

BRIEF REPORT SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ORGANIZATION (STIO)

Introduction

COMSTECH Science, Technology and Innovation Organization (STIO) came into being following its approval by the 34th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM). As a result of which the existing COMSTECH Secretariat was granted the status of Science, Technology and Innovation Organization (STIO). STIO has been entrusted with the goal of providing well-articulated and well-coordinated implementation strategies for the manifold STI programmes and projects. Its objectives include: promoting cooperation; encourage member states to incorporate science, technology and innovation in the formulation and implementation of their development strategy; maximize utilization of the scientific talent and technological potential of member states and to foster their technical competence and capabilities; promote smart partnerships and pool resources of the private and public sectors for research and development; and promote and encourage regional and international cooperation in STI. STIO has also been conceived to realize goals of the OIC Vision 1441H and Ten-Year Program of Action. The raison d'être of STIO is to enhance the existing levels of S&T in the OIC member states and to yoke S&T successfully to innovation which would ensure the rapid socio-economic development of the Muslim Ummah.

STIO has held its first meeting on 24 May 2010 in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia followed by meeting of its Program and Budget Committee on 21-22 June 2010, also in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Coordinator General of the COMSTECH is the Director General of STIO and acts as the ex officio Secretary of the Council of Ministers.

Brief Review of STIO Activities

First STIO Meeting

In pursuance of the above-mentioned goal, the first meeting of STIO was held on 24 February, 2010 at the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The meeting was presided over by His Highness Prince Dr. Turki Bin Mohammad Al-Saud, Vice-President of KACST and attended by the following Founding Members of STIO:

Kingdom of Bahrain, Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of the Gambia, Republic of Guinea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, State of Palestine, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Yemen

OIC General Secretariat and COMSTECH attended the first meeting in the capacity of the permanent members of the STIO.

Decisions of the First STIO Meeting

Following comprehensive deliberations, the STIO agreed as follows:

1. The Draft Statute of COMSTECH Secretariat Science, Technology and Innovation Organization (STIO) were unanimously adopted.
2. The Program and Budget Committee of STIO was formed and entrusted with the twin task of formulation of STIO programs and the approval of STIO budget. The following member states agreed to be the members of the Committee:

Arab Republic of Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, OIC General Secretariat, COMSTECH Secretariat, Director General STIO as the officiating Secretary of the Program and Budget Committee of STIO

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia most graciously offered to host the first meeting of the Program and Budget Committee of STIO.

3. The following members were elected to the Executive Committee of STIO as Regional Representatives for fostering regional coordination among the member states of the STIO:

- Burkina Faso from African region
- Islamic Republic of Iran from Asian region
- Arab Republic of Egypt from the Arab region

The following member states expressed their full and unwavering support to STIO and moreover participated actively in the deliberations of the First meeting:

Burkina Faso, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of The Gambia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Yemen

Following the first Meeting of the STIO on 24 May 2010, the Meeting of the Program and Budget Committee of STIO was held in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on June 21-22, 2010

First Meeting of the Program and Budget Committee of the STIO

The meeting had tabled six agenda items, which are given below:

1. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda which was disseminated at least five weeks before the meeting.
2. Election of Session Chairs and Rapporteur in the context of four planned sessions.
3. Presentation on program proposals by the Coordinator General COMSTECH. The third agenda item was divided in two parts, A and B.

Part A delineated the various areas identified in the presentation of the Coordinator General COMSTECH which could be fostered by the STIO member states. These focus areas were:

- Higher Education
- S&T Human Resource Development
- STIO Centres of Excellence
- Research Promotion
- University-Industry Collaboration
- Industrial Clusters and Global Production Networks (GPNs)
- Scientific Mobility
- Focus Disciplines containing 11 discipline crucial for fostering STI in OIC member states

Part B put forward the ideas for prospective programs to be supported by the STIO.

- Promoting S&T Partnerships
 - Building Innovation Capacity
 - Strengthening S&T Infrastructure
 - Events and Programs intended to Increase S&T Interaction
 - Improving R&D Infrastructure
 - Muslim World Technology Investment Fund (MTIF)
 - Organising Technology Foresight
 - Academic Interaction among STIO Scientists and Institutions
 - Stimulating Brain Circulation of OIC Scientists Working in the West
4. Open discussion on program proposals chalked out in preceding item.
 5. Presentation of specific project proposals by the STIO member states.
 6. Budget Proposals, Distribution of Resources and Finalization of Budget 2010-2011 also containing the proviso that share of each country be calculated according to the approved OIC formula and the proposal that 80% contribution of any specific country be earmarked for the exclusive use of that country after administrative costs have been duly accounted for.

The following members of the Committee attended the meeting:

Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Republic of Senegal, Syrian Arab Republic, OIC General Secretariat, COMSTECH Secretariat, Director General STIO as the officiating Secretary of the Program and Budget Committee of STIO

The following decisions were approved at the conclusion of the deliberations:

1. Projects to be linked to the Ten-year Program of Action and OIC Vision 1441 H.

Country-specific use of Funds

2. Funds contributed by STIO member states will be spent for projects within their countries except for the bilateral and multilateral projects for which participating member states will decide on the extent of contribution of each country.
3. Projects will be within defined time frames and funding will be made available before initiating a project.
4. Project funds will be deposited in separate STIO accounts, within STIO member states and 4 monthly statements of expenditure/bank statements will be sent to STIO.
5. STIO will play role of a facilitator and coordinator to translate decisions into actions including marketing of projects and obtaining additional funds from international donor organizations.
6. STIO will identify qualified resource persons and scientists for project implementation.
7. STIO Secretariat to receive 10% of budgeted project amount for its services at the start of execution of each project, for maintaining its secretariat and for meeting administrative costs.
8. Each participating country, when needed, will place a dynamic scientist in COMSTECH – STIO to oversee the implementation of the programs for that country. The salary and other expenses in this connection will be additionally borne by the STIO member country deputing a scientist for overseeing programs. Till such time that a full time scientist is placed in STIO Islamabad. Office space to be provided to a member of the Embassy of the STIO member country to coordinate the activities of that country.
9. The STIO programs to be major initiatives designed to uplift the status of science, technology and innovation in STIO member States and contribute to the process of socio-economic development.
10. Database of all projects to be compiled by STIO for circulation amongst interested Member States of STIO. This database shall be made available on a website accessible to STIO Member States within eight weeks.
11. A budget of USD seventy million for the year 2011 was approved for STIO programs.
12. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Islamic Republic of Iran pledged in principle, to make available USD five million each, annually for this initiative. STIO will approach other countries, to make significant commitments to this program.
13. Member States to start programs immediately.