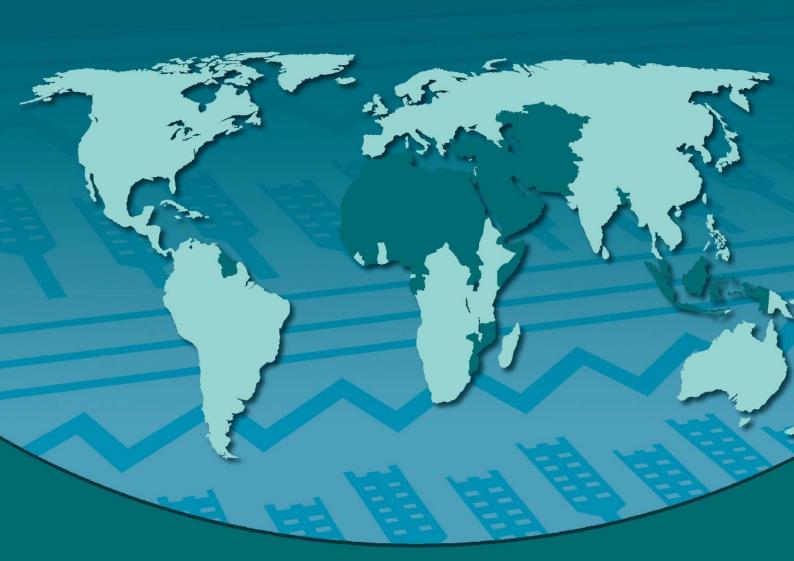
SESRIC ACTIVITY REPORT

Towards the Implementation of COMCEC Strategy and Ministerial Policy Recommendations





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



REPORT OF

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

ON

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMCEC STRATEGY AND MINISTERIAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUBMITTED TO

THE 39th MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF THE COMCEC

23-24 May 2023 Ankara, Türkiye

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 39th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC, which will be held on 23-24 May 2023 in Ankara, Republic of Türkiye.

Since the 38th 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 also made significant 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 agriculture, environment, disaster risk management, finance, health, water resources, poverty alleviation, public employment and tourism. These programmes are implemented in close cooperation with relevant national institutions in the OIC Member States through various modalities, including training courses, training workshops and study visits.

Furthermore, during the period under review, SESRIC signed two agreements to strengthen its cooperation with the relevant partners, facilitating the effective implementation of the COMCEC Strategy and Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

No.	Partners	Date of Agreement
1.	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation	8 March 2023
2.	Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Instrument Standardization (IAAIS)	15 March 2023

In light of the above, this report highlights the implemented activities of SESRIC in accordance with six cooperation areas of the COMCEC Strategy, namely **Trade**, **Transport and Communications**, **Tourism**, **Agriculture**, **Poverty Alleviation**, and **Finance**. Additionally, the report takes into account the relevant agenda items of the 39th Meeting of the Follow-up

Committee of the COMCEC, namely, **Enhancing the Role of Private Sector in Economic Cooperation** and the **Cooperation on Digital Transformation**.

AGENDA ITEMS¹:

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

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¹ In the draft agenda for the 39th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC, these agenda items were listed between numbers 4 and 11. However, in this report, they have been reordered and listed as numbers 1-8 for improved organization and ease of reference.

1. INTRA-OIC TRADE

Since the 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on intra-OIC trade:

- Workshop on "Competition Policy in Supporting Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery": Within the framework of the SESRIC Competition Authorities Capacity Building Programme (CA-CaB), the Centre, in collaboration with the Turkish Competition Authority (TCA), organised an online Workshop on "Competition Policy in Supporting Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery" on 16-17 January 2023. The workshop brought together experts and executives from the Competition Agencies/ Authorities and relevant Ministries and national institutions from 26 OIC Member Countries as well as representatives from the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on OIC economies and the role of competition law and policy in supporting economic recovery in the post-pandemic era.
- OIC Statistics (OICStat) Database: SESRIC is hosting 152 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 38th 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:

- Investment Outlook in the OIC Countries: This outlook report was jointly prepared by SESRIC and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD). It assesses and examines the investment performance and ecosystems in the OIC countries by highlighting the major issues and challenges along with the role and importance of investment funds for the financing of sustainable development. In particular, the report identifies available opportunities and priority sectors for investment in the OIC countries by providing a detailed sectoral analysis on agriculture and food, textiles and apparel, mining and construction, and petrochemicals with a view to providing some industry-level guidance to policymakers and potential investors.
- Training Workshop on "Promoting Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship in OIC Africa French-Speaking Member Countries": Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme, SESRIC organised an online Training Workshop on "Promoting Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship in OIC Africa French-Speaking Member Countries" on 14-16 March 2023. The training workshop was provided by competent experts from the National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI) of the Republic of Tunisia for the benefit of experts and executives from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Authorities and relevant national institutions of 12 OIC African French-Speaking Member Countries.

- Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on "Entrepreneurship Skills Development" for the benefit of TVET teachers and trainers: Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme, the Centre, in collaboration with UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development (IICPSD) and HP Foundation, organised an online Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on "Entrepreneurship Skills Development" on 08-19 May 2023. The ToT Programme, which consisted of two consecutive courses, was provided by competent experts for the benefit of TVET teachers and managers from TVET Institutions in the OIC African French Speaking 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 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on improving transport and communications:

- Transportation for Development in OIC Member Countries: Implications for Trade and Tourism & Challenges for Landlocked Countries: This report outlines the current state of the transport sector and potential constraints to connectivity that need to be addressed across OIC Member Countries with a special reference to issues and challenges faced by the Landlocked OIC Member Countries in this domain. In doing so, the report promotes the idea of a well-connected OIC region, with modern and functional transport infrastructure, easier passage at border gates, faster foreign trade, and operational economic corridors that may widen the basis and opportunities for economic growth and welfare. The report is expected to be submitted, as a technical background report, to the OIC Conference of Ministers of Transport once the Conference is convened.
- Statistical Training Course on "Transport Statistics": Within the framework of SESRIC's Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on "Transport Statistics" on 03-04 May 2023. The training course was provided by a competent expert from BPS-Statistics Indonesia for the benefit of participants from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of OIC Member Countries.
- Project titled "Increasing the Utilization of Innovative Financing Tools to Maintain Transport Infrastructure and the Services of TSPs in the OIC Member Countries": Within the framework of the 10th Call for Project Proposals of COMCEC Project Funding, SESRIC prepared and submitted a project proposal titled "Increasing the Utilization of Innovative Financing Tools to Maintain Transport Infrastructure and the Services of TSPs in the OIC Member Countries" for the benefit of 20 OIC Member Countries. Consisting of an online training course, an on-site workshop, and a field visit, the project aims at increasing the utilization of innovative financing tools with a view to supporting the financial conditions of TSPs and maintaining transport infrastructure 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 for the 2023 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 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on developing a sustainable and competitive tourism sector:

- Webinar on the "Digitalization of Tourism Services": Within the framework of SESRIC's Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB) and in line with relevant resolutions of the 38th Session of the COMCEC and the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), SESRIC, in collaboration with Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), organized a Training Webinar on the "Digitalization of Tourism Services in OIC Countries" on 24-25 May 2023. The training webinar was provided by competent experts and academicians for the benefit of experts and executives from the Ministries and relevant national institutions in charge of tourism in the OIC Member Countries.
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 13 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 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on increasing agricultural productivity and sustaining food security:

- State of Food Security in the Least Developed OIC Member Countries: Prepared upon the request of the OIC General Secretariat, this outlook report investigates the current state of food security in OIC Least Developed Countries (OIC-LDCs) by looking into the latest available data and statistics. The report also highlights the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food production and supply systems and its implications for the prevalence of undernourishment and hunger in OIC-LDCs.
- Agricultural Production and Trade Complementarities among OIC Member Countries: This report was prepared by SESRIC in collaboration with the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS). It identifies complementarities in the fields of agricultural resources, food production, and trade among OIC Member Countries. The report also sheds light on potential areas of partnership and cooperation for OIC Member Countries and makes policy recommendations in this regard. This report will be submitted to the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (MCFSAD), which is scheduled to be held in 2023.
- Training Workshop on "Water Governance and Integrated Water Resources Management in the OIC Member Countries": Within the framework of SESRIC's Water Resources Management Capacity Building Programme (Water-CaB) and in line with the relevant resolutions of the Fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers

Responsible for Water, the Centre organised an online Training Workshop on "Water Governance and Integrated Water Resources Management in the OIC Member Countries" on 24-26 January 2023. The training workshop was provided by competent experts from the Turkish Water Institute (SUEN) and the Directorate General of Water Management under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye for the benefit of experts and executives from the National Water Resources Authorities of 26 OIC Member Countries.

- Training Course on "Productivity Enhancement of Cotton by Using Modern Agronomic Practices": Within the framework of SESRIC's Cotton Capacity Building Programme (Cotton-CaB), the Centre organized an online Training Course on "Productivity Enhancement of Cotton by Using Modern Agronomic Practices" on 14-16 February 2023. The training course was provided by competent experts from the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) for the benefit of cotton experts and researchers from the National Cotton Institutions in 12 OIC African Member Countries.
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 104 indicators under the Agriculture category of the OICStat Database and are being updated regularly.

6. ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Since the 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on alleviating poverty:

- People with Disabilities and Special Needs in OIC Countries: This report investigates the current state of people with disabilities and special needs in OIC countries by using data from various international sources. The report also evaluates major socio-economic and cultural challenges that affect people with disabilities and special needs on a daily basis. Lastly, this report revisits dominant policy approaches to disability in line with the overarching principles proposed in the Draft OIC Plan of Action on People with Disabilities.
- Safeguarding Family Values and the Institution of Marriage in OIC Countries: This report examines the status of the marital and family institution in the OIC Member Countries and maps ongoing and emerging trends that affect familial and marital values and demographics by employing a diverse range of quantitative data that is relevant to the family and marriage institution. This report also makes some policy suggestions at both national and intra-OIC cooperation levels to improve the family values and institution of marriage in OIC Member Countries.
- State of Elderly in OIC Member Countries: This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the elderly in OIC Member Countries by looking into the latest available data and information concerning labour market, healthcare, cultural norms and supportive environment. In addition, the report also provides policy recommendations to address the problems of the elderly with a view to ensuring their full and equal participation in socio-economic life as well as in the development process of their respective countries.

- Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on "Graphic Design and Photo Print Techniques": Within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme, SESRIC, in collaboration with the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education under the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye, organized an online Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on "Graphic Design and Photo Print Techniques" on 13-15 December 2022. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the partner institution for the benefit of trainers and professionals from the TVET Authorities and relevant national institutions of 24 OIC Member Countries.
- Statistical Training Course on "SDG 1 (No Poverty) Indicators": Within the framework of SESRIC's Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on "SDG 1 (No Poverty) Indicators" on 17-18 January 2023. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) for the benefit of participants from the NSOs of 16 OIC Member Countries.
- Webinar on "Transforming Administrative Registers for Statistical Data Production": Within the framework of the Programme of Action for 2021-2025 set under the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision for 2030 and its Webinar Series on Statistical Experience Sharing, SESRIC organised a Webinar on "Transforming Administrative Registers for Statistical Data Production" on 14 February 2023, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) with the participation of experts from the NSOs of 24 OIC Member Countries. The Webinar provided a platform to exchange knowledge on how to develop and deploy the required technology and the mechanisms to transform the administrative registers for statistical data production in national statistical systems of OIC Member Countries, including discussions about the relevant initiatives, challenges faced and lessons learnt by all stakeholders.
- Statistical Training Course on "SDG 1 (No Poverty) Indicators": Within the framework of SESRIC's Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on "SDG 1 (No Poverty) Indicators" on 21-22 February 2023. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the National Institute of Statistics (INS) of the Republic of Tunisia for the benefit of participants from the NSOs of 7 French speaking OIC Member Countries as well as representatives from the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- Training Course on "Social Insurance Database Management": Within the framework of SESRIC's Social Security Institutions Capacity Building Programme (SSI-CaB), the Centre organized an online Training Course on "Social Insurance Database Management" on 01-02 March 2023. The training course was provided by competent experts from the Social Security Institution (SGK) under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Türkiye for the benefit of experts and executives from the national social security institutions of 24 OIC Member Countries.

- Training Course on "Optimal Design of Unemployment Insurance and Employment Protection": Within the framework of the SESRIC Public Employment Services Capacity Building Programme (PES-CaB), the Centre organised an online Training Course on "Optimal Design of Unemployment Insurance and Employment Protection" on 07-09 March 2023. The training course was provided by competent experts from the Social Security Organization (SOCSO) of Malaysia for the benefit of experts and executives from the National Public Employment Services (PES) Agencies/ Authorities as well as the relevant Ministries and national institutions of 20 OIC Member Countries.
- Statistical Training Course on "SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) Indicators": Within the framework of SESRIC's Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on "SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) Indicators" on 14-15 March 2023. The training course was provided by competent experts from DOSM for the benefit of participants from the NSOs of 13 OIC Member Countries.
- Statistical Training Course on "SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) Indicators": Within the framework of SESRIC's Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on "SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) Indicators" on 02-04 May 2023. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Department of Statistics (DoS) of Jordan for the benefit of participants from the NSOs of OIC Member Countries.
- Training Workshop on "Developing Effective, Reliable, and Affordable Social Protection Services for Vulnerable Groups": Within the framework of SESRIC's Social Development Capacity Building Programme (SD-CaB), the Centre, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, organised an online Training Workshop on "Developing Effective, Reliable, and Affordable Social Protection Services for Vulnerable Groups" on 02-04 May 2023. The training workshop was provided by competent experts from the relevant Directorates General of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye for the benefit of experts and executives from the Ministries and relevant national institutions responsible for social protection services in the OIC Member Countries.
- Orientation Workshop on "Tobacco Questions for Surveys of Youth (TQS-Youth)": SESRIC, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the CDC Foundation, organised an Orientation Workshop on "Tobacco Questions for Surveys of Youth (TQS-Youth)" on 09-10 May 2023 at SESRIC Headquarters in Ankara, Republic of Türkiye. The Workshop was participated by experts from the NSOs and Ministries of Health of OIC Member Countries. The objective of the Workshop was to provide additional information and technical support to the participants in integrating TQS-Youth into the ongoing youth-related national surveys in their respective countries.
- **OICStat Database**: SESRIC is hosting 56 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 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on deepening financial cooperation:

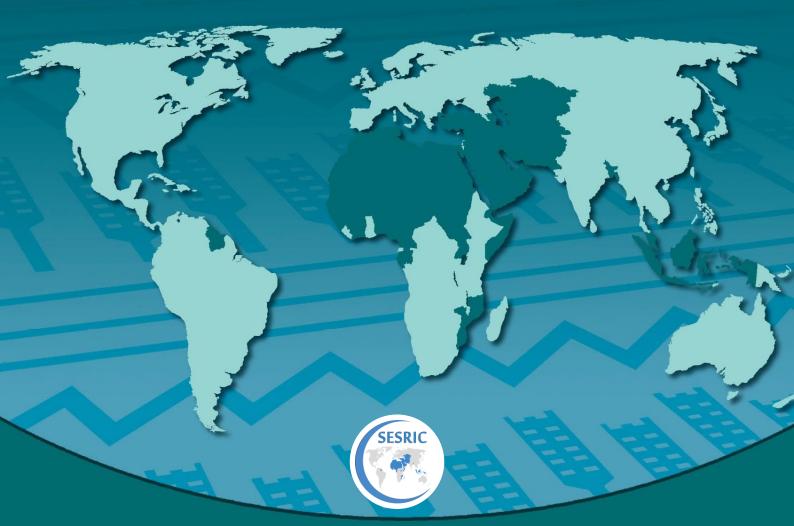
- Statistical Training Course on "Government Finance, Fiscal and Public Sector Statistics": Within the framework of SESRIC's Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme, the Centre organised an online Statistical Training Course on "Government Finance, Fiscal and Public Sector Statistics" on 10-12 January 2023. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) for the benefit of participants from the NSOs of 9 Arabic-speaking OIC Member Countries.
- Training Course on "Islamic Banking and Finance for Central Banks and Monetary Authorities": Within the framework of the SESRIC Central Banks Capacity Building Programme (CB-CaB), the Centre, in collaboration with the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF), organised an online Training Course on "Islamic Banking and Finance for Central Banks and Monetary Authorities" on 06-08 March 2023. The training course was provided by competent experts from BIBF for the benefit of experts and executives from Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of 29 OIC Member Countries.
- Webinar on "Reporting Data on Islamic Financial Services Sector": Within the framework of the Programme of Action for 2021-2025 set under the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision for 2030 and its Webinar Series on Statistical Experience Sharing, SESRIC organised a Webinar on "Reporting Data on Islamic Financial Services Sector" on 14 March 2023, in collaboration with Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB), UNSD, and UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) with the participation of experts from the NSOs of 20 OIC Member Countries.
- Training Course on "Islamic Debt and Equity Markets": Within the framework of the SESRIC's Stock Exchanges Capacity Building Programme (SE-CaB), the Centre, in collaboration with Borsa Istanbul, the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum, and the Indonesia Stock Exchange as well as the Indonesian Financial Services Authority, organized an online Training Course on "Islamic Debt and Equity Markets" on 16-18 May 2023. The training course was provided by competent experts from the relevant departments of the partner institutions for the benefit of participants from the Stock Exchanges and relevant Ministries in the OIC Member Countries.
- Project titled "Unleashing the Potential of Islamic Finance in Supporting MSMEs in the OIC Member Countries": Within the framework of the 10th Call for Project Proposals of COMCEC Project Funding, SESRIC prepared and submitted a project proposal titled "Unleashing the Potential of Islamic Finance in Supporting MSMEs in the OIC Member Countries" for the benefit of the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities from 40 OIC Member Countries. Consisting of a virtual training course and on-site workshop, the project aims to introduce innovative and sustainable solutions for Islamic Finance and ISF products to enhance the resilience of MSMEs in the OIC Member Countries in the face of possible shocks. 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 2023 implementation period.
- **OICStat Database:** SESRIC is hosting 131 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.

8. COOPERATION ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Since the 38th Session of the COMCEC, the following activities were implemented by SESRIC under the agenda item on cooperation on digital transformation.

- Project titled "Promoting Digital Technologies for an Integrated and Efficient Social Protection Systems in the OIC Member Countries": Within the framework of the 10th Call for Project Proposals of COMCEC Project Funding, SESRIC prepared and submitted a project proposal titled "Promoting Digital Technologies for an Integrated and Efficient Social Protection Systems in the OIC Member Countries" for the benefit of relevant departments of the Ministries and national institutions in charge of social protection policies and programmes and data management/IT systems of 15 OIC Member Countries. Consisting of two virtual training courses and an on-site workshop, the project aims at enhancing human resources and institutional capacities of the national institutions of social protection in effectively responding to the needs of the poor and vulnerable people 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 2023 implementation period.
- Technical Meeting between SESRIC and the Digital Transformation Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye: The meeting was held on 06 April 2023 to discuss the capacity building request of the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy of the Gambia for its staff in line with the digital transformation agenda of the Ministry. The meeting discussed and agreed upon concrete action items that included evaluating national infrastructure and assessing requirements, ensuring a comprehensive strategy to address essential areas and fields.



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