



## United Nations Development Programme

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

**Country of the Evaluation:** Iraq

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

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

**Name and address of the Evaluator:** Dr. Patrick Orotin

Email: [patrickorotin2006@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:patrickorotin2006@yahoo.co.uk)

Phone: +256 772 389 036

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mid-term Evaluation of the UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was conducted under the supervision of the Programme Pillar for Economic Diversification at UNDP Iraq Country Office. The Evaluator would like to thank the UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Zena Ali Ahmad, for the opportunity to perform and complete the mid-term evaluation. Appreciation also goes to Mr. Deah Mohammed, the National Project Officer for the UNDP FFER project, for coordinating access to project documents and information. The Evaluator also conveys his appreciation to the rest of the FFER-KRG project team for providing valuable information that helped in the production of this draft final evaluation report. In addition, thanks go to the entire FFER project team who reviewed the Inception Report and ensured that the methodology and data collection tools aligned with the necessary UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and UNEG ethical and compliance requirements before the actual data collection commenced. Finally, I thank all the FFER-KRG project partners and representatives of beneficiaries who put aside their time to participate in the interviews.

### 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 in the Kurdistan Regional Government	
Atlas ID Number	00101758	
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	28 September 2016	
Project Date	Start	Planned end
	1 October 2016	31 December 2023
Project budget	US\$ 8,001,785	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	US\$ 2,427,137.93	
Funding source	<b>Total Project Budget:</b> US\$ 7,984, 049 <b>Sources:</b> a) United States Agency for International Development (USAID): US\$ 7,100,000 b) The Netherlands – US\$ 267,144 c) UNDP – US\$ 183,708 d) Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) – US\$ 450,933.	
Implementing party <sup>12</sup>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	
Evaluation information		
Evaluation type	Project evaluation	
	Midterm Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	1 October 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.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE AND OPENING PAGE .....	i
PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .....	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	vii
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1. Evaluation Approach .....	6
4.2. Methods of data collection, data source, and rationale for their selection .....	6
4.3. Data collection tools, procedures, and sampling plan and frame .....	7
4.4. Stakeholders participation .....	8
4.5. Evaluation Management .....	8
4.6. Ethical considerations .....	9
4.7. Background information on the Evaluator .....	9
4.8. Major limitations of the methodology .....	9
<b>5. DATA ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1. Relevance .....	11
6.2. Effectiveness .....	16
6.3. Efficiency .....	25
6.4. Sustainability .....	29
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>8. RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>9. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES.....</b>	<b>36</b>
9.1. Lessons learned .....	36
9.2. Good practices .....	36

### Tables

Table 1. <i>Phases of the midterm evaluation</i> .....	6
Table 2. <i>Methods of data collection, data source, and rationale for their selection</i> .....	7
Table 3. <i>Data analysis methods applied and rationale for selection</i> .....	10
Table 4. <i>Achievements of the project under output 2</i> .....	18
Table 5. <i>Technical Assistance completed by the project</i> .....	18
Table 6. <i>Partnerships for Economic Reform, 2016-2023</i> .....	24
Table 7. <i>Contributions toward the Funding Facility for Economic Reform, 2016-2023</i> .....	25

Table 8. <i>Budget utilisation, 2017-2021</i> .....	28
Table 9. <i>Status of lessons learnt documented</i> .....	32

## Figures

Figure 1. <i>Evaluation stakeholders by category and sex</i> .....	8
Figure 2. <i>Concept of the Human Rights-Based Approach</i> .....	15
Figure 3. <i>Contribution of the project to the SDGs</i> .....	15
Figure 4. <i>UNDP's Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle</i> .....	35

## Charts

Chart 1. <i>Initial project management structure</i> .....	26
Chart 2. <i>Revised project management structure</i> .....	26

## Annexes

Annex 1. <i>Terms of Reference for the Midterm Evaluation Consultant</i> .....	37
Annex 2. <i>Evaluation Matrix</i> .....	47
Annex 3. <i>Code of conduct for Evaluation in the UN System signed by the Evaluator</i> .....	50
Annex 4. <i>Data collection tools</i> .....	51
Annex 5. <i>Data analysis plan</i> .....	58
Annex 6. <i>Workplan, Key Milestones, Deliverables, and Responsibilities</i> .....	79
Annex 7. <i>Audit trail</i> .....	80
Annex 8. <i>List of FFER project stakeholders consulted and interviewed</i> .....	85
Annex 9. <i>List of documents reviewed</i> .....	86

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

BOT	Board of Tourism
CoM	Council of Ministers
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease -19
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
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
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoI	Government of Iraq
HQ	Headquarter
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
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
MoAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
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
PPMIS	Public Pension Management Information System
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
RBM	Results Based Management
RMC	Reform Management Cell
SAGE	Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SPMIS	Social Protection Management Information System
SSN	Social Safety Net
TA	Technical Assistance

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
WHO	World Health Organisation

## 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) 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 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 Reform in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

### Description of the Intervention

The project purpose is to support the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in ensuring the implementation of the economic reform. The Project is positioned as financing instruments that are used to channel high-caliber international expertise and support into top priority reform initiatives drawn from the governments adopted 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 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 Kurdistan Regional Government 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 KRG, involving key informant interviews and focus group discussions, and involved a total of 13 persons (9 men and 4 women), with representatives from targeted stakeholders, namely; Board of Investment, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economy - Pension, Ministry of Finance and Economy – Tax Administration, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism – Board of Tourism, and UNDP. The agreed process for selection of participants was based on longer experience with the project technical assistance. Participation of the key partners was necessary to promote ownership, ensure accountability, and facilitate reaching evidence-based conclusions and utilization-focused recommendations for UNDP, the donors and implementing partners.

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

The evaluation did not face any significant limitations in terms of available data. 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.

## Findings

From the findings, the project is relevant, it considers the policy priorities of the KRG on economic reform, aligns with the UNDP Country Programme Outcomes for Iraq, UNDP Strategic Plan, and the policy priority of the SDGs. 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.



The project did not implement activities under Output 1 since the economic reform plan is still not endorsed by the KRG High Economic Council, and the activities under this output have been put on hold. The project expects that the reform plan would be approved in 2022, so that the project can start providing technical assistances to the government, to ensure the right committees are established and action plans developed.

The project performed overall well regarding all its targets in Output 2, despite significant interruptions by the referendum and elections in 2017 and 2018, respectively. 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 FFER-KRG 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.

The effectiveness and the efficiency are key strengths of the project judged from the achievement of all the output results, implementation of planned activities, and utilization of funds. It overachieved in 1 output indicator target of deployed national experts (130%) and fully achieved in all the other 2 indicator targets (100%) under Output 2. Based on the desk review and key informant interviews, the national deployment went more smoothly than international deployments, created a pool of national experts who can be contracted on short notice, and generated some good practice, in terms of learning and inclusion or participation. International deployments contributed benefits of international learning and development of national capacity for economic reform, who can be contracted on similar projects within KRG or beyond.

The project delivered successful capacity development initiatives for economic reform, notably, the development of the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which has since improved the timeliness of payment of pension to beneficiaries in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

When budgets versus utilization were 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 the referendum and 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.

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. PPMIS) developed are running and have started to attract co-funding from government. In terms of political and security sustainability, the prospects are promising. The relatively calm political situation in the KRI helped the project to run more smoothly. In terms of financial sustainability, prospects in some cases are partially promising and in some cases weak or even premature to judge.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, the conclusion on the analyzed aspects shows 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.

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 KRG Entities capacities and reinforce it using good practices in capacity development.

### **Lessons learned**

- a) Each KRG 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*'. 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.
- b) *Deployment of international experts generate more logistical challenges and are more demanding than national Experts.* They increase significantly the burden on the project implementing team and/or the UN agency tasked with the project management and require huge efforts and time resources to be able to identify a suitable expert for deployment. This should be factored in during project design, including while setting targets, milestones, and defining the criteria for international deployments, drafting the Terms of Reference, and determining the expected time resources from the project team to successfully supervise the deployment.

### **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 in the Kurdistan Regional Government. 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 Reform in KRG.

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 as the ToR did not include evaluation questions for 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.

---

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

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

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

In response to this, UNDP in partnership with KRG introduced Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) in the KRI. The FFER project is intended to support KRG in ensuring the implementation of the reform roadmap. The project is positioned as financing instruments that is used to channel high-caliber international expertise and support into top priority reform initiatives drawn from the KRG's adopted Economic reform roadmap. 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.

FFER project in coordination with the regional government 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 roadmap.

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

<sup>3</sup> Source:

<https://cdn.gov.krd/Ministries/Ministry%20of%20Planning/English/Publications/Reports/Ministry%20Reports/10.%20Reforming%20the%20KRG%20Reforming%20the%20Economy%20for%20Shared%20Prosperity.pdf>

	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.
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.

**Original project duration:** 1 October 2016 – 30 September 2020. **Extended to:** 31 December 2023.

**Funding and Funding source: Total Funding:** US\$ 7,984,049; **Funding sources:** (a) United States Agency for International Development (USAID): To KRG - US\$ 7,100,000; (b) The Netherlands- US\$ 267,144, (c) UNDP – US\$ 183,708, and (d) Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) – US\$ 450,933.

### 3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

**3.1. Scope:** The scope of the evaluation focuses on the Funding Facility for Economic Reform – Kurdistan Regional Government (FFER-KRG). 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>
<b>Efficiency:</b> the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs.	<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>
<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.	<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-KRG project midterm evaluation engaged with key project stakeholders. 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 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-KRG 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.	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 preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations.	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.  Presentation of the Draft Evaluation Report to UNDP's Senior Management and 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 KRG stakeholders and FFER-KRG Project Management team, and one focus group discussion with representatives of beneficiaries at the Directorate of Pension), 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 and Project Documents (UNDP Strategic Plans 2014-2017, 2018-2021; 2022-2025; CPD 2016-2020 &amp; 2020-2024; FFER project 2016-2020)</li> <li>• Results Framework and M&amp;E plan</li> <li>• Progress Reports</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 and Project Documents (UNDP Strategic Plans 2014-2017, 2018-2021; 2022-2025; CPD 2016-2020 &amp; 2020-2024; FFER project 2016-2020)</li> <li>• Results Framework and M&amp;E plan</li> <li>• Progress Reports</li> <li>• SDGs</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 KRG project stakeholders and FFER-KRG Project Management teams</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 Directorate of Pension</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 6-8 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 (identified in **Annex 8**, whose experiences are considered in this evaluation), and selection of

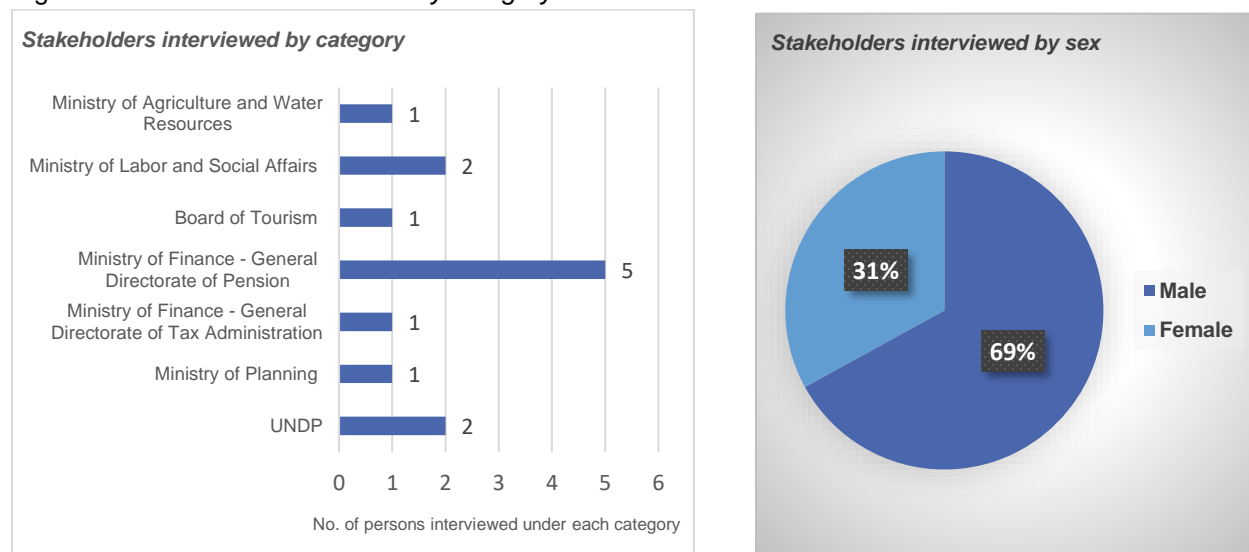
individuals to participate in the KII and FGD was based on in-depth experience with the project, and use was made of FFER-KRG Project Management team to identify the right people to interview.

Primary data was collected during in-country mission to KRG, involving key informant interviews and focus group discussions, and involved a total of 13 persons (9 men and 4 women), with representatives from targeted stakeholders, namely; Board of Investment, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economy - Pension, Ministry of Finance and Economy – Tax Administration, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism – Board of Tourism, and UNDP (**see Annex 8**). The agreed process for selection of participants was based on longer experience with the project technical assistance. Engagement of key partners with longer experience was intended to ensure in-depth experiences were adequately documented and also to ensure validity (or accuracy in measurement of project performance), credibility (or reliability of evidence generated) and interpretation of evaluation results. The maximum number of key informants or FGDs were two (2). This number is justifiable because more KII or FGD meetings do not necessarily lead to more information, and the strength of inference which can be made from KII increases rapidly once factors start to recur with more than one participant or meeting.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.4. Stakeholders participation

The evaluation took into consideration representation from the key institutions selected for interviews, with data disaggregated by stakeholders' category and by sex. The list of stakeholders that participated in the evaluation are presented in **Annex 8**, and the breakdown by stakeholders' 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 FFER-KRG 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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

Management team was also tasked with providing both substantive and logistical support to the Evaluator, making refinement to the evaluation work plan, organize key partners and beneficiaries for interviews, and provide input at key stages of the evaluation.

#### 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 Policies, including Evaluation guidelines during COVID-19, and OECD evaluation principles and guidelines and DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.<sup>5</sup> Based on the confidentiality requirements stated in the data collection tools (**see Annexes 4.1 & 4.2**), and **Code No.3** in the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (**see Annex 3**), 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 (Teaching and Learning). 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 aspect of project **impact** did not set questions in the Terms of Reference to measure impact.
- 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.

---

<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-KRG 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-KRG project 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 Evaluator also deemed it too early to assess impact at mid-point.

### 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 with the vast majority fleeing to Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In order to strengthen capacities of the KRG to deliver adequate services and provide economic opportunities for its citizens and displaced people (both internally displaced persons – IDPs and Syrian refugees), an Economic Reform Roadmap was developed with the support of the World Bank in 2016.<sup>6</sup> From the Roadmap, the Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) was designed in 2016, as a joint measure with KRG to consolidate the fragile peace through a structured economic reform. Thus, it was clear that the context from which the FFER-KRG was designed was understood and accounted for.

However, after the approval of the project for implementation on 28th September 2016<sup>7</sup>, its start was interrupted by a series of security and political uncertainties. For example, desk review and consultations with key project stakeholders revealed that between September and October 2017, a Referendum for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to gain independence from the Federal Government of Iraq took place. This created a situation of uncertainty in the security environment of the region, and affected the smooth start of the project in the region. This was followed by the KRG elections that took place in October 2018, which also negatively affected the early phase of project implementation in KRI; there was no government to approve project activities, as it took about 7 months for the new Kurdistan Regional Government to form. Over time, the Kurdistan region has enjoyed relative peace, and security improvements in the region have allowed the project to increase UNDP support; significant progress has been registered with the project implementation in the region.

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

<sup>7</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 – 31 December 2019. p.1.

In regards to other changes during the project period, 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 FFER-KRG 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 to ensure continuity in project implementation.

#### **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 policies and priorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). 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 Roadmap, which means that UNDP effectively responds to what the Kurdistan Regional Government expresses as necessary. UNDP developed the FFER-KRG in response to KRG requests for the needed technical assistance to support the implementation of the Economic Reform Roadmap, as stipulated in its policy document: New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019.<sup>8</sup> 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>9</sup>, the CPD is demonstrating alignment with the reform priorities and policies of the KRG.

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 regional institutions based on evidence from assessments or studies was cost-efficient and effective, as those ministries and sectors that received it expressed success with the project response.

Specific evidence serve as testimony to the relevance of the technical assistance, and therefore the project. According to a key informant from the Ministry of Finance and Economy - Pension in the KRG, the project responded to the real need that KRG was seeking funds to address. In particular, the project digitalized the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS). Through the PPMIS, paper-based data entry and delays in processing of pensioners payments has been reduced. The PPMIS has been designed for 4 governorates in the KRI and is operational in the 4 governorates. By enabling pensioners to access their pension easily, it is contributing to a wider unintended effect of the project, which is SDG 3: *Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services*. Because of the success of the PPMIS, and to demonstrate ownership of the project, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as Government contribution to procure IT equipment (computers, internet services, etc.) to support the functionality of the PPMIS<sup>10</sup>; a further testimony of the proper alignment of the project to national and regional reform priorities and policies. By meeting this important need of the beneficiaries (capacity development for pension reform), the project demonstrated effectiveness in responding to a regional priority. Similarly, by responding to the policy and priority needs of the government, the project was clearly relevant and so had greater support of governmental partners.

To enable provision of further support that responds to the changes in the regional context and the new and emerging regional priorities, KRG and UNDP agreed to extent the project to 31 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 KRG until 31 December 2023.<sup>11</sup>

The evaluation concludes that 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*

<sup>8</sup> New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019. Source: <https://gov.krd/english/government/agenda/>

<sup>9</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.8

<sup>10</sup> Key Informant

<sup>11</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project progress report. 1 April 2021 - 30 June 2021.

*Institutions*<sup>12</sup>, the New Kurdistan Regional Government Cabinet Agenda, 2019, and 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>13</sup>, and 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*, 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-KRG original project document (2016-2020) 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 original project document has two components: (a) *Support the development of implementation modalities in close partnerships with the Ministry of Planning and involving key assigned officials from line ministries to compose the Sectoral Task Forces*, and (b) *Support operationalization of the economic reform roadmap through the deployment of technical assistance to carry out additional analytical work within each defined reform area and develop an action plan*.<sup>14</sup> And there are two outputs: Output 1: *'Structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalised'*, and Output 2: *'The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance'*.<sup>15</sup>

The two original project outputs align with Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Iraq (2016-2020): *Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels*, and Output 2.1 of the CPD (2016-2020): *Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation*.<sup>16</sup> 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 KRG want to achieve through the FFER-KRG project (Economic Reform) has been clearly articulated in both documents; the FFER Project Document (2016-2020) and the CPD (2016-2020).

From a structural point of view, both documents emphasize establishing Economic Reform Roadmap to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors in KRG, and how the Economic Reform Roadmap would function has also been clearly articulated with key activities listed under each stated output.

In the project Results Framework, Output 1 has four indicators, and Output 2 has three indicators. 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 Outputs, and do not follow the RBM principle for SMART indicators.<sup>17</sup> For example, under Output 1, Indicator 1.1 is phrased as; *'Task Forces are established'*.<sup>18</sup> The same is true for Indicators under Output 2. For example, Indicator 2.1 is phrased as; *'Technical experts within the Task Force or related line ministries are deployed'*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020). Annex: Integrated results and resources framework. p.8

<sup>13</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 1 October 2016 - 30 September, 2020, p.4

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>16</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020). Annex: Integrated results and resources framework. p.8

<sup>17</sup> UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, p.63. Source: <http://www.undp.org/ea/handbook>

<sup>18</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 1 October 2016 - 30 September, 2020, p.8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.9.



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>20</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 technical experts', and 'deploy national technical experts'; the number of international experts were almost double that of national experts. The evaluation concludes that the project design was realistic in this instance, especially that KRG lacked the required professionals and scientific experts to provide the kind of expertise the reform required;<sup>21</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 (2020-2023) show that international technical assistance is being scaled down as national capacity picks up.<sup>22</sup>

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

This evaluation concludes that FFER-KRG 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 is concerned.

Key elements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) are reflected in the project design, with both '*right holders*' (KRG 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 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

---

<sup>20</sup> UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, p.63, Source: <http://www.undp.org/eo/handbook>

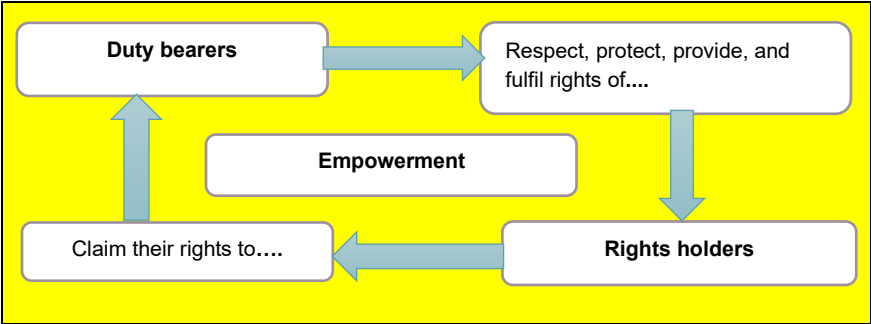
<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.16



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 the early years of project implementation. The key concept of the HRBA is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Concept of the Human Rights-Based Approach

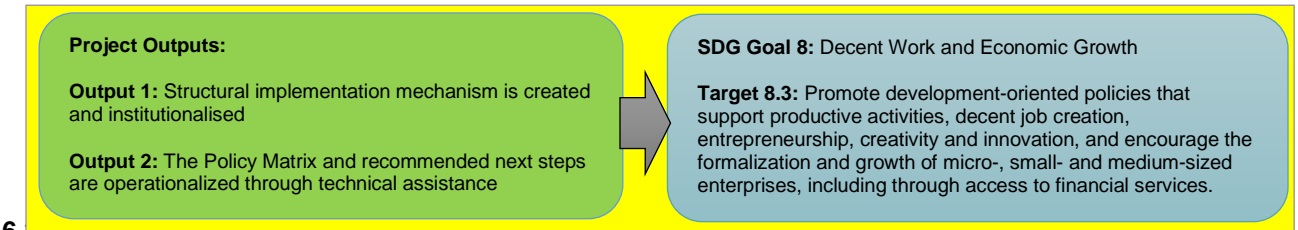


In as far as cross-cutting issues of gender are concerned, some key elements of gender equality and women’s empowerment are reflected in the project’s supported Ministry of Finance and Economy – Pension Reform. For example, a sizable number of women (18 or 30%) and men (42 or 70%) have been trained and are engaged in running the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS).<sup>23</sup> The PPMIS is an online software aimed at transitioning the Public Pension paper-based records and payment system to a digital payment system. Further, observations at the Pension Office and focus group discussion with staff of the Directorate of Pension in KRG Regional Office, provide evidence that the project intentionally promoted gender equality and women’s empowerment, as close to an equal number of women (3 or 43%) and men (4 or 57%) were trained to run the PPMIS at the regional office, and 22 women (or 52%) at the Governorates level. This further provides evidence of the extent to which marginalized groups, especially women, are incorporated in both policy and priorities of the regional government.

Although the initial project design does not include gender-disaggregated data in the Results Framework, these are reflected in progress reports and in the revised Project Document (2020-2023), and to a great 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>24</sup>, and UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2014-2017) Outcome 3: *Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services*.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 3 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 3: Contribution of the project to the SDGs



## 6.2. Effectiveness

<sup>23</sup> UNDP’s Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report, 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021, p.8.

<sup>24</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.

<sup>25</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Annex: Integrated results and resources framework (2014-2017). p.8.

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 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 30 September 2020, 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 are from those activities conducted after 30 September 2020, 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 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 under Output 2 reveal that 100% (7/7) of the project Outputs have been achieved, as follows:

- 1 output indicator target is overachieved; and
- 2 outputs indicator targets are fully achieved

The deployment of UNDP recruited project manager, based at the Ministry of Planning of the KRG, but directly supervised by UNDP, was a wise step that facilitated the delivery of project outputs, and contributed to the achievements of the project outputs.

While it is too early to assess the project impact (or achievement of the project objectives), key informant interviews and focus group discussion with some of the project beneficiaries demonstrate the significant benefits of the technical assistance in reforming regional government ministries or sectors, as a key informant from the KRG Ministry of Finance and Economy reported: '*...the digitalization of the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), has quickened the pension payments; enabling pensioners to access their finances timely*'.<sup>26</sup> Similar benefit was reported by the KRG Ministry of Planning: '*...the online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS) has been the most effective result of the FFER project's technical assistance.*' As a demonstration of ownership of the project, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as Government contribution to procure IT equipment (computers, internet services, etc.) to support the functionality of the PPMIS'.<sup>27</sup> According to desk review, USAID supported the PPMIS system design and specification, while KRG fund supported the actual system development and functionality. 64 staff (42 males & 22 females) under the Directorate of Pension regional and governorates levels, have been trained to run the PPMIS. Similarly, the project supported the development of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Framework, from which the KRG has developed a by-law and regulation to manage PPP projects implementation.

---

<sup>26</sup> Focus Group

<sup>27</sup> Key Informant

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.

**Output 1: *Structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalised***

This output is focused on putting in place a functioning Economic Reform Committee (ERC) through institutionalization of the economic reform implementation in the regional government sectors. The ERC members draw from relevant key reform institutions at the level of Council of Ministers and line ministries. Since the economic reform plan is still not endorsed by the KRG High Economic Council, the activities under this output have been put on hold. The project expects that the reform plan is to be approved within 2022 so that the project can start providing technical assistance to the government, to ensure the right committees are established and action plans developed.

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

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 regional 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 KRG-MoP. 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 regional government institutions or related line ministries, the evaluation reveals 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, as desk review reveal that consultations tended to involve a wider audience in the sectors.<sup>28</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.

In terms of international versus national deployments, the achievements demonstrate that the project fulfilled all the 10 international assignments (i.e., 100%), and slightly more assignments (130%) were implemented by national experts. At the time of this midterm evaluation, 3 additional contracts were being reviewed for the deployment of technical experts. The deployment of more national experts is realistic given the operational context in which the project has been implemented. On the other hand, by combining international with national experts, the project is fulfilling the UN mandate of local capacity development; and the strategy is contributing to a pool of national experts who can be contracted on short notice.

The project achievement rates are presented in table 4. From the table, the evaluation concludes that the project went overall well in regard to deployment of experts to support the economic reform roadmap, with the Output overachieving in 1 indicator and fully achieving in 2 indicators.

Table 4: *Achievements of the project under Output 2*

<sup>28</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress reports

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: 10 Experts</b>	Achieved: 100%
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: 13 Experts</b> (Project Manager -1, Project Officer -1, Local support to consultants-7, Individual contracts – 4)	Over-achieved: 130%
2.3. Monitoring mechanisms established and indicators for specific reform implementation are developed and used by ERC to measure progress	<b>1</b>	<b>Total Achieved: 1</b>	Achieved: 100%

Through mobilized and deployed international and national experts, the following technical assistances have been completed (Table 5).

Table 5: *Technical Assistance completed by the project*

Description of Technical Assistance	Government Entity	Completion Date	Funder
1. Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for the KRG Economic Reform Road Map 2016 and M&E Guidelines	Ministry of Planning	June 2018	The Kingdom of Netherlands
2. Reforming KRG Tax Administration	Ministry of Finance and Economy – Tax Administration	Oct 2021	USAID
3. Develop Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS) Specifications Terms of Reference	Ministry of Finance and Economy - Pension	June 2018	USAID
4. In-depth study on the Agriculture Sector of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources	July 2019	USAID and the Netherlands
5. Develop Social Safety Net Framework	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	June 2020	USAID
6. Develop Public Private Partnership (PPP) Framework	Ministry of Planning	July 2020	USAID
7. Develop Public-Private Partnership Projects (PPP) Pipeline	Ministry of Planning	July 2021	USAID
8. Develop Draft Electricity Sector Law	Ministry of Electricity	December 2020	USAID
9. Develop Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS)	Ministry of Finance and Economy - Pension	December 2020	KRG
10. Developing the Pension System Manual (Standard Operating Procedures-SOP).	Ministry of Finance and Economy -Pension	March 2021	USAID
11. Support implementation of KRG Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS)	Ministry of Finance and Economy - Pension	June 2021	USAID
12. Develop Investment Road Map	Board of Investment	June 2021	USAID
13. Develop Industry Sector Reform Recommendations	Ministry of Industry	October 2021	USAID
14. Develop the Tourism Sector	Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism – Board of Tourism	November 2021	USAID
15. Develop KRG Economic Reform Plan 2021-2023 <sup>29</sup> .	Ministry of Planning	July 2021	UNDP

Much as the Evaluator did not see any assessment report of the beneficiary satisfaction with the efforts of the deployed experts, specific ministries or sectors interviewed reported benefits gained beyond just the completion of the technical assistance. These ministries or sectors include; the Board of Tourism, Ministry of Planning (MoP), the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoAWR).

<sup>29</sup> This Technical Assistance has been funded by contribution from UNDP Iraq.

From the **Board of Tourism (BOT)** of KRG, the technical assistance led to the revival of the Strategic Plan (2013-2025), which had been shelved by the sector as no longer relevant. Specifically, the technical assistance focused on; revising the organizational structure, developing the tourism sites and products, quality improvement, tourism education, public financing, and tourism legislation, laws and regulations.

Following the technical assistance, preliminary efforts by BOT in developing the tourism sites and products, quality improvement, and tourism education, so far reveal that at least half a million tourists, mainly from southern Iraq, visited the Kurdistan region in 2021.<sup>30</sup> Observations of promotional materials developed (brochures, photos) and displayed at the BOT, reveal that Kurdistan region is endowed with beautiful natural scenery, a rich diversity, abundance of untouched resources, cultural heritage, and historical sites, wildlife, safaris, waterfalls, if channeled correctly, could provide considerable opportunities for cultural tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and diaspora tourism, thus accelerating economic growth and job creation.

Moreover, desk review of the BOT technical assistance reports reveal that Kurdistan region's tourism has the potential that remains largely untapped; will be one of the economic reform sectors that KRG will invest in more in the years ahead. In the Board of Tourism Strategic Plan: 2013-2025, the main strategy is to expand the sector from the current heritage-based tourism to a more diversified tourism that also involves promoting arts and crafts, largely produced by the women and youth in the Kurdistan region. Providing value-added services that accurately meet demand will help attract higher value tourists and foster repeat visitors, while also creating capacity in Kurdistan region to develop and manage a competitive tourism offer.

However, online promotion of tourism is still very limited or even non-existent, as the promotional and information materials (brochures, photos) used currently are paper-based. With a world of tourism going online, the paper-based strategy limits the reach of the promotion and information messages on the tourism sector, as it is not easily accessible and appealing to foreign tourists. Thus, tourism skills and capacity building to increase participation of youth and women remains the goal of the BOT, in particular in arts, crafts, and information communications technology (ICT). Such a move would not only help to diversify the tourism sector, but also address the challenge of social inclusiveness that are usually inherent in many industries.

For the **Ministry of Planning**, UNDP supported KRG to develop a **Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) framework**, which was approved by the KRG Council of Ministers in July 2020; and based on the framework, KRG prepared the PPP by-law which was approved by the KRG Prime Minister and published in a KRG's official Gazette. Currently the public sector dominates the tourism strategy and operations in the Kurdistan Region. However, the success of any tourism product cannot be achieved without the participation of the public and private stakeholders, and the PPP framework opens the door for joint ventures between Government and the Private sector, and would see the private sector play a bigger role in the tourism operations. It will help to liberalize the sector, allowing smaller entrants to come into the market and offer products to a broader and more diverse set of clients. For example, working with the smaller entities to ensure accommodation options are extended beyond that of large hotels in central areas. A best case scenario is in Jordan, whereby the government has accredited the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) – a non-profit organization supported by UNDP/GEF Bird Life Migratory Soaring Bird Project - to manage the county's ecological sites to much success and strong linkages to local communities.<sup>31</sup>

KRG must invest more in infrastructure (roads, facilities, and accommodation), and a regulatory environment that promotes innovation will help to ensure revenues generated go to benefit local communities, where those tourists sites may be located. For example, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) supported a scoping and feasibility analyses of tourism investment preparation, and regulatory reform and licensing in Morocco. These tools to promote informed decision-making have been put into practice in a project

---

<sup>30</sup> Key informant

<sup>31</sup> The Bird Life International UNDP/GEF Migratory Soaring Birds Project in Jordan. Source: <https://migratorysoaringbirds.birdlife.org>

to restore the Medina historical site in Morocco. The project combined investments in tourist infrastructure (restoration of historic buildings, traffic management with enhancing access to sanitation and emergency public services) and regulatory reform and licensing. It has significantly increased tourist traffic to the area – Medina is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> most visited sight in Morocco. Residents of Medina report significant increases to basic urban services and tourism-related employment opportunities for both women and youth.<sup>32</sup>

For the **KRG Ministry of Finance and Economy – Directorate of Pension**, the project supported the digitalization of the Pension Reform by helping to develop an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS). Although the PPMIS is still operational at only 3 out of the 4 governorates, it has increased efficiency of the pension system. About 85% of the existing pensioners' data has been transferred into the PPMIS as of May 2020.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the system will help KRG with the implementation of the Reform Law, reorganization and decentralization of the pension administration, and making available reliable data for decision making. The system has reduced paper-based data entry and transmission. With 64 governorates staff (42 males & 22 females) trained on the operations of the PPMIS, the Directorate of Pension is now processing new retirement applications more quickly since most of the pension issues are already dealt with at the lower governorates level.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, FFER-KRG in collaboration with the Pension Department has established PPMIS Core Unit. This unit supervises and manages the PPMIS system and conducts both refresher and new training to staff, from time to time to enhance the capacity and ensure new staff are well grounded on the system modules. Additionally, the unit staff are working as service centers for the system and staff can reach them when they need help.

While this evaluation did not carry out an IT skills assessment of the Pension staff, key informants reveal that most of the staff lack IT skills; many are approaching retirement and are not willing to enroll in IT training, and that the Directorate of Pension will be facing a series of retirements in the next few years, even from those who are currently IT literate. Experience from a USAID funded Information Technology Assessment of the Pension Systems - Technical Assistance for Policy Reform II in Egypt, reveal that one of the reasons online pension systems do not work well is that few staff have modern IT skill sets; and not enough new, young programmers have been brought into the organization. And when the IT units face a bubble of retirements, the online pension system is forced to operate at very low level. In order to address this, the project recommended; IT training course for all the staff in the Pension Unit, and coordination with the Audit Units to train the staff at the main pension office and remote locations on the different systems used inside the Pension Fund.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, under the Ministry of Finance and Economy – Directorate of Tax Administration, the FFER project supported the development of Tax Administration Reform Road Map. KRG has approved the roadmap and now agreed to start the Tax Business Process Review and re-engineering.

Under the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)**, and in regards to protection of vulnerable groups, key informant interviews reveal that the project has supported the ministry to develop a Social Safety Net Framework. The Framework has received feedback from partners, including UNICEF, who has experience implementing Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) of the elderly and vulnerable groups in other countries. The framework is being used as a reference document for the preparation of required instructions for the implementation of the poverty-based Social Safety Net in KRI. The project supported the MoLSA to prepare the system specification for Social Protection Management Information System (SPMIS) to efficiently and effectively track at-risks groups and provide timely support in appropriate form. So far, the SPMIS is contributing to strengthening social safety overall, empowering disadvantaged communities, and improving the quality of life in the KRI by delivering accurate analytics, assessing impact across zones, and facilitating better

---

<sup>32</sup> The Urban Rehabilitation of Medina: the World Bank Experience in the Middle East and North Africa.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle.net/10986/17382>

<sup>33</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report, 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020, p.5.

<sup>34</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report, 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021, p.8.

<sup>35</sup> USAID (2006). Information Technology Assessment of the Pension Systems. Technical Assistance for Policy Reform II in Egypt. 14 March 2006. Source: <http://www.usaideconomic.org.eg>

coordination.<sup>36</sup> Drawing from good practices from Uganda where the SAGE is being implemented, payments have been efficient, with over 99.8% of the beneficiaries receiving their payments on time, each time payments are made. The major facilitating factors are; high levels of awareness among beneficiaries – which is done through phone short message services (SMS), and wide coverage of mobile phones for communication.<sup>37</sup>

Under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MoAWR)**, the project supported the agricultural investment study aimed at contributing to increased productivity and improvements in agricultural value-chain. The study was beneficial in that it generated issue-based recommendations. The recommendations have been approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ministry of Planning, and the Council of Ministers of KRG, and have formed the basis for targeted technical assistance to the MoAWR. For example, the key recommendation from the study being implemented is that: Small scale farmers in KRG need to form into cooperatives based on the European model which is business-oriented, and not on the communist model with less business incentives. Secondly, because of lack of data for planning and decision-making within the Ministry of Agriculture, a proposal has been submitted to UNDP to support agricultural census for livestock and crops in KRI. FFER-KRG is, therefore, providing the required technical assistance to support the ministry with the implementation of the Agricultural Investment Study, including the introduction of Agricultural Cooperatives and conducting a Livestock Survey.

For the **Board of Investment**, it has prioritized three sectors to drive the economic reform in KRG; (a) Industrial development, (b) Tourism, and (c) Agriculture. The choice of these sectors was strategic and aligns with the KRG priority for economic reform. These sectors also have the potential to drive the economic development in KRI. Prioritizing industrial development is expected to boost the much needed revenue and employment opportunities in the KRI. While, supporting the Agriculture sector is expected to tap the rich farming resources in the KRG and thus help boost revenue base, and also contribute to food security in the KRI. In these regard, UNDP FFER has supported the KRG to develop a road map to guide the development of these sectors. The road map is yet to be approved by the KRG Council of Ministers.

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

From the desk review, the evaluation concludes that by combining international with national experts in the technical assistance, the project ensured that once the international expert has left the country, there were a pool of national experts that allowed continuity in the technical assistance to the targeted sectors and ministries. This enhanced the achievement of project results, in particular for Output 2.

Additionally, the project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance contributed to smooth project implementation, and this contributed a great deal to the achievement of project results under Output 2. For example, UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID and The Netherlands) and the Regional Government (KRG) to support the economic reform roadmap.

However, it should be noted that performance in the earlier years of the project was low, contributed to by the uncertain political situation from the referendum and elections that took place in the KRI between 2017 and 2018.<sup>38</sup> In spite of this, 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**

---

<sup>36</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. p.19.

<sup>37</sup> Final Report: Evaluation of the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Programme. April 2016. Source: <https://assets.publishing.services.gov.uk>

<sup>38</sup> Key Informant

Based on desk review, there was no specific strategy focused on gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups in this project design, 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>39</sup> Surveys, including a joint survey between UNDP, the World Bank and KRG conducted in 2017, revealed that 76% of those who were receiving Social Safety Net (SSN) benefits in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were not vulnerable.<sup>40</sup> From the outcome of this survey, there has been concerted effort to target those with the greatest need or in the language of the 2030 Agenda, reaching the farthest behind first. Desk review reveal that the project is empowering women to some extent. Under the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), out of the 71 staff trained and deployed to run the PPMIS at the Regional Office and at the Governorates, 25 are women (35%). Drawing from the desk review, key informant interviews and focus groups, the evaluation concludes that the project's initial intention was to be inclusive, including contributing to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Output: *'deliver universal access to basic services'*<sup>41</sup>, that is in effect 'reaching those left behind' with services.

#### **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 learnt drawn and used in project improvements.

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

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

This gap was addressed by improvements in the project design:

- ***In the revised Project Document (2020-2023)***, there are specific indicators designated to measure women engaged in the economic reform at the policy and programme levels (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>42</sup>
- ***Improvements in reporting on women engagement on the economic reform:*** The project addressed this by disaggregating data by sex and gender in some progress reports, and more effort is needed to strengthen this in the next phase of the project implementation.

**Gap No.2:** *Poor approach to coordination with KRG line ministries to plan for reform initiatives drawn from KRG Economic Reform Map 2016 and determine required technical assistance to support with implementation. This approach resulted in submission of individual technical assistances which were not interconnected to the reform sector.*

<sup>39</sup>UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal & FFER-KRG). Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.4

<sup>40</sup> Key informant

<sup>41</sup> Key informant

<sup>42</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Revised Project Document 2020-2023. p.15.



This gap was addressed this way:

- For the submission of subsequent technical assistance plans, a Reform Specialist was contracted to conduct consultations with the KRG authorities to align the support of the FFER-KRG with the KRG's technical assistance requirements on Economic Reform Road Map. As a result, a better road map was developed that included programmatic approach and comprehensive plan on how the reforms initiatives are interconnected to the reform sector. As well, it included policy actions and activities that would support the implementation of the reforms.

**Gap No.3:** *The initial Project Document (2016-2020) designed the Outputs that could not appropriately respond to the policy priority of the KRG. In particular, the KRG was interested in implementing its economic reform roadmap through the Economic Reform Committee (ERC) where members are drawn from relevant key reform institutions at the level of Council of Ministers and line ministries. Delays in addressing this concern also delayed the economic reform plan implementation under Output 1. Up to the time of this midterm evaluation, the economic reform plan had not yet been endorsed by the KRG High Economic Council, and the activities under this Output had been put on hold.*

This gap was addressed this way:

- The KRG is ensuring the right committees for the Economic Reform Committee are established and action plans developed. In addressing this design gap in the initial Project Document (2016-2020), the revised Project Document (2021-2023) has revised the Outputs to accommodate these concerns as follows:
  - a) **Output 1:** *The reform implementation structures and coordinating mechanisms are created, institutionalized and made operational.*
  - b) **Output 2:** *Specific priority reform actions are identified and endorsed and their implementation is supported by relevant technical assistance.*

#### **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 the KRG, 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 the senior KRG officials. This coordination efforts led to KRG giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that KRG general budget for project implementation was prepared, approved and launched for use in time.

At UNDP country office level, the FFER-KRG 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 KRG is revealed in the co-funding mechanism from KRG described in table 6.

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 Organisation 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 in KRG<sup>43</sup>. Another example is the capacity building of over 64 staff (42 male & 22 female) of the regional and governorates staff of the Directorate of Pension on the operations of the PPMIS (see described earlier under **6.2.3**). This close coordination with KRG line ministries resulted in conducting assessments in the sectors of agriculture, Investment, Tax, Industry, Tourism and PPP and development of plans for the economic reform in those sectors.

---

<sup>43</sup> Key informant

These coordination, cooperation, and capacity building efforts have not only positively influenced the full achievement of all the targets under the project output 2, 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. *New partnerships in view of strengthening project implementation and/or sustainability*

The project document describes the partnership: "...Private Sector and Civil Society will be also engaged at the consultation process when forming the reform actions under the umbrella of the Task Forces at implementation phase as key implementing partners."<sup>44</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, desk review reveals that the Private Sector and Civil Society are yet to be fully involved in the implementation of the economic reform roadmap and plans.

According to key informants, there is some hesitance in moving towards public private partnership (PPP) because the government 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>45</sup> Although, this has since experienced a decreasing trend; 38% in 2019 and 35% in 2020; it is, however, projected to pick up and reach 43% in 2023.<sup>46</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>47</sup> This scenario, however, has the disadvantage of altering the incentives for hard work, productivity, and value for money; values that private sector investors strongly encourage.<sup>48</sup>

In terms of mobilizing new partnerships for FFER-KRG, the evaluation reveals that much as UNDP has not mobilized new international partners (or donors) in support of the UNDP-KRG partnership, the existing partnerships continue to be maintained. This demonstrates the strength of the existing partnerships, besides revealing strong interest in ensuring the economic reform roadmap is implemented. Table 6 presents the existing partnerships in support of the economic reform roadmap.

Table 6: *Partnerships for Economic Reform, 2016-2023*

Donor	Contribution (US\$): 2016-2020	Contribution (US\$): 2021-2023	Total (US\$): 2016-2023
USAID	7,100,000	-	7,100,000
Netherlands	267,144	-	267,144
KRG	450,933	-	450,933
UNDP	165,972	17,736	183,708
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,984,049</b>	<b>17,736</b>	<b>8,001,785</b>

#### 6.2.7. *Project's ability to address protection concerns of vulnerable populations*

In 2017, UNDP together with the World Bank and KRG, conducted a Joint Survey, whose results revealed 76% of those receiving Social Safety Nets (SSN) were not vulnerable. The revelation led to the development of the Poverty Framework that saw the project targeting vulnerable populations. The survey results also contributed to informing the system design for the Social Protection Management Information System (SPMIS), whose aim is to efficiently and effectively track at-risks groups and provide timely support in appropriate form. Once developed, the SPMIS is expected to contribute to strengthening social safety overall, empowering

<sup>44</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document 1 October 2016 –September 2020. p.6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>46</sup> Iraq Employment rate: <https://tradingeconomics.com/iraq/employment-rate>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

<sup>47</sup> Key informants

<sup>48</sup> The Unfulfilled Promise of Oil and Growth. The Growth-Employment Nexus – World Bank Document. <https://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.

disadvantaged communities, and improving the quality of life in the KRI by delivering accurate analytics, assessing impact across zones, and facilitating better coordination.<sup>49</sup>

### 6.2.8. *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 FFER-KRG is on track in terms of access to continued funding from its existing partners. Regarding mobilization of financial resources for project related actions, table 7 presents results of the efforts of UNDP to maintain the support to the economic reform roadmap and plans in KRG.

Table 7: *Contributions toward the Funding Facility for Economic Reform, 2016-2023*

Donor	Contribution	Value (US\$): 2016-2020	Value (US\$): 2021-2023	Total (US\$): 2016-2023
USAID	Project funds	7,100,000	-	7,100,000
The Netherlands	Project funds	267,144	-	267,144
KRG	Government funds	450,933	-	450,933
UNDP	Project funds	15,972	17,736	183,708
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,984,049</b>	<b>17,736</b>	<b>8,001,785</b>

## 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 outputs and outcomes.

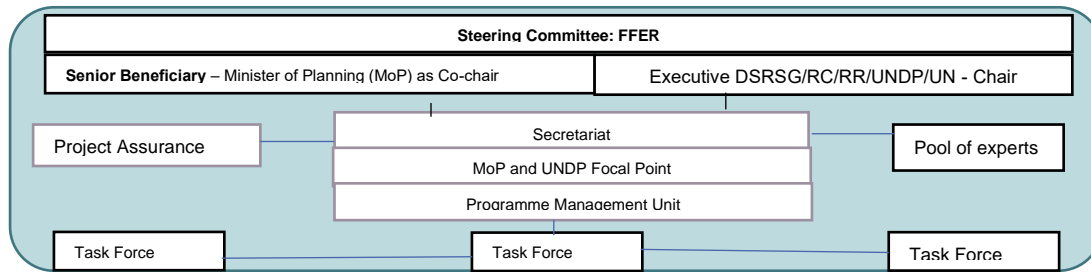
### 6.3.1. *Project management, technical support, administrative, and procurement and financial management procedures*

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 all output indicators, in particular, under output 2, tend to support that the project was staffed appropriately given its mode of implementation – coordinating technical assistance to government ministries and sectors. The key driving forces, as remarked by key informants, are the supportive government structures and strong leadership of the Ministry of Planning – which are pushing project delivery. Within the Project Management team, the key driving forces 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 UNDP as chair, with participation of the Project Manager from 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 initial project management structure is presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1: *Initial project management structure*

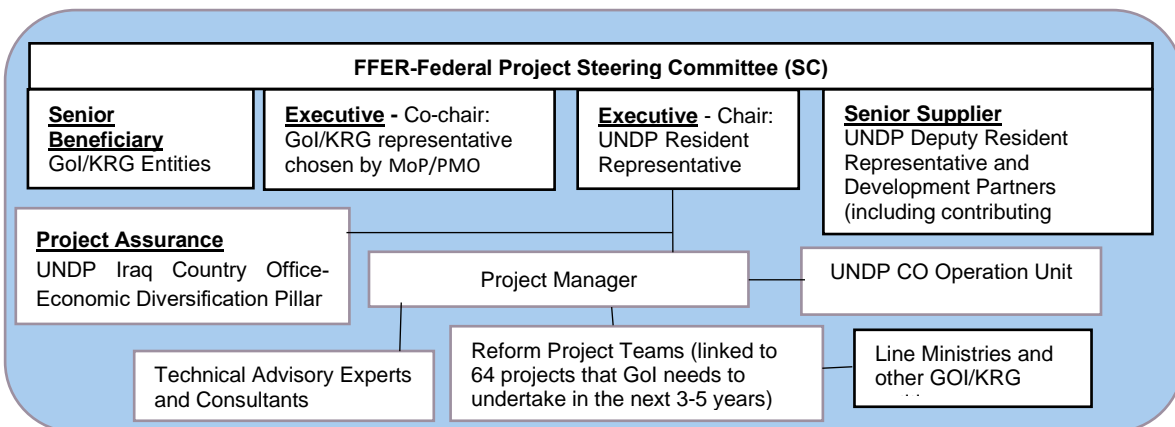
<sup>49</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. p.19.



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 of the FFER-KRG.

One of the functions of the SC - ensure coordination and synergy with key government entities, 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 is 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 (2021-2023) is presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2: Revised project management structure



For the case of FFER-KRG, the economic reform is being steered by an Economic Reform Committee (ERC), chaired by the Minister for Planning. Key informants report that the ERC is functioning well so far as they know, although it is yet to receive formal approval. In particular, the KRG used the approach of implementing its economic reform roadmap through the ERC where members are drawn from relevant key reform institutions at the level of Council of Ministers and line ministries. However, delays in approving this structure also delayed the economic reform plan implementation under the FFER project Output 1. As described earlier in **section 6.2.4**, up to the time of this midterm evaluation, the economic reform plan had not yet been endorsed by the KRG High Economic Council, and the activities under this Output had been put on hold.

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, the project supported completion of the targeted 10 technical assistance (100%) since 2016.<sup>50</sup> These include; (a) Implementation of the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), (b) Development of the Tourism Sector; (c) Development of the Tourism sector legal, institutional, policy and strategy, infrastructure, marketing and public financing, (d) Reforming KRG tax administration, (e) Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs) survey, (f) Development of the Agricultural Cooperative Policy Framework, (g) Social Safety Net Framework for Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and Social Protection Management Information System (SPMIS), (h) Social Safety Net Framework for MoLSA<sup>51</sup>, (i) Development of the Investment Road Map for KRG, and (j) Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for the KRG Economic Reform Road Map 2016 and M&E Guidelines.

The Social Safety Net Framework, for example, is being used as a reference document for the preparation of required instructions for the implementation of the poverty-based Social Safety Net in KRI. It is also contributing to strengthening social safety overall, empowering disadvantaged communities and improving the quality of life in the KRI by delivering accurate analytics, assessing impact across zones, and facilitating better coordination.<sup>52</sup> While the PPMIS is enhancing the timely payment of pensioners in KRG. However, desk review reveal that the KRG continues to apply Federal Laws in key sectors such as industrial, agriculture, water resources and tax. According to desk review and key informants, most of these laws were assessed as outdated and not up to the changing requirements and are consequently hindering effective technical support and sectoral reforms.

In regards to **administrative procedures** used by the project, desk review and key informants reveal that documents like laws, regulations and other materials are usually produced in Kurdish and 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 Kurdish or Arabic before submitting to KRG 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 government and the donor (USAID). The project management structure is such that UNDP, KRG 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 ensures transparency and accountability, builds trust and promotes learning during the review process, and ultimately leads to recruitment of suitably qualified experts. Key informants and desk review also reveal that the project encountered limited or no problems related to the quality of products produced by the international or national experts recruited through the tripartite procurement review process.

In regards 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 annual certified financial statement as of end of the year (31 December) is posted by UNDP HQ no later than

---

<sup>50</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp .5, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp.8-17.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.,p.19.

30 June of the following year and shared with the donor. The utilization of funds cover funds expended and those committed, together termed “*Funds utilized*.” The advantage of this financial management process is that it ensures UNDP has an overall view 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; no over-expenditures (negative values) were recorded. Internal controls are strong, as budget use is based on a tripartite review arrangement – involving UNDP- the implementing agency, Governments as a 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 expenditures remained within budget. However, key informants indicate that in some cases, the long procurement processes for goods and services affected some key project activities. For example, since KRG approved US\$ 200,000 co-funding for procurement of IT equipment to support the running of the PPMIS, it took close to a half-year before those funds were made available for use by the sector that needed it.<sup>53</sup> This delay and other challenges described in **5.1.1 under relevance**, contributed to slow activity implementation and therefore budget utilization. The trend in budget utilization during 2017-2021 is illustrated in table 8.

Table 8: *Budget utilization during 2017-2021*

Budget line	Project Year					GRAND TOTAL
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
<b>Output 1</b>	29,126.4	134,587.13	64,751.82	5,935	-	<b>234,400.35</b>
<b>Output 2</b>	25,268.5	299,546.81	493,605.5	426,485.49	429,870.67	<b>1,674,776.97</b>
<b>Project Management</b>	149,199.06	2,155.92	60,097.13	133,342.59	144,091.91	<b>517,960.61</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>203,593.96</b>	<b>436,289.86</b>	<b>618,454.45</b>	<b>565,763.08</b>	<b>573,962.58</b>	<b>2,427,137.93</b>

As the financial analysis in table 8 reveals, resources have been used for the budget outputs as planned without 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 policy-makers in most ministries and sectors in the region (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. While this election happened mainly in Iraq-Federal, it also

<sup>53</sup> Key informant



created political instability in KRI and this had negative impact on the FFER-KRG performance; contributing to lower implementation rates and funds utilization.

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

In terms of **visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project**, desk review reveal that towards 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>54</sup>

Additionally, the project uses the UNDP social media platform for the project visibility. For example, the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Framework reports have been published in the UNDP website in both Arabic and English. The project also involved the Kurdistan Regional Parliament members to the Social Safety Net (SSN) Workshop conducted in Aug 2019, and were part of the process of developing SSN framework.

#### **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 outputs and outcomes and allows for continuous learning:

- Monthly and Quarterly progress reports, shared and presented to UNDP senior management, USAID Project Focal Point, and targeted Government sectors.
- Dissemination of various reform final studies, surveys and assessments reports, frameworks, and roadmaps.
- Bi-lateral (zoom) conversations with offices including supervisors, project staff, and deployed technical experts – both international and national experts.
- Links to final deliverables (Frameworks, Roadmaps and Assessments) are incorporated into the quarterly reports to ensure donors and KRG have access to the materials
- Lessons learnt and reflection sessions with relevant audiences.

Regarding reporting, progress reports reviewed are well structured in terms of reporting on what has been done, and are 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.

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

---

<sup>54</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.12.

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 and implemented Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which is already enabling pensioners to access their finances timely and thus contributing to the **SDG 3: Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services**, is clearly one strategy with prospect of sustaining the project achievements. By addressing the most expressed policy priority of the Government stakeholders and thus the beneficiaries, the project has attracted greater support and ownership of governmental partners and the beneficiaries. Similarly, as described earlier under **section 6.2.1**, the project supported the development of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Framework, from which the KRG has developed a by-law and regulation to manage PPP projects implementation.

#### **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 looked at 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 structure 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, and ultimately KRG. 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>55</sup> This demonstrates the ability of the partnership to foresee financial risks to the economic reform plans and incorporate strategies to address them at a strategic level.

Similarly, 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 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. Moreover, 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>56</sup>. These events present political risks as no meaningful progress on the economic reform plans can be made without the involvement of political leaders.

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

The evaluation examined the **socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, and security**, in relations to the project sustainability.

In terms of **socio-economic sustainability**, and as described earlier, the developed and implemented Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which is already enabling pensioners to access their finances in a timely manner, thus contributing to the SDG 3: *Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services*, is clearly one prospect to the socio-economic sustainability of the intervention. Similarly, the Tax administration Reform Roadmap which is leading to better tax collection system that support workers and companies to pay their tax more efficiently and in a shorter time, is another prospect to the socio-economic sustainability of the FFER-KRG intervention.

In regards to **environmental sustainability**, this was not specifically targeted by the project for technical assistance during the period 2016-2020, as 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

---

<sup>55</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.2.

<sup>56</sup> Key informant



been introduced to the project. The project will support KRG with capacity building and introduction of renewable energy technology in the economic reform process.

Regarding **legal framework**, the project enabled the development of the Public and Private Partnership (PP) Framework. The framework has been approved by the KRG Council of Ministers (CoM), and is now a legal document that paves way for the public sector (Government sectors) to partner with the private sector in large projects, such as roads and housing construction, and tourism among others. As the private sector is levied income taxes, the PPP will broaden government revenue, and so stimulate economic growth and sustainable development.

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, assessments, frameworks, and IT, although it is premature to say all these have been institutionalized. Nonetheless, the government institutions involved acquired valuable experience in analysis of issues that help to shape their further analysis of economic reform plans.<sup>57</sup> For example, in order to implement the Public Pension Management System (PPMIS), the organizational structure and processes of the Pension Departments have been revised to institutionalize the PPMIS into the structure of the Directorate of Pension. Similarly, the PPP Framework provides required institutional structure to introduce PPP modality in KRG. This structure has been incorporated into the PPP Regulation and By-law.

Regarding **governance and security**, the project will only lead to the economic reform if good governance and security prevails. In response to this uncertainty, UNDP has proposed Economic Reform Governance structure in the Economic Reform plan in the revised Project Document (2021-2023) to ensure the reforms are implemented in efficient way, and to mobilize all key institutions to work together on the reform.

#### **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 Government of Iraq and KRG. In particular, it has supported capacity building work in Iraq and KRG, and mobilized external resources for this cause. In the revised FFER Project Document (2021-2023), UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID, The Netherlands, and KRG) to support the economic reform plans in KRI. The sustenance of existing donors to support the economic reform plans is a key contribution of UNDP's actions to the sustainability of project outputs.

Desk review reveal that the project design and its delivery model – ‘delivery through technical assistance’, considered the partners’ capacity (KRG capacities) and built ownership at the beginning of the implementation period. While it is too early to see the broader benefits of sustainability due to UNDP's actions in this area, specific benefits of the technical assistance – *‘the digitalization of the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which has quickened the pension payments, is enabling pensioners to access their finances timely’*.<sup>58</sup> As a demonstration of support to UNDP's actions and to show ownership of the results, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as co-funding contribution to procure IT equipment to support the PPMIS operations’.<sup>59</sup>

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

---

<sup>57</sup> Key informant

<sup>58</sup> Focus Group

<sup>59</sup> Key Informant

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. Table 9 illustrates the status of the lessons learnt documented, shared, and actions taken by stakeholders on receiving the lessons learnt.

Table 9: *Status of lessons learnt documented*

<b>Period of Progress Report</b>	<b>Lessons learnt documented</b>	<b>Channel through which it was shared</b>	<b>Partners shared with</b>	<b>Action taken</b>
1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020	Poor conception of the approach to coordination with KRG line ministries to plan for reform initiatives drawn from KRG Economic Reform Map 2016 and determine required technical assistance to support with implementation. This approach resulted in submission of individual technical assistances which were not interconnected to the reform sector.	Online	UNDP, USAID & KRG	A Reform Specialist was contracted to provide technical assistance on Economic Reform Road Map. As a result, a better road map was developed that included programmatic approach and comprehensive plan on how the reforms initiatives are interconnected to the reform sector.
1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020	Training workshops conducted online reduce engagement, especially, when internet connectivity is poor	Online	UNDP & KRG	This was the best solution to continue implementing project activities in an environment of COVID-19 that in-person gathering and movements are restricted.
1 June 2020 – 30 September 2020	Establishment of online coordination with partners during COVID-19 was a positive step in that it allowed identification of project activities that could be carried out online or from home	Online	UNDP & KRG	This was the best solution to continue implementing project activities in an environment of COVID-19 that restricted in-person gathering and movements

## 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, KRG and UNDP. It is relevant and reflects the policy priorities of the GoI, KRG, 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 initial project Results Framework (2016-2020), but are reflected in some progress reports. These gaps, however, have been mostly addressed in the revised Project Document (2021-2023).

The project results in Output 2, where activities were implemented, were all achieved, with overachievement in 1 output indicator, and the other 2 output indicators fully achieved, despite the uncertain political and security environments in the early years of the project, and later the effect of COVID-19, which caused the shutting down of offices and disruption in project implementation. The effectiveness and efficiency are key strengths of the project judging from the fulfilment towards its output targets, in particular, output 2. The project overachieved its targets in terms of deployed national experts, and delivered all the capacity development technical assistance to the targeted KRG entities.

It sustained existing partnerships, as all existing international donors continue to support the economic reform during the extended period of the project from 2021 to 2023. However, the project fell short of bringing on board private sector partners onto the economic reform through the Public-Private-Partnership arrangement.

Analyzing the achievements of project results versus use of financial resources, the project achieved all its output indicators targets with much less resources than anticipated. The distribution of costs per output was adequate and resources were used as planned, without deviations.

The sustainability prospects of the results achieved represents a mixed picture. In terms of political and security sustainability, the prospects are promising in the Kurdistan Region, where this has helped the project to run more smoothly. In terms of sustainability of project strategies used, the prospects are promising, especially in sectors where the systems developed are running and have started to attract co-funding from government.

In terms of financial sustainability, prospects in some cases are partially promising and in some cases weak or even 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.
3	Systematize the readiness assessment of the KRG 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 scale up 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 KRG, 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, 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 (2021-2023), the project Results Framework disaggregates indicator baseline and target data by gender (men and women), 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

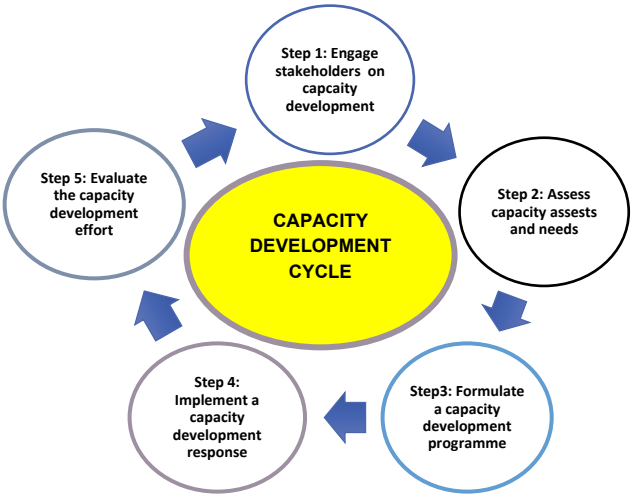
illustrates how and why a desired change is expected to happen in the individual/institution/country context. Therefore, it is advisable to develop an appropriate ToC and to introduce change-related questions in the monitoring plans. Subsequently, it is necessary to monitor to what extent the initial 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 KRG 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 last of the five steps of the capacity development step-by-step approach was not seen as no beneficiary satisfaction assessment report was available in relations to this last step of the capacity development approach. The UNDP's *Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle*<sup>60</sup> in Figure 4 that illustrates the good practice approach in capacity development might be useful.

Figure 4: *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>60</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. Lessons 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, KRG, and other stakeholders:

- a) Each KRG 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.
- b) *Deployment of International Experts generate more logistical challenges and are more demanding than National Experts.* They increase significantly the burden on the project implementing team and/or the UN agency tasked with the project management and require huge efforts and time resources to be able to identify a suitable expert for deployment. This should be factored in during project preparation and design, including while setting targets, milestones, and defining the criteria for international deployments, drafting the Terms of Reference, and determining the expected time resources from the project team to successfully supervise the deployment.

### 9.2. Good practices

- 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

---

<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

---

#### 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:

- Funding Facility for Economic Reform – Federal (FFER-Federal);
- 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>61</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>61</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>Deliverable 1: Comments and approval of inception report</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>Deliverable 2: Debriefing to UNDP</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>Deliverable 3: Draft evaluation report submission (one for each project)</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>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	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>62</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>62</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> <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>
	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What unanticipated sustainability threats emerged during implementation?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Sustainability</b>		

	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 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> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> </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>
<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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Security: Documents review KRG:</b> The project was developed after a dramatic increase of violence in 2014 bringing about displacement of about 3 million people with the vast majority fleeing to Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In order to strengthen capacities of the KRG to deliver adequate services and provide economic opportunities for its citizens and displaced people (both internally displaced persons and Syrian refugees), an Economic Reform Roadmap was developed with the support of the World Bank in 2016<sup>63</sup>. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), security improvements have allowed the project to increase UNDP support in the region. Although ISIS has lost its ability to control cities and villages, there is need for more coordination and joint measures to control the security situation and consolidate the fragile peace.</li> <li>• <b>Political: KII:</b> According to KII from UNDP, the Referendum for KRG to gain independence from the Federal Government of Iraq that took place in September to October 2017 created an insecure environment for the start of the project and so delayed the project progress. The federal elections that took place in October 2018 also interrupted project implementation as it took about 7 months for the new government to be formed.</li> <li>• <b>Economic: Documents review KRG:</b> With increased oil revenue, KRG has recently increased public investment and launched several legislative and policy initiatives. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a rate of eight percent, impacting positively on other economic indicators. The KRG is also working to improve education, health, electricity and water services. The FFER-KRG has harnessed this momentum to strengthen its cooperation with the KRG in support of the New KRG Cabinet Agenda 2019.<sup>64</sup></li> <li>• Since early 2020, KRG has been facing deep financial crisis due to the decline in oil prices and COVID-19 pandemic disruptions. In response, KRG with support of the FFER has undertaken several particular endeavors: implementation of the substantial austerity measures that aimed to reduce government budget deficits through spending cuts, going forward with the KRG Reform Law (recently approved by the Kurdish Regional Parliament), and implementing reforms to increase non-oil revenues.<sup>65</sup></li> <li>• The world oil market has undergone tremendous changes in the past three decades and, in particular, most of the oil-exporting countries in the Middle East have undertaken efforts to diversify and liberalize their economies in recent year, with tourism being regarded as the most feasible opportunities, especially given the growth of many of the region's airlines and the development of major aviation hubs. The UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform, was developed in response to this regional economic diversification that moves away from countries relying on oil, currently a sole driver of the economy of the countries of the Middle East.</li> <li>• <b>Institutional: Documents review:</b> Effective social institution, such as the religious authorities, markets, businessmen, tribal leaders, non-political organizations, and trade and professional unions, will also be influencing factors when it comes to government's success. Failure to invest in human capital and infrastructure has left</li> </ul>	<p>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.</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 with the vast majority fleeing to Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In order to strengthen capacities of the KRG to deliver adequate services and provide economic opportunities for its citizens and displaced people (both internally displaced persons – IDPs and Syrian refugees), an Economic Reform Roadmap was developed with the support of the World Bank in 2016.<sup>66</sup> From the Roadmap, the Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) was designed in 2016, as a joint measure with KRG to consolidate the fragile peace through a structured economic reform. Thus, it was clear that the context from which the FFER-KRG was designed was understood and accounted for.</p> <p>However, after the approval of the project for implementation on 29th January 2019<sup>67</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 of the region, and affected the smooth start of the project in the region. This was followed by the federal elections that took place in October 2018, which also negatively affected the early phase of project implementation in KRI; there was no government to approve project activities, as it took about 7 months for the new federal government to form. Over time, the Kurdistan region has enjoyed relative peace, and security improvements in the region have allowed the project to increase UNDP support; significant progress has been registered with the project implementation in the region.</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 FFER-KRG has adapted to the problem by continuing to operate at a lower capacity, including following other COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures</p>

<sup>63</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress report. 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020. p.4.

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

<sup>65</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress report. 1 June 2020 – 30 September 2020. p.5.

<sup>66</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project progress report. 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020. p.4.

<sup>67</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 – 31 December 2019. p.1.

		<p>the country unprepared for the current rate of population growth. Thus, the project is supporting the development of a stronger private sector to help create more jobs for the rapidly growing youth population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> The capacity building initiatives through establishment and empowerment of the Economic Reform Unit ERU) at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) through deploying high caliber international experts to work alongside national staff as <b>direct beneficiaries</b> (primary stakeholders) of the capacity building initiative in targeted reforms to address economic concerns, increased the capacity of the Ministry of Planning and other ministries targeted with the economic reforms. These improved capacities have strengthened planning and public financial management and ultimately contribute to achieving UNDP's Strategic Plan objectives and the sustainable development goals such as diversified economy and job creation, improved education, health, and transport and housing.</li> <li>• <b>Documents review KRG:</b> project manager: In trying to create jobs for the youth through the economic reform, it is clear that youth (the marginalized groups) are engaged in and are reached by the FFER project. And they are incorporated in both policy and intervention priorities. Perhaps the limitations to understanding their active participation is the lack of evidence in form of disaggregated data on youth and women, as progress reports do not provide these breakdowns..</li> <li>• <b>COVID-19 Pandemic: Documents review KRG:</b> The project faced challenges due to COVID-19 that spilled over from 2020 to 2022. Government offices have continued to operate at a lower capacity. This has created a lot of disruption to the work of the project and FFER-KRG has been making all possible efforts to keep the work on track.</li> </ul>	<p>(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>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KII:</b> According to KII from MoFE, the project is undoubtedly very useful. It addressed the real need that KRG was seeking funds to implement. For example, the project supported the digitalization of the Pension Reform by helping to develop an online public pension management information system (PPMIS). The system has reduced paper-based data entry, analysis, and transmission to the regional headquarter for further processing for pension payments. Although the PPMIS is still operational at the level of the Directorate of Pension, it has made processing of pension payments faster. It is anticipated that once the system is rolled down to all the 11 governorates, delays in payments of pension will have been much reduced; money that has been spent on manual processing and filing of records can now be used to fund other economic activities. This support, according to KII, has been the most effective result of the FFER project in KRG. For example, when the project was not able to fund the equipment (computers, internet, etc.) to operationalize the system, the Ministry of Finance of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 to procure these equipment; a tangible sign that the project has been very useful in addressing the real economic reform needs of the KRG.</li> <li>• <b>Documents review KRG:</b> For KRG, UNDP developed the FFER-KRG in response to the requests of the KRG for the needed technical assistance to support the implementation of the Economic Reform, as stipulated in its policy document: New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019<sup>68</sup></li> <li>• In August 2015, former Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi issued a first package of administrative, financial, and economic reforms<sup>69</sup>. The economic reform, in particular, included reforms to state expenditures and resources, including the customs and tax sector. It also included measures to improve electricity and</li> </ul>	<p>The alignment of the project assessed the extent to which the interventions addressed the policies and priorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). 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 Roadmap, which means that UNDP effectively responds to what the Kurdistan Regional Government expresses as necessary. UNDP developed the FFER-KRG in response to KRG requests for the needed technical assistance to support the implementation of the Economic Reform Roadmap, as stipulated in its policy document: New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019.<sup>76</sup> 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>77</sup>, the CPD is demonstrating alignment with the reform priorities and policies of the KRG. 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 regional institutions based on evidence from assessments or studies was cost-efficient and effective, as those ministries and sectors that received it expressed success with the project response. Specific evidence serve as testimony to the relevance of the technical assistance, and therefore the project. According to a key informant from the Ministry of Finance - Pension</p>

<sup>68</sup> New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019. Source: <https://gov.krd/english/government/agenda/>

<sup>69</sup> Source: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/smell-revolution...> retrieved February 24, 2022

<sup>76</sup> New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019. Source: <https://gov.krd/english/government/agenda/>

<sup>77</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.8

		<p>services and combat corruption by forming a committee to address the issue led by the prime minister himself, along with judges and other high officials. Additionally, Iraq is also obliged to carry out economic reforms to meet IMF conditionality for a loan worth US\$ 5.4 billion. This is to allow the government to secure additional financial assistance from the World Bank and the G7 to help manage the fiscal crisis<sup>70</sup>. However, lack of required professionals and experts to deal with the situation – especially in light of the major brain drain in all domains during the past decade required international expert and investigators to be hired to help build up Iraq's capacity to fight corruption and recover stolen money<sup>71</sup>. While a number of components of the reform plan are yet to be implemented, this perhaps was the first time that the government of Iraq has responded to the demands of the citizens by offering practical reforms. The UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project is intended to support the Iraqi federal government in its effort to ensure implementation of the economic reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FFER project has two outputs: <b>Output 1:</b> The structural implementation mechanism is created and institutionalized; and <b>Output 2:</b> The Policy Matrix and recommended next steps are operationalized through technical assistance<sup>72</sup>.</li> <li>• The FFER projects are aligned and contribute to: CPD Output 2016-2020 Output 2.1: Priority policies and partnerships approved and implemented for inclusive green economic growth and employment creation<sup>73</sup>; 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<sup>74</sup>; and 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<sup>75</sup>.</li> <li>• The UNDP and SDG Global priorities are in congruent with the local priorities of Iraq. Thus, through careful analysis, UNDP and its stakeholders avoided tensions resulting from mismatch of global and national priorities.</li> </ul>	<p>in the KRG, the project responded to the real need that KRG was seeking funds to address. In particular, the project digitalized the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS). Through the PPMIS, paper-based data entry and delays in processing of payments has been reduced. Although the PPMIS is still operational in only 3 out of 11 governorates, by enabling pensioners to access their pension easily, it is contributing to a wider unintended effect of the project, which is SDG 3: <i>Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services</i>. Because of the success of the PPMIS, and to demonstrate ownership of the project, the Ministry of Finance of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as Government contribution to procure equipment (computers, internet services, etc.) to support the functionality of the PPMIS<sup>76</sup>; a further testimony of the proper alignment of the project to national and regional reform priorities and policies. By meeting this important need of the beneficiaries (capacity development for pension reform), the project demonstrated effectiveness in responding to a regional priority. Similarly, by responding to the policy and priority needs of the government, the project was clearly relevant and so had greater support of governmental partners. To enable provision of further support that responds to the changes in the national context and the new and emerging national and regional priorities, the GoI and KRG, 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 and KRG until 31 December 2023.<sup>79</sup></p> <p>The evaluation concludes that 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>80</sup>, the New Kurdistan Regional Government Cabinet Agenda, 2019, 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>81</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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> This project was designed in 2016 at the beginning of the UNDP Country Programme, (CPD) 2016-2020. This was in response to the demand of the citizens and Government of Iraq (GoI) and a reform plan presented to UNDP to help improve public services, create job opportunities, and combat corruption that require structural, policy and economic reforms. Since the plans for structural and policy reforms were already part of the UNDP CPD (2016-2020) theory of change, it was easy for UNDP CPD to align its outcomes 2 to the government economic reform agenda. Given that this priority area was identified by the citizens and</li> </ul>	<p>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</p>

<sup>70</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) project document, 29 January 2017. p.2.

<sup>71</sup> Source: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/smell-revolution...> retrieved February 24, 2022

<sup>72</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER), Midterm Evaluation Terms of Reference, 8 February 2022.

<sup>73</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2020.

<sup>74</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021

<sup>75</sup> Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

<sup>76</sup> Key Informant

<sup>79</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project progress report. 1 April 2021 - 30 June 2021.

<sup>80</sup> UNDP Country Programme Document for Iraq (2016-2020). Annex: Integrated results and resources framework. p.8

<sup>81</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.8

		<p>Government of Iraq, stakeholders view the intervention as relevant, useful and valuable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outputs have been identified and adequately stated using the standard RBM approach. What the government of Iraq, UNDP and donors want to achieve through the FFER project (establishing an Economic Reform Unit - ERU) has been clearly articulated. The reasons for establishing the ERU has also been articulated (as a reform platform to coordinate reform efforts among various sectors of government). How the ERU would go about making the ERU unit functional has also been clearly articulated with key activities listed under each stated output. Good quality outputs are crucial for proper monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>• Further, in terms of quality of the FFER project design, the FFER was designed with political, technical, organizational and financial feasibility in mind. For example, various risks and assumptions were expressed in the project document.<sup>82</sup> It is clearly stated that the entire economic reform agenda would rely on the availability of strong political will that would play a driving force to overcome the expected resistance to change, as well as keeping the reform momentum intact during implementation period. And since the economic reform initiative originated because of the recent global oil shock and sharp drop in oil prices, which situation is expected to last for some time, the economic reform has mobilized support of not only the national government, but also the civil society, the private sector, and the donor community.<sup>83</sup></li> <li>• In regards to financial feasibility, the project was able to, right from the start, to mobilize financial resources from development partners (the World Bank and UNDP) to invest in systems (both soft and hardware) and direct technical assistance. Establishing the Economic Reform Unit (ERU) at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at the outset was already a positive step towards ensuring the political leadership takes full ownership of the project, organizational technical capacity is built right away to ensure continued and sustained availability of required technical capacity for the economic reform within the national government sectors, the private sector and civil society organizations.</li> </ul>	<p>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>84</sup> And there are two outputs: Output 1: Economic Reform Unit (ERU) established as reform platform<sup>85</sup>, and Output 2: Specific action plans for identified reform priorities are developed and endorsed.<sup>86</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 (CPD) for Iraq (2016-2020): Administrative and financial reforms and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorates levels'.<sup>87</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). From a structural point of view, 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. 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. In the project Results Framework, Output 1 has four indicators, and Output 2 has three indicators. These are reasonable numbers of indicators per Output; usually best practice recommends</p>
--	--	---	--

<sup>82</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.6.

<sup>83</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.6.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.8

			<p>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>88</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>89</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 plans'.<sup>90</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. 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>91</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>92</sup> which is commendable given the pilot nature of the project, and the possibly 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>93</sup></p>
	<p>1.4. To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment?</p>	<p><b>Documents review:</b> The FFER project was designed in response to the demand of the citizens and Government of Iraq (GOI) to help address a national problem, namely; to improve public services, create job opportunities, and combat corruption that require structural, policy and economic reforms. Since the needs were identified by the citizens, it is likely that youth, women, and PWDs were involved and their views could have formed part of the Economic Reform agenda.</p> <p><b>Documents review KRG:</b> However, as observed from the progress reports, disaggregated data and baseline data on gender, disability, and human rights did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system, and this presents a significant constraint when assessing the programmes's effectiveness in contributing to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment</p>	<p>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 is concerned. Key elements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) are reflected in the project design, with both 'right holders' (KRG 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. 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 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</p>

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

89 UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 -31 December 2019. p.8.

90 Ibid., p.9.

91 UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 -31 December 2019. p.9.

92 Ibid., p.2.

93 Ibid., p.16



			<p>environment in early years of the project implementation. 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 Finance – Pension Reform. For example, a sizable number of women (18 or 30%) and men (42 or 70%) have been trained and are engaged in running the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS).<sup>94</sup> The PPMIS is an online software aimed at transitioning the Public Pension paper-based records and payment system to a digital payment system. Further, observations at the Pension Office and focus group discussion with staff of the Directorate of Pension in KRG Regional Office, provide evidence that the project intentionally promoted gender equality and women's empowerment, as close to an equal number of women (3 or 43%) and men (4 or 57%) were trained to run the PPMIS at the regional office, and 22 women (or 52%) at the Governorates level. This further provides evidence of the extent to which marginalized groups, especially women, are incorporated in both policy and priorities of the government. Although the project design does not include gender-disaggregated data 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>95</sup>, and UNDP Global Strategic Plan (2014-2017) Outcome 3: Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services.</p>
<b>2. Efficiency</b>	<p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project management: Documents review:</b> The FFER-KRG project is led by the Project Steering Committee, composed of the Prime Minister's Office and the UN as co-chairs, World Bank as technical lead, and Federal Government. However, the project startup was marred by many factors, including; uncertain situation during the KRG Referendum for independence that took place between September and October 2017, the national elections in October 2018 followed by delays to form a new government after elections. It took about 7 months to form a new government, and then followed by COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2022. Because of these circumstances, the project Steering Committee that was meeting biannually was temporary interrupted. The World Bank also pulled out of the KRG due to uncertainties of the KRG Referendum for independence (ref. FFER-KRG Project Manager).</li> <li>• <b>Coordination: KII:</b> According to project management, while the many factors, including political (referendum &amp; national elections) and health factors (COVID-19 pandemic) disrupted project core services, on the other hand, the project's support to addressing key KRG most needs has strengthened relationship, partnership, and ultimately coordination between UNDP and KRG. KII in KRG revealed that the project stakeholders appreciate the support the project has so far rendered in facilitating economic reform, and the coordination that enabled the project to run smoothly so facilitated the project achievements, as key informants from the Ministry of Planning and Directorate of Pension in KRG reported: This project has been very useful. It has enabled us to digitalize the pension system which was very cumbersome previously because it was paper-based.</li> <li>• Moreover, a joint survey between UNDP, the World Bank and KRG revealed that 67% of those who were receiving social safety net were not really poor. Because of coordinated study, the results of the poverty assessment was used to target those</li> </ul>	<p>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 all 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 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 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. 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-KRG. One of the functions of the SC - ensure coordination and</p>

<sup>94</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report, 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021, p.8.

<sup>95</sup> UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.

		<p>with the greatest need or in the language of the UN 2030 agenda, reaching the farthest behind first..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Technical support: Documents review:</b> In KRG, as part of the economic reform, the project supported completion of 10 technical assistance (100%) since 2016.<sup>96</sup> Namely; (a) Implementation of the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), (b) Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for the ministries of Education, Health, Electricity, Municipality and Tourism, Agriculture and Water Resources, and Construction and Housing; (c) Development of the Tourism sector legal, institutional, policy and strategy, infrastructure, marketing and public financing, and (d) Reforming KRG tax administration, (e) Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs) survey, (f) Development of the Agricultural Cooperative Policy Framework, and (g) development of Social Protection Management Information System (SPMIS)<sup>97</sup>. The KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) was supported and completed development of a Social Safety Net Framework, which is being used as a reference document for the preparation of required instructions for the implementation of the poverty-based Social Safety Net in KRI.</li> <li>• KRG assisted MoLSA to develop Social Protection Management Information System (SPMIS) to efficiently conduct social safety net in the KRI with regards to effective tracking of at-risks groups and providing timely support in appropriate form. The SPMIS is contributing to strengthening social safety overall and empower disadvantaged communities and improve the quality of life in the KRI by delivering accurate analytics, assessing impact across zones, and facilitating better coordination<sup>98</sup>.</li> <li>• KRG, in particular, continues to apply Federal Iraqi Laws in key sectors such as industrial, agriculture, water resources and tax. Most of such laws were assessed as outdated and not up to the existing requirements and are consequently hindering effective technical support and sectoral reforms,</li> <li>• <b>Administrative: Documents review:</b> KRG documents like laws, regulations and other materials are in Kurdish or 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 Kurdish before submitting to KRG for decision-making. All these are challenge in that it delays their use.</li> <li>• <b>KRG FGD Pension:</b> Further, in KRG, most of the staff at the governorate levels, including the three large governorates being targeted by the project, are set to retire soon, possibly by the time the project winds up in December 2023. According to the Director General Pensions, apparently they cannot recruit younger staff because there is no money nor can they invest on training the soon to retire staff as their skills cannot be transferred.</li> <li>• <b>Procurement: Documents review:</b> In KRG, as per initial agreement, KRG is responsible for the procurement of IT equipment that is required for the implementation of the Pension Management System (PPMIS), but due to the financial crisis, the procurement has been delayed and this has delayed the implementation of the PPMIS at the governorates levels.<sup>99</sup></li> <li>• <b>KRG FGD Pension:</b> Although, the Ministry of Finance of KRG has approved up to US\$ 200,000 to support procurement of the equipment for the operationalization of the PPMIS at three large governorates out of the total 11 governorates, the</li> </ul>	<p>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 is presented in the initial project structure, 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. Further, key informant interviews reveal that the Economic Reform Unit (ERU), which is the key structure of the overall FFER project, expected to serve as a reform platform, has had challenges running as there has been 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, a new Executive Director for the ERU was recruited in November 2020. For case of FFER-KRG, the economic reform is being steered by the Economic Reform Committee (ERC), chaired by the Minister for Planning. Key informants report that the ERC is functioning well so far as they know.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In regards to technical support for economic reform, the project supported completion of 10 technical assistance (100%) since 2016.<sup>102</sup> These include; (a) Implementation of the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), (b) Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for the ministries of Education, Health, Electricity, Municipality and Tourism, Agriculture and Water Resources, and Construction and Housing; (c) Development of the Tourism sector legal, institutional, policy and strategy, infrastructure, marketing and public financing, (d) Reforming KRG tax administration, (e) Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs) survey, (f) Development of the Agricultural Cooperative Policy Framework, (g) Social Safety Net Framework for Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and Social Protection Management Information System (SPMIS), (h) Social Safety Net Framework for MoLSA<sup>103</sup>, (i) Development of the Investment Road Map for KRG, and (j) Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for the KRG Economic Reform Road Map 2016 and M&amp;E Guidelines. The Social Safety</p>
--	--	--	--

<sup>96</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp .5, 29.

<sup>97</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp.8-17.

<sup>98</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. p.19.

<sup>99</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. p.19.

<sup>102</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. pp .5, 29.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp.8-17.

		<p>procurement process, according to the Director General Pensions, will likely take one year to materialize. Thus, slowing the pension reforms process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KRG FGD Pension:</b> Given the long procurement process, much as the initial training on the PPMIS has been done, it is likely that a refresher training will be needed to update the staff on the PPMIS. According to the Director General Pensions, this refresher training will have to be done down to the level of the governorates. Redoing such an activity means a doubling of expenditure on an activity which has already been conducted and completed.</li> <li>• <b>Financial management procedures: Documents review:</b> In KRG, the project follows UNDP financial management procedures. All financial reported data is provisional until certified by UNDP Bureau of Management/Office of Finance and Administration. From the UNDP Bureau of Management/Office, an annual certified financial statement as of end of 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.</li> <li>• <b>Project management structure and allocation of resources: KRG KII MoP:</b> The project management structure is such that UNDP, Governments (GOI and KRG) and the Donor (USAID) all review major procurements processes to do with procurement of technical assistance. In previous project management, UNDP would single-handedly complete the procurement process for an expert, and deploy the expert to the ministry that needed him or her. Overtime, UNDP has revised the way it does procurement of technical assistance for the national government ministries.</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII:</b> To procure for technical assistance, UNDP drafts a Terms of Reference, which is reviewed by the concerned ministry, and the target ministry sends its comments on the Terms of Reference back to UNDP to incorporate. The revised Terms of Reference is then shared with the donor (USAID) for review and likely additional comments.</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP:</b> At every one of these steps, it takes not less than a week to get feedback. While the process ensures transparency and accountability, builds trust and promotes knowledge transfer, and ultimately leads to recruitment of highly qualified experts. However, the long procurement process leaves little time for project implementation. That also explains why a lot of project funds have been committed but not actually spent.<sup>100 101</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Net Framework, for example, is being used as a reference document for the preparation of required instructions for the implementation of the poverty-based Social Safety Net in KRI. It is also contributing to strengthening social safety overall, empowering disadvantaged communities and improving the quality of life in the KRI by delivering accurate analytics, assessing impact across zones, and facilitating better coordination.<sup>104</sup> While the PPMIS is enhancing the timely payment of pensioners in KRG. However, desk review reveal that the KRG continues to apply Federal Laws in key sectors such as industrial, agriculture, water resources and tax. Most of these laws were assessed as outdated and not up to the changing requirements and are consequently hindering effective technical support and sectoral reforms.</p> <p>In regards to administrative procedures, desk review and key informants reveal that documents like laws, regulations and other materials are usually produced in Kurdish and 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 Kurdish or Arabic before submitting to KRG for decision-making. All these are administrative challenges that increase cost and delay their use.</p> <p>Regarding procurement procedures, the project follows UNDP procurement procedures, but with involvement of government and the donor (USAID). The project management structure is such that UNDP, KRG 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 encountered limited or no problems related to the quality of products produced by the international or national experts recruited through the tripartite procurement review process.</p> <p>In regards 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 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 "Funds utilized." The advantage of this financial management process is that it ensures UNDP has an overall view of the status of its fund</p>
--	--	---	---

<sup>100</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. p.22.

<sup>101</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.,p.19.

			mobilization and utilization, globally, by region, by country and by thematic area.
	2.2. To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> In attempting to fast track implementation, the project goal in the first round was to support initiatives that would have immediate positive impact on civilian populations and boost donor and international confidence in the direction of the economic reform agenda<sup>105</sup>.</li> <li>• In KRG, the project supported the improvements in the legal and institutional frameworks required for critical economic reforms and the development of systems that contributed to the efficient use of public funds.</li> <li>• In KRG, for example, the project <u>strengthened the management of the pension system</u>, with funding from USAID for technical assistance and from KRG for development of the Public Pension Management System (PPMIS) and Pension Manual<sup>106</sup>. The PPMIS has increased efficiency of the pension system. About 85% of the existing pensioners' data has been transferred into the PPMIS as of May 2020.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, the system is helping KRG with the implementation of the Reform Law, reorganization and decentralization of the pension administration, and making available reliable data for decision making. The FFER KRG team is working to transfer the ownership of the MMIS to the KRG Directorate of Pension, including requirements for the system maintenance, update and upgrades and the improvement of the technical capacities of the system users<sup>108</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> In KRG in 2021, overall funds utilization was at 90.7% (1,433,658/1,581,084 x100%) in 2021; with Project Output 1 performing at 100% (50,000 / 50,000 x 100%), and Output 2 performing at 97.9% (1,213,617/1,240,000 x 100) in 2021. However, in terms of actual expenditure, only 31.6% (452,558/1,433,658 x 100) of the total funds approved for 2021 has been expended, while slightly more than two-thirds (68.4%) or 1,433,658-452,558/1,433,658 x100) has been committed to various services. In conclusion, there been under-expenditure on the project in FFER-KRG<sup>109</sup>. The major reason has been that the project faced challenges due to COVID-19 from 2020 till now. Government offices have continued to operate at a lower capacity. This has created a lot of disruption to the work of the project, and consequently funds utilization.</li> <li>• In Iraq in 2021, overall funds utilization was at 19.7% (820,288.82/4,163,293 x100%) in 2021; with Project Output 1 performing at 31.5% (89,333 / 283,741 x 100), and Output 2 performing at 19.7% (666,127.6/3,381,673 x 100) in 2021. However, in terms of actual expenditure, only 35.8% (32,020/89,333 x 100) of the total funds approved for 2021 has been expended, while less than a tenth (7.3%) or 820,288.82-760,669.63/820,288.82 x100) was committed to various technical services. In conclusion, there been under-expenditure on the project in FFER-Iraq<sup>110</sup>. The major reason has been that the project faced challenges due to COVID-19 from 2020 till now. Government offices have continued to operate at a lower capacity. This has created a lot of disruption to the work of the project, and consequently funds utilization.</li> </ul>	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; no over-expenditures (negative values) were recorded. Internal controls are strong, as budget use is based on a tripartite review arrangement – involving UNDP- the implementing partner, Governments as a 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 expenditures remained within budget. However, key informants indicate that in some cases, the long procurement processes for goods and services affected some key project activities. For example, since KRG approved US\$ 200,000 co-funding for procurement of IT equipment to support the running of the PPMIS, it took close to a half-year before those funds were made available for use by the sector that needed it.
	2.3. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP &amp; FFER Management:</b> Views from KRG-FFER Management and MOP: The project management structure is such that UNDP, Governments (GOI and KRG) and the Donor (USAID) all review major procurements processes to do</li> </ul>	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

<sup>105</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020. p.4.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>108</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 June 2020 – 30 September 2020. p.5

<sup>109</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021 & Consultant's calculations.

<sup>110</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Iraq) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021 & Consultant's calculations.

		<p>with procurement of technical assistance. To procure for technical assistance, UNDP drafts a Terms of Reference, which is reviewed by the concerned ministry, and the target ministry sends its comments on the Terms of Reference back to UNDP to incorporate the comments. The revised Terms of Reference is then shared with the donor (USAID) for review and likely additional comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KII MoP &amp; FFER Management:</b> At every one of these steps, it takes not less than a week to get feedback. While the process ensures transparency and accountability, builds trust and promotes knowledge transfer, and ultimately leads to recruitment of highly qualified experts, the long procurement process leaves little time for project implementation. That also explains why a lot of project funds have been committed but not actually spent.<sup>111</sup> It also possibly explains why the project was extended to end of 2023 to allow for the activities to be completed and the funds to be efficiently utilized by that time.</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP &amp; FFER Management:</b> From documents reviewed, the project has been revised and extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. This has been a result of the GOI leadership and ownership demonstrated by the recent Government in the design and implementation of governance and economic reforms have made UNDP and the other development partners grant an extension for the implementation of the ongoing FFER-Federal project until 2023. The extension of the project enabled UNDP to support the GOI's White Paper reform programme and the UNDP recommendations, which aims at reducing the role of public-sector in Iraqi economy and creating a diversified and dynamic economy<sup>112</sup>, and will be made effective after the substantive revision of the Project Document to bring it up to speed with the current country context and priorities.<sup>113</sup></li> </ul>	<p>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 contributed to lower implementation rates 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>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> In the project's final year, the Project Board 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>114</sup></li> </ul>	<p>In terms of <b>visibility and communications strategy adopted by the project</b>, desk review reveal 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>115</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>116</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 also been published in the UNDP website in both Arabic and English.</p> <p>As reported by a key informant, awareness of the project and its intent among some members of the House of Parliament is still limited, and this requires more awareness campaign and advocacy to present the true intent of the economic reform plans to the public.<sup>117</sup></p>

<sup>111</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) project progress report. 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021. p.22.

<sup>112</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document Revision - Iraq. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.1.

<sup>113</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document Revision - Iraq. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.2.

<sup>114</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.12.

<sup>115</sup> UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.12.

<sup>116</sup> UNDP FFER progress report, 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021.

<sup>117</sup> Project progress reports

	<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 analysis of quality and segregated data on expected outputs and outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> The FFER project governance mechanism (i.e. the project board and Steering Committee<sup>118</sup>) holds bi-annual project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. The SC has been instrumental in ensuring that any quality concerns or lower than expected progress is discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.<sup>119</sup></li> <li>• Similarly, the project has established a project Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in the project document<sup>120</sup>. Following this framework, the project managers (FFER-KRG &amp; FFER-Iraq) prepare quarterly and annual progress reports which are presented to the project board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, and updated risk log with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.</li> <li>• <b>Documents review:</b> While the project intended to be inclusive, including responding to UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Output: ‘.....<i>deliver universal access to basic services</i>’<sup>121</sup>, that is in effect ‘reaching those left behind’ with services, the M&amp;E Plan and Results Framework did not cater for disaggregated data and baseline data on gender, disability, and human rights. Further, disaggregated data and baseline data on gender, disability, and human rights did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system, and this presented a significant constraint when assessing the project’s effectiveness in contributing to human rights-based approach, gender equality and women’s empowerment.</li> <li>• <b>Documents review KRG:</b> However, as observed from the progress reports, disaggregated data and baseline data on gender, disability, and human rights did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system, and this presents a significant constraint when assessing the programmes’s effectiveness in contributing to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women’s empowerment</li> </ul>	<p>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&amp;E Officer in its management structure (refer to Charts 1 &amp; 2 under 6.3.1). It is mostly due to the robust M&amp;E system of the UNDP as an organization. Thus, the following actions represent how the project keeps track of progress on expected outputs and outcomes and allows for continuous learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Quarterly progress reports, shared and presented to UNDP senior management,</li> <li>-USAID Project Focal Point, and targeted Government sectors;</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 or location (Iraq-Federal and KRG). Desk review of progress reports reveal that disaggregated data on location and gender and human rights 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.</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>
--	---	---	---

<sup>118</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document Revision. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, Annex 4, p.45.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p.11-12.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<p><b>3. Effectiveness</b></p>	<p>3.1. To what extent are the project outputs and outcomes fully or partly achieved or on-track to be achieved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP - Tax Administration:</b> KRG is working on tax administration reform to increase tax revenue to ease the ongoing financial crisis faced by the government since 2013. The KRG Tax authority is planning to reform the way tax liabilities are determined for business and companies. Currently, in most cases tax liabilities are pre-determined based on a deemed income tax system.</li> <li>• However, the tax authority has taken steps to introduce account-based self-assessments, KRG is working on tax administration reform to increase tax revenue to ease the ongoing financial crisis faced by the government since 2013.</li> <li>• The KRG Tax authority is planning to reform the way tax liabilities are determined for business and companies. Currently, in most cases tax liabilities are pre-determined based on a deemed income tax system.</li> <li>• However, the tax authority has taken steps to introduce account-based self-assessments, to determine the tax liability for business according to laws and regulation.</li> <li>• Further work is required to effectively support this reform initiative. Additionally, the tax authority is considering further administrative reforms that will introduce new mechanisms to validate companies' income levels, better enforce tax collection, and enhance cross-agency information sharing. To support KRG Tax Authority with the Tax administration Reform, under USAID contribution, UNDP has hired a company (KPMG Kwasmy and Partners Co.) to assess current tax system and develop Tax administration Reform Roadmap.</li> <li>• Two major areas of focus for FFER project economic reform in the KRG are: (a) Tax Administration to improve tax collection, and (b) Development of the management information system (MIS) to digitalize the tax and pension data systems. The latter has not yet been done as it depends on the completion of the first - tax administration reform.</li> <li>• <b>Document review:</b> The tax administration reform recommends four tiers, namely; (a) <b>Foundation solutions</b>, that comprise of tax ID, interagency coordination, business process review, and operating model redesign; (b) <b>Pillar solutions</b>, that comprise of technical infrastructure, governance review, self-assessment expansion, and reporting and business intelligence; (c) <b>Consensus solutions</b>, that comprise of enacting of new taxes, coordination body, personal income tax compliance, and merge Customs Authority with Tax Authority; and (d) <b>Enhancement solutions</b>, that comprise of risk-based auditing, e-invoicing, banking integration, and taxpayer registry digitalization.</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP:</b> In implementing the tax reforms, so far only a consensus workshop has been held on 15 December 2021, to review the tax administration reform pillars and road map, that is intended to guide the steps to the tax reform. According to MoP KRG, the implementation of has since not taken place.</li> <li>• Transparency and exchange of tax information impacts public perception of the fairness of tax systems, contributes to the deterrence of tax evasion and avoidance, and fights tax non-compliance. Together, these factors lead to domestic resource mobilization.</li> <li>• The Tax Administration reform is intended to ensure tax payers are included in the tax payer registration base and the information held about them is accurate; the tax administration is clear about the risks to the tax system and is responding to them; tax payers have the necessary information and encouragement to voluntarily comply; taxpayers file their tax returns as required by law; taxpayers meet their payment obligations; the tax administration assesses the accuracy of reporting through verification; the dispute resolution process is independent and effective; the tax administrations operations are efficient and focus on the most important tax administration functions; the tax administration is transparent in the conduct of its activities and accountable to the government and the community.</li> <li>• <b>KRG FGD/KII Pension:</b> The project supported the digitalization of the Pension Reform by helping to develop an online public pension management information</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>The analysis of the achievements of the project Outputs reveal that 100% (7/7) of the project Outputs have been achieved, as follows:</p> <p>1 output indicator target is overachieved; and 6 outputs indicator targets are fully achieved</p> <p>The deployment of UNDP recruited project manager, based at the Ministry of Planning of the KRG, but directly supervised by UNDP, was a wise step that facilitated the delivery of project outputs, and contributed to the achievements of the project outputs.</p> <p>While it is too early to assess the project impact (or achievement of the project objectives), key informant interviews and focus group discussion with some of the project beneficiaries demonstrate the significant benefits of the technical assistance in reforming government ministries or sectors, as a key informant from the KRG Ministry of Finance and Economy reported: '...the digitalization of the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), has quickened the pension payments; enabling pensioners to access their finances timely'. Similar benefit was reported by the KRG Ministry of Planning: '...the online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS) has been the most effective result of the FFER project's technical assistance.' As a demonstration of ownership of the project, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as Government contribution to procure IT equipment (computers, internet services, etc.) to support the functionality of the PPMIS'. According to desk review, USAID supported the PPMIS system design and specification, while KRG fund supported the actual system development and functionality. 64 staff (42 males &amp; 22 females) under the Directorate of Pension regional and governorates levels, have been trained to run the PPMIS.</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 '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, as desk review reveal that consultations tended to involve a wider audience in the sectors. 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.</p> <p>In terms of international versus national deployments, the achievements demonstrate that the project fulfilled 10 international assignments as planned (i.e., 100%), and slightly more assignments (130%) were implemented by national experts. The deployment of more national experts is realistic given the operational context in which the project has been implemented. On the other hand, by combining international with national experts, the project is fulfilling the UN mandate of local capacity</p>
--------------------------------	--	--	--

		<p>system (PPMIS) in KRG. Although the PPMIS is still operational at the level of the Directorate of Pension, and only 3 out of the 11 governorates (Suleimaniyah and Duhok Directorate of Pensions), it has made processing of pension payments faster. It is anticipated that once the system is rolled down to all the 11 governorates, delays in payments of pension will have been much reduced; money that has been spent on manual processing and filing of records can now be used to fund other economic activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Document review:</b> USAID supported the system design and specification, while KRG fund supported the actual system development. The PPMIS was finalized in December 2020 and handed over to General Directorate of Pension under the Ministry of Finance. The system has reduced paper-based data entry, analysis, and transmission to the regional headquarter for further processing for pension payments. 60 staff (42 males &amp; 18 females) have been trained on the PPMIS, and the Directorate of Pension is now processing new retirement applications without any issues. It has also quickened the processing of new applications since most of the issues are now dealt with at the governorates level and make it easier to for the implementation of the PPMIS.</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP:</b> This support, according to the Deputy Minister of Planning, has been the most effective result of the FFER project in KRG. For example, when the project was not able to fund the equipment (computers, internet, etc.) to operationalize the system, the Ministry of Finance of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 to procure these equipment; a tangible sign that the project has been very useful in addressing the real economic reform needs of the KRG.</li> <li>• <b>KRG Document review:</b> In KRG, there are inadequate legal and institutional framework to promote foreign investment in the region. At the same time, several structural reforms are required in order to attract foreign direct investment. In this regard, PPPs serve as a viable solution in attracting private investors given that some of the risks associated with the investment may be transferred to the government. The project supported the development of the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) Framework. The PPP proposes potential projects for the ministries of Education, Health, Electricity, Municipality and Tourism, Agriculture and Water Resources, and Construction and Housing, based on success in regional and international experiences. The new framework focuses on the PPP Concept, KRG policy for PPP projects, PPP Projects User Fees, successful PPP projects for each sector, KRG PPP Project Preparation Process and next steps. The objective is to familiarise ministers with the PPP concept and ask them for their priority project to conduct PPP suitability for those projects. Subsequently, the expert will conduct prefeasibility study for the suitable PPP projects. The concept was translated to Kurdish to make it ready for the meetings with the ministers of the selected ministries</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoP:</b> The PPP Framework was approved by the Ministry of Planning and by the Council of Ministers of KRG. In addition to serving as a guide for tax reform, it is a legal document that paves way for economic investment by both local and foreign companies in KR. It allows for quicker</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII BOT</b> Similarly, the Board of Tourism (BOT) Sector Plan 2013-2025, the main strategy is to expand the sector from the current heritage-based tourism to a more diversified tourism that also involves promoting crafts, largely produced by the women in the KRG. Providing value-added services that accurately meet demand will help attract higher value tourists and foster repeat visitors. Major areas for the tourism sector reform are; (a) legal framework, (b) institutional structure, (c) policy and strategy, (d) infrastructure development, (e) marketing, (g) education, and (i) public financing.</li> <li>• Such offerings must be properly backed by strategic investments in infrastructure (roads, facilities, and accommodation), and a regulatory environment that promotes</li> </ul>	<p>development; and the strategy is contributing to a pool of national experts who can be contracted on short notice.</p>
--	--	--	---



		<p>innovation and helps to ensure revenues generated go to benefit local communities. For example, the World Bank and IFC supported a scoping and feasibility analyses of tourism investment preparation, and regulatory reform and licensing in Morocco. These tools to promote informed decision-making have been put into practice in a project to restore the Medina historical site in Morocco. The project combined investments in tourist infrastructure (restoration of historic buildings, traffic management with enhancing access to sanitation and emergency public services) and regulatory reform and licensing. It has significantly increased tourist traffic to the area – Medina is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> most visited sight in Morocco. Residents of Medina report significant increases to basic urban services and tourism-related employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the strategic areas that the BOT wants to invest in is the human resources. Tourism skills and capacity building to increase participation of youth and women remains the goal of the BOT, in particular in arts and crafts. Given the variety of jobs tourism creates across skills levels – from facilities maintenance to curators, architects, and city managers – and the sector's ability to promote economic development in rural communities at the local level, the sector is well placed to employ youth and women in Iraq and KRG.</li> <li>• However, there remains challenges as in much of the country there is a preference for women to stay at home, and in some communities a culture of wariness around working in tourism. Government will need to implement policies that provide women and youth skills and training required to take advantage of employment opportunities in the sectors, particularly in rural areas, where literacy and formal education may be low. Investment in tourism school and foreign language programmes for women and youth are two priorities moving forward. Instead of reinventing the wheel, the World Bank has an education for employment (E4E) initiative for Arab youth aimed to do just that, providing youth with skills that are relevant to the market place. E4E has identified tourism as a priority sector in the MENA region. The success of this initiatives can be used to design similar programmes in KRG.</li> <li>• Currently the public sector dominates the tourism strategy and operations, but UNDP has supported the KRG to develop a public-private-partnership (PPP) framework, which has been approved by the Council of Ministers of IKRG. The PPP framework opens the door for joint ventures between Government and the Private sector, and would see the private sector play a bigger role in the tourism operations. This will help to liberalize the sector, allowing smaller entrants to come into the market and offer products to a broader and more diverse set of clients. For example, working with the smaller entities to ensure accommodation options are extended beyond that of large hotels in central areas. A best case scenario is in Jordan, whereby the government has accredited the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature – a non-profit organization- to manage the county's ecological sights to much success and strong linkages to local communities.</li> <li>• Such a move would not only help to diversify the tourism sector, but also address the challenge of social inclusiveness that are usually inherent in many projects. If implemented, diversification offers varied and customized experience with tourist products, flexibility in the planning and design of destinations experience and competitiveness through creating more complementarities, synergies, and economies of scope. These marketing strategies are presented in the two documents yet to be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval.</li> <li>• <b>KII BOT KRG:</b> Tourism promotional materials observed at the BOT are all currently paper-based (photo albums, brochures), and one requires a lot of them for distribution to tourist and both as both promotional and information materials.</li> <li>• The <b>major challenge</b> to the development of the tourism sector is to do with attracting foreign tourists to Iraq or KRG. Tourism is a service industry that relies heavily on image, and crises have a major negative impact on the image and</li> </ul>	
--	--	--	--

		<p>reputation of destinations (hotels, restaurants, and airports). According to the Head of Tourism Board, about a half a million tourists, mainly local tourists from southern Iraq, visit KRG annually, and the trend is growing. This is strategic, as local tourists are rarely controlled by seasons, as do western tourists. Moreover, they base their visits on local knowledge of the region, and are likely to have many repeat visits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strategy is also important as a tool for several marketing and social objectives including extending the tourism season, overcoming seasonality and its impact on tourism sustainable development, increasing social inclusiveness, reorienting the market and avoiding conflict and tension. And with the fragile political situation in Iraq and KRG, this is a more sustainable way to promote the tourism sector. For example, in Maldives, where diversification of the tourism sector was implemented, tourism fostered economic growth and inclusive development which resulted in concentration of exports in tourism and generated a need for greater tourism diversification to meet the new markets.</li> <li>• The political crisis between 2017 and 2018 and elections in May 2022 in Iraq and KRG have been characterized by frequent occurrences of violence and easy transfer of its influence across the region. Intense media attention on the crisis also readily lead to reputation crisis. The impact of these crises on tourism in both Iraq and the KRG is sudden, continuing, destructive, and universal, often causing the destruction of the normal operating capacity of the destinations (hotels, restaurants, and airports), contraction of tourism flows or interruption of tourism, and the closure of tourism enterprises.</li> <li>• Through Framework, construction sector (housing and roads) has attracted the most foreign investments so far.</li> <li>• <b>KRG KII MoA:</b> The project supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources on a study on agricultural investment to increase productivity and improve agricultural value-chain. The study was very successful in that it generated issue-based recommendations. The recommendations were approved by the Ministry of Planning and the Council of Ministers of KRG, and this formed the basis for targeted technical assistance to the ministry. For example, the key recommendation from the study being implemented is that small scale farmers in KRG need to form into cooperatives based on the European model which are business-oriented, and not on the communist model with less business incentives. Secondly, because of lack of data for planning and decision-making under the Ministry of Agriculture, a proposal has been submitted to UNDP to support agricultural census for livestock and crops in the region.</li> <li>• <b>BOT Document review:</b> The potential of KRG's tourism remains largely untapped. If developed effectively, tourism in KRG has the potential to accelerate KRG's economic growth and job creation. Endowed with beautiful natural scenery, KRG has a major opportunity to harness the potential of tourism to foster development and increase its participation in the regional and global economy. In addition, tourism creates job opportunities for thousands of host communities in KRG and provides revenues for cultural and environmental preservation. Creating capacity in KRG to develop and manage a competitive tourism offer is thus fundamental. Tourism products are a key pillar in the development of any tourism destination. The range and quality of the tourism product offering defines the competitiveness and attractiveness of tourism destinations and the visitors' experience. Destinations recognizing the ability of the sector to transform nations economically, socially and environmentally, and therefore investing in the sector, have enjoyed significant progress, thus demonstrating tourism's role as an essential tool leading to the development, prosperity and well-being of a country's economy. Observation of the tourist albums at the Board of Tourism Office in Erbil, KRG is truly adorned with a rich diversity, abundance of untouched resources, natural beauty, cultural heritage, and historical sites, wildlife, safaris, waterfalls, if channeled correctly, could provide considerable opportunities for cultural tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and</li> </ul>	
--	--	---	--

		<p>diaspora tourism. Despite the challenges impacting the image of KRG, a proper product development plan will help mitigate the problem and enhance the tourism experience within the region, however, the success of any tourism product cannot be achieved without the participation of the all public and private stakeholders. It should involve the active intervention of various government departments and entities together with the private sectors. KRG in an effort to contribute to the social development and diversification of economy of the region, recognizes the importance of supporting the development of a resilient tourism sector in the KRI. In the draft Tourism Framework, developed with the support of UNDP, Reform Recommendations for the Tourism Sector which covers Legal Framework, Institutional Structure, Policy and Strategy, Infrastructure, marketing, and public financing, have been finalized, ready for submission for approval by the Council of Ministers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A consultant was hired to prepare a tourism strategy and policy, review Tourism industry permissions, procedures and criteria for quality assessment, and conduct capacity building and training sessions. The preliminary findings of the desk review are that the Board of Tourism requires a revision of administrative structure and its associated functions. Other needed amendments include a review of the current legislation, classifications, and quality control measures.</li> <li>• Notably, the BoT also faces deficiencies in implementing the tourism strategic plan of 2013. The preliminary findings of the desk review are that the Board of Tourism requires a revision of administrative structure and its associated functions. Other needed amendments include a review of the current legislation, classifications, and quality control measures. The following seven areas are identified as the most important: Organizational structure, Development of tourism sites and products, Quality improvement, Tourism education, Public financing, and Tourism legislation, laws and regulations.</li> </ul>	
	3.2.To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the project intended to be inclusive, including responding to UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Output: '.....<i>deliver universal access to basic services</i>', that is in effect 'reaching those left behind' with services, the M&amp;E Plan and Results Framework did not cater for disaggregated data and baseline data on gender. While The breakdown en Further, disaggregated data and baseline data on gender did not form a systematic and regular part of the project data collection and analysis process and monitoring system, and this presented a significant constraint when assessing the project's effectiveness in contributing to human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment</li> </ul>	Based on desk review, there was no specific 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>122</sup> Surveys, including a joint survey between UNDP, the World Bank and KRG revealed that 76% of those who were receiving Social Safety Net (SSN) benefits in KRG were not vulnerable. <sup>123</sup> From the outcome of this survey, there has been concerted effort to target those with the greatest need or in the language of the 2030 Agenda, reaching the farthest behind first. Desk review reveal that the project is empowering women to some extent. Under the Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), out of the 71 staff trained and deployed to run the PPMIS at the Regional Office and at the Governorates, 25 are women (35%). Drawing from the desk review, key informant interviews and focus groups, the evaluation concludes that the project's initial intention was to be inclusive, including contributing to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Output: '..... <i>deliver universal access to basic services</i> ' <sup>124</sup> , that is in effect 'reaching those left behind' with services.
	3.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement of project outputs, outcomes,	<b>Desk review</b> , the evaluation concludes that by combining international with national experts in the technical assistance, the project ensured that once the international expert has left the country, there were a pool of the national experts that allowed continuity in	From the desk review, the evaluation concludes that by combining international with national experts in the technical assistance, the project ensured that once the international expert has left the country, there were

<sup>122</sup>UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-Federal & FFER-KRG). Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2019, p.4

<sup>123</sup> Key informant

<sup>124</sup> Key informant

	including gender and women's empowerment results as of end 2021?	<p>the technical assistance to the targeted sectors and ministries. This enhanced the achievement of project results, in particular for Output 2.</p> <p>Additionally, the project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance contributed to smooth project implementation, and this contributed a great deal to the achievement of project results under both Outputs 1 and 2. For example, UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID, The Netherlands, KRG and Gol) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq Federal and KRG. Besides, it has mobilized new donors (The Trust Fund and INL) to support the economic reform roadmap.</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 referendum and elections that took place in Iraq between 2017 and 2018, created a negative environment against smooth project implementation.<sup>125</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>a pool of the national experts that allowed continuity in the technical assistance to the targeted sectors and ministries. This enhanced the achievement of project results, in particular for Output 2.</p> <p>Additionally, the project's ability to mobilize financial resources to provide rapid stabilization assistance contributed to smooth project implementation, and this contributed a great deal to the achievement of project results under both Outputs 1 and 2. For example, UNDP has been able to sustain the interest and the momentum of the existing donors (USAID, The Netherlands, KRG and Gol) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq Federal and KRG. Besides, it has mobilized new donors (The Trust Fund and INL) to support the economic reform roadmap.</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 referendum and elections that took place in Iraq between 2017 and 2018, created a negative environment against smooth project implementation.<sup>126</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>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 present limitation when assessing the project's strategies for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups. This mistake was addressed by using data disaggregation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvements in project design (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>127</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><b>Gap No.2:</b> Poor approach to coordination with KRG line ministries to plan for reform initiatives drawn from KRG Economic Reform Map 2016 and determine required technical assistance to support with implementation. This approach resulted in submission of individual technical assistances which were not interconnected to the reform sector.</p> <p>This mistake was addressed by using the lessons learnt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the subsequent submissions, a Reform Specialist was contracted to conduct consultations with the KRG authorities to align the support of the FFER-KRG with the KRG's technical assistance requirements on Economic Reform Road Map. As a result, a better road map was developed that included programmatic approach and comprehensive plan on how the reforms initiatives are interconnected to the reform sector. As well, it included</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 to draw lessons learnt and use in project improvements.</p> <p>By conducting data analysis and identifying lessons learnt, the project was able to capitalize on its successes and taking note of its mistakes.</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 a significant limitation when assessing the project's strategies for gender and women's empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>This mistake was addressed by using data disaggregation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvements in project design (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>128</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>

<sup>125</sup> Key Informant

<sup>126</sup> Key Informant

<sup>127</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Revised Project Document 2020-2023. p.15.

<sup>128</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Revised Project Document 2020-2023. p.15.

		policy actions and activities that would support the implementation of the reforms.	<p><b>Limitation No.2:</b> Poor approach to coordination with KRG line ministries to plan for reform initiatives drawn from KRG Economic Reform Map 2016 and determine required technical assistance to support with implementation. This approach resulted in submission of individual technical assistances which were not interconnected to the reform sector.</p> <p>This mistake was addressed by using the lessons learnt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>For the subsequent submissions, a Reform Specialist was contracted to conduct consultations with the KRG authorities to align the support of the FFER-KRG with the KRG's technical assistance requirements on Economic Reform Road Map. As a result, a better road map was developed that included programmatic approach and comprehensive plan on how the reforms initiatives are interconnected to the reform sector. As well, it included policy actions and activities that would support the implementation of the reforms.</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?	<p><b>Desk Review:</b> The project was and still is implemented by Iraq Federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments, 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 the senior KRG officials. This coordination efforts led to Gol and KRG giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that KRG and Gol general budget for project implementation were prepared, approved and launched for use in time.</p> <p>At UNDP country office level, the FFER-KRG 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 KRG is revealed in the co-funding mechanism from KRG (in cash, 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 surveys data collection using online data collection tool (Open Data Kit – ODK), with a large proportion of Central Statistical Organisation 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 in KRG<sup>129</sup>. Another example is the capacity development of over 64 (42 male &amp; 22 female) of the regional and governorates staff of the Directorate of Pension on the operations of the PPMIS.</p> <p>These coordination, cooperation, and capacity building efforts have not only positively influenced the full achievement of all the 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 Iraq Federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments, 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 the senior KRG officials. This coordination efforts led to Gol and KRG giving priority to finalizing important project activities. The result of this coordination, for example, is that KRG and Gol general budget for project implementation were prepared, approved and launched for use in time.</p> <p>At UNDP country office level, the FFER-KRG 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 KRG is revealed in the co-funding mechanism from KRG (in cash, staff time, and office space).</p> <p>In terms of capacity, the project has developed capacity for surveys data collection using online data collection tool (Open Data Kit – ODK), with a large proportion of Central Statistical Organisation 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 in KRG<sup>130</sup>. Another example is the capacity development of over 64 (42 male &amp; 22 female) of the regional and governorates staff of the Directorate of Pension on the operations of the PPMIS.</p> <p>These coordination, cooperation, and capacity building efforts have not only positively influenced the full achievement of all the 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>	

<sup>129</sup> Key informant

<sup>130</sup> Key informant

<b>4.Sustainability</b>	4.1. Are suitable strategies for sustainability developed and implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Political factors (support from national authorities): Documents review:</b> One of the risks that the project anticipated is the likely withdrawal of political will to economic reform, as this scenario was faced by previous reform attempts in Iraq. In KRG, the engagement of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and Ministry of Planning (MoP) was instrumental in increasing government ownership in the planning, design, implementation and management of the economic reforms. This increased the pace of reform implementation and ensured the sustainability of the economic and social life in the KRI.</li> <li>• The FFER Federal project assigned the leading role to the government, with direct involvement of the Prime Minister in the project steering committee (SC) co-chaired with the UNDP and participation of the key line ministries and development partners.</li> <li>• To strengthen the role of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), one of the main project's outputs was the establishment of the Economic Reform Unit (ERU) as a supporting and coordinating mechanism between the GOI and UNDP. Operations and functioning of the ERU represents key outcome of the FFER project because the project document foresees it as the key counterpart of the UNDP and assigns key roles that ensure ownership of GOI to priority reforms and their implementation modalities.</li> <li>• Given that the Government White Paper adopted in May 2020 aims at reducing the role of the state in Iraq's economy and creating a diversified and dynamic economy, the project is working to ensure that the private sector and the civil society are consulted and involved actively during the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the Economic Reform plan.</li> <li>• <b>Financial factors (available budgets): Documents review:</b> The second risk that the project anticipated is the likely unavailability of budget for technical assistance and investment in systems to ensure the economic reform. Fortunately, from documents reviewed, the project has been revised and extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. This has been a result the GOI leadership and ownership demonstrated by the recent Government in the design and implementation of governance and economic reforms have made UNDP and the other development partners grant an extension for the implementation of the ongoing FFER-Federal project until 31 December 2023.</li> <li>• The extension of the project enabled UNDP to support the GOI's White Paper reform programme and the UNDP recommendations, which aims at reducing the role of public-sector in Iraqi economy and creating a diversified and dynamic economy, and will be made effective after the substantive revision of the Project Document to bring it up to speed with the current country context and priorities.</li> <li>• UNDP in collaboration with the World Bank are still working closely with the international community (and Thus, budgets will still be available to support technical assistance and investment in systems to ensure the economic reform becomes a reality and sustainable.</li> <li>• Perhaps the dilemma is the pace at which the institutional development, boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's administrative apparatus, simplifying government services procedures, standardizing databases, resource management systems, public spending, and applying good governance standards, are implemented will determine what next steps international support will be after the end of the current phase of the FFER project that is expected to end on 31 December 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Technical factors (skills and expertise needed): Documents review:</b> The third risk to Iraqi economic reforms is</li> <li>• <b>Environmental factors (environmental appraisal): Documents review:</b> The fourth risk to Iraqi economic reforms has been the recent oil shocks and sharp fall in revenue, a situation that was expected to last for the foreseeable future. Environmental scanning, however, indicate that oil prices may rise and remain high.</li> </ul>	<p>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 and implemented Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which is already enabling pensioners to access their finances timely and thus contributing to the SDG 3: Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services, is clearly one strategy with prospect of sustaining the project achievements. By addressing the most expressed policy priority of the Government stakeholders and thus the beneficiaries, the project has attracted greater support and ownership of governmental partners and the beneficiaries.</p>
-------------------------	--	---	---

	<p>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?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial:</b> <b>KII MoA &amp; FFER Project Management:</b> The project was developed at a time when the KRG had a good economy to support itself. It was able to pay pensioners, it was able to support the vulnerable population through social safety nets (SSN). All these collapsed with the advent of the financial crisis in 2015. Oil, the sole foreign exchange earner for Iraq, has had its prices continue to fluctuate or even fall sharply. The war in Ukraine is causing a global shortage of oil supply, leading to a rise in oil prices. This war may not last for long and the good time for oil market is likely to be temporal.</li> <li>• <b>KII MoP</b> According to KII in KRG, because of the financial crisis, ministries, departments, and agencies are receiving very limited budget allocations compared to what they used to get before the financial crisis. For, example, according to the KRG Ministry of Planning, after the FFER project developed the PPMIS, they were finding it difficult to operationalize the system because there was no money to buy computers, install servicers and run the internet to make the system running. Thus, it is unlikely that the economic reform plans and the project's contributions to the UNDP country programme outputs and outcomes will be sustained after external financial support ends in December 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Social: FGD Pensions:</b> In KRG, the project trained a number of government staff; some of them are left with a few years to retire. Moreover, due to the financial crisis, the government is not able to recruit new staff, especially, young graduates, to replace old staff that will retire. Thus, knowledge transfer will be curtailed that will affect the sustainability of the investment in human resource technical capacity building, which has been the focus of the FFER technical assistance. For the case of the PPMIS, there seems to be away out to ensure its sustainability. The project trained up to 8 public-sector staff in the region and 4 staff per governorate. There are a total of 11 governorates. The staff trained are mixed - young and old, and likely when the old staff retire, there will be some staff left to run the PPMIS beyond the project life. But systems upgrade could still be a challenge since due to the financial crisis, there would be no money to support maintenance of equipment.</li> <li>• <b>Political:</b></li> </ul>	<p>The evaluation looked at 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 structure 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, and ultimately KRG. 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>131</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.</p> <p>Similarly, 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>132</sup>. These events present political risks as no meaningful progress on the economic reform plans can be made without the involvement of political leaders.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p><b>Desk Review:</b></p> <p><b>Socio-economic sustainability:</b> Developed and implemented Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which is already enabling pensioners to access their finances in a timely manner, thus contributing to the SDG 3: <i>Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services</i>, is clearly one prospect to the socio-economic sustainability of the intervention.</p> <p><b>Environmental sustainability:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Legal framework:</b> the project enabled the development of the Public and Private Partnership (PP) Framework. The framework has been approved by the KRG Council of Ministers (CoM), and is now a legal framework that paves way for the public sector (Government sectors) to partner with the private sector in large projects, such as roads and housing construction, and tourism among others. As the private sector is levied income taxes, the PPP will increase government revenue, and so stimulate economic growth and sustainable development.</p>	<p>The evaluation examined the socio-economic, environmental, legal and institutional framework, governance, and security, in relations to the project sustainability.</p> <p>In terms of socio-economic sustainability, and as described earlier, the developed and implemented Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which is already enabling pensioners to access their finances in a timely manner, thus contributing to the SDG 3: <i>Enable healthy ageing, wellbeing and access to health and care services</i>, is clearly one prospect to the socio-economic sustainability of the intervention. 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.</p> <p>Regarding legal framework, the project enabled the development of the Public and Private Partnership (PP) Framework. The framework has been approved by the KRG Council of Ministers (CoM), and is now a legal framework that paves way for the public sector (Government sectors) to partner with the private sector in large projects, such as roads and housing construction, and tourism among others. As the private sector is levied</p>

<sup>131</sup> UNDP's Funding Facility for Economic Reform Project Document. 15 December 2016 - 31 December 2023, p.2.

<sup>132</sup> Key informant

		<p><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, assessments, and IT, 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>133</sup></p> <p><b>Governance and security:</b> the project will only lead to the economic reform if good governance and security prevails.</p>	<p>income taxes, the PPP will increase government revenue, and so stimulate economic growth and sustainable development.</p> <p>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, assessments, and IT, 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>134</sup></p> <p>Regarding governance and security, 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>Key informants:</b> UNDP has been and remains a trusted partner of the Government of Iraq and KRG. In particular, it has supported capacity building work in Iraq and KRG, 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, The Netherlands, KRG and GOI) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq and KRG. 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><b>Desk review:</b> the project design and its delivery model – 'delivery through technical assistance', considered the partners' capacity (Iraq Federal and KRG capacities) and built ownership at the beginning of the implementation period. While it is too early to see the broader benefits of sustainability due to UNDP's actions, specific benefits of the technical assistance – 'the digitalization of the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which has quickened the pension payments, is enabling pensioners to access their finances timely'.<sup>135</sup> As a demonstration of support to UNDP's actions and to show ownership of the results, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as co-funding contribution to procure IT equipment to support the PPMIS'.<sup>136</sup></p>	<p>According to key informants, UNDP has been and remains a trusted partner of the Government of Iraq and KRG. In particular, it has supported capacity building work in Iraq and KRG, 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, The Netherlands, KRG and GOI) to support the economic reform plans in Iraq and KRG. 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>Desk review reveal that the project design and its delivery model – 'delivery through technical assistance', considered the partners' capacity (Iraq Federal and KRG capacities) and built ownership at the beginning of the implementation period. While it is too early to see the broader benefits of sustainability due to UNDP's actions, specific benefits of the technical assistance – 'the digitalization of the pension paper-based system with an online Public Pension Management Information System (PPMIS), which has quickened the pension payments, is enabling pensioners to access their finances timely'.<sup>137</sup> As a demonstration of support to UNDP's actions and to show ownership of the results, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of KRG approved US\$ 200,000 as co-funding contribution to procure IT equipment to support the PPMIS'.<sup>138</sup></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><b>Desk review</b> 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>133</sup> Key informant

<sup>134</sup> Key informant

<sup>135</sup> Focus Group

<sup>136</sup> Key Informant

<sup>137</sup> Focus Group

<sup>138</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 interviewed*

Institution	Number of Persons Consulted/Interviewed	
	Males	Females
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	1	1
Ministry of Planning	1	-
Ministry of Finance and Economy - General Directorate of Pension	4	-
Board of Tourism	-	1
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	1	1
Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources	1	
Board of Investment	-	1
Ministry of Finance and Economy – General directorate of Tax	1	0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>9 (69%)</b>	<b>4 (31%)</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>13</b>	

## Annex 9. *List of documents reviewed*

1. Evaluation Guidelines of the United Nations Development Programme. Source: <http://www.undp.org/evaluation>
2. Final Report: Evaluation of the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Programme. April 2016. Source: <https://assets.publishing.services.gov.uk>
3. Iraq Employment rate: <https://tradingeconomics.com/iraq/employment-rate>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.
4. Ministry of Planning (2019). Review of the Agricultural Sector in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: An Analysis of the Crops, Water Resources and Irrigation, and Selected Value Chains.
5. New Kurdistan Regional Government cabinet Agenda, 2019. Source: <https://gov.krd/english/government/agenda/>
6. OECD (FEBRUARY 2020). BETTER CRITERIA FOR BETTER EVALUATION. Source: <https://www.oecd.org/dac>
7. 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.
8. The Unfulfilled Promise of Oil and Growth. The Growth-Employment Nexus – World Bank Document. <https://www.worldbank.org>. Retrieved 1 May 2022.
9. The World Bank. Tourism in the Arab World can mean more than Sun, Sand and Beaches. Source: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org). Retrieved April 14, 2022.
10. UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025), UNDP, New York, USA. 2 September 2021.
11. UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021), Annex 2: Integrated results and resources framework. p.9-12.
12. UNDP Strategic Plan (2014-2017), Annex: Integrated results and resources framework (2014-2017). p.8.
13. The Bird Life International UNDP/GEF Migratory Soaring Birds Project in Jordan. Source: <https://migratorysoaringbirds.birdlife.org>
14. The Urban Rehabilitation of Medina: the World Bank Experience in the Middle East and North Africa. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle.net/10986/17382>
15. UNDP (2009). Capacity Development Primer. The Five Steps of the Capacity Development Cycle. UNDP Bureau of Development Policy. New York, USA.
16. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. Terms of Reference for the Midterm Evaluation of the UNDP's Funding facility for Economic Reform, 8 February 2022.
17. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD 2020-2024), 2 December 2019.
18. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD 2016-2020), 25-29 January 2016.
19. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER-KRG) Project Document. Approved 28 September 2016.
20. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project Document (Revised) for period: 2021-2023.
21. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, KRG, 1 October – 31 December 2021.
22. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, KRG, 1 October – 31 December 2020.
23. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, KRG, 1 June – 30 September 2020.
24. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. UNDP Funding Facility for Economic Reform (FFER) Project. Progress Report, KRG, 1 January 2019 – 31 May 2020.
25. UNDP, Iraq Country Office. Suggested minimum content/guidance on Inception Report Template.
26. UNDP IEOP|Independent Evaluation Office, New York, USA. Annex 3: UNDP Evaluation Report Template and quality standards. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, version 2019.
27. UNDP IEOP|Independent Evaluation Office, New York, USA. Annex 2: Summary of common data collection methods/sources used in UNDP evaluations. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, version 2019.
28. UNDP Outcome-level evaluation: A Companion Guide – Sample Evaluation Matrix, p.33-35.
29. UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results, Source: <http://www.undp.org/eo/handbook>
30. UN World Tourism Organisation: Affiliate Members Regional Report, Volume Four - Tourism in Africa: A Tool for Development. Best Practices. September, 2019.

31. USAID (2006). Information Technology Assessment of the Pension Systems. Technical Assistance for Policy Reform II in Egypt. 14 March 2006. Source: <http://www.usaideconomic.org.eg>