

DRAFT

Policy Recommendations for the Exchange of Views Session of the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session on “Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries”

The 40th COMCEC Session agreed on “*Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries*” as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session of the 41st Session of the COMCEC and requested COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report them to the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session. In line with this request, the 25th Meeting of the TWG has come up with the following challenges and policy recommendations on developing or improving export strategies in the OIC Member Countries:

A- CHALLENGES

- 1. Heavy reliance on imports of strategic goods which increases risks of price and supply fluctuations alongside instability from volatile export revenues*
- 2. Volatility of export revenues directly transmitting to growth variability through large fluctuations disrupting economic stability*
- 3. Increasing protectionist measures in traditional markets that compounds external shocks and fluctuations*
- 4. Geopolitical tensions, environmental challenges, and technological disruptions exposing structural weaknesses in export-led growth models*
- 5. Need for enhanced stakeholder coordination and stronger public–private partnership to ensure long-term sustainability and competitiveness*
- 6. Unharmonized quality infrastructure policies and lack of technical regulations amongst the OIC member Countries, limiting SMEs and MSMEs in meeting international requirements*
- 7. Variations in halal standards at the international level creating barriers to trade and consumer confidence*
- 8. Limited trade literacy constraining many countries, especially developing and emerging ones, from fully integrating into global markets and reducing export capacity*
- 9. Budgetary constraints limiting SMEs and MSMEs from investing in trade-related training, restricting their ability to participate in global value chains*

10. *Limited R&D investment, poor academia-industry collaboration, and insufficient financial support constraining companies' innovation and high-tech development, limiting countries' engagement in advanced sectors*
11. *Rapid digital technology evolution creating a skills mismatch, with shortages of professionals in AI, data science, cybersecurity, and blockchain*
12. *Structural constraints, including ISO or halal certification requirements, limiting SMEs and MSMEs' credibility and integration into international markets*
13. *Limited financial resources restricting SMEs and MSMEs from establishing and maintaining international connections*
14. *Low digital literacy and insufficient digital infrastructure constraining adoption of e-commerce platforms and digital trade facilitation tools*
15. *Inadequate digital infrastructure and high licensing fees limiting SMEs and MSMEs' participation in global value chains and export expansion*
16. *Limited compliance with new green trade regulations which revealed inherent vulnerabilities in many economies*
17. *Emerging climate-related regulations requiring companies to integrate sustainability across supply chains, increasing costs, compliance burdens, and competitive pressures*
18. *High digitalization infrastructure costs placing a disproportionate burden on SMEs and MSMEs reducing competitiveness and limiting efficient participation in international trade*
19. *The high infrastructure costs of digitalization place a disproportionate burden on SMEs and MSMEs decreasing their competitiveness and creating inefficiencies in their participation in international trade*
20. *Paper-based and fragmented systems causing delays, higher overheads, and increased risk of errors and fraud, while low transparency and data security concerns discouraging SMEs and MSMEs from adopting digital solutions*
21. *High shipping costs and limited access to competitive shipping lines*

B- DRAFT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the challenges and problems discussed above, the following set of policy recommendations shall be organized by national trade ministries and export promotion agencies, in cooperation with chambers of commerce and relevant OIC institutions, are as follows:

- 1. Encouraging to develop/implement a comprehensive trade facilitation framework within OIC Member Countries to streamline cross-border processes, reduce transaction costs, and enhance the efficiency of export and import operations.*
- 2. Organizing collaborative regional strategic planning activities in collaboration with specialists from OIC Member Countries, while encouraging the transfer of practical technical knowledge, through information sharing, trainings, workshops, personnel exchange programs, where applicable*
- 3. Utilization of services provided by SMIIC to facilitate trade between OIC Member Countries*
- 4. Making use of IFHAB services for mutual recognition of halal certificates by exploring to develop and implement Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) and Mutual Legal Agreements (MLAs) among the national halal accreditation bodies of the Member Countries to facilitate and remove technical barriers.*
- 5. Publishing and sharing policy briefs, newsletters, and guidance notes to OIC Member Countries' Ministries accreditation bodies and Halal Certification Authorities of Member Countries, for acceleration of the use of IFHAB services.*
- 6. Raising awareness and strengthening knowledge of exporters and marketing professionals about international market trends, compliance requirements, and risk management especially in less developed OIC Member Countries*
- 7. Promoting the use of digital marketing, e-commerce platforms, and successful international marketing practices to enhance the competitiveness of companies and strengthen the trade and marketing skills of their staff.*
- 8. Supporting public awareness campaigns to foster greater visibility of trade opportunities and success stories.*

9. *Encouraging the development of targeted innovation policies, R&D incentive programs and establishment of technology transfer centers, science parks, incubators, and innovation hubs through public-private partnerships, to support innovative entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs and MSMEs.*
10. *Developing/Improving dedicated supporting mechanisms for internationalization of SMEs and MSMEs and providing technical support to improve their credibility in overseas markets*
11. *Promoting targeted programs to support firms, particularly in developing countries, in achieving compliance with sustainability related trade standards*
12. *Encouraging trade policies that foster a business-friendly environment by simplifying standards, alignment of environmental requirements across regions of OIC Member Countries, and reducing non-tariff barriers related to sustainability compliance.*
13. *Promoting the adoption of National Single Window (NSW) system through encouraging adaptation of legislation and regulations that provide legal recognition of electronic documents, e-signatures, and digital certificates in trade related transactions.*
14. *Developing/Improving robust data security, cybersecurity, and privacy laws related with the use of National Single Window (NSW) system, in accordance with national laws by outlining the roles and responsibilities of public administrations and private users*
15. *Encouraging to provide a legal basis for regional interoperability which allows mutual recognition of electronic certificates of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) documents, and other trade-related licenses in cross border transactions.*