



## United Nations Development Programme

**Name of the Evaluation Intervention:** **Mid-term Evaluation of the UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform in the Federal Government of Iraq**

**Country of the Evaluation:** Iraq

**Timeframe of the Evaluation:** 17 March 2022 – 30 September 2022

**Date of Evaluation Final Report:** 6th September 2022

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Disclaimer

This evaluation report presents the views of the Evaluator and does not correspond to the opinions of UNDP or its stakeholders referred to in this report. The Evaluator has made every effort to ensure that the information presented in the report is accurate. Any factual errors that may appear is unintended and falls under the responsibility of the Evaluator.

## PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS

Project Information		
Project title	Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal)	
Atlas ID Number	00103034	
Corporate outcome and outputs	<p><b>Project Outputs (2016-2020):</b> <b>Output 1:</b> The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized. <b>Output 2:</b> The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance.</p> <p>Project outputs contribute to: <b>Outcome 2 of the CPD (2016-2020):</b> Administrative and financial reform and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorate level, and <b>CPD Output 2.1 (2016-2020):</b> Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation. <b>UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021): Output 2.1.1:</b> Low emission and climate resilient objectives addressed in national, sub-national and sectoral development plans and policies to promote economic diversification and green growth. <b>Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Outcome 3:</b> Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services.</p> <p><b>Project Outputs (2021-2023):</b> <b>Output 1:</b> The reform implementation structures, and coordinating mechanism are created, institutionalized, and made operational. <b>Output 2:</b> Specific priority reform actions are identified and endorsed, and their implementation is supported by relevant technical assistance.</p> <p>Project outputs contribute to: <b>Outcome 2 of the CPD (2020-2024):</b> Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive, gender sensitive and diversified economic growth, with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth, and vulnerable populations. <b>UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025): Direction of Change 2: Leave No Behind:</b> A rights-based approach centered on empowerment, inclusion, equity, human agency and development capabilities which recognizes that poverty and inequality are multidimensional.</p>	
Country	Iraq	
Region	Regional Bureau of Arab States	
Date project document signed	29 January 2017	
Project Date	Start	Planned end
	15 December 2016	31 December 2023
Project budget	US\$ 6,169,823	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	US\$ 1,103,965.26	
Funding source	<b>Total Project Budget:</b> US\$ 6,169,823 <b>Sources:</b> a) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) - US\$ 5,600,000; b) UNDP - US\$ 569,823 c) Gol – In-kind (national staff time and community mobilization)	
Implementing party <sup>12</sup>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	
Evaluation information		
Evaluation type	Project evaluation	
	Midterm Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	15 December 2016	31 December 2021
Evaluator	Dr. Patrick Orotin	
Evaluator email address	<a href="mailto:patrickorotin2006@yahoo.co.uk">patrickorotin2006@yahoo.co.uk</a>	
Evaluation dates	17 March 2022 – 30 September 2022	

<sup>1</sup> It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and work plan.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CoMSEC	General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease -19
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Central Statistical Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ERU	Economic Reform Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FFER	Funding Facility for Economic Reform
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Gol	Government of Iraq
HQ	Headquarter
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KII	Key Informant Interview
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LNOB	Leave No One Behind, priority policy of the SDG/2030 Agenda
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NIC	National Investment Commission
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
RBM	Results Based Management
RMC	Reform Management Cell
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TA	Technical Assistance
TF	Trust Funds
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollar

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The midterm evaluation of the “*Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER)*” (hereinafter referred to as *Project*) has been carried out on the initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq’s Funding Facility for Economic Reform in Iraq. The evaluation was conducted as part of UNDP commitment to improve results-based management. The findings from the evaluation questions addressed and the recommendations derived, are expected to inform and improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition and the quality of the next phase of technical support design and implementation. The main audiences of the evaluation findings and recommendations and how they will use the results, are; (a) UNDP, USAID and other Donors – are expected to use successful project strategies identified through the evaluation to improve the quality of the next phase of technical support design and implementation and potential scale-up or replication of the project, (b) Project Management – are expected to use the report; (i) to determine whether the technical assistance being provided is making a difference in the target ministries and sectors for economic reform, (ii) to identify weaknesses of the project that need to be improved or phased out, and (iii) as advocacy tool for increased funding or expansion of the Funding Facility for Economic Reform in Iraq.

### Description of the Intervention

The project purpose is to support the Government of Iraq (GoI) in ensuring the implementation of the economic reform plan. The Project is positioned as financing instrument that is used to channel high-caliber international expertise and support into top priority reform initiatives drawn from the government’s reform plan. The Facility helps to mobilize expertise for initiatives aimed at transforming and diversifying the Iraq’s economy, restructuring, and strengthening public administration and public financial management, and improving the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

The FFER project was implemented during three successive UNDP Strategic Plans: 2014-2017, 2018-2021, and 2022-2025, and two Country Programmes (CPDs): 2016-2020 and 2020-2024. The project outputs (2016-2020) are: **Output 1:** *The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized;* and **Output 2:** *The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance.* The outputs are aligned and contribute to: **UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Output 2.1.1:** *Low emission and climate resilient objectives addressed in national, sub-national and sectoral development plans and policies to promote economic diversification and green growth;* **UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Outcome 3:** *Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services;* **CPD (2016-2020) Outcome 2:** *Administrative and financial reform and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorate level,* and **CPD (2016-2020) Output 2.1:** *Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation;* and **SDG Goal 8 Target 8.3:** *Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.*

For the project extension phase (2021-2023), the project outputs are: **Output 1:** *The reform implementation structures, and coordinating mechanism are created, institutionalized, and made operational,* and **Output 2:** *Specific priority reform actions are identified and endorsed, and their implementation is supported by relevant technical assistance.* The outputs are aligned and contribute to: **UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025): Direction of Change 2: Leave No Behind:** *A rights-based approach centered on empowerment, inclusion, equity, human agency and development capabilities which recognizes that poverty and inequality are multidimensional;* **CPD (2020-2024) Outcome 2:** *Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive,*

*gender sensitive and diversified economic growth, with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth, and vulnerable populations.*

## **Approach and Methods**

The midterm evaluation was conducted from 17th March 2022 to 30th September 2022. It assessed the project **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability**, and generated **findings, recommendations, lessons learned** and **good practices**. Aspects of the project impact was not assessed as the ToR did not include evaluation questions for this criteria.

The midterm evaluation was done based on the methodology described in the Inception report and outlined in the Terms of Reference. The methodology was based on a hybrid approach, with one in-country mission to Iraq to consult with and interview stakeholders; the rest of the evaluation time – further data collection, data analysis and report writing, was home-based and remotely conducted. The methodology adopted a participatory and a mixed approach for data collection, engaging select project stakeholders for key informant interviews and focus group discussion.

Primary data was collected during in-country mission to Iraq, involving key informant interviews and focus group discussion, and covered a total of 11 persons (10 men and 1 woman) from 6 ministries/sectors, namely; (a) the Prime Minister's Office Financial Advisor (1); (b) Office of the Financial Advisor to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (2); (c) Ministry of Finance (1); (d) Economic Reform Unit at the Prime Minister's Office (ERU) (1); (e) Central Statistical Organization at the Ministry of Planning (5), and (f) UNDP (1). The agreed process for selection of participants was based on longer experience with the project technical assistance so as to obtain richer information and evidence on the performance of the project. Overall, 6 out of 7 (86%) institutions/sectors were interviewed.

Secondary data was gathered through desk review of project documents, and literature, progress reports, knowledge products (technical assistance products – e.g. surveys), and other documents and reports provided by the project team.

Although a stakeholders' exit meeting was scheduled for the last day of the In-Country Mission, some interviews were rescheduled for the afternoon of the last day of the mission, and so the exit meeting was held only with the project team. Overall, the evaluation did not face any significant limitations in terms of available data due to this. Most of the limitations identified in the Inception Report did not affect the evaluation and its outcome.

## **Data analysis**

Data analysis was done using three methods: contribution analysis, change analysis, and responsibility assignment mapping.

Overall, the conclusion on the analyzed aspects show positive results, based on the evidenced collected through desk review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, and reflections from exit meetings with the project team.

## **Findings**

From the findings, the project is relevant, it considers the policy priorities of the Gol on economic reform, aligns with the UNDP Country Programme Outcomes for Iraq, UNDP Strategic Plan, and the policy priority of the SDGs. However, the Human Rights-Based Approach, gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable populations was modest in the project design.

The project is largely consistent in terms of results-based management (RBM), with baselines, targets, milestones, and performance indicators; the performance indicators, however, have not been formulated using the RBM language. Baseline and target data in the project Results Framework have not been disaggregated by gender (men and women), although disaggregated data on gender are presented in progress reports. Both project outputs are linked to the UNDP Country Programme outputs and outcomes. The project does not have a theory of change, and cross-cutting issues of gender are not included in the design, but are reported in some progress reports.

In terms of effectiveness, the project performed mostly well regarding its targets. The effectiveness and the efficiency are key strengths of the project judged from the achievement of the output results, implementation of planned activities, and utilization of funds. It achieved fully in 4 output indicator targets (100%) and partially in 2 output indicator targets (50-60%) on deployment of technical experts. Significant interruptions by the elections in 2018 and 2021, respectively, contributed to partial achievement of output 2, largely because the activities under Output 1 required more political participation. The outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 and its rapid spread across countries and regions also presented significant restrictions to movements and gatherings; physical offices were closed, and limited project activities could be carried out, especially those that did not require physical gathering. But the project adapted to the problem by continuing to operate at a lower capacity, including following other COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and making all possible efforts such as use of 'zoom' and 'WhatsApp' to keep the project stakeholders engaged and work to continue.

When budget utilization was analyzed, the project implementation proves to be efficient. In terms of timeliness of implementation of planned activities, desk review and key informants revealed that there were delays due to political uncertainties in the first years of the project, but the project managed to pick up in the later years of implementation. It achieved all the targets with much less resources than planned.

In terms of coordination, UNDP works in close coordination with GoI, USAID and other donors through all the phases of work plan development and budgeting, deployment of international and national experts, implementation of technical assistance, reporting, and reviews. At the national level, the coordination is done through the Steering Committee and joint technical meetings between UNDP FFER teams and the senior GoI officials. This coordination effort led to GoI giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that the Federal general budget for project implementation was prepared, approved and launched for use in time. The project Steering Committee (SC) was scheduled to meet bi-annually, but this has not been happening regularly. The SC was inactive during the regular project implementation period (2018-2020), although the project monitoring and steering of the project was periodically performed by the UNDP senior management and the project manager in FFER-Federal.

UNDP works in close coordination with other development partners and donors (USAID, The Netherlands) in the FFER implementation. Coordination, cooperation and consultation effort between UNDP and other development partners and donors has been fruitful. Besides the main donors (USAID and the Netherlands), UNDP has attracted new donors to support its existing partnership with GoI. The new international partners are; The Trust Fund and INL. This demonstrates the strength of the UNDP coordination, cooperation and consultations in moving the Economic reform plan in Iraq. In terms of mobilizing new partnerships, UNDP has mobilized more international partners (or donors) to the support of the existing GoI-UNDP partnership, in particular, The Trust Fund and INL. This demonstrates the expansion of the partnership, besides revealing the new funding opportunities for economic reform plan in Iraq.

In regards to vulnerable groups (e.g. women), the project targeted participation of women, in particular, in the project implementation. Of the 20 CSO staff trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women. Similarly, out of the 25 participants who took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) online survey data collection tool, 22 (80%) were women.



The sustainability prospects of the results achieved represents a mixed picture. In terms of sustainability of strategies used, the prospects are promising, especially in sectors where the systems (e.g. ODK survey tool) developed are running and being rolled down to governorates. In terms of political and security sustainability, the prospects are promising. The relatively calm political situation in the GoI helped the project to run more smoothly. In terms of financial sustainability, it is premature to judge.

The analysis of the data gathered through desk review and consultation with stakeholders has led to generation of the following recommendations, lessons learned, and good practice:

**Recommendations:**

- a) Follow on the achievements made so far and scale up the technical assistance, keeping both international and national deployments, but focusing more on national deployments to ensure continuity of the technical assistance.
- b) Improve the project design with clarity on the theory of change and women's engagement in the economic reform plans, and disaggregated data.
- c) Systematize the readiness assessment of the GoI Entities capacities and reinforce it using good practices in capacity development.

**Lessons learned:**

- a) Each GoI entity in the economic reform process has different capacity development needs. So, while assessing readiness of the entities, the project did not deploy '*one size fits all*'. In recognition that individual sector capacity development and technical assistance are more efficient and effective than the group actions that were initially targeted through the Prime Minister's Office as a Senior Beneficiary of the project. Group actions can apply in general topics like 'team building' for instance. This also implies that in future similar actions, more sector specific assistance is needed, but will increase the burden on the project management team to deploy more experts for technical assistance. It is, therefore, important to take this into consideration at both the design and implementation phases of the project.

**Good practice:**

- a) By combining international with national experts to provide technical assistance, the project is contributing to developing a pool of national experts who can be contracted on short notice to not only work on economic reform, but also in similar future projects. The project team also remarked tangible benefits in terms of learning and inclusion or participation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The midterm evaluation of the “*Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER)*” (hereinafter referred to as *Project*) has been carried out on the initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) in Iraq. The evaluation was conducted as part of UNDP commitment to improve results-based management.

The findings from the evaluation questions addressed and the recommendations generated, are expected to inform and improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition and the quality of the next phase of technical support design and implementation.

The main audiences of the evaluation findings and recommendations and how they will use the results, are; (a) UNDP, USAID and other Donors – are expected to use successful project strategies identified through the evaluation to improve the quality of the next phase of technical support design and implementation and potential scale-up or replication of the project, and (b) Project Management – are expected to use the report; (i) to determine whether the technical assistance being provided is making a difference in the project target ministries and sectors for economic reform, (ii) to identify weaknesses of the project that need to be improved or phased out, and (iii) as advocacy tool for increased funding or expansion of the Funding Facility for Economic plans in Iraq.

This evaluation report follow the outline provided in the Evaluation Guidelines of the United Nations Development Programme<sup>2</sup>, that is; (a) Title and opening pages, (b) Project and evaluation information details, (c) Table of contents, (d) List of acronyms and abbreviations, (e) Executive Summary, (f) Introduction, (g) Description of Intervention, (h) Evaluation scope and objectives, (i) Evaluation Approach and Methods, (j) Data analysis, (k) Findings, (l) Conclusions, (m) Recommendations, (n) Lessons learnt, (o) Good practices, and (p) Annexes.

The report is prepared based on qualitative interviews and a review of literature and the documents related to the project, and was conducted in line with the evaluation criteria of the project **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, and **sustainability**, described in the Terms of Reference (ToR). Aspects of the project impact was not assessed. Unlike the other criteria, the approved ToR did contain assessment questions to guide the evaluation of this criteria.

The information contained in the evaluation report responds to the needs of the audience, in particular, in providing evidence to improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition and the quality of the next phase of technical support design and implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.undp.org/evaluation>

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The Government of Iraq (GoI) developed an Economic Reform plan in August 2015<sup>3</sup>, outlining long-term priorities for reconstruction and reform. The Reform Roadmap is offering a vision of economic revival driven by private sector development and increase revenue and reduce government spending. The GoI has established required mechanisms to implement the reform plans at the high level.

In response to this, UNDP in partnership with GoI introduced Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) in Iraq. The FFER project is intended to support GoI in ensuring the implementation of the Reform Roadmap. The project is positioned as financing instrument that is used to channel high-caliber international expertise to support top priority reform initiatives drawn from the GoI's adopted Economic reform plan. The Facility helps to mobilize expertise for initiatives aimed at transforming and diversifying the region's economy, restructuring, and strengthening public administration and public financial management, and improving the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

The FFER project in coordination with the GoI has supported the implementation of a number of activities since its establishment in 2016. The project has mobilized a number of international consultants to provide necessary technical assistance to the government for the implementation of the Economic reform plans.

The FFER project has these outputs:

FFER outputs for phase (2016-2020):

- **Output 1:** The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized.
- **Output 2:** The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance.

Outputs for the project extension phase (2021-2023):

- **Output 1:** The reform implementation structures, and coordinating mechanism are created, institutionalized, and made operational
- **Output 2:** Specific priority reform actions are identified and endorsed, and their implementation is supported by relevant technical assistance.

The FFER project outputs are aligned and contribute to:

UNDP Strategic Plans:	<b>Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Outcome 3:</b> Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services. <b>Strategic Plan 2018-2021, Output 2.1.1:</b> Low emission and climate resilient objectives addressed in national, sub-national and sectoral development plans and policies to promote economic diversification and green growth. <b>Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Direction of Change 2: Leave No Behind:</b> A rights-based approach centered on empowerment, inclusion, equity, human agency and development capabilities which recognizes that poverty and inequality are multidimensional.
CPD Outcomes:	<b>Outcome 2 of the CPD (2016-2020):</b> Administrative and financial reform and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorate level. <b>Outcome 2 of the CPD (2020-2024):</b> Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive, gender sensitive and diversified economic growth, with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth, and vulnerable populations.
CPD Outputs:	<b>Output 2.1.1 of CPD (2016-2020):</b> Critical capacities for public financial management and development planning at governorates level. <b>Output 2.1 of CPD (2020-2024):</b> Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation.

<sup>3</sup> UNDP Funding facility for Economic Reform Project Document, 15 December - 31 December 2019, p 2.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):	<b>SDG Goal 8 Target 8.3:</b> Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
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**Original project duration:** 15 December 2016 – 31 December 2019. **Planned end date:** 31 December 2023.

**Funding and Funding source: Total Funding:** US\$ 6,169,823; **Funding sources:** (a) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – US\$ 5,600,000; (b) UNDP - US\$ 569,823; and (c) GoI – In-kind (national staff time, office space, and community mobilization).

### 3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

**3.1. Scope:** The scope of the evaluation focuses on the Funding Facility for Economic Reform in Federal Iraq (FFER-Federal). The scope spans across two outcomes: Outcome 2 of the CPD (2016-2020) – *Administrative and financial reform and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorate level*, and Outcome 2 of the CPD (2020-2024): *Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive, gender sensitive and diversified economic growth, with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth, and vulnerable populations*. It is aligned to Output 2.1.1 of CPD (2016-2020): *Critical capacities for public financial management and development planning at governorates level*, and Output 2.1 of CPD (2020-2024) - *Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation*.

The evaluation focuses on the two FFER project outputs for 2016-2020: Output 1: *The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized*, and Output 2: *The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance*; and FFER Outputs for extension phase 2021-2023, but covering progress only up to 31 December 2021. The two outputs for FFER extension phase 2021-2023 that will be assessed are; Output 1: *The reform implementation structures, and coordinating mechanism are created, institutionalized, and made operational*, and Output 2: *Specific priority reform actions are identified and endorsed, and their implementation is supported by relevant technical assistance*.

**3.2. Objectives:** The objectives of the evaluation are; (a) Assess the **relevance** of the project's results; (b) Assess the **effectiveness** of the project and its Windows in reaching the stated objectives; (c) Assess the **efficiency** of project implementation, including the operations support; (d) Assess the **appropriateness** of the project design and management arrangements for achieving the stated objectives; (e) Assess the **sustainability** of the project results; (f) Take stock of the overall project progress achieved against the project's expected results, and contribution towards Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document; (g) Outline **lessons learned** and **good practices** that can be used in future identification, design, regular review, implementation and monitoring of FFERs interventions; (h) Provide constructive and practical **recommendations** on factors that can contribute to project sustainability and develop the FFER transition and exit strategy; and (i) Appraise project achievements against its expected outputs and recommend ways to improve future partnerships with project's implementing partners/ target groups.

### 3.3. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Criteria	Questions
<b>Relevance:</b> the extent to which the project strategy, proposed activities and expected outputs and outcomes are justified and remain relevant to beneficiaries' assessed needs, country's policies, and donor's priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional and other changes in the country?</li> <li>To what extent was the project in line with the development and reform priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?</li> <li>To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?</li> <li>To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness:</b> the extent to which the projects expected outputs and outcomes are being achieved or are expected to be achieved. Factors contributing to or detracting from the achievement of the project desired results and objectives should also be included in the assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?</li> <li>To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?</li> <li>What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?</li> <li>The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?</li> <li>To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Regional levels? To</li> </ul>

	<p>what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation and consultation among development partners (including UN agencies, and donors to this project)? How did the project steering committee contribute to a regular gathering of development partners to discuss development priorities?</li> <li>• Is the project actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?</li> <li>• To what extent do the project's activities/management systems mitigate, and address protection concerns of vulnerable populations (returnees, communities that did not leave ISIL controlled areas, minority communities, etc.) in the targeted areas?</li> <li>• What is the level of quality of the project outputs and/or the project activities?</li> <li>• To what extent the funding facility has been able to mobilize the financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Efficiency:</b> the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?</li> <li>• To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</li> <li>• What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?</li> <li>• How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability:</b> analyzing whether benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?</li> <li>• Are there any financial, social, political, or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the activity results likely to be sustained in the long-term after a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of FFER? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?</li> <li>• What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of end 2021?</li> <li>• To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?</li> <li>• To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?</li> </ul>

## 4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

### 4.1. Evaluation Approach

The FFER project midterm evaluation employed a participatory approach in engaging with key project stakeholders in Iraq. Participation of the key partners was necessary to promote ownership, facilitate future buy-in, ensure accountability, and facilitate reaching evidence-based findings and conclusions, and utilization-focused recommendations for UNDP, the donors and implementing partners.

The midterm evaluation was conducted from 17th March 2022 to 30th September 2022 and included three phases as summarised described in **Table 1**.

Table 1: *Phases of the midterm evaluation*

Phase	Description	Deliverable
<b>Inception Phase</b>	Preliminary desk review and initial remote interviews with UNDP's FFER Project Management team to familiarize with the project intervention logic, identify the sampling frame, key stakeholders for interviews, and to fine-tune the evaluation methodology; presentation of Inception report to the UNDP Project Management teams.	Inception Report
<b>Data collection Phase</b>	Further collection of documents; literature search and in-depth desk review; home-based remote and in-country mission for interviews with project stakeholders; presentation of in-country mission preliminary data analysis to UNDP Pillar and Project Management teams, as part of the data collection and verification process.	Draft Evaluation Report
<b>Data Analysis and Report Synthesis Phase</b>	Analysis of the collected data, aggregation of findings in line with the evaluation objectives, criteria and questions, assessment of progress and contribution of the project to achieved results, and development of conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned, and good practice.  Consultation/Verification: Electronic peer review of draft evaluation report by UNDP's FFER Project Management team.  Submission of the Final Evaluation Report to UNDP's FFER Project Management team.  Final reporting.	Final Evaluation report

### 4.2. Methods of data collection, data source, and rationale for their selection

The methodology was based on in-country and home-based remote data collection, and followed a mixed approach, using *qualitative* methods (review of programme and project documents, key informant interviews with FFER project stakeholders, including FFER-Federal Project Management team, and one focus group discussion with representatives of beneficiaries at the Central Statistical Organization), and *quantitative* methods (analysis of records of products produced and services provided by the project). The methods of data collection, data source, and rationale for their selection are described in **Table 2**.

Table 2: *Methods of data collection, data source, and rationale for their selection*

Methods of data collection	Data source	Rationale for their selection
UNDP Monitoring systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Documents (CPD 2016-2020 &amp; 2020-2024)</li> <li>• UNDP Strategic Plans (2014-2017, 2018-2021, &amp; 2022-2025)</li> <li>• FFER Project Documents</li> <li>• Project Management team</li> <li>• Government partners</li> </ul>	Since it uses project performance indicators to measure progress, particularly actual results against expected results, it is a reliable, cost-efficient, objective method to assess progress of the FFER project outputs and contribution to CPD outputs and Strategic Plan (SP) outcomes.
Reports and Documents review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Documents (CPD 2016-2020 &amp; 2020-2024)</li> <li>• UNDP Strategic Plans (2014-2017, 2018-2021, &amp; 2022-2025)</li> <li>• FFER Project Documents</li> <li>• SDGs<sup>44</sup></li> </ul>	It is cost-efficient because it relies on existing project documentation, including quantitative and descriptive information about the project, its outputs and SP outcomes it contributes to.
Key Informants Interview (KII)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of key GOI project stakeholders and UNDP's FFER-Federal Project Management team</li> <li>• UNDP Pillar/Project Management teams: Presentation of in-country mission preliminary data collection and analysis as part of the consultation, data collection and verification process</li> </ul>	<p>It engages with a wide range of project stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge about the FFER project's operations, programming and context. These project community experts will provide in-depth particular knowledge and understanding of the problems the project faced and recommend comprehensive solutions.</p> <p>While KII samples will not represent the total population in the FFER project geographic focus, in-depth interviews will allow the exploration of qualitative data to explain the project success or limitations brought about by the interventions.</p>
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of beneficiaries at the Central Statistical Organization</li> </ul>	It is quick, reliable method to obtain in-depth stakeholders' opinions, similar or divergent points of view, or judgments about the project, to collect information around tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from the project intervention, in a single gathering (usually 3-5 people per FGD) and in a short time .

### 4.3. Data collection tools, protocols, and sampling plan

#### 4.3.1. Data collection tools

The Midterm Evaluation Matrix in **Annex 2** identifies what data to look for to answer the evaluation questions. The tools for data collection, namely; key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) guides, and desk review guides, are presented in **Annexes 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3**, respectively.

#### 4.3.2. Data collection protocols

The data collection tools were accompanied with data collection protocols, which are systematic procedures for approaching the interviews, and collecting and recording data to ensure that high-quality data is collected and gathered efficiently. The data collection protocols are described in **Annexes 4.1 & 4.2**.

#### 4.3.3. Sampling plan and frame

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for KII and FGD. The sampling frame were the project stakeholders, and selection of individuals to participate in the KII or FGD was based on in-depth experience

<sup>44</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



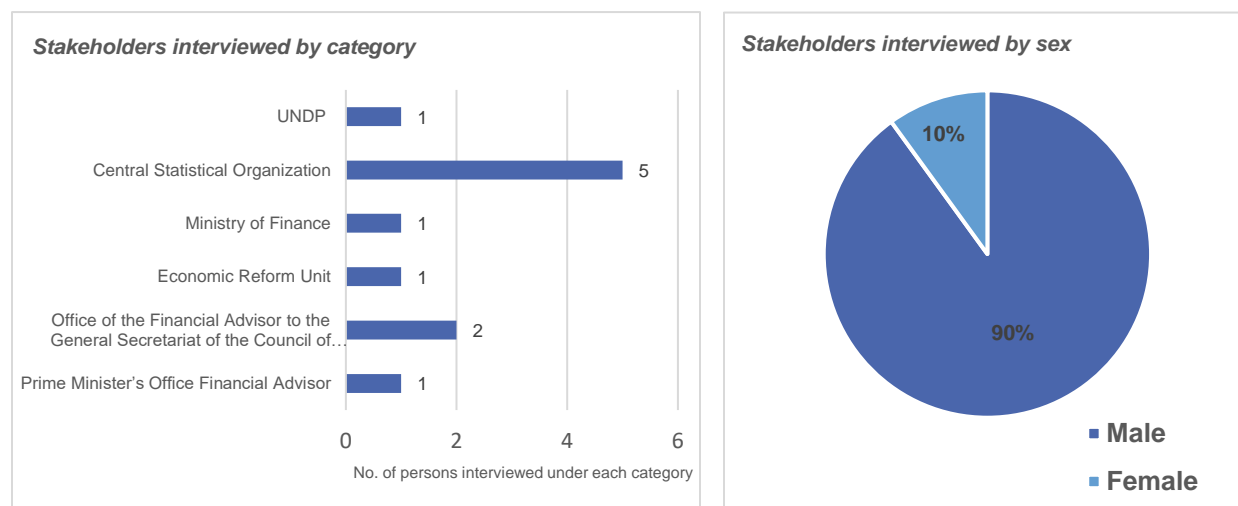
with the project, and use made of UNDP's FFER Project Management team to identify the right people to interview.

Primary data was collected during in-country mission to Iraq, involving key informant interviews and focus group discussion, and covered a total of 11 persons (10 men and 1 woman) from 6 ministries/sectors, namely; (a) the Prime Minister's Office Financial Advisor (1); (b) Office of the Financial Advisor to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (2); (c) Ministry of Finance (1); (d) ERU (1); (e) Central Statistical Organization at the Ministry of Planning (5), and (f) UNDP (1). The agreed process for selection of participants was based on longer experience with the project technical assistance so as to obtain richer information and evidence on the performance of the project. Overall, 6 out of 7 (86%) institutions/sectors were interviewed. Presentation of the in-country mission preliminary findings on the analyzed data to UNDP Pillar and Project Management teams, was part of the data collection and verification process.

#### 4.4. Stakeholders' participation

The evaluation took into consideration representation from all sectors targeted by the project. The list of stakeholders that participated in the evaluation are presented in **Annex 8**, and the breakdown of stakeholders by category and sex is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: *Evaluation stakeholders by category and sex*



#### 4.5. Evaluation Management

To ensure effectiveness and quality of the midterm evaluation undertaken by the Evaluator, the evaluation management structure was the UNDP's FFER-Federal Project Management team. This was intended to promote a highly participatory and quality review, and to ensure that the evaluation approach is relevant. The Project Management team was also tasked with providing both substantive and logistical support to the Evaluator, making refinement to the evaluation work plan, and organize key partners and beneficiaries for interviews. The FFER Project Management team was consulted on key aspects of the evaluation process to provide input at key stages of the evaluation. Preliminary data analysis was presented to UNDP Pillar and Project Management teams, as part of the data verification process.

#### 4.6. Ethical considerations

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the 'Code of conduct for Evaluation in the UN System' signed by the evaluator (**see Annex 3**), and the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, and OECD evaluation principles and guidelines and DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.<sup>5</sup> Based on the requirements for confidentiality stated in the data collection tools (**see Annexes 4.1 & 4.2**), and in the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System, the Evaluator did not publish the names of respondents in this report, but only presented the names of institutions and number of persons interviewed in each institution.

#### 4.7. Background information on the Evaluator

Patrick Orotin holds a Doctorate Degree in Management, a Master of Science Degree in Agriculture, and a Diploma in Education. He has a background and experience working as evaluator of; UN Country Programmes, Organizational Development, Climate Change and Renewable Energy, Gender Based Violence, Child Protection, Education, and Health Systems Strengthening programmes and projects, in Africa and Central Asia. He is well versed with the UN programming and operations, having served as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist of the UN Joint Programme on Population, and Co-Chair of the Joint UN M&E team in Uganda. In international evaluation standards, Patrick is familiar with the OECD/DAC criteria and guidelines and evaluation quality standards, UNEG Guidelines and UNDP approaches for evaluation, as well as GEF Guidelines for Midterm and Final Evaluations, having managed over eight evaluations for the United Nations (including as Evaluation Team Leader and Evaluation Manager for programmes and projects, singly or jointly implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, WHO, UN-Habitat and ILO), and over seven other evaluations for USAID, UK Aid, SIDA, and international NGOs. He is fluent in English and fair in French.

#### 4.8. Major limitations of the methodology

- a) Disaggregated data and baseline data on gender did not form part of the Results Framework and the M&E Plan in the original project design, and this presented a significant constraint when assessing the project's effectiveness in contributing to the human rights-based approach, and gender equality and women's empowerment. Nevertheless, the evaluator was able to tease out some gender disaggregated data from progress reports upon which some analysis on rights-based approach and gender equality and women's empowerment has been made.
- b) Aspects of the **project appropriateness** was found to be linked to the project **relevance** criterion, did not have stand-alone questions, and so the Evaluator assessed it under **relevance**. The criteria of project **impact** did have questions in the approved ToR, and so it was not systematically assessed; but aspects of impact are mentioned in the report, wherever identified.
- c) The Midterm evaluation faced specific delays in the completion of the data collection process and reporting within the stipulated time frame. Access to some key partners for data collection was delayed as they were out of the country for official missions. Given the importance of the partners' institutional memory of the project, the evaluator had to wait, and interviews were conducted online, but outside the original timeframe. While the delays affected the time required to complete the evaluation, this, however, did not affect the overall outcome of the evaluation.

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<sup>5</sup> OECD (FEBRUARY 2020). BETTER CRITERIA FOR BETTER EVALUATION. Source: <https://www.oecd.org>dac>

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS

Collected data was grouped by the evaluator into assessment areas (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability) and their sub-themes. Desk review and interview notes allowed quality evaluation of the data against the indicators in the results framework and their triangulation. Both quantitative and qualitative aspects were considered and assessed. The data analysis methods applied are presented in **Table 3**, and the data analysis plan is presented in **Annex 5**.

Table 3: *Data analysis methods applied and rationale for selection*

<b>Method</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Change analysis</b>	Collected data is systematized and compared against the achievements and expected changes described in the project document provided by UNDP. This helps to reach conclusions on progress of the project towards the targets and most effective approaches and recommendations for the next similar actions.
<b>Contribution analysis</b>	Contribution analysis is most appropriate method used in understanding the causes of achieved results, results chains, roles of each of the stakeholder involved and other internal and external factors, including both enablers and barriers. That enables drawing conclusions around the main contributors, including the level of contribution of UNDP, FFER project partners to the achieved results.
<b>Responsibility assignment mapping</b>	Using the logic of the intervention, and involvement of UNDP and FFER project partners, the evaluation will systematize the collected data on partnership arrangements between UNDP and FFER partners, practical implementation arrangements and expressed need for cooperation. Ultimately, this helps in reaching conclusions on effectiveness and efficiency of the support and recommendations on how to increase the effectiveness of the cooperation.

## 6. FINDINGS

This section of the report presents the findings and analysis of the mid-term evaluation, organized to reflect the project's **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability**, as specified in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1) and in the Inception Report approved for this evaluation. Aspects of the **project appropriateness** was found to be linked to the project **relevance**, did not have stand-alone questions, and so was assessed under **relevance**. The aspect of project **impact** did not have set questions in the Terms of Reference; the mid-term evaluation also deemed it too early to assess impact at this point in time.

### 6.1. Relevance

The relevance is assessed by the extent to which the project has been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional contexts and other changes in the country; is in line with the development and reform policies and priorities of the Government of Iraq, the UNDP Country Programme outputs and outcomes, and the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs; and contributes to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP Country Programme outcome. It considers the degree to which the logic of the interventions and the design are consistent and coherent for achieving the expected project outputs and objectives. The relevance also assessed the extent to which the project contributes to human rights-based approach (HRBA) and gender equality and women's empowerment enshrined in the SDG policy priority of 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB).

#### 6.1.1. *Responsiveness to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country*

The needs of the beneficiaries and other key project stakeholders cannot be understood in isolation and are shaped by their context. Thus, understanding whether context was understood and accounted for when the intervention was designed and whether the context changed between the inception and the end of the intervention is critical for fair judgment of the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Both key informant interviews (KII) and documents review reveal that the project was designed in response to the aftermath of the violence in 2014 that brought about displacement of about 3 million people. In order to strengthen capacities of Gol to deliver adequate services and provide economic opportunities for its citizens and displaced people (both internally displaced persons – IDPs), an Economic Reform Plan and Roadmap were developed with the support of the World Bank in 2016.<sup>6</sup> From the Plan and Roadmap, the Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) was designed in 2016, as a joint measure to consolidate the fragile peace through a structured economic reform. Thus, it was clear that the context from which the FFER was designed was understood and accounted for.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 and its rapid spread across countries and regions presented significant restrictions to movements and gatherings. The project faced challenges due to COVID-19 that spilled over from 2020 up to the time of this mid-term evaluation. But the project management has adapted to the problem by continuing to operate at a lower capacity, including following other COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and making all possible efforts such as use of 'zoom' and 'WhatsApp' to keep the project stakeholders engaged and work on track. In addition, the 2019 protests in Iraq that led to the resignation of the government affected government businesses for over 6 months until another government replaced it. Further, the preparation for 2021 elections and the delayed government formation process since Oct 2021, has led to many protests and political violence in Iraq. These have interrupted the participation of the government counterparts in the project implementation and decision-making processes.

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress report. 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020. p.4.

### 6.1.2. Alignment with national reform priorities and policies and UNDP country programme

The alignment of the project assessed the extent to which the interventions addressed the policy priorities of the GoI. Desk review and key informant interviews demonstrate that the project responded to the initiatives and requests of the institutions and authorities approved by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in line with the Economic Reform plans, which means that UNDP effectively responds to what the Government expresses as necessary. In the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Iraq (2016-2020) Outcome 2: *Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels*<sup>7</sup>, the CPD is demonstrating alignment with the reform priorities and policies of GoI.

The most successful projects are those where at least an adequate knowledge of the specific needs to be met are demonstrated. From the desk review and key informant interviews with project stakeholders, the evaluation concludes that FFER project is undoubtedly focused. Its mode of implementation through delivering technical assistance (TA) to GoI Entities based on evidence from assessments or studies.

To enable provision of further support that responds to the changes in the national context and the new and emerging national priorities, the GoI and UNDP agreed to extend the project to December 2023. According to desk review, this is also in line with the USAID approval provided in 2020 to extend the contribution agreement which covers the funding revision to Iraq Federal until 31 December 2023.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the project is in line with the GoI National Priority or Goal: General Framework of Government Programmes, 2014-2018, Priority 5: *Administrative and Financial Reform of the governmental Institutions*<sup>9</sup>, and UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020) Outcome 2: *Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels*<sup>10</sup>, and USAID strategy for Iraq.

### 6.1.3. Contribution to the theory of change of relevant UNDP country programme outcomes

The contribution to theory of change considered how well the project interventions were built to address relevant national priorities and whether project objectives have been clearly specified, and if national priorities are articulated in the intervention's objectives and linked to relevant UNDP country programme outcomes.

Desk review reveals that the FFER project does not have a theory of change, but its outputs have been linked to the outcomes and outputs of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020) for Iraq. The project is consistent in terms of results-based approach with its outputs, indicators, baselines, targets, and milestones. The project has two objectives: (a) *To undertake specific reform initiatives underlined by loan agreements either with international financial lending institutions such as IMF or bilateral donor to help the government to close a financial gap of US\$18.1 billion during 2016-2019*, and (b) *To reinforce reform initiatives undertaken by the government to respond to the public demand to improve public services, creation of job opportunities and combat corruption that require structural and policy and economic reform*.<sup>11</sup> And there are two outputs: Output 1: *Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform*<sup>12</sup>, and Output 2: *Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed*.<sup>13</sup>

The second project objective: *'To reinforce reform initiatives undertaken by the government to respond to the public demand to improve public services, creation of job opportunities and combat corruption that require structural and policy and economic reform'*, aligns with Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020) for Iraq: *Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at*

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>8</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project progress report. 1 April 2021 - 30 June 2021.

<sup>9</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020). Annex: Integrated results and resources framework. p.8

<sup>10</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.8

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.6.

*federal and governorates levels*'.<sup>14</sup> The two outputs; Output 1: '*Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform*', and Output 2: '*Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed*', also align with the second project objective and Outcome 2 of the CPD (2016-2020). The outputs have been identified and adequately stated using the standard Results Based Management (RBM) approach. Good quality outputs are crucial for proper monitoring and evaluation. Thus, at the outcome and outputs levels, what UNDP and the government of Iraq want to achieve through the FFER project (Economic Reform) has been clearly articulated in both documents; the FFER Project Document (2016-2020) and the CPD (2016-2020).

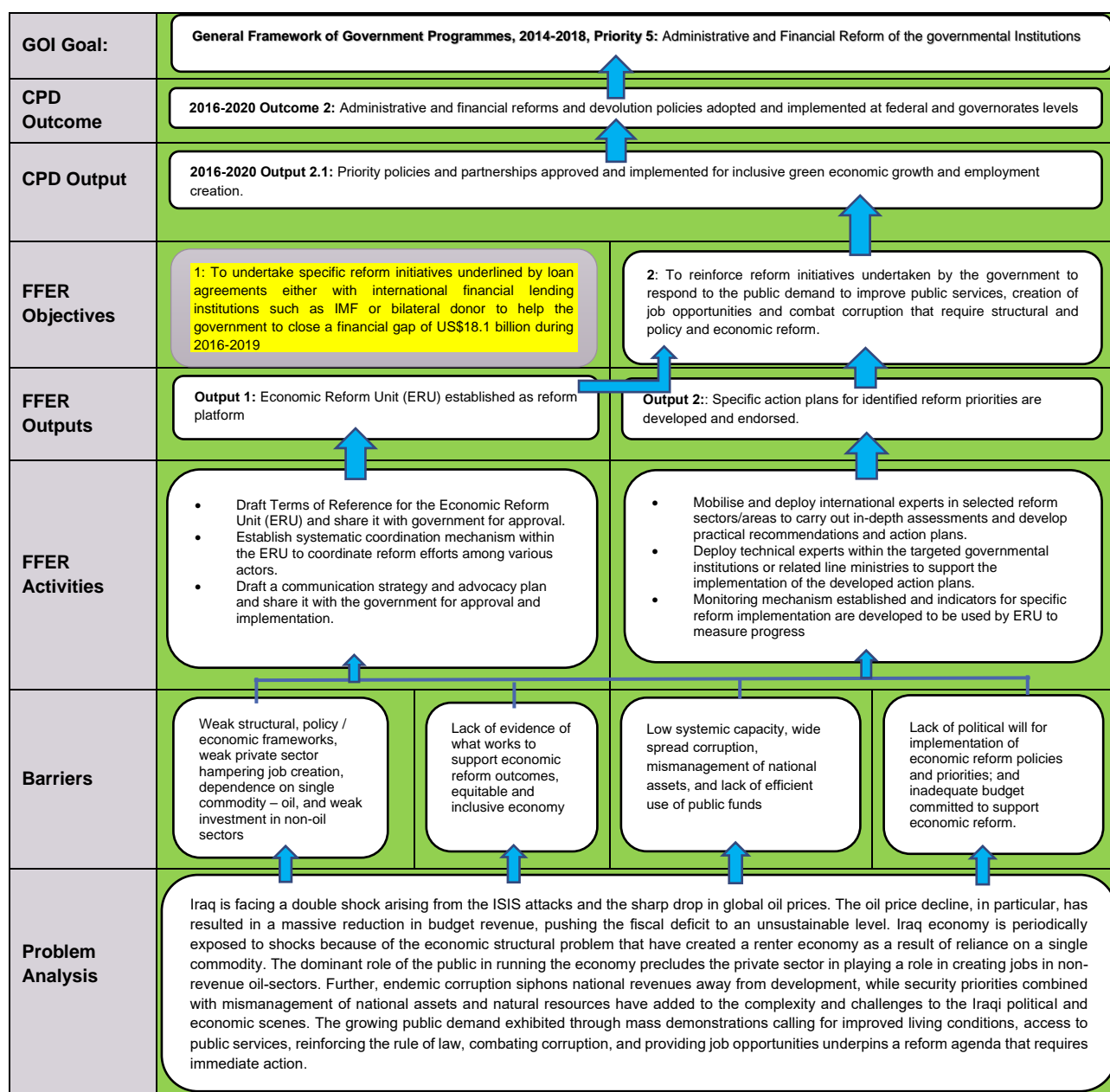
Both documents emphasize establishing Economic Rreform Platform to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of government – at federal and governorates levels, and how the Economic Rreform Platform would function has also been clearly articulated with key activities listed under each stated output.

However, the mid-term evaluation was not able to find a link in theory between the first objective: '*To undertake specific reform initiatives underlined by loan agreements either with international financial lending institutions such as IMF or bilateral donor to help the government to close a financial gap of US\$18.1 billion during 2016-2019*', and the two outputs: Output 1: '*Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform*', and Output 2: '*Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed*'. Key informant interview indicate that this objective was included to be implemented by the World Bank/IMF, but the Bank pulled out of the project due to insecurity and political uncertainty between 2017 and 2018. The results framework, which should provide a snapshot of the project theory of change, also does not have outputs, activities, and measurements (indicators, baselines, and targets) linked to this objective, which represents gaps in project design. Figure 2 illustrates the project theory of change as constructed by the Evaluator to support this analysis.

Figure 2: *Depiction of the project theory of change*

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.8



In the Results Framework in the project design, Output 1 has four indicators, and Output 2 has three indicators. In spite of the gaps in their formulations, these are reasonable numbers of indicators per Output; usually best practice recommends maximum of five indicators per output. All the indicators have not been formulated using the standard RBM approach. They are stated as Activities, and do not follow the RBM principle for SMART indicators.<sup>15</sup> For example, under Output 1, Indicator 1.1 is phrased as; '*Draft a detailed Terms of Reference for the Economic Reform Unit (ERU) and share it with government for approval*'.<sup>16</sup> The same is true for Indicators under Output 2. For example, Indicator 2.1 is phrased as; '*Mobilize and deploy international experts in selected reform sectors/areas to carry out in-depth assessments and develop practical recommendations and action*'

15 UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, p.63. Source: <http://www.undp.org/eo/handbook>

16 UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 216 -31 December 2019. p.8.

*plans*'.<sup>17</sup> This gap in formulating quality indicators promotes activity-based reporting, and makes it difficult for staff and managers to measure progress at results level and determine when to take corrective actions.

Quality indicators are stated using the RBM standard.<sup>18</sup> For quantitative indicators, they are stated in terms of:

- Number
- Percentage
- Rate (example: unemployment rate – number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the total number of persons in the labour force )
- Ratio (for example: sex ratio – number of males per number of females)

While qualitative indicators are stated in terms of:

- Compliance with...
- Quality of...
- Extent of...
- Level of...

Analyzing the quantitative aspects of the indicators, for example: 'deploy international experts', and 'deploy national technical experts'; the number of international experts were almost double that of national experts.<sup>19</sup> The evaluation concludes that the project design was realistic in this instance, especially that Iraq and KRG lacked the required professionals and scientific experts to provide the kind of expertise the reform required;<sup>20</sup> which is commendable given the pilot nature of the project, and the possibility that the project would be scaled up using the nationally developed capacity. Desk review of the revised Project Document show that international technical assistance is being scaled down as national capacity picks up.<sup>21</sup>

#### **6.1.4. Contribution to human rights-based approach, and gender equality and women's empowerment**

This evaluation concludes that the project was designed in response to the rights of the citizens, presented through the massive demonstrations by citizens for improved living conditions, access to and improved public services, combating corruption, reinforcing the rule of law, and creating job opportunities for women and youth that required structural, policy and economic reforms. This culminated into the design of the Funding Facility for Economic Reform in 2016. From the inclusiveness point of view, these needs were identified by the citizens, and key informants reveal that youth and women were involved and their views formed the content of the Economic Reform plans, especially as far as youth employment and women economic empowerment are concerned.

Key elements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) are reflected in the project design, with both '*right holders*' (GoI and its target sectors/institutions) presenting their priorities to be addressed, and '*duty bearers*' (UNDP & UN system) responding to these priorities. However, in terms of expertise, budget allocations, and duration of intervention, the greater focus is on the '*right holders*'. This is justified given the priorities identified and described in the project document and confirmed by interviewed stakeholders, are reasons for the design of the project.

The project delivery methods included a range of actions, tailored to the '*right holders*' and '*duty bearers*', such as capacity development and planning workshops and training, international experts working with national counterparts, face-to-face meetings and sharing knowledge, remote consultations, development of frameworks, manuals, and manuals, reflection sessions on lessons learnt, and monitoring actions reflected in the risk logs.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>18</sup> UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, p.63, Source: <http://www.undp.org/eo/handbook>

<sup>19</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 -31 December 2019. p.9.

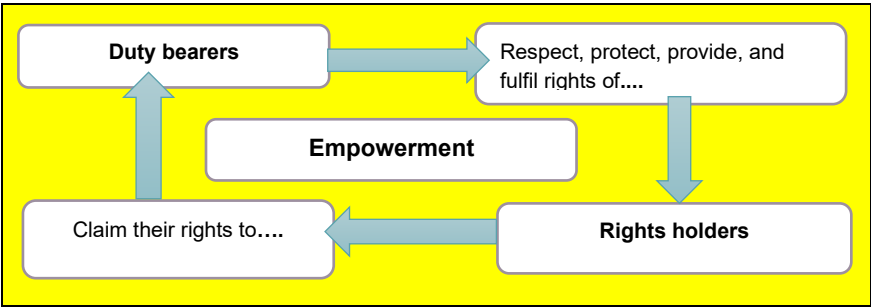
<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.16



Analysis of the planned interventions lead to overall conclusion that the type of actions planned for achievement were mostly adequate, and in congruent with the needs of the *right holders*’ and with expectations of the *‘duty bearers’*, with some exceptions. Initial delays in the deployment of international experts on the project was nothing to do with delaying the fulfilment of the rights of *right holders*’, but being cautious of the role of the *‘duty bearers’* in upholding the right to protect the safety of everyone in the project, given the political environment in early years of the project implementation. The key concept of the HRBA is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Concept of the Human Rights-Based Approach

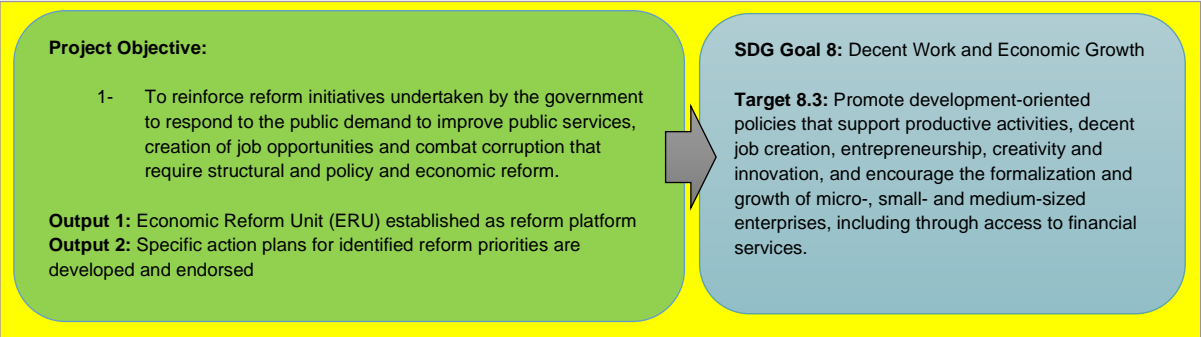


In as far as cross-cutting issues of gender are concerned, some key elements of gender equality and women’s empowerment are reflected in the project’s supported Ministry of Planning’s Central Statistical Organisation (CSO). For example, a sizable number of women (22/25 or 80%) took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool. Similarly, of the 20 CSO staff from the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women, drawn from the governorates of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basra, Diwaniya and Nineveh. Additionally, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) survey conducted by the CSO in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, targeted formal and informal MSME enterprises, which according to key informants also targeted informal enterprises run by women.

Although the project design does not include gender-disaggregated data in the baselines and targets in the Results Framework, these are reflected in some progress reports, and to some extent responded to the SDG policy priority of ‘Leave No One Behind’ (LNOB). It is also in line with the UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Outcome 2: *No-one left behind, centering on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development*<sup>22</sup>, and UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2014-2017) Outcome 3: *Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services*.<sup>23</sup>

Figure 4 illustrates how the project contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) by reflecting the link between the project objectives and both outputs of the project, and the SDG targets.

Figure 4: Contribution of the project to the SDGs



<sup>22</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.  
<sup>23</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Annex: Integrated results and resources framework (2014-2017). p.8.

## 6.2. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project was assessed by analysis of five key areas: the extent to which the project outputs and outcomes have been achieved; factors that were decisive in achieving the results; whether strategies for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups (returnees, etc.) were incorporated in the project implementation, with special attention paid to social inclusion when addressing equity of results; the extent to which findings of data analysis, best practices and lessons learnt were used in project improvements; the extent to which project activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, partnerships, and capacity at national and regional levels and; the extent of mobilization of additional resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance. The evaluation also analyzed internal factors such as the robustness of design as well as external factors affecting the project achievements.

The first phase of the project ended 31 December 2021, and it is worth noting that at the time of this evaluation, the project had been revised and cost-extended to 31 December 2023. So, some of the results reported could be from those activities conducted after December 2021, and likely to show the project has higher achievements.

### 6.2.1. *Achievement of the project outputs and outcomes*

In terms of effectiveness, the evaluation concludes that despite the challenges the project faced at the initial years of the implementation, described in the report under **relevance**, its effectiveness demonstrates one of the key strengths of the project, when judged from the set of indicators and targets in the Results Framework.

The analysis of the achievements of the project Outputs reveal that 71% (5/7) of the project Outputs have been achieved, as follows:

- 5 outputs indicator targets are fully achieved: and
- 2 output indicator targets are partially achieved.

The deployment of UNDP recruited project manager, based at the UNDP Country Office in Baghdad, and directly supervised by UNDP, was a wise step that facilitated the delivery of project outputs, ensured accountability, and contributed to achievements of some of the project outputs. However, based on the progress on the achievements so far, it is too early to assess the project impact (or achievement of the project objectives).

Specific to each Output, the main findings and conclusions of the evaluation are described below regarding the progress on the achievements of the project outputs and outcomes.

#### **Output 1: *Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform***

This output was focused on putting in place a functioning Economic Reform Unit (ERU) through establishing a systematic coordination mechanism within the ERU to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of the Government of Iraq and developing a communications strategy and advocacy plan. At the national level, the ERU was being coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office.

The project achievement rates are presented in the table 4 below. From the table, the evaluation concludes that the project went well in regard to Output 1, achieving all the 3 indicators fully, but achieved targets under output 2 partially. Table 4 illustrates the achievements of the project under Output 1.

Table 4: *Achievements of the project under Output 1*

Indicator <sup>1</sup>	Target	Progress	Level of Achievement
1.1. Draft a detailed Terms of Reference for the Economic Reform Unit (ERU) and share it with government for approval	Target: 1	Achieved: 1	Achieved: 100%
1.2. Establish systematic coordination mechanisms within ERU to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors	Target: 1	Achieved: 1	Achieved:100%
1.3. Draft a communication strategy and advocacy plan and share with government for approval and implementation	Target: 1	Achieved: 1	Achieved:100%

<sup>1</sup>These are not SMART indicators, but for the purpose of this evaluation, they have been kept the way they were stated in the Project Document.

The Economic Reform Unit (ERU) was established in 2017 to coordinate reform efforts among various governmental sectors. The economic reform aims at reducing the role of the state in Iraq's economy and creating a diversified and dynamic economy, in part driven by the private sector. Even when the White Paper guiding the reform was formerly adopted by the Government of Iraq in October 2020,<sup>24</sup> the reform agenda has not yet gathered full support from the legislature. As reported by a key informant, a lot of awareness campaign and advocacy has to be done to continue to present the true intent of the economic reform.<sup>25</sup>

## **Output 2: *Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed***

This output was focused on mobilizing and deploying international experts in selected reform sectors/areas to carry out in-depth assessment and develop practical recommendations and action plans. It was also focused on deploying national experts within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries to support the implementation of the developed action plans. In addition, it was focused on developing and establishing a monitoring mechanism and indicators for use by ERU to measure progress. This output represents the core element of the economic reform, and the extent of its implementation will be analyzed in greater details.

Analyzing the performance regarding the deployment of experts in selected reform sectors/areas and within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries, the evaluation revealed that the project represented a '*learning while doing*' approach as this encouraged active engagement of both international and national experts with the beneficiary sectors or ministries and appeals and retains knowledge. It also encouraged inclusion and participation; desk review reveals that consultations tended to involve a wider audience in the sectors.<sup>26</sup> Deployment of experts followed a clear procedure agreed between UNDP, Government, USAID; and it was based on qualifications and experience in the sector, and not gender.

The project achievement rates are presented in the table 5. From the table, the evaluation concludes that the project partially achieved its targets in regard to deployment of experts to support the economic reform plan, with the Output fully achieving in 1 indicator, and partially achieving in 2 indicators. Table 5 illustrates the achievements of the project under Output 2.

<sup>24</sup> <https://gds.gov.iq/iraqs-white-paper-for-economic-reforms-vision-and-key-objectives/>

<sup>25</sup> Project progress reports

<sup>26</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress reports

Table 5: *Achievements of the project under Output 2*

Indicator	Target	Progress	Level of Achievement
2.1. Mobilize and deploy international experts in selected reform sectors/areas to carry out in-depth assessment and develop practical recommendations and action plans	<b>10 International Experts deployed</b>	<b>Total Achieved: 6 Experts</b>	Not Achieved: 60%
2.2. Deploy technical experts within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries to support the implementation of the developed action plans	<b>10 National Experts deployed</b>	<b>Total Achieved: 5 Experts</b>	Not Achieved: 50%
2.3. Monitoring mechanisms established and indicators for specific reform implementation are developed and used by ERU to measure progress	<b>1</b>	<b>Total Achieved: 1</b>	Achieved: 100%

By the time of this Midterm evaluation data collation process, three (3) Terms of References for deployment of technical experts had not yet been approved.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, through mobilized and deployed international and national experts, the following technical assistances have been completed (Table 6).

Table 6: *Technical Assistance completed by the project*

Description of Technical Assistance	Government Entity	Completion Date	Funder
1. Technical support to the White Paper and ease of doing business in Iraq	Economic Reform Unit (ERU) and Ministry of Finance	August 2021	USAID
2. Technical support to Reform Management Cell (RMC) in Iraq on economic and public sector reforms.	Prime Minister's Office	November 2021	USAID
3. Feasibility study on Credit Guarantee System (CGS) to increase micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) access to finance.	Ministry of Finance	November 2020	USAID
4. Mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) survey in Iraq governorates of Baghdad, Basra, and Nineveh	Ministry of Planning	May 2021	USAID
5. Training of staff of Central Statistical Organization (CSO) in the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool	Central Statistical Organization in Iraq	September 2021	USAID

The evaluation was not able to see any report on the assessment of the efforts of the deployed experts. However, specific example, based on desk review of reports on the technical assistance provided to the Ministry of Planning (MoP) reveal expressed satisfaction with the technical assistance.

Under the **Ministry of Planning**, the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) disseminated the results of the MSME survey report, with 100 in-person attendees and other attending virtually. The event was highlighted by a communications campaign by the survey consultant and the communications team at UNDP based on the project's communications plan endorsed by the UNDP communications team and USAID.<sup>28</sup> The event enabled participants to better understand Iraq economy. In addition, the survey results enhanced participants' knowledge of MSMEs structure, business dynamics, challenges and opportunities through up-to-date, reliable market information and analysis. The MSMEs survey results has highlighted the opportunities for access to finance and activate the role of the private sector as an integral part of the economic reform process and the

<sup>27</sup> Key informant

<sup>28</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform progress report, 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021, p.7.

intended economic diversification. The result of the survey stimulated a need to expand the survey to cover the remaining 12 governorates in Iraq, and to do the same in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.<sup>29</sup>

### **6.2.2. Factors influencing achievement of project results**

From the desk review, the project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance contributed to smooth project implementation, and full and partial achievement of project results under Outputs 1 and 2, respectively. For example, UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID, The Netherlands, and GoI) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq; besides, it has mobilized new donors (The Trust Fund and INL) to support the economic reform plans.

However, it should be noted that performance in the earlier years of the project were low, contributed to by low implementation rates, as the elections that took place in Iraq in 2018 and 2021, created a negative environment against smooth project implementation.<sup>30</sup> However, the project managed to catch up in the subsequent years of 2019 through to 2020, a performance that is commendable, and also contributed to the cost-extension of the project to 31 December 2023.

### **6.2.3. Strategies used for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable populations**

Based on desk review, there was no deliberate Strategy focused on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups in this project, although parts of Strategy Number 3 in the FFER Project Document (2016-2019) states that *'While responding to specific needs through tailor-made interventions.....experts deployed to take into consideration importance of gender and the needs of vulnerable groups.'*<sup>31</sup> Desk review reveal that of the 25 staff from the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) of the Ministry of Planning (MoP) who took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool, 22 were women (80%). Similarly, of the 20 CSO staff trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women, drawn from the governorates of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basra, Diwaniya and Nineveh. Additionally, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) survey conducted by the CSO in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, targeted formal and informal MSME enterprises, which according to key informants also targeted informal enterprises run by women. According to focus group with the team at CSO, there is a planned survey to cover 12 remaining governorates, which will also target informal enterprises run by women. The Evaluation concludes that, while women were not intentionally targeted in the project design, they were targeted during implementation.

### **6.2.4. Use of data analysis or best practices in drawing lessons learned and use in project improvements**

Data analysis does not necessarily mean using a complicated computer analysis package. It means taking the data collected and looking at it in comparison to the questions for which answers are needed or targets set to be achieved. Desk review reveals that 'best practices' had not been documented at the time of the mid-term evaluation, but data analysis has been used and lessons drawn and used in project improvements.

By conducting data analysis and identifying lessons, the project was able to capitalize on its successes and taking note of its gaps.

**Gap No.1:** *The M&E Plan and Results Framework did not cater for indicators disaggregated baseline and target data on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups. This presented significant*

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.6

<sup>30</sup> Key Informant

<sup>31</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal & FFER-KRG). Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.4

*limitations when assessing the project's strategies for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups.*

This gap was addressed by:

- **Improvements in project design (refer to revised Project Document 2020-2023):** In the revised Project Document (2020-2023), there are specific indicators designated to measure number of women engaged in the economic reform roadmap at the policy level (e.g., Output 1, Indicator No. 1.2. No. of Women Members in the Reform Project Teams; Output 2, Indicator No. 2.5. No. of Iraqi officials trained by gender).<sup>32</sup>
- **Improvements in reporting on women engagement on the economic reform roadmap:** The project addressed this by partially disaggregating data by gender in the progress reports.

#### **6.2.5. Project coordination, cooperation, and capacity at national and/or regional levels**

Evaluation findings reveal that the project was and still is implemented by Gol, in close coordination with UNDP, USAID and other donors through all the phases of work plan development and budgeting, deployment of international and national experts, implementation of technical assistance, reporting, and reviews. At the national level, the coordination is done through the Steering Committee and joint technical meetings between UNDP FFER teams and senior Gol officials. This coordination efforts led to Gol giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that Gol general budget for project implementation have been prepared, approved and launched for use in time.

At UNDP country office level, the FFER-Federal project team communicate systematically and cooperate closely with the Country Office in Baghdad, and with the Project Board. The evidence of cooperation between UNDP and Gol is revealed in co-funding mechanism from Gol (in staff time and office space). The project also expanded its cooperation with other partners. This is seen in new partnerships described in table 7.

In terms of capacity, the project has developed capacity for survey data collection using online data collection tool (Open Data Kit – ODK), with a large proportion of Central Statistical Organization female technical staff at national and governorates levels trained to use this data tool in the mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) surveys.

These coordination, cooperation, and capacity building efforts have not only positively influenced the full achievement of some output targets, but also improved the dissemination of the project achievements, increased the visibility and the effectiveness of the project outreach efforts, and contributed to sharing lessons learnt and institutionalization of the knowledge management from the project implementation.

#### **6.2.6. Project coordination, cooperation, and consultation among development partners**

The UNDP FFER project works in close coordination with donors (USAID, The Netherlands) through the phases of implementation of technical assistance, reporting, and reviews. Coordination is being done through the Steering Committee and joint technical meetings between UNDP FFER teams, senior Gol officials, and donor representatives. The coordination, cooperation and consultation effort between UNDP and international partners has been fruitful. Besides the main donors (USAID and the Netherlands), UNDP has attracted new donors to support its existing partnership with Gol. The new international partners are; The Trust Fund and INL. This demonstrates the strength of the UNDP coordination, cooperation and consultations in moving forward the Economic reform plan in Iraq.

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<sup>32</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Revised Project Document 2020-2023. p.15.

### 6.2.7. New partnerships in view of strengthening project implementation and/or sustainability

The project document describes the partnership: “UNDP will work international partners including the World Bank and other partners. This initiative will be led by government, with direct involvement of the Prime Minister’s Office through the Project Steering Committee Mechanism that will be composed of key focal point representing line ministries concerned. Private Sector and civil society will be also engaged at the consultation process when forming reform action plans under the umbrella of the working groups or at the implementation phase as key implementing partners.”<sup>33</sup> This is how the existing partnership framework has been defined in the project document for greater involvement of the Private Sector and Civil Society alongside government in the economic reform implementation. However, key informants’ interviews and desk review reveal that the Private Sector and Civil Society are yet to be fully involved in the implementation of the economic reform plans.

According to key informants, there is some hesitation in moving towards public private partnership (PPP) because the retirement pension and social security policies make the public sector employment more attractive than the private sector. By the time of the design of the FFER project in 2016, the public sector employment made up about 62% of the wage earning employees in Iraq.<sup>34</sup> Although, this has since experienced a decreasing trend; 38% in 2019 and 35% in 2020, it is projected to pick up and reach 43% in 2023.<sup>35</sup> Further, according to a key informant, about 37 state-owned enterprises which have since closed have not been privatized, and are still paying wages to employees, revealing the significance of the public sector in the livelihood of households.<sup>36</sup> This scenario, however, has the disadvantage of altering the incentives for hard work and productivity; values that private sector investors strongly encourage.<sup>37</sup>

In terms of mobilizing new partnerships, the evaluation reveals that UNDP has mobilized more international partners (or donors) to the support of the existing FFER partnership. These new partners include The Trust Fund and INL. This demonstrates the expansion of the partnership, besides revealing the new funding opportunities for economic reform plans. Table 7 presents the new partnership in support of the economic reform.

Table 7: New partnerships for Economic Reform, 2021-2023

Donor	Contribution (US\$)
INL	38,230
Trust Funds (TF)	405,404
<b>Total</b>	<b>443,634</b>

### 6.2.8. Project’s ability to address protection concerns of vulnerable populations

Based on desk review, there was no deliberate Strategy focused on protection of vulnerable groups in this project, although parts of Strategy Number 3 in the FFER Project Document (2016-2019) states that ‘While responding to specific needs through tailor-made interventions.....experts deployed to take into consideration importance of gender and the needs of vulnerable groups.’<sup>38</sup> As described earlier in sub-section 6.2.3, vulnerable groups (e.g. women) have been targeted for participation in the project implementation. For example, out of the 20 CSO staff trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women; similarly, out of the 25 participants who took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) online survey data collection tool, 22 (80%) were women.

<sup>33</sup> UNDP’s Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document 2016-2019. p.6.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>35</sup> Iraq Employment rate: <https://tradingeconomics.com/iraq/employment-rate>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Key informants

<sup>37</sup> The Unfulfilled Promise of Oil and Growth. The Growth-Employment Nexus – World Bank Document. <https://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

<sup>38</sup> UNDP’s Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal & FFER-KRG). Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.4



### 6.2.9. *Project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance*

In terms of **Project's ability to mobilize additional financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance**, at least up to 2023, the economic reform plan is on track in terms of access to new funding for its implementation. Regarding mobilization of financial resources for project related actions, table 8 presents results of the efforts of UNDP to support the economic reform plans in Iraq.

Table 8: *Contributions toward the Funding Facility for Economic Reform, 2016-2023*

Donor	Contribution	Value (US\$): 2016-2020	Value (US\$): 2021-2023
UNDP	Project funds	569,823	826,667
USAID	Project funds	5,600,000	5,600,000
The Netherlands	Project funds	-	366,343
INL	Project funds	-	38,230
Trust Funds (TF)	Project funds	-	405,404
Government of Iraq	In-kind	Staff time, Office space	Staff time, Office space
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,169,823</b>	<b>7,435,644</b>
<b>Required</b>	<b>Project funds</b>		<b>14,669,265</b>
	<b>Unfunded</b>		<b>7,233,621</b>

Analysis of the information in the table shows that besides the main donors USAID, UNDP, and the Netherlands, that funded the FFER from 2016 to the time of this Mid-term Evaluation, UNDP has also made great efforts in mobilizing new donors to support its existing partnership with GoI. These new donors include; The Trust Fund and INL. This demonstrates the co-funding dimension of the partnership, besides revealing the financial sustainability.

## 6.3. Efficiency

The efficiency assessed the extent to which the project technical assistance delivers, or likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. In particular, the evaluation assessed the project management, technical support, administrative, and procurement and financial management procedures; efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project implementation; timeliness of the project implementation of planned activities; visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project; and the extent to which the project is keeping track of progress on expected results.

### 6.3.1. *Project management, technical support, administrative, and procurement and financial management procedures*

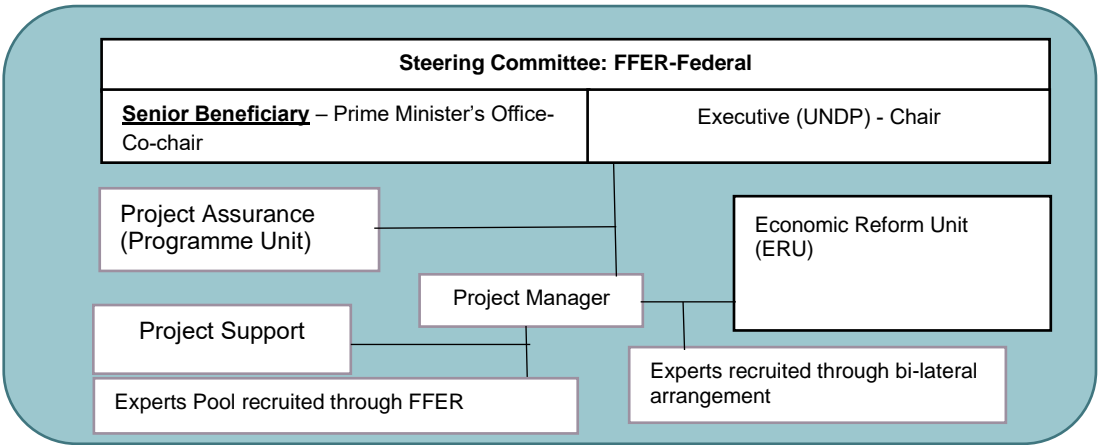
In terms of **project management**, information from interviews could not lead to any conclusion that the project was staffed appropriately to run the project adequately. But the achievement of 5 out of 7 output indicators tend to support that the project was staffed appropriately given its mode of implementation – coordinating technical assistances to government ministries and sectors. The key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are the supportive government structures and strong leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Planning – which are pushing project delivery. Within the UNDP Project Management Unit, the key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are committed technical staff, who provide proactive, consistent and systematic technical support and influence positively the inclusiveness of project stakeholders, subsequently the performance.

The initial management of the project was designed to be based on a Steering Committee (SC) approach, with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as co-chair and senior beneficiary, and UNDP as chair, with participation of Project Managers from both Iraq Federal and KRG. Desk review reveal that the SC functions are; provide strategic direction, determine priority reform initiatives, determine and decide the main areas and means of



support, ensure coordination and synergy with key GoI entities and international actors, and carry out regular reviews of the overall implementation of activities and progress towards expected results. The organization of the project management as stated in the initial Project Document is presented in Chart 1.

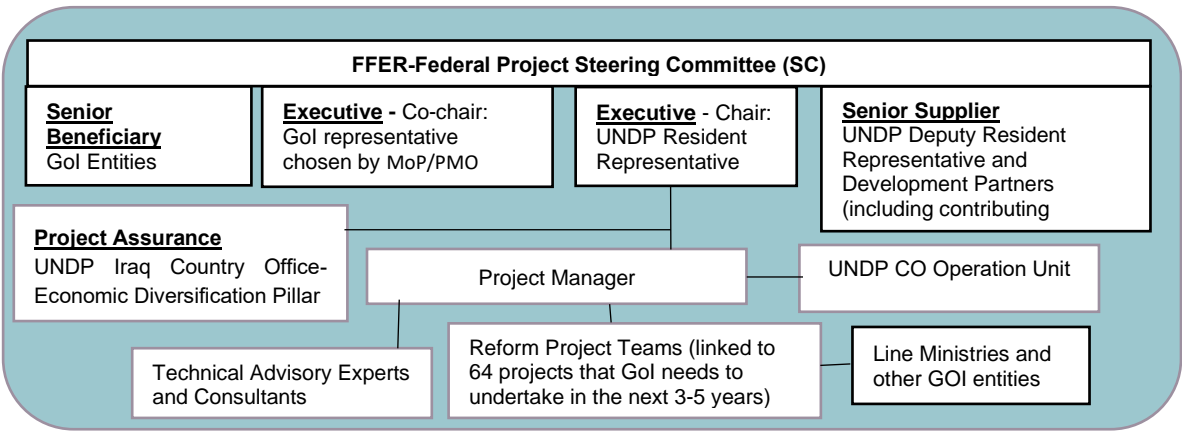
Chart 1: Initial project organization structure



According to key informants, the SC was scheduled to meet bi-annually, but this has not been happening regularly. The SC was inactive during the regular project implementation period (2018-2020), although the project monitoring and steering of the project was periodically performed by the UNDP senior management and the project manager in FFER-Federal.

One of the functions of the SC - ensure coordination and synergy with key GoI entities structure, requires that representatives (policy makers) from government entities targeted by the economic reform, are part of the project management structure. This was not the case in the initial structure. As presented in Chart 1, the senior beneficiary of the economic reform intervention is the Prime Minister’s Office, and not the key GoI entities targeted by the economic reform implementation. Based on lessons learnt, the SC has been restructured to be inclusive with better targeting. The revised project management structure which has been included in the revised Project Document (2020-2023) is presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2: Revised project management structure



Further, key informant interviews reveal that the Economic Reform Unit (ERU), which was the key structure of the overall FFER project, expected to serve as a reform platform, has had challenges running as there was staff turnover in the Unit. Key informants reveal that about 4 out of the 10 staff in the Unit had left, rendering the Unit below the initial planned capacity to run it. In addressing the ERU staff challenge, the ERU was disbanded and officially replaced by the Reform Management Cell (RMC), with a new Executive Director appointed in June 2021.

In **managing risks**, the project developed a risk log to monitor technical, social, and political risks during project implementation. The risk log describes the adverse situation, documents the date on which it was identified, categorizes the risks, scores its impact and probability, develops a management response, and assigns responsibility to update the project on the status of the risk. New risks were identified as project implementation went on. For example, when COVID-19 pandemic struck the whole world, local gathering and international travel were restricted. Instead of stopping the entire project operations, the project management addressed this risk by working on those activities that could be done remotely or at home; and for international consultants, the project started online coordination between the consultants and government sectors to which the technical assistance was being provided.

In regards to **technical support** for economic reform, desk review reveals that the project supported completion of 5 of 10 technical assistance fully (or 50%) since 2016.<sup>39</sup> These covered areas of; (a) Technical support to the White Paper and ease of doing business in Iraq; (b) Technical support to Reform Management Cell (RMC) in Iraq on economic and public sector reforms; (c) Feasibility study on Credit Guarantee System (CGS) to increase micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) access to finance; (d) Mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) survey in Iraq governorates of Baghdad, Basra, and Nineveh; and (e) Training of staff of Central Statistical Organization (CSO) in the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool.

In regard to **administrative procedures**, desk review and key informants reveal that documents like laws, regulations and other materials are usually produced in Arabic. To make these materials available and translated for international use requires time. Additionally, all documents prepared by consultants require to be translated from English to Arabic before submitting to GoI for decision-making. All these are administrative challenges that increase cost and delay their use.

Regarding **procurement procedures**, the project follows UNDP procurement procedures, but with involvement of GoI and the donor (USAID). The project management structure is such that UNDP, GoI and the Donor (USAID) all review major procurements processes to do with procurement of technical assistance. For example, to procure technical assistance, UNDP drafts a Terms of Reference (ToR), which is reviewed by the concerned ministry or sector. The target ministry submits its comments to UNDP to incorporate. The revised ToR is then shared with the donor (USAID) for review and approval or feedback comments. At every one of these steps, it takes a week or more to get feedback; the timeliness of any actions depended on the availability of all the project focal points at that time. While key informants from the Government side expressed some delays with this procurement process, they also expressed that the tripartite arrangement ensure transparency and accountability, builds trust and promotes knowledge transfer during the review, and ultimately leads to recruitment of suitably qualified experts. Key informants and desk review also reveal that the project did not encounter significant problems related to the quality of products produced by the international or national experts recruited through the tripartite procurement review and approval process.

In regard to **financial management**, the project follows UNDP financial management procedures. All financial data reported in the progress reports are provisional until certified by UNDP Bureau of Management/Office of Finance and Administration at UNDP headquarters in New York, USA. From the UNDP headquarters (HQ), an

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<sup>39</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp .5, 29.

annual certified financial statement as of end of the year (31 December) is posted by UNDP HQ no later than 30 June of the following year and shared with the donor. The utilization of funds covers total funds expended and those committed, together termed "*Funds utilized.*" The advantage of this financial management process is that it ensures UNDP has an overall picture of the status of its fund mobilization and utilization, globally, by region, by country and by thematic area.

### 6.3.2. *Efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project implementation*

In terms of **efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project implementation**, interviews reveal that the technical assistance on the economic reform, material and financial resources invested in the project (human resources, informational materials, sector-specific capacity strengthening interventions) are adequately and mostly sufficient for reaching the initially planned results. So far as it is, resources have been used as planned; total expenditures have remained within budget. Internal controls are strong, as budget use is based on a tripartite review and approval arrangement – involving UNDP- the implementing partner, GoI as local partner, and the donor (USAID). With the history of strong financial policies of UNDP and USAID, the project enjoyed good use of funds – overall expenditure has remained within budget. The trend in budget utilization during 2017-2021 is illustrated in table 9.

Table 9: *Budget utilization during 2017-2021*

Budget line	Project Year					GRAND TOTAL
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Output 1	269,100.75	(62,573.74)	(5,566,596.47)	105,936.47	4,388,570.08	(865,562.91)
Output 2	284,689.64	468,571.89	387,097.89	284,202.09	717,261.35	2,141,822.86
Project Management	78,372.02	61,795.18	56,410.38	(588,806.16)	219,933.89	(172,294.69)
Total	632,162.41	467,793.33	(5,123,088.20)	(198,667.60)	5,325,765.32	1,103,965.26

As the financial analysis in table 8 reveals, resources have been used for the budget outputs as planned without significant deviations throughout the project period 2017-2021. As stated above, the tripartite process for technical and financial review and approval (involving UNDP, Government, and USAID) ensured proper verification and utilization of and accountability for funds. While the use of the UNDP financial management procedures ensured adequate internal controls.

### 6.3.3. *Timeliness of delivery of project funds and implementation of planned activities*

In terms of the **timeliness of delivery of project funds and implementation of planned activities**, key informant interviews reveal that the project suffered significant delays at the initial phase, largely due to uncertain political and security environment created by the referendum in 2017 and the elections in 2018; but mostly managed to catch up in the subsequent years of 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Although, another political event - the Federal Election that took place on 10 October 2021 also took away attention of policymakers in most ministries and sectors – the decision-making centers, from the economic reform plans. These events delayed project implementation as no meaningful progress could be made with planning for and approval of work plans. These interruptions affected implementation of planned activities and funds utilization, and consequently contributed to the project being non-cost-extended between 2019 and 2020, and cost-extended to 31 December 2023.

### 6.3.4. *Visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project*

In terms of **visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project**, desk review reveals that in the project's final year in 2019, the Project Board/Steering Committee held an end-of-project review to capture

lessons learned and discussed opportunities for the scaling up and to socialize the project results and lessons learnt with relevant audiences.<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, the project disseminated results of the mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) surveys to stakeholders.<sup>41</sup> The effective use of the communications campaign designed by the project's consultants and supported by the UNDP Communications team, enabled reaching 100 attendees and several others virtually with the results of the MSME survey, and ultimately, projected the visibility of the project to the governorates that participated in the survey. To reach a wider national audience, the project broadcast success stories, influencers' videos and other promotional videos related to MSMEs. To increase visibility to regional and global audiences, the survey reports have been published in the UNDP website in both Arabic and English.

### **6.3.5. Keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes**

In terms of **keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes**, it is worth noting that the project scores well in terms of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), although it does not have an M&E Officer in its management structure (**refer to Charts 1 & 2 under 6.3.1**). It is mostly due to the robust M&E system of the UNDP as an organization. Thus, the following actions represent how the project keeps track of progress on expected results and allows for continuous learning:

- Quarterly progress reports, shared and presented to UNDP senior management, USAID Project Focal Point, targeted Government sectors, and other donors.
- Dissemination of various reform studies, surveys and assessments reports.
- Bi-lateral (zoom) conversations with offices including supervisors, project staff, and deployed technical experts – both international and national experts; and
- Lessons learnt and reflection sessions with relevant audiences.

However, the project Results Framework contain indicator baseline and target data which are not disaggregated by gender (men and women) and other vulnerable groups (e.g. disability). Desk review of progress reports reveal that disaggregated data on gender and human rights, and location did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system. This presented significant limitation when assessing the project's effectiveness in achieving its promise of contributing to human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Regarding reporting, progress reports reviewed are well structured in terms of reporting on what has been done, and connected with the two outputs of the project.

## **6.4. Sustainability**

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the benefits of the project's technical assistance continue or will likely continue. It included an examination of the suitability of strategies developed and implemented for sustainability; financial, social, political, or other risks affecting sustainability of the economic reforms plans; socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, and security; contribution of UNDP's actions to the sustainability of project outputs; and documentation of lessons learned and sharing with appropriate parties.

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<sup>40</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.12.

<sup>41</sup> UNDP FFER progress report, 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021.

#### 6.4.1. *Suitability of strategies developed and implemented for sustainability*

In terms of **suitability of strategies developed and implemented for sustainability**, it is mostly premature to assess their suitability. However, some strategies, like the developed staff capacity for the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) online survey data collection tool at the CSO of the Ministry of Planning will likely remain and the expertise can be drawn upon by other GoI sectors that may need to conduct surveys or censuses.

#### 6.4.2. *Financial, social and political risks affecting sustainability of the economic reforms plans and project's contribution to the country programme*

The evaluation examined the **financial, social and political risks affecting sustainability of the economic reforms plans**. In terms of **financial risks**, the outlook is mix. Key informants reveal that the current status of the economic reform can only progress if further external financial assistance is continued. However, desk review reveals that the financial sustainability risk is low at least up to 2024. The economic reform is UNDP's strategic priority for Iraq. Support to economic reform in Iraq is in the **UNDP CPD for Iraq (2020-2024) Outcome 2: Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive gender sensitive and diversified economic growth with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth and vulnerable populations**.<sup>42</sup> This demonstrates the ability of the partnership to foresee financial risks to the economic reform plans and incorporate strategies to address it at a strategic level.

In regards to the **political risks**, the project suffered significant delays in most phases of implementation; uncertain political and security environment brought about by the elections in 2018, and another political event - the Federal Election that took place in October 2021 also took away attention of most ministries and sectors away from the economic reform plans. At the time of the Midterm Evaluation, the national budget had not yet been presented to the Council of Representatives, as a new government had not yet been formed<sup>43</sup>. These events present political risks as no meaningful progress on the economic reform plans can be made without the involvement of political leadership.

#### 6.4.3. *Socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, and security*

In regards to **socio-economic sustainability**, desk review and key informant interviews reveal that the GoI is still faced with socio-economic crisis. As described earlier in subsection **6.2.6**, there is some hesitation of the public moving towards public private partnership (PPP) because the retirement pension and social security policies make the public sector employment more attractive than the private sector. According to key informants, this reinforces the public's reliance on the government for most of the services, including employment; thus weakening the potential of the project for economic reform in this area.

In regards to **environmental sustainability**, this was not specifically targeted by the project, as the technical assistance, the model for implementing the economic reform, was designed as a non-environmental intervention. However, in the revised Project Document (2021-2023), climate change has been included, and capacity building of the target partners in this area is planned.

In terms of **institutional framework**, the project is focused on providing technical assistance to institutions of government, involving deploying international and national experts. Evaluation findings reveal that institutional and individual capacity sustainability aspects are promising in terms of knowledge acquired and skills developed around large studies, surveys, and assessments, although it is premature to say all these have been institutionalized. However, the government institutions involved acquired valuable experience in analysis of issues that helps to shape their further analysis of economic reform plans.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.2.

<sup>43</sup> Key informant

<sup>44</sup> Key informant

Regarding **governance and security**, the project will only lead to the economic reform if good governance and security prevails.

#### 6.4.4. *Contribution of UNDP's actions to the sustainability of project outputs*

According to key informants, UNDP has been and remains a trusted partner of the GoI. In particular, it has supported capacity development in Iraq, and mobilized external resources for this cause. In the revised FFER Project Document (2020-2023), UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID and The Netherlands) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq. It has also mobilized new donors to support the economic reform plans. The new donors reveal the contribution of UNDP's actions to the sustainability of project outputs.

#### 6.4.5. *Documentation of lessons learned and sharing with appropriate parties*

Desk review reveals that documentation of lessons learned and sharing with appropriate parties was not conducted in the early years of the project in 2017 and 2018, but picked up from 2019 to 2021, when the project implementation gained momentum. Table 10 illustrates the status of the lessons learnt documented, shared, and actions taken by stakeholders on receiving the lessons learnt.

Table 10: *Status of lessons learnt documented*

Period of Progress Report	Lessons learnt documented	Channel through which it was shared	Partners shared with	Action taken
1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021	Late budget preparation by GoI delays approvals and start of project implementation in Federal Iraq.	Online	UNDP & GoI	UNDP engaged with senior GoI officials, and this led to GoI giving priority to finalise the budget in time. The result of this is that the general budget for subsequent periods were prepared, approved and launched for use in time.
1 July – 30 September 2021	The economic reform technical assistance initially adopted the approach to focus on Reformed Management Cell (RMC) basket and this carried risk as the RMC was unprepared to manage the economic reforms tasked by the GoI.	Online	UNDP, Donor (USAID) & GoI	In the new support to GoI, the project focuses on line ministries and carries less risk as it diversifies the counterparts and their economic reform projects.
1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021	The economic reform technical assistance initially adopted the approach to focus on Reformed Management Cell (RMC) basket and this carried risk as the RMC was unprepared to manage the economic reforms tasked by the GoI.	Online	UNDP, Donor (USAID) & GoI	In the new support to GoI, the project focuses on line ministries and carries less risk as it diversifies the counterparts and their economic reform projects.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This section of the report summarizes key conclusions based on the analysis of data collected and from the findings of the project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

From the analysis, overall, the project performance is mostly positive, based on the evidence collected during desk review, and from feedback shared by key informants and focus group participants engaged in the project implementation.

The FFER project is a national and regional level initiative between the GoI and UNDP. It is relevant and reflects the policy priorities of the GoI and UNDP, and is aligned to the UNDP Country Programme for Iraq, the SDG/Agenda 2030, and to the key priority of the GoI White Paper - Economic Reform. The HRBA and the policy priority of the SDG – ‘Leave No One Behind’, are modest in the project design.

The evaluation concludes that the project is to a large extent consistent in terms of the results-based management approach, with a set of indicators (though not formulated using the RBM approach), baselines, targets, and milestones, stated in the Results Framework. Both project outputs and the objectives are linked to the overall UNDP Country Programme Outcomes, without significant gaps. All the output indicators measure quantitative results. Disaggregated data on cross-cutting issues of gender, women empowerment, and protection of vulnerable populations are not incorporated in the project Results Framework but are reflected in some progress reports.

Four (4) project indicator targets were fully achieved, with two (2) partial achievements. The effectiveness and efficiency are key strengths of the project judging from the fulfilment of 5 out of 7 of its output targets. The project fully achieved its targets in terms of putting in place a functioning Economic Reform Unit (ERU) through establishing a systematic coordination mechanism within the ERU to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of the GoI and developing a communications strategy and advocacy plan. But achieved partially in deploying both international and national technical experts.

It established new partnerships, with opportunities for new funding for the extended period of the project to 31 December 2023. However, the project fell short of bringing on board the private sector partners onto the economic reform platform through public-private-partnership arrangement.

Analyzing the achievements of project results versus use of financial resources, the project achieved most of its output indicators targets with much less resources than anticipated. Overall, the distribution of costs per output was adequate and resources were used as planned.

The sustainability prospects of the results achieved represents a mixed picture. In terms of political and security sustainability, the prospects are promising. In terms of sustainability of project strategies used, the prospects are promising, especially in sectors where the systems developed are running.

In terms of financial sustainability, it is premature to judge.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1. General recommendations

No.	Recommendations
1	Follow on the achievements made so far and scale up the technical assistance, keeping both international and national deployments, but focusing more on national deployments to ensure continuity of the technical assistance.
2	Improve the project design with clarity on the theory of change and women's engagement in the economic reform plans, and disaggregation of data.
3	Systematize the readiness assessment of the GoI Entities capacities and reinforce it using good practices in capacity development.

### 8.2. Detailed recommendations

The detailed recommendations are presented and are meant to enhance the relevance and performance, stimulate learning and consolidate the sustainability prospects of the project achievements.

**Recommendation No.1:** *Follow on the achievements made so far and strengthen the technical assistance, keeping both international and national deployments, but focusing more on national deployments to ensure continuity of the technical assistance.*

It is recommended to keep both international and national deployments, and UNDP should maintain and further develop its strategic partnership with GoI, at the same time set up partnerships with other UN entities (e.g., UN WOMEN for women's economic empowerment). This is in line with the UN system which requires UN entities to undertake thematic activities and to report on their strategies. For UNDP, this represents an opportunity to share the project achievements and lessons learnt and replicate economic reform experiences to other UN entities.

**Recommendation No.2:** *Improve the project design with clarity on the theory of change and women's engagement in the economic reform plans, and disaggregation of data.*

It is recommended to eliminate the gaps described under **5.1.3** in the **relevance** section of the report regarding alignment of outputs to objectives in the results chain, formulation of indicators, and disaggregation of baseline and target data. Currently, the project design has quantitative indicators. Adding qualitative indicators would enhance the ability to measure project "impact" and "sustainability" that largely rely on satisfaction and changes in social and economic conditions. However, qualitative indicators are useful only when there are chances that the relevant data can be collected cheaply and timely. Thus, while formulating sets of indicators, it is important to ask the question: To what extent will we be able to collect the necessary data?

The evaluation also recommends increasing gender sensitiveness of the project. It is recommended to set gender sensitive baselines and targets, for instance for international and national deployments; reflect the gender dimension in the employment and management of the project; gender balance in training activities; and present gender disaggregated data in quarterly and annual reporting, where necessary.

Similarly, the evaluation recommends that in the revised Project Document (2020-2023), the project Results Framework disaggregates indicator baseline and target data by gender (men and women) and location (Iraq-Federal and KRG), to improve future reporting.



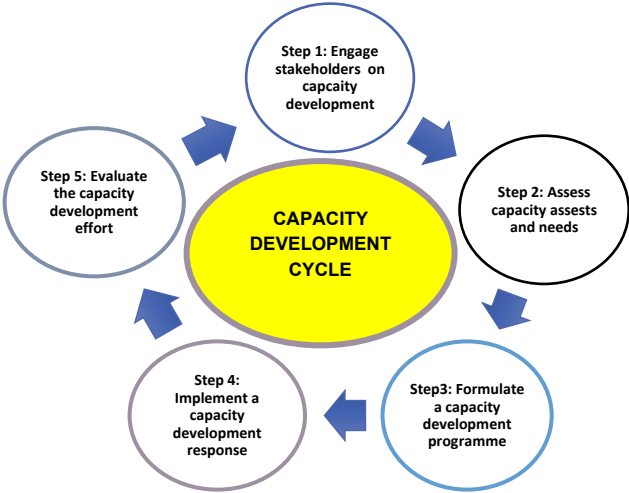
It is recommended to develop a Theory of Change (ToC). In addition to the explanations provided in the project document, a ToC is a hypothesis of how the project designers think change occurs. The ToC describes and illustrates how and why a desired change is expected to happen in the individual/institution/country context. Therefore, it is advisable to develop an appropriate ToC and to introduce change-related questions in the monitoring plans. Subsequently, it is necessary to monitor to what extent the initial assumptions are still valid and to what extent the changes are generated by the project as predicted in the ToC. While analyzing the changes generated, it is also advisable to analyze changes related to individuals and institution's resistance to change, which can be integrated in the capacity development initiatives of the project.

It is also recommended to capture and highlight changes due to the project from the recordings of voices of senior and final beneficiaries. In doing this, it is recommended to shift from action language to change language.

**Recommendation No.3:** *Systematize the readiness assessment of the GoI Entities capacities and reinforce it using good practices in capacity development.*

The capacity development should follow a consistent and step-by-step approach, such as: a) capacity needs assessment, b) capacity development plan, c) adequate human and financial resources allocations, d) step-by step implementation and, e) assessment of the capacity development efforts. The UNDP's *Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle*<sup>45</sup> in Figure 5 that illustrates the good practice approach in capacity development might be useful.

Figure 5: *UNDP's Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle*



The Project Document uses two terms “*capacity building*” and “*capacity development*” in its design, as similar, but are not. “*Capacity building*” means building the institutions from scratch, because it assumes that there are not any capacities, i.e. the baseline is “0”; while “*capacity development*” recognizes that there are some capacities already, i.e. the baseline is not “0” and it is about development of the existing capacities. There is need for consistency in the use of the terms.

<sup>45</sup> UNDP (2009). Capacity Development Primer. The Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle. UNDP Bureau of Development Policy. New York, USA. p.21.

## 9. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### 9.1. Lesson learned

Irrespective of how the project performed, there is always something to learn that provides room for improvement, be it in design or implementation that affect project performance and outcome.

Based on the review of project and programme documents and literature, interviews with key informants, focus group discussions, and analysis of performance-related information, the evaluation highlights the following lessons that may be useful to UNDP, GoI, and other stakeholders:

- a) Each GoI entity in the economic reform has different capacity development needs. So, while assessing readiness of the entities, the project did not deploy “*one size fits all*” approach. In recognition that individual sector capacity development and technical assistance are more efficient and effective than the group actions that were initially targeted through the Prime Minister’s Office as a Senior Beneficiary of the project. Group actions can apply in general topics like ‘team building’ for instance. This also implies that in future similar actions, more sector specific assistance is needed, but will increase the burden on the project management team to deploy more experts for technical assistance. It is, therefore, important to take this into consideration at both the design and implementation phases of the project.

### 9.2. Good practice

- a) By combining international with national experts to provide technical assistance, the project is contributing to a pool of national experts who can be contracted on short notice to not only work on economic reform, but also in future projects. The project team also remarked tangible benefits in terms of learning and inclusion.

## Annexes

### Annex 1. Terms of Reference for Midterm Evaluation Consultant

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<b>Project:</b>	Funding Facility for Economic Reform (Federal and KRG)
<b>Post Level:</b>	International Individual Consultant
<b>Duty Station:</b>	Iraq (Baghdad and Erbil)
<b>Period of assignment/services:</b>	30 Working days over 3 months period

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#### 1. **Background & Context:**

The Government of Iraq (GOI) and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have announced National Development Strategy and Economic Reform Roadmap respectively which are outlining long-term priorities for reconstruction and reform. The strategy and the Reform Roadmap are offering a vision of economic revival driven by private sector development and increase revenue and reduce government spending. Both GOI and KRG have established required mechanism to implement the strategy and reform roadmap at the high level.

In response to this, UNDP in partnership with GOI and KRG has introduced Funding Facility for Economic Reform at the Federal and regional levels. The projects are intended to support both Iraqi and KRG Governments in ensuring the implementation of economic reform. The Projects are to be positioned as financing instrument that will be used to channel high-caliber international expertise and support into top priority reform initiatives drawn from the governments adopted reform plan. The Facility will help to mobilize expertise for initiatives aimed at transforming and diversifying the country's economy, restructuring, and strengthening public administration and public financial management, and improving the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

FFERs in coordination with the governments has supported the implementation of number of activities since its establishment. The projects have mobilized number of international consultants to provide necessary technical assistance to Governments for the implementation of the strategy and the Economic reform roadmap.

The objective of this assignment is to conduct an evaluation on both FFERs projects as part of UNDP's commitment to improve results-based management. The evaluation findings and recommendations are expected to inform and improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition, and the quality of next phase of technical support design and implementation.

Overall, FFERs contributes to:

UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021	<b>Output 2.1.1:</b> Low emission and climate resilient objectives addressed in national, sub-national and sectoral development plans and policies to promote economic diversification and green growth
CPD Output (s) 2016-2020:	<b>Output 2.1.</b> Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<b>Goal 8 Target 8.3.</b> Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

#### 2. **Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives**

##### **Evaluation purpose:**

UNDP proposes to conduct an evaluation as part of its commitment to improved results-based management. As the project is entering the sixth year of implementation, the evaluation findings and recommendations are expected to inform and improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition and the quality of next phase of stabilization support design and implementation.

##### **Scope of evaluation:**

This evaluation will focus on two projects titled:

- a. Funding Facility for Economic Reform – Federal (FFER-Federal);

#### b. Funding Facility for Economic Reform – KRG (FFER-KRG)

Both projects are falling under Outcome 2 of CPD (2020-2024) and fall under output 2.1 - Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation.

Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) introduced in 2016 relies on two (2) primary sets of activities organized under two outputs to support the government with the institutionalization of the Economic Reform and the implementation of the economic reform priorities.

**Output 1.** The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized.

**Activities:**

- Support the establishment of the Task Forces, to be involving relevant department line ministers, private sector, civil society, and international development partners.
- Provide support and guidance to Task Forces to develop action plan with specific indicators to measure the progress at the task force level.
- Support the design of the consultation methodology and process for the Task Forces and Focus Groups.
- Support the development of communication strategy and advocacy plan targeting external and internal audiences, government, and non-government entities to build strategic partnerships that assist in the reform implementation.

**Output 2.** The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance.

**Activities:**

- Deploy technical experts within the Task Force or related line ministries to carry out in-depth analytical work for the sub-areas identified in the Policy matrix.
- Identify practical solutions to the identified next step in the Policy matrix and action plan for implementation including progress indicators and milestones.
- Provide support and guidance to Task Forces and relevant line ministries to implement reform actions.

#### **Evaluation objectives:**

The specific objective of this Project evaluation is to:

- a. Assess the relevance of the project's results;
- b. Assess the efficiency of project implementation, including the operations support;
- c. Assess the effectiveness of the project and its Windows in reaching the stated objectives;
- d. Assess the appropriateness of the project design and management arrangements for achieving the stated objectives;
- e. Assess the sustainability of the project results;
- f. Take stock of the overall project progress, achieved against the project's expected results, and contribution towards Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document;
- g. Outline lessons learned and good practices that can be used in future identification, design, regular review, implementation and monitoring of FFERs interventions.
- h. Provide constructive and practical recommendations on factors that can contribute to project sustainability and develop the FFER transition and exit strategy.
- i. Appraise project achievements against its expected outputs and recommend ways to improve future partnerships with project's implementing partners/ target groups.

### **3. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions**

The Project Evaluation will generate evidence of progress and challenges, helping to ensure accountability for the implementation of the project, as well as identifying and sharing knowledge and good practices through following standard Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria<sup>46</sup>.

**Relevance:** the extent to which the project strategy, proposed activities and expected outputs and outcomes are justified and remain relevant to beneficiaries' assessed needs, country's policies, and donor's priorities. More specifically, the relevance of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional and other changes in the country?
- To what extent was the project in line with the development and reform priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.html>

- To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?

**Efficiency:** the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs. More specifically, the efficiency of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

- How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?
- To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?
- How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?

**Effectiveness:** the extent to which the projects expected outputs and outcomes are being achieved or are expected to be achieved. Factors contributing to or detracting from the achievement of the project desired results and objectives should also be included in the assessment. More specifically, the effectiveness of the project should be assessed through the following guiding questions:

- To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?
- To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?
- What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?
- The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?
- To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or regional levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?
- To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation and consultation among development partners (including UN agencies, and donors to this project)? How did the project steering committee contribute to a regular gathering of development partners to discuss development priorities?
- Is the project actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?
- To what extent do the project's activities/management systems mitigate, and address protection concerns of vulnerable populations (returnees, communities that did not leave ISIL controlled areas, minority communities, etc.) in the targeted areas?
- What is the level of quality of the project outputs and/or the project activities?
- To what extent the funding facility has been able to mobilize the financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance?

**Impact:** analyzing the positive and negative changes produced by the Project, directly or indirectly, intended, or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the government reform agenda and other development indicators such as gender equality and social /environmental issues. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of social and economic conditions.

**Sustainability:** analyzing whether benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

- Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented.
- Are there any financial, social, political, or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the activity results likely to be sustained in the long-term after a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of FFERs? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
- What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of end 2021?

- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?
- To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

#### **4. Methodology:**

The Consultant will propose a project evaluation methodology and agree on a detailed plan for the assignment as part of the application process. The methodology will be further updated after the selection process is completed, and the Inception Report is developed. However, in general, the Consultant should adopt an integrated approach involving a combination of data collection and analysis tools to capture both the quantitative and qualitative results of FFERs and generate evidence to substantiate all findings. Given the large scale and coverage of the projects, it is important that the Consultant designs a methodology that could collect data that is representative of the project as a whole (or of each component), and which would be analyzed in a consistent manner within the given timeframe.

- The methodology should be robust enough to ensure high quality, triangulation of data sources, and verifiability of information. It is expected that the evaluation methodology can include, but would not be limited to the following elements:
- Desk review of project documents, progress reports, monitoring reports, lessons learned reviews, and other relevant documents.
- In-depth interviews with key informants such as government officials, and members of local, national, coordination bodies; and questionnaires
- Focus group discussions with the targeted beneficiaries; and Project/UNDP staff
- Interviews with the project team, and UNDP's Senior Management.
- Consultations with donors/ international partners and as relevant national non-governmental organizations that were directly engaged in project implementation.
- Survey with sample and sampling frame—if a sample is used. This could include the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria; the process for selecting the sample (e.g., random, purposive); if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of the sample for generalizing results.

All field-related work and relevant logistical arrangements should be made by the Consultant and are under his/her responsibility. Assistance will be provided by the UNDP FFERs Team in identifying key stakeholders and in facilitating the schedule of interviews, focus groups and site visits, when and where required.

Findings from the above assessment tools will be triangulated to appraise and conclude findings. Overall, the evaluation will be given the focus of the projects target coverage. The consultant will be assisted by the UNDP FFERs Project Manager.

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world and the impact on international travels is still continues. Therefore, if it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the evaluation then the evaluation team should develop a methodology that takes this into account and conduct of the evaluation virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the Inception report and agreed with the Evaluation Manager.

If all or part of the evaluation is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/ computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. These limitations must be reflected in the evaluation report.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (Skype, zoom etc.). International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff, consultants, and stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the evaluation schedule. Equally, qualified, and independent national consultants can be hired to undertake the evaluation and interviews in country as long as it is safe to do so.

#### **5. Key deliverables:**

The Consultant will produce the following:

- a) **Two Inception Reports (and presentation)- one per each FFER projects**: based on the terms of reference (TOR) and initial debriefing with the UNDP team, as well as the desk review outcomes, the Consultant is expected to develop an inception report. This report should detail out the consultant's understanding of what is being evaluated and why, the evaluation methodology that describes data **collection** methods and sampling plan, together with the rationale for their selection and limitations. The report should also include an evaluation matrix identifying the key evaluation questions and how they will be answered by the selected methods. Annexed work plan should include detailed schedule and resource requirements tied to evaluation activities and milestone deliverables.
- b) **2 Debriefings after completion of the field work – one per each project**
- c) **2 Draft Evaluation Reports** to be submitted to UNDP and presentation to the UNDP Team on the draft report outlining the key following aspects: (i) overall evaluation findings of FFER, and (ii) overall evaluation findings and in-depth analysis relating to each outputs and the sets of activities, 1) The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized and 2) The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance. Feedback received from the presentation of this draft Evaluation Report should be considered when preparing the final report. The evaluator should produce an audit trail indicating whether and how each comment received was addressed in revisions to the final Report.
- d) **2 Final Evaluation Reports – one per each project** (guided by the minimum requirements for a UNDP Evaluation Report /UNDP Outline of the evaluation report format; see annex 4a) should be submitted to UNDP
- e) **2 Brief summary reports** (within 5 pages) linking the final evaluation findings to the country programme outcome 2 focusing on Growing the economy for all, upon review of the relevant documents.

It should be noted that the above list of deliverables, together with the implementation time-frame (Section 8) might be subject to review and revision by UNDP in discussion with the Consultant in the event of unexpected changes to the context/ working environment in Iraq during the consultancy period.

## 6. Evaluation ethics:

Evaluations in the UN are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The Consultant Firm is required to read the guidelines and ensure a strict adherence to it, including establishing protocols to safeguard confidentiality of information obtained during the evaluation. The Consultant upon signing the contract will also sign this guideline which may be made available as an attachment to the evaluation report. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses.

## 7. Management and implementation arrangements:

The Project Evaluation is commissioned by UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic reform (FFER). The main UNDP Focal Point will be the FFER Project management team. FFER team will serve as the focal points for providing both substantive and logistical support to the evaluation team. Assistance will be provided by the FFERs Team to make any refinements to the work plan of the selected Consultant (i.e. key interview partners; organize meetings; and conduct field visits (if necessary and if the security situation permits).

This TOR shall be the basis upon which compliance with assignment requirements and overall quality of services provided by the Consultant will be assessed by UNDP.

As part of the assignment:

- UNDP will provide office space with access to the internet and printer when in-country in Erbil or Baghdad, Iraq.
- UNDP will provide the following list of additional documents to the selected Consultant
  - Project Documents
  - Donor Reports
  - Relevant Financial Information
  - Contact Details of Stakeholders and Partners
  - Project Beneficiary Details
  - Risk Analyses and Lessons Learned Logs
  - Other relevant documents
- The Consultant is expected to
  - Have/bring their laptops, and other relevant software/equipment.
  - Use their own mobile and personal email address during the consultancy period, including when in-country.
  - Make their own travel arrangements to fly in-country and transportation arrangements outside work hours.

**8. Travel plan:**

One travel is required for this assignment to Baghdad for 5 days from the consultant's home country to conduct required consultation with government officials and donors. Consultant is also required to travel to Erbil from Baghdad for 5 days to conduct required consultation with KRG officials.

Activity	Quantity
Round trip airfares: Home Country – Baghdad – Home Country (economy class tickets serving the most direct routes), visa expenses and terminals	1 round trip
Baghdad Perdiems /Living allowance (USD 244 will be applicable if IC is accommodated in Rasheed Hotel. In case UNDP arrange accommodation in the UN compound at the cost of office, applicable DSA will be 50% of standard UN DSA rate for Baghdad. DSA will be reimbursed on actual number of days stay in Baghdad)	5 Days
Round trip airfares: Baghdad – Erbil - Baghdad (economy class tickets serving the most direct routes), visa expenses and terminals	1 round trip
Erbil Perdiems /Living allowance (DSA will be reimbursed on actual number of days stay in Erbil)	5 Days

**9. Duty station:**

The expert will be based in Baghdad and in Erbil as per requirements.

**10. Monitoring and progress control:**

The consultant will be submitting progress reports to FFER Project team in form and substance satisfactory to UNDP.



**Indicative work plan—timeframe for evaluation deliverables**

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED NO. OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE
Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed)	1 day	TBC	Home-based & UNDP CO (online)
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing	Via email
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	5 days	Within ten days of contract signing	Home- based
<b><i>Deliverable 1: Comments and approval of inception report</i></b>	-	Within five days of submission of the inception report	UNDP Country Office
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews and focus groups	10 days (5 days in Baghdad and 5 days in Erbil)	Within ten weeks of contract signing	In country (field visits)
<b><i>Deliverable 2: Debriefing to UNDP</i></b>	1 day	TBC	In country
Preparation of two draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (5 pages)	10 days	Within two weeks of the completion of the field mission	Home- based
<b><i>Deliverable 3: Draft evaluation report submission (one for each project)</i></b>	-	TBC	
Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within one week of submission of the draft evaluation report	UNDP Country Office
Final debriefing with UNDP (including Senior Management)	1 day	Within one week of receipt of comments	Home-based & UNDP CO (online)
<b><i>Deliverable 4: Final evaluation report</i></b> ( one for each project) incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office	2 days	Within two weeks of final debriefing	Home-based
<b>Estimated total workdays for the evaluation</b>	<b>30 days</b>		

## 11. Indicative payment schedule and modalities

Payments will be made upon acceptance and approval by UNDP of the planned deliverables, based on the following tentative payment schedule:

Terms of Payment	Percentage (%)
1. First payment will be paid upon submission of inception reports, work plan and methodology	10%
2. Second payment will be paid upon finalize the field visit	25%
3. Third payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of the first draft evaluation report	35%
4. Fourth and final payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of final report	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The payment is deliverable based; i.e. upon satisfactory completion and UNDP's acceptance of the deliverable.</li><li>- Each payment claims must be approved by the UNDP focal point and FFER project manager.</li><li>- UNDP will make the payments within 20 days from receipt of invoice.</li></ul>	

### *\*N.B Travel and accommodation:*

*All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel within country or outside duty station/ repatriation travel. In general, UNDP does not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket.*

*In cases where UNDP arranges and provides travel and/or accommodation due to security and other reasons, it should be noted that these costs will be deducted from the payments to the Consultant Firm.*

*In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon in writing, between UNDP and selected Firms prior to travel and will be reimbursed.*

## 12. Evaluation Specialist required competencies:

Education:

**Master's degree** in sociology, social sciences, rural development, economics, development studies, peace and conflict studies or other field relevant to the assignment.

Experience:

- **At least 7 years** of professional expertise working with International Organizations on socio-economic stabilization, crisis response and recovery, development or social transformation projects in post-conflict environments;
- **At least 7 years** of experience on project design, results-based management (RBM) and participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies and approaches is essential;
- Proven experience in data collection, instrument development and data analysis both qualitative and quantitative is essential;
- Proven experience in conducting evaluation for large, and complex projects would be an added advantage;
  - Experience working in, and knowledge of the Arab region, including Iraq would be an advantage;
  - Experience in working with the UN or other international organizations would be an asset;
  - Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills and proven ability to draft recommendations stemming from key findings is essential;
  - Excellent report writing skills is essential;
  - Experience using ICT equipment and office software packages.

**Corporate Competencies:**

- Knowledge on UNDP programming principles and procedures; the UN evaluation framework, norms and standards; human rights-based approach (HRBA);
- Demonstrates commitment to the UN values and ethical standards;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality, and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly and with impartiality;
- Good communication, presentation and report writing skills including proven ability to write concise, readable and analytical reports and high-quality academic publications in English;
- Ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines;
- Flexible and responsive to changes and demands;
- Experience managing a small research team;

- Client-oriented and open to feedback.

#### **Functional Competencies:**

##### **Knowledge Management and Learning**

- Demonstrates good knowledge of the Iraq Economic issues, challenges, and opportunities.
- Shares knowledge and experience and contributes to overall reform programmes in Iraq.
- Develops deep knowledge in Practice Areas.
- Actively works towards continuing personal learning and development in one or more Practice Areas, acts on learning plan and applies newly acquired skills
- Networks in Government, NGOs and private sector.

#### **PRICE PROPOSAL AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

**Shortlisted candidates (ONLY) will be requested to submit a Financial Proposal. The consultant shall then submit a price proposal when requested by UNDP, in accordance with the below:**

- **Lump sum Fee** – The contractor shall propose an all-inclusive lump sum fee followed by a cost breakdown, which should be inclusive of his professional fee, local communication cost and insurance (inclusive of medical health insurance and evacuation).
- **DSA/Living Allowance** – The Consultant shall be separately paid the Living allowance/DSA as per applicable UNDP rate. Deductions from DSA shall be made as per applicable UNDP policy when accommodation and other facilities are provided by UNDP. An estimated provision in this regard shall be included in the contract. The consultant need not quote for DSA in Financial Proposal.
- **Accommodation in Iraq**– the Consultants are NOT allowed to stay in a place of their choice other than the UNDSS approved places in Iraq. UNDP will provide accommodation to the Consultant for the duration of the stay in Iraq in UNDSS approved places. Deductions in this regard shall be made from DSA payment as per applicable UNDP Policy.
- **Travel & Visa** – The contractor shall propose an estimated lump-sum for two round-trip Airfare tickets, home-Iraq-home travel (economy most direct route) and Iraq visa expenses.
- **The total professional fee** shall be converted into a lump-sum contract and payments under the contract shall be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables under the contract in accordance with the schedule of payment linked with deliverables and at the end of assignment.

UNDP reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

#### **Evaluation Method and Criteria:**

Individual consultant will be evaluated based on the following methodology:

The award of the contract shall be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- Responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

\* Technical Criteria weight 70%

\* Financial Criteria weight 30%

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 70 points (70% of the total technical points) would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

#### **Technical Evaluation (70%)**

##### **Qualification, Experience and Technical Proposal (100 marks):**

- Master's degree in sociology, social sciences, rural development, economics, development studies, peace and conflict studies or other field relevant to the assignment. (20 Points)
- At least 7 years of professional expertise working with International Organizations on socio-economic stabilization, crisis response and recovery, development or social transformation projects in post-conflict environments; (20 Points)
- At least 7 years of experience on project design, results-based management (RBM) and participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies and approaches is essential; (20 Points)
- Proven experience in data collection, instrument development and data analysis both qualitative and quantitative is essential; (20 Points)

- Proven experience in conducting evaluation for large, and complex projects would be an added advantage; (20 Points)

#### **Financial Evaluation (30%):**

The following formula will be used to evaluate financial proposal:

$p = y (\mu/z)$ , where

p = points for the financial proposal being evaluated

y = maximum number of points for the financial proposal

$\mu$  = price of the lowest priced proposal

z = price of the proposal being evaluated

#### **Documents to be included when submitting the proposals:**

Interested international Consultant must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications in one single PDF document:

- Personal CV or P11, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the Candidate and at least three (3) professional references.

**All materials developed will remain the copyright of UNDP Iraq. UNDP Iraq will be free to adapt and modify them in the future.**

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Planning and organizing: Identifies priority activities and assignments; allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary and, uses time efficiently.
- Communication: Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and, responds appropriately; asks questions to clarify and, exhibits interest in having two-way communication; tailors language, tone, style and, format to match the audience and, demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.
- Client orientation: Considers all those to whom services are provided to be "clients" and seeks to see things from clients' point of view; establishes and maintains productive partnerships with clients by gaining their trust and respect and, meets time line for delivery of product or services to client.
- Quality of deliverables: Professional skill required for delivering outputs will be assessed.
- Satisfactory and timely deliverables: Satisfactory and timely completion of tasks and submission of the deliverables within the provision of above explained deliverables and, outputs.

#### **13- TOR annexes**

Annex 1: Documents to be consulted

- UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for development results: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>
- UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019): <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>
- UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/547>
- National Development Strategies
- UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2020-2024

## Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	What data to look for	Data source	Data collection methods & Tools, and Analysis methods
<b>Relevance:</b> the extent to which the project strategy, proposed activities and expected outputs and outcomes are justified and remain relevant to beneficiaries' assessed needs, country's policies, and donor's priorities.	1.1. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional and other changes in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been consideration into any fluctuations in the relevance of the intervention as circumstances change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Risks Analysis &amp; Lessons learnt logs</li> <li>SDG indicators</li> <li>Government partners</li> <li>Development partners</li> <li>UNDP project team</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods:</b> Review of secondary data: Progress Reports & Documents; KII & FGD. <b>Data Tools:</b> Results framework; Progress Reports; KII & FGD Guides. <b>Analysis method:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping; Change analysis & Contribution analysis (see table 3)
	1.2. To what extent was the project in line with the development and reform priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the intervention relevant to the national and global policies and priorities (i.e. contribution to overall national and global goals)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
	1.3. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have stakeholders' UNDP, National Govt) priorities and needs been articulated in the intervention's objectives and underlying theory of change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
	1.4. To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have project interventions been focused on areas of greatest need, or in the language of the 2030 Agenda: reaching the furthest behind first? (women, youth, PWD, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
<b>2. Efficiency:</b> the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs.	2.1. How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project?</li> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Financial reports</li> <li>Donor reports</li> <li>Risks Analysis &amp; Lessons learnt logs</li> <li>Partners</li> <li>Management team</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods:</b> Desk reviews of project documents; Interviews with UNDP's FFER Project Management team, government partners, and development partners. <b>Data Tools:</b> Results framework; Progress Reports; KII & FGD Guides, Meeting Minutes. <b>Analysis method:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping
	2.2. To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project?</li> <li>Are resources concentrated on the most important initiatives or are they scattered/spread thinly across initiatives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
	2.3. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have there been time extensions on the project? What were the circumstances giving rise to the need for time extension?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
	2.4. What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to communicate project achievements to the stakeholders? Are these effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
	2.5. How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>

	of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?			
<b>3. Effectiveness:</b> the extent to which the projects expected outputs and outcomes are being achieved or are expected to be achieved. Factors contributing to or detracting from the achievement of the project desired results and objectives should also be included in the assessment.	3.1. To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What outcomes does the project intend to achieve?</li> <li>What outputs has the project achieved?</li> <li>What percentage of the project results at the output level has been achieved?</li> <li>What changes are observed as a result of these outputs?</li> <li>What were the unintended results (+ or -) as a result of UNDP initiatives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Reports</li> <li>Results framework</li> <li>Financial reports</li> <li>Donor reports</li> <li>SDG Reports</li> <li>Government partners</li> <li>Development partners</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods:</b> Review of Progress Reports & Documents; KII & FGD.  <b>Data Tools:</b> Results framework; Progress Reports; KII & FGD Guides.  <b>Analysis methods:</b> Change analysis & Contribution analysis (see table 3)
	3.2. To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies actions have been implemented for women empowerment?</li> <li>What percentage of the public-private partnerships involved women and youth?</li> <li>What are the benefits from livelihood support by gender (women, men, and youth)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods</b> (same as above)  <b>Data Tools</b> (same as above)  <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses (see table 3)
	3.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What influenced the project achievements?</li> <li>What percentage of the project output results achieved include gender and women's empowerment?</li> <li>What changes are observed in gender and women's empowerment as a result of these outputs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	Same as above
	3.4. To what extent have findings of data analysis or project best practices been used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What percentage of the project good practices have been used for project improvement or learning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods</b> (same as above) <b>Data Tools</b> (same as above) <b>Analysis methods:</b> Change analysis
	3.5. To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Regional levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have responsibilities been properly delineated and implemented in a complementary manner?</li> <li>Has UNDP coordination mechanisms ensured coherence, harmonization, and synergy in functions among project partners?</li> <li>Has UNDP improved project management capacities among project partners?</li> <li>Are strategies employed by project partners complementary and synergistic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Work plans</li> <li>Progress Reports</li> <li>Project meeting minutes</li> <li>Government partners</li> <li>Development partners</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods</b> (same as above) <b>Data Tools</b> (same as above) <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses (see table 3)
	3.6. To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation and consultation among development partners (including UN agencies, and donors to this project)? How did the project steering committee contribute to a regular gathering of development partners to discuss development priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Work plans</li> <li>Progress Reports</li> <li>Project meeting minutes</li> <li>Government partners</li> <li>Development partners</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods</b> (same as above) <b>Data Tools</b> (same as above) <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses (see table 3)
	Is the project actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Work plans</li> <li>Progress Reports</li> <li>Project meeting minutes</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods</b> (same as above) <b>Data Tools</b> (same as above)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government partners</li> <li>Development partners</li> </ul>	<b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses (see table 3)
	To what extent do the project's activities/management systems mitigate, and address protection concerns of vulnerable populations (returnees, communities that did not leave ISIL controlled areas, minority communities, etc.) in the targeted areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Data Methods:</b> Review of Progress Reports &amp; Documents; KII</li> </ul>
	What is the level of quality of the project outputs and/or the project activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
	To what extent the funding facility has been able to mobilize the financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>
<b>4.Sustainability:</b> analyzing whether benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.	4.1. Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project have an exit strategy?</li> <li>To what extent does the exit strategy take into account the following: Political factors (support from national authorities), Financial factors (available budgets), technical factors (skills and expertise needed), Environmental factors (environmental appraisal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Document</li> <li>Financial reports</li> <li>Donor reports</li> <li>Risks Analysis &amp; Lessons learnt logs</li> <li>Project Mgt team</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>	<b>Data Methods</b> (same as above) <b>Data Tools</b> (same as above) <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses (see table 3)
	4.2. Are there any financial, social, political, or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the activity results likely to be sustained in the long-term after; a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of FFERs? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>	Same as above	<b>Data Methods:</b> Review of Project Document & Progress Reports, KII, FGD. <b>Data Tools:</b> Results framework; Progress Reports; KII & FGD Guides. <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses (see table 3)
	4.3. What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> </ul>	Same as above	<b>Data Methods:</b> Review of Project Document & Progress Reports, KII, FGD. <b>Data Tools:</b> Results framework; Progress Reports; KII & FGD Guides. <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment mapping, Change & Contribution analyses 3)
	4.4. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What environmental threat to sustainability emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>	Same as above	Same as above
	4.5. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What actions have been taken to scale up the project if it is a pilot initiative?</li> </ul>	Same as above	<b>Data Methods:</b> Review Progress Reports, Lessons learnt, KII & FGD. <b>Data Tools:</b> Progress Reports; KII & FGD Guides. <b>Analysis methods:</b> Responsibility assignment; Contribution analyses (see table 3)

**Evaluator:**

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact during the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings, and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form<sup>47</sup>**

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

**Name of Consultant:** Dr. Patrick Orotin

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Signature: 

<sup>47</sup>[www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct](http://www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct)



## Annex 4. Data Collection tools

### Annex 4.1. Guidance for Key Informant Interviews (for Key FFER partners in Iraq and KRG)

#### PROTOCOL:

##### Greetings!!

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a Consultant working on behalf of The UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) in Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government, who is conducting a Midterm Evaluation of the project implementation with national and regional partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), and local communities. The project intention is support both the GOI and KRG to diversify their economies, restructure, and strengthen public administration and public financial management, and improve the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

##### Purpose of the Midterm Evaluation:

Is to inform and improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition and the quality of next phase of stabilization support design and implementation.

##### The objectives of the Midterm Evaluation:

- (a) Assess the **relevance** of the project's results;
- (b) Assess the **efficiency** of project implementation, including the operations support;
- (c) Assess the **effectiveness** of the project and its Windows in reaching the stated objectives;
- (d) Assess the **appropriateness** of the project design and management arrangements for achieving the stated objectives;
- (e) Assess the **sustainability** of the project results;
- (f) Take stock of the overall project progress achieved against the project's expected results, and contribution towards Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document;
- (g) Outline **lessons learned** and **good practices** that can be used in future identification, design, regular review, implementation and monitoring of FFERs interventions;
- (h) Provide constructive and practical **recommendations** on factors that can contribute to project sustainability and develop the FFER transition and exit strategy; and
- (i) Appraise project achievements against its expected outputs and recommend ways to improve future partnerships with project's implementing partners/ target groups.

##### Benefits:

Currently, there are No direct benefits to you as a participant in this review. However, there are indirect social benefits; for example, it will help the project best align its priorities and strategies to better strengthen public administration and public financial management, and improve the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

##### Confidentiality and Consent:

The answers you give will be known to us only and kept strictly confidential, with your name not being reported. Results will be reported in general terms. The interview will take about 1 hour to complete. All participants will be 18 years, and above and participation is voluntary. However, I request your full participation given that your views are very important. Thank you!!

I have a set of questions to guide our discussion. May I begin the interview (Yes/No)?

Date of Interview:-----Time of the Interview-----

##### Details of the respondent:

Name of respondent:----- Position in the project:-----

Duration with the project:----- Organization/Sector:-----

Location-----

# Key Informant Interview Guide:

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Probe Questions
<b>1. Relevance</b>	1.1. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional and other changes in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been consideration into any fluctuations in the relevance of the intervention as circumstances change?</li> </ul>
	1.2. To what extent was the project in line with the development and reform priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the intervention relevant to the national and global policies and priorities (i.e. contribution to overall national and global goals)?</li> </ul>
	1.3. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have stakeholders' UNDP, National Govt) priorities and needs been articulated in the intervention's objectives and underlying theory of change?</li> </ul>
	1.4. To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have project interventions been focused on areas of greatest need, or in the language of the 2030 Agenda: reaching the furthest behind first? (women, youth, PWD, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Efficiency</b>	2.1. How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project?</li> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective?</li> <li>Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project?</li> </ul>
	2.2. To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are resources concentrated on the most important initiatives or are they scattered/spread thinly across initiatives?</li> </ul>
	2.3. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have there been time extensions on the project? What were the circumstances giving rise to the need for time extension?</li> </ul>
	2.4. What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to communicate project achievements to the stakeholders? Are these effective?</li> </ul>
	2.5. How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor project implementation? Are these effective?</li> </ul>
	3.1. To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What outcomes does the project intend to achieve?</li> <li>What outputs has the project achieved?</li> <li>What percentage of the project results at the output level has been achieved?</li> <li>What changes are observed as a result of these outputs?</li> <li>What were the unintended results (+ or -) as a result of UNDP initiatives?</li> </ul>
	3.2. To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies actions have been implemented for women empowerment?</li> <li>What percentage of the public-private partnerships involved women and youth?</li> <li>What are the benefits from livelihood support by gender (women, men, and youth)?</li> </ul>
<b>3. Effectiveness</b>	3.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What influenced the project achievements?</li> <li>What percentage of the project output results achieved include gender and women's empowerment?</li> <li>What changes are observed in gender and women's empowerment as a result of these outputs?</li> </ul>
	3.4. To what extent have findings of data analysis or project best practices been used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What percentage of the project good practices and lessons learnt have been used for project improvement or learning?</li> </ul>
	3.5. To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Regional levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have responsibilities been properly delineated and implemented in a complementary manner?</li> <li>Has UNDP coordination mechanisms ensured coherence, harmonization, and synergy in functions among project partners?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has UNDP improved project management capacities among project partners?</li> <li>Are the strategies employed by the project partners complementary and synergistic?</li> </ul>
<b>4.Sustainability</b>	4.1. Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project have an exit strategy?</li> <li>To what extent does the exit strategy take into account the following: Political factors (support from national authorities), Financial factors (available budgets), technical factors (skills and expertise needed), Environmental factors (environmental appraisal)</li> </ul>
	4.2. Are there any financial, social, political, or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the activity results likely to be sustained in the long-term after; a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of FFERs? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>
	4.3. What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> </ul>
	4.4. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What environmental threat to sustainability emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>
	4.5. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What actions have been taken to scale up the project if it is a pilot initiative?</li> </ul>

Annex 4.2. Guidance for Focus Group Discussions (for separate inclusive samples of female and male project beneficiaries and UNDP Project Management Team)

**PROTOCOL:**

**Greetings!!**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a Consultant working on behalf of The UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) in Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government, who is conducting a Midterm Evaluation of the project implementation with national and regional partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), and local communities. The project intention is support both the GOI and KRG to diversify their economies, restructure, and strengthen public administration and public financial management, and improve the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

**Purpose of the Midterm Evaluation:**

Is to inform and improve decision-making relating to project implementation, transition and the quality of next phase of stabilization support design and implementation.

**The objectives of the Midterm Evaluation:**

- (a) Assess the **relevance** of the project's results;
- (b) Assess the **efficiency** of project implementation, including the operations support;
- (c) Assess the **effectiveness** of the project and its Windows in reaching the stated objectives;
- (d) Assess the **appropriateness** of the project design and management arrangements for achieving the stated objectives;
- (e) Assess the **sustainability** of the project results;
- (f) Take stock of the overall project progress achieved against the project's expected results, and contribution towards Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document;
- (g) Outline **lessons learned** and **good practices** that can be used in future identification, design, regular review, implementation and monitoring of FFERs interventions;
- (h) Provide constructive and practical **recommendations** on factors that can contribute to project sustainability and develop the FFER transition and exit strategy; and
- (i) Appraise project achievements against its expected outputs and recommend ways to improve future partnerships with project's implementing partners/ target groups.

**Benefits:**

Currently, there are No direct benefits to you as a participant in this review. However, there are indirect social benefits; for example, it will help the project best align its priorities and strategies to better strengthen public administration and public financial management, and improve the delivery of public goods, including basic services.

**Confidentiality and Consent:**

The answers you give will be known to us only and kept strictly confidential, with your names not being reported. Results will be reported in general terms. The interview will take about 2 hours to complete. All participants will be 18 years, and above and participation is voluntary. However, I request your full participation given that your views are very important. Thank you!!

I have a set of questions to guide our discussion. May I begin the interview (Yes/No)?

Date of Interview:-----Time of the Interview:-----

**Details of the individual respondent:**

Name of respondent:----- Position in the project:-----

Duration with the project:----- Organization/Sector:-----

Location:-----

**Focus Group Discussion Guide:**

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Probe Questions
<b>2. Efficiency</b>	2.1. How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective?</li> <li>Are resources concentrated on the most important initiatives or are they scattered/spread thinly across initiatives?</li> </ul>
	2.2. To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have there been time extensions on the project? What were the circumstances giving rise to the need for time extension?</li> </ul>
	2.3. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	
	2.4. What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to communicate project achievements to the stakeholders? Are these effective?</li> </ul>
<b>3. Effectiveness</b>	3.1. To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What changes are observed as a result of these outputs?</li> <li>What were the unintended results (+ or -) as a result of UNDP initiatives?</li> </ul>
	3.2. To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies actions have been implemented for women empowerment?</li> </ul>
	3.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What influenced the project achievements?</li> <li>What changes are observed in gender and women's empowerment as a result of these achievements?</li> </ul>
	3.4. To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Regional levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have responsibilities been properly delineated and implemented in a complementary manner?</li> <li>Has UNDP coordination mechanisms ensured coherence, harmonization, and synergy in functions among project partners?</li> <li>Has UNDP improved project management capacities among project partners?</li> <li>Are the strategies employed by the project partners complementary and synergistic?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Sustainability</b>	4.1. Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project have an exit strategy?</li> <li>To what extent does the exit strategy take into account the following: Political factors (support from national authorities), Financial factors (available budgets), technical factors (skills and expertise needed), Environmental factors (environmental appraisal)</li> </ul>
	4.2. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What environmental threat to sustainability emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>
	4.3. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What actions have been taken to scale up the project if it is a pilot initiative?</li> </ul>

### Annex 4.3. Guidance for Desk Review

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Probe Questions
<b>1. Relevance</b>	1.1. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional and other changes in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been consideration into any fluctuations in the relevance of the intervention as circumstances change?</li> </ul>
	1.2. To what extent was the project in line with the development and reform priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the intervention relevant to the national and global policies and priorities (i.e. contribution to overall national and global goals)?</li> </ul>
	1.3. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have stakeholders' (UNDP, National Govt) priorities and needs been articulated in the intervention's objectives and underlying theory of change?</li> </ul>
	1.4. To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have project interventions been focused on areas of greatest need, or in the language of the 2030 Agenda: reaching the furthest behind first? (women, youth, PWD, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Efficiency</b>	2.1. How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project?</li> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective?</li> <li>Has there been over-expenditure or under-expenditure on the project?</li> </ul>
	2.2. To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are resources concentrated on the most important initiatives or are they scattered/spread thinly across initiatives?</li> </ul>
	2.3. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have there been time extensions on the project? What were the circumstances giving rise to the need for time extension?</li> </ul>
	2.4. What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to communicate project achievements to the stakeholders? Are these effective?</li> </ul>
	2.5. How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What mechanisms does UNDP have in place to monitor implementation? Are these effective?</li> </ul>
<b>3. Effectiveness</b>	3.1. To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What outcomes does the project intend to achieve?</li> <li>What outputs has the project achieved?</li> <li>What percentage of the project results at the output level has been achieved?</li> <li>What changes are observed as a result of these outputs?</li> <li>What were the unintended results (+ or -) as a result of UNDP initiatives?</li> </ul>
	3.2. To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies actions have been implemented for women empowerment?</li> <li>What percentage of the public-private partnerships involved women and youth?</li> <li>What are the benefits from livelihood support by gender (women, men, and youth)?</li> </ul>
	3.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What influenced the project achievements?</li> <li>What percentage of the project output results achieved include gender and women's empowerment?</li> <li>What changes are observed in gender and women's empowerment as a result of these outputs?</li> </ul>
	3.4. To what extent have findings of data analysis or project best practices been used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What percentage of the project good practices and lessons learnt have been used for project improvements or learning?</li> </ul>
	3.5. To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Regional levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have responsibilities been properly delineated and implemented in a complementary manner?</li> <li>Has UNDP coordination mechanisms ensured coherence, harmonization, and synergy in functions among project partners?</li> <li>Has UNDP improved project management capacities among project partners?</li> <li>Are the strategies employed by the project partners complementary and synergistic?</li> </ul>

<b>4.Sustainability</b>	4.1. Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project have an exit strategy?</li> <li>To what extent does the exit strategy take into account the following: Political factors (support from national authorities), Financial factors (available budgets), technical factors (skills and expertise needed), Environmental factors (environmental appraisal)</li> </ul>
	4.2. Are there any financial, social, political, or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the activity results likely to be sustained in the long-term after; a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of FFERs? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>
	4.3. What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of end 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> </ul>
	4.4. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What environmental threat to sustainability emerged during implementation?</li> <li>What corrective measures did UNDP take?</li> </ul>
	4.5. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What actions have been taken to scale up the project if it is a pilot initiative?</li> </ul>

## Annex 5. Data analysis plan

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Desk review, Key Informants, and Focus Group Discussion Notes	Summary and Interpretation
<b>1. Relevance</b>	1.1. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, and institutional and other changes in the country?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> Both key informant interviews (KII) and documents review reveal that the project was designed in response to the aftermath of the violence in 2014 that brought about displacement of about 3 million people. In order to strengthen capacities of Gol to deliver adequate services and provide economic opportunities for its citizens and displaced people (both internally displaced persons – IDPs), an Economic Reform Plan and Roadmap were developed with the support of the World Bank in 2016.<sup>48</sup> From the Plan and Roadmap, the Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) was designed in 2016, as a joint measure to consolidate the fragile peace through a structured economic reform. Thus, it was clear that the context from which the FFER was designed was understood and accounted for.</p> <p>However, after the approval of the project for implementation on 29th January 2019<sup>49</sup>, its start was interrupted by a series of security and political uncertainties. For example, desk review and consultations with key project stakeholders reveal that between September and October 2017, a Referendum for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to gain independence from the Federal Government of Iraq took place. This created a situation of uncertainty in the security environment, and affected the smooth start of the project.</p> <p>The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 and its rapid spread across countries and regions presented significant restrictions to movements and gatherings. The project faced challenges due to COVID-19 that spilled over from 2020 up to the time of this mid-term evaluation. But the project management has adapted to the problem by continuing to operate at a lower capacity, including following other COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and making all possible efforts such as use of 'zoom' and 'WhatsApp' to keep the project stakeholders engaged and work on track.</p>	<p>Both key informant interviews (KII) and documents review reveal that the project was designed in response to the aftermath of the violence in 2014 that brought about displacement of about 3 million people. In order to strengthen capacities of Gol to deliver adequate services and provide economic opportunities for its citizens and displaced people (both internally displaced persons – IDPs), an Economic Reform Plan and Roadmap were developed with the support of the World Bank in 2016.<sup>50</sup> From the Plan and Roadmap, the Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) was designed in 2016, as a joint measure to consolidate the fragile peace through a structured economic reform. Thus, it was clear that the context from which the FFER was designed was understood and accounted for.</p> <p>However, after the approval of the project for implementation on 29th January 2019<sup>51</sup>, its start was interrupted by a series of security and political uncertainties. For example, desk review and consultations with key project stakeholders reveal that between September and October 2017, a Referendum for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to gain independence from the Federal Government of Iraq took place. This created a situation of uncertainty in the security environment, and affected the smooth start of the project.</p> <p>The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 and its rapid spread across countries and regions presented significant restrictions to movements and gatherings. The project faced challenges due to COVID-19 that spilled over from 2020 up to the time of this mid-term evaluation. But the project management has adapted to the problem by continuing to operate at a lower capacity, including following other COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and making all possible efforts such as use of 'zoom' and 'WhatsApp' to keep the project stakeholders engaged and work on track.</p>
	1.2. To what extent was the project in line with the national development and reform priorities and policies, the UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> The alignment of the project assessed the extent to which the interventions addressed the policy priorities of the Gol. Desk review and key informant interviews demonstrate that the project responded to the initiatives and requests of the institutions and authorities approved by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in line with the Economic Reform plans, which means that UNDP effectively responds to what the Government expresses as necessary. In the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Iraq (2016-2020) Outcome 2: <i>Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels</i><sup>52</sup>, the CPD is demonstrating alignment with the reform priorities and policies of Gol.</p>	<p>The alignment of the project assessed the extent to which the interventions addressed the policy priorities of the Gol. Desk review and key informant interviews demonstrate that the project responded to the initiatives and requests of the institutions and authorities approved by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in line with the Economic Reform plans, which means that UNDP effectively responds to what the Government expresses as necessary. In the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Iraq (2016-2020) Outcome 2: <i>Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels</i><sup>56</sup>, the CPD is demonstrating alignment with the reform priorities and policies of Gol.</p>

<sup>48</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress report. 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020. p.4.

<sup>49</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 – 31 December 2019. p.1.

<sup>50</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress report. 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020. p.4.

<sup>51</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 – 31 December 2019. p.1.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.8



		<p>The most successful projects are those where at least an adequate knowledge of the specific needs to be met are demonstrated. From the desk review and key informant interviews with project stakeholders, the evaluation concludes that FFER project is undoubtedly focused. Its mode of implementation through delivering technical assistance (TA) to GoI Entities based on evidence from assessments or studies.</p> <p>To enable provision of further support that responds to the changes in the national context and the new and emerging national priorities, the GoI and UNDP agreed to extent the project to December 2023. According to desk review, this is also in line with the USAID approval provided in 2020 to extent the contribution agreement which covers the funding revision to Iraq Federal until 31 December 2023.<sup>53</sup></p> <p>Thus, the project is in line with the GoI National Priority or Goal: General Framework of Government Programmes, 2014-2018, Priority 5: <i>Administrative and Financial Reform of the governmental Institutions</i><sup>54</sup>, the New Kurdistan Regional Government Cabinet Agenda, 2019, and UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020) Outcome 2: <i>Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels</i><sup>55</sup>, and USAID strategy for Iraq.</p>	<p>The most successful projects are those where at least an adequate knowledge of the specific needs to be met are demonstrated. From the desk review and key informant interviews with project stakeholders, the evaluation concludes that FFER project is undoubtedly focused. Its mode of implementation through delivering technical assistance (TA) to GoI Entities based on evidence from assessments or studies.</p> <p>To enable provision of further support that responds to the changes in the national context and the new and emerging national priorities, the GoI and UNDP agreed to extent the project to December 2023. According to desk review, this is also in line with the USAID approval provided in 2020 to extent the contribution agreement which covers the funding revision to Iraq Federal until 31 December 2023.<sup>57</sup></p> <p>Thus, the project is in line with the GoI National Priority or Goal: General Framework of Government Programmes, 2014-2018, Priority 5: <i>Administrative and Financial Reform of the governmental Institutions</i><sup>58</sup>, the New Kurdistan Regional Government Cabinet Agenda, 2019, and UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020) Outcome 2: <i>Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels</i><sup>59</sup>, and USAID strategy for Iraq.</p>
	1.3. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?	<p><b>Desk review</b> reveals that the FFER project does not have a theory of change, but its outputs have been linked to the outcomes and outputs of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020) for Iraq. The project is consistent in terms of results-based approach with its outputs, indicators, baselines, targets, and milestones. The project has two objectives: (a) To undertake specific reform initiatives underlined by loan agreements either with international financial lending institutions such as IMF or bilateral donor to help the government to close a financial gap of US\$18.1 billion during 2016-2019, and (b) To reinforce reform initiatives undertaken by the government to respond to the public demand to improve public services, creation of job opportunities and combat corruption that require structural and policy and economic reform.<sup>60</sup> And there are two outputs: Output 1: Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform<sup>61</sup>, and Output 2: Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed.<sup>62</sup></p> <p>The second project objective: 'To reinforce reform initiatives undertaken by the government to respond to the public demand to improve public services, creation of job opportunities and combat corruption that require structural and policy and</p>	<p>Desk review reveals that the FFER project does not have a theory of change, but its outputs have been linked to the outcomes and outputs of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020) for Iraq. The project is consistent in terms of results-based approach with its outputs, indicators, baselines, targets, and milestones. The project has two objectives: (a) <i>To undertake specific reform initiatives underlined by loan agreements either with international financial lending institutions such as IMF or bilateral donor to help the government to close a financial gap of US\$18.1 billion during 2016-2019, and (b) To reinforce reform initiatives undertaken by the government to respond to the public demand to improve public services, creation of job opportunities and combat corruption that require structural and policy and economic reform.</i><sup>64</sup> And there are two outputs: Output 1: <i>Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform</i><sup>65</sup>, and Output 2: <i>Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed.</i><sup>66</sup></p>

<sup>53</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project progress report. 1 April 2021 - 30 June 2021.

<sup>54</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020). Annex: Integrated results and resources framework. p.8

<sup>55</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.8

<sup>57</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project progress report. 1 April 2021 - 30 June 2021.

<sup>58</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020). Annex: Integrated results and resources framework. p.8

<sup>59</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.8

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.6.

		<p>economic reform', aligns with Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020) for Iraq: Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels'.<sup>63</sup> The two outputs; Output 1: 'Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform', and Output 2: 'Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed', also align with the second project objective and Outcome 2 of the CPD (2016-2020). The outputs have been identified and adequately stated using the standard Results Based Management (RBM) approach. Good quality outputs are crucial for proper monitoring and evaluation. Thus, at the outcome and outputs levels, what UNDP and the government of Iraq want to achieve through the FFER project (Economic Reform) has been clearly articulated in both documents; the FFER Project Document (2016-2020) and the CPD (2016-2020).</p> <p>Both documents emphasize establishing Economic Reform Platform to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of government – at federal and governorates levels, and how the Economic Reform Platform would function has also been clearly articulated with key activities listed under each stated output.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>However, the mid-term evaluation was not able to find a link in theory between the first objective: 'To undertake specific reform initiatives underlined by loan agreements either with international financial lending institutions such as IMF or bilateral donor to help the government to close a financial gap of US\$18.1 billion during 2016-2019', and the two outputs: Output 1: 'Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform', and Output 2: 'Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed'. Key informant interview indicate that this objective was included to be implemented by the World Bank/IMF, but the Bank pulled out of the project due to insecurity and political uncertainty between 2017 and 2018. The results framework, which should provide a snapshot of the project theory of change, also does not have outputs, activities, and measurements (indicators, baselines, and targets) linked to this objective, which represents gaps in project design.</li> </ul>	<p>The second project objective: '<i>To reinforce reform initiatives undertaken by the government to respond to the public demand to improve public services, creation of job opportunities and combat corruption that require structural and policy and economic reform</i>', aligns with Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2016-2020) for Iraq: Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels'.<sup>67</sup> The two outputs; Output 1: 'Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform', and Output 2: 'Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed', also align with the second project objective and Outcome 2 of the CPD (2016-2020). The outputs have been identified and adequately stated using the standard Results Based Management (RBM) approach<sup>68</sup>. Good quality outputs are crucial for proper monitoring and evaluation. Thus, at the outcome and outputs levels, what UNDP and the government of Iraq want to achieve through the FFER project (Economic Reform) has been clearly articulated in both documents; the FFER Project Document (2016-2020) and the CPD (2016-2020).</p> <p>Both documents emphasize establishing Economic Reform Platform to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of government – at federal and governorates levels, and how the Economic Reform Platform would function has also been clearly articulated with key activities listed under each stated output.</p> <p>However, the mid-term evaluation was not able to find a link in theory between the first objective: '<i>To undertake specific reform initiatives underlined by loan agreements either with international financial lending institutions such as IMF or bilateral donor to help the government to close a financial gap of US\$18.1 billion during 2016-2019</i>', and the two outputs: Output 1: 'Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform', and Output 2: 'Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed'. Key informant interview indicate that this objective was included to be implemented by the World Bank/IMF, but the Bank pulled out of the project due to insecurity and political uncertainty between 2017 and 2018. The results framework, which should provide a snapshot of the project theory of change, also does not have outputs, activities, and measurements (indicators, baselines, and targets) linked to this objective, which represents gaps in project design.</p>
	1.4. To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?	<p><b>Desk Review, KII &amp; FGD:</b> Key elements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) are reflected in the project design, with both 'right holders' (GoI and its target sectors/institutions) presenting their priorities to be addressed, and 'duty bearers' (UNDP &amp; UN system) responding to these priorities. However, in terms of expertise, budget allocations, and duration of intervention, the greater focus is on the 'right holders'. This is justified given the priorities identified and described in the project document and confirmed by interviewed stakeholders, are reasons for the design of the project.</p>	<p>Key elements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) are reflected in the project design, with both '<i>right holders</i>' (GoI and its target sectors/institutions) presenting their priorities to be addressed, and '<i>duty bearers</i>' (UNDP &amp; UN system) responding to these priorities. However, in terms of expertise, budget allocations, and duration of intervention, the greater focus is on the '<i>right holders</i>'. This is justified given the priorities identified and described in the project document and confirmed by interviewed stakeholders, are reasons for the design of the project.</p>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>68</sup> UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, p.63. Source: <http://www.undp.org/eo/handbook>

		<p>The project delivery methods included a range of actions, tailored to the 'right holders' and 'duty bearers', such as capacity development and planning workshops and training, international experts working with national counterparts, face-to-face meetings and sharing knowledge, remote consultations, development of frameworks, manuals, and manuals, reflection sessions on lessons learnt, and monitoring actions reflected in the risk logs. Analysis of the planned interventions lead to overall conclusion that the type of actions planned for achievement were mostly adequate, and in congruent with the needs of the right holders' and with expectations of the 'duty bearers', with some exceptions. Initial delays in the deployment of international experts on the project was nothing to do with delaying the fulfilment of the rights of right holders', but being cautious of the role of the 'duty bearers' in upholding the right to protect the safety of everyone in the project, given the political environment in early years of the project implementation.</p> <p>In as far as cross-cutting issues of gender are concerned, some key elements of gender equality and women's empowerment are reflected in the project's supported Ministry of Planning's Central Statistical Organisation (CSO). For example, a sizable number of women (22/25 or 80%) took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool. Similarly, of the 20 CSO staff from the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women, drawn from the governorates of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basra, Diwaniya and Nineveh. Additionally, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) survey conducted by the CSO in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, targeted formal and informal MSME enterprises, which according to key informants also targeted informal enterprises run by women.</p> <p>Although the project design does not include gender-disaggregated data in the baselines and targets in the Results Framework, these are reflected in some progress reports, and to some extent responded to the SDG policy priority of 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB). It is also in line with the UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Outcome 2: No-one left behind, centering on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development<sup>69</sup>, and UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2014-2017) Outcome 3: Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver <u>universal</u> access to basic services.<sup>70</sup></p>	<p>The project delivery methods included a range of actions, tailored to the 'right holders' and 'duty bearers', such as capacity development and planning workshops and training, international experts working with national counterparts, face-to-face meetings and sharing knowledge, remote consultations, development of frameworks, manuals, and manuals, reflection sessions on lessons learnt, and monitoring actions reflected in the risk logs. Analysis of the planned interventions lead to overall conclusion that the type of actions planned for achievement were mostly adequate, and in congruent with the needs of the <i>right holders'</i> and with expectations of the 'duty bearers', with some exceptions. Initial delays in the deployment of international experts on the project was nothing to do with delaying the fulfilment of the rights of <i>right holders'</i>, but being cautious of the role of the 'duty bearers' in upholding the right to protect the safety of everyone in the project, given the political environment in early years of the project implementation.</p> <p>In as far as cross-cutting issues of gender are concerned, some key elements of gender equality and women's empowerment are reflected in the project's supported Ministry of Planning's Central Statistical Organisation (CSO). For example, a sizable number of women (22/25 or 80%) took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool. Similarly, of the 20 CSO staff from the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women, drawn from the governorates of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basra, Diwaniya and Nineveh. Additionally, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) survey conducted by the CSO in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, targeted formal and informal MSME enterprises, which according to key informants also targeted informal enterprises run by women.</p> <p>Although the project design does not include gender-disaggregated data in the baselines and targets in the Results Framework, these are reflected in some progress reports, and to some extent responded to the SDG policy priority of 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB). It is also in line with the UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Outcome 2: No-one left behind, centering on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development<sup>71</sup>, and UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2014-2017) Outcome 3: Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver <u>universal</u> access to basic services.<sup>72</sup></p>
<b>2. Efficiency</b>	2.1. How efficient is the functioning of the project management, technical support, administrative, procurement and financial management procedures? To what extent have the project management structure and allocated resources been efficient in achieving the expected results?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> In terms of <b>project management</b>, information from interviews could not lead to any conclusion that the project was staffed appropriately to run the project adequately. But the achievement of 5 out of 7 output indicators tend to support that the project was staffed appropriately given its mode of implementation – coordinating technical assistances to government ministries and sectors. The key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are the supportive government structures and strong leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Planning – which are pushing project delivery. Within the UNDP Project Management Unit, the key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are committed technical</p>	<p>In terms of <b>project management</b>, information from interviews could not lead to any conclusion that the project was staffed appropriately to run the project adequately. But the achievement of 5 out of 7 output indicators tend to support that the project was staffed appropriately given its mode of implementation – coordinating technical assistances to government ministries and sectors. The key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are the supportive government structures and strong leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Planning – which are pushing project delivery. Within the UNDP Project Management</p>

<sup>69</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.

<sup>70</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Annex: Integrated results and resources framework (2014-2017). p.8.

<sup>71</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.

<sup>72</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Annex: Integrated results and resources framework (2014-2017). p.8.

		<p>staff, who provide proactive, consistent and systematic technical support and influence positively the inclusiveness of project stakeholders, subsequently the performance.</p> <p>The initial management of the project was designed to be based on a Steering Committee (SC) approach, with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as co-chair and senior beneficiary, and UNDP as chair, with participation of Project Managers from both Iraq Federal and KRG. Desk review reveal that the SC functions are; provide strategic direction, determine priority reform initiatives, determine and decide the main areas and means of support, ensure coordination and synergy with key Gol entities and international actors, and carry out regular reviews of the overall implementation of activities and progress towards expected results.</p> <p>According to key informants, the SC was scheduled to meet bi-annually, but this has not been happening regularly. The SC was inactive during the regular project implementation period (2018-2020), although the project monitoring and steering of the project was periodically performed by the UNDP senior management and the project manager in FFER-Federal.</p> <p>One of the functions of the SC - ensure coordination and synergy with key Gol entities structure, requires that representatives (policy makers) from government entities targeted by the economic reform, are part of the project management structure. This was not the case in the initial structure. As presented in Chart 1, the senior beneficiary of the economic reform intervention is the Prime Minister's Office, and not the key Gol entities targeted by the economic reform implementation. Based on lessons learnt, the SC has been restructured to be inclusive with better targeting. Further, key informant interviews reveal that the Economic Reform Unit (ERU), which was the key structure of the overall FFER project, expected to serve as a reform platform, has had challenges running as there was staff turnover in the Unit. Key informant reveal that about 4 out of the 10 staff in the Unit had left, rendering the Unit below the initial planned capacity to run it. In addressing the ERU staff challenge, the ERU was disbanded and officially replaced by the Reform Management Cell (RMC), with a new Executive Director appointed in June 2021.</p> <p>In <b>managing risks</b>, the project developed a risk log to monitor technical, social, and political risks during project implementation. The risk log describes the adverse situation, documents the date on which it was identified, categorizes the risks, scores its impact and probability, develops a management response, and assigns responsibility to update the project on the status of the risk. New risks were identified as project implementation went on. For example, when COVID-19 pandemic struck the whole world, local gathering and international travel were restricted. Instead of stopping the entire project operations, the project management addressed this risk by working on those activities that could be done remotely or at home; and for international consultants, the project started online coordination between the consultants and government sectors to which the technical assistance was being provided.</p> <p>In regards to <b>technical support</b> for economic reform, desk review reveals that the project supported completion of 11 technical assistance (or 55%) since 2016.<sup>73</sup> These covered areas of; (a) Technical support to the White Paper and ease of doing business in Iraq; (b) Technical support to Reform Management Cell (RMC) in Iraq on economic and public sector reforms; (c) Feasibility study on Credit Guarantee System (CGS) to increase micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) access to finance; (d) Mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) survey in Iraq governorates of Baghdad, Basra, and Nineveh;</p>	<p>Unit, the key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are committed technical staff, who provide proactive, consistent and systematic technical support and influence positively the inclusiveness of project stakeholders, subsequently the performance.</p> <p>The initial management of the project was designed to be based on a Steering Committee (SC) approach, with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as co-chair and senior beneficiary, and UNDP as chair, with participation of Project Managers from both Iraq Federal and KRG. Desk review reveal that the SC functions are; provide strategic direction, determine priority reform initiatives, determine and decide the main areas and means of support, ensure coordination and synergy with key Gol entities and international actors, and carry out regular reviews of the overall implementation of activities and progress towards expected results.</p> <p>According to key informants, the SC was scheduled to meet bi-annually, but this has not been happening regularly. The SC was inactive during the regular project implementation period (2018-2020), although the project monitoring and steering of the project was periodically performed by the UNDP senior management and the project manager in FFER-Federal.</p> <p>One of the functions of the SC - ensure coordination and synergy with key Gol entities structure, requires that representatives (policy makers) from government entities targeted by the economic reform, are part of the project management structure. This was not the case in the initial structure. As presented in Chart 1, the senior beneficiary of the economic reform intervention is the Prime Minister's Office, and not the key Gol entities targeted by the economic reform implementation. Based on lessons learnt, the SC has been restructured to be inclusive with better targeting.</p> <p>Further, key informant interviews reveal that the Economic Reform Unit (ERU), which was the key structure of the overall FFER project, expected to serve as a reform platform, has had challenges running as there was staff turnover in the Unit. Key informant reveal that about 4 out of the 10 staff in the Unit had left, rendering the Unit below the initial planned capacity to run it. In addressing the ERU staff challenge, the ERU was disbanded and officially replaced by the Reform Management Cell (RMC), with a new Executive Director appointed in June 2021.</p> <p>In <b>managing risks</b>, the project developed a risk log to monitor technical, social, and political risks during project implementation. The risk log describes the adverse situation, documents the date on which it was identified, categorizes the risks, scores its impact and probability, develops a management response, and assigns responsibility to update the project on the status of the risk. New risks were identified as project implementation went on. For example, when COVID-19 pandemic struck the whole world, local gathering and international travel were restricted. 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<sup>73</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp .5, 29.

		<p>and (e) Training of staff of Central Statistical Organization (CSO) in the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool.</p> <p>In regards to <b>administrative procedures</b>, desk review and key informants reveal that documents like laws, regulations and other materials are usually produced in Arabic. To make these materials available and translated for international use requires time. Additionally, all documents prepared by consultants require to be translated from English to Arabic before submitting to Gol for decision-making. All these are administrative challenges that increase cost and delay their use.</p> <p>Regarding <b>procurement procedures</b>, the project follows UNDP procurement procedures, but with involvement of Gol and the donor (USAID). The project management structure is such that UNDP, Gol and the Donor (USAID) all review major procurements processes to do with procurement of technical assistance. For example, to procure technical assistance, UNDP drafts a Terms of Reference (ToR), which is reviewed by the concerned ministry or sector. The target ministry submits its comments to UNDP to incorporate. The revised ToR is then shared with the donor (USAID) for review and approval or feedback comments. At every one of these steps, it takes a week or more to get feedback; the timeliness of any actions depended on the availability of all the project focal points at that time. While key informants from the Government side expressed some delays with this procurement process, they also expressed that the tripartite arrangement ensure transparency and accountability, builds trust and promotes knowledge transfer during the review, and ultimately leads to recruitment of suitably qualified experts. Key informants and desk review also reveal that the project did not encounter significant problems related to the quality of products produced by the international or national experts recruited through the tripartite procurement review and approval process.</p> <p>In regards to <b>financial management</b>, the project follows UNDP financial management procedures. All financial data reported in the progress reports are provisional until certified by UNDP Bureau of Management/Office of Finance and Administration at UNDP headquarters in New York, USA. From the UNDP headquarters (HQ), an annual certified financial statement as of end of the year (31 December) is posted by UNDP HQ no later than 30 June of the following year and shared with the donor. The utilization of funds covers funds expended and those committed, together termed "<i>Funds utilized</i>." The advantage of this financial management process is that it ensures UNDP has an overall picture of the status of its fund mobilization and utilization, globally, by region, by country and by thematic area.</p>	<p>since 2016.<sup>74</sup> These covered areas of: (a) Technical support to the White Paper and ease of doing business in Iraq; (b) Technical support to Reform Management Cell (RMC) in Iraq on economic and public sector reforms; (c) Feasibility study on Credit Guarantee System (CGS) to increase micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) access to finance; (d) Mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) survey in Iraq governorates of Baghdad, Basra, and Nineveh; and (e) Training of staff of Central Statistical Organization (CSO) in the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool.</p> <p>In regards to <b>administrative procedures</b>, desk review and key informants reveal that documents like laws, regulations and other materials are usually produced in Arabic. To make these materials available and translated for international use requires time. Additionally, all documents prepared by consultants require to be translated from English to Arabic before submitting to Gol for decision-making. All these are administrative challenges that increase cost and delay their use.</p> <p>Regarding <b>procurement procedures</b>, the project follows UNDP procurement procedures, but with involvement of Gol and the donor (USAID). The project management structure is such that UNDP, Gol and the Donor (USAID) all review major procurements processes to do with procurement of technical assistance. For example, to procure technical assistance, UNDP drafts a Terms of Reference (ToR), which is reviewed by the concerned ministry or sector. The target ministry submits its comments to UNDP to incorporate. The revised ToR is then shared with the donor (USAID) for review and approval or feedback comments. At every one of these steps, it takes a week or more to get feedback; the timeliness of any actions depended on the availability of all the project focal points at that time. While key informants from the Government side expressed some delays with this procurement process, they also expressed that the tripartite arrangement ensure transparency and accountability, builds trust and promotes knowledge transfer during the review, and ultimately leads to recruitment of suitably qualified experts. Key informants and desk review also reveal that the project did not encounter significant problems related to the quality of products produced by the international or national experts recruited through the tripartite procurement review and approval process.</p> <p>In regards to <b>financial management</b>, the project follows UNDP financial management procedures. All financial data reported in the progress reports are provisional until certified by UNDP Bureau of Management/Office of Finance and Administration at UNDP headquarters in New York, USA. From the UNDP headquarters (HQ), an annual certified financial statement as of end of the year (31 December) is posted by UNDP HQ no later than 30 June of the following year and shared with the donor. The utilization of funds covers funds expended and those committed, together termed "<i>Funds utilized</i>." The advantage of this financial management process is that it ensures UNDP has an overall picture of the status of its fund mobilization and utilization, globally, by region, by country and by thematic area.</p>
	2.2. To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	<p><b>Desk Review:</b> In terms of <i>efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project implementation</i>, interviews reveal that the technical assistance on the economic reform, material and financial resources invested in the project (human resources, informational materials, sector-specific capacity strengthening interventions) are</p>	<p>In terms of <i>efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project implementation</i>, interviews reveal that the technical assistance on the economic reform, material and financial resources invested in the project (human resources, informational materials, sector-specific capacity</p>

<sup>74</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp .5, 29.

		adequately and mostly sufficient for reaching the initially planned results. So far as it is, resources have been used as planned; total expenditures have remained within budget. Internal controls are strong, as budget use is based on a tripartite review and approval arrangement – involving UNDP- the implementing partner, Gol as local partner, and the donor (USAID). With the history of strong financial policies of UNDP and USAID, the project enjoyed good use of funds – overall expenditure has remained within budget.	strengthening interventions) are adequately and mostly sufficient for reaching the initially planned results. So far as it is, resources have been used as planned; total expenditures have remained within budget. Internal controls are strong, as budget use is based on a tripartite review and approval arrangement – involving UNDP- the implementing partner, Gol as local partner, and the donor (USAID). With the history of strong financial policies of UNDP and USAID, the project enjoyed good use of funds – overall expenditure has remained within budget.
	2.3. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> In terms of the <b>timeliness of delivery of project funds and implementation of planned activities</b>, key informant interviews reveal that the project suffered significant delays at the initial phase, largely due to uncertain political and security environment created by the referendum in 2017 and the elections in 2018; but mostly managed to catch up in the subsequent years of 2019, 2020, and 2021.</p> <p>Although, another political event - the Federal Election that took place on 10 October 2021 also took away attention of policy-makers in most ministries and sectors – the decision-making centers, from the economic reform plans. These events delayed project implementation as no meaningful progress could be made with planning for and approval of work plans. These interruptions affected implementation of planned activities and funds utilization, and consequently contributed to the project being non-cost-extended between 2019 and 2020, and cost-extended to 31 December 2023.</p>	<p>In terms of the <b>timeliness of delivery of project funds and implementation of planned activities</b>, key informant interviews reveal that the project suffered significant delays at the initial phase, largely due to uncertain political and security environment created by the referendum in 2017 and the elections in 2018; but mostly managed to catch up in the subsequent years of 2019, 2020, and 2021.</p> <p>Although, another political event - the Federal Election that took place on 10 October 2021 also took away attention of policy-makers in most ministries and sectors – the decision-making centers, from the economic reform plans. These events delayed project implementation as no meaningful progress could be made with planning for and approval of work plans. These interruptions affected implementation of planned activities and funds utilization, and consequently contributed to the project being non-cost-extended between 2019 and 2020, and cost-extended to 31 December 2023.</p>
	2.4. What is the visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project? Has it been cost-effective in terms of promoting the project and its achievements?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> In terms of <b>visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project</b>, desk review reveals that in the project's final year in 2019, the Project Board/Steering Committee held an end-of-project review to capture lessons learned and discussed opportunities for the scaling up and to socialize the project results and lessons learnt with relevant audiences.<sup>75</sup></p> <p>Additionally, the project disseminated results of the mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) surveys to stakeholders.<sup>76</sup> The effective use of the communications campaign designed by the project's consultants and supported by the UNDP Communications team, enabled reaching 100 attendees and several others virtually with the results of the MSME survey, and ultimately, projected the visibility of the project to the governorates that participated in the survey. To reach a wider national audience, the project broadcast success stories, influencers' videos and other promotional videos related to MSMEs. To increase visibility to regional and global audiences, the survey reports have been published in the UNDP website in both Arabic and English.</p>	<p>In terms of <b>visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project</b>, desk review reveals that in the project's final year in 2019, the Project Board/Steering Committee held an end-of-project review to capture lessons learned and discussed opportunities for the scaling up and to socialize the project results and lessons learnt with relevant audiences.<sup>77</sup></p> <p>Additionally, the project disseminated results of the mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) surveys to stakeholders.<sup>78</sup> The effective use of the communications campaign designed by the project's consultants and supported by the UNDP Communications team, enabled reaching 100 attendees and several others virtually with the results of the MSME survey, and ultimately, projected the visibility of the project to the governorates that participated in the survey. To reach a wider national audience, the project broadcast success stories, influencers' videos and other promotional videos related to MSMEs. To increase visibility to regional and global audiences, the survey reports have been published in the UNDP website in both Arabic and English.</p>
	2.5. How is the project keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes? Does the monitoring and evaluation system put in place allow for continuous collection and	<b>Desk Review:</b> In terms of <b>keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes</b> , it is worth noting that the project scores well in terms of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), although it does not have an M&E Officer in its management structure). It is mostly due to the robust M&E system of the UNDP as	In terms of <b>keeping track of project progress on expected outputs and outcomes</b> , it is worth noting that the project scores well in terms of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), although it does not have an M&E Officer in its management structure. It is mostly due to the robust M&E system of the UNDP as an organization. Thus, the following actions

<sup>75</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.12.

<sup>76</sup> UNDP FFER progress report, 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021.

<sup>77</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.12.

<sup>78</sup> UNDP FFER progress report, 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021.

	analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?	<p>an organization. Thus, the following actions represent how the project keeps track of progress on expected results and allows for continuous learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly progress reports, shared and presented to UNDP senior management, USAID Project Focal Point, targeted Government sectors, and other donors;</li> <li>• Dissemination of various reform studies, surveys and assessments reports;</li> <li>• Bi-lateral (zoom) conversations with offices including supervisors, project staff, and deployed technical experts – both international and national experts; and</li> <li>• Lessons learnt and reflection sessions with relevant audiences.</li> </ul> <p>However, the project Results Framework contain indicator baseline and target data which are not disaggregated by gender (men and women) and location (Iraq-Federal and KRG). Desk review of progress reports reveal that disaggregated data on gender and human rights, and location did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system. This presented significant limitation when assessing the project's effectiveness in achieving its promise of contributing to human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment in both locations (GoI and KRG).</p> <p>Regarding reporting, progress reports reviewed (2019, 2020 &amp; 2021) are well structured in terms of reporting on what has been done, but not structured along the two outputs of the project.</p>	<p>represent how the project keeps track of progress on expected results and allows for continuous learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly progress reports, shared and presented to UNDP senior management, USAID Project Focal Point, targeted Government sectors, and other donors;</li> <li>• Dissemination of various reform studies, surveys and assessments reports;</li> <li>• Bi-lateral (zoom) conversations with offices including supervisors, project staff, and deployed technical experts – both international and national experts; and</li> <li>• Lessons learnt and reflection sessions with relevant audiences.</li> </ul> <p>However, the project Results Framework contain indicator baseline and target data which are not disaggregated by gender (men and women) and location (Iraq-Federal and KRG). Desk review of progress reports reveal that disaggregated data on gender and human rights, and location did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system. This presented significant limitation when assessing the project's effectiveness in achieving its promise of contributing to human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment in both locations (GoI and KRG).</p> <p>Regarding reporting, progress reports reviewed (2019, 2020 &amp; 2021) are well structured in terms of reporting on what has been done, but not structured along the two outputs of the project.</p>
<b>3. Effectiveness</b>	3.1. To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KI:</b> The analysis of the achievements of the project Outputs reveal that 71% (5/7) of the project Outputs have been achieved, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 outputs indicator targets are fully achieved; and</li> <li>• 2 output indicator targets are partially achieved.</li> </ul> <p>The deployment of UNDP recruited project manager, based at the UNDP Country Office in Baghdad, and directly supervised by UNDP, was a wise step that facilitated the delivery of project outputs, ensured accountability, and contributed to achievements of some of the project outputs. However, based on the progress on the achievements so far, it is too early to assess the project impact (or achievement of the project objectives).</p> <p>Specific to each Output, the main findings and conclusions of the evaluation are described below regarding the progress on the achievements of the project outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>Output 1 was focused on putting in place a functioning Economic Reform Unit (ERU) through establishing a systematic coordination mechanism within the ERU to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of the Government of Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, supporting the Unit with ICT equipment, and developing a communications strategy and advocacy plan. At the national level, the ERU was being coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office. The project achievement rates are presented in the table 4 below. From the table, the evaluation concludes that the project went well in regards to Output 1, achieving all the 4 indicators fully, but achieved targets under output 2 partially.</p>	<p><b>Desk Review:</b> The analysis of the achievements of the project Outputs reveal that 71% (5/7) of the project Outputs have been achieved, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 outputs indicator targets are fully achieved; and</li> <li>• 2 output indicator targets are partially achieved.</li> </ul> <p>The deployment of UNDP recruited project manager, based at the UNDP Country Office in Baghdad, and directly supervised by UNDP, was a wise step that facilitated the delivery of project outputs, ensured accountability, and contributed to achievements of some of the project outputs. However, based on the progress on the achievements so far, it is too early to assess the project impact (or achievement of the project objectives).</p> <p>Specific to each Output, the main findings and conclusions of the evaluation are described below regarding the progress on the achievements of the project outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>Output 1 was focused on putting in place a functioning Economic Reform Unit (ERU) through establishing a systematic coordination mechanism within the ERU to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of the Government of Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, supporting the Unit with ICT equipment, and developing a communications strategy and advocacy plan. At the national level, the ERU was being coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office.</p> <p>The Economic Reform Unit (ERU) was established in 2017 to coordinate reform efforts among various governmental sectors. The economic reform</p>

		<p>The Economic Reform Unit (ERU) was established in 2017 to coordinate reform efforts among various governmental sectors. The economic reform aims at reducing the role of the state in Iraq's economy and creating a diversified and dynamic economy, in part driven by the private sector. Even when the White Paper guiding the reform was formerly adopted by the Government of Iraq in May 2020<sup>79</sup>, the reform agenda has not yet gathered full support from the legislature. As reported by a key informant, a lot of awareness campaign and advocacy has to be done to continue to present the true intent of the economic reform.<sup>80</sup></p> <p>Output 2 was focused on mobilizing and deploying international experts in selected reform sectors/areas to carry out in-depth assessment and develop practical recommendations and action plans. It was also focused on deploying national experts within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries to support the implementation of the developed action plans. In addition, it was focused on developing and establishing a monitoring mechanism and indicators for use by ERU to measure progress. This output represents the core element of the economic reform, and the extent of its implementation will be analyzed in greater details.</p> <p>Analyzing the performance regarding the deployment of experts in selected reform sectors/areas and within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries, the evaluation revealed that the project represented a <i>'learning while doing'</i> approach as this encouraged active engagement of both international and national experts with the beneficiary sectors or ministries, and appeals and retains knowledge. It also encouraged inclusion and participation; desk review reveals that consultations tended to involve a wider audience in the sectors.<sup>81</sup> Deployment of experts followed a clear procedure agreed between UNDP, Government, USAID; and it was based on qualifications and experience in the sector, and not gender. The evaluation concludes that the project partially achieved its targets in regard to deployment of experts to support the economic reform plan, with the Output fully achieving in 1 indicator, and partially achieving in 2 indicators.</p>	<p>aims at reducing the role of the state in Iraq's economy and creating a diversified and dynamic economy, in part driven by the private sector. Even when the White Paper guiding the reform was formerly adopted by the Government of Iraq in May 2020<sup>82</sup>, the reform agenda has not yet gathered full support from the legislature. As reported by a key informant, a lot of awareness campaign and advocacy has to be done to continue to present the true intent of the economic reform.<sup>83</sup></p> <p>Output 2 was focused on mobilizing and deploying international experts in selected reform sectors/areas to carry out in-depth assessment and develop practical recommendations and action plans. It was also focused on deploying national experts within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries to support the implementation of the developed action plans. In addition, it was focused on developing and establishing a monitoring mechanism and indicators for use by ERU to measure progress. This output represents the core element of the economic reform, and the extent of its implementation will be analyzed in greater details.</p> <p>Analyzing the performance regarding the deployment of experts in selected reform sectors/areas and within the targeted government institutions or related line ministries, the evaluation revealed that the project represented a <i>'learning while doing'</i> approach as this encouraged active engagement of both international and national experts with the beneficiary sectors or ministries, and appeals and retains knowledge. It also encouraged inclusion and participation; desk review reveals that consultations tended to involve a wider audience in the sectors.<sup>84</sup> Deployment of experts followed a clear procedure agreed between UNDP, Government, USAID; and it was based on qualifications and experience in the sector, and not gender. The evaluation concludes that the project partially achieved its targets in regard to deployment of experts to support the economic reform plan, with the Output fully achieving in 1 indicator, and partially achieving in 2 indicators.</p>
	3.2.To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; FGD:</b> there was no deliberate Strategy focused on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups in this project, although parts of Strategy Number 3 in the FFER Project Document (2016-2019) states that <i>'While responding to specific needs through tailor-made interventions.....experts deployed to take into consideration importance of gender and the needs of vulnerable groups.'</i><sup>85</sup> Desk review reveal that of the 25 staff from the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) of the Ministry of Planning (MoP) who took part in the training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool, 22 were women</p>	<p>Based on desk review, there was no deliberate Strategy focused on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups in this project, although parts of Strategy Number 3 in the FFER Project Document (2016-2019) states that <i>'While responding to specific needs through tailor-made interventions.....experts deployed to take into consideration importance of gender and the needs of vulnerable groups.'</i><sup>86</sup> Desk review reveal that of the 25 staff from the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) of the Ministry of Planning (MoP) who took part in the</p>

<sup>79</sup><https://gds.gov.iq/iraqs-white-paper-for-economic-reforms-vision-and-key-objectives/>

<sup>80</sup> Project progress reports

<sup>81</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress reports

<sup>82</sup> <https://gds.gov.iq/iraqs-white-paper-for-economic-reforms-vision-and-key-objectives/>

<sup>83</sup> Project progress reports

<sup>84</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress reports

<sup>85</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal & FFER-KRG). Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.4

<sup>86</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal & FFER-KRG). Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.4



		(80%). Similarly, of the 20 CSO staff trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women, drawn from the governorates of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basra, Diwaniya and Nineveh. Additionally, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) survey conducted by the CSO in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, targeted formal and informal MSME enterprises, which according to key informants also targeted informal enterprises run by women. According to focus group with the team at CSO, there is a planned survey to cover 12 remaining governorates, which will also target informal enterprises run by women. The Evaluation concludes that, while women were not intentionally targeted in the project design, they were targeted during implementation.	training workshop on how to use Open Data Kit (ODK) survey tool, 22 were women (80%). Similarly, of the 20 CSO staff trained on Advanced Surveys, Field management, and Analysis of statistical data, 35% were women, drawn from the governorates of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basra, Diwaniya and Nineveh. Additionally, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) survey conducted by the CSO in the governorates of Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh, targeted formal and informal MSME enterprises, which according to key informants also targeted informal enterprises run by women. According to focus group with the team at CSO, there is a planned survey to cover 12 remaining governorates, which will also target informal enterprises run by women. The Evaluation concludes that, while women were not intentionally targeted in the project design, they were targeted during implementation.
	3.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes, including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?	<p><b>Desk Review &amp; KI:</b> The project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance contributed to smooth project implementation, and full and partial achievement of project results under Outputs 1 and 2, respectively. For example, UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID, The Netherlands, and Gol) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq; besides, it has mobilized new donors (The Trust Fund and INL) to support the economic reform plans.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that performance in the earlier years of the project were low, contributed to by low implementation rates, as the elections that took place in Iraq in 2018 and 2021, created a negative environment against smooth project implementation.<sup>87</sup> However, the project managed to catch up in the subsequent years of 2019 through to 2020, a performance that is commendable, and also contributed to the cost-extension of the project to 31 December 2023.</p>	<p>From the desk review, the project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance contributed to smooth project implementation, and full and partial achievement of project results under Outputs 1 and 2, respectively. For example, UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID, The Netherlands, and Gol) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq; besides, it has mobilized new donors (The Trust Fund and INL) to support the economic reform plans.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that performance in the earlier years of the project were low, contributed to by low implementation rates, as the elections that took place in Iraq in 2018 and 2021, created a negative environment against smooth project implementation.<sup>88</sup> However, the project managed to catch up in the subsequent years of 2019 through to 2020, a performance that is commendable, and also contributed to the cost-extension of the project to 31 December 2023.</p>
	3.4. To what extent have findings of data analysis or project best practices been used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?	<p><b>Desk Review:</b> Desk review reveals that 'best practices' had not been documented at the time of the mid-term evaluation, but data analysis has been used and lessons drawn and used in project improvements.</p> <p>By conducting data analysis and identifying lessons, the project was able to capitalize on its successes and taking note of its limitations.</p> <p><b>Limitation No.1:</b> The M&amp;E Plan and Results Framework did not cater for indicators disaggregated baseline and target data on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups. This presented significant limitations when assessing the project's strategies for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>This limitation was addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvements in project design (refer to revised Project Document 2020-2023):</b> In the revised Project Document (2020-2023), there are specific indicators designated to measure number of women engaged in the economic reform roadmap at the policy level (e.g., Output 1, Indicator No. 1.2. No. of Women Members in the Reform Project Teams; Output 2, Indicator No. 2.5. No. of Iraqi officials trained by gender).<sup>89</sup></li> <li>• <b>Improvements in reporting on women engagement on the economic reform roadmap:</b> The project addressed this by partially disaggregating data by gender in the progress reports.</li> </ul>	<p>Data analysis does not necessarily mean using a complicated computer analysis package. It means taking the data collected and looking at it in comparison to the questions for which answers are needed or targets set to be achieved. Desk review reveals that 'best practices' had not been documented at the time of the mid-term evaluation, but data analysis has been used and lessons drawn and used in project improvements.</p> <p>By conducting data analysis and identifying lessons, the project was able to capitalize on its successes and taking note of its limitations.</p> <p><b>Limitation No.1:</b> The M&amp;E Plan and Results Framework did not cater for indicators disaggregated baseline and target data on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups. This presented significant limitations when assessing the project's strategies for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>This limitation was addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvements in project design (refer to revised Project Document 2020-2023):</b> In the revised Project Document (2020-2023), there are specific indicators designated to measure number of women engaged in the economic reform roadmap at the policy level (e.g., Output 1, Indicator No. 1.2.</li> </ul>

<sup>87</sup> Key Informant

<sup>88</sup> Key Informant

<sup>89</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Revised Project Document 2020-2023. p.15.

			<p>No. of Women Members in the Reform Project Teams; Output 2, Indicator No. 2.5. No. of Iraqi officials trained by gender).<sup>90</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Improvements in reporting on women engagement on the economic reform roadmap:</b> The project addressed this by partially disaggregating data by gender in the progress reports.</li> </ul>
	<p>3.5. To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Regional levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and regional levels?</p>	<p><b>Desk Review, FGD &amp; KII:</b> The project was and still is implemented by Gol, in close coordination with UNDP, USAID and other donors through all the phases of work plan development and budgeting, deployment of international and national experts, implementation of technical assistance, reporting, and reviews. At the national level, the coordination is done through the Steering Committee and joint technical meetings between UNDP FFER teams and senior Gol officials. This coordination efforts led to Gol giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that Gol general budget for project implementation have been prepared, approved and launched for use in time.</p> <p>At UNDP country office level, the FFER-Federal project team communicate systematically and cooperate closely with the Country Office in Baghdad, and with the Project Board. The evidence of the cooperation between UNDP and Gol is revealed in the co-funding mechanism from Gol (in staff time and office space). The project also expanded its cooperation with other partners. T</p> <p>In terms of capacity, the project has developed capacity for survey data collection using online data collection tool (Open Data Kit – ODK), with a large proportion of Central Statistical Organization female technical staff at national and governorates levels trained to use this data tool in the mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) surveys.</p> <p>These coordination, cooperation, and capacity building efforts have not only positively influenced the full achievement of some output targets, but also improved the dissemination of the project achievements, increased the visibility and the effectiveness of the project outreach efforts, and contributed to sharing lessons learnt and institutionalization of the knowledge management from the project implementation.</p>	<p>Evaluation findings reveal that the project was and still is implemented by Gol, in close coordination with UNDP, USAID and other donors through all the phases of work plan development and budgeting, deployment of international and national experts, implementation of technical assistance, reporting, and reviews. At the national level, the coordination is done through the Steering Committee and joint technical meetings between UNDP FFER teams and senior Gol officials. This coordination efforts led to Gol giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that Gol general budget for project implementation have been prepared, approved and launched for use in time.</p> <p>At UNDP country office level, the FFER-Federal project team communicate systematically and cooperate closely with the Country Office in Baghdad, and with the Project Board. The evidence of the cooperation between UNDP and Gol is revealed in the co-funding mechanism from Gol (in staff time and office space). The project also expanded its cooperation with other partners.</p> <p>In terms of capacity, the project has developed capacity for survey data collection using online data collection tool (Open Data Kit – ODK), with a large proportion of Central Statistical Organization female technical staff at national and governorates levels trained to use this data tool in the mixed formal and informal Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized enterprises (MSME) surveys.</p> <p>These coordination, cooperation, and capacity building efforts have not only positively influenced the full achievement of some output targets, but also improved the dissemination of the project achievements, increased the visibility and the effectiveness of the project outreach efforts, and contributed to sharing lessons learnt and institutionalization of the knowledge management from the project implementation.</p> <p>According to key informants, there is some hesitation in moving towards public private partnership (PPP) because the retirement pension and social security policies make the public sector employment more attractive than the private sector. By the time of the design of the FFER project in 2016, the public sector employment made up about 62% of the wage earning employees in Iraq.<sup>91</sup> Although, this has since experienced a decreasing trend; 38% in 2019 and 35% in 2020, it is projected to pick up and reach 43% in 2023.<sup>92</sup> Further, according to a key informant, about 37 state-owned enterprises which have since closed have not been privatized, and are still paying wages to employees, revealing the significance of the public sector in the livelihood of households.<sup>93</sup> This scenario, however, has the disadvantage of altering the incentives for hard</p>

<sup>90</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Revised Project Document 2020-2023. p.15.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>92</sup> Iraq Employment rate: <https://tradingeconomics.com/iraq/employment-rate>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

<sup>93</sup> Key informants

			work and productivity; values that private sector investors strongly encourage. <sup>94</sup>
<b>4.Sustainability</b>	4.1. Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?	<b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> In terms of <b>suitability of strategies developed and implemented for sustainability</b> , it is mostly premature to assess their suitability. However, some strategies, like the developed staff capacity for the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) online survey data collection tool at the CSO of the Ministry of Planning will likely remain and the expertise can be drawn upon by other Gol sectors that may need to conduct surveys or censuses.	In terms of <b>suitability of strategies developed and implemented for sustainability</b> , it is mostly premature to assess their suitability. However, some strategies, like the developed staff capacity for the use of Open Data Kit (ODK) online survey data collection tool at the CSO of the Ministry of Planning will likely remain and the expertise can be drawn upon by other Gol sectors that may need to conduct surveys or censuses.
	4.2. Are there any financial, social, political, or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? To what extent are the activity results likely to be sustained in the long-term after; a) completion of activities and handover to end-user, and b) after the closure of FFERs? What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?	<b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> The evaluation examined the <b>financial, social and political risks affecting sustainability of the economic reforms plans</b> . In terms of <b>financial risks</b> , the outlook is mix. Key informants reveal that the current status of the economic reform can only progress if further external financial assistance is continued. However, desk review reveals that the financial sustainability risk is low at least up to 2024. The economic reform is UNDP's strategic priority for Iraq. Support to economic reform in Iraq is in the <b>UNDP CPD for Iraq (2020-2024) Outcome 2: Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive gender sensitive and diversified economic growth with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth and vulnerable populations</b> . <sup>95</sup> This demonstrates the ability of the partnership to foresee financial risks to the economic reform plans and incorporate strategies to address it at a strategic level.  In regards to the <b>political risks</b> , the project suffered significant delays in most phases of implementation; uncertain political and security environment brought about by the referendum in 2017 and the elections in 2018, and another political event - the Federal Election that took place in October 2021 also took away attention of most ministries and sectors away from the economic reform plans. At the time of the Midterm Evaluation, the national budget had not yet been presented to the House of Parliament, as a new government had not yet been formed <sup>96</sup> . These events present political risks as no meaningful progress on the economic reform plans can be made without the involvement of political leadership.	The evaluation examined the <b>financial, social and political risks affecting sustainability of the economic reforms plans</b> . In terms of <b>financial risks</b> , the outlook is mix. Key informants reveal that the current status of the economic reform can only progress if further external financial assistance is continued. However, desk review reveals that the financial sustainability risk is low at least up to 2024. The economic reform is UNDP's strategic priority for Iraq. Support to economic reform in Iraq is in the <b>UNDP CPD for Iraq (2020-2024) Outcome 2: Improved people-centered economic policies and legislation contribute to inclusive gender sensitive and diversified economic growth with focus on increasing income security and decent work for women, youth and vulnerable populations</b> . <sup>97</sup> This demonstrates the ability of the partnership to foresee financial risks to the economic reform plans and incorporate strategies to address it at a strategic level.  In regards to the <b>political risks</b> , the project suffered significant delays in most phases of implementation; uncertain political and security environment brought about by the referendum in 2017 and the elections in 2018, and another political event - the Federal Election that took place in October 2021 also took away attention of most ministries and sectors away from the economic reform plans. At the time of the Midterm Evaluation, the national budget had not yet been presented to the House of Parliament, as a new government had not yet been formed <sup>98</sup> . These events present political risks as no meaningful progress on the economic reform plans can be made without the involvement of political leadership.
	4.3. What are the major factors (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, security etc.) which have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project, as of end 2021?	<b>Desk Review &amp; KII:</b> In regards to <b>socio-economic sustainability</b> , desk review and key informant interviews reveal that the Gol is still faced with socio-economic crisis. There is some hesitation of the public moving towards public private partnership (PPP) because the retirement pension and social security policies make the public sector employment more attractive than the private sector. According to key informants, this reinforces the public's reliance on the government for most of the services, including employment; thus weakening the potential of the project for economic reform in this area.  In regards to <b>environmental sustainability</b> , this was not specifically targeted by the project, as the technical assistance, the model for implementing the economic reform, was designed as a non-environmental intervention.	In regards to <b>socio-economic sustainability</b> , desk review and key informant interviews reveal that the Gol is still faced with socio-economic crisis. There is some hesitation of the public moving towards public private partnership (PPP) because the retirement pension and social security policies make the public sector employment more attractive than the private sector. According to key informants, this reinforces the public's reliance on the government for most of the services, including employment; thus weakening the potential of the project for economic reform in this area.  In regards to <b>environmental sustainability</b> , this was not specifically targeted by the project, as the technical assistance, the model for

<sup>94</sup> The Unfulfilled Promise of Oil and Growth.The Growth-Employment Nexus – World Bank Document. <https://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

<sup>95</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.2.

<sup>96</sup> Key informant

<sup>97</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.2.

<sup>98</sup> Key informant

		<p>In terms of <b>institutional framework</b>, the project is focused on providing technical assistance to institutions of government, involving deploying international and national experts. Evaluation findings reveal that institutional and individual capacity sustainability aspects are promising in terms of knowledge acquired and skills developed around large studies, surveys, and assessments, although it is premature to say all these have been institutionalized. However, the government institutions involved acquired valuable experience in analysis of issues that helps to shape their further analysis of economic reform plans.<sup>99</sup></p> <p>Regarding <b>governance and security</b>, the project will only lead to the economic reform if good governance and security prevails.</p>	<p>implementing the economic reform, was designed as a non-environmental intervention.</p> <p>In terms of <b>institutional framework</b>, the project is focused on providing technical assistance to institutions of government, involving deploying international and national experts. Evaluation findings reveal that institutional and individual capacity sustainability aspects are promising in terms of knowledge acquired and skills developed around large studies, surveys, and assessments, although it is premature to say all these have been institutionalized. However, the government institutions involved acquired valuable experience in analysis of issues that helps to shape their further analysis of economic reform plans.<sup>100</sup></p> <p>Regarding <b>governance and security</b>, the project will only lead to the economic reform if good governance and security prevails.</p>
	4.4. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?	<p><b>KII:</b> UNDP has been and remains a trusted partner of the GoI. In particular, it has supported capacity development in Iraq, and mobilized external resources for this cause. In the revised FFER Project Document (2020-2023), UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID and The Netherlands) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq. In has also mobilized new donors to support the economic reform plans. The new donors reveal the contribution of UNDP's actions to the sustainability of project outputs.</p>	<p>According to key informants, UNDP has been and remains a trusted partner of the GoI. In particular, it has supported capacity development in Iraq, and mobilized external resources for this cause. In the revised FFER Project Document (2020-2023), UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID and The Netherlands) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq. In has also mobilized new donors to support the economic reform plans. The new donors reveal the contribution of UNDP's actions to the sustainability of project outputs.</p>
	4.5. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	<p>Desk review reveal that documentation of lessons learned and sharing with appropriate parties was not conducted in the early years of the project in 2017 and 2018, but picked up from 2019 to 2021, when the project implementation gained momentum.</p>	<p>Desk review reveal that documentation of lessons learned and sharing with appropriate parties was not conducted in the early years of the project in 2017 and 2018, but picked up from 2019 to 2021, when the project implementation gained momentum.</p>

<sup>99</sup> Key informant

<sup>100</sup> Key informant

Annex 6. Work plan / Key Milestones, Deliverables and Responsibilities

Phase / Activity / Milestone/ Deliverables	Estimated number of days	Date of completion	Place	Responsibility
<b>1. Inception Phase</b>				
1.1. Debriefing meeting with UNDP project teams in Baghdad and Erbil	1 day	Within five days of contract signing	UNDP or remote	Project Management teams and Evaluator
1.2. Sharing of the relevant documents with External Evaluator	-	At the time of contract signing	Via email	Project Managers
1.3. Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	5 days	Within five days of contract signing	Home-based	External Evaluator
1.4. Submission of inception report (15 pages maximum excluding annexes)	-	Within five days of contract signing	Via email	External Evaluator
<b>1.5. Deliverable 1: Comments and approval of inception reports</b>	-	Within seven days of submission of the inception report	UNDP	Project Managers
<b>2. Data Collection Phase</b>				
2.1. Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews, and focus groups	10 days (5 days in Baghdad, and 5 days in Erbil)	Within two weeks of contract signing	In country with field visits	UNDP to organize with partners, project staff, including visa
<b>2.2. Deliverable 2: Debriefing to UNDP Project management teams in Baghdad &amp; Erbil</b>	-	Within 10 days of in-country visit	In-country	External Evaluator
<b>3. Data Analysis and Report Synthesis Phase</b>				
3.1. Preparation of two draft evaluation reports (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (5 pages)	10 days	Within two weeks of completion of field mission	Home-based	External Evaluator
<b>3.2. Deliverable 3: Draft reports submission (one for each project)</b>	-	Within one week of completion of field mission	Home-based	External Evaluator
3.3. Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within one week of submission of the draft evaluation report	UNDP	Project Managers & Management teams
3.4. Final debriefing with UNDP Project management teams (including senior management)	1 day	Within one week of receipt of comments	UNDP or remotely	Project managers & External Evaluator
<b>3.5. Deliverable 4: Final evaluation report</b> (one for each project) incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office	2 days	Within two weeks of final debriefing	UNDP or remotely	Project manager & External Evaluator
<b>3.6. Brief summary reports</b> (within 5 pages) linking the final evaluation findings to the country programme outcome 2 focusing on Growing the economy for all, upon review of the relevant documents.	1 day	Within two weeks of final debriefing	UNDP or remotely	External Evaluator
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 days</b>			

Annex 7. *Audit trail*

Annex 8. *Lists of FFER project stakeholders consulted and interviewed*

No.	Institution	Number of Persons Consulted/Interviewed	
		Males	Females
1	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	1	-
2	Prime Minister's Office (PMO)	1	-
3	Economic Reform Unit	1	-
4	General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (CoMSEC)	2	-
5	Ministry of Finance - ERU	1	-
6	Ministry of Planning - Central Statistical Organization (CSO)	4	1
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>10 (90%)</b>	<b>1 (10%)</b>
	<b>Grand total</b>	<b>11</b>	

#### Annex 9. *List of documents reviewed*

1. Evaluation Guidelines of the United Nations Development Programme. Source: <http://www.undp.org/evaluation>
2. Iraq Employment rate: <https://tradingeconomics.com/iraq/employment-rate>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.
3. OECD (FEBRUARY 2020). BETTER CRITERIA FOR BETTER EVALUATION. Source: <https://www.oecd.org/dac>
4. Ritche, J; Lewis, J, & Elam, G. (2003). Designing and selecting samples. In Jane Ritche & Jane Lewis (Eds.), Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers (pp 77-108). Sage.
5. The Unfulfilled Promise of Oil and Growth. The Growth-Employment Nexus – World Bank Document. <https://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.
6. UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.
7. UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Annex: Integrated results and resources framework (2014-2017). p.8.
8. UNDP (2009). Capacity Development Primer. The Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle. UNDP Bureau of Development Policy. New York, USA.
9. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. Terms of Reference for the Midterm Evaluation of the UNDP's Funding facility for Economic Reform, 8 February 2022.
10. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD), 2 December 2019.
11. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. Approved 29 January 2017.
12. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document (Revised) for period: 2020-2023.
13. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, Iraq, 1 October – 31 December 2021.
14. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, Iraq, 1 July – 31 September 2021.
15. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, Iraq, 1 April – 30 June 2021.
16. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, Iraq, 1 January – 31 March 2021.
17. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. Suggested minimum content/guidance on Inception Report Template.
18. UNDP IEO|Independent Evaluation Office, New York, USA. Annex 3: UNDP Evaluation Report Template and quality standards. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, version 2019.
19. UNDP IEO|Independent Evaluation Office, New York, USA. Annex 2: Summary of common data collection methods/sources used in UNDP evaluations. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, version 2019.
20. UNDP Outcome-level evaluation: A Companion Guide – Sample Evaluation Matrix, p.33-35.
21. UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, Source: <http://www.undp.org/eo/handbook>