

**Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the
COMCEC Agriculture Working Group**

**“Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information
Systems in the OIC Member Countries”**



COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

November 2022



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

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 19TH MEETING OF THE
COMCEC AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP**

**“Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information
Systems in the OIC Member Countries”**

(October 10th, 2022, Virtual Meeting)

(2nd Meeting – Final Draft of Research Report and Policy Recommendations)

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

November 2022

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Introduction

The 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group was held on 10 October 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “**Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in the OIC Member Countries**”.

The representatives of 17 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Agriculture Working Group, attended the Meeting. The representatives of the SESRIC, IsDB, IOFS, ICCIA, IFAD and FAO further attended the meeting.

Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Deputy Director General of the COMCEC, delivered an opening speech and gave the floor to Ms. Özge İMAMOĞLU, Chairperson of the Meeting. It was followed by the presentations made by Mr. Mustafa OĞUZ on the overview and the theoretical parts of the research report. Following the introductory presentations on the report, case country analysis were presented. While Mr. Oğuz presented the updated case study of Türkiye and Denmark, case study of Senegal was presented by Dr. Mamadou Gueye and case study of Egypt was explained by Dr. Wael Morad Mohamed Semidai.

The research team presented the final draft of the report. In the introduction part, the study's main objectives, scope, and methodology of the study as well as a description of the standardization were highlighted.

1. Opening Session

In line with the tradition of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Acting Director General of the COMCEC, welcomed all participants to 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG). Then, as the Chairperson of the Meeting, Ms. Özge İMAMOĞLU, Head of Department, from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry introduced herself, thanked all the participants, and mentioned about the programme of the meeting.

2. Overview of the Report and Analysis of the Survey Results

In the first session Mr. Mustafa Oğuz, project leader for the research report on Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS) in the OIC Member Countries, presented the overview of the state of Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS) in enhancing production.

In the first part, Mr. Oğuz presented state of agriculture in the world and OIC member states mainly covers the policy context for Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS). Mr. Oğuz highlighted that global food supply is at a turning point due to climate change, population growth and a heavy reliance on natural resources and there is urgent need for new approaches to food and agricultural production. Afterwards, he emphasized that the research paper identified 5 major points for Agricultural Transformation at global level: demography, climate change & sustainability, digital transformation, Covid-19, Geopolitics.

Concerning the agricultural outlook of OIC member countries, he presented main challenges of agricultural production:

- Insufficient agricultural productivity.
- OIC countries accounted for more than one-fourth of the world's agricultural land area.
- OIC Agricultural GDP and its Share in the World is decreasing.
- OIC member countries have a relatively lower performance in agriculture sector.
- Slower Growth & Decreasing Share in Employment in agriculture.
- Many OIC member countries still heavily rely on food imports to meet their local demand.
- 28 OIC Low-Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) are vulnerable to any sharp rise in the international food prices, trade restrictions.

To manage these challenges, OIC member countries need to enhance production, improve productivity, develop inclusive & resilient & sustainable & market-oriented value chain in food and agriculture. To meet the increasing demand of food and to respond to new market opportunities, agricultural systems in the OIC member countries need to be more sustainable by generating and applying new knowledge and innovations.

In the second part, Mr. Oğuz presented concept of Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), its implementation across the world and OIC member countries and how AKIS could address these challenges by linking Education, Research, Extension to boost agricultural productivity

He explained that AKIS is used to describe how people and organizations join together to promote mutual learning, to generate, share, and use agriculture-related knowledge and information. Farmers, advisers, researchers, education and training providers, input suppliers, retailers, media services, ministries are all part of a national or regional AKIS. They all either need, produce, or exchange knowledge and information. When developing new AKIS, technical, organizational, and social dimensions should be considered to bridge the gap between science and practice. As the world's population is projected to reach 10 billion people in 2050, an AKIS is an essential component to increasing the productivity and the profitability of farmers.

He also presented 7 functions within a well-developed AKIS system as 1. Knowledge development and diffusion, 2. Influence on direction of search and identification of opportunities, 3. Entrepreneurial experimentation and management of risk and uncertainty, 4. Market formation, 5. Resource mobilisation, 6. Legitimation, 7. Development of positive externalities.

In presenting the implementation of AKIS, he mentioned recent trends & reforms in AKIS development and institutionalization:

- Increasing the participation of farmers, the private sector, and other stakeholders governing and advisory bodies.
- Increasing the participation of women farmers.
- Decentralizing research systems to bring researcher closer to farmer and better focus need based research and innovation.
- Decentralizing extension and advisory services to improve accountability to local farmers.
- Establishing competitive funding mechanisms which involves key agricultural stakeholders especially farmers for promoting demand-driven research, setting priorities, formulating projects, and screening proposals.

- Promoting farmer organizations to reach economies of scale in services and market activities for increasing better demand-driven services and helping farmers to hold service providers more accountable.
- Mixing public and private systems by bringing together farmer organizations, NGOs, public bodies and private actors.

At the final part of the presentation, he presented successful implementation of AKIS in the world and OIC. For the AKIS in the EU, he highlighted that the concept of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovations Systems (AKIS) has grown especially in the 2000s in the European Union (EU) and over the years, AKIS evolved from a primarily academic concept to a broader approach for agricultural knowledge, policy and sectors. European AKIS was characterized by institutional pluralism; each country has developed a system that is adjusted to its particular institutional & political context, needs and actors in the agricultural sector. He concluded that building multi-actor knowledge networks for farmers, farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange, farmer-led interactive innovation, innovative agricultural media, social media by and for farmers, benchmarking for better farm performance are the main issues in EU AKIS agenda.

For AKIS in the OIC member countries, he presented first National Center for Knowledge and Innovation in Agriculture of Uzbekistan (UAKIS) which is part of the implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy for 2030 and the Green Innovation Centre for Agriculture and Food in Nigeria (GIAE).

Question(s) and Comment(s)

Question: Should AKIS be completely commercial for acceptance by the sector?

Answer: In responding, Mr. OGUZ stated that the mentioned about there are many different examples in AKIS applications, however it is generally accepted that the public sector should have dominant role in applications and development of AKIS

3. Selected Case Studies- Demark, Türkiye, Egypt, and Senegal

The second part of the presentations, which included the case countries Demark, Türkiye, Egypt, and Senegal started with the rationale for selecting the sample countries and methodology of the research report delivered by Mr. Mustafa Oğuz.

Mr. Oğuz stated that research report was relied on 4 case studies: 1 non-OIC country as a benchmark for the OIC member countries and 3 countries among the OIC member countries; one among the members of COMCEC Arab Group, one among the members of COMCEC Asia Group and one among the members of COMCEC Africa Group. He informed that PRO-AKIS project of the EU which ranks best performing AKIS in the European countries was used to select one non-OIC country and after analysing this ranking, Denmark was selected. Witt the largest Arab Country by population and largest agricultural GDP among Arab countries, Egypt was selected for COMCEC Arab Group. With its Largest Agricultural GDP in Europe and vertical & horizontal industry integration, Türkiye was selected for COMCEC Asia Group. With its Considerable agricultural GDP and expanding food production Senegal was selected for COMCEC Africa Group. To analyse these 4 countries, number of tools were used; in-depth interviews with the key informants and experts, survey among the major experts related to AKIS, a field visit

The second presentation continued with the Danish case delivered by Mr. Mustafa Oğuz. Mr. OĞUZ stressed that Denmark is a European hotspot for innovative food & agricultural products, services, and

technology. He underlined that Denmark could create value from research by close interaction between the public and private sectors. He also mentioned about well-functioning Danish AKIS with strong links between universities, public ministries and agencies, agricultural knowledge centers, agricultural colleges and vocational schools, advisory companies, and farmers. He underlined that Danish AKIS is a demand-driven system relies on a dense network of formal and personal linkages between associations, organizations, boards, institutions, and companies. Besides, at the center of all these linkages are the Danish farmers or their representatives. Danish AKIS are that they are at the same time both very informal as there are no or very few official documents papers connecting them, and on the other hand they are rather strong linkage. The core of the Danish advisory system is the farmer based owned and controlled The Danish Agricultural Advisory Service (DAAS) -system with SEGES, the Danish knowledge center for agriculture (600 employees) and 29 advisory centers (about 2,480 employees)

Then, Mr. Oğuz presented Türkiye case. He highlighted important points for Turkish AKIS. Mr. Oğuz noted 5 major challenges of AKIS in Türkiye: structural, access to finance, productivity gap, sustainability, climate change challenge. He concluded Türkiye case by noting major lessons to be learned by experience of Türkiye.

Dr. Wael Morad Mohamed Semidai from Fayoum University, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture presented Egypt Case. He underlined following points for AKIS in Egypt:

- Egyptian model still retains a traditional system oriented to technology transfer with decentralization efforts and digitalization agenda.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) is at the center of the system with its Central Administration for Agricultural Extension Services (CAAES), Extension Units and Agricultural Advisory Council Extension Programs, Extension Teaching Methods, Field Monitoring, Rural Development, Communities Department of Marketing Extension.
- The Agricultural Directorate at the governorate level is the key organization for the implementation of agricultural field activities, including national campaigns and foreign financed projects.
- The establishment of Regional Research and Extension Councils and the partition of the country into nine regions is an effort to bring research and extension services closer to farmers, while human development programs aim at revitalizing agricultural extension services.

Then, Dr. Semidai listed main challenges with AKIS in Egypt and lessons learnt from Egyptian experience.

Dr. Mamadou Gueye, Senegal based academic and researcher on agricultural sciences presented Senegal case. He underlined following points for AKIS in Egypt. Dr. Mamadou Gueye concluded case presentation with the challenges faced over time in AKIS development in Senegal and lessons learned from Senegal experience.

In the last part of the second presentation, Mr. Oğuz provided several policy recommendations on how to develop & improve AKIS in OIC member countries. He underlined policy recommendations were developed based on extensive examination of the necessary components and best practices of AKIS and were synthesis of case studies, in depth interviews with the experts that can substantially enhance AKIS across the OIC.

Then he presented the guide for establishing/improving AKIS systems in the OIC Member Countries with a 3-stage approach: design&planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation.

4. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States and International Institutions, and Private Sector

Member Country Presentation

Experiences of BENIN

Mr. Cosme Lehéros ZINSE from Benin made a presentation on “Transforming Food Systems After Covid-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in The OIC Member Countries: Case of Benin”. He mentioned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food systems and the characteristics of the food system in Benin. He pointed out that while the production of rice was decreasing, the import was increasing gradually.

- Then, he informed about the short- and long-term reforms made to strengthen the rice farming system in Benin and to reduce the dependence on food imports. In this regard, “*Emergency Rice Production Acceleration Program in BENIN*” was initiated as a short-term reform. He listed the following as long-term reforms:
- The establishment of a National Development Program for the RICE sector (PNDF-RIZ);
- The rice sector features prominently in the Government's Action Program (PAG -2022-2026);
- Hydro-agricultural developments in favor of rice growing;
- The opening of a training center to qualify young people for food production;
- Financing research on rice cultivation

He also talked about the AgriConnect platform, a digitalization initiative that provides services such as weather forecasts to Members and remote assistance to manufacturers in diagnosing health problems.

He concluded his presentation by saying that the actions for agricultural information systems are still in their infancy.

Experiences of International Organization

Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI)

Dr. Botir Dosov Executive Secretary in Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI), delivered a presentation on “Initiating and Institutionalizing AKIS: Experience of Uzbekistan”. Dr. Dosov started with introduction of the history of the AKIS in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Then, he informed about The Presidential Decree No. UP-5853 of 23 October 2019 on the approval of strategy for agricultural development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030 which defined the Development of science, education, information and advisory (extension) services in agriculture as one of the priorities.

Dr. Dosov mentioned about challenges in establishing AKIS in Uzbekistan. The biggest challenge was the absence of the Extension and Advisory Services as the system. On the other hand, operationalize full-fledged extension services system as part of AKIS is also great problem. He highlighted that Uzbekistan managed to institutionalize the extension system within 2-3 years, and needs some time to put it into sustainable operational mode. Still the institutional linkages between research, extension and education are not strong enough.

Then he talked about two main system level hindering factors are (i) disrupted system linkages, where many agriculture related research institutions operate under different systems, ministries, associations;

and (ii) unsuccessful attempts of fragmented reforms, characterizing that the agri-food system of Uzbekistan is very complex and multi-dimensional, though considered as a single system.

In the last part, he underlined that the increase the public investments on extension and AKIS still does not guarantee the effectiveness of extension services, since the accountability of extension services providers do not fully consider the needs of farmers.

Question(s) and Comment(s)

Question: There is a conflict between private and government sector in many countries about implementing AKIS. Especially Iran has many challenges in practice. What is the process to best way to overcome challenges for OIC Countries?

Mr. Dosov responded by appreciating the comment and the question. Then he said that there are very different examples of applying AKIS around the world. AKIS applications vary according to the priorities of the countries and strategy of the countries. To implement AKIS, the most appropriate system should be found for the current situation of the country.

He highlighted that much longer-term results can be achieved with the efforts of the public sector however in all cases, the private sector is the key.

Comment: He emphasized that AKIS will be important not only to increase agricultural output but also to be protected from future crises. He mentioned that it is important for the OIC countries to engage in and develop cooperation, since the most important challenge is the difference in capacity among the OIC countries, such as financial, education, research. In this regard, he emphasized that SESRIC is working on a capacity improvement program.

5. COMCEC Financial Support Programs

Mr. Ali ORUÇ, Program Coordinator at the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a presentation on the COMCEC Project Support Programs.

Mr. ORUÇ informed the participants about main characteristics of the COMCEC Project Funding in the first part of his presentation. Mr. ORUÇ underlined objectives of COMCEC Project Funding. Ms. ORUÇ continued his presentation with novelties in COMCEC Project Funding. He also highlighted the new two projects types, which will be supported by COMCEC and informed the participants about opportunity to implement project individually in next implementation period. Then, he briefly explained project types, budget limits and timelines for submission and implementation periods.

In the second part of his presentation, Mr. ORUÇ gave brief information about the projects, which are implementing by the member countries and OIC institutions in 2022 under the COMCEC Project Funding. He continued his presentation by sharing brief information about the projects, which are implementing by the member countries in this implementation year under the COMCEC COVID Response Program.

He also reminded the participants to read the application documents particularly the Project Preparation and Submission Guidelines as well as supported sectoral themes before designing and submitting their project proposal. Moreover, he informed the participants about online project submission system and highlighted the critical steps for this process.

Finally, Mr. ORUÇ invited the Member Countries and related OIC Institutions to submit their project proposals and wished all the success in the project submission period.

6. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Ms. Özge İMAMOĞLU, Chairperson of the Meeting from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey and Mr. Can AYGÜL, Head of Department at the COMCEC Coordination Office.

In her closing remarks, Ms. İMAMOĞLU conveyed her appreciations to all the presenters and participants for the fruitful deliberations made during the meeting.

Afterwards, in his closing remarks, Mr. AYGÜL expressed his thanks and appreciation to all participants for their contributions to the discussions throughout the meeting.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks.



**19TH MEETING OF THE
COMCEC AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP**

*(October 10th, 2022; Virtual Meeting)**

*“Transforming Food Systems After Covid-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in
The OIC Member Countries”*

DRAFT AGENDA

Opening Remarks

1. Overview of the State of Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS) in enhancing production
2. Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Countries and the Policy Options
3. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States and International Institutions, and Private Sector
4. Policy Debate Session on Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems(AKIS) in Enhancing Production in the OIC Member Countries
5. COMCEC Financial Support Instruments

Closing Remarks

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PROGRAMME

**19TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP
(October 10th, 2022, Virtual Meeting)**

*“Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems
in the OIC Member Countries”*

- 13.15 – 13.30** **Joining the Online Meeting**
(The link for the participation will be conveyed in advance of the Meeting)
- 13.30 – 13.40** **Opening**
- 13.40 – 14.10** **Overview of the State of Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems
(AKIS) in enhancing production**
- *Presentation: Mr. Mustafa OĞUZ
Consultant*
- 14.10 – 14.20** *Questions and Answers (Q & A)*
- 14.20 – 14.50** **Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Country Analysis and the Policy
Options for Sustainable Food Supply Chains**
- *Presentation : Mr. Mustafa OĞUZ
Consultant*
- 14.50 – 15.00** *Q & A*
- 15.00 – 15.45** **Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States and International Institutions**
- *Presentation on Initiating and Institutionalizing AKIS; Experience of
Uzbekistan Dr. Botir G. DOSOV
CEO / Executive Secretary*

*Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research
Institutions (CACAARI)*

- *Member Country Presentations*

15.45 – 15.55 *Q & A*

15.55 – 16.50 **Moderated Policy Debate Session: Policy Recommendations for Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in the OIC Member Countries**

15.55 –16.00 - *Presentation: Mr. Gökten DAMAR*
Expert, COMCEC Coordination Office

- *Moderator: Özge İMAMOĞLU*
Head of Department, Ministry of Agriculture And Forestry

16.50 – 17.05 **COMCEC Financial Support Instruments**

- *Presentation: Mr. Ali ORUÇ*
Expert, COMCEC Coordination Office

17.05 – 17.10 *Q & A*

17.10 – 17.15 **Closing Remarks**

Annex- III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

19th MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP (OCTOBER 10 2022, ONLINE)

A.MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

-Mr. ALI AHMAD SAADAT

Director General Regional Cooperation and Provincial Affairs Coordination, Ministry of
Economy

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

-Mr. FESTIM SHYTAJ

Head of Animal Breeding, Reproduction and Nutrition Sector, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural
development

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

-Ms. HOURIA ZEGHLIBENYAHIA

Director of Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

-Dr. LACHIBI MOUSSA

Inraa, Algeria

-Ms. ILHEM GUETTAFI

Researcher, INRAA

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

-Mr. ZINSE COSME

Monitoring-Evaluation Focal Point, Department of Plant Production of the Ministry of
Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

-Mr. HUSSAIN ALLAITH

Director of Plant Wealth Directorate, Agriculture and Marine Resources, Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture

REPUBLIC OF CHAD

-Mr. ALLARAMADJÏ NOMAYE

Head Agriculture Data Base Ministry of Agriculture Production (Chad), Ministry Of Agriculture Production

REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE

-Mr. DRÏSSA TRAORE

Technical Advisor to the Director General, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

-Prof. Dr. AKOUA ASSUNTA ADAYE

Teacher-Researcher, Félix HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY University, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

-Prof. Dr. MAHMOUD KHALLAF

Agriculture Economic Research Institute

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

-Ms. MARÏSSA DALTON

Senior Analyst, Ministry of Agriculture

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

-Assoc. Prof. Dr. MOHAMMAD KHALEDÏ

Director General of Planning and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

-Mr. MOHD KHIER ALHYARI

Head of Agreements and Notification, Ministry of Agriculture

MALAYSIA

-Mr. MUHAMMAD SUHAIL MUHAMMAD

Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry Of Agriculture and Food Industries

-Ms. MOHD YUSMIZAM YAHYA

Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry Of Agriculture and Food Industries

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

-Mr. HASAN HASAN

Director General of Planning and Policies, Ministry of Agriculture

STATE OF QATAR

-Ms. AMĪNA ALJABER

Head of Studies and Policy Department, Ministry of Municipality

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

-Mr. FAĪSAL SULEĪMAN ALMUTAĪRY

Economist, Ministry of Environment, Water & Agriculture

-Mr. QASĪM ALALAWĪ

Senior Specialist, GAFT

-Mr. WALEED ALDAKHĪL

International Organizations Specialist, the Saudi General Authority of Foreign Trade

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

-Mr. ACHRAF GHARBĪ

Administrator advisor, Ministry of Agriculture Hydraulic Resources and Fisheries

-Mr. MOHAMED DALDOUL

Head of Service, Ministry Of Trade and Exports Development

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

-Ms. SEVDE KAHRAMAN

Engineer, TARIM VE ORMAN BAKANLIĞI

-Mr. SERDAR TEVFİK GURBUZ

Engineer, TARIM VE ORMAN BAKANLIĞI

B.THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT

OIC

-Mr. MUHAMMAD AİSAMİ SALEH

Professional Officer, OIC

C.THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

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

-Dr. FAHMAN FATHURRAHMAN

Researcher, SESRIC

-Ms. ALİA SHARİFY ORTAQ

Project Officer, SESRIC

-Ms. NENDEN OCTAVARULİA SHANTY

Senior Researcher, Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)

D.AFFILIATED ORGANS OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE (ICCIA)

-Mr. MULHİM ELTAYEB

Agribusiness Strategic Advisor, ICCIA

-Ms. SAFİA HUSSAİN

Business Development Analyst, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

-Ms. SAFİNA SHALWANİ

International Relations Associate, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture

E. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

FAO

-Mr. BURAK ÖZ

Expert, FAO

G. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

CACAARI

-Mr. BOTIR DOSOV

CEO, Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
(CACAARI)

H. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

-Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ

Deputy Director General, COMCEC Coordination Office

-Mr. CAN AYGÜL

Director, COMCEC Coordination Office

-Mr. MEHMET ASLAN

Director, COMCEC Coordination Office

-Mr. MEHMET CELALETTİN AKTAŞ

Director, COMCEC Coordination Office

-Mr. GÖKTEN DAMAR

Expert, COMCEC Coordination Office

-Ms. DİLEK DEMİRHAN

Assistant Expert, COMCEC Coordination Office

Annex- IV

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19th MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) successfully held its 19th Meeting on October 10th, 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Transforming Food Systems After COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in the OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, AWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to improving agricultural knowledge and information systems. In the light of the main findings of the report and the intense deliberations during 19th Meeting, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

Policy Recommendation 1: Developing a sound stakeholder coordinating and consulting mechanism to provide a common framework in which all actors can operate in an aligned and harmonized way.

Rationale: It is important to establish some type of loosely defined coordinating body for the various components of the AKIS to provide a common framework in which all actors can operate in an aligned and harmonized way. Coordination should not be so strict to discourage competition for innovation. At a minimum level, mechanisms are needed to harmonize policies and strategies such as prioritization of research and innovation. Supreme Council for Science and Technology and Agriculture and Forestry Council of Türkiye and The Plant Congress (Plantekongressen) of Denmark are good examples of coordinating and consulting mechanisms among stakeholders.

Policy Recommendation 2: Making use of Public-Private Partnerships for effective AKIS governance and financing.

Rationale: Managing new challenges agriculture faces such as climate change, geopolitical risk; supply-chain disruptions require good policy design, sustained investments, and sound financing framework. While public is dominant actor in the governance and financing of the AKIS, the private sector plays an increasingly important role in through commercial programs to sell its inputs, products, and its innovative capabilities. The public should improve patterns of interaction among all stakeholders, design and enforce an enabling regulatory framework, provide financing. PPP mechanisms can be instrumental ways in boosting the volume of research, extension, and advisory services for agriculture. PPPs are special arrangements to maximize service quality by exploiting the creativity and synergy of public and private. Well-designed PPPs bring social benefits by leveraging resources and capabilities of the private actors and the public.

Policy Recommendation 3: Investing in new talent for agriculture through developing connections and networks between youth and AKIS institutions to prepare workforce of the future.

Rationale: While the workforce in agriculture is aging, ensuring the interest and participation of the new generations to come in agriculture is essential for the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry. To increase youth employment in agriculture, new mechanisms are needed to put in place to improve their technical knowledge and skills.

Talent development programs to make attractive for young people to choose a career in agriculture for the postgraduate students as well as young farmers is essential component of transforming the AKIS. Such programs should include new agricultural Technologies such as precision, better data usage and

business development techniques. Young farmers and agri-entrepreneurs might be promoted to take part in global forums, which connects and empowers young people to discuss their local priorities and challenges and identify innovative and actionable solutions for a better food future.

Policy Recommendation 4: Including seasonal agriculture workers into the AKIS for better harnessing their potential in terms of investment, job creation and agricultural productivity.

Rationale: While agriculture mostly creates seasonal jobs, the number of seasonal workers is often underestimated. In many countries, seasonal workers are important part of the production of the most the strategic products within the OIC Member Countries. The seasonal farm labour market is growing in the OIC Region. Education and skill levels of seasonal workers vary widely; they are often excluded from extension services. Training programs for them often concentrates on workers right and protecting health. Effective AKIS should include seasonal workers as an important component of the agricultural ecosystem for better harnessing their potential in terms of investment, job creation and agricultural productivity.

Policy Recommendation 5: Developing a sound system for effective monitoring and evaluation from the beginning to better understand the impact of AKIS.

Rationale: Establishment of sound monitoring and evaluation system from the beginning is crucial to see the impact of the system. Reporting matrix of public, private industry, NGO, FO, academic & research institution, development agencies, INGOs, IFIs through bottom-up and participatory approaches serve to enhance partnerships and build a sense of ownership and consensus among actors. AKIS needs systems that assess its impact and outcome to feed this information back to policy making and coordination units. Reporting mechanism is needed to coordinate mutual interests of AKIS triangle.

Policy Recommendation 6: Strengthening the information and communications technology (ICT) Systems for AKIS to address the need for localized and customized information.

Rationale: ICT Systems allows producers adequate, timely access to technical and marketing information. ICT systems allows more farmers to benefit from existing knowledge and information via creation of local, regional, and global information networks. Such networks allow collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving and research practices. ICTs could be integrated into AKIS in many ways such as agricultural radio & television channels, internet portals, social media, and mobile services. Knowledge and information disseminated via these systems include information for climate change, early warning for drought and extreme weather conditions, diseases, and price & market data. ICT systems also brings new opportunities for farmers to share their experiences with each other.

Policy Recommendation 7: Developing an AgriTech & FoodTech ecosystem for the creation and growth of new companies and supporting the existing ones.

Rationale: Developing an AgriTech & FoodTech ecosystem is essential to facilitate the transition of agri-food systems to meet both consumers' demands and sustainable development goals. AgriTech is the intersection products, services, applications derived from agriculture to improve yield, efficiency, and profitability while FoodTech is the intersection of agriculture, food, and technology along the value-chain from harvest, storage, processing to distribution and retail. AgriTech includes field sensors, drones, farm-management software, robotics, vertical farming. FoodTech direct-to-consumer food delivery platforms, products, and services to innovate food processing and improve food ingredients,

next-generation food, and drinks such as plant-based milk and meat, waste management and food packaging. Developing such an ecosystem that will contribute to the creation and growth of new companies is necessary to attract growing global investment to agriculture. Volume of investment in AgriTech reached to \$ 5.2 billion in 2021.

Policy Recommendation 8: Developing a virtual network of OIC AKIS institutions to increase collaboration among OIC Member Countries.

Rationale: While different sources of knowledge are needed to deal with vital agricultural issues, agricultural competitiveness depends on collaborative actions for innovation. Cross border collaboration in research and innovation creates a more integrated market for research. Development of a virtual network of OIC AKIS institutions would facilitate experience sharing among the OIC member countries. Such a virtual network can create an inventory of existing projects and expertise, showcase best practices. Virtual OIC AKIS Network may gradually lead to joint project development and execution mechanism where funding institutions, research institutions, universities, private companies, FO interact for innovation projects.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Recommendations:

COMCEC Agriculture Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner. Working Group may work on a prioritization and sequencing of the policy areas.

COMCEC Project Funding: Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit projects to be financed by the COMCEC. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office can support financing the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include training programs, study visits, workshops, organizing seminars, peer-to-peer experience sharing, needs assessments and producing promotional materials/documents.