

## 2.5 Directorate of External Relations and Cooperation

As part of the cooperation and partnership policies of ISESCO alongside Arab, Islamic and international organizations and civil national bodies, the Organization was able to achieve positive concrete results, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, with the implementation of a great number of activities included in ISESCO action plans of the past years in cooperation with these institutions. ISESCO also benefited from the quality expertise of these partners in developing work mechanisms and promoting implementation tools. In view of its good international credibility in terms of professionalism, credibility and seriousness, ISESCO succeeded to enlarge extensively the scope of its partnerships with cooperating parties, through concluding cooperation agreements, MoUs and programmes of action with the most important regional and international organization in the same area of competence. Accordingly, they co-organized international conferences and colloquia and implemented important developmental projects on the field. These activities had the greatest impact not only on promoting the image of ISESCO regionally and internationally, but also on active contribution to the development of Member States and the promotion of their educational, scientific, cultural and communication levels.

Cooperation with Islamic and international financial institutions and donors was further developed so as to ensure technical and financial complementarity between the financial resources of these institutions and ISESCO's technical expertise and thus secure as much benefits as possible for Member States from the projects and programmes implemented in this framework.

ISESCO gave utmost importance to developing cooperation with civil society bodies and its different components considering the ever-increasing role of these bodies in serving society and achieving ISESCO's objectives and civilizational mission. Cooperation with these bodies focused on issues relating to common priorities, particularly sustainable development, human rights, alliance of civilizations and education for all.

In view of the large cooperation relationships network built over the past years, and in light of the outstanding achievements made over the successive action plans, and with a view to ensuring further organization of this partnership, better control of its mechanisms and guaranteeing its effectiveness and efficiency, action under this plan will continue on the following two sector-specific priorities:

- **Consolidating cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, financial institutions and donors;**
- **Entrenching the developmental dimensions of humanitarian action in the Islamic world.**

Through two projects which are:

- 1- Developing strategic partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations, financial institutions and donors;**
- 2- Developing strategic partnership with civil society institutions and humanitarian organizations.**

## **Project 1: Developing strategic partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations, financial institutions and donors**

### **General framework:**

Under previous action plans, ISESCO signed more than 229 cooperation agreements and MoUs with governmental and non-governmental regional and international organizations, as well as financial institutions and donors. It also held dozens of joint committees and coordination meetings with these institutions to agree on and assess future cooperation programmes, and explore their implementation arrangements. Besides, ISESCO strives for establishing close relations with specialized and active bodies on the international scene within ISESCO's areas of competence, although there are no mutual cooperation agreements. Yet they contributed with ISESCO to holding a set of conferences and symposiums, and implementing a number of developmental projects of material benefit to Member States.

This cooperation could secure key additional financial resources for the Organization, which led to lower spending on the said programmes and projects. ISESCO also benefited from the outstanding expertise of a number of cooperating organizations, and succeeded to highlight the participation of the Islamic world in the international arena, voice the concerns of Member States and present the true image of Islam and Muslims to the international civil society.

Under the first project, ISESCO will strive to reinforce the cooperation bases existing with effective partners network and look for other serious partners in order to meet the evolving needs of Member States, particularly in light of the regional and international developments over the last years, through concluding cooperation agreements and action programmes, holding bilateral and multilateral coordination meetings, as well as participating in, and contributing to sponsoring and supporting, whenever needed, conferences, forums and international events. In this context, focus will be laid on trying to meet the developmental priorities of Member States, through unifying field efforts, orienting strategic approaches and using institutional impact so as to promote the national policies of Member States in various sectors, strengthen good governance, encourage best practices and step up pilot and innovative initiatives likely to give a great impetus to developmental action.

ISESCO shall ascertain that the outputs and implementation mechanisms of this cooperation take the form of integrated programmes and projects which address key issues and propose drastic and effective solutions according to set deadlines and in coordination with the benefitting and implementing parties as well as partners. This new cooperation approach will be based on quality criteria and assessment indicators of the field impact of these programmes and projects, instead of quantitative considerations and measures which focused on the number of activities and spent amounts, without confirming their effective results and the real benefits brought to Member States.

### Objectives:

- Developing cooperation and partnership relations with governmental and non-governmental organizations and bodies.
- Securing additional financial resources to ISESCO.
- Implementing joint projects and programmes
- Sharing expertise and experiences in areas of common interest.

### Areas of intervention:

1. Promoting cooperation and partnership with governmental organizations and bodies.
2. Promoting cooperation and partnership with non-governmental organizations and bodies.

**Total budget: US\$ 766,444.00.**

### Area of intervention 1: Promoting cooperation and partnership with governmental organizations and bodies.

In its earlier action plans, ISESCO gave great attention to cooperation with national, regional and international governmental organizations. It implemented a large number of programmes and projects with these institutions, both in Member States and beyond, and participated as well in the most important international conferences and forums held by these institutions. In addition to being development-oriented, through projects that have a direct benefit on the field in Member States, cooperation also focused on the strategic dimension which promotes joint Islamic action and ensures the Islamic world's active role on the international scene.

Coordination efforts will be carried out with the relevant Directorates at ISESCO, as well as official authorities in Member States, in order to draw up joint projects and elaborate integrated perspectives for the programmes to be presented to competent governmental institutions. ISESCO will ensure the activation of the role of the national commissions so as to identify developmental priorities and needs of Member States.

### Expected outcome 1: Broadening the scope of cooperation fields with governmental organizations and increasing the number of partners.

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing the legal and procedural framework for cooperation with governmental organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concluding new cooperation agreements and new action programmes with major governmental organizations with similar fields of competence.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing coordination and consultation mechanisms with governmental organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convening meetings of joint committees and coordination meetings with current partners to agree on cooperation programmes during the action plan years.</li> <li>- Fostering key development initiatives.</li> </ul>

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
- Promoting the implementation outputs and strategic platforms of cooperation with governmental organizations	- Agreeing with partners on participation in important international forums and events.

**Area of intervention 2: Promoting cooperation and partnership with non-governmental organizations and bodies.**

The field roles of civil society institutions are constantly evolving and the scope of their development responsibilities is expanding, making them indispensable and strategic partners in policy formulation, project implementation and national decision-making. ISESCO has, years ago, anticipated the growing importance of civil society institutions and promoted partnership with them; accordingly, ensuring that they benefit from training programmes, supporting their equipment with the necessary work tools, and involving them in the implementation of educational, scientific and cultural activities.

ISESCO took growing interest in cooperation with the private sector whether in organizing major international conferences, forums and exhibitions or in terms of partnership in supporting and sponsoring specialized programmes of common interest. Under this theme, ISESCO will strengthen this trend which represents one of the new dimensions of the cooperation policy of the Organization, ensure constructive complementarity with the previous theme on cooperation with national organizations. Accordingly, it will sign more cooperation agreements and action programmes, and continue holding joint commissions and coordination meetings with non-governmental institutions and the private sector. Outreach to private sector institutions will also be intensified to raise their awareness of the need to be involved in ISESCO’s specialized programmes and projects for Member States, and stress the importance of investing in human capital, knowledge infrastructures, and technologies to support sustainable development.

**Expected outcome 2: Enhancing the contribution of non-governmental institutions and the private sector to ISESCO’s programmes.**

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
- Providing the legal and procedural framework for cooperation with NGOs, civil society institutions and the private sector.	- Concluding new cooperation agreements and action programmes with the most important NGOs, civil society institutions and the private sector.
- Strengthening coordination and consultation mechanisms with civil society institutions to serve sustainable development issues.	- Participating in organizing, sponsoring and establishing specialized national, regional and international forums for civil society institutions to serve sustainable development issues.
- Encouraging the contribution of the private sector to developmental projects in Member States.	- Implementing a number of developmental programmes and projects for Member States in cooperation with the private sector.

## Project 2: Developing strategic partnership with civil society institutions and humanitarian organizations

### General framework:

Islamic teachings have urged for volunteerism and donating, for which some religious obligations and charity forms in Islam have provided structured mechanisms such as Zakat (alms), which is one of the five pillars of Islam, and Waqf (endowment), which is one the most important forms of goodness and charity, that stress the values of solidarity and interdependence. Such teachings also set up financial and banking systems based on social justice and mechanisms for guaranteed funding, far from speculations and risks that most theories and practical experiences proved to be of a fragile and even dangerous nature for the future of institutions, individuals and society. Inspired from these teachings and values, and in a bid to develop joint humanitarian Islamic action and activate its role in the developmental process as a whole, and in pursuit of the new orientations in its cooperation policy, ISESCO, in this context, **will encourage channeling the efforts of charities, humanitarian institutions, and humanitarian individual initiatives of donors in the Islamic world towards sponsoring development projects, contributing to financing field programmes that sustainably benefit the needy and support productive practices.**

**Although the social circumstances in a number of Member States require urgent humanitarian assistance to meet priority needs, this should not play down the importance of providing the needed educational roles and the preservation of cultural heritage and monuments as well as the preservation of ecosystems. All these are specialized developmental issues that complement with immediate and daily assistance provided to communities in need.**

In view of the special relations that the Organization entertains with a large number of non-governmental humanitarian and charitable institutions, and taking account of the need to promote coordination mechanisms among these specialized institutions and bodies, be they Arab, Islamic or International, ISESCO seeks, under this theme, to reach out to these bodies and agree with them on programmes and projects likely to promote the humanitarian services provided and to expand areas of field intervention, **through integrating educational, scientific, cultural and communication activities for the concerned groups.** In addition to these joint projects, ISESCO will focus in its cooperation with these bodies on the holistic vision of joint Islamic humanitarian action, by holding bilateral meetings and joint commissions and **organizing regular joint forums** where participants discuss the main challenges facing them, propose practical solutions and agree on joint projects. ISESCO will also prepare a project on the strategy for **specialized humanitarian Islamic action** and draw up model implementation plans which would help these institutions and serve as bases for ISESCO and other specialized organizations in related partnership projects. Building on this premise, cooperation with

these bodies will not be limited to benefiting from their financial resources and field experience, as they will in turn benefit from ISESCO's technical expertise, its developmental vision and official relationship with public national institutions in the countries concerned.

**Objectives:**

- Orienting the efforts of charities and humanitarian institutions along with individual initiatives to development fields;
- Sponsoring developmental and humanitarian projects, and contributing to financing field programmes.

**Areas of intervention:**

1. Enhancing ISESCO's role in the area of Islamic humanitarian action.
2. Upgrading the educational, scientific, cultural and information services in Member States with special conditions.

**Total budget: US\$ 766,444.00.**

**Area of intervention 1: Enhancing ISESCO's role in the area of joint Islamic humanitarian action.**

Under this line of action, ISESCO will endeavor to consolidate partnership with humanitarian and charity institutions in order **to ensure complementarity between meeting urgent needs which is the mainstay of these institutions, and the sustainable services that ISESCO provides** as a specialized institution focusing on development issues, through supporting education, science, culture and communication

To this end, joint committees and coordination meetings will be held with these institutions to agree on joint programmes and projects that respond to the priorities of stakeholders in their various social, educational and cultural dimensions. ISESCO will also organize a forum every three years, to be attended by major charity institutions in order to assess achievements, identify urgent needs, careful planning for proactive humanitarian action, and coordinate the allocation of tasks and obligations. In the same vein, ISESCO will prepare a draft strategy to develop joint Islamic humanitarian action's executive mechanisms, and intensify contact with official national authorities in Member States, especially the ministries of endowment, to activate mechanisms of consultation and coordination between these ministries and discuss the ways to benefit from their resources and expertise.

**Expected outcome 1: Establishing implementation and coordination mechanisms for enhancing the developmental orientations of joint Islamic humanitarian action.**

Measurement Indicators	Performance Indicators
- Providing the legal and procedural framework for cooperation with humanitarian and charity institutions.	- Concluding cooperation agreements and new programmes of action with key humanitarian and charity institutions.
- Consolidating mechanisms of coordination and consultation with humanitarian and charity institutions.	- Organizing coordination forums for charity institutions and official meetings of national authorities in charge of endowments in Member States.
- Ensuring the availability of reference instruments to integrate development dimensions in joint Islamic humanitarian action.	- Preparing a draft strategy for joint Islamic humanitarian action, its mechanisms of implementation and other relevant studies, researches and reports.
- Encouraging participatory initiatives in the humanitarian and development fields.	- Establishing an institution for orphans and encouraging their access to educational institutions.

**Area of intervention 2: Upgrading the educational, scientific, cultural and information services in Member States with special conditions.**

As part of the programmes scheduled by the specialized directorates, action under this area will focus on consolidating and coordinating educational, scientific and cultural activities in Member States and Muslim societies experiencing special conditions such as Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Mali.

ISESCO will coordinate with official authorities in these countries and cooperate with the organizations interested to hold conferences and forums for donors so as to provide the financial resources and human expertise necessary to enhance the services provided and preserve the cultural and environmental specificities of these regions. ISESCO will approach competent authorities in the targeted countries to provide it with information on priorities and pressing needs in order to include them in its annual action plans and programmes.

**Expected outcome 2: Providing further support to educational, scientific, cultural and communication institutions in Member States with special conditions.**

Performance Indicators	Measurement Indicators
- Consolidating coordination and consultation among ISESCO programmes Directorates and national, regional and international parties to provide support for educational, scientific, cultural and communication institutions in Member States with special conditions.	- Coordinating and promoting the financial and technical support earmarked by Programmes Directorates to improve their field services; - Organizing donors' conferences and forums in addition to coordination meetings with specialized organizations on providing further support to educational, scientific, cultural and communication institutions in Member States and in Muslim societies with special conditions.

## Off-budget Specialized Projects

The adopted policy to date in fostering cooperation with Arab, Islamic and international organizations has achieved substantial outcomes. Through these cooperation efforts, the Organization has built up a wide relation network which has considerably contributed to expanding its institutional reach and boosting its record of achievement within the Member States and beyond.

Under the previous action plans, the General Directorate has focused on fostering bilateral and, sometimes, multilateral cooperation with its partners as part of the approved annual programmes and budget, and through joint funding to cover programmes implementation expenses. This methodology has contributed to reducing the financial cost of activities and programmes, thus doubling their number and enhancing the level of their implementation. However, the timeframes for adoption of the annual programmes schedule and balance them with external partners' timeframes have always largely disrupted the chronology for implementing programmes and financial provisions allocated at the beginning of each year. In addition, scheduled activities are not properly controlled as their number is successively changing due to joint meetings with other organizations and bodies held throughout the year.

**It should also be noted that the implementation conditions of such programmes set by a number of major international institutions no longer match the measures provided for by ISESCO's administrative and financial regulations.**

Against this backdrop, and in a bid to diversify and improve partnership's foundations and methods, the Organization has included within this Plan the so-called **off-budget specialized projects**. These projects are characterized by a comprehensive approach in addressing relevant issues, their extensive geographical coverage of the benefiting parties, their flexible implementation measures and easy control of administrative and financial procedures.

ISESCO has actually initiated coordination with a number of Arab, Islamic and international organizations to identify the major areas of these specialized projects, start their conception, agree upon their implementation mechanisms and set their relevant budgets, based on specific measures complying with the administrative and financial procedures of each party, and in light of ISESCO's strategies, and the Ten-Year Action Plan of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the SDGs.

Though the selection list of fields and projects will not be restrictive based on the excellent outcomes achieved under the past plan, which was the first plan to include such projects, the data provided below seek to outline the general features and objectives of these projects. Their final structure will be established in agreement with the partners concerned with implementation.

In the field of education, these projects will focus on promoting all kinds and levels of traditional education, stepping up Member States' efforts to achieve Education for All goals, and reducing illiteracy and dropout rates. They will also give special attention to developing modern technology applications in the field of education in general, and supporting educational facilities. An illustration is Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum-ISESCO Prize for Voluntary Development of Educational Facilities in the Islamic World. With regard to the field of science, major projects will be devised with the aim of promoting the use of renewable and environment-friendly energy solutions, establishing researchers' networks in science, innovation and water resources management. In this regard, ISESCO holds the Award of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Environmental Management.

Regarding the area of culture, given the special care the Organization devotes to safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, these projects will seek to step up national and international efforts to preserve the various components of this heritage, particularly the heritage in danger of disappearance, including attaching importance to writing the languages of Islamic populations in the Standardized Quranic Script. These projects will also focus on training human resources working in cultural industries considering their direct development role. In furtherance of its efforts in intercultural dialogue and alliance of civilizations, ISESCO will design integrated projects aimed at enhancing the presence of the Muslim world in relevant international initiatives, publicizing the true image of Islam and Muslims, and highlighting Muslims' contributions to entrenching the culture of justice, peace and security, in addition to enhancing the civilizational identity elements of the Ummah through model projects, such as the project on promoting the values of glorifying the Holy City.

Moreover, coordination will be initiated with the competent parties in Member States to develop sectoral governance mechanisms, especially in the educational, scientific and cultural fields through taking advantage of the successful experiences and pioneering projects, namely "ASAN" Project in the Republic of Azerbaijan and other relevant projects concerned with managing key sectors in Member States and rationalizing their resources. In this regard, ISESCO will design integrated and comprehensive action programmes.

As for communication, modern written and audio-visual communication technology will be optimally used to enhance the status of Islamic civilization on the international arena; publish Muslims' major past and present achievements in education, science and culture; and create virtual platforms and electronic networks to facilitate exchange of expertise and experiences among outstanding researchers in the Muslim world.

## Budget of External Relations and Cooperation Programmes

Projects	Project budget	Total budget in US\$
1- Developing strategic partnership with governmental organizations and non-governmental bodies.	<b>766,444.00</b>	<b>1,532,888.00</b>
2- Developing strategic partnership with civil society and humanitarian action institutions.	<b>766,444.00</b>	

## Details of Financial Items

### Directorate of External Relations and Cooperation (salaries and allowances)

Items	First year 2019	Second year 2020	Third year 2021	Total (US\$)
<b>Basic salaries</b>	176,965.00	190,864.00	217,199.00	585,028.00
<b>Allowances</b>	83,312.00	86,089.00	90,393.00	259,794.00
<b>Social security</b>	22,290.00	23,033.00	24,185.00	69,508.00
<b>New posts</b>	32,320.00	33,397.00	35,066.00	100,783.00
<b>Total (US\$)</b>	<b>314,887.00</b>	<b>333,383.00</b>	<b>366,843.00</b>	<b>1,015,113.00</b>