely manner. Moreover, MIS provincial staff has been trained on collection of information.
 - Benin has been currently in a process of National Census of Agriculture with a view to have a database on agriculture including the list of farmers.
 Moreover, Benin has developed strategies to facilitate access to agricultural quality inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.
 - In Cote d'Ivoire, concerning cash and food crops, various strategies have been implemented and some action plans are available to improve farmers' access to the quality inputs. Moreover, they have implemented some projects and programs including capacity development support programs and trainings to farmers and farmer associations for increasing their access to warehousing and storage capacity.
 - Jordan has held training courses on Development of Market Business.



- In Palestine, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) started a new project called "National Agricultural Registry System" to enhance cooperation, knowledge sharing and information management between related stakeholders including farmers and to improve linkage between farmers and MOA.
- Palestine has organized a training course on marketing information system and prices report component has been added to the market information system of the country.
- Regarding the Policy Recommendations on Trade Networks and Policies,
 - In terms of promoting agri-food trade networks among the Member Countries, Afghanistan has signed agriculture technical and commercial agreements with some OIC member countries and received tax exemption for Afghan importing agriculture products. Moreover, export procedure has been simplified in Afghanistan, and land and air corridors have been opened with many countries to increase agricultural trade.
 - Benin has developed the "Warantage" system which consists in granting producers, substantial credit against their harvest kept in a collective store and provides countries preferential market access.

4.4. OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development

Another important platform where common problems of the OIC Member Countries are discussed in field of agriculture is the OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development. The 7th OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security Agricultural Development held on 26-28 April 2016 in Astana, Kazakhstan has deliberated on the common constraints and challenges of agricultural development and food security in the OIC Member States, especially the agricultural production and productivity, trade in agriculture commodities, water resources and their use in agriculture. Moreover, 8th Ministerial Conference will be organized in İstanbul, Turkey, in the last quarter of 2020.



5. Poverty Alleviation

5.1. Poverty Alleviation

Access to health services is quite important for the living quality and social as well as economic productivity of individuals. A healthy life reduces the likelihood of becoming poor. On the other hand, the cost of health services and drugs as well as the lack of facilities to access to health services are the main challenges for the poor in many countries.

Given the importance of the issue, the 13th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group was held on April 4th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Access to Health Services in the OIC Member Countries". The research report prepared for this meeting highlighted that the OIC member countries are characterized by lower life expectancy, higher maternal and under-five mortality rates than non-OIC countries for lower middle-income countries. However, the OIC member countries are less affected by tuberculosis and HIV than non-OIC countries for the upper middle-income group. The report also underlined that physical and financial accessibility of healthcare services tends to be lower in the OIC member countries than in non-OIC countries. Availability of nurses and midwives is much lower in low income OIC member countries than in low income non-OIC countries, whereas the OIC member countries invest less in health as a proportion of their GDP and expose their citizens to higher out-of-pocket expenses (OOP) than non-OIC countries.

As highlighted in the research report and the discussions during the Meeting, the following challenges were identified by the Working Group:

- Inadequate health infrastructure and capacity,
- Limited number of health staff.
- Low level of health insurance coverage,
- High out of pocket spending on health,
- Low level of allocated financial resources,
- Inadequate health information management systems and lack of reliable data.

To overcome these challenges, the Working Group came up with the following policy recommendations:



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

- Developing a strategy/policy including a well-designed payment and health insurance schemes to achieve universal health coverage,
- Strengthening primary healthcare particularly in poorer areas through encouraging skilled health staff to work in rural and remote areas and enhancing integrated health promotion and prevention interventions.
- Promoting the engagement of private sector in the provision of safe and quality healthcare in close partnership with public authorities and with well-designed monitoring mechanisms.
- Encouraging development and upgrade of health information management systems through designing an online-integrated health information system, allocating required resources to health IT infrastructure and strengthening multi-sectoral coordination mechanism.

Moreover, the Poverty Alleviation Working Group, in its 14th Meeting held on November 6th, 2019, in Ankara, has focused on child and maternal health.

The research report prepared for the meeting reveals that thanks to the improved access to affordable, quality health services child deaths have been reduced by nearly half and maternal deaths by over one-third since 2000. On the other hand, the new estimates reveal that 6.2 million children under 15 years died in 2018 and over 290 000 women died due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth in 2017. Of the total child deaths, 5.3 million occurred in the first 5 years with almost half of these in the first month of life.³

-35-

³ https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/19-09-2019-more-women-and-children-survive-today-than-ever-before-unreport accessed on 21.09.2019



Although the global maternal mortality was reduced about 44% between 1990 and 2015, the progress of maternal mortality reduction was much slower in the OIC Member Countries, which was about about 29%. Similarly, the rate of child mortality reduction was much slower in the OIC member countries compared to World, which accounted for 41.2% and 58%respectively. Almost half of the world's under-5 child deaths (46.4%) occur in the OIC member countries.

According to the findings of the report, low level of education of women, limited access to health services in rural areas and financial constraints preventing mothers to access to essential drugs, antenatal and postnatal visits as well as to give birth in a health institution are some of the major

Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
(COMCEC)

Child and Maternal Mortality in Islamic Countries

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
October 2019

challenges faced in many OIC Member Countries.

Taking these figures and challenges into consideration, the 14th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

- Developing a strategy/policy to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) care, and to provide equitable distribution of health providers,
- Improving health system functioning and quality of MNCH care through training and practice of recommended standard of care protocols, and regular monitoring of standards,
- Improving continuum of maternal, neonatal and child health care for assuring uninterrupted services before and during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum period through among others developing specific conditional



cash transfer programs,

- Developing/Improving integrated health information management systems for monitoring MNCH care level and reporting births and deaths, including maternal deaths, nationally and locally,
- Developing sustainable educational programs on women and child health care delivered to community with a view to eliminating the inequities linked to low education levels.

5.2. COMCEC Funded Projects in Poverty Alleviation Area for the Realization of the Policy Recommendations

Five projects have been implemented in the poverty alleviation cooperation area in 2019 under the COMCEC Project Funding. Afghanistan implemented the project titled "Improving the Quality of Education through Information and Communication Technologies in the OIC Countries" with the participation of Iran, Turkey and Palestine. The project targets at enhancing the institutional capacity of Afghanistan for disadvantaged children's access to qualified education in the rural regions through ICT. For that purpose, a workshop was held on sharing best practices to increase teaching and learning effectiveness through adoption of ICT.

The second project titled "Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education for Grassroots Empowerment in the OIC Countries" was implemented by Nigeria with the partner countries, The Gambia and Turkey. The aim of the project was to analyze the current situation and needs with regard to vocational education of the youth and women in the OIC member countries. The main aim was to further reintroduce them to economy and to provide a sustainable development. In line with this aim, a workshop was organized to identify gaps and assessing the needs for the technical and vocational education systems as well as to create a roadmap for addressing job creation for the vulnerable groups.

Suriname implemented the project titled "Increasing the Capacity of Vocational Education Centers for the Disabled in the Selected OIC Countries" with the participation of Guyana and Turkey. The project aimed at increasing institutional



capacity of the training centers that serve for people living with disability, developing curriculum for the training centers and enhancing the human capacity of the teachers. Within this framework, a training program was organized for development of vocational skills for the teachers and curriculum for the training centers in the OIC member countries.

Turkey has implemented the project titled "Developing Guidelines on Social Safety Net Systems for the OIC Countries". The main aim of the project is to increase the human and institutional capacity of Indonesia, Tunisia, Iran and The Gambia in the Social Safety Net (SSN) systems. In this regard, a training was organized to discuss the role of information technologies in providing efficient, transparent and accountable SSN services. Concurrently a workshop was also conducted to analyze the different country models of SSN systems and to provide adaptable and applicable SSN guidelines for the OIC member countries.

The final project titled "Digital Skills Development in the OIC Countries" was implemented by SESRIC with the partnership of Azerbaijan, Benin, The Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia and Turkey. The project's aim is to present the relationship between digitalization and vocational education, determining the effect of digitalization to vocational education and suggesting the necessary policies for managing the digital transformation in the OIC member countries. Within this scope, a workshop was organized to identify the current status and needs for the digitalization of the workforce and economies of the OIC member countries.

5.3. Member Countries' Efforts for the Realization of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Policy Recommendations

Regarding the efforts of the Member Countries towards the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations on Poverty Alleviation, the Member Countries reported the following:

- With respect to the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on "Accessibility of Vulnerable Groups to Social Protection Programs in the OIC Member Countries",
 - Concerning the specific recommendation on "Promoting free and universal health care coverage for vulnerable groups", there are some ongoing



initiatives for the inclusion of children under the age of 5, pregnant women and elderly into the health insurance system of Jordan.

- Regarding the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on "Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries",
 - Jordan has amended the Investment Law allowing the Syrians to invest and work and has issued some instructions that provide work permits and employment opportunities for Syrian refugees.
- Concerning the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on "Education of Disadvantaged Children in the OIC",
 - Jordan has conducted several types of activities such as training, workshop, study visit and exchange of experts specifically for increasing access to inclusive education for children including those having disabilities. Jordan also expressed the necessity for technical assistance, such as exchange of experts, study visits, training programs etc. and has shown their willingness to cooperate with other OIC Member Countries for such technical assistance activities.
- With regard to the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on "Malnutrition in the OIC Member Countries",
 - Jordan has carried out a number of measures to improve the nutrition of children and infants such as encouraging breastfeeding through a range of awareness and counseling programs and providing guidance for mothers in the field of breastfeeding in health centers. Jordan has also amended the labor law to include the obligation of employers to establish nurseries in women's workplaces. The Labor Law obliges employers with more than 20 female workers to establish a nursery in the workplace. The civil service system in Jordan has also been amended to allow nursing mothers to obtain a license for a period of two years and to give right to receive a daily breast feeding for a period of one year after birth.

5.4. Other Efforts under the COMCEC by the OIC Institutions

Other ongoing programs for alleviating poverty under the COMCEC are: Special Program for the Development of Africa - SPDA (within the Islamic Development Bank), Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development - ISFD (within the Islamic



Development Bank) and OIC Vocational Education and Training Program - OIC-VET (within SESRIC).

The Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) is a special fund established with the purpose of reduction of poverty focusing on human development, agriculture, rural development and basic infrastructure. The targeted budget of the Fund is US\$ 10 billion. As of April 2018, total amount of the contributions received was US\$ 2.584 billion. Cumulative approvals has reached US\$ 734,2 million for 117 operations in 33 Member Countries. 3 new grants-based programs have been adopted by the ISFD namely, Second Generation of the Alliance to Fight Avoidable Blindness, Scholarship Program for the Poor in IDB Member Countries, Coalition to Stop Obstetric Fistula Program.

The Special Program for the Development of Africa (SPDA) is another program developed to alleviate poverty in the Member States in Africa through increasing economic growth, enhancing the productivity of agriculture sector and creating employment opportunities. The target capital of the SPDA is \$12 billion. The amount of total approvals has reached 5.5 billion USD since the beginning of the Program. The disbursements against SPDA approvals are US\$ 2.248 billion or 46% of total approvals.

The Vocational Education and Training Program for the OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET) is implemented by SESRIC in order to strengthen the member countries' capacities in the field of technical and vocational education and training. TVET Teacher Education Program, Certification and Modular Training Programs and Occupational Standards and Qualification and Quality Assurance System are some of the important programs within the framework of the OIC-VET.

5.5. Implementation of the SDGs

Given its crucial place in the global development agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been taken into the agenda of the COMCEC.

In this regard, the COMCEC follows-up the programs, projects and other activities of the relevant OIC Institutions related to the implementation of the SDGs. To that end, SESRIC conducted a tendency survey on the priorities of the member countries regarding the SDGs and reported the results to the 34th COMCEC Session. Based on these results, SESRIC will present an annual report on the



progress at the OIC level towards achieving the prioritized SDGs to the 35th COMCEC Ministerial Session.

Furthermore, The CCO will submit a compiled list of activities of the OIC Institutions, which were conducted for contributing to the implementation of the prioritized SDG areas in the member countries to the 35th COMCEC Session.

6. Financial Cooperation

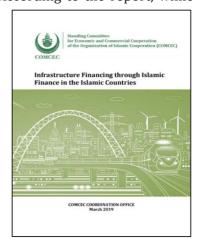
6.1. Financial Cooperation Working Group

Infrastructure is very crucial in order to realize a proper functioning economy and promote economic growth and alleviate poverty. However, the overall status of infrastructure in the OIC member countries needs to be improved. This requires a huge amount of investment and alternative sources of funding. Given its social and ethical principles as well as emphasis on risk-sharing and asset-backed financing, the Islamic finance industry can potentially play an important role in providing financing for infrastructure projects.

Taking the great potential of Islamic Finance into consideration, the 12th Meeting of the Financial Cooperation Working Group (FCWG) was held on March 28th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of "Infrastructure Financing through Islamic Finance in the OIC Member Countries." The research report prepared for this meeting reveals that investment requirements for the OIC member countries, in which data is available, is estimated at USD 7.2 trillion for the 2016-2040 period. With the current trends, the investments are estimated to be USD 5.6 trillion, which will result in a deficit of USD 1.6 trillion. According to the report, while

global shariah compliant assets exceed USD 2 trillion for the 2017-2018 period, the total contribution of the Islamic financial sector in infrastructure financing was only about USD 120 billion. The percentage of assets going to infrastructure sector in the Islamic banking, takaful and sukuk sectors are estimated to be 4.74%, 2% and 11.57% respectively.

Furthermore, in order to enrich the data and analysis in the research report and to get insights about the policy environment on the





infrastructure financing through Islamic Finance, field visits were conducted to four OIC member countries namely Indonesia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. On the other hand, a desk based study was fulfilled for Malaysia.

The followings were highlighted by the research report as the major challenges of the member countries in utilizing Islamic finance for infrastructure financing:

- Inadequate of legal and regulatory framework
- Lack of standardized Shariah-compliant contract templates for infrastructure projects and infrastructure fund,
- Insufficient human capital,
- Shortages of Islamic banks in investing long-term infrastructure projects,
- Small size of nonbank Islamic financial institutions,
- Lack of innovative models of using zakat and waqf.

To overcome these challenges, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

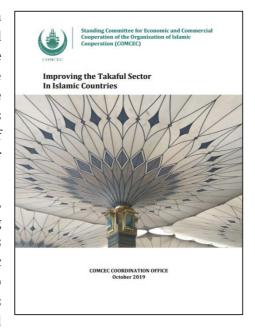
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

- Developing Legal and Regulatory Framework to Provide an Enabling Environment for Realizing Large Infrastructure Investments through Islamic Finance.
- Increasing the number and share of Islamic Nonbank Financial Institutions to Enhance the Contribution of Islamic Finance in Infrastructure Investments.
- Developing the Islamic Capital Markets Infrastructure to Facilitate the Issuance of Different Types of Project Sukuk and other Instruments as appropriate for Infrastructure Projects,
- Encouraging Innovative Models to use Islamic Social Sector (i.e., Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqah) to Provide Social Infrastructure Services (such as Education and Health) provided that they are Shariah-compliant,
- Improving capacity and human capital for increasing the use of Islamic Finance for infrastructure financing.



The insurance industry has become a necessary part of business and financial system. The growing Islamic Finance industry has provided a room for the development of alternative insurance mechanisms. Accordingly, takaful has emerged as an important component of Islamic Finance to meet the demands for Shariah compliant insurance products.

Given the importance of the subject, COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group has elaborated on Takaful sector as an important component of the Islamic Finance in its 13th meeting. According to the research report prepared for this meeting, in the Takaful industry's total



assets grew up to USD46 billion in 2017. The industry had 324 Takaful operating companies comprising more than 112 general Takaful Operators (TOs) as well as 76 life TOs around the world in 2017.

The working Group has highlighted the main challenges faced by member countries as the following:

- Inadequate awareness,
- Limited re-takaful capacity,
- Limited investment options,
- Inadequate skilled human resources,
- Weak regulatory framework,
- Inadequate distribution capacity,
- Limited efforts in research and development.

In order to address these challenges and enhance the utilization of Islamic Finance in infrastructure investments, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

- Developing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for the Takaful industry to facilitate the operations, transparency, and governance in this sector,
- Promoting product customization in Takaful Sector and introducing new products in accordance with the changing needs of the market,
- Encouraging the talent development through training and professional certification programs and increasing the awareness of stakeholders in Takaful sector,
- To provide incentives to the Takaful industry to enhance its competitiveness and business sustainability, thereby creating the level-playing field for the industry.

6.2. COMCEC Funded Projects in Financial Cooperation Area for the Realization of the Policy Recommendations

In 2019, three financial cooperation projects were supported under the COMCEC Project Funding.

The first project titled as "Capacity Building on Islamic Finance in Mozambique, Gambia and Nigeria" was implemented by Mozambique with the participation of The Gambia and Nigeria. The project aimed at increasing the institutional capacity of the member countries and raising awareness on Islamic financial literacy and Islamic financial services. Within the scope of the project, a training program was conducted on Islamic banking, products and services. A workshop was also organized to address business opportunities, financial inclusion and poverty reduction aspects of Islamic finance.

The second project titled "Islamic Liquidity Management Instruments for Sustainable Development of Islamic Financial Institutions" was implemented by Nigeria with the participation of Gambia, Togo and Malaysia. The project aimed at developing the capacity of Islamic Banks and Financial regulators in the OIC



member countries to develop Sharia Compliant HQLA (high-quality liquid assets) for effective liquidity management and monetary operation frameworks. In this regard, a study visit was conducted to Malaysia with the purpose of learning how the country manages the short term liquidity needs of Islamic finance institutions. Furthermore, officials and experts from Nigeria, Togo and Gambia were trained on effective liquidity management through the development of HQLAs.

The third project titled "Assessment of COMCEC Real Estate Securities Markets and Regulatory Landscapes for Strengthening Capital Markets" was implemented by Turkey with the partnership of Albania, Brunei, Gambia, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan and Palestine. The project aimed at analyzing the possibility of establishing a real estate securities trading platform among OIC countries by identifying types, market structures and regulatory features of real estate securities market in the member countries. For this purpose, inclusion of the real estates to the economy through alternative securities such as real estate investment trusts, real estate investment trust shares, lease certificates and real estate certificates was discussed within the margin of an international workshop held in Turkey.

6.3. Member Countries' Efforts for the Realization of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Policy Recommendations

According to the feedbacks received from the Member Countries to the evaluation forms and COMCEC Policy Follow-up System, the following national efforts in line with the COMCEC Policy Recommendations have been reported.

- Regarding the Ministerial Policy Recommendations on Improving Public Debt Management in the OIC Member Countries,
- Egypt is considering to have a strategy/ action plan/ road map with the objective to strengthening/setting up an independent Public Debt Management Unit with well-defined functions and a dedicated debt management strategy.
- Nigeria Debt Management Office has attended COMCEC Training and Workshop organized in Nigeria and in Turkey.



- Azerbaijan is considering to medium and long-term strategy for public debt management in the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- Jordan is considering to have a strategy/ action plan/ road map and activities in order to broaden and diversify the creditor base.
- Iran is working on a strategy for developing/improving domestic debt market in order to use the privileges of this market.
- Turkey issued Pension and Mutual Funds in order to contribute to the development of the capital markets, increase domestic savings, expand the investor base and diversify the financing instruments.
- Malaysia has established a Debt Management Committee in May 2019 to provide advisory services to ensure the country's debt management is in line with global best practices.
- With Respect to Diversification of Islamic Financial Instruments,
 - Nigeria issued Islamic Funds Rules in 2010, Sukuk Rules in 2013, Non-Interest banking rules in 2011 and Takaful guidelines in 2013.
 - Egypt and Algeria are considering to have a strategy, road map, regulation and some activities for improving the Islamic Finance Infrastructure. Furthermore, lack of institutional and human capacity and technical expertise are some of challenges faced by Egypt to implement the concerned policy recommendations.
 - Algeria has some efforts towards strengthening human capital in Islamic Finance through enhanced financial literacy and awareness programs/projects.
 - Iran is willing to provide seminars, training programs, workshops, and exchange of experts programs to the other requesting member countries for improving the Islamic Finance Infrastructure in the OIC Region.
 - Turkey has revised the "Regulation on Credit Transactions of Banks",
 "Deposit Regulation" and "Provision Regulation" in order to improve its
 Islamic finance infrastructure and diversify Islamic financial instruments.
 Turkey has also taken some actions for improving its takaful sector.



- Malaysia has introduced various regulatory policies and guidelines for Islamic banking and takaful sectors in order to strengthen its Islamic Finance Infrastructure.
- Concerning policy recommendations on Role of Sukuk in Islamic Capital Markets,
 - Nigeria has been considering to develop an enabling regulatory framework for Sukuk issuance.
 - In Azerbaijan, Road Map on Perspectives of National Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan including the sukuk instruments was approved.
 - The Egyptian Financial Regulatory Authority and the Ministry of Finance are in the process of modifying the existing Law of "Corporate Sukuk" to issue "sovereign Sukuk"
 - In Algeria, sovereign Sukuk issuances are allowed thanks to a provision of the financial law in 2018.
 - Iran has provided legal and regulatory framework for Sukuk Issuance. The
 Law for Development of New Financial Instruments and Institutions
 provided the necessary ground for the establishment of the Collective
 Investment Schemes and provision of tax exemptions for Collective
 Investment Funds.
 - Turkey is working on improving regulatory framework within the scope of Istanbul Finance Center initiative.
- Concerning policy recommendations on the Improving of the Islamic Fund Management,
 - Egypt and Jordan are considering to have a strategy, road map, regulation for providing a viable ecosystem for Islamic funds.
 - Malaysia launched Islamic Fund and Wealth Management Blueprint as well as Guidelines to support the ecosystem of Islamic funds.



6.4. Other Efforts under the COMCEC Financial Cooperation

OIC Exchanges Forum

The OIC Member States Stock Exchanges Forum, established in 2005, aims to enhance cooperation among the stock exchanges of the OIC Member Countries and relevant institutions and focuses on the harmonization of the rules and regulations governing market operations. Since its establishment, the Forum has also developed some important projects including S&P OIC/COMCEC 50 Shariah Index. The 13th Meeting of the Forum was organized on September 26th, 2019 in Turkey.

Moreover, the Forum has been working on the establishment of a gold exchange/platform for the OIC Member Countries in line with the relevant resolutions of the COMCEC. The Forum Secretariat is expected to report the progress to 35th COMCEC Session. Details regarding the Forum activities are available on the Forum website. (www.oicexchanges.org)

COMCEC Capital Markets Regulators Forum

The COMCEC Capital Markets Regulators Forum was founded in 2011 to develop a cooperation mechanism for capital markets regulatory bodies of the Member States. The Forum undertakes its work under four task forces namely, "Capacity Building", "Market Development", "Islamic Finance" and "Financial Literacy". The Task Forces produced eight reports on various issues including, Islamic finance, financial literacy improvement in securities markets, and public disclosure systems etc. The 8th Meeting of the Forum was organized on September 26th, 2019 in Turkey.

In addition to the existing efforts to boost cooperation among the capital markets regulatory bodies of the Member States, the Forum has also been working on the establishment of the "COMCEC Real Estate Exchange" in light of the relevant resolutions of the COMCEC.

Detailed information regarding the Forum activities are available on the Forum website. (www.comceccmr.org)

OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum

As per decision of the 16th Meeting of the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities and the relevant resolution of the COMCEC, the Central has started to



continue its activities as the "OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum." The Central Bank of Turkey serves as the Secretariat of the Forum. The 1st Meeting of the Forum was held on 22-24 September 2019 in Turkey. Detailed information regarding the Forum activities are available on the Forum website. (http://www.comceccentralbanks.org)

7. Private Sector Cooperation

The private sector is an important driver of economic growth and sustainable development. It is the major source of income generation, job opportunities and poverty eradication. As the OIC Member Countries have a wide range of development levels, some member countries have a dynamic and resilient private sector, whereas others do not fully benefit from the opportunities generated by the private sector. Therefore, there is a primary need for developing private sector in the member countries to enable them to be incorporated into the development endeavors.

Considering the importance of the private sector for the economies of the Member Countries, some important events, fairs and exhibitions are organized by the ICDT and ICCIA in order to strengthen the private sector cooperation under the OIC. These activities are reviewed during the COMCEC annual Meetings.

Private Sector Meetings/ Businesswomen Forum

The strong involvement of the private sector to the COMCEC and other relevant fora under the OIC is very crucial for enhancing intra-OIC trade and investments. In this respect, Private Sector Meetings, organized by the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), serves as a platform for the private sector of the 57 OIC Member Countries to communicate with each other, explore new markets and learn about best practices. Up to now, 16 private sector meetings have been held. Apart from private sector meetings, the ICCIA also organizes Businesswomen Forums.

<u>Preparations for the Operationalization of the OIC Arbitration Center</u>

During the 13th Islamic Summit held in 10-15 April 2016 in İstanbul, Turkey, H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, the President of the Republic of Turkey and the Chairman of the COMCEC proposed to set-up an arbitration center in İstanbul for the benefit of the OIC Member Countries. Upon this proposal, the COMCEC has



taken the necessary actions to start the preparations for establishing the OIC Arbitration Center in Istanbul.

In this regard, 2 task force meetings were held in 2018 and the draft statute of the Center was prepared. Accordingly, the 35th General Assembly Meeting of the ICCIA has approved the Statute of the Center. ICCIA and TOBB are undertaking the necessary preparations for making the Center operational soon.



CHAPTER II: KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION EFFORTS: COMCEC PUBLICATIONS

The COMCEC aims to produce and disseminate knowledge, share experiences and best-practices, develop a common understanding and approximate policies in cooperation areas to find solutions to the challenges faced by the Member Countries. To this end, the COMCEC Working Group was designed as an instrument for realizing this mission of the COMCEC. In this regard, research reports are prepared for each WG meeting, to form a basis for the discussions made during the Meetings.

Each research report focuses on the specific theme of the Working Groups and is prepared by world-class consulting firms, international organizations having experience on the specific theme or academicians from high-ranking universities around the world. The COMCEC Coordination Office conducts the reports in close cooperation with the consultants to ensure high-quality research studies. The studies begin with a conceptual framework and an overview of the specific theme in the world and the member countries, followed by an in-depth analysis of a few member countries based on field visits, surveys and interviews. At the end of each report, some policy recommendations are given for the Member Countries as well as international cooperation efforts under the umbrella of the COMCEC.

During the preparation of each research report, the active involvement of the Member Countries is of vital importance. In this regard, the research topics are identified with the Member Countries during the Annual Coordination Meetings of the COMCEC Focal Points. In light of the views of the COMCEC Focal Points, the themes of each working group as well as research report are determined for the next three years. Moreover, during the preparation of the research reports, surveys are conveyed to the focal points for enriching the empirical data presented in the reports and ensuring their analytical soundness. The observations of the Member Countries are also benefited through receiving their views/comments on the draft case studies (if they are subject to case analysis) and draft report before its finalization. Furthermore, the observations made during the Working Group Meetings, where each research report is presented, the Member Countries and relevant international organizations are benefited for improving the research reports. The final versions of the research reports are published through the COMCEC e-book website (ebook.comcec.org).



Moreover, sectoral outlooks are prepared annually for each cooperation area. These documents are prepared by the COMCEC Coordination Office with a view to exploring the global trends and current situation in the OIC Member Countries in the respective area and enriching the discussions during the Working Groups Meetings by providing up-to-date data.

Furthermore, Proceedings documents are produced after each Working Group Meeting to reflect the discussions including the summaries of the presentations made during the Meetings.

Since the 34th Session of the COMCEC 12 research reports on the themes of the working groups and 6 sectoral Outlook reports as well as 6 proceeding documents have been prepared, as of end of October 2019. All these publications are available on the COMCEC web-site accessible in e-book format at COMCEC E-book Website: http://ebook.comcec.org/



CHAPTER III: COMCEC POLICY FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM WAS LAUNCHED

The COMCEC Coordination Office has launched the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System during the 7th Annual Coordination Meeting of the COMCEC Working Group Focal Points held on 15-17 July 2019 for the effective follow-up of the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

The COMCEC provides the opportunity to the Member Countries to develop a common understanding and approximating policies among themselves within a multilateral context. It enables the Member Countries to move from shared goals to concrete actions.

The Member Country experts discuss policy recommendations on the theme of each Working Group meeting based on intensive research as well as the responses by Member Countries to the policy questions, which are communicated to the focal points before each Working Group meeting. Through discussions in the Working Groups, the Member Country experts and policy-makers would be able to make better-informed decisions, both at national and OIC levels, as the Working Groups discuss high-quality, relevant and evidence-based policies. Accordingly, the policy discussions provide significant inputs to the Ministerial level of the COMCEC Sessions, and eventually becoming policy recommendations in their respective fields.

The policy recommendations formulated by the Working Groups are then referred to the Ministerial Session for consideration. After the discussions, the policy recommendations are adopted by the Ministerial Session under each specific sectoral agenda item as part of Ministerial Resolutions. The adopted policy recommendations are published on the COMCEC Website for the use of the relevant Ministries and Institutions of the Member Countries.

(http://www.comcec.org/en/comcec/comcec-policy-recommendations).

The COMCEC Policy Follow-up System (PFS) is an electronic-based platform and aims at facilitating the effective follow-up of the implementation of the Policy Recommendations. Moreover, it enables assessment of the results on the implementation of the Policy Recommendations through the necessary data and information.



The COMCEC Working Group Focal Points, who are nominated by the Member Countries in each sector from the relevant authorities (Ministry of Trade, Tourism etc.), has a crucial role as they collect the necessary information on the implementation of the Recommendations Ministerial Policy respective countries and submit through the PFS. In this respect, COMCEC Focal Points are expected to provide timely, accurate and reliable data and information on their respective countries' performance through the PFS. The System can be accessed through the COMCEC (http://pfs.comcec.org). The Guideline for utilizing the PFS is also available in the System.



Furthermore, for the active follow-up of the implementation of Policy Recommendations and effective use of PFS, national coordination bears great importance. In this regard, effective national coordination among the relevant Ministries and Institutions of the Member Countries is needed for implementation of the policy recommendations and for their effective following-up. Considering the importance of this issue, some member countries, such as the Gambia, Nigeria, Indonesia and Turkey have already established high level coordination committees/bodies in their respective countries as part of the national coordination efforts.



CHAPTER IV: COMCEC PROJECT FUNDING AS A POLICY SUPPORT INSTRUMENT FOR COMCEC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The COMCEC Project Funding, one of the two main instruments of the COMCEC Strategy, aims to mobilize the capacity and expertise of the Member States and OIC institutions to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Strategy. COMCEC Project Funding facilitates the realization of the COMCEC Policy Recommendations as each funded project should be linked with one of the policy recommendations adopted by the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions.

This instrument enables the Member Countries and OIC Institutions to engage in cooperation efforts to overcome the common challenges. It provides an opportunity for the Member Countries to propose multilateral projects to realize the Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

COMCEC Project Funding is a valuable tool to assist member countries in their policy making endeavors. It turns COMCEC policy recommendations into practice while improving the institutional and human capacity of the Member Countries. Each funded project is implemented in cooperation with the participation of at least three OIC Member Countries. In doing so, it not only enables sharing knowledge and experience in a specific theme, but also improves the ability of the Member Countries to work together in addressing the common problems through the implementation of multilateral projects.

Project proposals can be submitted by the relevant ministries of the Member Countries, which are registered to the relevant Working Groups. The OIC Institutions working in the economic domain are also eligible to submit proposals.

In 2018, the fifth implementation year of the COMCEC Project Funding, seventeen projects were financed by the COMCEC (Table 1).



Table 1: Projects Funded in 2018

	Project Owner	Project	Cooperation	Project Title
		Partners	Area	
1	Turkey	Morocco, Tunisia	Agriculture	Improving Agricultural Irrigation Extension Services
2	Indonesia	Malaysia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan	Agriculture	Developing Agricultural Market Information System for Horticulture Farmers
3	Gambia	Senegal, Cameroon Morocco	Poverty Alleviation	Training on Entrepreneurship for Teachers in the Selected OIC Countries
4	Indonesia	Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh	Poverty Alleviation	Improving the Single Window Service System for Social Protection and Poverty Reduction in the OIC Countries
5	Burkina Faso	Niger, Côte d'Ivoire	Tourism	Strengthening the Resilience of Tourism Sector Against Crises through Communication
6	Mozambique	Sudan, Malaysia, Gambia, Uganda	Tourism	Community-Based Tourism through The Promotion of Heritage Sites for Poverty Alleviation
7	Mali	Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal	Tourism	Training on Crisis Communication in Tourism for Selected OIC Member Countries
8	SESRIC	13 Member Countries	Tourism	Improving Islamic Tourism Ecosystem in OIC Member Countries: Destination and Industry Development
9	Sudan	Jordan, Morocco, Turkey, Uganda	Trade	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Single Window Systems in the OIC Member States
10	Morocco	Cameroon and Tunisia	Trade	The Feasibility Study on the Interoperability of Selected Single Window Systems in the OIC Member Countries
11	Nigeria	Morocco, Indonesia	Trade	Boosting Intra-OIC Trade Through Improvement of Trade Facilitation Measures in the OIC Member Countries
12	SMIIC	21 Member Countries	Trade	Harmonization of National Halal Standards with the OIC/SMIIC Halal Standards
13	Gambia	Senegal, Nigeria	Transport and Communication	Analysis of the Road Database Management Systems in the Selected OIC Countries



	Project Owner	Project Partners	Cooperation Area	Project Title
14	Iran	Azerbaijan, Turkey	Transport and Communication	Feasibility Study of Iran- Caucasus Transport Corridor
15	Jordan	Iraq, Turkey	Transport and Communication	Feasibility Study for Reconstructing the Old Ottoman Hejaz Railway Line
16	Nigeria	Gambia, Togo	Financial Cooperation	Training and Guidelines on SUKUK issuance
17	Turkey	18 Member Countries	Financial Cooperation	Improving Financial Consumer Protection in the OIC Countries

Source: COMCEC Coordination Office

Taking into account both the project owners and their partners, 34 member countries have benefited from the COMCEC Project Funding in 2018. In this respect, three analytical reports were drafted along with thirteen training programs and eight workshops. These activities were made possible by the feedback, data and information gathered during eight study visits conducted by project owners and partners alike (Table 2).

Table 2: Activity Breakdown of 2018 Projects

	Project Owner	Cooperation Area	Training	Workshop	Analytical Report	Study Visit
1	Turkey	Agriculture	1	1		1
2	Indonesia	Agriculture	1	1		1
3	The Gambia	Poverty Alleviation	1			
4	Indonesia	Poverty Alleviation	3	1		
5	Burkina Faso	Tourism	1			
6	Mozambique	Tourism	1	1		
7	Mali	Tourism	1			
8	SESRIC	Tourism	1			1
9	Sudan	Trade	1			1
10	Morocco	Trade			1	3
11	Nigeria	Trade		1		1



12	SMIIC	Trade	1			
13	The Gambia	Transport and Communication		1		
14	Iran	Transport and Communication			1	
15	Jordan	Transport and Communication			1	
16	Nigeria	Financial Cooperation	1	1		
17	Turkey	Financial Cooperation		1		
Tota	ıl		13	8	3	8

Source: COMCEC Coordination Office

In 2019, 22 projects were completed under the COMCEC Project Funding. These projects addressed the common development challenges of 35 member countries (Table 3).

Table 3: Projects Funded in 2019

	Project Owner	Project Partners	Cooperation Area	Project Title
1	Malaysia	Turkey, Indonesia, Bangladesh	Agriculture	Capacity Building on Warehousing and Storage Management
2	Turkey	Indonesia, Palestine, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia	Agriculture	Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in the OIC Countries
3	Turkey	Indonesia, Tunisia, Iran, The Gambia	Poverty Alleviation	Developing Guidelines on Social Safety Net Systems for the OIC Countries
4	Afghanistan	Iran, Turkey, Palestine	Poverty Alleviation	Improving the Quality of Education through Information and Communication Technologies in the OIC Countries
5	Nigeria	Turkey, The Gambia	Poverty Alleviation	Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education for Grassroots Empowerment in the OIC Countries
6	Suriname	Turkey, Guyana	Poverty Alleviation	Increasing the Capacity of Vocational Education Centers for the Disabled in the Selected OIC Countries



	Project Owner	Project Partners	Cooperation Area	Project Title
7	SESRIC	Azerbaijan, Benin, The Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey	Poverty Alleviation	Digital Skills Development in OIC Countries
8	Mali	Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger	Tourism	Capacity Building on Destination Management Organizations of OIC Member Countries
9	Mozambique	Malaysia, Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria	Tourism	Improving Human Capacity on Muslim Friendly Tourism for Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC
10	The Gambia	Senegal, Nigeria	Tourism	Training of Accommodation Providers in the OIC Member Countries on Muslim Friendly Tourism Standards and Quality
11	Azerbaijan	Cameroon, Iran	Tourism	Destination Management Organization: Conceptual Framework for Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Iran
12	ICDT	Suriname, Turkey, Malaysia	Tourism	Developing Muslim-Friendly Tourism in Guyana and Suriname
13	Lebanon	Turkey, Jordan	Trade	Supporting Cooperatives to Enhance Their Access to OIC Markets
14	Indonesia	Malaysia, Bangladesh, Turkey, Brunei Darussalam,	Trade	Empowering Halal Industry to Boost Intra- OIC Trade
15	Palestine	Iraq , Indonesia	Trade	Introduction of Palestinian Export Products to Selected OIC countries
16	SMIIC	Turkey, Malaysia	Trade	Increasing Public Halal Awareness in OIC countries
17	The Gambia	Senegal, Nigeria, Turkey	Transport and Communications	Improving Human and Institutional Capacity for Integrated Database Management System in the OIC Countries
18	Jordan	Turkey, Egypt	Transport and Communications	Reconstructing the Old Ottoman Hejaz Railway Line – Phase 2
19	Iran	Turkey, Oman, Qatar, Pakistan	Transport and Communications	Increasing Seaborne Transport and Trade within the Framework of the TPS-OIC
20	Mozambique	The Gambia, Nigeria	Financial Cooperation	Capacity Building on Islamic Finance in Mozambique, Gambia and Nigeria
21	Nigeria	Malaysia, The Gambia, Togo	Financial Cooperation	Islamic Liquidity Management Instruments for Sustainable Development of Islamic Financial Institutions



	Project Owner	Project Partners	Cooperation Area	Project Title
22	Turkey	Kuwait, Malaysia, The Gambia, Iran, Palestine, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Djibouti, Gabon, Senegal	Financial Cooperation	Assessment of COMCEC Real Estate Securities Markets and Regulatory Landscapes for Strengthening Capital Markets

Source: COMCEC Coordination Office

For the year of 2020, the CCO called for project proposals for the seventh time in September 2019. After the preliminary evaluations, the CCO has announced the short-list for the 7th Call for Project Proposals of the COMCEC Project Funding in November. After the final submission period is over, the final list of successful projects is going to be announced at the end of January 2020 through the COMCEC web site.



CHAPTER V: 35th MEETING OF THE COMCEC FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE

The Follow-up Committee is one of the organs of the COMCEC to review the progress in the implementation of the programmes and projects approved by the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions. The Committee also prepares the draft agenda of the COMCEC Sessions. The Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC convenes annually in the Republic of Turkey.

The 35th Meeting of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee was held on 24-25 April 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the participation of current Members of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee under the chairmanship of the President of Strategy Budget of the Presidency of Republic of Turkey, H.E. Naci AĞBAL.

The Committee reviewed the progress implementation in the COMCEC Strategy and its mechanisms, namely the Working Groups and COMCEC Project Funding. Moreover, the Committee elaborated on the programs, projects and activities in the COMCEC agenda.

The Committee has prepared a set of recommendations to be submitted to the 35th COMCEC Session. Accordingly, the Committee welcomed, among others, the Progress Report submitted by the COMCEC Coordination Office particularly highlighting the progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy, and commended the Member States and OIC Institutions for their valuable contributions to the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy. The Committee also requested the Member States and OIC Institutions to further their full support to the implementation of the Strategy.

All reports and documents submitted to the 35th Meeting of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee are available at the COMCEC website (www.comcec.org).



CHAPTER VI: 34th MEETING OF THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE

The Sessional Committee, which consists of the OIC Institutions working in the economic domain, meets on the sidelines of each COMCEC Ministerial Session and Follow-up Committee meeting to review and coordinate the activities and programs of the relevant OIC institutions. Along with the OIC General Secretariat and the COMCEC Coordination Office, the Sessional Committee Meetings are attended by the relevant OIC Institutions, namely ICCIA, ICDT, IDB Group, SESRIC, SMIIC and OISA.

In this regard, on the sidelines of the 35th Meeting of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee, 34th Sessional Committee Meeting was held on 25th April 2019. During the Meeting, the OIC Institutions discussed their planned activities aligned with the COMCEC Strategy and the COMCEC policy recommendations. Moreover, the contributions of the OIC institutions to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial policy recommendations and the roles of the OIC Institutions in the implementation of the economic cooperation section of the OIC-2025 were also discussed during the 34th Sessional Committee Meeting.

Furthermore, the SESRIC briefed the Committee regarding the preparations for the annual report on the progress at the OIC level towards achieving the prioritized SDGs as decided by Member States to be submitted to the 35th Ministerial Sessions of the COMCEC.

During the Meeting, the Committee also discussed the preparations of the new programme called "OIC Business Intelligence Center" by ICIEC and SESRIC. Taking note with appreciation of the report, the Committee requested ICIEC to improve the report through conducting benchmarking study, SWOT and stakeholders' expectations analysis and preparing a strategic plan.



CHAPTER VII: 7th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMCEC FOCAL POINTS

Since the launch of the COMCEC Strategy in 2013, the CCO has been organizing annual focal points meetings with a view to providing a regular platform for interaction and consultation between the COMCEC Secretariat and the Member Countries with the aim of improving the overall work of the COMCEC, as well as the implementation of both instruments of the COMCEC Strategy: Working Groups and COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism. These meetings provide an opportunity for the member countries to share their feedbacks and observations on the implementation of these instruments. Through these interactive gatherings, communication and collaboration is improved between the CCO and the Member States, resulting in better realization of the goals and objectives of the Strategy. Therefore, these meetings have proven themselves as important gatherings, demonstrating the member-driven character of the COMCEC.

In this respect, the 7th Annual Focal Points Meeting of the COMCEC Working Groups was held on 15-17 July 2019 in İstanbul. The Meeting was attended by COMCEC Working Group Focal Points and COMCEC National Focal Points from 40 Member States which have notified their focal points for the COMCEC Working Groups.

During the meeting, the participants were informed about the main achievements of the COMCEC and the progress in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy during the 2013-2019 period. In this regard, the CCO presented the endeavors under the WGs, including registration and participation status of the Member Countries to the WGs and research efforts such as research reports, field visits and surveys etc. The CCO also informed the participants about the progress achieved in the implementation of the COMCEC Project Funding (CPF) as a policy support instrument for the realization of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

Moreover, during the meeting, a panel discussion was made on "Ensuring Effective Coordination of the COMCEC Related Work at the National Level." During the panel discussions, representatives of the Member Countries shared their country experiences regarding coordination of the COMCEC related work at the national level. The participants highlighted that diversified and increased COMCEC activities, involvement of wide range of stakeholders and multi-sectoral character of the activities necessitate an effective national coordination. It was



underscored that national coordination committees along with technical level gatherings can be established in each member country for facilitating the overall coordination and efficient decision-making for the COMCEC-related matters at the national level.

Furthermore, during the meeting, the issues related to implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations and their effective follow-up were also discussed. The CCO informed the participants on the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System, which has recently been established as an electronic-based platform for facilitating the effective follow-up of the implementation of the Policy Recommendations in the Member Countries.

In addition, the participants discussed and exchanged their views on the themes of the WGs for 2020-2022 for each cooperation area. Accordingly, the focal points identified WG themes for 2020-2022.

On the sidelines of the Meeting, the COMCEC Coordination Office has organized a training program on the COMCEC Project Funding. At the training, COMCEC WG Focal Points had the opportunity to make an exercise on project the preparation.



CHAPTER VIII: PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS SESSION

Exchange of views sessions are held regularly at the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions. The Ministers from the OIC Member Countries have a chance to discuss their country experiences as well as the ways and means for enhancing cooperation among the Member Countries on a specific theme, which was determined by the previous COMCEC Ministerial Session.

In this regard, the 34th Session of the COMCEC determined the theme of the Ministerial Exchange of Views of the 35th COMCEC Session as "Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries" and requested the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group, in cooperation with the relevant OIC Institutions, to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report it to the 35th COMCEC Session. In this regard, the 13th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) held on 9-10 October 2019, in Ankara, served as a preparatory event towards the said session.

Accordingly, the AWG, in its 13th Meeting, deliberated on the preparations regarding the Exchange of Views Session and has come up with a set of policy recommendations, which will be submitted to the 35th COMCEC Session. The details of the policy recommendations to be submitted to 35th COMCEC Session are available on the COMCEC website (www.comcec.org).

Moreover, during the Exchange of Views Session, a keynote address will be made in this session by Mr. Daniel J. GUSTAFSON, Deputy Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).



CHAPTER IX: SPECIAL SIDE EVENTS OF THE 35th COMCEC SESSION

On the sidelines of the 35th Session of the COMCEC, a number of high-level panels will be organized on different aspects of food security and sustainable food systems, which is also the theme of Ministerial Exchange of Views Session. In this regard, to raise awareness on the sustainable food systems and to discuss the ways and means of addressing the challenges faced by the Member Countries, six special sessions on sustainable food systems will be organized on the sidelines of the 35th Session of the COMCEC. These special sessions will take place on 28 November 2019 with the following topics:

- Sustainable Food Systems in the Islamic World: Ongoing Dynamics and Constraints
- Adaptation Strategies to Minimize the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Sustainable Food Systems in the Islamic World
- Strengthening Food Security Governance in the Islamic World
- Food and Agriculture in Times of Crisis: NGOs' Emergency Response
- Innovative Financing and Investment Opportunities For Sustainable Food Systems
- Forum Discussion: Sustainable Food Systems

The main objective of these events is to complement the discussions of the Exchange of Views Session with different aspects from the relevant stakeholders of sustainable food systems. The speakers of the panels will include dignitaries from the Member States, representatives of International and OIC Institutions, civil society and private sector organizations, think-tanks and the academia. All delegations of the OIC Member States participating the 35th COMCEC Ministerial Session, as well as representatives of civil society, media, academia and private sector are expected to attend these events.

Moreover, given the importance of the arbitration in enhancing trade and investments in the OIC Region and the progress towards the operationalization of one of the flagship projects of the COMCEC namely the OIC Arbitration Center, a high-level panel on the Role of Arbitration in Enhancing Trade and Investment in the Islamic World will be held on 28 November 2019, on the sidelines of the 35th COMCEC Session.



Furthermore, the Side Event on "COMCEC Project Funding: Experiences of the Project Owners" will also be conducted on 26 November 2019, on the sidelines of the $35^{\rm th}$ Session of COMCEC.

COMCEC Project Funding Exhibition will be held on 25-28 November 2019 for demonstrating details of the samples of the successful COMCEC Funded Projects.

More information about these events can be found on the COMCEC website, http://www.comcec.org

