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Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 – Final Independent Evaluation

ILO DC/SYMBOL: IRQ/20/03/EUR

Type of Evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

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List of Abbreviations

CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
FGD	Focus group discussion
GET Ahead	Gender & Entrepreneurship Together
HQ	Headquarters
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LABADMIN/OSH	Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
IRIS	Integrate Resource Information System
ITC ILO	International Training Center of the International Labour Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme and Budget
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States
SCP	Strategic Compliance Planning
SYIB	Start & Improve Your Business Programme
ToT	Training of trainers
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT	
Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure	<p>The project "Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 in Iraq" IRQ/20/03/EUR was the first project to be implemented by the ILO office in Iraq, and aimed at enhancing the application of international labour standards and national labour legislation, and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work. In order to reach this main objective, the project set out four immediate objectives that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour inspection system modernized and its effectiveness enhanced in line with the International Labour Standards, particularly the labour inspection conventions • Occupational Safety and Health improved in line with the ILO Conventions No. 155 and 187 in response to COVID-19 • Awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH is raised and they are in a better position to engage in programmes to promote compliance with labour legislation and in response to COVID-19 • Workers in agriculture benefit from enhanced working conditions and improved status through skills development opportunities, awareness raising, and farm level interventions. <p>The project mainly targeted labour inspectors, OSH inspectors, social partners, farm owners, labour recruiters and agriculture workers including coop members. The project was implemented with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the main government counterpart.</p>
Present situation of the project	The project ended as of the end of May 2023
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	<p>The purpose of this final evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the overall achievements of the project against its planned objectives and outputs to generate lessons learned, best practices and recommendations, and also to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of resources and achievement of results. The evaluation has also identified strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy and implementation as well as best practices and lessons learned with recommendations, which will help to inform future project design and implementation as well as contribute to broader organizational learning. Furthermore, the evaluation investigated cross cutting issues including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards. The evaluation covered the entire timeframe of the project, from December 2020 to May 2023, and also covered the geographical areas of the intervention through assessing (i) centralized interventions at the level of the Federal Republic of Iraq, including Kurdistan Region of Iraq and relevant national</p>

	<p>institutions in Baghdad, (ii) local-level interventions in one governorate in the north of the country (Dohuk), and one governorate in the south (Al-Basra). It looked at the project achievement at the level of each immediate objective, and took into consideration the project duration, existing resources and political, security, and environmental constraints. The primary clients of this evaluation are ILO ROAS and ILO Iraq Office, ILO constituents in Iraq, including relevant government entities, and the donor. Secondary audience include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.</p>
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>This evaluation followed a mixed methods approach, relying on available information and quantitative data collected through the desk review and primary qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with the key project stakeholders as well as through focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries. Interviews were conducted with 43 stakeholders (of which 8 were females. While the evaluation strived to achieve a balanced share of male and female respondents for the interviews, a balance could not be achieved given that the stakeholders are predominantly male. A total of 14 FGDs were held with 93 project beneficiaries (of which 43 or 46% are female). Gender was mainstreamed throughout the methodology from inception to data collection to data analysis. A main limitation of the methodology was a delay in data collection faced during the fieldwork, but this was overcome by the follow-up made by the project team with stakeholders. Another limitation was that the sample of the beneficiaries selected for the FGDs are not representative of the whole population given the large number of beneficiary groups across multiple locations having been exposed to a varied set of interventions. However, in order to come up with representative findings, the evaluation employed a stratified random sampling process to ensure that voices are heard from across most beneficiary groups, and from both women and men.</p>

<p>MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS</p>	<p>Relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Finding 1:</u> The project’s objectives and focus were found to be aligned with the needs of constituents and with the context of Iraq and the priorities of its authorities, mainly due to the fact that the project design was heavily based on the DCWP (2019-2023) which has already been agreed upon with constituents. • <u>Finding 2:</u> The relevance of the project to the needs of the targeted populations was enhanced through the different assessments conducted early on in the project to inform implementation, and the needs of vulnerable groups were addressed by the project design. Effectiveness: • <u>Finding 3:</u> In spite of the ambitious design of the project in relation to its limited level of resources, the project managed to implement almost all of its planned activities and was effective in its contribution to achieving all of its immediate objectives. • <u>Finding 4:</u> Under the 1st and 2nd immediate objectives, the project was able to develop evidence-based national policies for labour inspection and OSH that were both validated by social partners and endorsed by the government in federal Iraq as well as in KRI. The project also built
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the capacities of labour inspectors & OSH experts, and upgraded the institutional capacity for labour inspection and OSH in both Federal Iraq and KRI. But due to limited resources, the project could not complete the setting up on an online/electronic labour inspection system, despite having accomplished related activities towards laying the groundwork to automating the inspection system. The ILO plans to complete the automation process through another ILO project.

- Finding 5: A main gap found in the labour inspection system in Iraq is a lack of inspection on agriculture farm activities given the closed family nature of these farms and their distant locations, coupled with the limited resources available for inspection.
- Finding 6: Under the 3rd immediate objective, the project was effective in raising the awareness of social partners on the role of inspection and OSH and established a tripartite labour inspection committee. However, there remains challenges in coordination within local tripartite structures and mechanisms in Iraq.
- Finding 7: Under the 4th immediate objective, the project succeeded in implementing a very large number of field-level activities, including at the farm level, across several different topics and in different locations across Iraq within a relatively limited period. The project reached close to 9,000 beneficiaries (around 45% females) in Basra and Dohuk, under this component of the project.
- Finding 8: While the extensive field-level activities carried many varied benefits to workers, the evaluation found some improvements in the working conditions and status of specific, but not all, beneficiary groups exposed to the project's activities. This was due to many factors including workers not being able to apply what they learned due to various constraints, and also due to the fact that the wide range and large number of activities across different topics and geographical areas implemented in a limited period of time may have played a role in scattering efforts under this outcome and diluting its effects.
- Finding 9: The project's achievements form an essential contribution to the project's overall objective, but they are considered to be a first step in the long journey towards realizing the project objective.
- Finding 10: The project contributed significantly to ILO's cross cutting policy drivers. *Labour standards* were at the heart of the project and its objective. On social dialogue, the project activities, especially the component focused on social partners and the validation workshops and trainings held with them under other components, contributed to bringing ILO constituents closer together during implementation. But gaps remain in social dialogue in Iraq.
- Finding 11: Not only did the project manage to reach an impressive share of female beneficiaries, but it also addressed the issue of gender equality across many components including its provision of gender-sensitive trainings, including ToT trainings, and the integration of gender equality in the awareness session provided by the project. The project reached more than 4,000 women across its activities.
- Finding 12: A number of unintended positive consequences emerged as a result of the project intervention, including a higher capacity of local implementing partners, the Iraqi government's enhanced

reporting on the OSH Convention No. 184, and the opening of an ILO office branch in Basra.

- **Finding 13:** The project was able to provide strategic technical support and enhanced policy dialogue among social partners in response to COVID-19 mainly through its work on developing the labour inspection and OSH systems in the country.

Efficiency:

- **Finding 14:** The project faced some delays in its first year from factors outside of the project team's control, including the repercussions of COVID 19 (e.g. longer than anticipated lockdowns and travel restrictions) and a slow recruitment process for project staff. And since this is the first project implemented by the ILO office in Iraq, the project was operating in new contexts and had limited knowledge of the landscape of implementing partners which caused delays, given the general weak level of capacity of potential partners in the country
- **Finding 15:** the efficiency of the project was greatly enhanced following the 1st year given the strategic decisions made by the team, including the competitive procurement of services from local implementing partners and recruiting local consultants. The use and development of local skills and adherence to competitive procurement procedures carried effectiveness and efficiency gains, especially with regards to project activities being cost efficient.
- **Finding 16:** The development of evidence-based national policies in full consultation with social partners in a limited period of time has raised the efficiency of the project.
- **Finding 17:** However, much of the efficiency gains of the project came at a cost which was the very high levels of workloads and stress experienced by most human resources of the project as well as rushing some activities to meet the project's ambitious targets within a limited period of time. This was mainly due to the misalignment between the project design and its resources.
- **Finding 18:** The results achieved by the project are extensive and more than justify the resources invested, reaching more than 9,000 individuals and resulting in endorsed policies, plans, structures, and tools. Results included achievements on both the policy and field levels across different autonomous geographical areas that have different structures and languages.

Sustainability & Potential Impact:

- **Finding 19:** A number of sustainability measures and approaches were utilized by the project to enhance the sustainability of its results, including the many different ToT programs, the development of evidence-based nationally endorsed policies in full consultation with social partners, the establishment of a dedicated training centre, the establishment of two new units at MoLSA KRI, and the equipping of the national OSH centre.
- **Finding 20:** Despite these sustainable approaches, most results achieved by the project were found to be unsustainable without further ILO support, given that this project was originally designed to be a first phase in a larger programme. In other words, the project has only laid the groundwork for further action and developments to the

inspection and OSH systems, and there is still a need of further capacity building.

- Finding 21: While national government and non-government partners have expressed their willingness to continue their efforts towards the project's objectives, they indicated that it will be challenging for them to do so outside of ILO's support given the need for a higher level of capacity.
- Finding 22: Most of the project's initiatives are logically correlated with each other and with the overall objective of the project, with the exception of outcome 4, which many consider to be a separate project by itself.
- Finding 23: While the project's initiatives provide an essential contribution to the project's overall objective, they are considered as groundwork and the first step in the long path ahead towards realizing the project objective.
- Finding 24: The evaluation has found that allocating more resources to the project, especially in terms of time, would have enabled a more effective contribution to the project's main objective, given the very ambitious objective for the context of Iraq.

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements:

- Finding 25: Significant managerial and technical effort was put by project team to complete almost all of the project's extensive activities and achieve a number of results in a new context and within limited resources. The team's ample effort is considered to have been a pivotal factor behind the success of the ambitious project.
- Finding 26: Extensive consultations were held between the project team and the relevant technical specialists at ILO ROAS and HQ across many components of the project which has enhanced the effectiveness of the project. The evaluation found that extensive technical and administrative support was provided by ILO regional and global specialists based on the request of the project team.

Conclusions:

- The project, which was based on the DWCP in Iraq, was found to be relevant to the Iraqi context and its objectives aligned with the needs of constituents and priorities of authorities. The implementation of assessments in the beginning of the project has contributed to informing implementation to better meet the needs of vulnerable groups addressed by the project design.
- The project was effective in its contribution to its immediate objectives and managed to implement most of its planned activities in spite of the ambitious nature of the project design relative to its resources. The project resulted in a number of significant achievements, especially on the policy level, including the development of evidence-based policies on inspection and OSH that were validated by social partners and officially endorsed by the government. On the field level, the project managed to reach a large number of beneficiaries across different interventions in separate regions inside Iraq, with improvements in the working conditions and status of some workers exposed to some of the

project's activities. But implementing such a wide scope of activities across different areas may have played a role in scattering some efforts and diluting their effects.

- The project contributed significantly to ILO's cross cutting policy drivers, given its focus on labour standards across all of its objectives and activities and its efforts in bringing together social partners in validating important project outputs, despite existing gaps in tripartite coordination structures and mechanisms in Iraq.
- The project also contributed to gender equality. Not only did the project manage to reach an impressive share of female beneficiaries, but it also addressed the issue of gender equality across many components including its provision of gender-sensitive trainings, including ToT trainings, and the integration of gender equality in the awareness session provided by the project.
- The extensive results achieved by the project within limited resources points towards a high level of efficiency by the project, despite some delays encountered early during implementation that were mostly related to the novelty of the operating context to the ILO and a general weak capacity of potential partners. A late recruitment process of the project team as well as prolonged travel restrictions and lockdowns from COVID were also behind some of the delays. Overall, the use and development of local skills and adherence to competitive procurement procedures carried efficiency gains in the project.
- A number of sustainability measures were utilized by the project, but most project results were found to be unsustainable without further ILO support, as results have laid down the groundwork for further work. While national government and non-government partners are willing to continue their efforts, there remains a need for continued ILO support given the need for a higher level of capacity.
- Having said that, the achievements of the project are considered to be only a first step in the long journey towards realizing the project's main objective. The evaluation has found that allocating more time for the project would have enabled a more effective contribution towards the project's main objective.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

- Align future projects' design parameters with estimated/available project resources, including human, time, and financial resources
- Continue supporting Iraq's journey to develop and modernize its labour inspection and OSH monitoring systems, including completing procedures for the online labour inspection system, supporting the implementation of the policies developed under this project and continued institutional and professional capacity building.
- Earmark some of the resources of future projects to build the capacities of implementing partners, especially when operating in new contexts or with new partners.
- Request more time for the inception phase when implementing a project in a new context to better understand the landscape.
- Work on enhancing the social protection of agricultural workers

	<p>through enabling the labour inspection system in Iraq to inspect farm activities and facilitating the registration of workers in social security under the newly endorsed social security law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize graduates of ToT activities and the newly inaugurated training centre to build the capacities of stakeholders in Iraq in upcoming projects. • Continue the high level of contribution made by the project to ILO's cross cutting policy drivers of gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards, to facilitate the eventual realization of ILO's policy goals in Iraq.
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Lessons Learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of local skills can greatly facilitate the implementation of activities in new contexts in which there is no ILO presence or where it is difficult for ILO personnel to reach. A main lesson learned by the project's experience in implementing large scale field-level activities in Basra is that the use of local consultants can help avert adverse implications to the project's efficiency and effectiveness resulting from such contexts. • The misalignment observed between the project's overly ambitious design and the project's resources has led to very high workloads and stress levels experienced by most human resources of the project, as well as the project's inability to complete a few of the planned initiatives while rushing a few others. The contribution towards project objectives and the sustainability of results would have been enhanced through a closer alignment between the project's design and resources. Nevertheless, the project exerted much effort to complete most of the activities successfully, including 3 new activities that were added during implementation, and even over achieved some its targets, despite of the limited resources available. <p>Emerging Good Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was able to effectively leverage ILO's global tools, resources, and guidance to complete a large range of activities within a limited period of time. In addition to the heavy technical and administrative support received by the project from the ILO ROAS and HQ as well as the cooperation made with the ILO's ITC, the project utilized and adapted a significant number of ILO global tools in its implementation of field activities including ILO's Career Guidance and Employment Services Tool, GetAhead, SYIB, COOP tools, and the strategic compliance model. The evaluation found that this leveraging of existing resources has raised the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation. • The national labour inspection and OSH policies were developed in an inclusive and informative approach under this project which resulted in its official endorsement by the government, thus constituting an integrated part of the official inspection and OSH systems in the country. The development of the policies was heavily informed by evidence coming from assessments done early in the project, and policies were validated with tripartite

constituents, which facilitated their endorsement.

- Incorporation of a significant amount of TOT activities across many of the project's activities leads to an enhanced level of sustainability of some project results and facilitates the implementation of future capacity building activities utilizing ToT graduates. ToT activities were implemented across various components of the project including TOTs on labour inspection, GetAhead, career guidance and employment services, cooperative development, and OSH. In other words, the project established a group of local trainers who may be utilized in further trainings during implementation of future projects, especially that this project was the first project implemented by the ILO office in Iraq.

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

Project Background

Iraq is an upper middle-income country that has suffered from periodic conflicts over the past two decades, resulting in a fragile political and socio-economic context that lacks stability, despite the presence of significant oil reserves. The Iraqi economy is highly dependent on the oil and gas sector, which generates most of the government's revenues and is the leading export sector.

Iraq faces significant challenges related to employment, social protection and labour rights. The most recent labour force survey implemented in Iraq (2021)¹ revealed that almost two-thirds of total employment in the country constitute informal jobs, indicating a high share of informality in the country. Unemployment is also high at 16.5%, with a modest 39.5% labour force participation rate. Unemployment is particularly high among women (28.2%) and youth (37.5% 15-19 years, 35% 20-24 years), indicating that these two groups are particularly vulnerable.

While Iraq has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions, implementation and enforcement has been weak especially related to freedom of association, collective bargaining and labour inspection. In fact, there are impediments to the functioning of the labour inspection system which has been characterized by poor governance². Most recently in 2023, Iraq ratified the ILO conventions on Social Protection and on Maritime Labour, paving the way for advancements in the field of social protection. Moreover, Iraq ratified the convention on Safety and Health in Agriculture in 2021 to enhance OSH monitoring in this sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the labour sector of the country in terms of reduced livelihoods and employment opportunities. In the absence of protection, the crisis led to the introduction of new working arrangements, that adversely impacted working hours and employment, especially for informal workers. According to rapid small-scale surveys implemented following the outbreak of the crisis, a quarter of those employment before the crisis had been laid off, with over one third of younger workers made redundant³. The crisis highlighted and aggravated the need for an enhanced labour governance system in the country that would result in the application of international labour standards.

Therefore, the ILO project "Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 in Iraq" was designed and implemented as a response to the above-mentioned challenges. The main aim of the EU-funded project was *to enhance the application of International Labour Standards and national labour legislation and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work*. In order to reach this main objective, the project set out for immediate objectives that include:

- Labour Inspection System modernized and its effectiveness enhanced in line with the International Labour Standards, particular the Labour Inspection
- Occupational Safety and Health improved in line with the ILO conventions No. 155 and 187 in response to COVID-19
- Awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH is raised and they are in a better position to engage in programmes to promote compliance with labour legislations in response to COVID-19

¹ ILO, CSO, KRSO (2022) "Iraq Labour Force Survey 2021"

² ILO (2021) "A Diagnostic of the Informal Economy in Iraq"

³ UNDP (2020) "Impact of COVID-19 on the Iraqi Economy"

- Workers in agriculture benefit from enhanced working conditions and improved status through skills development opportunities, awareness raising and farm level interventions.

While the project design estimated that the 3 EUR million project would be implemented in 24 months, actual implementation extended to 30 months at no cost. The extension of the timeframe of the project came in response to the recommendations of an internal mid-term evaluation that was conducted in 2022. Furthermore, amendments to the project’s logframe, mainly regarding the indicators, were implemented following the results of this mid-term evaluation.

The project was implemented with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other state institutions. The project was also implemented with extensive involvement of social partners, i.e. employers’ and workers’ representatives. A full list of project stakeholders was provided to the evaluation team during the inception phase, and accordingly, a preliminary mapping was conducted by the evaluation team to categorize the various key stakeholders of the project into five categories including (i) ILO staff and consultants, (ii) government stakeholders (including representatives from both Federal Iraq and KRI, (iii) workers’ and employers’ organizations (including representatives from both Federal Iraq and KRI, (IV) Implementing partners and trainers, and (v) the donor. The project was implemented on the central level in Baghdad and Erbil and on the local level in Basra and Erbil. In other words, the project’s policy-oriented activities were implemented in the main cities of Baghdad and Erbil while its farm-level local interventions were implemented in the governorates of Basra and Dohuk. The ILO’s role in this project was the provision of technical assistance to improve labour governance in Iraq.

The project was mainly implemented by the ILO personnel in Baghdad and Erbil. Initially, the project team was composed of a Chief Technical Advisor, a national officer, an admin assistant, and a driver. Throughout implementation, the project recruited a number of international and local consultants to support implementation. The project received technical backstopping support from the relevant specialists in ROAS (International Labour Standards specialist & the Regional Gender Equality specialist) and in HQ (Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch (LABADMIN/OSH))

The below table illustrates the project's logframe

Table 1 Project logframe

Project Logframe			
Overall Objective			
<i>Enhance the application of the International Labour Standards and National Labour Legislation and Promoting Social Dialogue, Social Justice, and Decent Work in Iraq</i>			
Immediate Objectives			
1. Labour Inspection System modernized and its effectiveness enhanced in line with the International Labour Standards, particularly the Labour Inspection Conventions	2. Occupational Safety and Health monitoring improved in line with the ILO Conventions No. 155 and 187 in response to COV ID-19	3. Awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH is raised and they are in a better position to engage in programmes to promote compliance with labour legislations and in response to COVID-19	4. Workers in agriculture benefit from enhanced working conditions and improved status through skills development opportunities, awareness raising and farm level interventions

Outputs			
1.1 A National labour inspection policy developed in consultation with the social partners	2.1 A National OSH policy and programme developed in consultation with the social partners	3.1 Workers' and employers' representatives are trained on the role of labour inspection, OSH, and fundamental principles and rights at work	4.1 Improved national regulatory frameworks and structures are developed and promoted for the protection of workers in agriculture and in other targeted sectors
1.2 The ILO Strategic Compliance Intervention Model adopted and implemented via the established methodology	2.2 Capacity of the National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety strengthened.	3.2 Tripartite structures and mechanisms on labour inspection and OSH established, or existing ones strengthened, and more effective	4.2 Improved working conditions and enhanced compliance with national legislation and International Labour Standards on selected farms
1.3 Institutional capacity of the labour inspectorate strengthened	2.3 Reporting and recording of work-related accidents, injuries and diseases improved		4.3 Farms advance their compliance with decent work principles in exchange for support to improve work force productivity
1.4 Capacity of labour inspectors strengthened and improved on regular basis			

Evaluation Background

Evaluation purpose

The purpose of this final evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the overall achievements of the project against its planned objectives and outputs to generate lessons learned, best practices and recommendations, and also to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of resources and achievement of results. The evaluation investigated the evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability & possible impact, and effectiveness of management arrangements, reflecting findings on the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives.

The evaluation has also identified strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy and implementation as well as best practices and lessons learned with recommendations, which will help to inform future project design and implementation as well as contribute to broader organizational learning. Furthermore, the evaluation investigated cross cutting issues including gender equality, disability, and social dialogue in order to determine the project's contribution in advancing the broader goals of the ILO in these areas. The evaluation has fully complied with the ILO evaluation policy including the protocols and guidelines set forth by the EVAL/ILO, which is based on the OECD DAC and United Nations Evaluation Norms and Standards and the UNEG guidelines.

The evaluation assessed the project over its entire duration of 30 months from December 2020 to May 2023. It looked at the project achievement at the level of each immediate objective, and took into consideration the project duration, existing resources and contextual constraints including political, security, and environmental factors. The evaluation also covered the geographical areas of the intervention through assessing (i) centralized interventions at the level of the Federal Republic of Iraq, including Kurdistan Region of Iraq and relevant national institutions in Baghdad, (ii) local-level interventions in one governorate in the north of the country (Dohuk), and one governorate in the south (Al-Basra). The evaluation took specific note of the integration of gender mainstreaming, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards, social dialogue, and environmental sustainability, as well as its contribution to the realization of the SDGs and the COVID-19 response. The evaluation itself was implemented over a period of 10 weeks in a full-time manner.

The primary clients of this evaluation are ILO ROAS and ILO Iraq Office, ILO constituents in Iraq, including relevant government entities, and the donor. Secondary audience include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria & Questions

The evaluation aimed at answering the evaluation questions as presented in the ToR for this assignment. The evaluation questions are illustrated below, and further elaborated on in the evaluation matrix found in annex 1.

Table 2 Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Evaluation Criteria	Main Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project objectives and approach relevant to the constituent's needs and present country context? How relevant was the project to the needs of the targeted population? Were needs of women, PWDs, refugees, IDPs, and most vulnerable groups considered in the project design?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project meet all of its immediate objectives? To what extent has the achievement contributed to the overall objective? What is the level of improvement in the working conditions and status of workers in agriculture? How effective was the project in meeting the needs of agriculture workers? How did the project's achievements contribute to ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards? Has there been any unintended positive/negative consequences of the project intervention? To what extent has the project fostered integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes through the ILO COVID-19 response intervention at country level for a timely crisis response to COVID-19?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have project activities been cost-efficient? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc...) been allocated strategically to achieve all outcomes? To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?
Sustainability and possible impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How sustainable are the results achieved by the project likely to be? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project To what extent are national partners – governmental or non-governmental – able and willing to continue their efforts after the project's end date? What is the likely contribution of the project's initiatives to the stated development objectives of the intervention? Did they contribute as laid out in the initial theory of change? What else could have been done to better realize the project objective?
Effectiveness of management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective was communication between the project's teams, the regional office and the responsible technical department at headquarters? Has the project sought and received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?

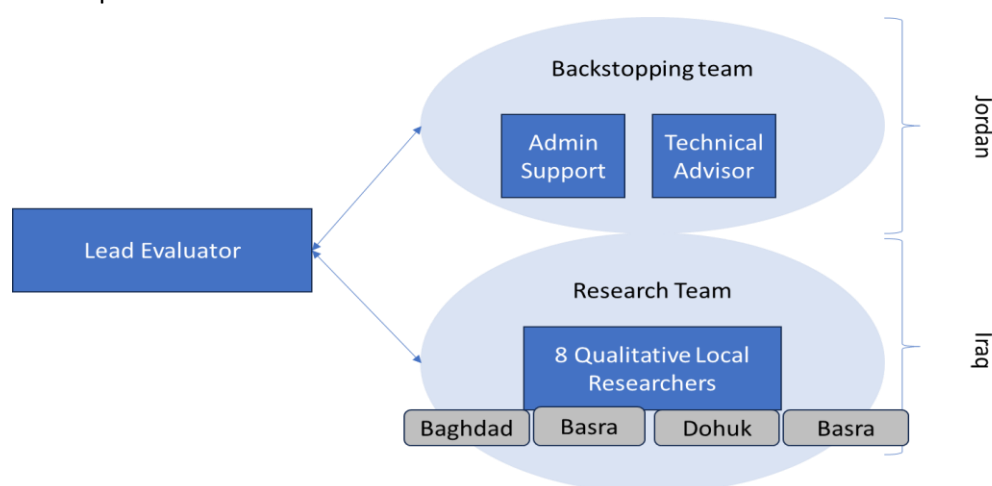
Evaluation Timeline & Management Arrangements

The evaluation took around 10 weeks from its inception until the submission of this final evaluation report. The evaluation process followed the below timeline

Table 3 Evaluation Timeline

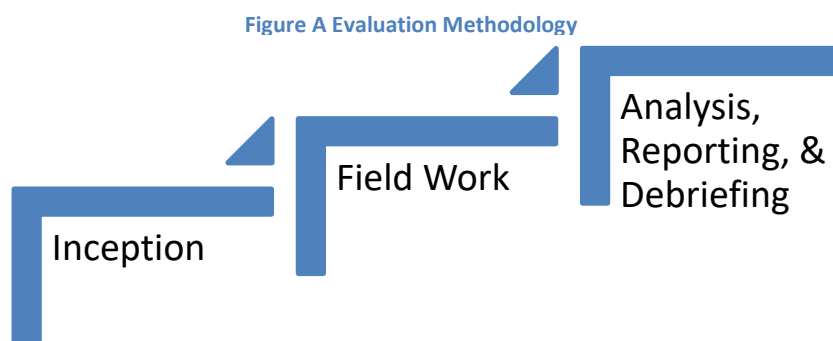
Activities & Deliverables	Jul		Aug				Sep			
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10
Inception phase	Kick off meeting on Jul 24									
Inception Report (Deliverable)		Draft submitted on Jul 31								
Inception Report Approval				Approved on Aug 14						
Data Collection (remote & in person KIIs & in-person FGDs)										
Analysis & reporting										
Draft evaluation report (Deliverable)								Submitted by Sep 11		
ILO Feedback on draft report										
Preparation of comments log (Deliverable)										
Presentation (Deliverable)										
Finalization of evaluation report (Deliverable)										

In order to complete the evaluation within the set period and meet with all sample beneficiaries and stakeholders as suggested in the evaluation methodology, the evaluation team has mobilized significant human resources across the different fieldwork locations in Iraq. The whole evaluation was led by a lead evaluator, one technical and administrative backstopping team housed at To-Excel premises, and one research team located across different areas inside Iraq. The following organogram illustrates the composition of the evaluation team.



Methodology

This evaluation followed a mixed methods approach, relying on available information and quantitative data collected through the desk review and primary qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with the key project stakeholders as well as through focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries. Such a mixed methods approach drew on both subjective and objective sources of data, which has contributed to providing a balanced and insightful evaluation report. Gender was mainstreamed throughout the methodology from inception to data collection to data analysis. In specific, the evaluation team actively sought to include a balanced share of males and females in the evaluation's data collection activities. But given the predominantly male stakeholders, a balanced share of males and females could not be achieved in the interview component of the research but was achieved among FGD participants. Moreover, key issues pertaining to females were focused on initially during the desk review of the inception phase, and later on during the fieldwork. The evaluation team has strived to present gender disaggregated analysis whenever differences between the views of males and females were observed. To as much extent possible, indicators presented in this evaluation have been disaggregated according to gender. The methodology for this evaluation is illustrated in the diagram below.



a) Inception

Following the kick off meeting conducted with the project team and with the evaluation manager at ILO ROAS, a desk review process was initiated to prepare for the inception report. The project team provided the evaluation team with key project documents on which the desk review process was based. Requests for additional project documents were made during the inception phase, and were well received. The full list of documents is listed in annex 3. The desk review process began with the inception phase and remained until the reporting phase. During the desk review process, special attention was given to the issue of gender equality.

During the kick off meeting, the evaluation team held discussion with the project team on the evaluation methodology and the focus of the field work, especially given the tight evaluation timeline. Discussions also extended to include the logistics of the field work, geographical locations, beneficiary categories and numbers, stakeholders, and other matters. These discussions have contributed to the development of the field work plan for this evaluation, which is presented in the next section.

b) Field Work Phase

Following the finalization and approval of the inception report, the evaluation team began with the field work phase for this evaluation. As mentioned, the field work consisted of in-depth interviews

with key stakeholder and FGDs conducted with beneficiaries. To as much extent possible, the fieldwork has ensured an equal representation of females and males throughout the data collection process.

1) **In-depth semi-structured interviews** were used to collect information from all key project stakeholders (as per the table below). The choice of utilizing semi-structured interviews for this evaluation is that they allow for an in-depth discussion around the evaluation questions. The instrument was used to collect qualitative information about the overall performance of the project, but has specifically investigated the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability & possible impact, and effectiveness of management arrangements of the project. In addition, the interviews gathered information on cross cutting issues of gender equality, social dialogue, and international labour standards. Depending on the stakeholder group, different dimensions were discussed and data collected. For a full list of interviewed stakeholders, please see annex 2.

In depth interviews were conducted with a total of 43 key project stakeholders, of whom 8 were female (19%). While the evaluation strived to achieve a balanced share of male and female respondents for the interviews, a balance could not be achieved given that the stakeholders are predominantly male. There was no sampling for these interviews, the evaluation team met with most stakeholders considered to be key for the project; a few of the stakeholders could not be met due to their unavailability in this period.

2) **Focus group discussions (FGDs)** were used to collect information from the beneficiaries of the project. FGDs provided a platform through which beneficiaries of the program can share their experience in the project. FGDs allowed beneficiaries to freely discuss various issues in depth and variety that would not have been possible through surveys. FGDs were structured and directed, in order to obtain the required information in a limited amount of time. FGDs were flexible enough to encourage participants to share their personal experiences and perceptions in the project.

A total of 14 FGDs were conducted in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra, and Dohuk with a total of 93 beneficiaries (of whom 43 are women, 46%) from the many different beneficiary groups that were exposed to the project’s interventions. While the evaluation aimed at having 50% female respondents for the FGDs, a few of the female beneficiaries invited to the FGDs did not show up, which meant that an overall 46% of FGD participants were female. Having said that, the share of females in the FGD sample exceeds the share of females in the population of beneficiaries (44%). Beneficiaries included in the FGDs included labour inspectors, OSH experts, GetAhead beneficiaries, SYIB beneficiaries, Career Guidance & Employment Services beneficiaries, COOP beneficiaries, and beneficiaries of OSH trainings and various awareness sessions. A stratified random sampling to select beneficiaries to participate in the FGDs to ensure that voices are heard from across different beneficiary groups, including a focus on women. The following table illustrates the FGDs conducted under this evaluation and their locations.

Table 4 Distribution of Implemented FGDs According to Location & Gender

Distribution of Implemented FGDs According to Location & Gender		
FGD 1	Basra	7 males
FGD 2	Basra	8 females
FGD 3	Basra	6 females
FGD 4	Basra	6 males
FGD 5	Erbil	7 males

FGD6	Erbil	7 females
FGD7	Dohuk	6 males
FGD 8	Dohuk	6 males
FGD 9	Dohuk	7 females
FGD 10	Dohuk	6 females
FGD 11	Baghdad	5 males
FGD 12	Baghdad	9 females
FGD 13	Baghdad	7 males
FGD14	Baghdad	6 males
Total		43 females, 50 males

The choice of utilizing the above data collection methods (desk review, interviews, and focus group discussion) depended on a preliminary analysis of information needs, sources of information, types of project activities, and the evaluation budget. Moreover, multiple methods used for data collection have allowed for a triangulation of evaluation findings, i.e. the verification of findings derived from one method against a different method or source.

Throughout the evaluation process, and especially the field work, the evaluation team was committed towards the ILO and towards the stakeholders and beneficiaries of this project in adhering to the highest level of ethical standards. In specific, the evaluation team has strictly adhered to the ILO code of conduct⁴ throughout all stages of the evaluation, from inception to completion, and maintained its adherence to the UNEG ethical guidelines.

c) Analysis, Reporting, and Debriefing

Following the field work, the evaluation team began with the analysis of collected data. During the analysis, a reasoned assessment of facts and findings was conducted to provide answers to the evaluation questions, which were articulated according to cause-and-effect statements based on facts, data, interpretations and analysis. An overall assessment of the project is presented in this final report, after having ensured that findings and conclusions were fully grounded in facts and triangulated from more than one data source. It was ensured that both conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation are not systematically biased towards positive or negative views. The analysis of data paid special attention to gender issues, and whenever different views by males and females were observed, this has been included in the analysis and reporting.

The evaluation questions matrix, available in annex 1, presents the overall framework used for analysis. Under the matrix, specific data sources and data collection methods were identified for each of the evaluation questions. In addition, measures or indicators for the formation of judgements, as well as the methods of analysis and assessment have been formulated for each of the questions.

It is important here to highlight that all data analysis in this evaluation was based on triangulation in order to enable the evaluation team to make sound judgements based on multiple channels of evidence. Generally, triangulation refers to the use of multiple approaches, methods and sources of data and analysis to verify and substantiate data and information. For this evaluation, triangulation was achieved by combining a number of main sources of data (document review, interviews with the different key stakeholders, and FGDs with beneficiaries). Through this triangulation process, the

⁴ as presented in ILO (2021) "Template 3.1: ILO Code of Conduct: Agreement for Evaluators"

evaluation team aimed at developing high quality analysis to formulate verified findings, from which challenges, lessons learned and recommendations could be derived.

Following this analysis process, the evaluation team began the process of drafting the final evaluation report. The drafting of the final report followed the ILO's guidance⁵ which lays out specific requirements for each formal element of the report, in addition to providing specific details on how to present the conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned, and emerging good practices. The guidance document provided the required templates to be completed, especially with regards to lessons learned and good practices⁶.

Limitations

A main limitation faced by the evaluation team was a lack of responsiveness from some senior stakeholders during the beginning of the evaluation which led to some delays in the fieldwork. To overcome this, the project team followed up with these stakeholders urging them to respond and meet with the project team, which greatly facilitated in implementing the planned fieldwork. Another limitation was that the sample of the beneficiaries selected for the FGDs are not representative of all beneficiary groups and of the whole population, given the large number of beneficiary groups across multiple locations having been exposed to a varied set of interventions. However, in order to come up with representative findings, the evaluation employed a stratified random sampling process to ensure that voices are heard from across most beneficiary groups, and from both women and men.

⁵ ILO (2021) "Checklist 4.2: Preparing the Evaluation Report"

⁶ Available in ILO (2020) "Guidance note 5.5: Dissemination of Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices"

Main Findings

This section will present the triangulated evidence-based findings of this evaluation in a concise and clear manner. The findings are presented according to each evaluation criteria and directly answer each of the evaluation questions, with summarized findings presented at the top of each subsection. Therefore, this section is sub divided into the evaluation criteria, and the relevant evaluation questions are presented under each evaluation criterion, followed by a presentation of findings that directly answer these questions.

Relevance

- **Finding 1:** The project's objectives and focus were found to be aligned with the needs of constituents and with the context of Iraq and the priorities of its authorities. This close alignment was mainly due to the project design being heavily based on the DCWP (2019-2023) which has already been agreed upon with constituents and was aligned with national priorities.
- **Finding 2:** The relevance of the project to the needs of the targeted populations was enhanced through the different assessments conducted early on in the project to inform implementation, and the needs of vulnerable groups were addressed by the project design.

To what extent are the project objectives and approach relevant to the constituent's needs and present country context?

The project was found to be relevant to the Iraqi context. The objectives, outputs and activities of the project directly address a main problematic issue in the Iraqi labour market: high informality and its associated lack of decent working conditions resulting from poor governance⁷. With this situation being prevalent from before the COVID crisis, the crisis put vulnerable workers at additional risk from loss of employment or reduction in benefits, with an estimated quarter of the workforce being laid off due the crisis⁸. Therefore, this project came at a crucial time to support Iraq in enhancing its labour governance through the application of international labour standards and national labour legislation and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work across the country.

Moreover, the project's focus on the agricultural sector was found relevant given that the sector suffers from high rates of informality and is one of the largest employers in Iraq, especially employers of female workers. The results of Iraq's Labour Force Survey (2021) showed that nearly 20% of workers in the agricultural sector are women⁹.

The project was also found to be very much in line with Iraq's Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2019-2023)¹⁰, especially priority 3: "Labour market governance is strengthened in order to promote the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work through improved social dialogue mechanisms" and Outcome 3.2 "Labour inspection and OSH services and more effective in preventing and detecting noncompliance with national and international labour standards." Given that this is the first ILO project implemented by the ILO Iraq office in Iraq, the design of the project was actually based

⁷ For further information on the situation of informality in Iraq, see: ILO (2021) "A Diagnostic of the Informal Economy in Iraq"

⁸ UNDP (2020) "Impact of COVID-19 on the Iraqi Economy"

⁹ ILO, CSO, KRSO (2022) "Iraq Labour Force Survey 2021"

¹⁰ ILO (2019) "Decent Work Country Programme. Iraq: Recovery and Reform 2019-2023"

on the DCWP which was agreed upon with Iraq constituents in late 2019, i.e. almost one year before the start of the project.

The project's result framework was also found to be in line with national priorities and needs. For example, one of the main goals of Iraq Vision 2030 is to "create decent and protected job opportunities for all unemployed people" in addition to "uphold rule of law, access to justice and enhance the good governance foundations" and "develop the agricultural sector and achieve food security". The associated National Development Plan (2018-2022) also emphasizes the need for good labour governance and increase integrity and transparency while reducing administrative and financial corruption. The recent government plan that was announced by the government in late 2022 addresses the issue of upgrading the agriculture sector in Iraq. Furthermore, the project's work in building institutional and professional capacities of constituents across all of Iraq supports the country's decentralization efforts enacted almost a decade ago.

How relevant was the project to the needs of the targeted population? Were needs of women, PWDs, refugees, IDPs, and most vulnerable groups considered in the project design?

The relevance of the project to the needs of the targeted populations was enhanced through the different assessments conducted early on in the project to inform implementation. At the central level, the project began implementation with a comprehensive assessment of labour inspection (including OSH) Iraq, including the KRI. The assessment was conducted in full consultation with the MoLSA and the social partners. Another assessment was conducted soon after in partnership with the Cash and Livelihood Consortium of Iraq on economic relief, recovery, and resilience in South Iraq, and found that the agriculture sector is the main driver of growth, development, and employment there.

The needs of vulnerable groups were addressed in the design, since the most vulnerable groups, including women, PWDs, refugees and IDPs, are most prone to experience a lack of decent working conditions at their workplace and be outside of national social protection schemes. These groups are also considered to be the disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and an ineffective labour governance in the country¹¹. Therefore, the project's work on enhancing labour governance comes to serve these vulnerable groups the most. In addition, the project contained specific initiatives that addressed the most vulnerable groups. For example, the issue of child labour on farms was specifically addressed by one of the project's initiatives despite the difficulty associated with working with this target population as part of a larger project. The project managed to identify and refer around 1,200 child labourers to local service providers. Furthermore, the project put effort in including PWDs as part of its activities. For example, 3% of beneficiaries who received training on ILO's Career Guidance and Employment Services and around 1% of beneficiaries who received safety equipment were PWDs. The case is similar with refugees and IDPs, which were incorporated as part of the overall beneficiaries in a number of activities conducted on the field level. Around 4% of women who were received skills training under this project were Syrian refugees residing in Iraq and around 4% of those who benefitted from improved employment services were refugees.

According to most of the targeted population met with during this evaluation, the project was indeed relevant to their needs, but has only partially met them from the activities they were exposed to.

¹¹ ILO, FAFO (2020) "Rapid Assessment of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-Scale Enterprises in Iraq"

Furthermore, the project implemented activities specifically targeting women as part of its overall project strategy.

Effectiveness

- **Finding 3:** In spite of the ambitious design of the project in relation to its limited level of resources, the project managed to implement almost all of its planned activities and was effective in its contribution to achieving all of its immediate objectives.
- **Finding 4:** Under the 1st and 2nd immediate objectives, the project was able to develop evidence-based national policies for labour inspection and OSH that were both validated by social partners and endorsed by the government in Federal Iraq and KRI. The project also built the capacities of labour inspectors & OSH experts, and upgraded the institutional capacity for labour inspection and OSH in both Federal Iraq and KRI. But due to limited resources, the project could not complete the setting up of an online/electronic labour inspection system.
- **Finding 5:** A main gap found in the labour inspection system in Iraq is a lack of inspection on agriculture farm activities given the closed family nature of these farms and their distant locations, coupled with the limited resources available for inspection.
- **Finding 6:** Under the 3rd immediate objective, the project succeeded in raising the awareness of social partners on the role of inspection and OSH and established a tripartite labour inspection committee. However, there remains challenges in coordination within local tripartite structures and mechanisms in Iraq.
- **Finding 7:** Under the 4th immediate objective, the project succeeded in implementing a very large number of field-level activities, including at the farm level, across several different topics and in different locations across Iraq within a relatively limited period following the first year of the project. This was facilitated by the recruitment of local consultants. The project reached close to 9,000 beneficiaries (around 45% females) in Basra and Dohuk, under this component of the project¹²
- **Finding 8:** While the extensive field-level activities carried many varied benefits to workers, the evaluation found some improvements in the working conditions and status of specific, but not all, beneficiary groups exposed to the project's activities. This was due to many factors including workers not being able to apply what they learned due to various constraints, and also due to the fact that the wide range and large number of activities across different topics and geographical areas implemented in a limited period of time may have played a role in scattering efforts under this outcome and diluting its effects.
- **Finding 9:** The achievements are an essential contribution to the project's overall objective, but they are considered to be a first step in the long journey towards realizing the project objective.
- **Finding 10:** The project contributed significantly to ILO's cross cutting policy drivers. Labour standards were at the heart of the project and its objective. On social dialogue, the project activities, especially the component focused on social partners and the validation workshops and trainings held with them under other components, contributed to bringing ILO constituents closer together during implementation. But gaps remain in social dialogue in Iraq.
- **Finding 11:** Not only did the project manage to reach an impressive share of female beneficiaries, but it also addressed the issue of gender equality across many components including its provision

¹² The final number of beneficiaries was synthesized from beneficiary data provided by the project team.

of gender-sensitive trainings, including ToT trainings, and the integration of gender equality in the awareness session provided by the project.

- **Finding 12:** A number of unintended positive consequences emerged as a result of the project intervention, including a higher capacity of local implementing partners, the Iraqi government's enhanced reporting on the OSH Convention No. 184, and the opening of an ILO office branch in Basra.
- **Finding 13:** The project was able to provide strategic technical support and enhanced policy dialogue among social partners in response to COVID-19 mainly through its work on developing the labour inspection and OSH systems in the country.

Did the project meet all of its immediate objectives? To what extent has the achievement contributed to the overall objective?

In spite of the project's ambitious design and limited resources, the project managed to successfully implement over 60 activities on both the policy level (i.e. in Baghdad and Erbil) and the field level (i.e. in Basra and Dohuk) within a limited time period. The project was effective in its contribution to meet all of its immediate objectives. The table below shows how the project managed to achieve and over-achieve its indicators at the level of each immediate objective.

Table 5 Project's Immediate Objectives Indicators

Immediate objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual
Labour Inspection System modernized and its effectiveness enhanced in line with the International Labour Standards, particularly the Labour Inspection Conventions	# of inspections at workplaces	24,046 (2020)	26,404	47,900 (2022)
	# of annual inspection reports in line with the relevant ILO conventions	0	1	1 (2022)
Occupational Safety and Health monitoring improved in line with ILO Conventions No. 155 and 187	# of OSH inspections conducted at workplaces	686 (2020)	755	12,215 (2022)
	# of annual OSH reports that include national data on occupational injuries	0	1	1 (2022)
Awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH is raised and they are in a better position to	Status of tripartite committee on OSH and labour legislations	N/a	Tripartite committee regularly deliberates	Tripartite committee established as of the end of 2022, but no regular deliberations

engage in programmes to promote compliance with labour legislation	# of national frameworks on labour inspection and/or OSH validated/approved with active involvement of workers' and employers' organizations	0	1	3
Workers in agriculture benefit from enhanced working conditions and improved status through employment diagnosis , skills development opportunities, awareness raising and farm level interventions.	# of national frameworks and structures reviewed and/or revised and associated work plans developed by the Tripartite Committee by the end of the project	0	2	4
	% of targeted agriculture workers who are using improved agricultural practices / skills	0	70%	97%
	# of labour recruiters that agree on and sign a Code of Conduct drafted by the project, disaggregated by sex	0	10 (2 females)	23 (7 females)
	# of labour inspectors that sign and implement the codes of practice in their operations, disaggregated by governorate and sex	0	10 (2 females)	13 (5 female)

Source: Indicator value collected by evaluation team using the updated project logframe as well as the project's endline survey.

Regarding the project's first immediate objective, the project was able to lay down the groundwork to revamp and modernize the labour inspection system in Iraq in order to enhance its effectiveness in line with the international Labour Standards.

The project's support in this area led to the development of a Labour Inspection Policy that was based on an initial assessment of the labour inspection system. The Policy was developed and verified with

social partners, and was officially adopted and endorsed by the governments in both Federal Iraq and KRI. In addition to this, the project updated and developed the necessary tools and materials that would contribute to improving the quality of labour inspection visits and reports. The development of the tools was done in consultation with the social partners. It resulted in clear job descriptions for labour inspectors and their supervisors, an updated labour inspection tool (checklists), and a labour and OSH inspection guide. These final tools and templates were shared by KRI-MoLSA with their branches across the region to be put into practice by their teams during site visits while carrying out inspections on the enterprises. Inspectors and supervisors representing both Federal Iraq and KRI were oriented on how to best use the developed tools and reporting templates. But despite the project's plans to automate labour inspection procedures and tools, this could not be fully achieved during the course of the project given the large amount of resources needed to set up such a system which could not be accommodated by the project. Having said that, the project carried out many activities to lay the groundwork for the future automation process. For example, the project was able to develop the wireframe and software requirement specification for the proposed electronic case management system based on validated workflows addressing labour & OSH inspection and social security inspection separately.

In addition to this, the project built the capacities of labour inspectors across Federal Iraq and KRI in a number of sessions. In its first year, the project built the capacities a group of labour inspectors across Federal Iraq and KRI on effective modern labour inspection procedures. In its second year, the project selected the top-ranking officials from the first round of capacity building and provided them with an 8-day ToT, out of which 10 were selected to implement the following capacity building sessions¹³. In total, over 100 labour inspectors (around 43% of whom are women)¹⁴ had their capacities built from this program. The project also prepared a capacity building plan for inspectors in an effort to facilitate a regular capacity building process following the end of the project.

Feedback from inspectors that received training on modern labour inspection procedures and relevant ILS indicated that they found great value in the training sessions they received, and considered to be of high quality. Most inspectors indicated that the training raised their knowledge on various dimensions related to inspection and how to deal with employers and workers. However, the majority agreed that they would like more of the practical training elements which they particularly enjoyed, such as conducting field visits to workplaces. Having said that, some inspectors who were trained on the ILO's Strategic Compliance Planning approach were dissatisfied from the training given that it was held online in light of the COVID 19 situation.

In terms of institutional capacity, the project's capacity building programme culminated in the establishment of a labour inspection training centre inside MoLSA premises in Baghdad, which was inaugurated near the end of the project's duration. In KRI, the project succeeded in establishing two new units at MoLSA, one for labour inspection and one for OSH, given that there was no labour inspection department in KRI prior to this project.

The project succeeded in implementing the ILO's Strategic Compliance Planning (SCP) approach to inspection mainly for MoLSA KRI with full involvement of social partners, whereas progress with this regard was limited in Baghdad. The support provided by the project resulted in establishing an official strategic compliance task team in KRI and creating profiles for team members in the ILO's online

¹³ Based on data and information presented in the project's 2nd annual progress report

¹⁴ Based on project data on beneficiaries provided to the consultant.

strategic portal, thereby creating a story of change for labour inspection in KRI. Similar to most other outputs of this project, the Portal was translated into Kurdish (in addition to Arabic) to enable easy access and use for team members

According to the project's indicators, the number of inspections at workplaces almost doubled from 24,046 visits in 2020 to 47,900 in 2022, well above the project's target of 26,404¹⁵. However, this indicator should be viewed in light of the COVID-19 crisis which led to a global decline in inspections due to lockdowns and other social distancing measures imposed worldwide in 2020 and 2021.

Furthermore, the overall support provided to the labour inspection system, including the work done to implement the strategic compliance planning approach with social partners, has led to the production of an annual inspection report that is compatible with the standards for drafting annual labour inspection reports, according to ILO Convention on Labor Inspection No. 81 of 1947. The compatibility lies in the report's inclusion of data on the legal framework for labour inspection in Iraq and the inspection management in terms of the numbers of inspectors by gender, the numbers of representatives of workers' organizations and employers' organizations accompanying the inspection committees, the number of inspection visits, the number of workers covered in those visits, the classification of visits in terms of day and night visits, detected violations and complaints received by the labour inspection, and a detailed statistics of work injuries. While there were indeed a number of shortcomings in the report that prevent the report from being fully compatible with international labour standards, it represents a major step forward towards such standards.

All this mean that the project completed all of its planned activities under the labour inspection component with the exception of fully completing the final stages of the automation process and the setting up of an online/electronic labour inspection case management system. The main reason behind not being able to complete electronic inspection system is the very ambitious design of the project in relation to its resources (time, human resources, finances). Designing and fully setting up an operational online inspection system requires many technical details and a lot of time to be implemented. In other words, having it part of this project was too ambitious given the prerequisites of designing the inspection tools, which takes time by itself.

Regarding the project's second immediate objective, the project was able to improve the OSH framework in line with the ILO Conventions No. 155 and 187

The project's support in this area led to the development of an OSH policy and profile that was based on a review and assessment of the OSH system. The policy and profile were validated with social partners and endorsed by the governments in both Federal Iraq and KRI. Consequently, the project supported the development of an OSH programmes and action plan, including notification mechanisms, and improvements of accidents reporting and recording tools and templates. As part of this work, the project analysed the capacity of the National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (NCOHS) and developed a comprehensive capacity-building plan for the centre's staff. The project supported equipping the centre with required devices, tools and equipment. According to a representative of the centre, "the project contributed to enhancing the capacity of the centre in terms of conducting a higher number of speedy and accurate medical and laboratory tests as well as identifying risks in the workplace". In KRI, the project managed to establish an OSH unit inside MoLSA.

¹⁵ Based on project's updated logframe

It is worth noting that the project added and implemented two new activities under this outcome during implementation that were not included under the original design. These include (i) the development of a policy paper on decent work in agriculture focused on improving OSH in agriculture through social dialogue and (ii) capacity building of OSH inspectors in assessing risks and monitoring occupational accidents and diseases, especially in the agriculture sector.

According to the project's indicators, the number of OSH inspections increased dramatically from 686 inspections in 2020 to 12,215 inspections in 2022, much more than the project's target of 755. But similar to the indicator associated with the first outcome, this indicator should be viewed in light of the COVID-19 crisis which led to a global decline in inspections due to lockdowns and other social distancing measures imposed worldwide in 2020 and 2021. Another factor behind this surge in the number of OSH inspections was the equipment and devices provided by the project to the NCOHS in 2022 which enabled it to carry a higher number of speedy and accurate tests as well as identifying risks at the workplace. Furthermore, the annual inspection report, referred to above, included national data on occupational injuries thereby satisfying the second indicator under this outcome.

Regarding the project's third immediate objective, the project succeeded in raising the awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH, and established a tripartite inspection committee that would put social partners in a better position to engage in programmes to promote compliance with labour legislation. The project consisted of capacity building sessions provided to workers' and employers' representatives on the role of labour inspection, OSH, and fundamental principles and rights at work. This was also accompanied by the development of relevant brochures and infographics. Another capacity building session was implemented for workers in each of federal Iraq and KRI to present the grievance procedures report which was earlier developed by the support of the project.

On the issue of forming or strengthening a national tripartite inspection committee, the project was able to bring together representatives of social partners to discuss a national tripartite committee for inspection and to review and strengthen the functions and roles of the tripartite consultative committee in terms of labour inspection and relevant issues. This resulted in establishing the tripartite committee. Having said that, conversations held with social partners indicate the tripartite inspection mechanisms are still not functioning at the required level. According to government stakeholders, especially in KRI, there are challenges faced in coordination among social partners. The challenge in coordinating with social partners means that they rarely join inspection committees during inspection visits; workers' organizations indicate that they do not have the financial means to participate in these visits, while employer organizations say they don't have enough staff to participate. When asked about the tripartite mechanisms and structures, one social partner mentioned that it is only in theory and still not a reality. Having said that, the extensive involvement of social partners across many different parts of the project meant that the project contributed to bringing social partners in Iraq closer together, especially on the policy level.

According to the project's indicators, the national frameworks on labour inspection and/or OSH that were validated and approved by workers' and employers' organizations under the project included the labour inspection policy, the OSH policy, and the OSH profile for Iraq. This means that the project managed to have three national frameworks reviewed and validated by social partners during the project, overachieving its target. However, the other indicator under this outcome, related to the regular deliberation of the tripartite inspection committee has not been fully achieved. While the project did establish a tripartite inspection committee near the end of 2022, the evaluation has found that the committee does not regularly deliberate, according to the interviews held for this evaluation.

Regarding the project's fourth immediate objective, the project's ambitious design entailed a large and wide variety of initiatives and activities under this outcome catered to the agriculture sector in Iraq, specifically in the governorates of Basra and Dohuk. This outcome pertained to field-level activities at the farm level and in local communities. In order to illustrate the huge amount of work done under this outcome, and the varied set of activities, the following list presents the main achievements pertaining to this outcome.

- Study to review national regulatory frameworks and structures in the agriculture sector
- Development of a Code of Conduct for Fair Recruitment in Iraq with a focus on the agriculture sector, endorsed by government.
- Development of labour inspection code of practice for effective labour inspection between farmers and labour inspectors, endorsed by social partners.
- Activities on reviewing the strategic compliance model in the field with 43 stakeholders
- 52 National tripartite committee members capacities built on collective bargaining and tripartite agreements
- 20 reps of social partners capacities enhanced on dispute resolution
- 16 Community-based service providers targeting youth supported to enhance their services
- 1,061 Farmers, agricultural workers, and labour recruiters trained on ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment
- 18 farms supported to register their agricultural workers in social security
- 34 farms with information sessions on social security
- 93 farms informed through information sessions on the compliance model
- local service providers in communities where target farms are located, that participate in the implementation of the referral mechanism of child labour
- 6 collective agreements negotiated by end of Sep 2022
- 1,200 child labourers identified and referred to local safety providers
- 30 farmers and ag coop reps trained on national labour legislation and ILS
- More than 2,000 farmers provided with safety equipment, 1,200 of which had their capacity enhanced in OSH.
- More than 1,000 agricultural workers and representatives have their capacities enhanced on ILS, trade union principles and management, disaggregated by sex
- 42 farmers and agriculture workers trained as OSH trainers (TOT)
- 27 worker management committees are established in farms and operationalized and have their capacity enhanced
- 35 farmers who receive guidance to issue model contracts
- Piloted model contract for agriculture workers
- Linking farms with buyers
- 422 ag workers have their awareness raised on basic rights and decent work
- 607 female agriculture workers have their capacities enhanced through ILO's GetAhead programme
- 50 individuals trained as certified GetAhead trainers (TOT)
- 55 agriculture coop members have their capacity enhanced on improved human resource and farm management, including through ILO's Think COOP, Start COOP, and MyCoop tools.
- More than 2,000 agricultural workers benefit from career guidance and employment services .

- 23 employment service officer had their capacities strengthened
- 5 farms trained through employment service sessions
- 2 employment service packages developed (targeting youth, female workers, workers with disabilities, and refugees)

Most stakeholders described outcome 4 of the project to be “a project on its own”, with many noticing a disconnect between this outcome and the remaining policy-level work of the project. As can be seen from the above list, the work done under this outcome was extensive, and was implemented in two separate regions in Iraq which speak different languages. Activities ranged from awareness raising, to skills development & OSH to enhancing labour governance at the field-level.

The absence of the ILO presence in Basra at the beginning of the project in addition to the low level of capacity noticed by potential implementing partners in the governorate led to some delays in kickstarting activities under this outcome. Nevertheless, the team was able to move forward in implementation after hiring suitable local consultants that have greatly facilitated the identification of suitable implementing partners and ensured that work flowed smoothly under this outcome, especially in Basra.

According to the project’s indicators, the project was able to develop the 1st Code of Conduct Code for Fair Recruitment in the agriculture sector which was signed by both Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs in Federal Iraq and KRI, and endorsed by social partners and signed by 23 (7 females) private sector recruiters. The code of conduct aims at safeguarding workers against fraudulent practices and abusive recruitment practices, based on ILO general principles and operational guidelines on fair recruitment. Moreover, the project had also developed a labour inspection code of practice for inspections in the agriculture sector, which was reviewed and endorsed by social partners, and eventually signed by 13 labour inspectors (5 females). This indicates that the project overachieved most of its indicators under this outcome.

Nevertheless, a few planned activities under this outcome could not be completed within the timeframe of this project. In specific, the project had plans to develop a study jointly with another ILO project on the extension of social security coverage to informal workers in the agricultural sector in Iraq. However, this could not be completed given that a new draft law for social security with major changes to the system was already being discussed, and it would not have made sense to develop the paper before the endorsement of the new law. The project could not therefore achieve its target of registering 500 agriculture workers. Instead, the project added and implemented a new activity under this outcome during implementation which was not part of the original design. The activity was to organize a roundtable discussion on cooperative development based on good practices.

While the above achievements provide an essential contribution towards the overall objective of the project, it is considered by most to be the first step in a long journey towards realizing the project’s overall objective. The contribution made by the project represents the groundwork for further work on enhancing labour governance and the application of ILS.

What is the level of improvement in the working conditions and status of workers in agriculture?
How effective was the project in meeting the needs of agriculture workers?

Most stakeholders indicated that agriculture workers in Iraq are among the most vulnerable workers who have needs that cannot be fully met by a 2-year project. Having said that, the activities of the project were found to contribute to meeting the needs of agriculture workers, through their focus on

OSH, labour rights, and ILS, but considered to be inadequate to fully meet most needs. While the extensive field-level activities carried many varied benefits to workers, the evaluation found some improvements in the working conditions and status of specific, but not all, beneficiary groups exposed to the project's activities. The improvements in working conditions were mainly noted for agriculture workers who received and used safety equipment distributed by the project, child labourers who were identified and referred to local service providers, and those workers involved in some specific farm-level interventions. With regards to status, some improvements were found in beneficiaries receiving skills development intervention. But other than these groups, the evaluation found an overall limited improvement in the working conditions and status of agriculture workers. The evaluation has found that labour inspection in Iraq still does not yet inspect farm activities given the closed family nature of these farms and their distant locations as well as the limited resources available for inspection.

According to stakeholders, this is because the policy work done by the project has only laid down the groundwork for further steps that may enhance working conditions of agricultural workers in the future. Moreover, some stakeholders indicated that the multiplicity of interventions in different issues, the range of stakeholders involved, the wide geographical scope and the fragile context of the country, have all played a role in scattering efforts and diluting the effects that the project had on agricultural workers. This was mainly due to the project design which had an over ambitious scope of work under the 4th outcome of the project.

Furthermore, some stakeholders and even beneficiaries saw that some activities on the field level were rushed in order for the project to meet its large number and scope of its targets. As an example, most workers were exposed to one or two types of short trainings with no follow-up. And many of the agricultural workers met with who had their awareness raised on OSH and basic rights at work indicated that they could not apply what they learned in their workplace due to the resistance of employers or lack of safety equipment, which meant that their working conditions and status have witnessed a limited improvement as a result of the project's interventions.

Having said that, most agriculture workers met with during this evaluation highly appreciated that interventions they received from the project. In particular, workers who received some of the project's awareness raising sessions on OSH and basic rights at work indicated that they have learned new and important things about safety at the workplace from the intervention received that they did not previously know about. However, as mentioned above, most participants mentioned that they found difficulty when trying to apply what they learned inside farms mainly due to resistance from farm owners and/or a lack of safety equipment. As one worker put it "we do not have the finances to purchase safety equipment needed to apply the OSH principles learned, and the owner of the farm does not supply us with any safety equipment", while another worker added that "there are challenges in achieving balance between applying safe and healthy labour standards and the job's actual requirements and conditions... applying safety concepts without negatively affecting productivity may require additional efforts". This is despite the project's work with farm owners that included information sessions on the labour law and associated labour matters, legal framework for labour relations in the sector, and the project's provision of safety equipment for the workers of the farms that were part of the intervention.

Individuals who received skill development trainings (i.e on food processing, GetAhead, and SYIB), indicated how the trainings "opened our minds to new horizons that we haven't thought of before" in terms of learning how to start and maintain a business. Participants praised the training that they received but most indicated that they were hoping for the project to continue with them and provide

them with grants, at least to the top achievers, to enable them to start up their project, given that these training courses are on entrepreneurship. In other words, many indicated that they cannot apply what they learned due to their limited financial capabilities. As one beneficiary put it, “It was great learning about new and modern techniques in food processing, but I apply most of what I learned at home only, and maybe later in the future, I can open a project if our financial capabilities allow”. On this issue, the project was able to connect some of the graduates of these trainings with grant-giving interventions implemented by other international organizations, which is considered to be a strategic move by the project team to enhance the effectiveness of these trainings. Out of the beneficiaries met with who received skills development training, only one person was able to start her own project to sell clothes.

Agricultural coop members appreciated the project’s support in raising their awareness of the importance of official contracts for workers and OSH. Participants indicated strongly that the project helped address some of their needs, especially on how to deal with workers, which has helped raise their confidence in their work. However, participants indicated the same thing that was heard from beneficiaries of other training interventions; i.e. there are significant challenges in applying what they learned during the training. Examples given include that the issue of workers having fears about signing written contracts (especially that many are illiterate) was not addressed during the session. They also hoped for a less theoretical, and more practical training.

For those Individuals who received career guidance and employment services under the project, most of those met with during the FGDs indicated they are now in a better position to search and apply for jobs. They described the training to be interactive and contributed to their communication and problem-solving skills as well as adding the needed professional dimension to their job search. However, none of the individuals met with were able to find employment, more than one year after having been exposed to the project’s intervention. The main reasons given were related to the lack of opportunities.

Finally, it is worth noting here that none of the workers met with during the FGDs was registered in social security. This was despite that the project held informational sessions on social security in selected farms during the project. While some of the workers did understand its importance, many indicated they have no interest in registering fearing the payment of high fees and not being fully knowledgeable about the system. A major factor behind this finding was that a new draft law for social security with major changes to the system (affecting agriculture workers) was already being discussed during the implementation of the project.

The above findings which indicate that some, but not all, beneficiary groups witnessed improved working conditions and status are in line with an end-line survey implemented by the project, which showed that working conditions among surveyed agriculture workers have seen limited improvements outside of those who received safety equipment. For example, the results indicated that only 17% of surveyed farm owners have registered their workers in the social security, despite having received informational sessions with this regard. Moreover, only 17% of surveyed farms indicated that they contracted their workers using model contracts.

How did the project’s achievements contribute to ILO’s cross-cutting policy divers including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?

To as much extent possible, the project team tried to incorporate gender equality into all the activities and monitoring implemented under this project. The M&E framework was found to be gender-sensitive and project indicators were disaggregated according to gender.

According to the project indicators, around 44% of all project beneficiaries were women which was found to be significant in a conservative society such as in Iraq. The project team's decision to implement the food processing and GetAhead programmes exclusively for women has greatly contributed to raising the total share of women in the project, given that the training was received by more than 600 women in Basra and Dohuk.

Not only did the project manage to achieve an impressive share of female beneficiaries, but it also addressed the issue of gender equality across many components. For example, labour inspectors received several gender-sensitive trainings including a training on Effective and Gender-Responsive Labour Inspection Procedures as part of their capacity building programme, while many of the trainings provided to workers integrated gender equality as a part of the training.

The project also graduated trainers from a ToT programme, resulting in having 15 trainers from the local community becoming certified in the Gender Sensitive Business Management Programme and the GET Ahead programme. Gender equality was also integrated in awareness sessions provided by the project to hundreds of workers on decent work principles.

Having said that, the majority of project stakeholders including workers' and employers' representatives, government officials and project consultants are male given the predominantly male presence in these roles in Iraq.

Regarding social dialogue, the project's work under the third immediate outcome contributes strongly to enhancing social dialogue in Iraq, especially its work towards enhancing tripartite structures in the country. In addition, the project extended efforts at enhancing social dialogue in most other components of the project. For example, the development of the policies under the 1st two outcomes of the project was done in full consultations with all social partners. Also, the 4th outcome incorporated workers and employers' representatives during discussions held on the legal framework and compliance checklist on the field level in the sector and had their capacities raised in collective bargaining, dispute resolution mechanisms and tripartite agreements. But despite all these efforts in bringing ILO's social partners together, there remains some gaps in coordination among them on the field level, which adversely affects the functioning of local-level tripartite structures and mechanisms in the country. Also, some social partners met with during this evaluation indicated that they would have liked to be more involved in the design and implementation of the project.

Labour Standards are at the heart of this project, with its main and immediate objectives all related to enhancing labour standards in the country with activities on both the policy and field levels. The policy-level work done in the project to produce the inspection & OSH policies and OSH profile was very much based on the relevant international ILO conventions related to inspection and OSH. The field-level work of the project has contributed significantly to raising the awareness of a wide segment of the agricultural community on basic rights at work and decent work principles that adhere to international labour standards. Much of the capacity building programmes employed by the project contain an element addressing ILS.

Has there been any unintended positive/negative consequences of the project intervention?

One unintended positive consequence coming out of the project's intervention has been the increased capacity of local partners gained from implementing the project. The increased capacity was found to be a result of a 'learning-by-doing' process under this project, supported by capacity building by project staff and consultants. For example, some of the implementing partners of the project faced many struggles in administrative implementing the project due to low capacities in technical and financial reporting as well as monitoring. One of the local implementing partners, despite being challenged by reporting requirements, is now competitively bidding for other projects run by international organization and is succeeding, with a growing caseload of projects. Despite not being part of the project or its objectives, the project team and consultants built the capacities of these local organizations in these matters such that they are now in a much better position to work with international organizations on important matters.

Another unintended positive consequence was the project's contribution in building the capacities of government officials to better report on the OSH Convention No. 184 related to the agriculture sector. This was not part of the project's results framework since Iraq ratified the convention during the project's first year. Through the project's work done on building the capacities of officials in labour inspection and OSH, they are in a better position to report on this convention.

One institutional unintended positive consequence for the ILO from this project has been to better position itself inside Iraq. In other words, the project's experience of working in Basra highlighted the need for the ILO to have an active presence there, and therefore, contributed to the ILO's decision to establish an operational office inside the governorate of Basra. This means that the ILO is now present across the whole of Iraq, in the north, middle, and south.

To what extent has the project fostered integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes through the ILO COVID-19 response intervention at country level for a timely crisis response to COVID-19?

The project's support in modernizing the inspection and OSH systems in Iraq came at a much-needed time, given the already poor working conditions faced by many workers in the country before the onset of COVID-19, especially those working in agriculture. The project, therefore, provided strategic technical support to authorities and enhanced policy dialogue among social partners to strengthen the inspection system and contribute to enhancing labour standards in the country. Having said that, the project does constitute as a crisis emergency response project.

Efficiency

- **Finding 14:** The project faced some delays in its first year from factors outside of the project team's control, including the repercussions of COVID 19 and a slow recruitment process for project staff. And since this is the first project implemented by the ILO office in Iraq, the project was operating in new contexts and had limited knowledge of the landscape of implementing partners which caused delays, given the general weak level of capacity of potential partners in the country
- **Finding 15:** the efficiency of the project was greatly enhanced following the 1st year given the strategic decisions made by the team, including the competitive procurement of services from local implementing partners and recruiting local consultants. The use and development of local

skills and adherence to competitive procurement procedures carried effectiveness and efficiency gains, especially with regards to project activities being cost efficient.

- **Finding 16:** The development of evidence-based national policies in full consultation with social partners in a limited period of time has raised the efficiency of the project.
- **Finding 17:** However, much of the efficiency gains of the project came at a cost which was the very high levels of workloads and stress experienced by most human resources of the project as well as rushing some activities to meet the project's ambitious targets within a limited period of time. This was mainly due to the misalignment between the project design and its resources.
- **Finding 18.** The results achieved by the project are extensive and more than justify the resources invested, reaching more than 9,000 individuals and resulting in endorsed policies, plans, structures, and tools. Results included achievements on both the policy and field levels across different autonomous geographical areas that have different structures and languages.

To what extent have project activities been cost-efficient? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc...) been allocated strategically to achieve all outcomes?

The evaluation has found that resources have been allocated strategically to achieve most project results, despite some delays in initiating activities under outcome 4 and an overall slow start to the project due to a late recruitment process for project staff, the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis, the low-capacity level of implementing partners, and the novelty of the of the operating context.

Delays encountered in the beginning of the project limited the overall efficiency of the project in its first year. The project team was recruited and finalized 5 months after the project start date. And coupled with delays associated with COVID-19 restrictions and not being able to find competent implementing partners due to novel operating environment for the ILO and also due to the overall low level of capacity by potential partners, this meant that the project had spent less than 30% of its budget in its first year and had to eventually request a no-cost extension from the donor. Most of these factors were outside the control of the ILO. Online communication during the COVID-19 crisis (mainly until June 2021) was difficult and challenging given poor connections and the lack of IT skills among some stakeholders and ILO constituents. Moreover, the prolonged lockdown periods and travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 crisis made it difficult to continuously engage with constituents and stakeholders as well as beginning implementation of farm-level intervention. Moreover, the weak level of capacities among potential local implementing partners, and the lack of ILO presence and experience in Basra, delayed the recruitment process for implementing initiatives under outcome 4 due to the inability to find competent partners.

The project continued its 2nd year in a much more efficient pace, consuming around 53% of the project's funds, and achieving most of its accomplishments in that year. This was partly due to a strategic decision made by the project team to hire a number of local consultants to handle different responsibilities in the project and resort to local implementing partners to support implementation. Under outcome 4, the team realized that there needs to be a presence for the project in Basra, and since there was no ILO office there at the time, the team was faced with a decision to either rely on local implementing partners and consultants, or resort to more experienced international partners. While international partners may have a higher level of capacity, they also offer a very high price, many times over the price offered by local organizations. Therefore, the team opted to partner with local consultants and implementing partners to make the best use of funds and ensure that activities implemented on the ground are cost-efficient. Another main reason is that local consultants and local

organizations have very good access to and knowledge of the local community and the targeted beneficiaries of the project. For example, the employment of local consultants to monitor and support the implementation of the project's activities in Basra and support implementing partners greatly enhanced the efficiency of the project under outcome 4, which would not have been the case had the team decided to partner with an international partner. The project's efficiency benefitted from these partners' knowledge of the local operating context.

Furthermore, the development of evidence-based inspection and OSH policies under the other outcomes of the project and having them validated by constituents and officially endorsed by the government, in a relatively short period of time under the project timeframe, is a main indication of a high level of efficiency by the project, especially with respect to outcome 1 and 2.

With regards to cost, the project has implemented a wide variety of activities that reached thousands of individuals in Iraq, and had worked on both the policy and field levels, utilizing the finances of the project in an efficient manner. Furthermore, it is worth that the project launched a competitive bidding process for implementing partners under this project, despite the already-existing time constraints at the time. This indicates an efficient procurement process in the project, especially given that a significant portion of the project budget was allocated to implementing partners to handle implementation of different activities in the field.

However, this overall efficiency came at a cost, which was the disproportional workloads and high stress levels that the project team, implementing partners and some consultants experienced during implementation. In many situations, activities were planned for and implemented in less time than the time it would have usually taken in a more relaxed setting. Conversations held with the majority of project staff and consultants indicated that they were under a great deal of stress to get things done in a shorter period than usual, with some indicating that some activities have been rushed and would have benefited from more time.

To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?

The project's achieved results across all of its immediate objectives were found to justify the invested resources. As many stakeholders have indicated, this project was considered to be two projects in one, with the first three outcomes constituting a policy-oriented project and the fourth outcome being a project by itself, focusing on labour in the agriculture sector. Furthermore, the project had a wide geographical scope, operating in two regions that have independent governments and structures. And since the project achieved significant achievements on both fronts (the policy-level and field-level) and in both regions (federal Iraq and KRI), the results are found to justify the limited resources invested in the project, especially in relation to time and human resources. In total and across its various activities, the project directly reached more than 9,000 beneficiaries in Iraq (both federal Iraq and KRI) including government officials, representatives of social partners, agricultural workers, farm owners, agricultural coop members, and unemployed individuals in local communities. It has also managed to develop the labour inspection and OSH systems in the country in a fully participatory approach. All this was implemented within a period of less than 30 months, with an initial core technical team of only three members.

Sustainability & Possible Impact

- **Finding 19:** A number of sustainability measures and approaches were utilized by the project to enhance the sustainability of its results, including the many different ToT programs, the development of evidence-based nationally endorsed policies in full consultation with social partners, the establishment of a dedicated training centre, the establishment of two new units at MoLSA KRI, and the equipping of the national OSH centre.
- **Finding 208:** Despite these sustainable approaches, most results achieved by the project were found to be unsustainable without further ILO support, given that this project was originally designed to be a first phase in a larger programme. In other words, the project has only laid the groundwork for further action and developments to the inspection and OSH systems, and there is still a need of further capacity building.
- **Finding 21:** While national government and non-government partners have expressed their willingness to continue their efforts towards the project's objectives, they indicated that it will be challenging for them to do so outside of ILO's support given the need for a higher level of capacity,
- **Finding 22:** Most of the project's initiatives are logically correlated with each other and with the overall objective of the project, with the exception of outcome 4, which many stakeholders consider to be a separate project by itself.
- **Finding 23:** While the project's initiatives provide an essential contribution to the project's overall objective, they are considered as groundwork and the first step in the long path ahead towards realizing the project objective.
- **Finding 24:** The evaluation has found that allocating more resources to the project, especially in terms of time, would have enabled a more effective contribution to the project's main objective, given the very ambitious objective for the context of Iraq.

How sustainable are the results achieved by the project likely to be? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?

A number of key sustainability measures have been included in the design and taken during implementation in an effort to sustain results achieved across most outcomes. The project's work to develop labour inspection and OSH policies was done in a fully participatory approach with social partners and has laid the groundwork for updating the inspection and OSH systems in the country. The fact that the policies were validated by social partners and officially endorsed by the government enhanced their sustainability in terms of implementation later on, especially since the project has also developed inspection checklists and tools, and has applied ILO's strategic compliance model in inspection in KRI. These tools are expected to continue being used by inspectors, as indicated by stakeholders, but would require further support in their application.

The project's strong capacity-building component to government officials, social partners, and beneficiaries has also a strong sustainability component, especially considering the many ToT workshops held under this project for government officials and community members across most outcomes. The fact that there are now dozens of certified trainers across different components of the project, many of whom are women, greatly enhances sustainability. The studies and assessments that

have been developed by the project will also continue to act as a reference for future research and programming.

The project also established a Labour and OSH Training Centre with MoLSA premises in Baghdad which was opened a few months before the end date of the project. This ILO support was very much appreciated by government officials who indicated that training programmes are currently being prepared to make best use of the centre. The project also provided much needed equipment to the National Centre for OSH in Baghdad to enable it to more adequately assume its role. According to representatives from the Centre, this support has enabled the centre to plan for a higher number of speedy and accurate OSH inspections which would have been unfeasible without the support provided by the project.

In Kurdistan, the project supported the establishments of two new units in MoLSA KRI; a labour inspection unit and an OSH unit. It worth highlighting that one of the main sustainable achievements resulting from the project is the presence of 12 labour inspectors in KRI compared to no inspectors at all before the beginning of the programme. As one government official put it, “we started from zero.. we didn’t have any real labour inspectors... but now, we have a unit and 12 officially appointed labour inspector to cover the Kurdistan region. While we need more, this is a great start”.

Having said that, the evaluation has found that results will be sustainable as long as there is continued ILO support. Most stakeholder consider this project to be a first phase of a larger programme, and therefore, results coming out of this project alone are not expected to be sustained outside of continued ILO support. This issue was clearly mentioned during the last steering committee meeting; that stakeholders still need more support across all aspects of the project.

To what extent are national partners – governmental or non-governmental – able and willing to continue their efforts after the project’s end date?

Conversations held with non-government implementing partners and government stakeholders indicated that they are very much willing to continue their efforts related to the project objectives after the project’s completion, but they may not be able to do so outside of continued support. Many stakeholders mentioned how “we are still at the beginning of the road” and how “the road is still long, there are many things to work on”. Most stakeholders saw the outcomes of this project to be a first step in a long journey of development that requires ILO support. Some stakeholders highlighted the need for future ILO projects on inspection and OSH in order to build on the groundwork that has been accomplished by this project. Therefore, it is important to highlight that both government and non-government stakeholders have a sense of conviction on the need for further efforts towards the project’s objectives, and they now have a better understanding of the situation than before the project. But they nonetheless need continued support on this journey.

What is the likely contribution of the project’s initiatives to the stated development objective of the intervention? Did they contribute as laid out in the initial theory of change? What else could have been done to better realize the project objective?

Most of the project’s initiatives correlate logically to the overall objective of the project, especially under initiatives under outcome 1, 2 and 3 which built capacities in inspection and OSH, developed the relevant policies and tools, and engaged with social partners through tripartite mechanisms along

the way and built their capacities on the role of inspection. Not only are these initiatives correlated with one another, they are also correlated with and will likely contribute to the main objective of enhancing the application of ILS & national labour legislation and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work in Iraq. Having said that, outcome 4 of the project has been considered by many stakeholders to be a separate project by itself. This was also highlighted in the internal midterm evaluation report conducted during project implementation. Some stakeholders indicated that ideally, it would have been more effective and sustainable if outcome 4 was implemented at a later stage, after having implemented the 1st three outcomes of this project. This would be the ideal scenario where the project could have built on and applied its policy-level achievements and improvements in social dialogue. Having said that, some of the initiatives implemented under the 4th outcome support the overall objective including the work done on model contracts, the code of conduct for fair recruitment, the labour inspection code of practice for effective labour inspection in agriculture, the review of the strategic compliance model.

Overall, the evaluation has found that allocating more resources to the project, especially in terms of time, would have enabled a more effective and sustainable contribution to the project's main objective, given the very ambitious objective for the context of Iraq. This is because an enhanced application of ILS and national labour legislation and the promotion of decent work need significant time to materialize in Iraq. This project contributed to laying the groundwork for further work to reach the objective. More resources, especially time, would have enabled the project to support Iraqi authorities and social partners not only in the development and endorsement of the new policies, but also in their application, and would have enabled stronger results in the field level. This was pointed towards by most stakeholders and beneficiaries spoken with during this evaluation. More time in the project would have enabled the team to initially focus on the policy-level work and then shift the focus to implementing the new policies on the local level.

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

- **Finding 25:** Significant managerial and technical effort was put by project team to complete almost all of the project's extensive activities and achieve a number of results in a new context and within limited resources. The team's ample effort is considered to have been a pivotal factor behind the success of the ambitious project.
- **Finding 26:** Extensive consultations were held between the project team and the relevant technical specialists at ILO ROAS and HQ across many components of the project which has enhanced the effectiveness of the project. The evaluation found that extensive technical and administrative support was provided by ILO regional and global specialists based on the request of the project team.

How effective was communication between the project's teams, the regional office and the responsible technical department at headquarters? Has the project sought and received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?

The project team, which was tasked to conduct more than 60 activities, consisted of only a CTA, a national officer, an admin assistant, and a driver. Throughout implementation, the project recruited a number of international and local consultants to support implementation across the project's different geographical locations. Significant managerial and technical effort was put by project team to complete almost all of the project's extensive activities and achieve a number of results in a new

context and within limited resources. The team's ample effort is considered to have been a pivotal factor behind the success of the ambitious project. The project team also received strategic technical guidance and support from the ILO country coordinator in Iraq throughout implementation which enabled a more effective implementation process.

The evaluation found that the project sought and received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO backstopping units at ROAS and HQ. The project engaged heavily with the Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch (LABADMIN/OSH) at HQ through its work under outcomes 1 and 2, especially with regards to implementing ILO's Strategic Compliance Model. The project also partnered with ILO's International Training Centre (ITC) for the provision of some of the capacity building activities. Furthermore, close consultation and coordination took place with HQ on the implementation of COOP activities.

The project engaged even more heavily with ROAS. The project received extensive technical support from ILO's regional specialist on labour inspection and OSH. Not only did the specialist provide continuous guidance and review of project outputs, but he also supervised some of the workshops and facilitated some of the implementation work through proposing suitable international consultants to support the project's work on modernizing the labour inspection and OSH systems in Iraq. The project also received support from gender-specific sessions provided by the ILO's regional gender specialist during the project's capacity building programme for inspectors.

In terms of administrative support, the project relied heavily on the administrative backstopping support at ROAS, given the coordinatory nature of the ILO office in Iraq. During most of the implementation of the project, the project team held daily communication with ROAS and had to continuously coordinate with the relevant admin support at ROAS on all financial and human resources matters. The ROAS also provided some capacity building to members of the team on the use of the ILO's Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) which is expected to be rolled out to the ILO Iraq office in the third quarter of 2023.

Conclusions

This section aims at synthesizing the main findings of this evaluation into summary judgments of merit and worth through the use of evaluative reasoning and critical thinking. This section will present the conclusions per each of the main evaluation criteria.

Relevance

The project was found to be relevant to the Iraqi context and its objectives aligned with the needs of constituents and priorities of authorities. This was mainly because the design of the project was heavily based on Iraq's DWCP (2019-2023) which was developed in full consultations with social partners in Iraq. Different assessments implemented early on in the project have contributed to informing implementation and tailoring activities to better meet the needs of vulnerable groups addressed by the project design, thereby enhancing the overall relevance of the project to the needs of targeted populations.

Effectiveness

Although the project design was overly ambitious relative to its allocated resources, it succeeded in implementing most of its planned activities and was effective in its contribution to achieving all of its immediate objective. Under its first two outcomes, the project was able to lay down the groundwork to revamp and modernize the labour inspection system in Iraq in order to enhance its effectiveness in line with ILS as well as improve the OSH framework in line with the relevant ILO conventions. Under the project's third outcome, the project succeeded in raising the awareness of social partners on the role of inspection and forming a national tripartite committee on inspection. Under the fourth outcome of the project, the project's ambitious design entailed a large and wide variety of initiative and activities implemented on the field level in two different locations in Iraq. And while the project implemented almost all of the extensive activities under this objective within a relatively limited time period, the evaluation found some improvement in the working conditions of specific, but not all, beneficiary groups exposed to the project's activities. The improvements in working conditions were mainly noted for agriculture workers who received and used safety equipment distributed by the project, child labourers who were identified and referred to local service providers, and those workers involved in some specific farm-level interventions. With regards to status, some improvements were found in beneficiaries receiving skills development interventions. Otherwise, the evaluation found a limited improvement in the overall working conditions and status of agriculture workers. This was due to many factors including workers not being able to apply what they learned due to various constraints, and also due to the fact that the wide range and large number of activities across different topics and geographical areas may have played a role in scattering efforts under this outcome and diluting its effects. The project's achievements contributed significantly to gender equality, labour standards and social dialogue in Iraq, and the project was able to provide strategic technical support and enhanced policy dialogue among social partners in response to COVID-19. A number of unintended positive consequences emerged as a result of the project intervention, including a higher capacity by local implementing partners, a higher capacity by government officials to report on the OSH Convention No. 184, and the opening of an ILO office in Basra.

Efficiency

Despite initial delays to project implementation related to factors outside of ILO's control, the project managed to raise its efficiency following the 1st year due to strategic decisions made by the project

team including the decision to further utilize local skills and the launch of competitive procurements. Moreover, the development of evidence-based national policies in a limited period of time has raised the overall efficiency of the project. However, much of these efficiency gains came at a cost which was the very high levels of workloads and stress experienced by most human resources of the project as well as rushing some activities to meet the project's ambitious targets within a limited period of time. Overall, the results achieved by the project are extensive and more than justify the resources invested. Results included achievements on both the policy and field levels across different autonomous geographical areas that have different structures.

Sustainability & Possible Impact

Despite the project having employed and integrated sustainability measures and approaches during project implementation, including the extensive use of ToTs, the development of validated evidence-based policies, the establishment of a dedicated training center, and the equipping of the national OSH center, many project results achieved by the project cannot be sustained without further ILO support. Although national government and non-government partners have expressed their willingness to continue their efforts towards the project's objectives, they indicated that it would be too difficult for them to do so outside of ILO's support. Most of the project's initiatives are logically correlated with each other and with the overall objective of the project, with the exception of outcome 4, which many consider to be a separate project by itself. While the overall initiatives under the project provide an essential contribution to the project's overall objective, they are considered as groundwork and the first step in the long journey towards realizing the project objective, given its ambitious nature for the context of Iraq.

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

Extensive consultations were held between the project team and the relevant technical specialists at ILO ROAS and HQ across many components of the project which has enhanced the effectiveness of the project. The evaluation found that extensive technical and administrative support was provided by ILO regional and global specialists based on the request of the project team.

Lessons Learned & Best Practices

Lessons Learned:

- The use of local skills can greatly facilitate the implementation of activities in new contexts in which there is no ILO presence or where it is difficult for ILO personnel to reach. A main lesson learned by the project's experience in implementing large scale field-level activities in Basra is that the use of local consultants can help avert adverse implications to the project's efficiency and effectiveness resulting from such contexts. After facing delays in managing the substantial scope and number of activities in Basra where there is no ILO presence, the project team decided to recruit local consultants to monitor and support project activities which drove implementation forward. The experience of this project actually highlighted the need to have an ILO office in the governate of Basra. And eventually, during the last few months of the project timeline, the ILO opened its branch office in Basra to support its activities under other projects.
- The misalignment observed between the project's overly ambitious design and the project's resources has led to very high workloads and stress levels experienced by most human resources of the project, as well as the project's inability to complete a few of the planned initiatives while rushing a few others. The contribution towards project objectives and the sustainability of results would have been enhanced through a closer alignment between the project's design and resources. Nevertheless, the project exerted much effort to complete most of the activities successfully, including 3 new activities that were added during implementation, and even over achieved some its targets, despite of the limited resources available.

Emerging Good Practices:

- The project was able to effectively leverage ILO's global tools, resources, and guidance to complete a large range of activities within a limited period of time. In addition to the heavy technical and administrative support received by the project from the ILO ROAS and HQ as well as the cooperation made with the ILO's ITC, the project utilized and adapted a significant number of ILO global tools in its implementation of field activities including ILO's Career Guidance and Employment Services Tool, GetAhead, SYIB, COOP tools, and the strategic compliance model. The evaluation found that this leveraging of existing resources has raised the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation.
- The national labour inspection and OSH policies were developed in an inclusive and informative approach under this project which resulted in its official endorsement by the government, thus constituting an integrated part of the official inspection and OSH systems in the country. The development of the policies was heavily informed by evidence coming from assessments done early in the project, and policies were validated with tripartite constituents, which facilitated their endorsement.
- Incorporation of a significant amount of TOT activities across many of the project's activities leads to an enhanced level of sustainability of some project results and facilitates the implementation of future capacity building activities utilizing ToT graduates. ToT activities were implemented across various components of the project including TOTs on labour inspection, GetAhead, career guidance and employment services, cooperative development, and OSH. In other words, the project established a group of local trainers who may be utilized in further trainings during implementation of future projects, especially that this project was the first project implemented by the ILO office in Iraq.

Recommendations

1. Align future projects' design parameters with estimated/available project resources, including human, time, and financial resources

The evaluation has found that the project had an over ambitious design relative to the resources of the project, especially time. Many saw the project actually be two projects in one. While this helped raise the overall efficiency of the project, the efficiency gains came at a cost which was the high level of workloads and stress experienced by the project team and some project consultants. In some cases, it also resulted in rushing some activities to meet the ambitious targets of the project. Moreover, while the activities implemented in the field were very wide in scope enabling the project to reach a large number of beneficiaries, the activities were not deep enough to induce any significant change in the working conditions and status of agriculture workers. It is therefore recommended that the design of future projects should be aligned with the resources estimated/requested for the project.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq, ILO ROAS	High	Low	Short-term	Findings 4, 8, 17, 22, 23, 24

2. Continue supporting Iraq's journey to develop and modernize its labour inspection and OSH monitoring systems, including completing procedures for the online labour inspection system, supporting the implementation of the policies developed under this project and continued institutional and professional capacity building

The evaluation has found that the achievements made by this project are a first step in a long journey to realize a significant advancement of the labour inspection and OSH systems in the country. The evaluation also found that inspectors in Iraq, and social partners, still need to have their capacities built to enable them to lead the development of the labour inspection and OSH frameworks in the country. It is therefore recommended for the ILO to continue building the capacities of relevant stakeholders in Iraq (both federal Iraq and KRI), continue with its institutional capacity building, and continue supporting the country in its journey towards enhancing decent working conditions in line with ILS.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq	High	High	Short-term	Findings 4, 9, 20, 21, 23

3. Earmark some of the resources of future projects to build the capacities of implementing partners, especially when operating in new contexts or with new partners.

While the project team did in fact build the capacity of implementing partners during this project, it did so in an unstructured way as it was not part of the project design. But given the weak level of capacity of many local service providers, future projects are recommended to allocate specific funds from the project budget for a structured capacity building programme to be provided to implementing partners on technical and financial reporting, and data monitoring. This will help raise the level of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of future projects.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq, ILO ROAS	Medium	Medium	Short-term	Finding 14

4. Request more time for the inception phase when implementing a project in a new context to better understand the landscape

The evaluation has found that part of the delays faced at the beginning of the project are related to the fact that this was the first ILO project implemented by the newly established ILO office in Iraq, which means that this project operated in a new context for the ILO. For this reason, more time could have been spent early in the project in understanding the context, mapping potential implementing partners, engaging heavily with social partners for a more effective and efficient intervention. It is therefore recommended that whenever the ILO implements a project in a new context, adequate time has to be requested for the inception phase of the project.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq, ILO ROAS	Low	Medium	Long-term	Findings 14, 24

5. Work on enhancing the social protection of agricultural workers through enabling the labour inspection system in Iraq to inspect farm activities and facilitating the registration of workers in social security under the newly endorsed social security law

The evaluation has found that labour inspection in Iraq still does not yet inspect farm activities given the closed family nature of these farms and their distant locations as well as the limited resources available for inspection. Moreover, none of the workers met with during this evaluation was registered in social security, and the project faced difficulties in achieving its target related to registering workers. Workers met with indicated that they did not understand the importance of registering and expressed no interest in doing so fearing high payments. The newly endorsed social security law provides an opportunity for future projects to facilitate the registration of workers given the law's provisions related to subsidizing the registration of informal workers. It is therefore recommended for future projects to work on developing the social protection status of agricultural workers through enhancing their knowledge about the new social security law and the importance of registration, and facilitating their registration in accordance with the new law. In parallel, future projects are recommended to enable the labour inspection system to inspect activities on the farm-level.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq	Medium	High	Short-term	Findings 5, 7

6. Utilize graduates of ToT activities and the newly inaugurated training center, to build the capacities of stakeholder in Iraq in other upcoming projects

Given the wide scope of ToT activities implemented under this project, there are now dozens of Iraqis who have become certified trainers across various topics including inspection, OSH, career guidance, GetAhead, and cooperative development. Moreover, the project has supported the establishment of a dedicated training center at MoLSA. Future ILO projects in Iraq are highly recommended to utilize the investments made in these individuals and in the new center to enhance the sustainability of project results and raise the effectiveness of future capacity building activities

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq	Medium	Low	Short-term	Finding 19

7. Continue the high level of contribution made by the project to ILO's cross cutting policy drivers of gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards to facilitate the eventual realization of ILO's policy goals in Iraq

The evaluation has revealed a strong contribution made by the project to gender equality, social dialogue and labour standards, ILO's main cross cutting policy drivers. Future and other ongoing ILO projects in Iraq should continue this strong contribution towards these policy drivers to facilitate a more effective contribution to the effective realization of ILO's overall policy goals.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing	Linked to
ILO Iraq	Medium	Low	Short-term	Finding 10, 11

Annex 1 -Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
1. <u>Relevance</u>						
Relevance	A. To what extent are the project objectives and approach relevant to the constituents' needs and present country context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate consultations held with constituents during design. - Constituents indicate that project objective and approach are relevant to their needs - Project objectives and approach are in line with the context of Iraq and respond to national needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Government stakeholders - Donor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Government stakeholders - Donor 	Assess alignment of project with country context and with constituents' needs
	B. How relevant was the project to the needs of targeted population? Were the needs of women, PWDs, refugees, IDPs, and most vulnerable groups considered in the project design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project components address needs of target population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews - FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations 	Assess alignment between project's activities and outputs with beneficiaries' needs.

		- Project document explicitly addresses needs of vulnerable groups	- Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Beneficiaries - Donor		- Implementing partners and trainers - Beneficiaries - Donor	
2. Effectiveness						
Effectiveness	C. Did the project meet all of its immediate objectives? To what extent has each achievement contributed to the overall objective?	- Achievement of immediate objectives of project (i.e. achievement of the outcome indicators) - Linkages between the outcomes and impact are clear and logical	- Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Interviews - FGDs	- ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries	Assess achievement of the project's immediate objectives, and their contribution to the project's overall objective
	D. What is the level of improvement in the working conditions and status of workers in agriculture? How effective was the project in meeting the needs of agriculture workers?	- Agricultural worker report improvements in their working conditions and status	- Project documents - ILO Staff - Implementing partners and trainers	- Desk Review - Interviews - FGDs	- ILO Staff - Implementing partners and trainers - Beneficiaries	Assess the level of improvement in the working conditions of agricultural worker

		- Agricultural workers indicate that project met their needs (triangulated with desk review and logical assumptions of project)	- Beneficiaries			
E. How did the project's achievements contribute to ILO's cross cutting policy drivers including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of incorporating cross cutting issues in design and implementation, including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards - Project contributed to gender equality, social dialogue, and/or labour standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Review - Interviews - FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	Assess the project's contribution to ILO's cross cutting policy issues including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards	
F. Has there been any unintended positive/negative consequences of the project intervention?	- Unintended positive or negative outcomes identified ¹⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Review - Interviews - FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations 	Analyse the project's unintended outcomes, whether positive or negative	

¹⁶ Unintended outcomes refer to the effects of an intervention other than those it aimed to achieve. Such effects could be positive (e.g. producing additional benefits) or negative (causing harm to those involved, either directly or indirectly)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	
	G. To what extent has the project fostered integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes through the ILO COVID-19 response intervention at country level for a timely crisis response to COVID-19?	- Strategic technical support and policy dialogue fostered by the project enabled a timely response to COVID-19, as reported by stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Review - Interviews - FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	Analyse the technical and policy dialogue support process fostered by the project in enabling a timely response to COVID-19
3. Efficiency						
Efficiency	H. To what extent have project activities been cost-efficient? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve all outcomes?	- Minimum waste in utilizing resources in the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff - Implementing partners and trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - ILO Staff - Implementing partners and trainers 	Analyse the efficiency of project spending

	I. To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial, and human resources invested in the project?	- Number and depth of new policies, frameworks.. etc & number of beneficiaries reached by project vis-à-vis project investment	- Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Government stakeholders - Donor	- Desk review - Interviews	- ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Government stakeholders - Donor	Analysis of the scope and depth of project results in terms of investments made
4. Sustainability and Possible Impact						
Sustainability & possible impact	J. How sustainable are the results achieved by the project likely to be? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?	- Clear sustainability measures implemented in the project	- Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Interviews - FGDs	- ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries	Identify and analyse key sustainability measures introduced in the design and taken during the implementation of the project
	K. To what extent are national partners – governmental or non-governmental – able and willing to continue their efforts after the project's end date?	- Partners report that they are able and commitment to continue their efforts towards the	- Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations	- Desk review - Interviews	- ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations	Analyse the ability and commitment of project stakeholders to continue their efforts towards

		project's objectives after its completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders 	the project's objectives after its completion.
	L. What is the likely contribution of the project's initiatives to the stated development objectives of the intervention? Did they contribute as laid out in the initial theory of change? What else could have been done to better realize the project objective?	- Project initiatives are logically correlated to and contribute to the intended objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Desk review - Interviews - FGDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO Staff - Workers' & employers' organizations - Implementing partners and trainers - Government stakeholders - Beneficiaries 	Analyse the likely contribution of the project's initiatives to the intended objectives of the project and identify factors that could have enhanced effectiveness
5. Effectiveness of Management Arrangements						

Management Arrangements	M. How effective was the communication between the project team, the regional office, and the responsible technical department at HQ? Has the project sought and received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?	- Adequate technical and administrative support was sought by the project and provided by various ILO departments at the regional and global level.	- Project documents - ILO Staff	- Desk review - Interviews	- ILO Staff	Analyse the adequacy of support provided by various ILO departments in response to requests by the project team
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Annex 2: List of Persons Interviewed

Stakeholder Categories	Name	Entity	Position
ILO Staff & Project Consultants	Zryan Khidir	ILO (project team)	National Project Senior Officer
	Dawit Mengesha	ILO (project team)	MEAL Officer
	Racha Elassy	ILO (project team)	Chief Technical Advisor
	Nazar AlHashamat	ILO (project team)	Project Assistant
	Habib Obaidy	ILO (project team) (former)	Former National Protect Officer
	Maha Kataa	ILO Iraq Office	Iraq Country Coordinator
	Felix Martin	Senior Programme Officer	International Training Center of the ILO (ITC ILO)
	Wisam Jasip	Consultant and trainer	
	Khalid M. Hussein	Consultant on Labour Inspection Business Analysis	
	Adnan Rababh	International expert	
	Ahmad Safadi	International Expert	
	Rula Al.sadi	Get Ahead Consultant	
	Sanger Y. Salih	National Consultant on OSH	
	Mohammad Abdul Ameer	National Consultant	
	Abdulqadir Ahmed	National Consultant on Labour Inspection	
Nathalie Both	Social Protection and Resilience Officer		
Government stakeholders	Kanar Hidayat	General Director	Planning Department – KRI Ministry of Planning
	Dashti	Head of Training	KRI MoLSA
	Jwan	Head of OSH	KRI MoLSA
	Mriwan Bakok Azzez	Head of Directorate	KRI Directorate of Labour and Social Security
	Tarik Hazim Fatah	Head of Labour Inspection Unit	KRI MoLSA
	Mohamed Amin Haji	Head of Relations	KRI Directorate of Labour and Social Security
	Mashreq Abdulkhaliq Falaeh	Head	Federal Iraq OSH Center
	Usama Mohammad Shahab	Head of Relations	Federal Iraq OSH Center
	Abbas Fadil Abbas	Deputy Head of Department	Federal Iraq Labour and Vocational Training
	Zainab Fadel Hassan	Head of Relations	Federal Iraq Labour and Vocational Training

Workers' & Employers' Organizations	Adil Aukab Hussein	Head	Iraqi Federation of Industries
	Hangaw Khan	Director	Operational Office – Kurdistan United Workers Union
	Nateq Abdulrahim Sadiq	Advisor	Kurdistan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry
	Adnan Saffar	Secretary General	Conference of Iraqi Trade Unions and Federations
	Sattar Dnbus Barak	Head	Federal General Trade Union of Iraq
	Ali Yassin	Head	Wafa' Federation of Trade Unions
	Elham Zubaidi	Head	Lotus Organization
	Hamdi Aledani	Project Manager	Al-Khir Organization
Implementing Partners & Trainers	Hadi Hussein	Director	Basra Department of Agriculture
	Mathew Kinsella	Associate Managing Director	Sreo Consulting
	Mayameen Mohammad	Head	Mayameen Organization
	Rezgar Omar	Project Manager	Peace and Freedom Organization
	Abdulah Khalid	Board Director	Peace and Freedom Organization
	Sajed Saad Hasan	Dean of Agriculture College	Basra University
	Ranj S. Abdullah	Director of International Relations Office	Erbil Polytechnic University
	Sdeeq Ramadhan Hasan	Partner/Trainer	(KRI-Kurdistan United Workers Union) + Member and Representative of LI Committees
	Ziad Muhammad	Finance & Logistics Officer	SWEDO
Donor	Tsvetomir Tsekov	Donor representative	EU Delegation to Iraq

Annex 3 – List of Documents Reviewed

- Evaluation ToR
- Received project documents, including:
 - Project document
 - Progress Reports 2021 & 2022, both narrative and financial reports
 - Internal Midterm Evaluation Report
 - Endline Survey Report
 - List of Beneficiaries per outcome indicators
 - List of project stakeholders
 - Final Technical Progress Reports (TPRs) for main implementing partners
 - Revised logframe – based on proposal from EU Third Party Monitoring Team
 - Areas of intervention in Dohuk and Basra
 - Labour Inspection Policy for Iraq
 - Labour Inspection manual for Agriculture Sector
 - National OSH Policy
 - OSH Profile
 - OSH Programme
 - Tools and Template for reporting of work accidents and injuries
 - Capacity building plan for Labour Inspectors in Iraq
 - Labour inspection templates/checklists
 - Job descriptions for labour inspectors and OSH inspectors
 - Workplan to enhance capacity of National OSH Center
 - Assessment on labour inspection and OSH
 - Quotes
- External Documents
 - ILO, CSO, KRSO (2022) "Iraq Labour Force Survey 2021"
 - ILO (2021) "A Diagnostic of the Informal Economy in Iraq"
 - UNDP (2020) "Impact of COVID-19 on the Iraqi Economy"
 - ILO, FAFO (2020) "Rapid Assessment of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Populations and Small-Scale Enterprises in Iraq"
- ILO Evaluation Guidance documents & templates

Annex 4 – ILO Lesson Learned Template

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 in Iraq
Project TC/SYMBOL: IRQ/20/03/EUR

Name of Evaluator: To Excel Consulting **Date: September 2022**

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	The use of local skills can greatly facilitate the implementation of activities in new contexts in which there is no ILO presence or where it is difficult for ILO personnel to reach. A main lesson learned by the project's experience in implementing large scale field-level activities in Basra is that the use of local consultants can help avert adverse implications to the project's efficiency and effectiveness from such contexts.
Context and any related preconditions	This lesson is relevant in novel operating contexts in which the ILO has not worked before.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Project Management
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Remotely managing a substantial scope and number of activities in new contexts where there is no ILO leads to delays and inefficiencies in implementation.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The project team's decision of recruiting local consultants to manage and monitor project activities in the field drove implementation forward.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The experience of this project actually highlighted the need to have an ILO office in the governate of Basra. And eventually, during the last few months of the project timeline, the ILO opened its branch office in Basra to support its activities under other projects.

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 in Iraq
Project TC/SYMBOL: IRQ/20/03/EUR

Name of Evaluator: To Excel Consulting

Date: September 2022

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	The misalignment observed between the project's overly ambitious design and the project's resources has led to very high workloads and stress levels experienced by most human resources of the project, as well as the project's inability to complete a few of the planned initiatives while rushing a few others. The contribution towards project objectives and the sustainability of results would have been enhanced through a closer alignment between the project's design and resources.
Context and any related preconditions	The ambitious design that included over 60 activities across various locations in Iraq and across both the policy and field levels over a limited timeframe did not take into account the new operating context of the different locations inside Iraq, which usually requires more time than usual for implementation.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Project Management / Design
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Implementing an ambitious project relative to the limited resources employed carried adverse effects on effectiveness and sustainability.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	NA
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The issue stems from the design of the project and its allocated resources.

Annex 5 – ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 in Iraq

Project TC/SYMBOL: IRQ/20/03/EUR

Name of Evaluator: To Excel Consulting

Date: September 2023

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project was able to effectively leverage ILO's global tools, resources, and guidance to complete a large range of activities within a limited period of time. In addition to the heavy technical and administrative support received by the project from the ILO ROAS and HQ as well as the cooperation made with the ILO's ITC, the project utilized and adapted a significant number of ILO global tools in its implementation of field activities including ILO's Career Guidance and Employment Services Tool, GetAhead, SYIB, COOP tools, and the strategic compliance model (...). The evaluation found that this leveraging of existing resources has raised the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The project operated in a very tight timeline given the large number and variety of activities involved across Iraq. Rather than taking significant time to devise new tools and methods for implementing the project's initiatives, the project utilized and adapt existing relevant ILO resources that were at the heart of the project's objectives in terms of labour governance and labour standards. In addition, the team requested and received extensive technical support from the regional and HQ offices. This has helped the project implement and achieve almost all of what it had planned to do within a limited period of time, and thus, had enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The leveraging of ILO's resources allowed the project to implement a larger and more varied number of activities than would have been otherwise possible.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The project implemented over 60 activities and reached more than 9,000 varied beneficiaries over a 2-year period. This period also saw important achievements on the policy level.
Potential for replication and by whom	This good practice may be applied and replicated by ILO project managers in any context in which the use of ILO's tools can provide efficiency gains and lead to a more effective project. However, the content of the tools must always be tailored and adapted to the local context and language.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Good practice is linked with all outcomes of Iraq's DWCP (2019-2023), especially the third outcome linked to labour governance.

Other documents or relevant comments	NA
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ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 in Iraq
Project TC/SYMBOL: IRQ/20/03/EUR

Name of Evaluator: To Excel Consulting **Date: September 2023**

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The national labour inspection and OSH policies were developed in an inclusive and informative approach under this project which resulted in its official endorsement by the government, thus constituting an integrate part of the official inspection and OSH systems in the country. The development of the policies was heavily informed by evidence coming from assessments done early in the project, and policies were validated with tripartite constituents, which facilitated their endorsement.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This good practice may be replicated in any project in which there is scope for policy development work. The good practice comes from the evidence-based development of the policy and the involvement of social partners in the review and validation of the policies.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Since the policy development was informed by evidence and since the policies were developed in full consultation with stakeholders, including social partners, the policies are now part of the official reform efforts by the Iraqi government on its labour inspection and OSH systems. This process led to the development of the policies within a limited timeframe, and has helped create a sense of national ownership for the policies.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Two evidence-based national labour inspection and OSH policies were developed in an inclusive and evidence-based approach and subsequently officially endorsed within a limited time period
Potential for replication and by whom	This good practice may be applied and replicated by any ILO project managers who are working on the policy level. The good practice is represented by evidence-based work to develop the policy in full consultation with social partners, to enable national ownership.

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Good practice is linked with the third priority under Iraq's DWCP (2019-2023) related to strengthening labour market governance
Other documents or relevant comments	NA

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 in Iraq
Project TC/SYMBOL: IRQ/20/03/EUR

Name of Evaluator: To Excel Consulting

Date: September 2023

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Incorporation of a significant amount of TOT activities across many of the project's activities leads to an enhanced level of sustainability of some project results and facilitates the implementation of future capacity building activities utilizing ToT graduates. ToT activities were implemented across various components of the project including TOTs on labour inspection, GetAhead, career guidance and employment services, cooperative development, and OSH. In other words, the project established a group of local trainers who may be utilized in further trainings during implementation of future projects, especially that this project was the first project implemented by the ILO office in Iraq.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This good practice may be replicated by any project that is operating in a new context, in order to enhance sustainability
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The incorporation of a significant amount of TOT across a number of topics has enhanced the sustainability of some project results Through its proactive engagement with MoSD, which was not involved in the project's 1 st phase, and through its work within the national framework, the project was able to significantly deepen the relationship between the two main government stakeholders concerned with child labour, MoL and MoSD, This closer relationship contributes to a more effective national system and structure in dealing with child labour issues. And in turn, a more effective government structure in this area contributes to the sustainability of project results beyond the timeframe of the project.

Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	A closer relationship between MoL and MoSD on child labour issues. Both stakeholders have indicated that their relationship on issues related to child labour has been strengthened significantly by this project.
Potential for replication and by whom	This good practice may be applied and replicated by any project manager leading a project with a substantial capacity building component to enhance the sustainability of results. It is especially relevant in new contexts in which future work is anticipated.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Good practice is linked with Jordan's P&B (2020-2021) Enabling Outcome A: authoritative knowledge and high-impact partnerships for promoting decent work, in addition to being linked with outcome 7 "Adequate and effective protection at work for all"
Other documents or relevant comments	NA

Annex 6 – Terms of Reference



**Terms of Reference
For Independent Final Evaluation
of 'Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase I in
Iraq'**

1. KEY FACTS	
TC Symbol:	IRQ/20/03/EUR
Country:	Iraq
Project title:	Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions in Response to COVID-19 Phase I in Iraq
Duration:	30 Months
Start Date:	01-DEC-2020
End Date:	31 May 2023
Administrative unit:	Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)
Technical backstopping unit	Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)
Collaborating ILO Units	LABADMIN/OSH; FUNDAMENTALS; COOP; SOCPRO; SKILLS;
P&B outcomes	Outcome 7: Adequate and effective protection at work for all
SDGs	08. Decent work and economic growth; 01. No poverty;
Evaluation requirements:	Independent final evaluation
Donor:	EU
Budget:	EUR 3,000,000

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Iraq is currently in a post-conflict phase after the end of military operations against ISIS, but the country's political and socio-economic context remains complex and unpredictable. Asymmetric attacks by armed groups and small-scale military operations continue to occur, leading to new displacement and impacting the return rate of IDPs. Additionally, rising poverty rates, delays in community reconciliation, lack of livelihood opportunities, and political and social tensions are causing new sources of instability, resulting in small-scale new displacement.

Iraq faces significant challenges related to employment, social protection, and labor rights. Youth, persons with disabilities, and women are particularly vulnerable, with high unemployment rates and limited participation in the labor force. Additionally, workers in the informal economy lack social insurance coverage, exacerbating their vulnerability to shocks and income loss.

Iraq has ratified all fundamental ILO conventions, but there are challenges related to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and labor inspection. Trade unions face interference, and collective bargaining is not yet practiced at the enterprise, sector, or national levels. The labor inspection system is weak, with legislative gaps, a lack of resources and policies, and inadequate engagement of social partners.

Iraq has signed the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but implementation and enforcement remain weak. The Iraqi Federation of Industries represents employers in the private industrial sector but has limited institutional capacity, and there are few opportunities for other trade unions to participate in formal consultation structures.

COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all sectors, resulting in reduced livelihood and employment opportunities, particularly for vulnerable populations. The crisis has also highlighted the importance of protecting workers' rights and ensuring decent work conditions, especially for informal and casually employed workers. The pandemic has led to the introduction of new working arrangements, causing devastating losses in working hours and employment. This has placed a high load on workers who can access their workplaces, while leaving informal and casually employed workers without a secure income and at risk of exploitation.

In response to the above, the International Labour Organization, with the support of the European Union, has implemented the project under evaluation. The project aimed at improving labour governance, inspection, and working conditions in Iraq in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project was implemented with a range of national partners, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health. Other stakeholders included the General Federation of Workers Unions and the Iraqi Federation for Industries.

The project falls under the third priority of Iraq's 2019-23 Decent Work Country program: "Labour market governance is strengthened in order to promote the realisation of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work through improved social dialogue mechanisms", while also contributing to the other two priority areas. These include priority 1: "Private sector development supports job creation" and priority 2: "Vulnerabilities in Iraq are reduced through extension and strengthening of social protection to fill coverage and adequacy gaps, and an effective framework to address child labour."

The project also contributes to the ILO Programme and Budget 2020-2021 mainly outcome 3: Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all, outcome 8: Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all, and outcome 7: Adequate and effective protection at work for all.

Additionally, the project is aligned with the strategic priorities of the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Cooperation framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024, namely strategic priority 1: “Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection and Inclusion”, and strategic priority 2: “Growing the Economy for All.”

Moreover, the project contributes to the attainment of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere namely target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all namely target 8.5: By 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value; target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms; target 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers, in particular women migrants and those in precarious employment.

The project team includes a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) based in Baghdad, two National Project Officers one based in Baghdad and one Erbil and one Administrative Assistant based in Baghdad. The project received backstopping from the Regional Crisis and Resilience Specialist and other DWT specialists. Additional technical support was provided from the Technical Specialist for Strategic Compliance from HQ.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES

The overall objective of the project is enhancing the application of International Labour Standards and national labour legislation and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work in Iraq. This is to be achieved through the following immediate objectives and their respective outputs:

Immediate Objective (1): Labour Inspection System modernized and its effectiveness enhanced in line with the International Labour Standards, particularly the Labour Inspection Conventions

- Output 1.1: A National labour inspection policy developed in consultation with the social partners.
- Output 1.2: The ILO Strategic Compliance Intervention Model adopted and implemented via the established methodology.
- Output 1.3: Institutional capacity of the labour inspectorate strengthened.
- Output 1.4: Capacity of labour inspectors strengthened and improved on regular basis.

Immediate objective (2): Occupational safety and Health improved in line with the ILO Conventions No. 155 and 187 in response to COVID-19

- Output 2.1: A National OSH policy and programme developed in consultation with the social partners.
- Output 2.2: Capacity of the National Center for Occupational Health and Safety strengthened.
- Output 2.3: Reporting and recording of work-related accidents, injuries and diseases improved.

Immediate objective (3): Awareness of social partners on labour inspection and OSH is raised and they are in a better position to engage in programmes to promote compliance with labour legislations and in response to COVID-19

- Output 3.1: Workers' and employers' representatives are trained on the role of labour inspection, OSH and fundamental principles and rights at work.
- Output 3.2: Tripartite structures and mechanisms on labour inspection and OSH established, or existing ones strengthened, and more effective.

Immediate objective (4): Workers in agriculture benefit from enhanced working conditions and improved status through skills development opportunities, awareness raising and farm level interventions.

- Output 4.1: Improved national regulatory frameworks and structures are developed and promoted for the protection of workers in agriculture and other targeted sectors.
- Output 4.2: Improved working conditions and enhanced compliance with national legislation and International Labour Standards on selected farms
- Output 4.3: Farms advance their compliance with decent work principles in exchange for support to improve work force productivity

3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF EVALUTION

ILO considers evaluation an integral part of the implementation of technical cooperation projects. Evaluation requirements are made in all projects in accordance with ILO evaluation policy and based on the nature of the project and the specific requirements agreed upon at the time of the project design and during the project as per established procedures. Accordingly, and since this project is ending in May 2023, it will undergo a final independent evaluation.

The main purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the progress to date for accountability and learning purposes, through an analysis of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and orientation to impact of the project.

The main outcomes of this evaluation include:

- 1) Assessment of the project achievements: this evaluation will assess the project's achievements against its intended outcomes and objectives.
- 2) Identification of strengths and weaknesses: The evaluation will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project, including what worked well and what did not work so well. This information can help to inform future project design and implementation.
- 3) Recommendations for improvement: Based on the strengths and weaknesses identified, the evaluation will make recommendations for improvement. These recommendations may relate to project design, implementation, or monitoring and evaluation.
- 4) Lessons learned and best practices: The evaluation will identify and document lessons learned and best practices from the project. These will help to inform future project design and implementation, as well as contribute to broader organizational learning.

- 5) Accountability and transparency: The evaluation will provide an independent assessment of the project, which can help to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of resources and the achievement of results.
- 6) Assessment of the project's integration of ILO's cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, social dialogue and tripartism, international labour standards, just transition to environmental sustainability, and the response to COVID-19 into its design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This will help to determine the project's contribution to advancing the broader goals of the ILO in these areas. The evaluation may also make recommendations for improving the integration of these cross-cutting issues in future projects.

The primary clients of this evaluation are ILO ROAS and ILO Iraq Office, ILO constituents in Iraq, including government entities, and the donor. Secondary audience include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

The evaluation will comply with the ILO evaluation policy, which is based on the United Nations Evaluation Norms and Standards and the UNEG ethical guidelines.

4. EVALUATION SCOPE

The final evaluation will cover project implementation, across all its outcomes and outputs, from December 2020 to May 2023. The geographical focus is aligned with that of the project; centralized interventions are to be assessed on the level of the Federal Republic of Iraq, including Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and relevant national institutions in Baghdad. On local level, evaluation will assess the interventions in two governorates in the north of the country (Duhok and Erbil, with the capitals Duhok and Erbil) and one governorate in the south (Al-Basrah with the capital Basra).

As cross-cutting themes, the evaluation will also take specific note of the integration of gender mainstreaming¹, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards, social dialogue², and environmental sustainability, as well as its contribution to the realization of the SDGs and the COVID-19 response³.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation utilises the standard ILO framework and follows its major criteria. While the evaluator may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, however any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator and reflected in the inception report.

Relevance:

- ❖ To what extent are the project objectives and approach relevant to the constituents' needs and present country context?
- ❖ How relevant was the project to the needs of targeted population? Were the needs of women, people with disabilities (PWDs), refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and most vulnerable groups considered in the project design?

Project Effectiveness:

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746717.pdf

³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf

- ❖ Did the project meet all of its immediate objectives? To what extent has each achievement contributed to the overall objective?
- ❖ What is the level of improvement in the working conditions and status of workers in agriculture? How effective was the project in meeting the needs of agriculture workers?
- ❖ How did the projects' achievements contribute to ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?
- ❖ Has there been any unintended positive/negative consequences of the project intervention?
- ❖ To what extent has the project fostered integrated and strategic technical support and policy dialogue processes through the ILO COVID-19 response intervention at country level for a timely crisis response to COVID-19?

Efficiency of resources:

- ❖ To what extent have project activities been cost-efficient? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve all outcomes?
- ❖ To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?

Sustainability and possible impact:

- ❖ How sustainable are the results achieved by the project likely to be? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?
- ❖ To what extent are national partners– governmental or non-governmental – able and willing to continue their efforts after the project's end date?
- ❖ What is the likely contribution of the project's initiatives to the stated development objectives of the intervention? Did they contribute as laid out in the initial theory of change? What else could have been done to better realize the project objective?

Effectiveness of management arrangements:

- ❖ How effective was communication between the project's team, the regional office and the responsible technical department at headquarters? Has the project sought and received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?

6. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards (updated in 2016), and OECD/DAC's recommendations, as well as the ILO's Evaluation Policy Guidelines. It will also adhere to ethical standards and codes of conduct when gathering information to protect those involved in the evaluation process.

This evaluation will rely on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to seek and triangulate responses to evaluation questions and fulfil its purpose. The analysis should include examining the interventions' Theory of Change, with particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connect between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets. The detailed approach and methodology, including the workplan, should be part of the inception report. Throughout the evaluation process as well as dissemination, the evaluation should ensure involvement of key stakeholders while mainstreaming ILO's crosscutting issues.

The data collection methods consist of:

- **Desk review of existing documents:** The evaluator will conduct systematic analysis of existing documents and obtain existing qualitative and quantitative evidence prior to primary data collection. The desk review also facilitates assessment of the situation and available data to plan the evaluation and develop the inception report.
- **Key information interviews:** Online / face-to-face individual interviews will be conducted with a pre-agreed list of stakeholders who have in-depth exposure and understanding of the project and their context. Interview guide(s) will be developed during the inception phase to stimulate a discussion on concerned evaluation questions.
- **Focus group discussions:** Focus group discussions with direct and/or end-beneficiaries will be organized to collect their insights on the project interventions.
- **Preliminary finding briefing:** Upon completion of primary data collection, the evaluator will present preliminary findings to key stakeholders. The evaluator will also collect further insight from the group to feed them into the final report.
- **Site visits:** During data collection, site visits will be conducted to observe selected interventions. This can be combined with focus group discussions, depending on site selection.

Findings should be triangulated by using more than one data source to draw evaluator's judgements. Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with and approved by the Evaluation Manager during the inception phase.

7. WORK ASSIGNMENTS

a. Kick-off meeting

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the evaluation manager, relevant project team members and programme officer. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final assessment report. The following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, and the outline of the inception and final report.

b. Desk Review

The evaluator will review project background materials and will conduct inception interviews before starting the data collection. Documents to review include, but are not limited to,

- Project document
- Revised Project logical framework
- Progress reports
- Minutes from technical meetings
- Mission reports
- Reports and assessment produced by the project
- National LI policy
- National OSH policy
- National strategies and plans
- The ILO Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 & 2022-2023
- Iraq Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) (2019-2023)

c. Inception Report

The evaluator will draft an Inception Report, which should describe, reflect upon, and fine-tune the following issues:

- Project background
- Purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation
- Evaluation matrix, including criteria, questions, indicators, data source, and data collection methods
- Methodology (data collection and analysis methods)
- Main deliverables
- Management arrangements and work plan
- Data collection tools (interview and focus group discussion guides)

d. Primary Data Collection (Key Informant Interviews & Focus Group Discussions)

Following the inception report, the evaluator will have interviews with stakeholders together with an enumerator supporting the process, if necessary. Individual or group interviews will be conducted with the relevant stakeholders.

Focus Group Discussions will be conducted with direct and/or end beneficiaries. If the evaluator is unable to conduct focus group discussions (e.g., due to a possible language barrier), a national consultant will be hired separately.

e. Preliminary finding presentation

Upon completion of data collection, the evaluator will present preliminary findings to the main stakeholders.

f. Final Report

The final report will follow the format below and be in a range of **35-45 pages** in length, excluding the annexes:

1. Title page
2. Table of Contents, including List of Appendices, Tables
3. List of Acronyms or Abbreviations
4. Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations
5. Background and Project Description
6. Purpose of Evaluation
7. Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions
8. Key evaluation findings (organized by evaluation criteria)
9. A table presenting the key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (expected and unexpected)
10. Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible and the time and resource implications of the recommendations)
11. Lessons learned and good practices (in prescribed ILO template)
12. Annexes (list of interviews, TORs, list of documents consulted, good practices and lessons learned in the ILO format, etc.)

The quality of the report will be assessed against the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) Checklists 4.2, 4.3, 4.4⁴. The deliverables will be submitted in the English language and structured according to the templates provided by the ILO.

⁴ Link to Checklists can be found here: [wcms_853289.pdf \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_761031.pdf)

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_761031.pdf

8. Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation period will be from June 2023 to August 2023 with 30 working days.

Tasks	Number of Payable Working days
Kick-off meeting	0.5
Desk review of documents; inception interviews; drafting inception report	7
Revise and resubmit inception report	1
Interviews & focus group discussions	10
Data analysis & drafting the final report	6
Presentation of preliminary findings (this may be structured into two presentations)	0.5
Preparing the second draft of the report	3
Integration of comments and finalization of the report	2
Total number of working days	30

9. DELIVERABLES

Deliverables of the evaluation consist of the following:

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report with comments log
- Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report
- Deliverable 3: Stakeholder debrief, PowerPoint Presentation (PPP) – with necessary translation
- Deliverable 4: Draft 2 evaluation report with comments log
- Deliverable 5: Finalized comprehensive comments log of how all comments were considered and taken on board by the evaluation team or not and why not.
- Deliverable 6: Final evaluation report with executive summary (report will be considered final after review by EVAL. Comments will have to be integrated).

The quality of the report will be assessed against the EVAL Checklists 4, 5, and 6. The deliverables will be submitted in the English language and structured according to the templates provided by the ILO.

10. PAYMENT TERM

- i. 20 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 1 (inception report) approved by the evaluation manager
- ii. 30 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 2 (draft evaluation report) and deliverable 3 (PowerPoint presentation on preliminary findings)
- iii. 50 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 4, 5, and 6 approved by the ILO Evaluation Office.

11. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

The evaluator will report to the ILO's evaluation manager and should discuss any technical and methodological matters with her. The ILO project office in Iraq will provide administrative and logistical support during the data collection. The Evaluation Office will approve and sign off the final evaluation report.

The evaluator is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (ToR).

He/she will:

- Review the ToR and propose any refinements to evaluation questions and methodology during the inception phase
- Review project background materials (e.g., project document and progress reports).
- Prepare an inception report
- Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions
- Conduct preparatory consultations with the evaluation manager prior to the evaluation mission
- Conduct key informant interviews and collect information
- Either conduct focus group discussions or guide and coordinate with a national consultant to do so
- Analyse findings from key informant interviews and focus group discussions
- Present preliminary findings
- Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/stakeholders
- Prepare the final report based on the ILO, donor and other stakeholders' feedback obtained on the draft report.

The ILO Evaluation Manager is responsible for:

- Drafting the ToR
- Finalizing the ToR with input from ILO colleagues and other stakeholders
- Hiring the evaluator
- Providing the evaluator with the project background materials
- Assisting the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate
- Reviewing the inception report, initial draft final report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluator on the inception report and the final report
- Reviewing the final report
- Coordinating with the Regional Evaluation Officer for the Evaluation Office's clearance of the final report
- Disseminating the final report to stakeholders
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary.

The ILO Regional Evaluation Officer⁵:

- Provides support to the planning of the evaluation;
- Approves selection of the evaluation consultant and final versions of the TOR;
- Reviews the draft and final evaluation report and submits it to the ILO Evaluation Office;
- Disseminates the report as appropriate.

The Project team is responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input

⁵ For this evaluation, the Regional Evaluation Officer is the evaluation manager.

- Providing project background materials, including studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced, and any relevant background notes
- Providing a proposed list of stakeholders
- Participating in the preparatory briefing prior to the assessment missions
- Support in logistical arrangements for the missions
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report
- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations

12. LEGAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS

- This evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation guidelines and UN Norms and Standards.
- The ToR is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluation “Code of conduct for evaluation in the ILO”⁶. The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.

13. QUALIFICATION

The evaluation team is expected to have the following qualifications:

- At least 7 years of proven experience in evaluating development interventions.
- Thematic experience in International Labour Standards, labour governance, labour inspection, and occupational safety and health (OSH). Evaluation experience in these areas is a strong asset.
- An advanced degree in a relevant field.
- Previous experience in conducting evaluations for UN agencies is required. Experience with the International Labour Organization (ILO) is preferred.
- Proficiency in English (ability to produce high quality reports). Proficiency in Arabic and Kurdish for national consultants.
- Prior experience in the region, particularly in Iraq, is an asset.
- High professional standards and adherence to principles of integrity in accordance with the ILO Evaluation Policy and United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.
- The team members should have no links to project management or any other conflicts of interest that would compromise the independence of the evaluation.