Proceedings of the 23rd Meeting of the

COMCEC Trade Working Group

"Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries''

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

October 2024

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 23rd MEETING OF THE

COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

ON

"Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries"

(October 2024)

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

October 2024

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1. Introduction

The 23rd Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group was held on 19-20 September 2024, in Ankara with the theme "Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries''. The representatives of 19 Member Countries which have notified their focal points for the Trade Working Group, attended the Meeting.

(The Agenda and Program of the Meeting are attached as Annex-I and Annex-II)

Representatives of the SESRIC, ICD, SMIIC, UNIDO and the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) attended the meeting.

(The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex-III)

2. Opening Session

The Meeting started with a recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, on behalf of the Director General of CCO, H.E. Selçuk KOÇ, Mr. Can AYGÜL, Director at the CCO, welcomed all participants to 23rd Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG).

Mr. AYGÜL started his speech by welcoming the participants and extending heartfelt condolences to Palestinian brothers and sisters affected by recent events. He expressed his hopes for a fair resolution to the conflict through the efforts of the Islamic Ummah.

Mr. AYGÜL emphasized that the focus of the meeting was on Quality Infrastructure (QI), a key element for economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. He noted that QI forms the backbone of development and contributes to policy objectives of governments by improving trade, innovation, and public health. Mr. AYGÜL emphasized that metrology, as the science of measurement, plays a crucial role in promoting product quality, facilitating trade, and safeguarding public health. He highlighted that accurate measurements are indispensable in many sectors, ranging from ensuring the precision of medical devices to enabling fair trade through calibrated weights and measures.

Mr. AYGÜL pointed out that the state of development regarding metrology varies significantly across OIC Member Countries, with many, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs), lagging behind in international indexes. He highlighted that these deficiencies hinder trade and economic growth within the OIC Member Countries. Mr. AYGÜL mentioned that discussions during the meeting touched upon the preliminary findings from the Policy Guide, initially introduced during the 22nd meeting. He encouraged participants to provide feedback on the final version of the guide. Mr. AYGÜL concluded by stating that these recommendations will be submitted for further deliberation during the 40th Ministerial Session of COMCEC in November 2024.

Later, Ms. Demet Işıl KARAKURT, Head of Department from the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, moderated the Sessions during the Meeting. In her opening remarks, she welcomed all participants to the 23rd Meeting of TWG and gave a brief evaluation of the 22nd TWG Meeting held in May 2024. Ms. KARAKURT expressed her gratitude to Morocco, Türkiye, and SMIIC (Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries) for their presentations. She emphasized that these presentations significantly enhanced the sharing of experiences among the OIC Member Countries, highlighting the effectiveness of the information exchange facilitated by the Meeting. Ms. KARAKURT further stated that establishing and maintaining a strong metrology system and national quality infrastructure is of great importance for the OIC Member Countries. She stressed that such systems are essential for driving sustainable development and ensuring competitiveness on the global stage.

Then, Ms. KARAKURT briefly informed the attendees of the agenda and program of the Meeting.

3. Overview Presentation of the Final Draft of the Guide

3.1. General Overview of the Guide

Dr. Maria Rüya HAN provided a comprehensive overview of the Study, Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries, which serves as a crucial guide for the OIC Member Countries seeking to enhance their quality infrastructure (QI) systems. She highlighted that the primary aim of the report is to address the current challenges faced by OIC Member Countries in building and maintaining effective QI systems, while also proposing actionable strategies to overcome these barriers. QI, she noted, is essential for ensuring product quality, safety, and conformity, thereby enhancing competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Ms. HAN indicated that the study has three key objectives:

Providing Principles and Recommended Practices: The guide outlines the fundamental principles of quality infrastructure, including the roles of metrology, accreditation, standardization, and conformity assessments. It offers recommended practices that are adaptable to the specific economic and developmental contexts of OIC Member Countries.

Sharing Insights from Case Studies: The study draws on in-depth analyses of five countries: Kazakhstan, Senegal, USA, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Italy. These countries were selected based on their distinct approaches to building and maintaining quality infrastructure systems. By examining these diverse case studies, the report highlights both best practices and common challenges that can inform policy-making in OIC Member Countries.

Providing Actionable Recommendations: The study culminates in a set of practical recommendations aimed at guiding OIC member countries toward enhancing their quality infrastructure systems. These recommendations address the need for capacity building, regional cooperation, and the adoption of international standards, among other priorities.

Ms. HAN also emphasized that the Guide is structured into four main sections as follows:

Introduction: This section provides a broad understanding of quality infrastructure, explaining its critical components, metrology, standardization, accreditation, and conformity assessments, and their role in ensuring product quality and facilitating trade. It also contextualizes the need for OIC member countries to strengthen their QI systems to meet international market demands.

Key Components of Quality Infrastructure: The second section delves deeper into the essential elements of QI systems, offering a detailed analysis of metrology (measurement standards), standardization (development and use of technical standards), accreditation (formal recognition of testing and calibration laboratories), and conformity assessment (certifications and inspections).

Case Studies: The report then presents detailed case studies of Kazakhstan, Senegal, USA, UAE, and Italy. Each case study illustrates the specific approaches these countries have taken to build their QI systems, including their successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

Recommendations: The final section outlines key recommendations tailored to the needs of OIC member countries. These include capacity building, strengthening regional cooperation, aligning national standards with international frameworks, and promoting public-private partnerships to ensure that QI systems are robust and aligned with global market needs.

In her presentation Ms. HAN explained that the selection of the case study countries was a deliberate decision to provide a diverse range of experiences. Each country represents different stages of economic development and unique approaches to quality infrastructure. For instance, Kazakhstan and Senegal are examples of emerging economies working to establish and strengthen their QI systems. In contrast, the USA and Italy represent advanced economies with well-established and globally recognized quality infrastructure frameworks. The UAE was selected as a rapidly developing economy that has made significant strides in integrating digital technologies and innovation into its QI systems.

Ms. HAN continued with explaining the methodology employed in the Guide. The study was based on a combination of desk research, fieldwork, and surveys. Desk research involved reviewing existing literature, reports, and data on quality infrastructure systems in the selected countries. Fieldwork was conducted in Kazakhstan, Senegal, and the UAE, where interviews were held with key stakeholders, including government officials, quality infrastructure authorities, and private sector representatives. Additionally, surveys were distributed to public institutions and private sector companies within the selected countries to gather firsthand insights on the challenges and opportunities in building quality infrastructure.

She also emphasized that one of the study's key strengths lies in its ability to offer comparative insights across countries with different levels of economic development and varying approaches to QI systems. This comparison enables OIC member countries to draw lessons from a wide spectrum of experiences, identifying strategies that can be adapted to their specific national contexts.

The importance of collaboration and cooperation between OIC Member Countries was a recurring theme in the report. Ms. HAN pointed out that improving quality infrastructure cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires a coordinated effort involving multiple stakeholders, including governments, industries, and international organizations. The Study encourages OIC Member Countries to work together, share knowledge and expertise, and build regional frameworks that promote the harmonization of standards and mutual recognition of certifications.

Moreover, she stressed that the ultimate goal of enhancing QI is to support economic growth, facilitate trade, and improve consumer trust in products and services. By ensuring that products meet international standards, OIC Member Countries can boost their exports, attract foreign investment, and enhance the competitiveness of their industries in global markets. At the same time, robust QI systems help protect consumers by ensuring the safety, quality, and reliability of products and services.

In conclusion, Ms. HAN highlighted that the findings and recommendations in this study provide a practical roadmap for the OIC Member Countries. By investing in their QI systems and aligning them with international standards, OIC Member Countries can unlock new economic opportunities, improve their trade relationships, and contribute to the overall prosperity of the region.

3.2. Selected Case Study

In this section of the study, it was delved into the detailed analysis of five selected countries such as Kazakhstan, Senegal, the USA, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Italy, representing a unique approach to building and maintaining QI systems. These case studies offer insights into the varying degrees of development and the specific strategies adopted by each country to ensure that their QI frameworks meet international standards and support both local economic growth and global trade competitiveness. The countries were selected based on several criteria, including economic status, the maturity of their quality infrastructure, the level of integration into the global economy, and their ability to offer best practices or relevant lessons for OIC Member Countries. By examining the experiences of these countries, the study seeks to provide actionable guidance for other OIC member countries as they work toward improving their own QI systems.

Kazakhstan

Ms. HAN underlined that Kazakhstan, as an emerging economy in Central Asia, is building a robust QI system to support its growing industrial base and facilitate integration into global supply chains. She highlighted that Kazakhstan's efforts in strengthening its QI are driven by the goal of enhancing the quality and competitiveness of its exports, particularly in key sectors such as agriculture, oil and gas, and manufacturing. Ms. HAN emphasized that Kazakhstan has made significant investments in modernizing its metrology systems, aligning them with international measurement standards. She stated that this modernization is particularly crucial in energy and agriculture, where precise measurements are essential for quality assurance.

She also pointed out that the Kazakh government has established a national accreditation body operating in accordance with international standards. Ms. HAN noted that this body is vital for ensuring the global recognition of local testing and certification entities, thus boosting the credibility of Kazakh exports. Ms. HAN highlighted Kazakhstan's development of a conformity assessment framework to ensure that products meet both domestic and international standards. She mentioned that Kazakhstan has also been working to harmonize its technical regulations with those of the *Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)* to facilitate regional trade.

Despite these achievements, Ms. HAN stated that Kazakhstan still faces challenges in fully implementing its QI policies. She underlined that limited capacity in certain regions, a shortage of qualified personnel, and the need for greater public-private cooperation are key obstacles to advancing QI.

Senegal

Ms. HAN outlined Senegal's progress in building its QI system as a low-income country in West Africa. She noted that, while at an earlier stage, the Senegalese government recognizes the importance of QI for enhancing the quality of locally produced goods and services, especially in agriculture, fisheries, and textiles. Ms. HAN highlighted that Senegal has established a national metrology institute, gradually expanding its services to cover key industrial sectors. She added that the country has developed national standards aligning with regional and international requirements, particularly in agriculture and fisheries.

Ms. HAN pointed out that Senegal's accreditation process is still developing, with limited capacity to certify laboratories and testing bodies. However, she emphasized that efforts are underway to strengthen national institutions' capabilities to issue internationally recognized certifications, especially in food safety and agricultural products. Ms. HAN noted improvements in Senegal's conformity assessment practices, especially for export commodities. She stated that Senegal is collaborating with international partners to build the capacity of its national conformity assessment bodies, ensuring that exports, such as fish and peanuts, meet stringent international standards.

Ms. HAN highlighted several challenges Senegal faces, including limited financial and human resources, insufficient infrastructure, and the need to increase public awareness of QI benefits. She also mentioned the need for better coordination among QI institutions to avoid overlaps and inefficiencies. Ms. HAN emphasized that Senegal's experience shows how low-income countries can make progress in developing QI systems with appropriate policy frameworks and international support. She suggested that OIC member countries with similar economic conditions could benefit from Senegal's gradual approach to building QI capacity, particularly in sectors where exports are essential for economic growth.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Ms. HAN highlighted the UAE's impressive progress in developing its QI system within a relatively short period. She noted that, as a rapidly growing economy with aspirations to become a global hub for trade, innovation, and technology, the UAE has prioritized aligning its QI system with international best practices.

Ms. HAN explained that the *Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA)* is central to setting national measurement standards that align with international frameworks. She emphasized the UAE's significant investments in modern metrology laboratories, especially in sectors such as energy, healthcare, and aviation. Ms. HAN highlighted the UAE's proactive approach to standardization, with national standards harmonized with those of the *International Organization for Standardization (ISO)* and the *International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)*. She mentioned that this alignment has facilitated the UAE's integration into global trade networks and strengthened its reputation as a reliable trading partner.

Ms. HAN noted that the UAE has established a highly respected accreditation system led by ESMA and the Dubai Accreditation Department, which certify testing and calibration laboratories. She emphasized the importance of this system in critical sectors such as food safety, construction, and tourism. Ms. HAN explained that the UAE has a well-developed conformity assessment system with robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with both national and international standards. She highlighted the UAE's adoption of innovative technologies like blockchain to enhance transparency and efficiency in conformity assessments.

Despite the UAE's progress, Ms. HAN pointed out that the country faces ongoing challenges in keeping its QI system up to speed with rapid technological advancements. She stressed the need for capacity building and training to equip the workforce with the skills necessary to maintain and operate advanced QI systems.

Ms. HAN emphasized that the UAE's experience demonstrates the importance of government leadership in building a modern and globally integrated QI system. She suggested that OIC member countries could learn from the UAE's approach to aligning national standards with international frameworks and its investments in advanced technologies to improve QI efficiency.

Italy

Ms. HAN underlined that, as a European Union (EU) member, Italy has a well-established and highly integrated QI system. She highlighted that Italy's QI framework aligns closely with EU regulations, known for their stringent standards, especially in areas like food safety, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing. Ms. HAN underlined that Italy hosts advanced metrology institutes, such as the *Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca Metrologica (INRIM)*, ensuring Italy's measurement standards align with EU and international requirements, crucial for precision engineering and manufacturing.

She highlighted that Italy's standardization system is fully integrated with the *European Committee for Standardization (CEN)* and the *European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC)*, ensuring Italian products meet high standards necessary for EU and global market access. Ms. HAN pointed out that Italy's accreditation is managed by ACCREDIA, which follows EU regulations and the *International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)*, guaranteeing that Italian products, especially in food and pharmaceuticals, comply with rigorous EU and international standards.

Ms. HAN noted Italy's challenge in balancing national and EU-level regulations, particularly where local standards may diverge slightly from EU norms. Italy is also modernizing its QI system to address emerging challenges in digitalization, cybersecurity, and sustainability. Ms. HAN underlined that Italy's experience shows the benefits of aligning QI systems with regional frameworks to ease trade and economic integration. OIC member countries considering regional trade agreements may find Italy's approach to QI harmonization within the EU a valuable model.

United States of America (USA)

Ms. HAN underlined that the United States, as one of the world's most advanced economies, has a well-established and sophisticated QI system. She highlighted that the USA approach to QI is deeply integrated into its regulatory framework and private sector operations, ensuring that products and services meet the highest standards of quality, safety, and reliability.

Ms. HAN underlined that the *National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)* plays a leading role in setting measurement standards, ensuring industries can rely on precise measurements critical for innovation. She highlighted that the USA has a decentralized approach to standardization, with organizations like the *American National Standards Institute (ANSI)* collaborating with industry and government to develop responsive standards.

Ms. HAN pointed out that the USA operates a globally recognized accreditation system, ensuring that testing and certification organizations meet stringent requirements for global acceptance. She emphasized that the robust USA system of conformity assessment focuses on voluntary compliance and third-party certifications, allowing flexibility while maintaining high quality and safety standards. Ms. HAN noted that the USA faces challenges in maintaining its QI leadership amidst rapid global changes, including issues like digital transformation and cybersecurity. Ms. HAN underlined that the USA model provides valuable lessons on the benefits of a decentralized, industry-driven approach, encouraging OIC member countries to increase private sector participation in their QI systems, particularly in key industries for national economic priorities.

4. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member Countries, International Institutions

4.1. Experiences/Perspectives of the OIC Member Countries

a) Malaysia

Ms. Nur Afifah IJAP, Senior Assistant Director, from Department of Standards, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry of Malaysia made a presentation on Malaysian Strategy for Quality Infrastructure. Ms. IJAP elaborated on Malaysia's strategy for enhancing its National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) to drive economic growth, trade, and social well-being.

Ms. IJAP explained that Malaysia's journey in developing its NQI began in 1966 with the establishment of the *Standards Institute of Malaysia (SIM)*, followed by key institutions like *SIRIM, the Department of Standards Malaysia (JSM), and the National Metrology Institute of Malaysia (NMIM)*. These institutions were established to ensure that Malaysia's standards, accreditation, and metrology meet global benchmarks. Ms. IJAP highlighted Malaysia's commitment to keeping pace with international standards through its participation in global recognition frameworks, thus maintaining the credibility of its quality infrastructure.

Ms. IJAP also provided an overview of the current state of Malaysia's NQI, which includes vital components such as standardization, accreditation, metrology, conformity assessment, and market surveillance. Ms. IJAP emphasized the role of JSM in maintaining and developing Malaysian Standards, as well as managing internationally recognized accreditation programs. She noted that Malaysia's adherence to international standards facilitates trade by providing independent assurance of product and service quality. Moreover, she shared that Malaysia ranked second highest among all OIC member countries in the 2023 Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII), underscoring the importance of enhanced regional collaboration and institutional support to elevate quality infrastructure across the region.

Ms. IJAP also addressed the challenges Malaysia faces, particularly the need for continuous improvement to keep up with emerging technologies such as digitalization and renewable energy. She mentioned the importance of responding to global agendas like sustainability and climate change to further develop Malaysia's quality infrastructure.

In her presentation, Ms. IJAP showcased Malaysia's halal quality assurance system as a case study, which demonstrates how a strong QI supports both economic and societal goals. She explained how this system involves components such as standardization, metrology, accreditation, and conformity assessment, ensuring that halal products meet high standards of quality and safety. Ms. IJAP pointed out that standards such as MS1500 and MS2738 provide the guidelines for halal food and consumable goods, while JSM's accreditation for certification bodies guarantees the credibility of halal certification conducted by JAKIM. Furthermore, she mentioned that market surveillance by the *Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living (KPDN)* enhances consumer confidence and opens up global markets for Malaysian halal products, contributing significantly to the country's economic growth.

Ms. IJAP emphasized that a robust NQI is essential for Malaysia's overall development. She noted that a strong NQI enables Malaysia to compete in global markets by ensuring products and services meet international standards, reducing trade barriers and fostering trust. Additionally, Ms. IJAP highlighted the role of NQI in promoting innovation, supporting new technologies, ensuring public safety, and contributing to environmental sustainability, all of which are critical for Malaysia's goal of becoming a high-income nation. Ms. IJAP explained Malaysia's vision to further strengthen its NQI by improving coordination among NQI institutions and addressing new stakeholder demands. She emphasized that Malaysia's future focus would include digital transformation, sustainable practices, and global alignment to maintain its competitiveness on the international stage.

b) Oman

Ms. Jihad JABR, Director of Standards Department from Directorate General for Standards and Metrology of Sultanate of Oman made a presentation on Enhancing Quality Infrastructure in Oman. Ms. JABR started her presentation by outlining Oman's advancements in Quality Infrastructure (QI), emphasizing its significance for trade, industry, and investment. She explained that Oman's efforts align with its Vision 2040, which focuses on economic diversification, innovation, and global competitiveness. Ms. JABR highlighted that the *Directorate General for Standards and Metrology (DGSM)*, established by Royal Decree in 1976, is the national authority responsible for Oman's standardization and metrology activities, playing a critical role in aligning the country with international standards and facilitating global trade.

Ms. JABR described Oman's QI as a key driver for sectors like trade, industry, and investment promotion. She noted that the DGSM oversees various key departments, including the Conformity Department, Accreditation Office, and the National Metrology Center, all of which work towards ensuring compliance with global standards. She emphasized Oman's participation in 31 ISO committees and active involvement in regional standards development through the *Gulf Standards Organization (GSO)* and the *World Trade Organization (WTO)* on technical regulations.

Ms. JABR emphasized several recent improvements Oman has made in its QI, including the development of the Omani System for Conformity and Legal Calibration, which she noted is now highly efficient. She also highlighted the modernization of metrology laboratories, advances in national accreditation systems with the establishment of the Oman Accreditation Center, and ongoing digitization efforts, such as the launch of a unified electronic platform for standardization services. Ms. JABR stressed that these initiatives are aligned with Oman's Tenth Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), which focuses on improving local product quality and export standards.

Ms. JABR highlighted several opportunities for further enhancing Oman's QI. She noted that digital transformation offers significant potential to streamline compliance processes and improve market access. Ms. JABR also pointed out that empowering the private sector to manage standards and metrology laboratories can foster greater efficiency and innovation.

Additionally, she underscored Oman's commitment to furthering its integration into the global standardization community by enhancing its memberships in international organizations such as ISO and IEC. Despite the progress, Ms. JABR acknowledged that Oman faces several challenges. She highlighted the need for continuous capacity building to stay aligned with global best practices and mentioned that improved coordination among stakeholders—including government, industry, and academia—remains a challenge in standard development and implementation. Furthermore, Ms. JABR cited funding and resource limitations as obstacles to expanding Oman's QI, particularly in areas requiring sophisticated technology and expertise.

Ms. JABR reiterated Oman's commitment to further improving its QI through continued collaboration with the *Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)* and OIC Member Countries. She emphasized that Oman's focus on digitizing services, modernizing infrastructure, and enhancing human capacity are critical steps toward aligning its standards with global practices. Ms. JABR noted that Oman's future efforts will focus on further developing its standards system, enhancing metrological capabilities, and promoting trade by ensuring products meet international standards. Ms. JABR highlighted that Oman's advancements in quality infrastructure provide a solid foundation for improving economic competitiveness, promoting innovation, and enhancing regional and global trade relationships, all of which are essential for achieving the goals set out in Vision 2040.

c) Saudi Arabia

Mr. SHIHAB ALJABREEN, Assistant Governor from Saudi Standards, *Metrology and Quality Organization of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (SASO)* made a presentation on National Quality Infrastructure of Saudi Arabia. Mr. ALJABREEN's presentation focused on Saudi Arabia's achievements in developing a robust QI particularly highlighting the progress in standardization, conformity assessment, and metrology as key components of the national QI system. He underlined the significant strides Saudi Arabia has made in building an internationally recognized QI system that supports the country's Vision 2030 and enhances global competitiveness.

Mr. ALJABREEN emphasized that Saudi Arabia has become a regional leader in QI, ranking highly in both regional and global QI indexes. He pointed out that Saudi Arabia ranks 2nd in the Middle East and 34th globally in QI maturity, positioning the Kingdom above the global and high-income country medians. He also underlined that Saudi Arabia ranks 1st in the Arab world for standardization and 2nd for conformity assessment. These rankings reflect the Kingdom's progress in adopting international standards and fostering active participation in international quality networks.

Mr. ALJABREEN highlighted that SASO has developed over 1,500 new standards in 2023, increasing its total stock of standards by 7.4%. This growth was primarily focused on the services sector, with a 36% increase in standards He emphasized that SASO's Standards Issuing Strategy is well aligned with national priorities and strategies like Vision 2030. The organization consulted over 150 stakeholders and reviewed more than 50 national development strategies to ensure the relevance of its standardization efforts.

Mr. ALJABREEN emphasized the success of the *SABER* platform, an electronic system launched by SASO in 2019 to streamline product registration and certification. He noted that the platform has helped ensure product conformity at the point of origin, reduced private sector costs, and enhanced the speed of shipment releases. He underlined that the number of registered products through SABER has increased by 62.62% from 2019 to 2023. This growth has positively impacted Saudi Arabia's global competitiveness. Mr. ALJABREEN noted the rapid growth of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) in Saudi Arabia, driven by SASO's encouragement of private sector participation. From 2022 to 2023, the number of CABs increased by 75%, with the largest growth seen in the private sector. He also emphasized SASO's role in facilitating the approval of private sector CABs, which has reduced the need for testing in SASO's own laboratories and increased the capacity for private sector involvement.

Mr. ALJABREEN emphasized the central role of the *National Measurement and Calibration Center (NMCC)* in supporting Saudi Arabia's metrology system. He highlighted that since 2014, NMCC has added 22 new laboratories, bringing the total number to 30. The center provides key services such as calibration, quality control, and technical consultancy, ensuring that Saudi Arabia's metrology standards are aligned with international bodies. He also underlined that the Taqyees program, launched in 2018, serves as Saudi Arabia's dedicated center for legal metrology. The program covers key areas such as electricity meters, fuel pumps, and trade balances, with the goal of ensuring compliance with national and international standards. Mr. ALJABREEN stressed that Saudi Arabia's QI initiatives are closely tied to the Vision 2030 goals of economic diversification and global leadership. SASO's strategic alignment with national development goals, such as the National Industry and Logistics Program and the National Export Strategy, ensures that QI development remains a key driver of growth. He concluded by underlining the importance of continuous improvement in QI, through capacity building, technological advancements, and stronger international partnerships. He noted that Saudi Arabia's active engagement in international QI networks will continue to bolster the country's global standing.

4.2. Experiences/Perspectives of the International Institutions

United Countries Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Mr. David Anthony TOMLINSON, Associate Technical Expert from *United Countries Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)* made a presentation regarding UNIDO's Experiences/Perspectives Supporting the Development of Metrology. Mr. TOMLINSON's presentation focused on UNIDO's support for the development of QI and its specific role in promoting metrology among the OIC Member Countries. He highlighted the critical role of metrology in ensuring the quality, safety, and environmental sustainability of goods and services. Metrology, as part of the broader QI system, helps countries participate more effectively in international trade and supports economic development. Mr. TOMLINSON expressed that a significant proportion of the Member Countries are either not members of the *International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM)* or *International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML),* which affects their ability to fully participate in the global metrology network.

Mr. TOMLINSON emphasized that 63% of the OIC Member Countries lack BIPM membership and encouraged them to join global and regional metrology organizations to enhance their competitiveness and technical capacities. He added that UNIDO provides technical assistance and capacity building to national and regional metrology institutes (NMIs), improving their ability to offer calibration services and maintain traceability to international standards.

Mr. TOMLINSON informed participants regarding specific examples include support to the Member Countries like Mozambique, where UNIDO helped broaden the scope of accredited calibration services and enhance national and international metrology networks. Mr. TOMLINSON recommended strengthening national quality policies that align with regional and international frameworks to support the development of metrology systems. He also discussed the importance of legal metrology policies aligned with OIML D1 international recommendations, ensuring the legislation adequately meets the metrology needs of each country. Mr. TOMLINSON expressed that UNIDO promotes a harmonized legal and regulatory framework for metrology, which includes technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment schemes. This ensures that products meet international standards for safety, quality, and sustainability.

Mr. TOMLINSON highlighted that UNIDO value chains from production to export, helping SMEs improve their competitiveness through better metrology practices, particularly in regions such as West Africa. Mr. TOMLINSON discussed challenges such as limited financial resources and human capital shortages in developing countries, which can hinder the growth of metrology services. He emphasized the need for digitalization, partnerships, and more inclusion of metrology in secondary and tertiary education to develop future experts.

5. COMCEC Financial Support Programs

Mr. Mustafa Adil SAYAR, Expert from Programs and Projects Department at the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a presentation on COMCEC Project Support Programs.

Mr. SAYAR started his presentation by providing general information on the COMCEC Project Support Programs, namely COMCEC Project Funding, COMCEC COVID Response and COMCEC Al-Quds Program. After that, he explained objectives and main characteristics of CPF. Accordingly, he informed the participants that 133 projects have been implemented by 29 countries and 6 OIC Institutions. He emphasized that almost all the member countries benefited from the output of the project activities.

Mr. SAYAR also provided details about the supported themes under the trade area. He stated that the CCO supports the projects, which are formulated in line with the sectoral themes that are formulated in accordance with the COMCEC policy recommendations. Reminding that the project submission period is still open, Mr. SAYAR recommended the participants to review the application documents particularly the Project Preparation and Submission Guidelines as well as supported sectoral themes before designing and submitting their project proposals. Moreover, he informed the participants about online project submission and highlighted the critical steps for this process.

Mr. SAYAR continued his presentation with providing brief information about the trade projects under CPF to be conducted in 2024. Accordingly, five projects are being implemented in 2024 by the member countries, namely, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Suriname, Türkiye, Uganda.

Furthermore, Mr. SAYAR informed the participants that the new project call will be made in October 2025.

6. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Can AYGÜL, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office. In his closing remarks, Mr. AYGÜL expressed his sincere gratitude to the Member Country participants for their active participation and contributions to the discussions and negotiations. Afterward, Mr. AYGÜL conveyed his thanks to representatives of OIC, UNIDO and other institutions for their valuable contributions. Lastly, Mr. AYGÜL underlined that the contributions of the participants would be reflected on the Policy Guide.

7. Annex I

AGENDA

OF THE 23rd MEETING OF THE COMCEC

TRADE WORKING GROUP

(19-20 September 2024; Ankara)

"Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries"

Opening

1. "Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries" (Scope, Conceptual Framework and Methodology)

2. Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies

3. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member Countries , International Institutions,

4. COMCEC Project Support Programs

5. Policy Debate Session: Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 40th COMCEC Ministerial Session

Closing

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8. Annex II

PROGRAMME

23RD MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

(19-20 September 2024, Grand Mercure Ankara Hotel, Türkiye)

"Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries"

September 19th, 2024

09.00-09.30 **Registration**

09.30-09.35 **Recitation from Holy Qur'an**

09.35-09.45 **Opening Remarks**

09.45-10.05 **COMCEC Trade Outlook 2024**

- *Presentation by Mr. Yunus KAYIŞ*
  Trade Working Group Coordinator
  COMCEC Coordination Office

10.05-10.15 Discussion

10.15-10.55 **Presentation of the Policy Guide**

- *Presentation by Dr. Maria Rüya HAN*
  Consultant
  COMCEC Coordination Office

10.55-11.15 Discussion

11.15-11.30 **Coffee Break**

11.30-12.10 **Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies and the Policy Options**

- *Presentation by Dr. Maria Rüya HAN*
  Consultant
  COMCEC Coordination Office

12.10-12.30 Discussion

12.30-14.00 **Lunch**

14.00-15.00 **Experiences/Perspectives of the Member Countries**
(Sharing Experiences and Good Practices on Improvement of Quality Infrastructure)

- *Presentations by Malaysia, Oman, and Saudi Arabia*

- *Discussion*

15.00-15.15 **Coffee Break**

15.15-15.45 **Experiences/Perspectives of International Institutions**

- *Presentation by Mr. David Anthony TOMLINSON*
  Associate Technical Expert
  United Countries Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

- *Discussion*

15.45-16.15 **Utilizing the COMCEC Project Support Programs**

- *Presentation by Mr. Mustafa Adil SAYAR*
  Program Coordinator
  COMCEC Coordination Office

- *Discussion*

September 20th, 2024

09.30-11.45 **Policy Debate Session: Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 40th COMCEC Ministerial Session on Improving Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries**

A policy debate session was held to come up with a set of policy recommendations to address improvement of Quality Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries.

- *Discussion*

11.45-12.00 **Closing Remarks and Family Photo**

12.00-14.00 **Lunch**

9. Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

23rd Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group
(19-20 September 2024 - Ankara)

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Mr. ALLOUNE TAREK
  Head of Department, Ministry of Trade and Export Promotion
- Mr. HALES DJAMEL
  Director General, Ministry of Industry and Pharmaceutical Production

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Ms. NANAKHANIM MASIMLI
  Advisor, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Mr. YUNUS HUSEYNOV
  Advisor, State Service for Antimonopoly and Consumer Market Control under the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Ms. MAHBUBA KHATOON MINU
  Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. MD SHAFIQ UDDIN
  Officer, Embassy of Bangladesh in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

- Mr. HYACINTHE MONTCHO
  Director of Studies and Development Aid Coordination, Ministry of Economy and Finance

REPUBLIC OF GABON

- Ms. FRANCOISE CAROLE DOUBY MAYANDJI
  Undersecretary of Economy, Embassy of Gabon in Ankara

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- Ms. ELHAM HAJIKARIMI
  Head of Department, Iran Trade Promotion Organization

REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

- Mr. MUTHANA ALWAN
  Consultant, Iraq Commercial Attaché
- Mr. DHEYAA NASEER
  Manager, Ministry Of Trade

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

- Mr. ABDULRAHEEM MAHMOUD AYED ALHYARI
  Head of Department, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply
- Ms. MARUA NICOLETA SALEM
  Expert, Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

- Ms. HANADI ALENEZI
  Foreign relation researcher, Ministry of Finance

MALAYSIA

- Mr. MOHD RASHIDI YUSOF
  Principal Assistant Director, Ministry Of Investment, Trade and Industry Malaysia
- Ms. NUR AFIFAH IJAP
  Senior Assistant Director, Department Of Standards Malaysia, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Malaysia

SULTANATE OF OMAN

- Dr. JEHAD JABR NASSER ALBUSAIDI
  Head of Department, Ministry Of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion
- Ms. NOOF ALSHAAILI
  Specialist of international organizations, Ministry Of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- Ms. FAKHIRA AKRAM
  Officer, Ministry Of Communications
- Mr. QAZI SALEEM AHMED KHAN
  Counsellor, Embassy of Pakistan in Ankara

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

- Mr. HAIDAR HAJJEH
  Director General, PSI
- Mr. JAWAD ALMUTY
  Head of Department, Ministry of National Economy

STATE OF QATAR

- Dr. ALI ALMARRI
  Head of Department, Public Works Authority – Ashghal
- Ms. LOLWA ALBAKR
  International Cooperation and Trade Agreements Researcher, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Ms. MARYAM ALJEFAIRI
  International Cooperations and Trade Agreements Researcher, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Qatar

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Mr. JIHAD ALHUTHAIL
  General Manager on International Organizations, Saudi General Authority of Foreign Trade
- Mr. SHIHAB ALJABREEN
  Assistant Governor, Planning and Strategy, Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization
- Ms. LAMA ALSAFAAI
  International Affairs Senior Specialist, Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority

REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

- Mr. MOMOH KAIKAI
  Assistant Director, Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Mr. ROSETTA CONTEH
  Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Trade

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

- H.E. Dr. ILHAM OBIED
  QCQA General Administration Manager, SSMO

REPUBLIC OF TOGO

- Mr. KITI YOUO
  Focal Point, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. KOFFI BIOVA ESSIOMLE
  Head of Department, High Authority for Quality and the Environment

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

- Mr. MUSTAFA ÇETİNTAŞ
  Director General, TÜBİTAK UME
- Mr. BEKİR ÖZGÜVEN
  Head of Department, Ministry Of Industry and Technology
- Ms. GÖKSU TÜLÜMEN
  Head of Department, Ministry of Commerce

- Ms. DEMET IŞIL KARAKURT
  Head of Department, Ministry of Trade
- Ms. SEZEN LEVENTOĞLU
  Head of Department, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. ONUR SEÇKİN
  Director of International Relations and Global Business Development, TSE
- Ms. BENGU KUMDEMİR
  Senior Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. ERKUT KIRMIZIOĞLU
  Senior Expert, Ministry of Industry and Technology
- Mr. NURULLAH ASIM AKBULUT
  Expert, Ministry Of Trade
- Ms. BAŞAK KARAHANLI
  Expert, TSE
- Ms. HATİCE MENDERESTOKER
  Assistant Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. BARIŞ GÖRKEM TALAY
  Expert, Ministry of Industry and Technology
- Mr. MURAT CAN KILINÇ
  Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. OĞUZHAN ERDİN
  Assistant Trade Specialist, Ministry of Trade

B. THE OIC INSTITUTIONS

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

- Mr. SEYID TAHIR MAHMUD

  Senior Expert

- Mr. ABDALLAH SHAKHSHIR
  Assistant Expert

ISLAMIC CORPORATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR (ICD)

- Mr. ALİ ÇAMLIOGLU
  Senior Expert

STANDARDS AND METROLOGY INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SMIIC)

- Mr. YASİN ZÜLFİKAROĞLU
  Senior Expert

C. OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)

- Mr. DAVID TOMLINSON
  Expert, UNIDO

D. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- MEHMET ASLAN
  Head of Department
- CAN AYGÜL
  Head of Department
- Mr. MUSTAFA ADİL SAYAR
- Senior Expert
- YUNUS KAYIŞ
  Trade Working Group Coordinator
- TİLBE GOCUKLU
  Assistant Expert
- Ms. MARIA RÜYA HAN
  Consultant from CCO
- ÖZGÜL YÜKSEL
  Officer
- OZAN LİF
  Officer
- SELİM UYAR
  Translator
- HANDE ÖZDEMİR
  Translator
- HAVVA YILMAZ
  Officer
- YELİZ DURAN
  Officer