



CONCEPT NOTE ON THE ROLE OF REGIONAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

1. Introduction

One of the major planks of intra-OIC cooperation in the relevant socio-economic domains is the mainstreaming of the role of Centres of Excellence for the purpose of building technical and industrial capacities of member-states' institutions with a view to attaining desired developmental objectives. Essentially, the pooling of resources in the technological and scientific sectors would promote efficiency and cost-effectiveness, thereby providing quick-wins towards rewarding multilateral cooperation among member states.

Considering the need to promote technological development in the domain of agriculture, rural development and food security, the creation of a platform for knowledge-sharing among the various training and research institutions in OIC/IOFS member states has become very crucial. Essentially, this training methodology would add value to the current programme of OIC/IOFS on the development of strategic agricultural commodities (Wheat, Cassava and Rice) in their member states.

In this regard and taking into consideration the existence of numerous research institutions in the development of these three strategic commodities in OIC/IOFS member states, regional centers of excellence shall be designated in key regions on each of the selected three commodities. These centers would in turn operate to conduct and coordinate training and research programmes among member states in their respective regions. When required, a central meeting of all regional Centres of Excellence would be convened to discuss policy coordination and related matters.

2. Role of Regional Centres of Excellence:

The role of Regional Centres of Excellence shall, inter alia, include:

- Building human and technological capacities in the field of production and development of strategic agricultural commodities along their entire value chain;
- Promoting dialogue that leads to the sharing of science, innovation and best practices;

- Achieving a model of sustainable development that includes regulatory relevancy of materials and ensures continued value to all participants;
- Leveraging on existing work that has a level of convergence;
- Conducting trainings and workshops within the Regional Centres of Excellence in new/improved technologies in rice, cassava and wheat production, post-harvest and processing activities;
- Enhancing capacity-building of field and extension workers for effective use of new technologies in production of strategic agricultural commodities;
- Intensifying activities aimed at developing experience and expertise in scientific and technologic area for natural breeding of nutritionally valuable and climate-resilient crops with emphasis on avoidance of genetically modified and non-nutritious products;
- Elaborating and mainstreaming R&D programmes and their utilisation for facilitating strategic commodities -related researches;
- Enhancing capacity-building initiatives and develop a viable programme for R&D to employ newer technologies for increased productivity, and new variety development.

The above objectives will be achieved through the provision of high quality training programmes through partnerships with academia, regulators and the agro-food industry.

3. Structure of Regional Centres of Excellence

Regional Centres of Excellence shall be designated, in accordance with the identified developmental needs of countries within a target group of countries within a given regional group and based on their comparative advantages in the production and utilization of any of the three strategic commodities. Consultation with all identified institutions in OIC/IOFS member states would be undertaken to agree on designation of Regional Centres. Such criteria as the research capabilities, size and centrality of location shall be taken into consideration. Centres of Excellence shall be promoted widely to secure funding and other material support within and outside the OIC system in order to perform their set tasks.

4. Proposed list of Regional Centres of Excellence

It is envisaged that the following Regional Centres of Excellence will be created under the OIC Plan of Action for Strategic Commodities.

For the purpose of efficiency, communication and coordination, OIC Member States have been arranged into six geographical groups Asia Group (AsG) I and II, Africa Group (AfG) I and II and Arab Group (ArG) I and II as follows:

(A) Regional Centres of Excellence for Wheat

No.	Group/Zone	Regional Centre of Excellence	Catchment area
1	AsG I	Republic of Turkey	West and South-East Asia
2	AsG II	Republic of Kazakhstan	Central Asia + Afghanistan, Iran, Azerbaijan
3	ArG I	Arab Republic of Egypt	Arab and Africa groups

(B) Regional Centres of Excellence for Cassava

No.	Group/Zone	Regional Centre of Excellence	Catchment area
1	AsG I	Republic of Indonesia	Asia
2	AfG I	Federal Republic of Nigeria	West Africa
3	AfG I	Republic of Cameroon	Eastern and Central Africa

(C) Regional Centres of Excellence for Rice

No.	Group/Zone	Regional Centre of Excellence	Catchment area
1	AsG I	Republic of Indonesia	Asia
2	AsG II	People's Republic of Bangladesh	Central Asia, Arab and Africa groups

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