



COMCEC

CCO BRIEF ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

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I. Introduction

As an important component of economic and social development poverty alleviation was identified as a cooperation area in the COMCEC Strategy. The Strategy established the Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG) with the strategic objective of “Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in the member countries”.

In order to reach this objective, the COMCEC Strategy has determined, among other issues, aid effectiveness and the monitoring poverty as the output areas. The expected outcomes under these output areas include, among others, increased effectiveness of aid delivery, development of effective aid strategies and policies, improved collection of accurate and reliable data and enhanced capacity of the member states in monitoring poverty.

In this context, the PAWG attaches great importance to improving the living conditions of the poor and increasing their productive capacities by providing more effective social assistance to the poor. In line with this perspective, the PAWG discussed (i) targeting mechanisms of social safety net systems in its 2nd meeting, (ii) monitoring mechanisms of social safety net systems in its 3rd meeting, (iii) institutional structure of social safety net programs in its 4th meeting, and finally (iv) accessibility of vulnerable groups to social protection programs in its 7th meeting. The research reports prepared on these topics laid the groundwork for discussions and enriched the discussions at the relevant meeting.

As a result of the restrictions applied due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the economic problems experienced all over the world, unfortunately, led to job losses and other income losses, so more people became poor. Due to all these difficulties and the loss of achievements in poverty reduction in the last decades, the PAWG has put the issue of providing social assistance more effectively on its agenda again.

In this context, in 2022, the Working Group Meetings will be held with the theme of "Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in light of COVID-19 Pandemic in the OIC Member Countries".

II. Poverty Alleviation Efforts under the COMCEC

Considering the destructive impacts of the COVID-19 increasing the number of poor globally, and the loss of achievements in poverty reduction in the last decades the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG) dedicated its meetings in 2022 to discuss the delivery of social assistance benefits more efficiently, especially by the means of integrated social assistance schemes. A research report on this issue is being prepared to review the lessons learned from the experiences and come up with concrete policy recommendations on this important topic and prepare a guide to establish integrated monitoring and information systems for social assistance programs or improve the existing systems in the OIC Member Countries.

A. Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of Covid-19 Pandemic (18th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group)

18th Meeting of the COMCEC PAWG will be held with the theme of “Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of Covid-19 Pandemic” in virtual-only format on May 10th, 2022.

The Working Group will elaborate on social assistance provision during the pandemic in the world and the OIC Member Countries and discuss the role of integrated monitoring and information systems in delivering social benefits more effectively. In addition to the member country representatives, World Food Programme (WFP) and Turkish Red Crescent Society (Kızılay) will also enrich discussions with their presentations.

Moreover, the preliminary findings of the aforementioned research report will be presented during the 18th Meeting of the PAWG. The final version of the report will be submitted to the 19th Meeting of the PAGW to be held in October 2022. The 19th Meeting will also serve for the preparations of the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session to be held during the 38th Session of the COMCEC.

B. COMCEC Project Funding

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

Under the 7th and 8th Calls for Project Proposals, two projects were selected to be financed by the CCO. The projects completed during the 2021 implementation period are as follows;

Benin’s project, titled “TVET Piloting in the Selected OIC Countries”, aimed at ensuring better institutional governance and efficient management of TVET institutions in line with system development strategy, with the partnership of the Gambia, Niger and Türkiye. In the project, a study visit was organized to the Gambia to learn the skills thought in the Gambian TVET institutions and to observe the relationship between the industrial requirements and job-oriented curriculum. A training was also held on for learning the strategies, governance models and implementation processes of TVET system in the partner countries.

Türkiye’s project “Strengthening Health Human Capacity and Creating Intervention Task Force” aimed at strengthening the human workforce capacity for the partner country, Niger. The project activity was a training on health emergencies for establishing a common implementation methodology for the partner countries.

Under the 9th Call for Project Proposals, 2 projects were selected to be financed by the CCO in 2022.

The first project’s title is “Impacts of Digitalization in Social Assistance Program for Forced Migration” and the project will be implemented by Türkiye. The project aims at increasing and strengthening institutional capacity of countries for social assistance programs in the case of forced migration.

The second project, titled as “Fostering Information Technology Solutions to Improve the Effectiveness of Public Employment Services in the OIC Member Countries”, will be implemented by SESRIC. It is purposed to share best practices and tools for high-level IT involvement in PES systems and to increase the capacities of the staff working in relevant areas of PES through conducting a capacity building training course and a workshop on the topic.
