

SESRIC ACTIVITY REPORT
Towards the Implementation of
COMCEC Strategy and Ministerial Policy
Recommendations



**STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
(SESRIC)**

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**REPORT OF
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND
TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
(SESRIC)**

ON

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMCEC STRATEGY AND
MINISTERIAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

SUBMITTED TO

**38th MEETING OF THE
FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF THE COMCEC**

Agenda Item No: 4-10

24-25 May 2022

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the technical activities and programmes that have been conducted by SESRIC towards the implementation of COMCEC Strategy and Ministerial Policy Recommendations to be submitted to the 38th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC, which will be held on 24-25 May 2022.

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, SESRIC has continued to prepare regular technical background reports and research studies on a wide range of socio-economic issues on the agendas of various OIC conferences and related meetings, particularly the sectoral ministerial conferences and the annual sessions of the relevant standing committees. In doing so, the Centre continued to make a significant contribution to the OIC policy dialogue mechanism by analysing the current situation at the OIC level and suggesting appropriate policy actions to address the challenges and strengthen intra-OIC cooperation in the relevant fields.

The Centre also continued to contribute to the efforts of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) towards enhancing and improving the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) in the OIC Member States with a view to producing better national statistics and thus helping policy-makers introduce better national policies and strategies. In this context and in its capacity as the Secretariat of the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom) and through its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre contributes significantly to the technical capacity building of the NSOs and other constituents of the NSSs of the OIC Member States.

During the period under review, SESRIC has made efforts to strengthen intra-OIC South-South cooperation by implementing a wide range of capacity building programmes and training activities on various socio-economic fields of immediate interest to the OIC Member States. Currently, the Centre has 19 sector-specific capacity building programmes covering a wide range of areas such as finance, agriculture, health, environment, water resources, poverty alleviation, disaster risk management, public employment and tourism. These programmes are implemented in close cooperation with relevant national institutions of the OIC Member States through various modalities, including training courses, training workshops and study visits.

During this critical and difficult period, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite all the technical challenges, SESRIC exerted significant efforts and utilised digital platforms to carry out its planned capacity building training activities with special emphasis on relevant important topics taking place on the agenda of the COMCEC during these exceptional times.

Furthermore, during the period under review, SESRIC signed 1 agreement with the Bureau of Statistics of Guyana on 11 April 2022 to strengthen its ties for a better implementation of the relevant objectives of the COMCEC Strategy and the Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

In the light of the above, this report highlights the implemented activities of SESRIC in accordance with the seven cooperation areas of the COMCEC Strategy, namely Intra-OIC Trade, Enhancing the Role of Private Sector in Economic Cooperation, Improving Transport and Communications, Developing a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Sector, Increasing Productivity of Agriculture Sector and Sustaining Food Security, Alleviating Poverty, and Deepening Financial Cooperation.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1. INTRA-OIC TRADE**
- 2. ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION**
- 3. IMPROVING TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**
- 4. DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE TOURISM SECTOR**
- 5. INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY OF AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND SUSTAINING FOOD SECURITY**
- 6. ALLEVIATING POVERTY**
- 7. DEEPENING FINANCIAL COOPERATION**

1. INTRA-OIC TRADE

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on intra-OIC trade:

- **OIC Statistical Outlook on “Trade in COVID-19 Medical Supplies in OIC Countries”**: The OIC Statistical Outlook on Trade in COVID-19 Medical Supplies in OIC Member Countries, published in November 2021, presents imports, exports, and trade balance of the OIC Member Countries concerning COVID-19 medical supplies in 2019 and 2020. The Report underlines the insufficient and undesirable levels of investments by the OIC countries in the development and production of medical supplies, as indicated by the large deficit in their trade balances in medical supplies products. The said Outlook is accessible through <https://www.sesric.org/publications-oso.php>.
- **OIC Statistics (OICStat) Database**: SESRIC is hosting 155 indicators under the International Trade category of the OICStat Database, which can be accessed through <http://www.sesric.org/oicstat.php> and are being updated regularly.

2. ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item of enhancing the role of the private sector in economic cooperation:

- **Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on “Business Formation and Entrepreneurship Skills Development”**: Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme, SESRIC organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on “Business Formation and Entrepreneurship Skills Development” on 08-10 November 2021. The ToT course was organised in collaboration with the Gambia OIC-Secretariat for the benefit of participants from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions and Business Development Institutes in the Gambia.
- **Webinar on “Use of Business Registers for Business Demography and Entrepreneurship Statistics”**: Within the framework of its Webinar Series on Statistical Experience Sharing, SESRIC organised a Webinar on “Use of Business Registers for Business Demography and Entrepreneurship Statistics” on 28 March 2022. The webinar was organised in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) for the benefit of participants from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of 24 OIC Member Countries.
- **OICStat Database**: SESRIC is hosting 39 indicators under the Private Sector category of the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.

3. IMPROVING TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on improving transport and communications:

- **Project titled “Improving the Regulatory Framework for PPPs in Transport Sector in the OIC Member Countries”:** Within the framework of the 9th Call for Project Proposals of COMCEC Project Funding, SESRIC prepared and submitted a project proposal titled “Improving the Regulatory Framework for PPPs in Transport Sector in the OIC Member Countries” for the benefit of 16 OIC Member Countries”. Consisting of an online training course and an online workshop, the project aims at improving the legal and regulatory framework for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the transport sector in the OIC Member Countries. Based on the evaluation results announced by the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the Project was found eligible to be financed under the COMCEC Project Funding in the 2022 implementation period.
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 41 indicators under the Transportation and Communication category of the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.

4. DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE TOURISM SECTOR

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on developing sustainable and competitive tourism sector:

- **International Tourism in the OIC Countries 2022: Prospects and Challenges amid the COVID-19 Pandemic:** SESRIC prepared the 2022 edition of its regular report titled “International Tourism in the OIC Countries” to be submitted as a technical background document for the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), which will be held in Azerbaijan in June 2022. The report particularly looks into the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector in OIC member countries by using a number of indicators like tourist arrivals and tourism receipts. The report also identifies key prospects and challenges in the tourism sector amid the pandemic and concludes with a set of policy implications on how to revive the sector in OIC countries in the post-pandemic period and increase its resilience to future shocks.
- **Halal Industry in OIC Member Countries: Prospects and Challenges:** As per the request of the OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC prepared and submitted a comprehensive research study in December 2021 on “Halal Industry in OIC Member Countries: Prospects and Challenges” that analyses the current state of the Halal Industry in terms of finance, food, tourism and lifestyle markets. Among others, the report particularly overviews the state of the Islamic tourism sector in OIC member countries and provides a set of policy recommendations on ways and means to unleash its potential in the OIC group.
- **Training Webinar on “Managing and Marketing Protected Areas”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB), SESRIC and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Handicraft of the Republic of Guinea, organised a Training Webinar on “Managing and Marketing Protected Areas” on 21-22 February 2022. The training webinar was provided by competent experts and academicians from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Türkiye, and SESRIC for the benefit of participants from the Ministries and relevant national institutions in charge of tourism in 10 West African OIC Member Countries, which are the beneficiaries of the Regional Project on “Sustainable

Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Park and Protected Areas in West Africa”.

- **Training Course on “Tourism and Hospitality Services”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB), the Centre, in collaboration with the Gambia OIC-Secretariat, organised an online Training Course on “Tourism and Hospitality Services” on 14-16 March 2022. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education under the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye for the benefit of participants from public and private tourism authorities as well as TVET institutions in the Gambia.
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 12 indicators under the Tourism category of the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.

5. INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY OF AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND SUSTAINING FOOD SECURITY

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on increasing agricultural productivity and sustaining food security:

- **OIC Environment Report 2021:** This report examines the current state of the environment and its management in OIC Member Countries by using the most recent data available on major relevant indicators. This edition of the report portrays the importance of natural capital, of which agricultural land is a significant component, to the wealth of OIC Member Countries, and also highlights the OIC Member Countries' progress towards meeting the targets on environment-related sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement commitments. The report suggests some policy recommendations to help OIC member countries achieve more sustainable environmental resource management amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Water Situation and Challenges in OIC Countries:** During the 9th World Water Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, on 21-26 March 2022, SESRIC participated in the High-Level Dialogue on Mainstreaming Climate Action in the Water Sector, which was co-organized by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the League of Arab States (LAS). At this high-level discussion panel, held on 24 March 2022, SESRIC made a presentation on “Water Situation and Challenges in OIC Countries”, which highlighted the current state and trends and the key challenges in the water sector in OIC Member Countries and provided recommendations towards sustainable water resources management.
- **Training Course on “Biotechnological Tools and Techniques for Cotton - Sample Collection Activities”:** Within the framework of the Reverse Linkage Project between Bangladesh and Türkiye on “Enhancing Capacity in Cotton Varieties Development”, SESRIC, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and Nazilli Cotton Research Institute (CRI) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye, organized a Training Course on “Biotechnological Tools and Techniques for

Cotton - Sample Collection Activities” on 17-28 January 2022 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The training course was provided by competent trainers from the Nazilli Cotton Research Institute (CRI) of Türkiye for the benefit of cotton experts from the Cotton Development Board (CDB) under the Ministry of Agriculture of Bangladesh.

- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 99 indicators under the Agriculture category of the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.

6. ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on alleviating poverty:

- **Socio-Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in OIC Countries: Pathways for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery:** As per the request of the OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC prepared, in continuance to its previous report on the same topic, an updated report that provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in OIC Member Countries and highlights a diverse set of policy reactions and good practices in response to the pandemic under 18 socio-economic categories. The report also suggests a number of policy recommendations under these categories with a view to supporting sustainable and resilient recovery in OIC Member Countries. SESRIC completed and submitted the report to the OIC General Secretariat in March 2022.
- **South-South Cooperation and the Gender Equality Factor in the Emerging Multilateralism:** SESRIC, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), published a thematic paper on “South-South Cooperation and the Gender Equality Factor in the Emerging Multilateralism”. The paper highlights the potential of South-South cooperation (SSC) in catalysing efforts towards the recognition of women’s role in sustainable development and the achievement of gender equality in the Global South.
- **Elderly and Persons with Disabilities in OIC Member Countries:** Within the scope of the activities of the OIC during Dubai Expo 2020, SESRIC organized a Seminar on “Elderly and Persons with Disabilities in OIC Member Countries” on 02 December 2021 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Seminar provided a platform to discuss and highlight the common challenges faced by the elderly and persons with disabilities, evaluate the prospects for improving their quality of life, exchange knowledge and best practices in this area, and extend efforts towards enhancing intra-OIC cooperation.
- **Training Course on “Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Care in Sub-Saharan Africa”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s IbnSina Health Capacity Building Programme (IbnSina-CaB) and in line with the relevant resolutions of the 6th and 7th Sessions of the Islamic Conference of Health Ministers (ICHM), the Centre organised an online Training Course on “Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Care in Sub-Saharan Africa” on 06-08 December 2021. The training course was provided by competent experts from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Kingdom of Morocco for the

benefit of participants from the Ministries of Health of 12 OIC Member Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Training Course on “Strengthening Institutional Capacity on Vocational Qualifications”**: Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme and in line with the OIC-TVET Strategic Roadmap 2020-2025, SESRIC organised an online Training Course on “Strengthening Institutional Capacity on Vocational Qualifications” on 13-15 December 2021. The training course was organised in collaboration with the Qatar National Committee for Education, Culture and Science and provided by competent experts from the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (CNAQ) for the benefit of participants from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Authorities and relevant national institutions of 28 OIC Member Countries.
- **Training Workshop on “Health and Social Care Policies towards Supporting Independent Living for People with Disabilities”**: Within the framework of SESRIC’s Social Development Capacity Building Programme (SD-CaB), the Centre organised an online Training Workshop on “Health and Social Care Policies towards Supporting Independent Living for People with Disabilities” on 08-10 February 2022. The training workshop was provided by competent experts from the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Türkiye as well as the Social Security Institution (SGK) of the Republic of Türkiye for the benefit of participants from the Ministries and relevant national institutions in charge of services for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and social assistance in 18 OIC Member Countries.
- **Statistical Training Course on “Labour Cost Statistics”**: Within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Training Course on “Labour Cost Statistics” on 15-16 February 2022. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) for the benefit of participants from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of 7 OIC Member Countries.
- **Training Workshop on “Enhancing Collaboration between TVET Institutions and Industry towards Effective Curriculum Development”**: Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme and in line with the OIC-TVET Strategic Roadmap 2020-2025, SESRIC organized an online Training Workshop on “Enhancing Collaboration between TVET Institutions and Industry towards Effective Curriculum Development” on 21-23 February 2022. The training workshop was provided by competent experts from the Technical and Vocational Education Training Division of the Ministry of Education Malaysia for the benefit of participants from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Authorities and relevant national institutions of 25 OIC Member Countries.
- **Workshop on “Protecting and Advancing Children's Rights Including the Ones with Disabilities”**: Within the framework of the SESRIC’s Social Development Capacity Building Programme (SD-CaB) and in line with the relevant resolutions of the First Ministerial Conference on Social Development in the OIC Member States, the Centre

organised an online Training Workshop on “Protecting and Advancing Children’s Rights Including the Ones with Disabilities” on 22-24 February 2022. The training workshop was provided by competent experts from the General Directorate of Child Services at the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye for the benefit of participants from the Ministries and relevant national institutions in charge of child services in 25 OIC Member Countries.

- **Statistical Training Course on “SDG 13 (Climate Action) Indicators”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Training Course on “SDG 13 (Climate Action) Indicators” on 14-16 March 2022. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Department of Statistics (DoS) of Jordan for the benefit of participants from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of 6 OIC Member Countries.
- **Technical Consultation on “2021 Smoking and Tobacco Consumption Survey Conducted by the PCBS”:** SESRIC organised a Technical Consultation on “2021 Smoking and Tobacco Consumption Survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)” on 31 March 2021. The technical consultation was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Palestine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CDC Foundation, and WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO EMRO) for the benefit of relevant officials at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) within the framework of TQS integration project.
- **Training Course on “Promoting Good Governance of TVET for Efficient System Management”:** Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme and in line with the OIC-TVET Strategic Roadmap 2020-2025, SESRIC organised an online Training Course on “Promoting Good Governance of TVET for Efficient System Management” on 10-12 May 2022. The training course was provided by competent experts from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia for the benefit of experts and executives from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Authorities and relevant national institutions of the OIC Member Countries.
- **Statistical Training Course on “SDG 4 (Quality Education) Indicators”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on “SDG 4 (Quality Education) Indicators” on 24-25 May 2022. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the National Institute of Statistics (INS) of Tunisia for the benefit of participants from the NSOs of OIC Member Countries.
- **Project titled “Fostering Information Technology (IT) Solutions to Improve the Effectiveness of Public Employment Services (PES) in the OIC Member Countries”:** Within the framework of the 9th Call for Project Proposals of COMCEC Project Funding, SESRIC prepared and submitted a project proposal titled “Fostering Information Technology (IT) Solutions to Improve the Effectiveness of Public Employment Services (PES) in the OIC Member Countries” for the benefit of representatives of PES Agencies/ Institutions from 15 OIC Member Countries. Consisting of a virtual workshop and a virtual

training course, the project aims at strengthening the human resources and institutional capacities of the PES institutions for alleviating poverty in the OIC countries. Based on the evaluation results announced by the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the Project was found eligible to be financed under the COMCEC Project Funding in the 2022 implementation period.

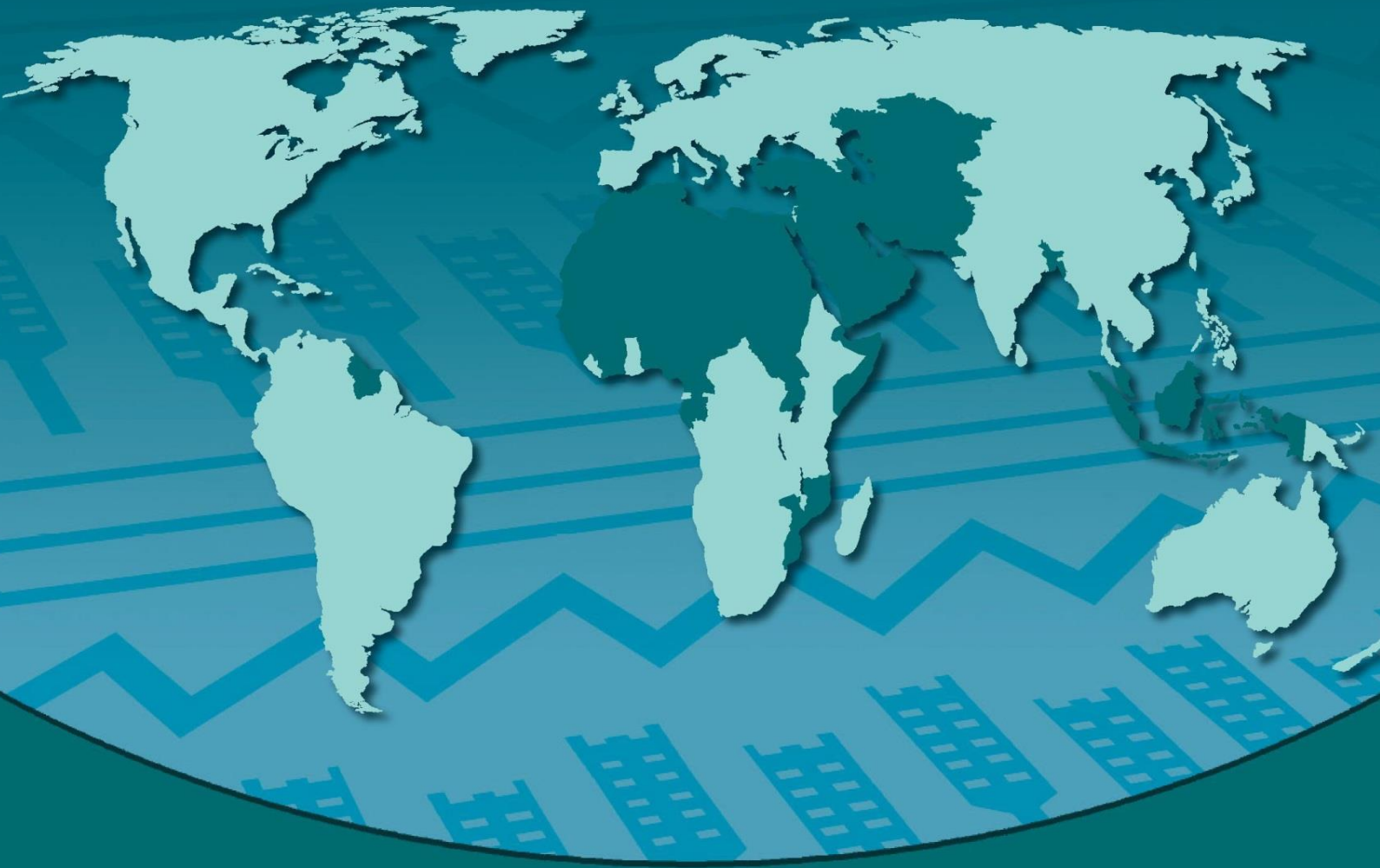
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 49 indicators related to poverty alleviation (SDG 1 “No Poverty” indicators) under the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.

7. DEEPENING FINANCIAL COOPERATION

Since the 37th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on deepening financial cooperation:

- **Training Course on “Risk Management in Islamic Financial Institutions”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Central Banks Capacity Building Programme (CB-CaB) and in line with the relevant resolutions of the 37th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC, the Centre organised an online Training Course on “Risk Management in Islamic Financial Institutions” on 14-16 December 2021. The training course was provided by a competent expert from Bank Indonesia for the benefit of participants from the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of 18 OIC Member Countries.
- **Statistical Training Course on “Government Finance, Fiscal and Public Sector Statistics”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Training Course on “Government Finance, Fiscal and Public Sector Statistics” on 7-8 March 2022. The training course was provided by competent experts from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) for the benefit of participants from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of 13 OIC Member Countries.
- **Training Course on “Monetary Operations: Tools and Techniques for Policy Implementation”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Central Banks Capacity Building Programme (CB-CaB) and in line with the relevant resolutions of the 37th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC, the Centre organized an online Training Course on “Monetary Operations: Tools and Techniques for Policy Implementation” on 15-17 March 2022. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum, for the benefit of participants from the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of 26 OIC Member Countries.
- **Training Course on “Capital Market Operations”:** Within the framework of SESRIC’s Stock Exchanges Capacity Building Programme (SE-CaB) and in line with the relevant resolution of the 37th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC, the Centre organised an online Training Course on “Capital Market Operations” on 11-12 May 2022. The training course was provided by competent experts from the relevant departments and subsidiaries of Borsa Istanbul, the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum, for the benefit of participants from the Stock Exchanges and relevant Ministries in the OIC Member Countries.

- **Project titled “Strengthening Financial Literacy and Promoting Islamic Finance in the OIC Member Countries”:** Within the framework of the 9th Call for Project Proposals of COMCEC Project Funding, SESRIC prepared and submitted a project proposal titled “Strengthening Financial Literacy and Promoting Islamic Finance in the OIC Member Countries” for the benefit of the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities from 41 OIC Member Countries. Consisting of two virtual training courses, and a physical workshop, the project aims to contribute to the improvement of financial systems and their inclusivity in OIC Member Countries through strengthening intra-OIC collaboration opportunities and solidarity. Based on the evaluation results announced by the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the Project was found eligible to be financed under the COMCEC Project Funding in the 2022 implementation period.
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 106 indicators under the Banking, Money and Prices; Government Finance; International Finance; and Islamic Banking and Finance categories of the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.



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