The IsDB is matching Bangladesh's needs with Turkey's experience so that the two countries will cooperate to increase the local cotton production in Bangladesh.

It is at the center of the IsDB's mandate to promote cooperation among its member countries. In 1981, the Makkah Declaration of the Third Islamic Conference Summit called the OIC member countries to strengthen collaboration, to utilize and foster their talents, skills and technological capacities. The Bank responded and launched its Technical Cooperation Program in 1983. This has then been scaled up via what we call Reverse Linkage.

The structured skills swap under Reverse Linkage helps the recipient country diagnose and analyze a problem while the provider country shares its proven knowledge and expertise to find a solution.

The idea that all partners have something to gain from cooperation lies at the heart of Reverse Linkage. The learning process is reciprocal, knowledge transfer is in both directions, and benefits are mutual.
Cotton is one of the most important cash crops in Bangladesh and it is the major source of raw material to the textile industry, contributing significantly to the country’s exports. However, local cotton production is far from meeting annual requirements of the textile industry, which is around one million tons. Therefore, 97% of cotton is imported from abroad and only 3% is locally produced. The Government of Bangladesh is keen to increase cotton production without affecting already limited agricultural land used to grow food crops. Therefore, the Government’s policy is to reduce less productive agricultural land for cotton production, reorganizing the development of new cotton varieties.

The Cotton Development Board (CDB), under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey, is mandated to conduct studies on cotton production and release varieties appropriate for agro-ecological conditions in Turkey. It is leading to increasing cotton productivity and yield since 1934. The CRI’s achievements have contributed significantly to Turkey ranking among the top countries in the world for lint cotton yield. Since 1934, the CRI’s achievements have contributed increasingly to the country’s exports. However, local cotton production, and hence reducing cotton imports, will enable the country to save foreign exchange reserves and increase farmers’ incomes.

In Bangladesh, the project will trigger a chain of positive changes. The project will effectively contribute to addressing the major challenge; the enhancement of staff capacity on advanced research methodologies to develop improved cotton varieties. Increasing local cotton production, and hence reducing cotton imports, will enable the country to save foreign exchange reserves and increase farmers’ incomes.

The CRI developed and released 37 cotton varieties that have the potential to become a model that can be replicated in other IsDB-member countries where cotton is a primary agricultural crop.