

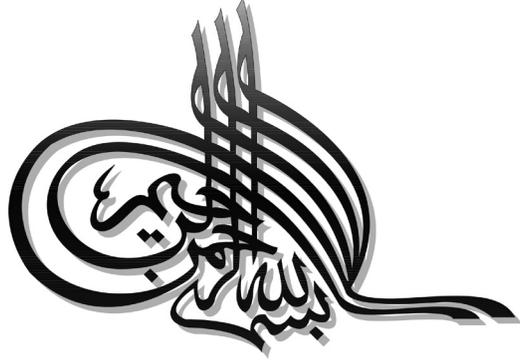


**Seventh Meeting of the Consultative Council
for the Implementation of the Strategy for Science,
Technology and Innovation in Islamic Countries**

**Project of TFAHUM Programme
on Exchange of Students, Faculty
and Researchers among Universities
in the Member States**

(Annex VIII)

**ISESCO Headquarters, Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco
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General Context:

- 1- As part of its functions in the areas of education, science and culture, ISESCO puts **human capital development** among its top priorities. In this context, the most obvious mission of the higher education system is to train competent human resources capable enough to contribute effectively to comprehensive economic, social and cultural development of countries. This makes higher education an agent of socioeconomic development with a role to play in improving the quality of life of citizens. To bring this project to fruition, the mobility of students, teachers and researchers will certainly bring in certain added value. To this end, ISESCO plans to launch a major project focused on the materialization of exchange programmes among higher education institutions in the Arab, African and Asian regions.
- 2- Today, globalization and information and communication technologies (ICT's) offer a great opportunity to bridge up differences through better understanding of other civilizations, societies and cultures, thus contributing towards harmony, peace and tranquility in the world. This will help to deal with the toughest challenges of humanity, namely the mutual lack of knowledge leading to differences and disparities which pose major threat to world peace. **This highlights the need to implement concrete dialogue-based outreach projects**, especially in the scientific, educational and cultural fields. This is the context of the present exchange programme intended as an off-shoot of ISESCO's overall strategy to promote rapprochement of peoples and intercultural dialogue, the ultimate aim being to build a cohesive society where peace, understanding and mutual respect will prevail, in accordance with the shared values of the Muslim world, which are actually universal.
- 3- Considering the various challenges facing higher education systems in the Member States (marked by training-employment mismatches and poor access to quality training services, and exponentially growing numbers of students, which all require new funding sources), and in a bid to **strengthen education-focused cooperation**, ISESCO, submits to the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, for consideration, the first phase

of a project to create a general and institutional framework for the exchange of students, researchers and teachers among universities in the Member States. This major project, especially in its educational, scientific and cultural aspects, seeks to promote openness to the Other, while effectively contributing to **rapprochement between academic communities to share experiences and enhance mutual knowledge.**

Objectives:

- 1- The general objective of this ambitious educational project is to contribute to the development of Member States based on optimal use of knowledge. By supporting and supplementing the relevant efforts of these States, the project will seek to foster exchange, cooperation and accordingly improve education and training systems. The purpose is to turn this project into an international reference, like European, American and other similar projects.
- 1- The project concerns higher education, mainly Bacculaureate+3 and possibly advanced vocational education, including doctoral studies. The objective is to contribute to the development of the academic community in ISESCO Member States as an advanced knowledge society, in such a way as to induce sustainable economic development, through a quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment.
- 1- Finally, the project aims to contribute to promoting a better understanding among young people and the educational staff of cultural diversity by helping them to acquire the proficiency and basic skills necessary for youth's personal development, employability and active citizenship.

Specific Objectives of the Exchange Programme:

- To enhance partnerships among universities and prestigious schools in the Member States by creating a credit transfer system among universities to ensure homogeneous validation of curricula.
- To develop mobility of students (studies, training, internships), teachers, researchers and staff of private and public institutions wishing to strengthen

their capacity, with the ultimate aim of improving communication between Member States.

- To develop a university-enterprise synergy (sharing best practices, experiences and know-how) as the cornerstone of higher education development, while promoting a culture of innovation in universities.
- To endorse mutual recognition of qualifications.
- To encourage the learning of foreign languages.
- To promote on-going training of teachers.
- To strengthen knowledge and experience sharing.
- To make sure the strategic choices of the selected programmes are supported by centers of excellence.

1. Programmes by Sector:

The programme should pursue specific objectives to support or promote better education and training through the development of sectoral programmes. These must meet the priority needs of Member States, or have a major impact on the socioeconomic environment. Actions in this regard should be based on:

- Developing qualified training programmes.
- Supporting innovation, creativity and competitiveness, developing entrepreneurship, supporting and developing the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies (ICT's).
- Promoting language learning and fostering intercultural dialogue.
- Fostering gender equality and personal fulfillment.
- Promoting exchange of good practices, etc.

Furthermore, coherence and complementarity of this programme should be strongly aligned with ISESCO Member States' flagship educational policies. It should particularly take into account the following main elements:

- Specific needs of all learners (students, researchers, teachers).
- Equal opportunities for men and women (gender perspective).

- Understanding cultural and linguistic diversity and multiculturalism as a means of countering racism, stereotypes and xenophobia.
- Formal recognition by the universities of origin of the segments of studies carried out abroad by their own students (semester, whole year or more).
- Maintaining payment of scholarships and loans by the University of Origin.

2. Beneficiaries of the Programme:

- Students, researchers and faculty.
- Institutions and organizations actively involved in the programme.
- Programme partners.
- Enterprises, social partners, labour organizations and chambers of commerce and industry.
- Bodies providing guidance, counseling and information.
- Associations of participants, parents or teachers.
- Centers and research incubators.
- Non-profit associations, voluntary organizations and NGOs.

3. General Conditions of Eligibility:

- To opt for a curriculum that is among the core components of the programme in which the student is enrolled at the University of origin.
- To have completed the first three years of university studies.
- To sign a learning agreement specifying the conditions to be met before departure.

4. Programme Management:

- 1- The programme will be managed by a Committee consisting of:
 - Representatives of both ISESCO and partner institutions.

- Representatives of ISESCO Member States (for the 3 regions: African, Asian and Arab) to be appointed in consultation with the National Commissions of ISESCO Member States.

2- The Committee will promote academic exchange between the Member States, through bilateral agreements between universities and / or colleges.

3- Among its tasks, the Committee will select deserving students of disadvantaged backgrounds to benefit from merit scholarships. To this end, an annual fund will be devoted to supporting exchange programmes. All cooperating parties will contribute to the Fund.

This project, aimed to promote exchanges (students, researchers and teachers) and the convergence of ISESCO Member States' university systems towards common reference standards, would be a first step towards a broader approach as part of a long-term process of quality education improvement, as in the European systems of higher education (Bologna Process).