

The ISESCO Three-year Action Plan (2010-2018) has laid emphasis on the importance and strategic position of the media and of communication. In order to meet its targets and accomplish the civilizational mission entrusted to it internally and externally, ISESCO has put all stakes on institutional communication techniques. These techniques entail continuous communication with its broader public, listening to the Other and engaging in dialogue with him, and laying bridges of partnership and cooperation, all within the framework of a knowledge and information society with all its terms and prerequisites and taking into consideration the challenges associated with this society.

Conscious that information and communication are two complementary processes in which all possible channels and methods of expression are used and through which occurs the exchange of views, ideas and experiences, thus leading to a greater understanding and allowing better possibilities of mutual acquaintance, information exchanges, interaction, cooperation and coexistence, ISESCO was determined in the current Three-Year Action Plan (2016-2018) to put to the best use information and communication technologies, both new and conventional, to enhance its outreach on the international level, assert its continuous presence within and beyond the Islamic world, enhance the role it plays in cultural dialogue and the alliance of civilizations, and further its openness onto its environment within and beyond the Islamic world. ISESCO paid special attention to the information and communication sector as a connecting thread of all its fields of competence in the educational, scientific and cultural levels, more so since this sector's role has gained in importance with the advance of technology and the growing diversity and complexity of its intervention areas, as well as the diversity and multiplicity of the target groups and beneficiaries of ISESCO's activities.

In line with this vision, the Center of Information and Communication will endeavor under the Mid-Term Action Plan for 2016-2018 to publicize the achievements and activities of ISESCO and its Director-General in and beyond the Islamic world, promote interactions and cooperation with the media in the Islamic world and beyond and reinforce ISESCO's drive towards openness onto and communication with its academic, cultural and media environment. The Center also will encourage the development of legislation in the information and communication fields and a better access to information. It will promote training and scientific research on new information and communication professions, and address stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media from a professional, academic, legal and human rights perspective.

To achieve this, ISESCO has identified for its information and communication plan two sector-based priorities, namely: "**Supporting ISESCO's intellectual and media outreach within and beyond the Islamic World**" and "**Promoting the right to a greater access to information and addressing stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media from a professional and legal perspective**".

Three projects were selected for implementation during the 2016-2018 term, namely:

- 1. Project on channeling IT and public relations into strengthening ISESCO's international outreach.**
- 2. Project on promoting greater access to information and the right to responsible expression in the information and communication sector**
- 3. Project on a professional and legal approach to mutual stereotyping in the media.**

In implementing these projects, the Center will be guided by the directives issued by the various sessions of the General Conference, the Executive Council, the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers and the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC). It will engage in continuous coordination with national commissions and competent authorities in Member States and cooperate with regional and international partners on relevant issues particularly the Islamic Radio and Television Union, the Islamic News Agency, the Union of Arab States Broadcasting Union, the General Union of Arab journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, the UNESCO Information and Communication Department and the International Telecommunications Union.

The Center's implementation of its programmes will bring into play a number of reference documents that include the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic world, ISESCO's three-year and midterm action plans, the Tunis Commitment and action plan issued by the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 2005), and the Strategy for the Development of Information and Communication Technologies in the Islamic world. Equally important documents in this regard are the General Framework of the Programme of Action to Refute the Media Smear Campaigns against Islam and the Islamic Civilization, the Course in Training Journalists and Broadcasters to Counter Stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western Media, and the study on Western Media Contents on Islam in light of International Law. Another important referential element for the Center will be the periodic information and communication reports issued by competent authorities in Member States, as well as Islamic and international organizations, bodies and observatories, research centers and civil society institutions interested in the information and communication sector.

1. Project on channeling IT and public relations into strengthening ISESCO's international outreach

General framework:

Information technologies and public relations are two modern tools used to cast light on the activities of institutions and their achievements, enhance their communication with internal and external audiences, and reinforce their local, regional and international impact and outreach. The use of IT in information gathering, transmission, dissemination and processing has reached significant proportions, matched by the growing diversity of methods of using information technologies and PR techniques to influence and guide public opinion and project a positive image of the institution.

Since its inception, ISESCO has been sensitive to the importance of information technologies and their role in publicizing its civilizational mission. With this in mind, the Islamic Organization has always endeavored to create direct and indirect channels of communication with media institutions within and outside the Islamic world. It consistently provided specialized parties with information, news, reports and publications relating to its fields of competence in education, science, culture and communication. ISESCO has accumulated a significant experience in this area, manifest in the regular publishing in Arabic, French and English of the quarterly bulletin (ISESCO), the annual journal *Islam Today*, and dozens of directories and information booklets, CDs and documentaries, as well as many press communications and statements issued on various occasions, media releases and weekly electronic bulletins, and finally the use of social media and the development of a web portal.

ISESCO will continue to boost the role of the media and public relations to keep pace with the developments taking place today in this sector, especially the electronic component. The aim is to achieve a professional and modern coverage of the activities of the Director General, the various directorates and the regional offices by combining the traditional forms of news coverage with modern technologies in communication, to strengthen relations with the broad and increasingly diverse audience of ISESCO in a context of building bridges of trust with the public, giving body to the notion of the right to access information relevant to ISESCO's fields of competence, drawing benefits from this information and disseminating it widely to convince public opinion in Member States and outside the Islamic world of the civilizational role that ISESCO plays in the service of Muslims within and outside the Islamic world.

Objectives:

- To provide Islamic and international media organizations with information, news, reports and publications relating to the activities of ISESCO's Director-General, directorates and regional offices.
- To utilize PR techniques to enhance communication and cooperation between ISESCO and governmental and non-governmental organizations and media institutions within and outside the Islamic world.
- To support the local, regional and international outreach of ISESCO, promoting cooperation and coordination with its partners, encouraging contacts with research centers, experts and researchers in information and communication within and beyond the Islamic world.

Areas of intervention:

- Publicizing activities and achievements of ISESCO and its Director General in the Muslim world and beyond.
- Enhancing communication and cooperation with the media in the Muslim world and beyond.

Partners:

- Islamic and international organizations sharing similar interests.
- Governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations active in the media sector.
- Associations of media professionals within and beyond the Muslim world.

Total budget:

US\$ 210,000.00

Area of intervention 1: publicizing activities and achievements of ISESCO and its Director General in the Muslim world and beyond

To further expand the intellectual reach of ISESCO and publicize its activities, the Center will strive to develop methods of formulating news and information on ISESCO's activities within the seat country and abroad, diversify the ways of disseminating and publicizing these through the continued publishing of the quarterly bulletin "ISESCO" in the three working languages of the Organization in a new format. Priority will be given to news and reports on the educational, scientific, cultural and communication activities implemented for the benefit of Member States and Muslim minorities outside the Islamic world.

As part of the celebration of the capitals of Islamic culture in the Arab, African and Asian regions in 2016-2018, informational days will be organized in coordination with the competent authorities of the country of which the capital is celebrated as a capital of Islamic culture, to introduce the programme of the capitals of Islamic culture and the

activities scheduled by ISESCO in this regard and its action programme and projects in its fields of competence. These informational days will be inaugurated with a press conference given by the Director General of ISESCO.

Efforts will be made to document research and studies that address issues related to the fields of competence of ISESCO, either through the continued annual publishing of the *journal Islam Today* or through the documentary series published under the title *Civilizational Edification of the Islamic World*. The Center will also compile news on the activities of the Director General and sector-based directorates and publish them on the ISESCO website as well as distribute them to Islamic and international news agencies and to local and international media. The Center will continue reporting on and documenting the activities of the ISESCO Director General, sectoral directorates and specialized centers through the preparation of the “annual media file”, developing the contents and format of the weekly newsletter, monitoring and compiling news, information and activities related to the preoccupations and interests of ISESCO and distributing them to directorates, sections and departments, each according to its field of intervention. The Center will provide the media and the Muslim and international public opinion with accurate statements and, whenever the need arises, respond to fabricated news spread about ISESCO and its Directorate General. The center will put together press kits for the events and gatherings organized by ISESCO both in the seat country and abroad, and cooperate with the Center for Information, Planning Documentation and Publishing in providing the necessary information for the preparation and organization of radio and television news programmes and documentaries on ISESCO's activities and on its Director General.

Expected outcome: publishing news and media reports about the activities of ISESCO and its Director General within and outside the Islamic world in paper format and electronically

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicizing the activities of the Director General, the sector-based directorates and specialized centers and regional offices of ISESCO • Documenting the activities of ISESCO and its Director General • Weekly electronic posting of news roundups on the activities of ISESCO and its Director General • Enlighten the Islamic and international public opinion on the positions of ISESCO and its General Director vis-à-vis events and urgent developments occurring within and outside the Islamic world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing 12 issues of the quarterly newsletter "ISESCO" in the Organization's working languages. • Publishing 3 issues of the <i>Guide to ISESCO</i>. • Publishing 3 issues of the journal <i>Islam Today</i>. • Organizing 9 informational days to mediatize ISESCO on the occasion of the celebration of the Capitals of Islamic Culture for 2016-2017-2018. • Publishing 3 issues of <i>Civilizational Edification of the Islamic World</i>. • Publishing 3 issues of the <i>Annual Press file</i>. • Publishing 144 issues of the weekly electronic newsletter in the working languages of ISESCO. • Publishing the debates held by the Director General in a yearbook. • Issuing statements, declarations and announcements. • Holding 9 interviews of the Director General.

Area of intervention 2: enhancing communication and cooperation with the media in the Muslim world and beyond

Conscious that institutional communication represents one of the facets of human communication in its development, solidarity and civilizational goals since it feeds individuals, groups and institutions with the knowledge, information and experiences needed to bring about positive changes in mindsets and behavior and in the perception of and attitude towards the Other, the Center will strive to activate cooperation mechanisms and utilize communication techniques in an effort to reinforce professional relationships with media representatives from within and outside the Islamic world. The Center will invite them to participate in the coverage of the major activities held by ISESCO in and outside the seat country and enable a number of young media representatives from Member States to benefit from advanced training sessions organized within and outside the Islamic World. It will also provide financial and technical support to non-governmental media organizations and associations active in the educational, scientific and cultural fields in Member States.

As ISESCO plays the role of the interface, intermediary and frontline in the defense of the Islamic identity and culture, special attention will be dedicated to strengthening its position on the international scene and furthering its intellectual and cultural reach. To this end, the Center will endeavor to strengthen links with the media in Member States through networking and the organization of joint activities such as ISESCO doors open days and sensitization days. It will strengthen cooperation with media and communication supervisory bodies at Islamic and international organizations in order to share experiences, open up to civil society organizations specialized in media and communication, journalist training institutes and information colleges, and research and media study centers within and outside the Islamic World.

Expected outcome: strengthening cooperation ties with representatives of the media and civil society organizations operating in journalism and media within and outside the Islamic World

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust and strengthening cooperation ties between ISESCO and media representatives from within and outside the Islamic World. • Promoting the developmental role of media institutions and professional associations in Member States • Promoting the openness of ISESCO onto its academic, cultural and scientific surroundings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of 15 media representatives from the Islamic world and beyond in covering major conferences organized by ISESCO at the seat country and abroad. • Building a database of media institutions and experts in the Islamic world. • Extending support to 9 media professionals to enable them to benefit from advanced training sessions in and outside the Islamic World. • Providing financial and technical support to 3 organizations, associations and non-governmental media bodies from Member States operating in ISESCO's fields of competence. • Holding 3 meetings to examine and discuss ISESCO's new publications.

2. Project on promoting greater access to information and the right to responsible expression in the information and communication sector

General background:

With the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the challenges they have given rise to at the legislative level in direct correlation to the right to communicate, express opinions and access information, ISESCO will take greater interest in programmes and activities aimed at supporting freedom of expression and better access to information in Member States and towards which efforts were already made within the framework of the previous three-year action plan (2013 -2015). The aim was to promote freedom of expression in Member States in a framework of responsibility and commitment to professional ethics and to the right to access information as one of the fundamental rights affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Islamic Declaration of Cultural Rights.

ISESCO's will also continue its efforts, initiated in its 2001-2003 action plan in areas such as building the capacities of human resources active in ICTs in Member States, especially young journalists, this continuity representing at the same time a consecration of its former accomplishments and a response to the growing needs of Member States for training and media coaching in order to keep up with the rapid developments occurring in the information and communication sector. ISESCO will focus on formulating a programme for building capacities and professional skills, entrenching expertise in new media and communication professions, and a culture of communication between society's diverse categories, especially young people.

Objectives:

- To update legislation addressing information and communication and strengthening the ethics of new media uses.
- To develop the professional capacities of workers in the ICT field in Member States.
- To encourage scientific research and innovation in the ICT field in Member States.

Areas of intervention:

- Developing legislation on information and communication and access to information.
- Developing training and scientific research pertaining to new information and communication careers.

Partners:

- Islamic and international organizations and bodies sharing similar concerns.
- Government institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society institutions interested in media-related legislation, training and scientific research in the areas of information and communication.

Total budget:

US\$ 1,000,000.00

Area of intervention 1: developing legislation on information and communication and access to information

ISESCO will endeavor to sensitize Member States to the importance of developing their national legislation in order to improve the possibilities of access to information. It will also continue its efforts to strengthen the media and support its institutions in Member States, adopt a proximity approach in notification and communication, and ensure a wider margin of press freedom by denouncing grave assaults against journalists. ISESCO will ensure that its annual prize for freedom of the press and expression is awarded to persons, bodies or institutions that have provided great services to the media and made sacrifices in order to unveil the truth and spread it.

ISESCO will support the generalization of the creation of higher audiovisual communication authorities in Member States to ensure the respect of the cultural and ethical aspects of media contents addressed to the public and support the establishment of local radio stations and community multimedia centers as channels that make the voice of local communities heard, showcase their specificities, shed light on their cultures and involve the residents of those areas, especially isolated ones, in the edification of society.

Expected outcome: contributing to developing plans and legislation related to ICTs in Member States

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing technical advice to competent authorities in Member States to help them revise and update their national legislation on ICTs. • Supporting non-governmental organizations pursuing the promotion of a culture of communication among children and young people. • Raising awareness about the ethical and cultural aspects of social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispatching international experts specialized in information and human rights legislation to 6 Member States in need of technical advice to revise and update their national ICT legislation. • Providing financial and technical support to 9 non-governmental organizations intent on spreading the culture of communication among children and youth (at the rate of 3 organizations per year). • Holding 6 seminars on the cultural and ethical aspects of social media.

Area of intervention 2: Development of training and scientific research pertaining to new information and communication careers

Taking into consideration the actual needs of Member States, ISESCO will carry out a number of activities aimed at supporting media and information training institutions with infrastructure and technological equipment, technical expertise and professional supervision, and empowering the human resources working in this field with the means necessary to keep pace with technological developments and take stock of new discoveries and of the and ways of harnessing them.

ISESCO will also contribute to developing courses for training and coaching media professionals, with a special focus on new social media. The Organization will continue to work on issues related to the use of these media by children and young people in Member States, given the many concerns they have begun to generate in view of the legal and ethical challenges that flow from the widespread use of ICTs and the tremendous rise of the number of their users in the Islamic World.

ISESCO will strengthen the role of its regional centers of audiovisual production and multimedia in cooperation with the Member States that host these centers, the aim being to develop the technical and professional qualifications and abilities of human resources working in ICTs in Member States, and establish ISESCO chairs for ICTs in a number of information institutes and faculties that fall under the universities of the Islamic world.

ISESCO will continue its efforts to promote scientific research in media and communication by supporting a number of scientific research projects in ICTs in their technical and human aspects in Member States, and encouraging young researchers by continuing to award the annual ISESCO prize for the best university research in the areas of information and communication.

Expected outcome: contributing to meeting the needs of Member States for technical and vocational training of ICT human resources

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and vocational training of workers in social and new media in Member States. • Supporting training and rehabilitation programmes of institutions active in information and communication technologies in Member States. • Promoting communication and information-related scientific research and encouraging young researchers in Member States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing 6 training sessions on new media professions at the ISESCO regional centers for audiovisual training and production. • Holding 6 national workshops on cultural and ethical aspects of social media. • Publishing 3 professional directories and reference books on new media uses. • Providing financial and technical support to 3 national institutions for media training in Member States from the African region. • Establishing ISESCO Chair on communication at a university of a Member State. • Awarding 3 prizes as part of the annual ISESCO prize for best ICT university research.

3. Project on a professional and legal approach to mutual stereotyping in the media

General background:

On the beginning of the third millennium, the denigration of Islam and Muslims has taken on new forms that violate all international laws governing human rights and the media. The methods and mechanisms of this denigration have evolved, shifting from the sphere of books, encyclopedias, and orientalist studies to films, radio and television programmes and the internet. Thanks to all these media, the Western media's legal violations have increased, tarnishing the image of Islam and Muslims among the European elites but also globally, including in academic and cultural circles. These growing abuses are a deliberate breach of international law and a heavy blow to the notions enshrined in international instruments on human rights and that confirm the freedom of the media and of expression but become restrictive when it comes to the denigration of religions, preventing and prohibiting any invitation to hatred, racism or religious discrimination, and advocating tolerance instead.

Certain Western media have endeavored to kindle the fires of Islamophobia as part of the denigration of Islam, its symbols and sacred places through the stereotyping they continue to engage in about Muslims and Arabs, and about Islam, the religion they label as the religion of terrorism. In reaction, many voices have risen within the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, calling for a binding international law to prevent the spread of this phenomenon, in line with the requirements of the respect of religions.

In view of this, and since ISESCO is called upon to correct any misinformation about Islam and the Islamic civilization in the international media, conscious of the challenges and demands expressed in this area and taking due consideration of the outcome of the evaluation activities undertaken under the previous three-year action plan for 2013-2015, ISESCO will continue to address Islamophobia and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western media from a legal and professional perspective. It will push ahead with the fulfillment of the targets enshrined in its relevant reference documents, namely the **Strategy for Cultural Action outside the Islamic world and its Executive Plan**, the **General Framework of the Action Programme to Refute Media Smear Campaigns against Islam and Islamic Civilization**, the **ISESCO Programme to Qualify Journalists at Islamic Media Institutions in the West to Counter Media Distortions of Islam and Islamic Civilization**, **ISESCO's Course to Train Journalists and Broadcasters in Addressing Stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western Media**, the **Islamic Declaration on Cultural Rights**, and **Western Media Content in Islam in Light of International Law**.

Objectives:

- To halt the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Western media and cultural and academic environments.
- To empower media professionals within the Islamic world and beyond with the techniques of countering stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media, and creating alternative images that would help promote dialogue among cultures and promote tolerance, coexistence and the respect of others.
- To expose legal violations of Western media productions prejudiced against Islam and Muslims, and proposing the legal actions that could halt these violations.

Areas of intervention:

- Professional treatment of stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media.
- Legal treatment stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media.

Partners:

- Islamic and international organizations and bodies sharing the same concerns.
- Government institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society institutions and human rights associations within the Islamic world and beyond interested in countering the phenomenon of Islamophobia and addressing mutual stereotyping.

Total budget:

US\$ 1,000,000.00

Area of intervention 1: professional treatment of stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media

In this area, ISESCO will endeavor to develop the expertise, the professional and technical skills of journalists working in media institutions in the Islamic World and beyond, enrich their legal knowledge and enable them to defend their interests, cultural specificity and discharge their information mission in the respect of laws, international norms and conventions on freedom of opinion and expression, ethics of journalism and rejection of religious denigration.

ISESCO will also continue to explore ways of addressing Islamophobia and the negative stereotypes peddled by Western media about Islam and Muslims. It will organize training courses for the benefit of media workers and journalists outside the Islamic world about the use of modern information and communication technologies to disseminate true information about Islam and its civilization.

Expected outcome: addressing the phenomenon of Islamophobia and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western media of a professional media perspective

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building expertise and developing the professional and technological skills of journalists outside the Islamic world for the production of media contents that provide true information about Islam and its culture and participate in modifying the stereotypes held about Muslims and their beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing 6 workshops to carry out the modules of ISESCO's Course to Train Journalists and Broadcasters in Addressing Stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western Media for the benefit of Muslim journalists residing in European, American and Asian countries.

Area of intervention 2: legal treatment of stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media

Taking into account the growing interest in the legal aspects of Islamophobia and religious denigration and the contribution of ISESCO to finding a solution to the divergence of opinions on all aspects related to religious denigration, including restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression as enshrined in the relevant international conventions, ISESCO will dedicate special attention to the violations of international law perpetrated by a highly biased Western media against Islam and Muslims. In this context, the Organization will channel its efforts to raising awareness about the need to bring about a balance between freedom of expression and the respect of religious sanctities. It will coordinate with intergovernmental organizations and civil society institutions and urge them to implement the charters, covenants, conventions, declarations and resolutions as well as national and international laws that draw the line between freedom opinion and expression and the various excesses and abuses against religions that are committed by the media under the pretext of freedom of opinion and expression.

ISESCO will also endeavor to raise awareness among the heads of cultural centers and Islamic associations in the West to adopt a legal approach when dealing with media slur campaigns against Islam and its sanctities by resorting to the local judiciary system to prosecute these media platforms on charges of advocating religious hatred, breaching the principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.

Expected outcome: treatment of Islamophobia and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western media from a legal perspective

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness about the importance of adopting a legal approach in dealing with media campaigns against Islam and its sanctities. • Strengthening cooperation between Islamic media and their counterparts in the West within the framework of codes of conduct and ethics and international laws on human rights and the freedom of expression and opinion. • Encouraging studies and research on stereotypes about Islam and Muslims and the legal breaches committed by Western media against Islam and Muslims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding 3 meetings of experts in law and international relations from among Muslim competencies living in the West to discuss the mechanisms and instruments of prosecuting media organizations prejudiced against Islam and Muslims. • Establishing the International Media Forum in order to address mutual stereotyping and the phenomenon of religious denigration.