

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

**'Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme'
Phase II**

Draft Evaluation Report

20th October 2019

Matjaz Saloven – Evaluation Consultant

Programme Information		
Programme title	Iraq Public Sector Modernisation – Phase II	
Atlas ID	00059925	
Corporate outcome and output	Modernisation of public sector in Iraq	
Country	Iraq	
Region		
Date programme document signed	December 20121	
Programme dates	Start	Planned end
	January 2013	December 2019
Programme budget	USD 24,045,411 million	
Programme expenditure at the time of evaluation	17,579,573	
Funding source	UNDAF / MPTF	
Implementing party	UNDP	
Evaluation Information		
Evaluation type	Programme evaluation	
Final evaluation	Final evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	January 2013	October 2019
Evaluators	Matjaz Saloven	
Evaluator email address	matjaz.saloven@gmail.com	
Evaluation dates	Start	End
	21 st September	30 th October

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Acknowledgement:

The evaluator expresses his gratitude to the UNDP office staff in Iraq, the Ministry of Planning, CoMSEC, and the national beneficiaries for the support provided during the evaluation process and the evaluation visit to Baghdad and Karbala.

List of Acronyms:

CoMSEC	Council of Ministers' Secretariat
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan 2011-2014 of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GWIPMS	Government-Wide Institutional Performance Management System
I-PSM	Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levante
ITF	Iraq Trust Fund
LADP	Local Area Development Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NCMDIT	National Center for Management Development and Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSDP-I	Private Sector Development Programme – Iraq
PSMSC	Public Sector Modernisation Steering Committee
PWG	Priority Working Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCWA	United Nations Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WHO	World Health Organisation
GOI	Government of Iraq

NPMSC	National Public Sector Modernisation Committee
MTF	Multi-Trust Fund
ITF	Iraq Trust Fund
GIS	Geographic Information System
SGP	Strategic Government Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
LADP	Local Area Development Programme
NPSMS	National Public Sector Modernisation Strategy
NCMDIT	National Center for Management Development and Information Technology
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PSMR	Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap
RBM	Result-Based Management
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
UAE	United Arab Emirates
TOT	Train of Trainers
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOCHM	Ministry of Construction, Housing and Municipalities
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
ESRI	Environmental System Research Institute
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
MWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
MME	Ministry of Migration and Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN	United Nations
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Background of the Evaluation

This evaluation report presents findings of the final evaluation of the 'Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme - Phase II', funded by the United Nations Member States¹ through the UNDAF Multi-Partner Trust Fund and implemented by the United Nations agencies under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme.

1.2. Overview of the Programme 'Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme – Phase II'

The Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme (programme) is a Government of Iraq-led UN joint programme, initially aimed to support Iraq's Strategic Government Plan (SGP) 2011-2014, National Development Plan (NDP) 2010-2014, and subsequent National Development Plans. The overall programme budget was USD 24,045,411 million. The programme started in January 2013 and will be finished in December 2019.

The Programme was focused on four developmental themes:

- i) developing policy and building machinery at the centre of government for managing public sector modernisation;
- ii) supporting system-wide reform for development management, gender mainstreaming, e-governance and national statistics;
- iii) piloting reform in the three key sectors of health (education, water, and sanitation (WATSAN)); and
- iv) supporting decentralised service delivery and local governance initiatives.

By promoting and working on enhancing service delivery, the Government of Iraq (GoI) aimed to demonstrate to the Iraqi people that public sector modernisation will have concrete and tangible benefits for the population as a whole. The programme thus aimed to establish synergies with existing UN and other donor programmes, aimed at addressing corruption, decentralisation and participation, as well as to integrate cross-cutting issues in relation to poverty, gender, social exclusion and, the environment.

1.3 Methodology

The evaluation methodology looked for evidence of why, whether, and how results were linked to the programme and identified factors driving or hindering processes. The evaluation provided an understanding of the cause-and-effect links between inputs and activities as well as outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The evaluation was based on the programme theory of change, considering links between the activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The evaluation took into consideration the five OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. During the evaluation process, data and information were gathered during desk research, field visits in Baghdad and Karbala in Iraq, and subsequent interviews. The evaluation covered programme activities implemented throughout the life-span of the programme,

¹ Participating states to the UNDAF Multi-Trust Fund: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Korea, Spain Sweden, Scotland, Turkey, the USA (these states governments or its specialised development assistance agencies)

between January 2013 and September 2019. During the field visit in Iraq, interviews were held with the main stakeholders at the central and local level, with the representatives of Karbala University, and with UNDP staff.

1.4. Overall Assessment of the Project

1.4.1 Relevance

The programme has been aligned with and supported the Iraqi Strategic Government Plan (SGP) 2011-2014, National Development Plan (NDP) 2010-2014, Government Plan 2014-2018 and NDP 2018-2022; thus, to a significant extent, it responded to the GoI strategic policy priorities. The expected outputs and outcomes have been valid, and the programme responded to the real beneficiaries' needs and successfully supported the public sector modernisation and modernisation of the public administration. The GoI problems, challenges and needs in the public sector were appropriately identified in the programme design as well as adequately analysed prior to the implementation phase. The programme successfully addressed gaps which the other development partners actions did not consider. The programme also supported the implementation of the specific UN SDGs, such as of SDG 4 – quality education, SDG 5 – gender equality, SDG 6 – clean water and sanitation and SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. To summarise, the programme was relevant to the Iraqi development context and, broadly speaking, managed to deliver most of the planned outputs by the introduction of new mechanisms, revised and improved procedures, improved human resources management, managerial capacity, administrative structures, sector management, and service delivery.

1.4.2 Design

The programme action document clearly elaborated the envisaged programme objectives, outputs and outcomes. The allocated resources (financial resources, staff, etc.) corresponded to the initially envisaged programme time schedule and deliverables that were planned to be achieved by the programme. The programme objectives were realistic and achievable within the envisaged time frame and resources; however, this has not been attained due to the unexpectedly changed operating context. The programme design was logical and coherent in terms of the roles and beneficiaries' capacities. The programme concept appropriately introduced a cross-cutting and horizontal approach. Taking into account the programme scope and its complexity, the programme action document relatively well defined the performance indicators per specific outputs in the programme action document log-frame. The programme design appropriately considered various external risk factors such as political, security, legislative, etc., which in fact eventually negatively impacted the programme implementation dynamic. However, given the amended operating context and several programme extensions, the performance indicators should have been modified. In general, the programme design corresponded to the stakeholders' needs and appropriately supported GoI by focusing on enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability of the public sector and improving public administration and public service delivery.

1.4.3 Effectiveness

The programme has been, to a large extent, effective as it has attained a number of valuable outputs and outcomes that were planned and envisaged by the programme action document. The programme contributed to the simplification of working systems and procedures and service delivery models across the entire public sector. The programme

applied a holistic approach to structural and systems reforms, capacity development and public sector modernisation, and brought several concrete and tangible results. The programme deliverables were provided through a joint participatory process that took into consideration the Iraqi context and provided county-tailored outputs. As the programme achieved a number of valuable results, it is difficult to privilege some against others. However, the programme support to the development of the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap, National Development Plans, Evaluation and Performance Monitoring Frameworks, Geographical Information System, e-learning, e-governance, seem to be the most outstanding results though there are also many other. The programme was a backbone of reform initiatives by strengthening the institutional capacities of the Iraqi state through instating policy and legislative reforms and modernising its institutional capacities and enhance its service provision role at all levels of government. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights were adequately integrated into the programme action document and in the overall programme implementation.

1.4.4 Efficiency

The war against ISIL significantly hampered the GoI capacity to provide required allocation funds for cost-sharing. In spite of that, GoI insisted on keeping the programme as it recognised it as a cornerstone for the decentralisation of public sector and public sector modernisation. The programme was thus extended to December 2019 at the request of GoI. UNDP and its implementing partners implemented the programme in a flexible manner and adjusted the programme activities to the actual needs of the national stakeholders. However, the programme implementation was hampered by several delays, related to the beneficiaries' administrative procedures, visa issues, delayed adoption of the Law on National Budget for 2014, delays in approval of the annual working plans, etc. The delays led to the cost and non-cost extensions of the programme, which resulted in the relatively long six-year implementation phase. Nonetheless, the programme appropriately selected the national and local beneficiaries and partner institutions, which enabled proper further institutional dissemination of the programme results. The involvement of academia provided an added value to the GoI-led programme and ensured better engagement and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sectors. The programme has also had adequate political, technical, and administrative support provided by the national and local partners and build a very good reputation of UN among programme beneficiaries and stakeholders. The weakest point of the programme seems to be its visibility as the programme performed rather limited activities for publicising its activities and particularly programme results to the wider public.

1.4.5 Impact

The programme to a considerable extent contributed to the modernisation and development of the public institutions in Iraq with the elaboration of various action plans, strategies, delivered recommendations, provided assistance in amending regulations and legislative acts, developed guidelines, introduced performance and monitoring frameworks and tools, developed e-learning tools, transferred knowledge and skills, trained trainers, elaborated studies, etc., which all ensured an important added value and provided a significant impetus to the modernisation of the Iraqi public sector. The programme's strategic approach to engaging with the highest GoI political and technical structures (e.g., the Prime Minister's Office, CoMSEC, MOP, etc.) proved to be a very effective and efficient approach, having a successful multiplier effect and significant overall impact by reaching other national-level stakeholders. However, the progress made by the programme within the public sector cannot

be exclusively attributed to the programme, but also to the efforts and activities performed by GOI itself and other development partners, but the programme has had an important impact on the overall public sector modernisation.

1.4.6 Sustainability

Several programme outputs are likely to be sustained after the completion of the programme. As observed, a number of the developed tools are being used (e.g., Guidelines, etc.), thus the mid-term results are likely to be sustained in the future. Furthermore, the technical equipment, such as computers, software, etc., contributed to better sustainability of the programme results and developed tools and successfully complemented and supported the capacity-building activities, such as training courses, study visits, workshops, etc. The programme contributed to accelerating the transformation process through the rapid development of Iraq's public service leadership and contributed to building more modern public service structures.

1.5 Conclusions

The project was relevant to the Iraqi public sector modernisation and brought several positive and outstanding results. However, the recent violent demonstrations, in which protesters claimed better public services, confirm that there is still a significant need to provide better public services and better cater basic people needs. After nine years of continued programme support through Phases I and II, further external support is still needed, but it needs to be redefined. The programme applied a successful approach by addressing the GOI, sub-national and local levels and established good working relations, high buy-in and beneficiaries' ownership of the programme; thus, any longer programme void between the existing programme and a new programme/project will entail in losing the momentum and diminish the established working relations. Though the programme addressed various cross-cutting issues, very few activities were directly geared to prevent and fight corruption in the public sector. The programme has not introduced a robust monitoring mechanism and failed to ensure adequate programme visibility.

1.6 Recommendations

Due to the immense and continued need for improvement of the Iraqi public sector and its further modernisation, it is recommended to provide follow-up support that would build upon the achieved results. In this context, it is recommended to retain the cooperation with the Prime Minister's Office, relevant ministries and governorates and to avoid disconnection between the existing programme and a new programme/project support. The fight against corruption in the public sector shall be considered in follow-up actions to a greater extent. Given the outstanding impact and achieved results, it is recommended to continue technical cooperation with the National Center for Management Development and Information Technology and to replicate successful programme deliverables, among others also the GIS applications that were firstly piloted and the successful implemented in Karbala Governorate. Last but not least, the programme should improve its monitoring mechanism as well as to improve programme visibility.

II. HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme was a USD 24,045,411 programme funded by UN member states that contributed to the UNDAF-MPTF. The programme was launched in January 2013 and will finish in December 2019. The evaluated programme was entrusted jointly to eight UN agencies. The lead coordinator has been UNPD whilst the other participating UN agencies were WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNFPA, UN-ESCWA and UN-WOMEN. The programme was initially supposed to last 24 months to December 2104, but eventually it has been subject to several cost and non-cost extensions and eventually extended by December 2019.

The programme has been providing technical expertise and supporting GoI in its endeavour to enhance and modernise its administrative structures with the aim of improving service delivery schemes at different tiers of government. The Phase programme II has been focused on four developmental themes: i) Developing policy and building machinery at the centre of GoI for managing public sector modernisation; ii) Supporting system-wide reform for development management, gender mainstreaming, e-governance, and national statistics; iii) Piloting reform in the three key sectors of health, education and water and sanitation (WATSAN); and iv) Supporting decentralised service delivery and local governance initiatives.

Phase II has built upon lessons learned and recommendations emerging from its implementation and an external evaluation of Phase I as well as on the conclusions and outcomes of the inception consultations conducted before Phase II that fine-tuned and reaffirmed the strategic interventions for Phase II. Based on the results of an external evaluation of Phase I, Phase II was supposed to be less ambitious, more focused, and better attuned to the political and operational context with which GoI and UN officials had to contend. Broadly speaking, Phase I addressed issues associated with legal frameworks, human resources, managerial capacity, administrative structures, sector management and service delivery. During Phase I, pilots were undertaken in the ministries dealing with education, health and WATSAN.

The programme was led by GoI through its National Public Sector Modernisation Steering Committee (NPSMSC), providing overall strategic direction for public sector modernisation policy and coordination with particular attention to the development of the GoI's public sector modernisation vision and strategy. Three sector Ministerial Advisory Committees (Health, Education and WATSAN) were envisaged to assist the NPSMSC in guiding sectoral reforms in the concerned ministries and agencies.

2.1 Intervention Logic of the Programme

This section briefly outlines the Theory of Change of the programme at its initial stage. According to the Terms of Reference, the overall objective of the programme was to support public sector modernisation in Iraq.

The Programme had four themes:

1. Developing policy and building machinery at the centre of government for managing public sector modernisation;

2. Supporting system-wide reform for development management, gender mainstreaming, e-governance, and national statistics;
3. Piloting reform in the three key sectors of health, education and WATSAN
4. Supporting decentralised service delivery and local governance initiatives.

2.2.1 The specific programme development goal was to confirm that the Iraqi state ensures more efficient, accountable, and participatory governance at national and subnational levels.

The specific immediate objectives of the programme were:

- i) GoI enhanced capacity to undertake public sector modernisation at national, regional and governorate levels;
- ii) GoI improved public administration systems at national and sub-national levels;
- iii) GoI implemented reform and modernisation plans in Education, Health and WATSAN sectors; and
- iv) GoI sub-national governance and decentralised service delivery systems strengthened through enhanced participatory processes.

2.2 Reconstruction of the Theory of Change

The overall objective of the programme was to support the public sector modernisation in Iraq. The intervention diagram was constructed of four set of activities implemented during the programme, aimed to achieve the expected outputs. The set of outputs led to four main objectives; a) enhanced capacity to undertake public sector modernisation at national, regional and governorate levels, b) enhanced capacity to undertake public sector modernisation at national, regional and governorate levels, c) implementation of reform and modernisation plans in Education, Health and WATSAN sectors, and d) strengthened sub-national governance and decentralised service delivery systems through enhanced participatory processes. The programme activities, outputs and outcomes contributed to the modernisation of the public sector in Iraq, both at the technical and policy level.

2.3 Adjustment of the Programme Over the Programme Life-span

The Iraq-Public Sector Modernisation (I-PSM) Programme – Phase 1 was a USD 13,600,000 joint programme of the UN agencies, established to support GoI in modernising its public sector by adopting a public sector reform strategy for government and launching its implementation in three key sectors. Phase I was launched in April 2010 and finished in December 2012. Phase I was extended by the Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) Steering Committee in July 2012 to allow the completion of an inception period prior to the launching of Phase II. The inception period enabled defining the activities that UN agencies implemented during Phase II. The extension also enabled the UN agencies to keep momentum with the Iraqi partners, thus preventing a potential disengagement from their side.

In comparison with Phase I, Phase II experienced programmatic and funding changes as the decision was taken to apply a different funding modality than the one adopted in Phase I. The shift of the programme from ITF to UNDAF impacted on the programme as substantial contributions and commitments made by previous major donors – namely the European Commission and DFID – could not be carried over to the UNDAF fund, which required UN participating agencies to revise and prioritise proposed interventions, and this resulted in losing almost half of allocated resources.

2.4 Operating Context

Iraq has endured successive crises and challenges that have exacerbated problems and deepened its impact and effects.

In 2014, the Iraqi insurgency escalated and resulted in the conquest of Ramadi, Fallujah, Mosul, Tikrit and in the major areas of northern Iraq by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). At its height, ISIL held 56,000 square kilometres of Iraqi territory, containing 4.5 million citizens. These developments have resulted in pressure on human capital, lack of jobs and low human development, as well as massive destruction of infrastructure. In addition to this, many qualified public servants left jobs in the public sector and went into exile. The afore-mentioned circumstances also significantly impacted the implementation of the programme.

III. EVALUATION PURPOSE, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This chapter briefly describes the methodology applied for this evaluation, starting with an overview of the evaluation questions that were used for the implementation of the evaluation, followed by a description of the approach for data collection.

3.1 Objectives of the evaluation

The **specific objectives of the evaluation** were to:

- Determine if the programme has achieved its stated objectives and explain why/why not;
- Determine the project's results (i.e., mainly outputs and likelihood of their contribution to the outcome) in terms of sustaining the project's achievements;
- Provide recommendations to build on the programme's achievements and sustainability of the same;
- Document lessons learned and best practice from the overall project implementation to consider for future programming including approximately three success stories;
- Appraise project achievements against its expected outputs and recommend ways to improve future partnerships with the project's implementing partners/ target groups.

The programme evaluation focused on the following criteria:

Relevance: How important is the relevance or significance of the intervention regarding local and national priorities / is the programme on the right track?

Effectiveness: Did the project achieve its set outputs? How significant/big is the impact or effectiveness of the project compared to its expected outputs? (i.e., comparison: result- planning)

Efficiency: Did the programme achieve its outputs/implement project activities economically (i.e., value for money)? How big is the efficiency or the utilisation ratio of project resources (i.e., comparison: invested resources - results/impact)

Impact: Does the overall intervention contribute to longer-term outcomes/results? What is the impact or effect of the intervention in proportion to the overall situation of the target groups or the beneficiary population?

Sustainability: Are the positive impacts effective and sustainable? How is the sustainability of the intervention or its effects assessed?

In addition to this, the evaluation considered to what extent cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, civil society engagement and government-nongovernment partnerships, do-no harm and, conflict sensitivity principles in the programme log-frame and programme implementation have been considered.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Overview of data collection phases

Data and information for this evaluation were collected in two phases:

1. A **desk phase**, involving an analysis of the relevant programme documents. During this phase, the evaluator acquired preliminary information about the operating context, including information about the programme objectives, reporting, implementation, political situation, security issues, international presence in Iraq, etc.

2. A **field visit** to Iraq to collect additional primary and secondary data from the main stakeholders and key beneficiaries of the programme. This included the UNDP staff, CoMSEC staff, Ministry of Planning (MoP), Geographical Information System (GIS) Unit in Karbala, University in Karbala and other stakeholders benefiting from the programme. The evaluator also collected additional information in the field to complement the information gathered during the inception and analysis phases and those available in the programme reports. Throughout the field mission, the evaluator used the most reliable and appropriate sources of data and information. At the end of the field phase, the evaluator summarised his work, analysed the reliability and coverage of data collection, and presented preliminary findings in a Skype meeting to the UNDP programme manager.

3.2.2 Overview of evaluation tools and approaches

During the evaluation phase, the following evaluation tools and approaches were applied:

1. A review of all documents related to the development, implementation and monitoring of the programme performance. The evaluator reviewed the documents obtained from UNDP as well as the publicly available documents and open sources available on the internet. Furthermore, additional documents were requested from the UNDP office in Iraq and from the beneficiaries during the field visit.

2. A data analysis was performed on the achieved results during the implementation phase. A cross-check was made against initially set and consequently achieved results.

3. To validate the preliminary findings and to collect missing information, a series of individual interviews were conducted with the UNDP staff, the staff of MoP, CoMSEC, with the representatives of Karbala University, the GIS Unit in Karbala, etc.

3.2.3 Limitations to the Evaluation

No progress report for the second half of 2018 was made available for the evaluator by the UNDP office, so information for this period was obtained through the interviews with the programme staff and national beneficiaries. During the evaluator's field visit in Iraq, the security situation in the country significantly deteriorated due to violent demonstrations. For this reason the field mission was shortened by one day, and the debriefing did not take place in Baghdad. The remaining interviews with the UNDP staff were conducted after the field visit via Skype.

IV. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

4.1 Relevance

To a significant extent, the programme has responded to the GoI strategic policy priorities, objectives, and challenges defined in the GoI strategic policy documents. The programme has been aligned with and supported the Iraqi Strategic Government Plan (SGP) 2011-14, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2010-2014, the Government Plan 2014-2018, and NDP 2018-2022. As concerns NDP 2011-2014, it envisaged the following objectives; i) Good Governance: Strengthen the role of local governments in developing their provinces and building capacity for coordination and complementarities, using their comparative advantages; ii) Good Governance: Inclusiveness of all groups in the development process; iii) Establish sustainable development that balances economic, social, and environmental considerations. As regards NDP 2018-2022, the programme was relevant for the achievement of the NDP strategic goals, such as i) laying the foundations for good governance, ii) laying the foundation for decentralisation to strengthen spatial development and iii) aligning the general development framework with urban structures based on the foundations of urban planning. Furthermore, the programme was aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011-2014 and UNDAF 2015-2019, though the latter strategic document had not yet been adopted at the inception of the programme.² As concerns UNDAF 2011-2014, the programme directly contributed to the UNDAF Priority Areas under outcome no. 2 the such as; i) Priority Area 1 - Improved Governance - the Iraqi state has more efficient, accountable, and participatory governance at national and sub-national levels; ii) to the UNDAF Priority Area 2 - Inclusive, more equitable and sustainable economic growth; iii) to the UNDAF Priority Area 4 - Increased access to quality essential services. As regards UNDAF 2015-2019, the programme was also relevant to Priority A – Improving the performance and responsiveness of targeted national and sub-national institutions. The programme was also aligned with and relevant to the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2011-2014 of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.

Furthermore, the programme was relevant to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals³ (MDGs), particularly MDG 3⁴ and MDG 8⁵ and for the achievement of subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as universal agreements to end poverty in all its dimensions and craft an equal, just and secure world. More specifically, the programme was relevant for the accomplishment of SDG 4 – quality education, SDG 5 – gender equality, SDG 6 – clear water and sanitation and SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. In line with the programme design, the programme has been focused on three key sectors – health, education, WATSAN which have had the most direct impact on the achievement of the afore-mentioned SDGs.

Taking into consideration the socio-economic context in Iraq, it can be concluded that the programme has responded to the real and actual beneficiaries' needs. Specifically, the programme successfully supported the public sector modernisation and the modernisation of the public administration, supported the development of strategic plans, policies and mid-term strategies to carry on the necessary reforms. The expected outputs and outcomes have been valid and corresponded to the stakeholders' actual needs as identified in the programme action document.

² https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq_undaf-15-mar-2015.pdf

³ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were the eight international development goals for the year 2015.

⁴ Promotion of gender equality and empower women

⁵ Development a global partnership for development

It is noteworthy to mention that Phase II has built upon the results, and lessons learned that had been achieved at the national and sub-national levels during Phase I. The GOI problems, challenges and needs in the public sector were appropriately identified in the programme design as well as adequately analysed during the inception phase before the implementation phase. In addition to this, an external programme evaluation was conducted at the end of Phase I in December 2011 in order to identify lessons learned and to provide recommendations for Phase II. The main programme activities were centred around three main pillars; i) institutional performance management, ii) national monitoring and evaluation capacity, and iii) public sector reform with specific emphasis on simplification of work systems, procedures and service delivery models, which all had been identified as relatively weak before the programme implementation; therefore, the programme appropriately responded to the identified beneficiaries' needs. Based on that, the planned programme's specific immediate objectives were relevant and realistic to the situation and beneficiaries' needs.

Generally speaking, government reform worldwide is a daunting, inter-generational and high-risk undertaking. As evident from the programme action document, the programme design relatively well took into consideration the existing national capacities, political, and security context. The programme action document appropriately identified the main reform challenges (e.g., loss of many trained and experienced senior officials in the last decade, absence of a ministry responsible for steering public sector reform, absence of documents guiding public sector reform, outdated working processes, etc), as well as general and specific lessons learned during Phase I (within Education, Statistic, and WATSAN sectors). In order to optimise the aid support, certain pilots were undertaken already Phase I in the ministries dealing with education, health and WATSAN. However, during the elaboration of the programme action document it was not possible to foresee such significant deterioration of the security situation that affected almost the whole of Iraq: the emergence of the ISIL significantly impacted on the programme pace and delivery of the programme activities during Phase II.

Nonetheless, the programme was relevant to the Iraqi development context and broadly speaking managed to deliver most of the planned outputs with the introduction of new mechanisms, revised and improved procedures, human resources management, managerial capacities, administrative structures, sector management and service delivery. It can be also mentioned that the programme was relevant to GOI as it was designed in a way to introduce a top-down and system-wide intervention, to progress further in three key sectors and to pilot service delivery at the local level. The programme successfully applied a holistic approach to structural and system reform, capacity development and public sector modernisation as well as successfully addressed the gaps which the actions of other development partners have not addressed.

4.2 Design

As mentioned, Phase I was the foundation for the analytical assessment and preparatory work enabling GoI to develop a system-wide public administration reform plan, as well as sector-specific modernisation plans for three pilot sectors and three pilot governorates. Based on the lessons learned in Phase I, the programme action document clearly defined the envisaged programme objectives, outputs, and outcomes. However, several subsequent external factors and unpredictable circumstances impacted the programme pace, delivery of activities and outputs. According to the programme action document, the programme was supposed to last two years (24 months); however, Phase II eventually lasted six years, and in total the programme lasted eight years (Phase I and II). Generally speaking, the allocated resources (finances, staff, etc.) of Phase II corresponded to the initially envisaged time schedule and deliverables that were planned to be achieved by the programme. The programme objectives were realistic and attainable within the envisaged time frame and recourses; however, the programme has not been completed in the foreseen period due to the unexpectedly changed operating context.

Though the operating context has significantly changed since the programme inception due to the worsened security (particularly between summer 2014 and summer 2017) and budgetary constraints on the beneficiary side, the programme action document, its design, objectives and outputs have not been changed since the inception of the programme in January 2013. As indicated by the programme management staff, in 2015 they started using the Iraqi Public Sector Reform Roadmap as the programme log-frame. Nonetheless, according to the programme design, yearly elaborated annual working plans enabled adequate programme flexibility. Namely, the annual working plans were jointly agreed and elaborated by the beneficiaries and the UN agencies before end of every year for the next programming year. This programme modality ensured sufficient flexibility in the planning of the programme activities and adjusting the programme workplan to the operating context. In general, the programme design was logical and coherent in terms of the beneficiaries' roles and capacities; it was designed to achieve the planned results and corresponded to the stakeholders' commitment.

The programme concept appropriately implemented a cross-cutting approach and addressed issues that were not addressed by other international organisations, development partners, or bilateral donors, at least at the inception of the programme in December 2013. Nonetheless, it shall be mentioned that certain GOI interviewees pointed out that the donor coordination at the GOI level was not introduced and should be improved in the future.

Taking into the consideration the programme scope and its complexity, the programme action document relatively well defined the performance indicators per specific outputs in the programme action document log-frame (e.g., policy papers, concept papers, introduction of working groups, steering committees, assessments). However, given the amended operating context and several programme cost and no-cost extensions, the programme outputs and, particularly, performance indicators could have been revised and adjusted during the programme implementation period as they have not been adjusted and revised since the programme action document was elaborated in 2012, particularly as the programme lasted six years. Similarly to this, the means of verification have not been adjusted and/or updated and thus, in certain instances, were not relevant anymore. In addition to this, the quarterly report template did not provide adequate linkages between the programme action log-frame, annual working plans and actual programme outcomes and outputs. In conclusion, after a six-year programme implementation period, it is difficult to exactly establish and assess to what extent (or to which percentage) the

programme outputs have been achieved in line with the programme action document and its log-frame.

The programme design appropriately considered various external risk factors, such as political, security, legislative, etc., which in fact eventually negatively impacted the programme implementation dynamic.⁶ Nonetheless, as identified in the programme design, not much could have been done to mitigate risks, such as delays in the development and adoption of the National Public Sector Modernisation Strategy (NPSM), worsened security situation, budgetary issues, etc.

Though the programme design has not been revised or adjusted during the entire programme implementation phase, as mentioned, the annual working plans enabled adapting the programme activities to the actual beneficiaries needs. As highlighted by several interviewees, the UN agencies involved in the programme implementation have been open to the stakeholders' needs and addressed them in a flexible way in agreement with them. Though the programme budget did not allow to deliver certain specific or additional activities requested by the beneficiaries, the programme design allowed for necessary flexibility in the programme implementation.

The programme design appropriately took into consideration the issue of programme sustainability. Specifically, the programme concept to support and facilitate a top-down reform of the public administration reform and public sector modernisation by partnering, cooperation and engagement with the GoI, Ministry of Planning (MOI) and its National Center for Management Development and Information Technology (NCMDIT), Council of Ministers' Secretariat (COMSEC), Prime Minister's Office (PMO), line ministries, academia, various governmental committees and other key ministries, governates, ensured high level of buy-in at the highest level and sub-horizontal replication and dissemination of the programme results, including in other sub-national and local public services and institutions.

⁶ Programme action document; Risk assessment for the I-PSM Programme, page 40

4.3 Effectiveness

To a large extent, the programme has been effective as it has attained a number of valuable outputs and outcomes that were planned and envisaged by the programme action document.

As regards programme **Output no. 1**, the programme has contributed to the enhanced GOI capacity in undertaking public sector reform at national, regional, and governorate levels. The *Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap* (PSMR),⁷ which was developed by the programme support, has been recognised as one of the most prominent programme outputs which supported the GoI Public Sector Modernisation Steering Committee (PSMSC) to fulfil its mandate and design a national strategy document that provided a strategic framework for the public administrative reform in Iraq. To facilitate the implementation of PSMR and adequately implement its corresponding annual working plans, the programme delivered a number of capacity-building activities, such as study visits, workshops, etc., which facilitated and enabled more efficient and effective implementation of PSMR. In addition to this, the programme also supported the elaboration of the annual working plans for public sector modernisation activities at the sub-national level (e.g., Basra, Al Najaf governorates, etc). The programme also supported the development and introduction of the automated *Monitoring and Reporting System* which is based on result-based management (RBM) principles and records achievements and progress made against planned results of PSMR.

The programme also supported the elaboration of NDP 2018–2022 as well as the GOI capacity to plan, monitor, and evaluate NDP. In this regard, the programme supported the development of the Guidelines on Preparing the National Development Plan for Development Results (2018–2022) which were published by MOP and shared with the public sector institutions to guide the preparation of NDP 2018–2022. In this context, it is noteworthy that 14 sectoral strategic papers were developed by MOP in the preparation of NDP 2018-2022 while guided by these ‘Guidelines’. In addition to this, the programme also supported the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for NDP 2018-2022 and supported the elaboration of performance monitoring frameworks for 14 sectors. Based on the programme input, MOP and other ministries are currently elaborating the annual performance report of NDP for 2018 in line with the most advanced standards, introduced by the programme.



Guidelines developed and elaborated by programme support

In addition to this, the programme supported the development of the *Government-Wide Institutional Performance Management System*, firstly developed and piloted in three ministries⁸ and later endorsed by GoI for wider replication across Iraq. The system has been developed in line with the ‘European Foundation for Quality Management’ (EFQM) standards and a team of twenty (20) Iraqi experts who successfully completed and passed the EFQM

⁷ The Public Administration Reform (PAR) Roadmap was endorsed by Council of Ministers on 24th September 2013

⁸ Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Electricity, and Ministry of Trade

Assessor Training and became EFQM Certified Assessors with the programme support. They Iraqi experts gained skills, knowledge and attitude necessary to efficiently and effectively assume their roles and responsibilities in assessing the Iraqi public sector institutions in line with the EFQM standards. Furthermore, few members of the 'Higher Committee for Performance Management' together with the EFQM Certified Assessors were sensitised with the fundamental concepts and practicalities of 'Excellence' in general, and the EFQM Excellence Model specifically. In addition, they were further exposed to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) excellence experience by visiting a number of leading organisations in the UAE and thus developed ideas from real-life examples and good practices that are likely to inspire and facilitate the Iraqi public sector modernisation. Last but not least, 225 participants from 24 public sector institutions (various ministries, CoMSEC and Federal Board of Supreme Audit) were capacitated and sensitised with the principles of institutional performance management through 11 basic and advanced workshops.

Under programme **Output no. 2**, the programme significantly contributed to the improvement of the public administration systems at the national and sub-national levels. The programme enhanced policies and processes. More specifically, the programme supported the e-governance Steering Committee and supported the elaboration of the e-Governance Guidelines for National Architecture and Public Data Policy, assisting in delivering organisational and technological changes needed for instating successful e-Governance architecture systems, public websites, and service transformation at both central and local levels. Furthermore, the programme supported the introduction of an e-learning approach to the Academic and Public Sector Institutions in Iraq. More specifically, the e-learning approach was introduced in two public sector and academic institutions in Iraq; NCMDIT within MoP and University of Karbala (Faculties of Sciences and Engineering). The e-learning team at University Karbala has capitalised on the momentum created and went beyond the workshops by including the e-learning technology in the academic courses. As indicated by the interviewees at University of Karbala, before the programme support, the university was using only PowerPoint and PDF files for lecturers, which was considered 'e-learning'. After the support provided by the programme, the University of Karbala completely changed its approach and introduced a real e-learning system. With the programme support, e-training courses, e-exams, e-newsletters and established e-mail accounts for students and lecturers were introduced. Moreover, with the programme support, 12 Head of Sections from Karbala University and Colleges were trained, which further replicated the received knowledge by additional training courses. In essence, 20,000 students directly benefited from the programme within Karbala University. Furthermore, the programme supported the simplification of work systems, procedures and service delivery models through various other capacity-building activities. Based on the programme support, several government services were simplified (e.g.. easier obtainment of construction permits, academic certifications, housing loans, inheritance and allocation of lands to citizens⁹).

As concerns the achievements under **Output no. 3**, the programme contributed to the implementation of reform and modernisation plans within the education, health, and WATSAN sectors by the introduction of new working mechanisms and systems for public administration at the central and governorates' levels within these sectors, which is also an important programme achievement. For example, in the health sector, among others, the

⁹ Second quarterly report 2016, page 6

programme contributed to the enhanced Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system by the provision of Training of Trainers (ToT). In addition to this, the programme contributed to the elaboration of the 'Nursing and Midwifery Strategy and Action Plan' through a consultancy process that included Iraqi nurses, midwives, academics from universities and the Ministry of Health (MOH) institutes and departments as well as other stakeholders. In the WATSAN sector, for example, the programme supported the development and pilot of the 'GIS-Based Water Billing and Complaints System' at the Mayoralty of Baghdad and Kirkuk Governance, which was subsequently developed, launched, and installed at the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Municipalities (MoCHM), covering all 15 governorates.

Several outstanding outputs have also been achieved under **Output no. 4** as the programme successfully contributed to the strengthened GOI sub-national and decentralised service delivery. First, it is important to note that the Council of Representatives amended the Provincial Powers Act that redefined the mandate of the local governments. This achievement was a result of the programme efforts which encompassed the technical support provided by UNDP and UNESCWA through a working mission to Canada for the Parliamentarians from the Provincial Powers Committee and a visit by the Canadian constitutional experts to Baghdad to mature the final draft of the mentioned Act. Canada's model was considered as a best practice and was used as an example to encourage decentralisation in Iraq and redefine the relationship between the federal and local governments.

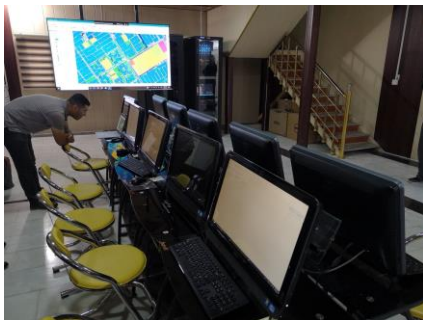


Photo shows the GIS Unit office in Karbala with the computers and GIS' IT solution providing each real estate its own individual registration number, both supported by the programme

In addition to this, at the sub-national level, a GIS Unit was formally established under the direct supervision of the Governor of Karbala, and embedded in the governorate organisational structure. A series of training workshops and field visits were supported by the programme, targeting the Karbala GIS Unit as well as staff from 21 other public sector institutions whose participants acquired advanced knowledge and professional skills on 'Building Spatial Data Infrastructure'. Furthermore, the 'Integrated GIS-Assisted Decision Support System' for Sectoral Planning, Utilities Management and Land Use Planning was developed by the GIS Unit team in Karbala with the programme support. Furthermore, in Karbala the Complaints Portal and Service Tracking System was also launched; it was developed as a pilot and is available to Karbala citizens through a mobile app and a newly

designed web page of Karbala Governorate. Citizens of the Karbala Governorate have the opportunity to report on service outage of various sectors and also follow-up on the actions taken by the governorate officials in this regards. In addition to this, the governor of Karbala Governorate and a number of participants from the GIS Unit were also acquainted with the latest 'Environmental Systems Research Institute' (ESRI) and Autodesk technologies in UAE. In this regards, two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were concluded between the programme and both ESRI (MENA and Africa Regional Office in Dubai) and Autodesk (Middle East Regional Office in Dubai), according to which both parties provide technical support and free software licences for further deployment of Karbala Spatial Data Infrastructure and future upscaling and replicating of these models at the national level.

Last but not least, the Public Opinion Polling Units were institutionalised with the programme support at the three target governorates of Missan, Basra, and Karbala and embedded with the governorate organisational structures. The Public Opinion Polling supported the local authorities to obtain and measure public opinion on public service delivery and contributed to better addressing citizens needs and eliminating gaps and weaknesses.

It can be concluded that the programme has achieved a number of valuable achievements hence would be inappropriate to privilege specific results against others as all are relevant and important for the beneficiaries within their specific areas of work. However, it shall be noted that the main supporting factor for the achievement of the programme results was the beneficiaries' commitment to cooperate with the programme and beneficiaries' real need for advanced external knowledge and skills, which the programme successfully provided. Unlike with other programme evaluations, it is interesting to note that during the evaluation interviewees the beneficiaries did not request further support in terms of equipment delivery, but mostly requested further support in providing advanced expertise and institutional knowledge for their institutions and services. Whilst the programme has established a conducive environment for future cooperation, several programme outputs have great potentials for further nation-wide replication and scale-up of the programme achievements; thus, a potential new programme or project should build upon the successful achievements that can be successfully replicated across Iraq, either at the national or local levels (e.g., GIS, e-learning, e-governance, etc.)

UNDP has quite effectively provided the overall coordination of the programme and fostered mediation between the UN agencies. Based on that, it can be concluded that the collaboration between the participating UN agencies was effective and ensured a holistic interaction between GOI and UN as a whole in the area of public sector modernisation. The programme has thus successfully gathered and utilised the expertise of sister UN agencies in the achievement of forecast outcomes and outputs. Eight UN agencies provided and accumulated their own experiences into the programme: UNPD, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNESCWA, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNWOMEN and WHO, which provided better complementary and synergies, particularly as concerns cross-cutting themes. In this regard, it is important to note that engagement of various UN agencies in the elaboration of the programme design and its implementation ensured that the cross-cutting issues, such as gender, human rights, civil society engagement and government-nongovernment partnerships, do-no harm, were adequately integrated in the programme action document and in the overall programme implementation. The programme provided various basic and advanced training courses and workshops on strengthening the capacity of the Gender Units in Iraqi ministries. For example, the programme delivered a workshop on gender responsive planning and budgeting in a humanitarian context, targeting the Higher Ministerial Committee for Displaced Relief to mainstream gender planning in humanitarian response. In line with the workshop purpose, deputy ministers of the Ministry of Migration, Education (MME) and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) with director generals from various other line ministries were sensitised with gender responsive planning in humanitarian response. Furthermore, a number of staff were trained on basic gender issues, management and coordination in several joint activities conducted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) with the support of UNPD, UNFPA and UNWOMEN. UNWOMEN also carried out several activities with the Parliamentary Women Committee and Financial Committee to push and include gender-based budgeting in the new budget law as well as to promote

gender equality in budgeting and planning frameworks. In addition to this, several Gender Gap Analyses were drafted by UNWOMEN, including in the education and health sectors. MOH, for example, also included the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) component in the ministry's strategic planning for 2013–2017 as well as forming an internal committee of MOH to follow up on the implementation of the GRB. The programme also conducted the national conference 'Leaving no Woman Behind: Toward Transformative Inclusive Development' in light of the achievements of SGDS 2015-2030. Last but not least, via programme support, the Guidelines on enacting SDG 5 on Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment in Iraq were drafted. Based on that, it can be concluded that the cross-cutting themes were successfully addressed through the cross-cutting actions and capacity-building support; thus, the programme activities also contributed to the achievement of the relevant SDGs.

To a considerable extent, the beneficiaries and stakeholders have been engaged in the programme implementation. In this regard, it shall be mentioned that annual working plans were adjusted and adapted to the beneficiaries' needs, which ensured better beneficiaries' commitment and ownership not only at the central but also at the local level. Last but not least, the programme activities also supported the implementation of the local development plans through the results-based management approach, development of strategic planning and performance monitoring.

4.4 Efficiency

The overall programme's budget was USD 24,045,411. The programme envisaged cost-sharing between MTF-UNDAF and GoI. In 2013, GoI indeed participated in cost-sharing and provided for the programme activities USD 4.5 million of allocations, which were delivered by GoI to 13 GoI entities for joint activities with UN agencies under the programme. However, in 2014, Iraq was significantly impacted by the war against ISIL, which ended in December 2017. In 2014, the GoI cost-sharing was substantially reduced or for some actions even ceased, given the war and necessity to financially support fight ISIL and provide humanitarian assistance. Notwithstanding that, UNCT kept momentum with GoI on the development issues with the identification of key priority areas for the recovery and resilience for the war-affected population while development programmes were considered for non-war affected zones. Though the war against ISIL, the internal political struggles, such as the relations between the federal level and Kurdistan as well as the low oil prices, have continued to hamper the GoI capacity to provide required allocation funds for the development programmes in the country until 2017, GoI insisted on keeping the programme ongoing only by UN contributions; thus, GoI relied only on the UN available funds for the implementation of key activities to sustain the programme that has been recognised as the cornerstone for the decentralisation and public modernisation.

The programme was thus extended four times (in 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019) to December 2019 at the request of GoI to provide more support to GoI to oversee the implementation of the Government Programme 2014-2018 and NDP 2018-2022 and also to advance Iraq's 2030 sustainable development agenda. One of the main obstacles, which negatively impacted almost all UN agencies' performance, was related to the delayed adoption of the Iraqi Budget Law of 2014, which hindered the execution of joint activities with GoI and led to a subsequent delay in implementing activities through the cost-sharing mechanism. Though the lack of the GoI cost-sharing funds impacted the programme pace and slowed down the implementation of the roadmap activities and programme implementation, it shall be mentioned that the beneficiaries, often to the best possible extent, ensured in-kind contribution to the programme (e.g., providing transportation and accommodation for participants, inter-ministerial and inter-institutional coordination, etc.). On the other side, a delay in receiving the UN funds for 2018 also led to a delay in the commencement of the planned programme activities (e.g., late receipt of the UNDAF MTPF additional funding amounting to US \$1.5 million to UNDP). Nonetheless, no evidence was found that the programme resources would not have been spent efficiently while the programme resources (funds, human resources, etc.), were appropriately allocated for the achievement of planned outputs and outcomes.

As concerns administrative hindrances that negatively affected on the programme implementation, it should be mentioned that insecurity and limited access to public buildings and officials at the national and sub-national level for the programme staff and unstable political environment with frequent changes of government focal points in line with a contingent political landscape significantly impacted the programme pace. Furthermore, several delays occurred in relation to obtaining entry visas for Iraq for international consultants, which led either to delayed implementation of activities, or cancellation of missions in some circumstances. In addition to this, several programme missions were either cancelled or postponed due to the security situation as well as the fact that many international consultants were reluctant to come to Baghdad. At the inception of Phase II,

the programme faced difficulties by engaging with local-level authorities due to the limited receptiveness of local governments to the centrally-led reform agenda. The staff turnover within some UN agencies and the need to comply with security measures for projects in Iraq required additional time for preparatory activities. In addition, different UN agencies faced specific sector-related difficulties with their line ministries/counterparts. UNICEF, for example, encountered a delay in approving annual working plans and the lack of enthusiasm on the beneficiary side, which resulted in an implementation delay. UNESCWA, for example, encountered a delay related to endorsement of the cost-sharing agreement with the GoI, which affected the implementation pace of the UNESCWA-led activities, etc.

Certain implementation difficulties, which to a certain extent impacted the programme pace and efficiency, can actually be attributed to both sides, GOI and UN agencies. (e.g., elections that impacted staffing and change of personnel in GOI, change of personnel and restructure in UNDP, problems with the UNDP programme and GOI budget/cost-sharing, etc.). The main GOI critique about the programme efficiency was related to the programme budget limitations, weak UN-agencies adherence to the pre-agreed annual workplans and to the unrealised programme management staff promises on delivery of certain pre-agreed activities (e.g., training courses, workshops, etc.) which eventually did not take place. In addition, according to the beneficiaries, several pre-agreed programme activities were simply cancelled by UNDP or significantly downsized (, of three pre-agreed training sessions only one took place, etc.).

Nevertheless, the programme management appropriately selected the national and local beneficiaries and partner institutions, which enabled proper further institutional dissemination of the programme results. The involvement of academia provided an added value to the GOI-led programme and ensured better engagement and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sector. In addition to this, the programme has had adequate political, technical and administrative support provided by the national and local partners.

As concerns monitoring of the programme results, it seems that the programme failed to introduce a more comprehensive result-oriented monitoring framework. Specifically, the programme's quarterly progress and annual reports provide only general information on the performed activities and certain deliverables but do not summarise the achievements and associated changes achieved over the entire programme period. Though this might be solved by the elaboration of a final programme report, it seems that the programme monitoring framework was not sufficiently developed and implemented. Given the broad programme portfolio, long duration and numerous activities performed by eight UN agencies, tracking and monitoring of the results was not easy. The programme progress also reports not always clearly distinguish which results were exactly achieved with the programme support and which development changes took place within the beneficiaries' structures without programme support. Furthermore, the quarterly progress reports and annual reports do not contain any information about the programme visibility activities. Finally, the programme reports also do not provide cumulative information or estimation of how many stakeholders' or beneficiary' staff benefited from the programme in total (e.g., how many training courses, how many staff trained, how many TOT, how many revived legal acts, etc.), which would provide better insight in the overall programme performance.

As indicated by the UN and GOI interviewees, certain duplications and overlaps occurred with other development partners' initiatives (e.g., with USAID, GIZ, the Canadian government support, etc.), which were mainly launched after the inception of this UN programme. According to the interviewees, these overlaps did not significantly undermine the programme efficiency.

The UN benefited from its various agencies' experience in developing institutional capacities in public sector reform, promoting international conventions, and sharing regional and international good practice in reforming processes. Though the UN agencies sectoral knowledge and experience embedded in each UN agency contributed to the better joint performance, the programme failed to establish good cooperation with the Local Area Development Programme (LADP Phase-II) and the Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP-I), though this was envisaged in the programme action document. Nevertheless, the UN agencies involved in the programme implementation have been recognised by GOI as a key partner in facilitating new frameworks and strategies to strengthen the regulatory and institutional framework and processes of national and local governance to enhance service delivery.

It should be mentioned that the programme has not been very efficient and successful in communicating its results to the general public, and the programme visibility seems to be a rather weak point. For example, not a single programme quarterly report indicates how the programme results were published to the general public. In addition, the programme has not set up its own webpage, thus only partial, fragmented and rather limited information can be found about the programme on certain UN agencies' web-pages. Moreover, the programme did not develop any visibility strategy, action plan or overall approach to present its work to the general public even though the programme subjects were extremely relevant for all citizens. It cannot be denied that certain programme activities or outputs were to a limited extent covered by various media at the beneficiaries' initiatives (e.g., GIS in Karbala); however, it seems that the programme failed to apply a holistic visibility approach, which would have ensured much greater visibility and acquainted the wider general public about the achieved results. In conclusion, the programme failed to adequately publicise and promote the achieved results and the development of the modernisation process, supported by the UN programme.

In general, the beneficiaries and stakeholders during the interviews expressed their high satisfaction with the programme results and outcomes as they have significantly contributed and supported the public sector modernisation and its reform process. During the interviews, many beneficiaries' representatives indicated that the programme for first time ever enabled them to gain knowledge and skills from external aid. Many interviewees also highlighted the high quality of the programme deliverables and emphasised that UN has increased its credibility and reputation with the implementation of this programme. In addition to this and as confirmed by various interviewees, the programme engaged highly skilled experts and provided high quality outputs that were appropriately tailored to the national context, further introduced in the institutional context, and thus practically used by the beneficiaries (strategies, draft laws, performance and monitoring frameworks, etc.).

4.5 Impact

As evident from the programme progress reports, at the inception phase, the programme suffered from the lack of clear political support for public sector modernisation, at least at the highest levels in government, which was a reason for lack of progress, at least in certain areas. Over time, the political support and ownership of the programme have increased; the programme thus benefited from the GoI engagement and GoI willingness to initiate and proceed with major public administration reforms. The programme strategic approach to engage with the highest GoI political and technical structures (e.g., CoMSEC, Prime Minister’s Office, MOP, etc.) proved to be a very successful and efficient approach, having a successful multiplier effect and significant overall impact by reaching out to other national-level stakeholders. In this context, it is necessary to mention that Iraq is divided into a Central Government, the autonomous region of Kurdistan, eighteen governorates and finally districts at the local level.¹⁰ Within these levels, the programme provided a number of sensitisation workshops, capacity-building training courses, consultation meetings, study tours, delivered ToT, developed manuals,¹¹ elaborated strategies,¹² studies,¹³ and legal acts,¹⁴ etc., which all considerably supported GoI to reform its public sector, implement the national development plans as well as to advance the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. However, the progress made by the programme within the public sector cannot be exclusively attributed to the programme, but also to the efforts and activities performed by GoI and other development partners, but the programme has had an important impact as many interviewees highlighted that this programme in comparison with donor initiatives was the best in the performance delivery and its impact. To this end, it can be concluded that the programme has provided concrete and tangible benefits not only for the public servants and public institutions, but also for the end-users – Iraqi citizens.

The programme as such has been considered by GoI as a cornerstone for the public sector reform. Achievements realised on the ground indicate that the programme has established a conducive environment and provided high credibility of the UN in the eyes of GoI as well as provided an effective mechanism to advance the public modernisation agenda. The importance and impact of the programme can also be substantiated by the acknowledgement made by the Chairman of the Technical NDP Development Committee on the first page of NDP 2018-2020, where he highlighted:

‘We cannot fail to thank the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its support and partnership in developing this document through logistical support for conferences and workshops, as well as through trainings for teams on result-based management (RBM) methodology – which was adopted as a tool for NDP development and follow-up – in partnership with COMSEC the Government Coordination and Follow-up Department.’

¹⁰ The governorates are run by Governors appointed by the central government, together with directly elected provincial councils. The Governorates are organised into districts, sub-districts and villages. There are therefore effectively four tiers of government (national, regional (Kurdistan), governorate and district which benefited from the programme.

¹¹ e.g., Institutional Re-Structuring and Reform Toolkit

¹² e.g., National Development Plans,

¹³ Development of the Study ‘Development of a Strategy Report on Water Quality Management for Iraq’ and approved by UNICEF, CMWG and PMAC

¹⁴ e.g., Development of a Water and Sanitation Bill, amendment of the Provincial Powers Act, etc.

Moreover, as concerns the implementation of the PAR roadmap, the programme cooperated directly with deputy ministries, which ensured greater buy-in at the highest level and which had a significant overall impact. The programme results will also have a significant impact in the future, particularly as MoP and its NCMDIT were used as the most important entry points for further cross-sectoral dissemination of the programme outputs, which significantly increased the overall programme impact. This might not have immediate results, but will certainly contribute to the overall improvement of the public sector service in the mid- and long-term perspectives.



Photo shows a NCMDIT trainer trained by the programme who further disseminates the received knowledge by the programme as she trains other trainees in NCMDIT of MOP

Finally, the programme has been closely attached to MDGs and subsequent SDGs which provided strong impact on the international and national level. Various capacity-building activities, such as the ‘Localising Sustainable Development Goals and Decentralising Public Services in Iraq’, addressed and sensitised a wide range of beneficiaries and stakeholders from central, local, and sector levels. This included central Iraqi officials from Higher Commission for Coordinating among Provinces and various ministries. In addition to this, it targeted governors’ offices, local members of planning and development councils, local elected councils, and NGOs. Based on this, it can be concluded that the programme has to a significant extent contributed to the reconstruction and development of institutions in governmental entities in Iraq.

Nonetheless, a 2015 COSIT survey¹⁵ assessing the e-readiness of Iraqi state institutions shows that the use of e-forms in institutional work amounted to 21%, while paperwork still accounts for the largest proportion of work (77%). The number of e-services is thus still very limited in comparison with manual services provided by state institutions; while some institutions have been successful in providing e-services, these sub-services are still substandard and require further support and development. In addition to this, further support is needed in order to ensure higher integrity, transparency, accountability, particularly as regards reducing corruption. The recent mass riots that erupted during the evaluation field visit in October 2019 in many Iraqi cities and which unfortunately resulted in the deaths of more than 100 protesters, have proven that there is persisting need for better public service delivery and more efficient combatting of corruption throughout Iraq.

¹⁵ NDP 2018-2022, page 39

4.6 Sustainability

Despite the GoI's redefinition of the priorities in 2014-2015 and placing its focus on displaced persons and relief to war-affected areas, GoI insisted on keeping the programme ongoing in order to sustain the results that had been recognised by GoI as the cornerstone for the decentralisation and public modernisation. This decision reaffirmed the GoI commitment to the programme as well as indicated the likelihood that many programme results, achievements and benefits will remain after the end of the programme.

The programme activities and achievements have been to a considerable extent geared toward attaining sustainable results. The sustainability of results stems from its design and implementation guiding principles, which were based on government-driven processes, which allowed the delivery of reforms that will remain self-sustaining over time.

The main entry point and one of the most critical elements of the reform was the development of the National Public Sector Modernisation Strategy around which national ownership and leadership have emerged to secure the delivery of programme benefits. As confirmed by the beneficiaries and evident from the programme progress reports, the beneficiaries started using indicators, measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the work performance, result-based monitoring approach, etc. According to the beneficiaries, a number of administrative procedures in the public sector were eased or simplified due to technical knowledge and skills obtained with the programme support. To increase the programme sustainability, the programme applied an appropriate mixture of capacity-building activities supplemented by technical equipment in certain occasions, development and provision of hardware, software, websites, IT applications, etc, which ensured better programme buy-in, impact and sustainability of the transferred knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, a number of programme deliverables contributed to improved public services (e.g., installation of web-sites where Iraqi people can access to relevant information, fill-in different applications, provide comments and proposals, etc.).

The improvement of service delivery thus led to increased public confidence in public institutions (e.g., public opinion research and addressing its findings, improved public procurement procedures, etc.); however, as mentioned, this cannot be exclusively attributed to the programme, but also to other donor programmes. Though the main programme beneficiaries were MoP and CoMSEC, the reforms were also initiated in three line ministries (Health, Education and WATSAN) but in fact many other ministries also benefited from the programme, either through MoP or directly by the programme activities. The programme thus laid the foundation for continuity and consolidation as well as ensured expansion to other sectors. The selection and involvement of national institutions and entities ensured the delivery of hands-on experience and strengthened national know-how and expertise. Moreover, the sustainability of results was not only ensured by the strong national ownership and relevance of the interventions to national priorities and needs, but also by the policy and institutional provisions that were extended to the GoI and its ministries. In line with that, no exit programme strategy was needed or developed.

Nevertheless, in this context, it should be mentioned that the programme sustainability to a certain extent depends on the GOI capacity to ensure adequate funding, particularly as regards further replication of models and good practises introduced by the programme. It is

important to note that GOI expressed continued interest for further cooperation with the international community in order to facilitate institutional development and good governance. In relation to the most recent demonstrations and unrests, it is very likely that continuation of public service reform and the battle against corruption, foremostly in the public sector, will become one of the core and main governmental priorities with significant possibilities for further development, replication and building upon the achieved results.

V. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusion 1: **The project was relevant to Iraqi public sector modernisation**

Iraq remains a fragile society in a continued need for further international support to advance public sector modernisation and reform public administration. The recent violent demonstrations, in which protesters demanded better public services, confirm that there is still a significant need to provide better public services and provide basic human needs. The project was fully in line with the national priorities and has contributed to the modernisation of the Iraqi public sector. The project's activities were well appreciated by all beneficiaries, ranging from the Prime Minister's Office, different ministries, governorates and academia. The programme has been supporting GOI in the development of the NDPs, development and the monitoring performance of other strategic plans within in programme phases. However, after nine years of the continued programme support through Phases I and II, GOI with their ministries (should) have become capable of developing new NDPs and national strategic plans without external support. To that extent, further support in certain programme areas seems not to be justified anymore.

The conclusion is based on EQ 4.1

5.2 Conclusion 2: **The Programme Applied Appropriate Top-down Institutional Approach**

The programme applied a very successful approach by addressing GOI, sub-national and local levels. Good working relations between the programme and GOI (Prime Minister's Office, MOP, etc.) ensured high ownership above the programme and high level of cooperation, which has brought sector-wide positive results.

This conclusion is based on EQ 4.2

5.3 Conclusion 3: **UN Agencies Established Conducive Environment for Cooperation with Beneficiaries**

The programme has established a conducive environment for further cooperation and ensured great buy-in at the beneficiary side. Many interviewees pointed out the good reputation that UN has obtained through the implementation of the programme as well as highlighted the high quality of the programme deliverables. However, any longer programme void between the existing programme and a new programme/project will entail in losing the momentum and diminishing the established working relations.

This conclusion is based on EQ 4.5

5.4 Conclusion 4: **Prevention and Fight against Corruption in the Public Sector has not been Sufficiently Addressed by the Programme**

Though the programme addressed various cross-cutting issues, in fact, very few activities were directly geared to prevent and fight corruption in public sector. Several interviewees emphasised the necessity that a potential future programme/project support shall to much higher extent focus on prevention and suppression of corruption across entire public sector.

This conclusion is based on 4.6

5.5 Conclusion 5: Geographical Information System in Karbala Governorate Successfully supported Public Service Planning and Public Service Delivery

The integrated GIS-Assisted Decision Support System for Sectoral Planning, Utilities Management and Land Use Planning in Karbala has brought tangible results in local spatial planning. Furthermore, the GIS applications developed and supported by the programme significantly improved analysis-based decision making of various local public services of Karbala governorate. These and other programme deliverables significantly improved public administration planning and public service delivery at the sub-national level with great potential for further replication in other governorates and at the national level.

This conclusion is based on EQ 4.3

5.6 Conclusion 6: National Center for Management Development and Information Technology used as an Important Programme Entry Point

The programme has established successful cooperation with the National Centre for Management Development and Information Technology within Ministry of Planning. NCDMIT was used as the most important entry point for further cross-sectoral dissemination of the programme outputs, which significantly increased the overall programme impact. NCDMIT, being responsible for supporting other ministries in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of strategic policy documents and action plans, successfully disseminated acquired knowledge and expertise to other ministries, NGOs and public institutions, including at the sub-national level.

This conclusion is based on EQ 4.3

5.7 Conclusion 7: Weak Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The programme failed to introduce an appropriate result-oriented monitoring mechanism. Furthermore, the programme progress reports in certain instances did not differentiate what the programme achievements actually were and what beneficiaries' achievements were without programme support. Finally, the programme also does not have any information or estimation about how many beneficiary staff in total benefited from the programme as well as what kind of activities were performed to ensure programme visibility.

This conclusion is based on EQ 4.4

5.8 Conclusion 8: Weak Programme Visibility

The programme failed to ensure adequate and broader publication of the programme results to the general public; thus, the programme visibility seems to be a rather weak point of the programme. A much more pro-active approach should have been applied by the programme to sensitise general public about the achieved results under the programme.

This conclusion is based on EQ 4.4

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendation 1: Continuation of Donor Support

Recommendation deals with:	Further support to public sector modernisation
Recommendation is directed at:	Donor countries and UN

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 1

Statement of overall recommendation:

Due to the immense and continued need for improvement of public sector and its further modernisation, it is recommended to provide follow-up support that would build upon the achieved results and boost the project across Iraq. However, it is recommended to stop or at least downsize further programme support to certain programme areas that have been continuously supported since 2011 (Phases I and II) as the beneficiaries (should) have become self-dependent and capable of performing their tasks (strategic development, planning, monitoring) without a significant external assistance and support. In contrast to this, it is recommended to provide further support in specific sectors or sector institutions to build upon the achieved results in areas where further advancement is likely to succeed, be sustained and where the beneficiary cooperation and co-funding is promising. As capacity-building activities cannot solely address gaps, applying an appropriate mix of capacity-building and technical assistance measures (hard component support) is recommended.

Action to be taken;

1. Provision of further support to the national stakeholders and beneficiaries engaged in public sector modernisation in Iraq

6.2 Recommendation 2: Retention of the Existing Cooperation Mechanisms with the Programme Beneficiaries and Stakeholders

Recommendation deals with:	Programme design and programme approach
Recommendation is directed at:	UN and GOI

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 2

Statement of overall recommendation:

In the case of continuation of programme/project support, it is recommended to maintain the same approach and to retain the existing well-developed cooperation framework with GOI, ministries, governorates, and other stakeholders, as this enabled appropriate buy-in and increased overall programme impact. The UN should use the momentum and avoid a potential programme/project void and continue with supporting the public sector in specific areas.

Action to be taken:

1. Retain cooperation with the Prime Minister's Office, relevant ministries and governorates.
2. Avoid disconnection between the existing programme and a new programme/project support

6.3 Recommendation 4: Increased Support in Fight and Suppression of Corruption in the Public Sector

Recommendation deals with:	Continuation of aid support
Recommendation is directed at:	UN and GOI

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 4

Statement of overall recommendation:

Potential future programme/project support shall, to a much greater extent, include actions and activities aimed at the prevention and suppression of corruption by increasing anti-corruption capacities in the public sector. In line with this, it is recommended to more strongly involve the key institutions in charge of good governance and reconciliation, such as Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs.

Action to be taken:

1. To better suppress widespread corruption in Iraq public sector, it is necessary to introduce and implement additional activities aimed at fighting corruption

6.4 Recommendation 5: Continued Cooperation with GIS and county-wide implementation of the Geographical Information System

Recommendation deals with:	Further development of Geographical Information System
Recommendation is directed at:	UN and GOI

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 5

Statement of overall recommendation:

It is recommended that the outstanding results achieved by the Geographical Information System Unit in Karbala be further replicated across Iraq to enable its application in other governorates and districts. Further support can be also provided to development of the new Law on GIS and the establishment of a National GIS Centre

Action to be taken:

1. Provision of further technical and capacity-building support to GIS at central and decentralised level

6.5 Recommendation 6: Continued Cooperation with National Center for Management Development and Information Technology

Recommendation deals with:	Maintain technical cooperation with NCMDIT
Recommendation is directed at:	UN and GOI

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 6

Statement of overall recommendation:

In case of further programme/project support, it is recommended to maintain the existing cooperation framework, particularly with MOP and NCMDIT. Furthermore, it is recommended to

further support the Centre’s capacities and connect it with similar institutions abroad in order to bring in more international experience that can be further replicated across other ministries, public institutions, and NGOs in Iraq. Furthermore, it is also recommended to provide further support to developing e-learning processes and to expanding e-governance solutions and applications.

Action to be taken:

1. Provision of further support to NCMDIT

6.6 Recommendation 7: Improvement of Programme Monitoring and Reporting

Recommendation deals with:	Programme management and monitoring
Recommendation is directed at:	UN, UNDP

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 7

Statement of overall recommendation:

It is recommended to improve the result-oriented monitoring system for upcoming programming actions and to improve regular programme reporting by providing information on the programme progress and about the performed activities about the programme visibility . In addition to this, it is recommended to ensure and allocate financial resources for mid-term evaluations, providing an interim independent assessment and provide recommendations for potential adjustment of the programme for remaining period, particularly for such long-lasting programmes.

Action to be taken:

1. Improve programme/project monitoring and reporting mechanisms

6.7 Recommendation 8: Improvement of Programme Visibility

Recommendation deals with:	Programme visibility
Recommendation is directed at:	UN, UNDP

This recommendation is based on Conclusion 8

Statement of overall recommendation:

Potential further programme/project support shall significantly improve the visibility of a potential new programme/project. It is recommended to develop a visibility strategy, action plan, and to introduce programme activities through various media, including social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. ,as well as to develop a project/programme related web-page.

Action to be taken:

1. Improve programme/project monitoring and reporting mechanisms

LESSONS LEARNED

After eight years of programme implementation, several considerable lessons have been learned that may be useful for future programming and project implementation.

Public Sector Reform remains a Highly Political Undertaking. Countries in transition remain resistant to radical reforms due to the political sensitivity as public reforms are often associated with the dismissal or redeployment of redundant public servants. For this reason, extensive civil service and administrative reform programme could be both controversial and potentially politically destabilising.

Government and Political Will. To reach and advance public sector modernisation, it is necessary to ensure appropriate political will. Without continued, sustained, developing, and practical stakeholder commitment and political will from the government, further advancement of the programme results will be rather limited and mostly narrowed to low level-technical advancement, without necessary institutional changes. The application of new laws or amendment of existing legal frameworks require necessary political will and usually cannot be achieved in a short-term perspective.

Administrative Hindrances and Absorption Capacities. The limited national stakeholders' absorption capacities, as well as slow and very formal communication between the national stakeholders and the implementing agencies, shall be taken into consideration as a specific circumstance in the planning process. This requires more efforts and patience as well as mutual respect for internal administrative procedures on both sides.

Flexibility in Implementation. Although the programme continues to plan to best address the needs of the stakeholders, it has often been the case that more 'needs' arose during the implementation phase, which required changes in the activities or in the adjustment of schedules for specific activities. Catering all such needs within administrative limitations required additional efforts and led to more delays to the overall completion of the programme.

Security. Over the previous two years, the security threat level in Iraq has improved as no major terrorist attacks occurred. Furthermore, all ISIL-held territories in Iraq have been liberated by 2017. However, the internal security remains fragile as Iraqi people have become particularly sensitive to the high level of corruption and poor public service delivery; thus, continuous support is needed to maintain and enhance national, regional, and global security by the provision of better public services and the reduction of corruption.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED:

Date	PERSONS MET	
22 – 09- 2019	Meeting IPSM team	Firas Al Karam
	Meeting with Governance pillar	Mahab Alkurkash
	Meeting with Deputy Minister of Planning	Mahir Johan
23-09-2019	Meeting with head of UNDP Karbala office	Ali Kamouna
	Meeting with Head of Oversight and Audit Directorate	Riyad Fadil Mohamed
24-09-2019	Meeting with head of National Centre for Development Management and Information Technology	Raghd Abdul Rasoul; Wathba Altayar
25-09-2019	Meeting with the head of Institutional Performance Assessment section	Abbas Mohsen
26-09-2019	Meeting with Head of Monitoring and Evaluation unit	Wafaa Rasheed
	Director-General of the Department of Economic Policy	Alaa
29-09-2019	Meeting with Head of central statistical organisation	Dr. Dhya'a Awad
	Meeting with Head of GIS Unit in Baghdad (MoP)	Firas Rasheed
30-09-2019	Meeting with Missan focal point	Majeed Jasim
30-09-2019	Meeting with Basra focal	Nibras Abdul Abass
1-10-2019	Meeting with head of Geographical Information Systems unit	Ahmed Mamur
2-10-2019	Meeting with the chair of Karbala University	Dr. Zuhair Mohammed
2-10-2019	Meeting with Karbala focal point for Public Opinion Polling	Mohammed kamel
11-10-2019	IPSM Team	Firas Al Karam Zeyad Al Obaidi
13-10-2019	Previous IPSM Programme Manager	Hisham El Azzouni

ANNEX II. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. Terms of Reference – Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme (I-PSM)-Phase II
2. IRAQ UNDAF FUND Joint Programme – Programme Action Fiche
3. 2108 – Eight annual consolidated report on activities implemented under Iraq UNDAF Fund for the period 1st January-31st December 2018
4. Iraq Public Sector Modernisation Programme Phase 1- Evaluation Report
5. UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011-2014
6. UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2015-2019
7. National Development Plan 2018 – 2022
8. National Development Plan 2013 – 2017
9. Quarterly Reports Q1-Q4 -2013
10. Quarterly Reports Q1-Q4 -2014
11. Quarterly Reports Q1-Q4 -2015
12. Quarterly Reports Q1-Q4 -2016
13. Iraq Country Programming Framework 2013-2017 (FAO)

WEB- SOURCES;

<http://middleeast-business.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Oct-2014-E.pdf>

<https://mnpd.gov.iq/en/>

https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/iraq_undaf-15-mar-2015.pdf