

November 2022

**Mid-Term Evaluation:  
Community-Based  
Reconciliation and  
Reintegration (C2RI) Project**

# **Final Report**

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### Project/Outcome Information

Project/outcome title	<b>Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project (C2RI)</b>	
Atlas ID	00130140	
Corporate outcome and output	2020-2024 UNSDCF OUTCOME INVOLVING UNDP #3.2: People in Iraq, civil society, and communities, particularly women, have improved capacity to lead, participate in and contribute to the design and delivery of equitable and responsive services, especially for the most vulnerable populations (2020-2024 CPD)	
Country	Iraq	
Region	Anbar Governorate: Al Qaim, Habbaniya, Fallujah, Al Baghdady Salah al Din Governorate: Tuz Khurmato, Sharqat, Balad Ninewa Governorate: Muhalabiya, Tel Afar	
Date project document signed	20 February 2021	
Project dates	<b>Start</b>	<b>Planned end</b>
	01 May 2020	31 May 2023
Project budget	28,668,775 USD	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 8,181,818.00	
Funding source	Government of Japan, UNDP Funding Window	
Implementing party	UNDP	

### Evaluation Information

Evaluation type (project/outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project Evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Mid-Term Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	<b>Start</b>	<b>Planned end</b>
	01 May 2020	31 May 2023
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Evaluation dates	<b>Start</b>	<b>Completion</b>
	17 August 2022	30 October 2022

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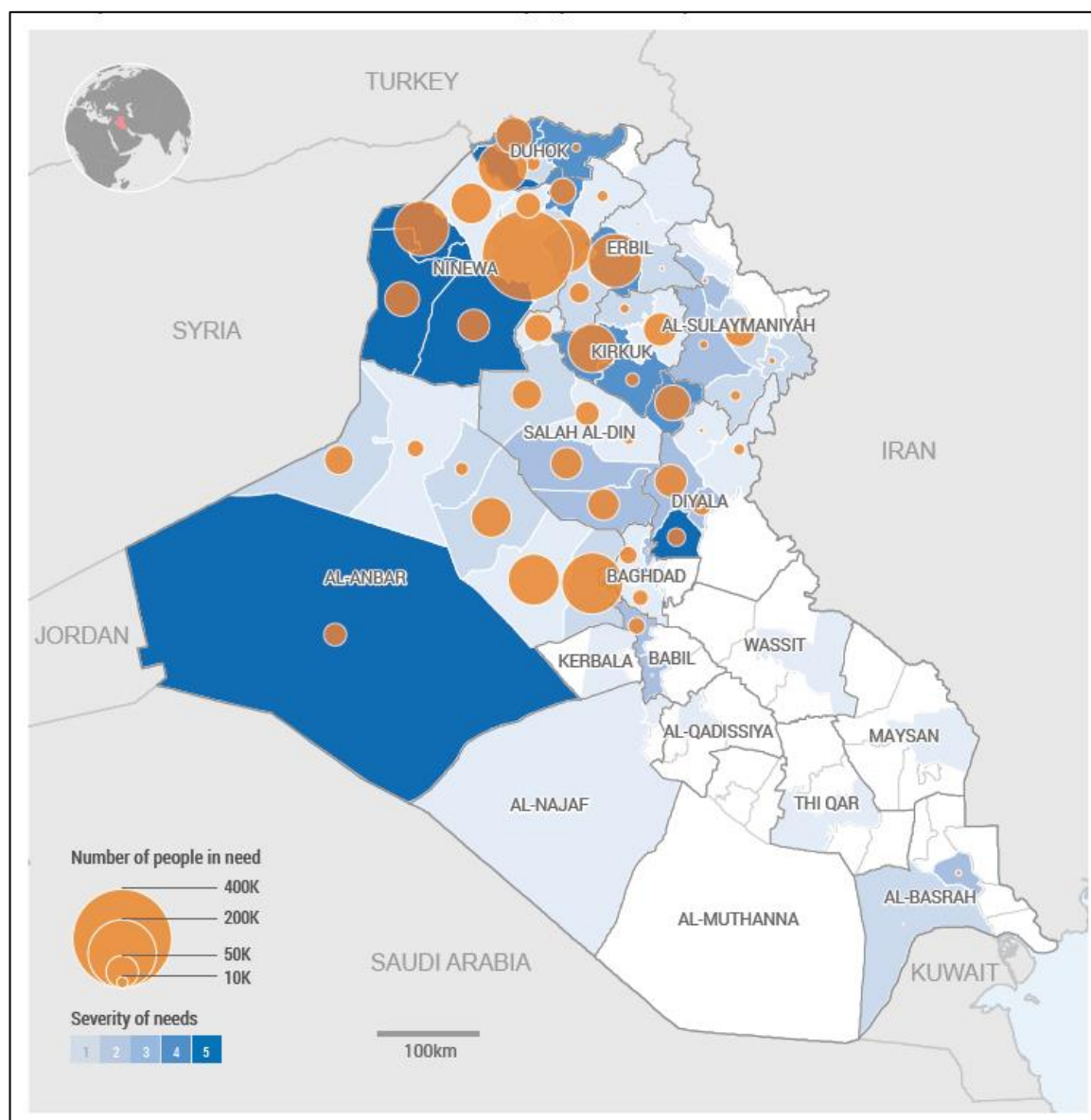
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## List of Acronyms

<b>C2RI</b>	Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>CDSP</b>	Committee for Dialogue and Societal Peace (CDSP)
<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Questions
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FFS</b>	Funding Facility for Stabilization
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ICRRP</b>	Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme
<b>IRP</b>	Integrated Reconciliation Programme
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>LPC</b>	Local Peace Committee
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>MOMD</b>	Ministry of Migration and Displaced
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
<b>ONSA</b>	Office of National Security Advisory
<b>PwDs</b>	People with Disabilities
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>UNAMI</b>	UN Assistance Mission for Iraq
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund

## Severity of Humanitarian Conditions and Number of People in Need in Iraq



Source: Humanitarian Needs Overview, March 2022<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IOM. 2022. *Humanitarian Needs Overview*. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a64f3a8-4262-37d5-9e6f-00db3422b031/iraq\\_humanitarian\\_needs\\_overview\\_2022\\_-\\_issued\\_27\\_march\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a64f3a8-4262-37d5-9e6f-00db3422b031/iraq_humanitarian_needs_overview_2022_-_issued_27_march_0.pdf)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Iraq Country Office has launched a call to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project (C2RI), which is part of its Social Cohesion Pillar. With funding from the Government of Japan, a pilot phase was conducted in four target locations from May 2020 to September 2022, while the project is continuing in other locations until March 2023 with possibility of extension. This Final Report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the C2RI project's mid-term evaluation, which at the same time presents a final evaluation of the Japan-funded pilot.

### Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The main purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to review the impact and efficiency of the C2RI project interventions, which will help improve decision-making and inform the remaining project implementation. The objectives of the mid-term evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance of and progress of project's results.
- Assess the efficiency of project implementation, including the operations support.
- Assess the effectiveness of the project and its activities in reaching the stated objectives.
- Assess the appropriateness of design and management arrangements to achieve objectives.
- Assess the sustainability of the project results.
- Outline lessons learned and good practices to support the remaining project implementation.

The evaluation examined the project's conceptualization, design, implementation, management, and results thus far to support, covering the target locations of Al Qaim, Habbaniya, Tuz Khurmato, and Muhalabiya between May 2020 until end of July 2022. The evaluation assessed the project using the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and adopted an approach with both qualitative and quantitative data collection involving various stakeholders and partners.

### Evaluation Findings

#### Relevance

The C2RI project addresses the challenges identified in the Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework Plan 2018-2027, in which the government has made the return of IDPs and their families to their home areas a priority. It also addresses key priority of the 2019 Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, and currently contributes to the National Plan to End Displacement and the UN durable solution framework under priority 5 of the UNSCDF and the UN Global Framework for UN Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees. The project's Outputs 1 and 2 respond to the social challenges associated with the breakdown in social cohesion and trust between ethnic and religious groups, as well as widespread exclusion of vulnerable groups. Outputs 3 and 4 respond to the political challenges associated with identity and sectarian divides and delays in advancing national reforms. During this mid-term evaluation, feedback from government stakeholders and international partners showed that UNDP's efforts through the C2RI project are instrumental and appreciated, where the issue of affiliation or association with ISIL is very challenging to deal with. The C2RI project contributes

towards the achievement of Outcome 3.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Iraq (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 developed in 2019 but was not endorsed (when the project document was initiated) and now to outcome 5.1 and 5.2 in the UNSDCF 2020-2024 that was updated and endorsed in 2021 and towards outcome 3 of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 'Strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis'. It is aligned with the SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 5 Gender equality and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities.

In 2020, 15 UN agencies jointly developed the Global Framework for UN Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees. The Global Framework recognises that an 'all-of-UN' response is required to address the transnational humanitarian, human rights and security crisis for stranded families with perceived or actual ties to ISIL. As part of the Global Framework, a 'Joint Scoping Exercise' took place to Iraq in 2021-2022 to identify key gaps and needs prior to defining the scope of UN support that may be provided to a Member State. Iraq – whose approximately 29,257 nationals, mostly children, are the majority of the population of the largest camp, Al Hol – was identified as the first Member State for which the JSE would be implemented. In 2021, the Government of Iraq decided to repatriate Iraqis displaced from Al Hol Camp. Given its credibility and long-standing partnerships in return communities, UNDP was well-positioned to support the Government in facilitating community acceptance and reintegration through its community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq Project, and through its wide network of more than 500 members of local peace mechanisms and community leaders. Currently UNDP is leading the UN-Government Task Force for Reintegration within the UN-Government Technical Working Group for facilitating return and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol camp North-East Syria.

## Coherence

C2RI is coherent with the stabilisation framework of UNDP which has to date supported the return of close to 5 million people to their areas of origin. It was designed using the lessons learned from the UNDP's Integrated Reconciliation Project (IRP) concluded in December 2021, and the work of social cohesion under W4 of the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS). In 2020, UNDP deployed its global experts in a scoping mission to guide its programmatic approach on this complex issue. The recommendations of the mission resulted in finalizing a UN Joint Approach for community-based reconciliation and reintegration of children, young people and adults formerly associated with ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq. A Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) UN Joint Approach, chaired by UNDP and IOM, with membership from UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR and UNAMI, was established to coordinate this support. While recognising that for reintegration to be sustainable, a well-coordinated process of protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and return is essential, the TCC served as a forum for unified messaging and advocacy for this politically sensitive but critical file. The scoping mission report also stressed that achieving sustainable reintegration remains the most crucial and challenging aspect of the individual assessment, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration process. As a result, UNDP launched the C2RI to support reintegration at multiple levels - the individual, family, and community and paying attention to its multi-faceted dimensions; economic, social and psychosocial to support those formerly associated and the receiving communities through an individual multiple targeting approach as well as community-level support.

The C2RI expanded the work of the stabilisation approach by delving into reintegration and recognising that in order for people to return and reintegrate in a sustainable manner there is a need to approach this issue in an integrated area-based programme through creating community acceptance as well as provide



a holistic set of services that go beyond infrastructure rehabilitation. Using the same implementation strategies and capitalising on UNDP Iraq previous work under FFS, reconciliation and social cohesion, the C2RI engaged with the previously established and empowered local peace mechanisms the Local Peace Committees (LPCs) to support the return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliations. C2RI adopted an area-based approach to ensure targeting the areas of origins of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL at the sub-district level and ensure coherence and complementarity with other interventions implemented by the country office. This has also ensured that the reconciliation and reintegration activities closely link to PVE, stabilisation, social cohesion, recovery and development activities and programmes operating in the selected areas.

### Efficiency

The technical capacities of the project management team were appreciated, as well as their high flexibility and effective communications with the donor and implementing partners. A main challenge is the insufficiency of the staff, especially on the ground. The case is the same with the implementing partners. The project budget was developed at the activity level, with the highest portion allocated to Output 1 at 76 percent. The allocated budgets for Outputs 2, 3 and 4 was 2 percent for each, while 18 percent went to management, M&E and indirect project costs and UN coordination levy. Almost all interviewed implementing partners and stakeholders mentioned that the budget allocated for reconciliation and integration in communities is insufficient to cover the huge livelihood needs and well-being of the target populations, as well as support infrastructure of their houses. The rational is to enhance capacities of local and national partners to adopt the sustainable reintegration approach to meet those needs. Of note is the change in the modality for the livelihood grants shifted from the provision of cash into in-kind support. Implementation of the project components was done through implementing for the MHPSS and livelihoods support components, whereas the rehabilitation was implemented directly by UNDP's FFS technical staff. In the views of the three implementing partners, the timeframe of the project was a challenge compared to the targets.

The project has a Communications and Visibility Strategy developed at the start of the design. The implemented activities contributed to raising awareness about the project activities and the efforts by UNDP and the Government of Japan for the return and reintegration of families perceived to be affiliated with ISIL. It ensured that the outcomes of the community dialogues are broadly communicated within the selected areas and to local and national partners.

Each implementing partner utilized a different monitoring approach and had its own field staff. They submitted regular monthly reports to UNDP, however their reports did not capture the quality information that would have provided a rich source of knowledge about the context, lessons learned and good practices on what works and what not regarding the implementation approaches. The M&E system is in place but does not have specific data collection and analysis tools. Some of the project indicators are not well-defined and not SMART, and do not allow to measure the quality of the activities. Two Perception Surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021 assessed community readiness for return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation in pilot areas, the Policy Research Centre of the UN University, conducted a study on Managing Exits from Armed Conflict (MEAC), which seeks to build a common, robust knowledge base around what it means for IDP children and adults to reintegrate back fully and sustainably into civilian society.

At the policy level, the project has supported the establishment of a task force that will formulate a national roadmap and policies on reconciliation and reintegration. The three partners had hotline numbers for the project beneficiaries and a complaints box in their field offices. The project developed an Information, Counselling and Referral System, while still at its testing and launch phases, it presents a strong attempt to systematically register beneficiary information and track the assistance they receive. Furthermore, the Knowledge products generated by the project add to the body of knowledge on integration and reconciliation in Iraq and informs programming in this area.

### Effectiveness

The four project outputs were fully achieved or on track to be achieved. The project activities support the reintegration and reconciliation of persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, IDPs, returnees and stayers through community level and individual level preparedness, implemented in complementary to each other. Stigmatization and lack of social acceptance between the host communities and returnees is a major challenge, which often results in the economic and social exclusion of the latter. They face difficulties to find jobs or access services and livelihood opportunities. Output 1 of the C2RI project responded to a high extent to the needs of both target groups through livelihoods support activities either through cash-for-work activities, vocational trainings for increased employability or business grants for income-generation. People affected by violence and conflict experience mental health conditions and many face threat of sexual exploitation and SGBV, and to access healthcare, PSS and protection services. The C2RI project focused on communal healing through capacity building and provision of MHPSS services. Having no property or damaged houses are among the reasons why persons formerly associated cannot or do not want to return to their areas of origin. The project rehabilitated 801 houses in target locations.

Negotiations, mediation and reconciliation process for return of people with perceived affiliation to ISIL was relatively simple in few communities, yet, in other, it gets harder and time-consuming. Led by the LPCs and supported and facilitated by the project, under Output 2, a comprehensive set of activities were implemented that enable community-based and led reconciliation and social cohesion processes. UNDP, with IOM, has been approached by the Committee for Dialogue and Societal Peace (CDSP) to assist in outlining a 'National Roadmap' for the reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation, yet this has not materialized due to the weak capacity of CDSP and the lack of national will before 2021, the file of return and reintegration of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL has been shifted to the Office of National Security Advisory and MOMD after the Iraqi government decision to repatriate the Iraqi families from Al-hol camp North East Syria. As such, UNDP, with its positioning within this project on reintegration, has been approached by the government to support the returns from Al-Hol given that most cases are within some of the pilot locations of C2RI. under Outcomes 3 and 4 of the C2RI, the project supported the establishment of a UN-Government task force on reintegration under the UN Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration and has facilitated meetings between national government and community leaders to enhance community acceptance, trained community leaders and government officials on mediation and reintegration. The C2RI project is informed by lessons learnt from UNDP's past work on stabilization, social cohesion and community reintegration and reconciliation since 2015. It has established partnerships with UN agencies such as IOM and UNICEF. Partnerships with NGOs were seen as an area that could be strengthened, as noted by interviewed stakeholders, by bringing in more NGOs and CSOs who can work on the different areas, along with the social cohesion.

## Impact

According to the C2RI database, a total of 12,968 persons (7,004 females and 5,964 males) have directly benefited from the activities and interventions of the project by the end of September 2022. Community synthesisation and townhall meetings implemented by the project benefited a wider number of individuals that would be hard to estimate with accuracy. A number of important results could be observed as a result of the interventions of the pilot project. In addition to the actual return of families to their areas of residence, it is clear that the perceptions of the host communities vis a vis the returnees have changed and there is a wider acceptance of returnees as well as the acceptance of those with perceived ISIL affiliations. The strengthening of the role of the LPCs as important local structures capable of promoting peace and reconciliation has been crucial to support return and reintegration of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL. UNDP has invested through previous projects in the capacity building and institutionalisation of the LPCs. Through C2RI, communities were able to recognise this role and to increase community trust in local authorities and structures. Communities have accepted MHPSS as an important tool to strengthen reintegration and provide needed support to the communities. The C2RI project was able to change the perspective of people regarding return and reintegration. MHPSS activities focused on restoring some level of peace of mind of the host and returning families and increasing the sense of acceptance of the other, as well as self-confidence. Support at the institutional level has put concerned actors on track to start concrete steps on the roadmap to durable and owned reintegration processes. This includes the digital case management and referral system, as well as the formulated task force on reintegration and reconciliation.

## Sustainability

Community ownership and durability were specifically considered in the C2RI's work and were anchored around a number of elements. Firstly, the full engagement of local governance structures and authorities and building their capacities and knowledge. In the views of the interviewed LPCs, this suggests high likelihood for sustainability, assuming that the capacitated LPCs, social workers and NGOs will continue to promote acceptance and trust to allow for the returning of families with ISIL association into the host communities. However, the evaluation could not account for a distinct exit strategy in place yet to allow for the transitioning into full national ownership on reintegration and reconciliation. Yet while this report was under finalization and through the Reintegration task force led by the government and UNDP and with membership of several UN and government counterparts, developing a national strategy for reintegration has been identified as a priority.

At the local level and with reference to the crucial role that LPCs play in supporting return and reintegration, it is worth considering that LPCs are based on a volunteer membership who might not be able to pursue the same effort beyond the support of this project or other external international actors on their own for financial and workload considerations. Sustainability was not given enough focus during its design and was only mentioned briefly in the project document based on the capacity building provided for the Government of Iraq on social cohesion, reconciliation and reintegration. The project's commitment to social and environmental sustainability were underpinned by the UNDP's Social and Environmental

Standards (SES).<sup>2</sup> The project met the key elements of the SES, including Leaving no one behind, human rights, gender equality and women empowerment and sustainability and resilience, and accountability. One of the core considerations of the C2RI was the generation of evidence and knowledge on integration and reconciliation through a number of surveys, studies and assessments (discussed in detail under EQ 19). Knowledge was also extended to local governance structures; LPCs and local authorities, through different activities, mainly the tailored capacity building on social cohesion and MHPSS.

## Conclusions

### Relevance

- The C2RI project is aligned with the Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Reconstruction and Development Framework Plan 2018-2027, in which the government has made the return of IDPs a priority. Government stakeholders and international partners find that UNDP's efforts through the C2RI project are instrumental and appreciated.
- It also addresses key priority of the 2019 Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, and currently contributes to the National Plan to End Displacement and the UN durable solution framework under priority 5 of the UNSCDF and the UN Global Framework for UN Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees.
- The project design suggested an evolution in UNDP's work on reconciliation and integration, based largely on a scoping mission in 2020. Through this project, UNDP introduced an integrated approach that focuses on community preparedness, as well as on livelihoods and well-being of families.
- In 2021-2022, as part of the Global Framework for UN Support on Syria/Iraq, a 'Joint Scoping Exercise' took place in Iraq. It identified key gaps and needs prior to defining the scope of UN support that may be provided to a Member State.
- In 2021, the Government of Iraq decided to repatriate Iraqis displaced from Al Hol Camp. Given its credibility and long-standing partnerships in return communities, UNDP was well-positioned to support in facilitating community acceptance and reintegration.

### Coherence

- The C2RI capitalised on UNDP's work through the IRP project which concluded in 2021 and uses the same implementation strategies. The project contributes to the UNDP Iraq Country Programme 2020-2024 and works in synergy with the Social Cohesion Portfolio; mainly with FFS and ICRRP.
- A Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) UN Joint Approach, chaired by UNDP and IOM, with membership from UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR and UNAMI, was established to coordinate reintegration and reconciliation support. The TCC served as a forum for unified messaging and advocacy for this politically sensitive but critical file.
- The project is part of the UN family's '*Joint Approach for community-based reconciliation and reintegration*'. UNDP is well positioned to coordinate with actors engaged in reconciliation, however mostly not structured to maximize impact, resources and knowledge sharing. UNDP co-chairs the TCC with IOM, and coordinate with all UN agencies in this file, discussions are currently

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES). <http://www.undp.org/ses>

ongoing for joint projects on juvenile rehabilitation and reintegration with UNODC and on child protection and reintegration with UNICEF.

### Efficiency

- A main challenge is the insufficiency of the project teams on the ground compared to the amount of work required. Implementing partners also faced challenges on the staffing size, high level of turnover and security risks. Their capacities of their staff were limited and improved as the project progressed. Both, UNDP and implementing partners realize the need for advanced capacity building.
- The total resources required for the UNDP's C2RI project is US\$ 28,668,774, so far, only 29 percent were mobilized from the Government of Japan. Donors' funding for all social cohesion and reintegration projects is mostly short term for one-year, only the Government of Denmark gives a 4-year funding.
- The highest portion of the budget went to Output 1 'Adults formerly associated and selected community members have received targeted reintegration support' at 76 percent. Implementing partners find that the budget is insufficient compared to the actual needs on ground by the communities.
- The modality for the livelihoods grants shifted from the provision of cash into in-kind support to ensure there was no mismanagement of resources. Grant value was convenient for the small business ideas and locations. UNDP is now introducing collective business grants instead of individual business ones, with strengthened market linkages.
- LPCs were actively involved and supporting in project implementation, for example, identifying beneficiaries and housing units for rehabilitation, outreaching and community discussions.
- Visibility and advocacy were core elements of the C2RI project. Implemented activities contributed to raising awareness about the activities and the efforts by UNDP and the Government of Japan. It ensured that the outcomes of the community dialogues are broadly communicated.
- The project's visibility activities were effective, primarily the townhall meetings and the published web stories and videos. Implementing partners played a notable role in the visibility in terms of information sharing and receiving feedback from beneficiaries through their offices and hotlines.
- Tracking of project progress was done through regular field visits. Implementing partners submitted monthly reports to UNDP and UNDP submitted bi-monthly updates, however, these followed a template requested by the donor, hence were too brief to allow for capturing quality work or the consideration of the cross-cutting themes. Some of the project indicators are not well-defined and not SMART, some do not allow for gender or age disaggregation, and none measure the quality of the activities.

### Effectiveness

- The four project outputs were fully achieved or on track to be achieved, despite the limited timeframe given for implementation.
- Target 3.1 '*A national roadmap and policy on reconciliation and reintegration formulated*', although a task force was established engaging different actors is favourable, however no concrete outcome was achieved as a result. Target 2.3 '*The rehabilitation and active use of 15 social and productive infrastructure*', this target is delayed as the units to be rehabilitated are not yet selected. Finally,

target 2.4 ‘*holding 20 social and PVE activities in the targeted locations*’, the project did not reach this high target of events, however the townhall events were highly engaging.

- Output 1 of the C2RI project responded to the needs of returnee families who suffer from stigmatization and exclusion, and of host communities who also face socio-economic stressors. With this output, livelihoods were supported, housing units were rehabilitated and MHPSS services were provided. Capacity building on MHPSS to social workers and psychologists had limited results and their capacities to sustain the provision of services to individuals is not guaranteed.
- Negotiations, mediation and reconciliation process for return of people was provided under Output 2, led by LPCs. Although originally planned, the project did not yet work on the rehabilitation or construction of social and productive infrastructure. Under Outcomes 3 and 4 of the C2RI project supported the establishment of a task force the reintegration under the Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration and government officials were trained.
- The lessons learned from previous social cohesion efforts in Iraq was integrated in the design and implementation strategies of this project. This includes more emphasis on knowledge generation, community participation through NGOs, promotion of economic opportunities and supporting reintegration at the individual, family, and community levels.
- LPCs believe that the project has opened the door for them to play an active role in bringing support on infrastructure and to integrate as many families as possible. Coordination between the LPCs and CSOs was recognized as a key aspect to widen the reach and provide technical backstopping.

### Impact

- It is clear that the perceptions of the host communities vis a vis the returnees have changed and there is a wider acceptance of returnees even the acceptance of those with perceived ISIL affiliations. Rich and illustrative real-life stories on reintegration were shared during the evaluation that confirms this positive impact.
- The ability of individuals to return especially those with perceived ISIL affiliations marks a real shift in the mind-set and perceptions of host communities regarding the importance of peace building, social cohesion and integration of women and children within their original place of residences to promote peace and stability in Iraq.
- UNDP has invested through previous projects in the capacity building and institutionalisation of the LPCs. Through C2RI, communities were able to recognise the important role they play to increase community trust in local authorities and structures.
- UNDP, with its positioning within this project on reintegration, has been approached by the government to support the returns from Al-Hol given that most cases are within some of the pilot locations of C2RI.
- Community acceptance of MHPSS as an important tool to strengthen reintegration and provide needed support to the communities. Communities started to understand that in order to develop, they need to have some level of communal healing and peace.
- The holistic approach of the implementation strategy of integrating returnees with host communities in MHPSS and livelihood activities increased interaction between community members and allowed for the establishment of new social relations that are necessary for living together in peace.



## Sustainability

- The evaluation could not account for a distinct exit strategy in place. Community ownership was at the core of the C2RI's suggesting high likelihood for sustainability, given the change in perceptions by the host communities and increased acceptance for the returning families. However, LPCs are based on a volunteer membership who might not be able to pursue the same effort beyond the project on their own for financial and workload considerations.
- National partners believe that without the C2RI support, the government's financial capacity would not have allowed for the rehabilitation of houses. Continuation of reconciliation and integration does not usually receive attention by the state in all locations and unlikely to expand without UNDP's support.
- At the individual level, the project interventions had positive impact evident in the return of the families to rehabilitated houses and with facilitated access to services, capacity and skill building and income-generation. As such, the likelihood is high that they maintain an increased income for sustainable livelihoods. Sustaining the MHPSS provision of services by the local workers is unlikely, given the outcomes of the provided training and their limited capacities that would not allow them to continue on their own.
- As reported by UNDP staff, developing a national strategy for reintegration has been identified as a priority and announced during the development of this Mid-Term Evaluation Report through the Reintegration Task Force led by the government and UNDP and with membership of several UN and government counterparts.
- Prospects of sustainability are more concrete with the project's institutional support through the formulation of the task force on the reintegration and the digital referral system, which is yet premature.
- Several external factors may jeopardise the likelihood of sustainability of the project. These include the fragile security situation in Iraq and the limited mobility in some areas, political changes, competing priorities and compound crises. Further, sustainability of financial assistance to address social cohesion remains a risk, if donor funding priorities are shifted to address another crisis.
- Gender social norms and stereotypes are taboos in most of the Iraqi locations and this affects meeting gender commitments for their economic, political and social empowerment. Moreover, risks of climate change and shocks are high in Iraq and its vulnerability to climate breakdown.

## Cross-Cutting

- The C2RI project took into consideration human-rights approach, emphasis was given to IDP families with perceived ISIL affiliation who are in the most marginalised and vulnerable situations and who face barriers in realising their needs and rights. Community participation and accountability were considered by the UNDP.
- The project does not have a stand-alone gender analysis. Gender is mainstreamed across the project's outputs through the provided vocational training and the business grants, 50 percent of beneficiaries were women. The project encouraged women to choose non-conventional projects. MHPSS capacity building was offered to female social workers and provided services to beneficiary women. The level of participation by women in the LPCs was not clear. Four Women Peace Groups were established to advocate for peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.
- Social norms related to the economic participation of women, their autonomy and restrictions on mobility manifested themselves as key issues under Output 1 on livelihoods support. A challenge

that was reported during the evaluation is that there is a limited number of women-led organisations because of discriminatory gender norms that affects women in the workplace.

- The project included PwDs in some project activities as beneficiaries, including 99 living in housing units that were rehabilitated, as well as 11 benefiting from MHPSS services. The evaluation could not account of how many PwDs benefited from livelihoods training and business grants. Integration of PwD needs was seen as a weakness acknowledged by the project team noting the more tangible work needs to go into the inclusion of this target group in future programming.

## Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Make adjustments to the M&E system, develop and use relevant tools to be used by UNDP and its implementing partners, which will allow for a more structured data collection and analysis at different levels. UNDP's work on integration has evolved into more resilience and development interventions, in parallel, M&E system needs to evolve as well. Indicators should be well-defined and SMART and to allow for measuring the quality of the activities. UNDP could invest more in the development of digital infrastructure and capacity building for the M&E system to enhance accuracy and timeliness and data visualization for analysis, decision making and corrective measures.

Recommendation 2: Develop a unified complaints and feedback mechanism across UNDP and implementing partners which would allow for two-way communication and flow of information. The attempts by implementing partners to establish hotlines and feedback set-ups are acknowledged, however could substantially be improved.

Recommendation 3: Build on the achievement of the C2RI project on the digital case management and referral system DREAM IT, with clear plans for its institutionalization into Government information management systems, as well as possible sharing of information with UN and international partners, ensuring necessary technology devices and capacity building are provided to national systems for its adoption.

Recommendation 4: Although the project is mainstreaming gender, it is recommended to conduct a comprehensive gender analysis prior to any future programming, which will enhance gender-transformative approach to re-integration and reconciliation efforts and address the varying needs of target groups, The analysis can also explore possible partnerships with focus on gender and women empowerment.

Recommendation 5: Despite that UNDP works on ensuring linkages and building capacity of local and national partners , it is of value to clarify the transition plan for the different project outputs and deliverables to have a clear and long-term vision for the expansion and continuation of achieved results, through the national and local partners. A developed national roadmap on integration which UNDP has proposed to the government is a starting point.

Recommendation 6: If possible, suggest adjustments to the donor's reporting templates to allow for improving the technical/ narrative reported by UNDP and its implementing partners in a way that would allow for capturing quality data with sufficient level of detail for guiding implementation and documentation of results.



Recommendation 7: Continue strengthening UNDP positioning as a lead to support the Government of Iraq on the development of a National Strategy for Reintegration, in addition to continuing support on facilitating return and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol camp North-East Syria

Recommendation 8: For future programming, discuss with donors and partners the possibility to consider a longer implementation timeframe, with the realization that the integrated approach adopted by UNDP for reconciliation and reintegration is unlikely to achieve desirable results within a short period; building resilience and human capital needs time.

Recommendation 9: For future programming, and where possible establish a stronger alignment with existing national social protection graduation programmes. In doing so, UNDP can revisit the design of the livelihoods interventions across the four core pillars of safety nets, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion and social empowerment.

Recommendation 10: Develop a resource mobilization strategy to ensure continuous sufficient funding for the C2RI overall programme, beyond the generous fund from the Government of Japan that ended September 2022.

Recommendation 11: In future programming, ensure a concrete emphasis on inclusion and disability, with targeted interventions to address their special needs. A study looking at the situation and needs of People with Disability and existing actors in the context of Iraq is necessary for an informed design of this component/ interventions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Overview

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Iraq Country office has been implementing the Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Project (C2RI) as part of its Social Cohesion Pillar since May 2020. The project contributes Outcome 3.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF): ‘People in Iraq, civil society and communities, particularly women, have improved capacity to lead, participate in and contribute to the design and delivery of equitable and responsive services, especially for the most vulnerable populations.’ It has received generous funding from the Government of Japan for the implementation of a pilot phase in 4 locations: Al Qaim, Habbaniya, Tuz Khurmato, and Muhalabiya and will be completed by 31 September 2022. Meanwhile, the project is continuing in other locations with funding from other donors and is expected to continue until end of March 2023.

To this end, UNDP Iraq Country Office has launched a call to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the project as a whole, which will also serve as a final evaluation for the components funded by the Government of Japan. The evaluation findings and recommendations are expected to inform and help improve decision-making relating to project implementation in other locations across Iraq.

This Final Report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the C2RI project’s mid-term evaluation. It starts with a description of the context in Iraq and the approaches adopted throughout the evaluation processes. The report then provides answers to each of the evaluation questions (EQs) defined under six criteria; relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Finally, the report presents conclusions and recommendations drawn from the consultant’s judgments and based on observed facts, evidence and data.

### 1.2. Context in Iraq

Five years since seize of violent conflicts in Iraqi and the defeat of ISIL by the Federal Government in 2017, the country is experiencing improved security and political situation and is slowly progressing towards recovery. Significant reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts have restored roads, reopened local markets, restarted public water and electricity, and rebuilt housing, health facilities and schools.<sup>3</sup> The survey conducted by UNDP in 2022 under the C2RI project here under review on public perceptions of safety and security in Iraq showed that a strong majority (96 percent) of people across the country felt safe in 2022 because of people living peacefully, strong presence of Iraqi Security Forces and no presence of ISIL. The survey reflected the need to prioritize improving local police services, improving access to security and justice services for the local population, and supporting community security interventions at the local level.<sup>4</sup> However, spill overs from the conflict still remain, according to the Global Peace Index in

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<sup>3</sup> OCHA. 2022. Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview, March 2022. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a64f3a8-4262-37d5-9e6f-00db3422b031/iraq\\_humanitarian\\_needs\\_overview\\_2022\\_-\\_issued\\_27\\_march\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a64f3a8-4262-37d5-9e6f-00db3422b031/iraq_humanitarian_needs_overview_2022_-_issued_27_march_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> UNDP. 2022. Policy Brief: Public Perception Survey on Local Safety and Security in Iraq. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-07/220701%20POLICY%20BRIEF%20Safety%20and%20Security%20Perception%20Survey%202022.pdf>

2022<sup>5</sup>, Iraq ranked 157 out of 163 countries in terms of societal safety and security, domestic and international conflict and degree of militarization (Up-change of 2 from 2017). Unfortunately, five years after the defeat of ISIL, Iraq still ranks in the top 10 globally for Internally Displaced People (IDPs), who still need sustainable and durable solutions to become fully productive members of society and the economy. Access for humanitarian and development partners is key to implementing the durable solutions framework, and Area Based Coordination Groups have been set up to promote an enabling environment for returns.<sup>6</sup>

The post-conflict period has seen gradual return of over 4.94 million Iraqis to their areas of origin. Millions of Iraqis previously affected by ISIL and related counter military operations are benefiting from efforts to bring them back in parity with other Iraqis. Humanitarian needs and displacement remain stubbornly persistent for a relatively small but deeply vulnerable portion of the population. Around 1.19 million still remain displaced, in addition to 247,000 Syrian refugees.<sup>7</sup> OCHA Iraq<sup>8</sup> indicated that IDPs currently live in all 18 governorates, in over 100 districts throughout the country. Over 92 percent of all remaining IDPs are in protracted displacement, having been displaced for three years or longer.

Challenges to the return and reintegration of IDPs are related to humanitarian needs, and the lack of social acceptance, trust and cohesion between returnees and different communities who are unwilling to live alongside. Stigmatization of individuals perceived as having family ties to ISIL often results in their economic and social exclusion, difficulties in finding employment, public shaming and in some cases extrajudicial violence. Unresolved ethnoreligious tensions, a lack of communal trust and weak governance. Local conflicts, such as access to housing, land, and property as well as insecurity, crime and difficult inter-tribal relations further complicate the situation.<sup>9</sup>

According to IOM, 49 percent returnee households live in locations at risk of violence, 44 percent experience restrictions of movement, and 32 percent have a female member who feels unsafe moving around.<sup>10</sup> Displaced women and children, including widows of ISIL combatants face additional challenges such as the threat of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence (SGBV).<sup>11</sup> Hence, gender inequalities and the systemic exclusion of women and girls, exacerbated by conflict and fragility, also undermine Iraq's social cohesion and produce gendered vulnerabilities.

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<sup>5</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace. 2022. Global Peace Index 2022: Measuring Peace in a Complex World.

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> UN Iraq. 2022. IRAQ Common Country Analysis. <https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/CCA%20Iraq%20-%20Condensed.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> IOM. 2021. Displacement Tracking Matrix, Iraq Master List Report 123, Oct. 2021 <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/iraq-%E2%80%94-displacement-report-124-october-december-2021>

<sup>8</sup> OCHA. 2021. Iraq Humanitarian Bulletin, July 2021

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/july\\_2021\\_humanitarian\\_bulletin\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/july_2021_humanitarian_bulletin_final_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> UNDP. 2021. Pathways to Reintegration: IRAQ Families Formerly Associated with ISIL

[file:///C:/Users/daaa.arafa/Documents/DA%20Family%20IDs%20&%20Passports/Other/Iraq%20C2RI/UNDP-IQ-Pathways-to-Reintegration-Report%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/daaa.arafa/Documents/DA%20Family%20IDs%20&%20Passports/Other/Iraq%20C2RI/UNDP-IQ-Pathways-to-Reintegration-Report%20(1).pdf)

<sup>10</sup> IOM. 2021. Home Again? Categorising Obstacles to Returnee Reintegration In Iraq

[https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202216553131\\_iom\\_Iraq\\_Home\\_Again\\_Categorising\\_Obstacles\\_to\\_Returnee\\_Reintegration\\_in\\_Iraq.pdf](https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202216553131_iom_Iraq_Home_Again_Categorising_Obstacles_to_Returnee_Reintegration_in_Iraq.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> UNDP. 2022. Conflict Analysis, Community-Based Reconciliation & Reintegration in Iraq.

<https://www.undp.org/iraq/publications/community-based-reconciliation-and-reintegration-iraq-c2ri-conflict-analysis-2022>

On another front, the economic conditions in Iraq are challenging in general, affected by the political instability, social unrest and a deepening state-citizen divide.<sup>12</sup> This is also now exacerbated by more recent crises, majorly the early 2020 decline in oil prices<sup>13</sup> and the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on jobs and revenue losses. The poverty rate in Iraq nearly doubled, reaching 31.7 percent, while the unemployment rate around 14 percent.<sup>14</sup> Iraq's economic outlook remains subject to significant risks, yet, the turnaround in oil markets has significantly improved Iraq's economic outlook in the medium term. Overall growth in 2022 is now forecast at 8.9 percent.

A substantial portion of returnee households face obstacles across indicators related to employment and economic security. Lack of livelihoods opportunities and absence of available income-generating activities are of the most pervasive challenges to durable solutions in Iraq.<sup>15</sup> 39 percent of returnees live in locations with inoperative businesses and other 22 percent live in locations with inoperative agriculture. Many are awaiting compensation for property damage or destruction due to conflict and are facing difficulties to access healthcare, psychosocial (PSS) and protection services.<sup>16</sup> These issues are prolonging the Iraq's displacement conundrum, exacerbating intergroup tensions and heightening the country's fragility and risk of backsliding into conflict. Traditional tribal customs have long been influencing life in Iraq, many Iraqis may resort to their tribe when seeking physical and economic security or dispute mediation. Tribes' role at the national level remains marginal, but at the local level, client-centric forms of tribal authority continue to be important throughout Iraq. Tribal justice system provides stability and maintain collective honour, while preventing a descent into revenge killings and the escalation of conflict.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, Iraq is one the most vulnerable countries worldwide to climate breakdown, affected by soaring temperatures, insufficient and diminishing rainfall, intensified droughts and water scarcity, frequent sand and dust storms and flooding. Compounding this, rapid population growth, urbanization and inefficient water use by the agricultural and industrial sectors is propelling a demand for more water. Climate migration is already a reality in Iraq; Iraqis are forced to relocate in order to survive.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3. Description of the C2RI Project

#### Rationale

UNDP is committed to supporting the Government and people of Iraq during their transition towards reconciliation, reform and stability. UNDP Iraq Country Office has been supporting the social cohesion and community reconciliation for decades through humanitarian, recovery and resilience programmes. Social

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<sup>12</sup> World Bank. 2020. *Addressing the Human Capital Crisis: A Public Expenditure Review for Human Development Sectors in Iraq*. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/568141622306648034/addressing-the-human-capital-crisis-a-public-expenditure-review-for-human-development-sectors-in-iraq>

<sup>13</sup> Iraq is one of the most oil-dependent countries in the world. Over the last decade, oil revenues have accounted for more than 99% of exports, 85% of the government's budget, and 42% of GDP. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview#1>

<sup>14</sup> World Bank. 2022. *World Bank in Iraq Website: Iraq Overview*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/overview>

<sup>15</sup> IOM. 2022. *Humanitarian Needs Overview*. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a64f3a8-4262-37d5-9e6f-00db3422b031/iraq\\_humanitarian\\_needs\\_overview\\_2022\\_-\\_issued\\_27\\_march\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a64f3a8-4262-37d5-9e6f-00db3422b031/iraq_humanitarian_needs_overview_2022_-_issued_27_march_0.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> IOM. 2021. *Home Again? Categorising Obstacles to Returnee Reintegration In Iraq*. [https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202216553131\\_iom\\_Iraq\\_Home\\_Again\\_Categorising\\_Obstacles\\_to\\_Returnee\\_Reintegration\\_in\\_Iraq.pdf](https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/202216553131_iom_Iraq_Home_Again_Categorising_Obstacles_to_Returnee_Reintegration_in_Iraq.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Haley Bobseine. 2019. *Tribal Justice in a Fragile Iraq, The Century Foundation Report*, [https://production-tcf.imgix.net/app/uploads/2019/11/08121945/tribal-justice\\_bobseinePDF.pdf](https://production-tcf.imgix.net/app/uploads/2019/11/08121945/tribal-justice_bobseinePDF.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> IOM. 2022. *Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Iraq* <https://iraq.un.org/en/194355-migration-environment-and-climate-change-iraq>

cohesion is mainstreamed through the stabilization work of UNDP and has been able to facilitate return through dialogue and peace agreements with support to local peace mechanisms, working with youth, women groups, media and religious leaders to build peaceful and more cohesive societies. The C2RI project directly responds to the UNDP's approach to support the Government of Iraq to facilitate the return of internally displaced people (IDPs), lay the groundwork for rehabilitation and recovery and safeguard against the resurgence of violence and extremism.

### Expected Results

UNDP Iraq with generous funding from the Government of Japan amounting to US\$ 8,181,818 is implementing the C2RI project to support the return and reintegration of 4,000 perceived ISIL affiliated families in Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Al-Anbar Governorates by enhancing the community readiness of and fostering dialogue within target communities to accept the return of these families through tailored MHPSS, livelihoods, PVE and infrastructure rehabilitation programme interventions.<sup>19</sup>

The expected outputs of the project are as follows:

- Output 1 – Adults formerly associated and selected community members have received targeted reintegration support.
- Output 2 – Increased community acceptance in the selected areas for the return and reintegration of children, young people and adults formerly associated with ISIL.
- Output 3 – National institutions, policies and strategies for reintegration strengthened and developed.
- Output 4 – Local institutions and governance structures for reintegration strengthened.

### Theory of Change

With this project and building on the stabilization and other social cohesion projects, UNDP will contribute to the arduous task of achieving the sustainable reintegration of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons, and specifically, persons formerly associated with ISIL.

For sustainable reintegration to occur, and as outlined in the development challenge and lessons learned sections earlier in this document, communities of return need to allow to persons formerly associated with ISIL to return, and once returned, enable them to socially, psychosocially and economically reintegrate. Once communities are 'prepared' and persons formerly associated ready and willing to return, reintegration support, both at community level and individual level can start, which in due course and if well monitored and accompanied will lead to sustainable reintegration.

This gradual and often time-consuming process, led by Local Peace Committees (LPCs) and supported and facilitated by UNDP's C2RI project is the first essential building block, which consists of:<sup>20</sup>

- A comprehensive, integrated set of activities that enable community-based and led reconciliation and social cohesion processes;
- An advocacy and outreach campaign, tailored to each of the selected areas; and
- Rehabilitation or construction of social and productive infrastructure.

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<sup>19</sup> UNDP. 2019. *Project Document: Community-based Reconciliation & Reintegration in Iraq (C2RI)*

<sup>20</sup> UNDP. 2019. *Project Document: Community-based Reconciliation & Reintegration in Iraq (C2RI)*

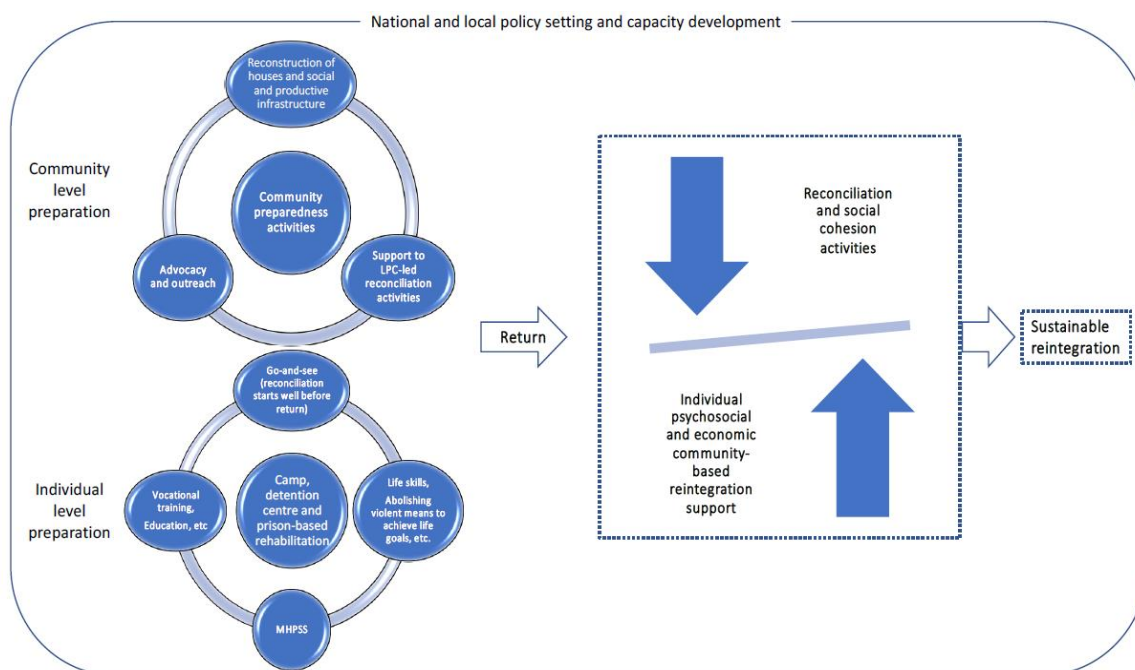


Figure 2: C2RI Project's Theory of Change

## 2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

#### Purpose

Project Evaluation is part of UNDP's commitment to improved results-based management. The main purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to review the impact and efficiency of the C2RI project interventions which will support the remaining project implementation. The evaluation findings and recommendations are expected to inform and help improve decision-making relating to implementation for the Iraq Social Cohesion Programme to promote social cohesion and reconciliation. They may also support the implementation of the remaining activities until the projects close on 31 May 2023.<sup>21</sup>

#### Objectives

According to the terms of reference (ToRs) in **Annex 1**, the objectives of the mid-term evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance of and progress of project's results.
- Assess the efficiency of project implementation, including the operations support.
- Assess the effectiveness of the project and its activities in reaching the stated objectives.
- Assess the appropriateness of project design and management arrangements to achieve objectives.
- Assess the sustainability of the project results.
- Outline lessons learned and good practices that can support the second half of project implementation.

<sup>21</sup> UNDP Iraq. 2022. *Terms of References, Mid-Term Evaluation of the C2RI project*

## Scope

**Thematic scope:** The evaluation examined the project's conceptualization, design, implementation, management, and results thus far to support the remainder of its implementation. The evaluation will engage all project stakeholders, beneficiaries, communities, relevant national institutions, donors, UNDP, United Nations (UN) agencies and Civil Society Organization (CSOs).

**Geographic scope:** The evaluation covers the following regions where the project was implemented.

- Anbar Governorate: Al Qaim, Habbaniya, Fallujah, Al Baghdady
- Salah al Din Governorate: Tuz Khurmato, Sharqat, Bald
- Ninewa Governorate: Muhalabiya, Tel Afar

**Temporal scope:** The life of the project is covered since its inception in May 2020 until end of July 2022.

## 2.2. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation follows the of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC)<sup>22</sup> criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in addition to coherence and complementarity.

- **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.
- **Coherence:** the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
- **Efficiency:** the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs.
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the project's 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.
- **Impact:** analysing 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 local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. 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:** Analysing 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

30 evaluation questions were used as provided by the UNDP ToRs, and 44 people were interviewed in total. The Evaluation Matrix presented in **Annex 2** of this report presents the sources of information, methods of data collection and evaluability criteria for each EQ. Additionally, the evaluation considered

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<sup>22</sup> OECD. 2021. *Evaluation Criteria*. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>



cross-cutting issues, including gender equality and empowerment of women (GEWE), human rights, young people, diversity and needs and priorities of people with disability during data collection and analysis. This was done by consistently asking all stakeholders about cross-cutting issues ensuring the responses are collated, analysed and presented in the report.

All collected data was disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories and employed a range of data sources and processes to ensure inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including the most vulnerable. Table 1 provides a list of the final EQs used in the evaluation.<sup>23</sup>

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

Criteria	Evaluation Question
Relevance	EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?
	EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development priorities and policies, UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?
	EQ 3: To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP country programme outcome?
	EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?
Coherence	EQ 5: To what extent does the project address synergies and linkages to other projects?
	EQ 6: To what extent is the project aligned with the Iraq Country Programme Document?
	EQ 7: To what extent is the project aligned with interventions from other UNDP Iraq units?
	EQ 8: To what extent is external coherence taken under consideration?
	EQ 9: How is this project consistent with other interventions by other actors?
Efficiency	EQ 10: 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?
	EQ 11: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?
	EQ 12: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
	EQ 13: 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?
	EQ 14: 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	EQ 15: To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving planned objectives, outcomes, and outputs?
	EQ 16: To what extent do the project's activities/management systems support the reintegration and reconciliation of persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, IDPs, returnees, and stayers?
	EQ 17: What has been achieved thus far?
	EQ 18: To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?

<sup>23</sup> Nahla Hassan. 2022. Inception Report, Mid-Term Evaluation of the C2RI project



	EQ 19: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?
	EQ 20: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?
	EQ 21: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?
Impact	EQ 22: What has happened/changed as the result of the pilot phase in the targeted locations?
	EQ 23: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?
	EQ 24: How many people have been affected by the project as of end of September 2022?
Sustainability	EQ 25: Have suitable strategies for sustainability been developed?
	EQ 26: Has the project contributed to the expansion of knowledge on reintegration and reconciliation among government counterparts, local partners, and community members?
	EQ 27: To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term following closure of C2RI?
	EQ 28: What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
	EQ 29: Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
<b>Cross Cutting Themes</b>	
Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and/or marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project in the country?</li> </ul>
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent have GEWE been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?</li> <li>Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?</li> <li>To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in GEWE? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?</li> </ul>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in planning and implementation?</li> <li>What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?</li> <li>What barriers did persons with disabilities face?</li> <li>Was a twin-track approach adopted?</li> </ul>

## 2.3. Stakeholders Consulted

The stakeholders consulted during the field data collection were selected based on a mapping exercise that was done during inception phase guided by the evaluation ToRs. The evaluation engaged various stakeholders, including Key UNDP staff in Iraq, government representatives, CSOs, Implementing Partners (IPs), other UN agencies, Government of Japan and other donors and development partners. The comprehensive list of stakeholders is provided in the stakeholders map of this Final Report (**Annex 3 and 4**). Interactions with the stakeholders were conducted using face to face and virtual means.

## 2.4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The mid-term evaluation examined UNDP's interventions in their own merit as well as their contribution to wider objectives of UNDP such as resilience building, advancing economic growth, women's rights and specific UNSDCF objectives and identified SDGs. The evaluation considered the project's results framework and theory of change (ToC) examining selected indicators and verifying progress according to the original project design to achieve intended results.

### **Participatory Approach**

In line with the UNDP ToRs, the evaluation was based on an inclusive, transparent and participatory approach, involving a broad range of partners and stakeholders at national and sub-national levels. This is believed to have preserved a sense of ownership and was successful in setting the stage for an open discussion that addressed issues and challenges and proposed solutions or corrective measures to be adopted in the remaining phase of the project. The consultant spoke to a wide range of stakeholders involved in the C2RI identification, formulation and implementation.

### **Mixed-Method Approach**

The evaluation used different methods for data collection, with emphasis on qualitative data collection techniques to answer the evaluation questions. These included document review, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The qualitative data was complemented with quantitative data analysis of standardized, quantifiable and classifiable regular data linked to monitoring systems of the project. This helped to minimise bias and strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings.

### **Integration of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

Considerations of GEWE were integrated in the evaluation scope of data collection and analysis, the indicators were designed in a way that ensured GEWE-related data are collected. The evaluation objectives required assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations and these aspects were also mainstreamed in other objectives. Having employed a mixed-methods approach, it was appropriate to evaluate GEWE considerations (collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data and ensuring the appropriate sample size of participants).

### **Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus**

Reconciliation and reintegration are by definition key activities within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The social cohesion pillar of UNDP combines humanitarian support with long term development interventions to improve the peaceful coexistence within societies. The consultant closely considered the work of UNDP from a humanitarian-development-peace-nexus lens, which helped to properly understand needs and the root causes of interrelated population and development issues, inequalities, vulnerability and fragility. Beyond the immediate programme location, analysis took into account the broader implications of intervening in both the humanitarian and development settings upon impartial, principled humanitarian action and long-term social cohesion.

## 2.5. Data Collection and Analysis

The mid-term review will utilize several data collection methods, including KIIs with stakeholders, national and sub-national level IPs and FGDs with beneficiaries and stakeholders of the different activities in different countries. All interviews and FGDs will be conducted through remote means (Zoom, teams or phones). Data will be collected using semi-structured interview guides tailored as necessary for each group of the target participants of the review. **Annex 4** outlines the guides for the conducted FGDs and KIIs.

The mid-term evaluation was conducted using the following methods:

**Desk Review:** An in-depth desk review and analysis of available qualitative and quantitative secondary data was used to support the development of findings and complement information received through the field data collection. As part of desk review, the evaluation carefully assessed project documents and reports provided by UNDP to the greatest extent possible, as well as relevant national documents and any relevant literature. The documents were also used to find information which the evaluation was not able to find during the field data collection in light of changes in project management as well as government counterparts in some places of the intervention. A detailed assessment of the documentation will provide information. It is also recognised that the security or health conditions could potentially affect the length and access of the field data collection mission.

**Field Mission:** A field mission was facilitated by the UNDP Iraq Country Office for the consultant who visited Baghdad between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2022.

**Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** KIIs were during field data collection conducted mostly in person and face to face that depended on the security conditions in Iraq during the time of the field mission. 30 KIIs were conducted with project's stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders such as trainees, community members and community leaders, participating ministries, departments and agencies, implementing partners, CSOs, personnel from relevant UN agencies and donors.

**Focus Group Discussions:** FGDs were conducted with beneficiary groups from Anbar, Salah Eldin and Nenwa Governorates. In total, the consultant conducted 2 FGDs, taking into consideration a representative coverage of respondent groups and geographic locations. Each focus group was composed of 6 to 10 members (with 8 being the appropriate number). In cases where meetings in person were not possible, interviews were conducted via Zoom/skype or phone. The evaluation made sure that the voices, opinions and information of targeted citizens and participants in C2RI were considered. The evaluation selected the project beneficiaries for interviews, in close collaboration with UNDP.

**Quantitative data:** Quantitative data was drawn from standardised and quantifiable data collected by the project through its results framework and indicators.

**Data Analysis:** Verification and triangulation of data will be done through correlation of data obtained from (a) different groups of stakeholders, as well as (b) different methods. The evaluation ensured that findings were backed by a combination of sources and methods, to ensure validity of findings.

The following principles will guide the data analysis process in general:

- Methods of data collection and stakeholders' perspectives were triangulated for as many as possible of the EQs. This included asking similar questions to different stakeholders and in different locations noting similarities and differences. As much as possible, whenever inconsistencies were noted between the various stakeholders, the team tried to clarify the information.
- Although a consistent approach was followed to ensure grounds for a good qualitative analysis, the assessment incorporated a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership by stakeholders.

## 2.6. Ethical Standards

International standards for data collection methods were followed. These include ensuring the consent of the participants is granted (or guardians of in the case of minors) for participating in KIIs or FGDs. A consent form was read by the consultant to the participants at the beginning of the meetings, ensuring their approval to participating. Confidentiality and anonymity of the data was ensured in a safe and confidential set-up. The evaluation adhered to the standards of UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.

## 2.7. Evaluation limitations

As with any research or field work, there were certain limitations encountered. Not all locations could be visited in person due to security reasons. One visit was conducted to understand the change that has occurred in the community. To compensate for this, several workshops were observed to gauge the extent of the work done prior to the implementation of the project.

# 3. FINDINGS

## 3.1. Relevance

**EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?**

The C2RI project addresses some of the most critical political, security and social challenges identified in the Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework Plan 2018-2027<sup>24</sup>, in which the government has made the return of IDPs and their families to their home areas a priority. Because return is widely regarded as the preferred solution to internal displacement, forced return, which has been documented in Iraq, renders returnees vulnerable to unsafe living conditions, retaliation, and in some cases, recruitment by armed groups.<sup>25</sup>



Figure 3: Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027: Recovery Pillars

<sup>24</sup> Iraq Ministry of Planning and World Bank Group. 2018. *Iraq Reconstruction and Development Framework 2018-2027* <https://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Iraq-Recons-Inves-World-Bank-Jan-2018.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> UNDP. 2021. Pathways to Reintegration: IRAQ Families Formerly Associated with ISIL <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/iq/UNDP-IQ-Pathways-to-Reintegration-Report.pdf>

In response, the project is ensuring the communities are socially and economically ready to receive the Iraqi families with perceived ISIL affiliation or having lived in ISIL controlled areas and is addressing critical challenges related to their security, economic and humanitarian needs. It is therefore in alignment with the Framework's five integrated recovery pillars 1) Governance, 2) Reconciliation and Peacebuilding, 3) Human and Social Development, 4) Infrastructure, and 5) Economic Development. The project's Outputs 1 and 2 respond to the social challenges associated with the breakdown in social cohesion and trust between ethnic and religious groups, as well as widespread exclusion of vulnerable groups, including ethno-religious minorities, women, children and youth. Outputs 3 and 4 respond to the political challenges associated with identity and sectarian divides, delays in advancing national reforms and a feeling of exclusion from the national political debate at the subnational level.

In 2020, 15 UN agencies jointly developed the Global Framework for UN Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees. The Global Framework recognises that an 'all-of-UN' response is required to address the transnational humanitarian, human rights and security crisis in Northeast Syria, where more than 59,000 individuals, mostly children from Syria, Iraq, and more than 60 other countries – with perceived or actual ties to ISIL, are currently living in closed camps. Separate from the population in camps, approximately 10,000 people suspected of being ISIL members or fighters are believed to be detained in prisons in Northeast Syria. As part of the Global Framework, a 'Joint Scoping Exercise' took place to Iraq in 2021-2022 to identify key gaps and needs prior to defining the scope of UN support that may be provided to a Member State. Iraq – whose approximately 29,257 nationals, mostly children, are the majority of the population of the largest camp, Al Hol – was identified as the first Member State for which the Scoping Exercise would be implemented.

The Scoping Exercise was conducted at the start of the C2RI project and explored the situation of Iraqi families with perceived ISIL affiliation or having lived in ISIL controlled areas. It identified the challenges, opportunities and risks involved in the provision of technical and financial support for their reintegration into society by the UN and the international community. Recommendations were drawn to ensure the project's response in relation to the national policy level engagement, programme solutions that respond to the highly complex, sensitive context and risks in Iraq when dealing with the target groups. Also in relation to building capacities of Local Peace Committees (LPCs) and technical and financial supporting mechanisms, as well as international coordination and joint initiatives together with international partners.<sup>26</sup> Interviewed UNDP staff during the evaluation highlighted the importance of this mission in formulating the project design, which depended on discussions with stakeholders, actual needs on ground, as well as the collective experience of UNDP on reconciliation and social cohesion in Iraq and globally.

In 2021, the Government of Iraq decided to repatriate Iraqis displaced from Al Hol Camp. Given its credibility and long-standing partnerships in return communities, UNDP was well-positioned to support the Government in facilitating community acceptance and reintegration through its community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq Project, and through its wide network of more than 500 members of local peace mechanisms and community leaders. Currently UNDP is leading the UN-Government Task

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<sup>26</sup> UNDP. 2020. *The Situation of Iraqi Families Affiliated or Perceived to be Affiliated with ISIL or Having Lived in ISIL Controlled Areas, Report on Prospects for Community-based Reintegration Support*

Force for Reintegration within the UN-Government Technical Working Group for facilitating return and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol camp North-East Syria.

During this mid-term evaluation, feedback from government stakeholders and international partners showed that UNDP's efforts through the C2RI project are instrumental and appreciated, where the issue of affiliation or association with ISIL is very challenging to deal with. SGBV and ethnic strife are two sufferings by the families that the project was specifically acknowledged for addressing, as well as the interventions that empower community dialogue committees. Interviewees indicated that supporting the livelihoods of returning families in villages is important given the financial hardships that they face, which is exacerbated by the impact climate change on agricultural productivity. Returning families cannot afford the rehabilitation cost of their houses and the C2RI project's response in this regard is critically needed.

**EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development priorities and policies, UNDP country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?**

Through its four expected outputs, the C2RI project comes in line with the priorities of the Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development<sup>27</sup>, specifically, with Priority 1 'Human Capital Development', Priority 2 'Good Governance' and Priority 4 'Safe Society'. The project is also aligned to the strategic objectives of the National Development Plan 2018-2022<sup>28</sup>, contributing to Strategic Objective 1 'Lay the foundations of good governance' and Strategic Objective 3 'Recovery of communities affected by the for the poorest and vulnerable groups'.

The C2RI project contributes towards the achievement of Outcome 3.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Iraq (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 '*People in Iraq participate in and benefit from effective mechanisms –at national, subnational and community levels– that prevent, mitigate and manage conflict, and contribute to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, with a focus on women and youth leadership in decision-making, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.*'

It also supports the progress towards outcome 3 of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021<sup>29</sup> '*Strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis*', specifically, Output 3.2.2 '*National and local systems enabled and communities empowered to ensure the restoration of justice institutions, redress mechanisms and community security.*' The Project design is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), primarily SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, as well as SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 5 Gender equality and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities.

**EQ 3: To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant UNDP Country Programme outcome?**

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<sup>27</sup> Iraq Ministry of Planning. 2019. *Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development: The Future we Want*. <https://mop.gov.iq/en/static/uploads/8/pdf/1568714423e99cb9efb0b0a786344a1294683d4931--%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%8A%D8%A9%202030%20e.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Planning, Republic of Iraq. 2017. *National Development Plan 2018-2022*. [https://www.iraq-jccme.jp/pdf/archives/nationaldevelopmentplan2018\\_2022.pdf](https://www.iraq-jccme.jp/pdf/archives/nationaldevelopmentplan2018_2022.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> UNDP. 2017. *UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*. [file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/DP\\_2017\\_38-EN.pdf](file:///C:/Users/doaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/DP_2017_38-EN.pdf)



The C2RI project directly contributes to the stabilization pillar (UNSDCF Outcome 3.2) of the UNDP Country programme 2020-2024, supporting the Government's post-ISIL efforts. The stabilization initiatives as described in the Country Programme Document (CPD) address challenges related to access to basic infrastructure and services in disadvantaged areas most affected by the cycle of conflict and at risk for future conflict. This pillar strives to ensure that the required technical expertise of municipalities and local line directorates is built and allocated to sustain service delivery efforts in liberated areas and underserved governorates and develops stronger synergies with other programme areas, particularly livelihoods, social cohesion, environment and governance, while improving strategies for the empowerment of women and youth and mainstreaming innovation.

The C2RI project is built on the assumption that *if* Iraqi communities are prepared and persons formerly associated with ISIL are ready and willing to return to their home areas, *then* sustainable reintegration could be achieved, *because of* reintegration support that promote social cohesion at community level, as well as psychosocial/mental health and economic reintegration support for target beneficiaries. Hence, the project contributes to the CPD's theory of change that supports the restoration of public services, rehabilitation of housing and public infrastructure, and implementation of interventions to address service sustainability in critical infrastructure sectors, while giving greater emphasis to issues of exclusion, discrimination and rights and stronger focus on 'building back better'.

**EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?**

The C2RI project considers gender equality and women's empowerment in its interventions, in line with the UNDP Strategy and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security<sup>30</sup>, which accounts for the gender-specific impacts of the conflict on men, women and children in conflict-affected communities. The project supports women from families with perceived affiliation to ISIL and community members through a comprehensive package of assistance tailored to their specific needs. This includes the provision of mental health and psychological support (MHPSS) to women and children, case management, referral services and information sharing, livelihoods vocational trainings and cash for work activities, in addition to rehabilitation of houses.

People perceived in affiliation with ISIL face serious threats to the basic principles of human rights and non-discrimination, including political movements and ideologies, weak or biased legal frameworks and socio-cultural norms and values. Displacement and proximity to ISIL were associated with poorer economic and mental health conditions. People who lived in ISIL territory but were not proximate to ISIL had slightly better mental health outcomes than other profiles. The MEAC Study by the Centre for Policy Research of the UN University suggests that the impact of long-term displacement and the experience of perceived ISIL affiliation both have wide-ranging impact on psychological functioning. Families with proximity to ISIL were more likely to be missing civil documentation. They also are less likely to consider all members of their family safe in their area, they fear false accusations and are more likely to receive

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<sup>30</sup> UN Department of Information. 2005. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

threats. Due to their fears around safety, people who lived in ISIL territory were much less likely to socialize outside the house or to limit their movements as much as possible.<sup>31</sup>

The C2RI project adopts a rights-based approach to reconciliation that endeavour to bring about transformational change and reduce underlying vulnerabilities. In its efforts to support minority and marginalized groups of women, IDP returnees and families with perceived ISIL affiliation, the project builds capacities of local peace committees to adopt reconciliation approaches and activities that adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>32</sup> and the international human rights law and principles. This also considers the Government of Iraq's five-year Human Rights National Action Plan adopted in 2021, with the support of the Office of the President and UNAMI's Human Rights Office. The Action Plan seeks to harmonise national legislation with international human rights standards, strengthen national policies for the protection and promotion of human rights, and build human rights capacity within government institutions, including establishing women and youth peace groups.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2. Coherence

#### **EQ 5: To what extent does the project address synergies and linkages to other projects?**

C2RI is designed to capitalise and complement the work done by UNDP in Iraq. The project was designed using the lessons learned from the UNDP's Integrated Reconciliation Project (IRP) concluded in December 2021. The IRP supported the establishment of the LPCs as important catalysts for social cohesion. Using the same implementation strategies and capitalising on UNDP Iraq previous work, the C2RI engaged with the LPCs already established to support the return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliations. LPCs helped synthesize the communities and the authorities in the targeted locations to increase acceptance of the returnees thus promoting social cohesion and reintegration. The project also provided housing refurbishment services in close coordination and collaboration with UNDP Iraq flagship project the Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS).

Initially designed as a return scheme for the internally displaced who may have been displaced multiple times as a result insecurities and conflict, C2RI recognised that those hardest to return or reach had different fears and worries related to stigmatisation and fear of retaliation from survivors' families. C2RI is coherent with the stabilisation framework of UNDP which has to date supported the return of close to 5 million people to their areas of origin. C2RI expanded the work of the stabilisation approach by delving into reintegration and recognising that in order for people to return there is a need to create community acceptance as well as provide a holistic set of services that go beyond infrastructure rehabilitation. Hence C2RI, also as recounted by stakeholders interviewed, encompassed infrastructure with livelihoods and MHPSS services. This package was preceded by engagement with LPCs to pave the way for return and reintegration.

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<sup>31</sup> Centre for Policy research, UN University. 2022. MEAC Iraq Case Study Report: Supporting the reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation in Iraq

<sup>32</sup> OHCHR. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> UNDP. 2021. Pathways to Reintegration: IRAQ Families Formerly Associated with ISIL

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/iq/UNDP-IQ-Pathways-to-Reintegration-Report.pdf>



### **EQ 6: To what extent is the project aligned with the Iraq Country Programme Document?**

The C2RI project directly contributes to several outputs of the UNDP Iraq Country Programme 2020-2024<sup>34</sup> through the pathways a) Strengthened Stabilization and c) Improved Governance, with accountable institutions that protect the rights of vulnerable groups and pave the way for citizen-state trust. These pathways are all underpinned by the humanitarian-peace-development nexus and forge a new social contract in Iraq. The project specifically contributes to:

- Output 1.1 Infrastructure for basic service delivery improved in locations affected by crisis and vulnerable to conflict.
- Output 1.2 Civil society and academia enabled to promote social cohesion, PVE and sustainable development.
- Output 2.2. Access to livelihood and employment creation opportunities increased in locations affected by and vulnerable to conflict.
- Output 3.2 National institutions and mechanisms dedicated to promoting social cohesion and PVE strengthened.

### **EQ7: To what extent is the project aligned with interventions from other UNDP Iraq units?**

Social Cohesion Portfolio has been developed in 2019 as a main pillar of UNDP Iraq. It integrates all projects and windows working on social cohesion and reconciliation funded from different donors with one vision and aims to improve the enabling environment for peace and social cohesion in Iraq, through a multi-pronged intervention that addresses institutional frameworks, local mechanisms and actions, institutional and individual capacities, inter-group and state-citizen relations, and conflict-sensitive responses. The project adopts a whole of-country and comprehensive approach, is informed by lessons learnt from past work, focuses on developing competencies, works with diverse stakeholders and partners, mainstreams social cohesion and conflict sensitivity into the UNDP country programme, and works with due sensitivity for political and conflict risks. The framework includes the Integrated Reconciliation Project, Window 4 of FFS, social cohesion component of Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) and this project; Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq.

As discussed under EQ 5, C2RI is integrated within the social cohesion pillar of UNDP Iraq. It builds on previous projects and activities implemented or being implemented by UNDP Iraq to maximise the outcomes of the activities. Of particular focus in the project's alignment with the social cohesion pillar that focuses on strengthening local mechanisms for peace and reconciliation. It also builds and capitalises on the work of the FFS to ensure consistency and equity in infrastructure works. All infrastructure and house rehabilitation works implemented by the project was conducted through direct coordination and collaboration with FFS to ensure efficiency in the use of resources as well as expertise and value.

The C2RI adopted an area-based approach to ensure coherence and complementarity with other interventions implemented by the country office. The area-based interventions which target a defined geographic territory containing conflict-affected communities with (large) clusters of persons formerly associated while considering all networks and economic flows that (can) affect the defined territory. The

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<sup>34</sup> UNDP. 2019. *Iraq Country Programme 2020-2024*.

<file:///C:/Users/daaa.arafa/Documents/Consultancy/IRP/Resources/UNDP%20Iraq%20country%20programme%202020%202024.pdf>

objective is to optimise the use of locally based resources (rural or urban) and the synergies arising among local businesses, civil society, business development service providers, investors, and authorities. Area-based programming ensured that the reconciliation and reintegration activities closely coordinate with PVE, stabilisation, social cohesion, recovery and development activities and programmes operating in the selected areas.

**EQ 8: To what extent is external coherence taken under consideration? EQ 9: How is this project consistent with other interventions by other actors?**

A Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) UN Joint Approach, chaired by UNDP and IOM, with membership from UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR and UNAMI, was established to coordinate this support. While recognising that for reintegration to be sustainable, a well-coordinated process of protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and return is essential, the TCC served as a forum for unified messaging and advocacy for this politically sensitive but critical file. The scoping mission report also stressed that achieving sustainable reintegration remains the most crucial and challenging aspect of the individual assessment, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration process. C2RI is part of this joint efforts by the UN family in Iraq who finalised and launched a *“Joint Approach for community-based reconciliation and reintegration of children, young people and adults formerly associated with ISIL”*.

The formulation of this Joint Approach is important as it improves coordination of ongoing programming. The Joint Approach focuses on the last two steps of the process, reconciliation and reintegration while recognising that for reintegration to be sustainable, a well-coordinated process of protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and return is of essence, with strong involvement of the receiving communities. The Joint Approach provides broad guidance and stresses ‘red lines’ for support by the participating agencies, funds and programmes. In Iraq, it is widely recognised that reconciliation and reintegration solutions are local, and the Joint Approach should, therefore, give broad guidance and facilitate processes that help find these local solutions while respecting the human rights of children, young people and adults. The Joint Approach provides an umbrella to all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes working in Iraq on community-based reconciliation and reintegration of children, young people and adults formerly associated with ISIL.

As a result of the FFS project and the social cohesion pillar within UNDP, the organisation is well positioned to coordinate and collaborate with the other UN agencies and actors engaged in reconciliation, return, and reintegration. The efforts of UNDP to ensure synergies between the UN actors which were initially scattered on the issue enabled a more nuanced and integrated approach. UNDP co-chairs the Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) with IOM and with the membership of UNHCR and UNODC. UNDP is engaged with UNODC on ensuring juvenile justice to promote reconciliation and return. The TCC enabled strong coordination and collaboration with IOM. It is important to point that the scale of interventions of IOM are not as wide as UNDP. Nonetheless, the two agencies divided the areas of work geographically to ensure absence of duplication and increased coordination.

C2RI also enabled the expansion of partnerships amongst UN actors. With the realisation that many of the returnees include many children, UNDP partnered with UNICEF to ensure that child protection mechanisms and approaches are also available as an important service within the communities.

### 3.3. Efficiency

**EQ 10: 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?**

#### Project Management

Project management is designed at several levels; the project governance, which is embedded within the UNDP's Integrated Social Cohesion portfolio in Iraq and provides direction, review and monitoring at a strategic level. The project management is delegated to the C2RI Programme Specialist and the Project Management Unit. The Unit comprises a Social Reintegration Officer and Economic Reintegration Officer, and an Information, Counselling and Referral Officer. The project utilizes the M&E Specialist, Finance and Admin Officer, Communications Officer who are part of the Social Cohesion Portfolio. At the level of the selected areas, the project coordinates all reconciliation and reintegration support with the respective local authorities and LPCs. Field offices each has few coordinators and an administrative assistant.

Interviews during the evaluation showed an appreciation of the technical capacities of the project management team who has a high degree of smooth communications with the donor and implementing partners. A main challenge is the insufficiency of the project management unit and the teams on the ground compared to the amount of work required. The C2RI had a budget for the programme implementation but not for staff in the field. Project staff were overwhelmed, which affected their ability to focus on some functions, such as resource mobilization.

#### Financial Management

The total resources required for the UNDP's C2RI project is US\$ 28,668,774. Of which, US\$ 8,181,818 (29 percent) were so far mobilized with generous funding from the Government of Japan. The UNDP team indicates that there exists resource mobilization plans and efforts. Donors' funding for all social cohesion and reintegration projects is mostly short term for one-year, only the Government of Denmark gives a 4-year funding. The budget was developed at the activity level, based on valid estimates using benchmarks from similar projects or activities and with consideration to implications of inflation and price increases.<sup>35</sup> Cost implications from inflation and foreign exchange exposure have been estimated and incorporated in the budget, as well as costs for M&E, communications and security have been incorporated.

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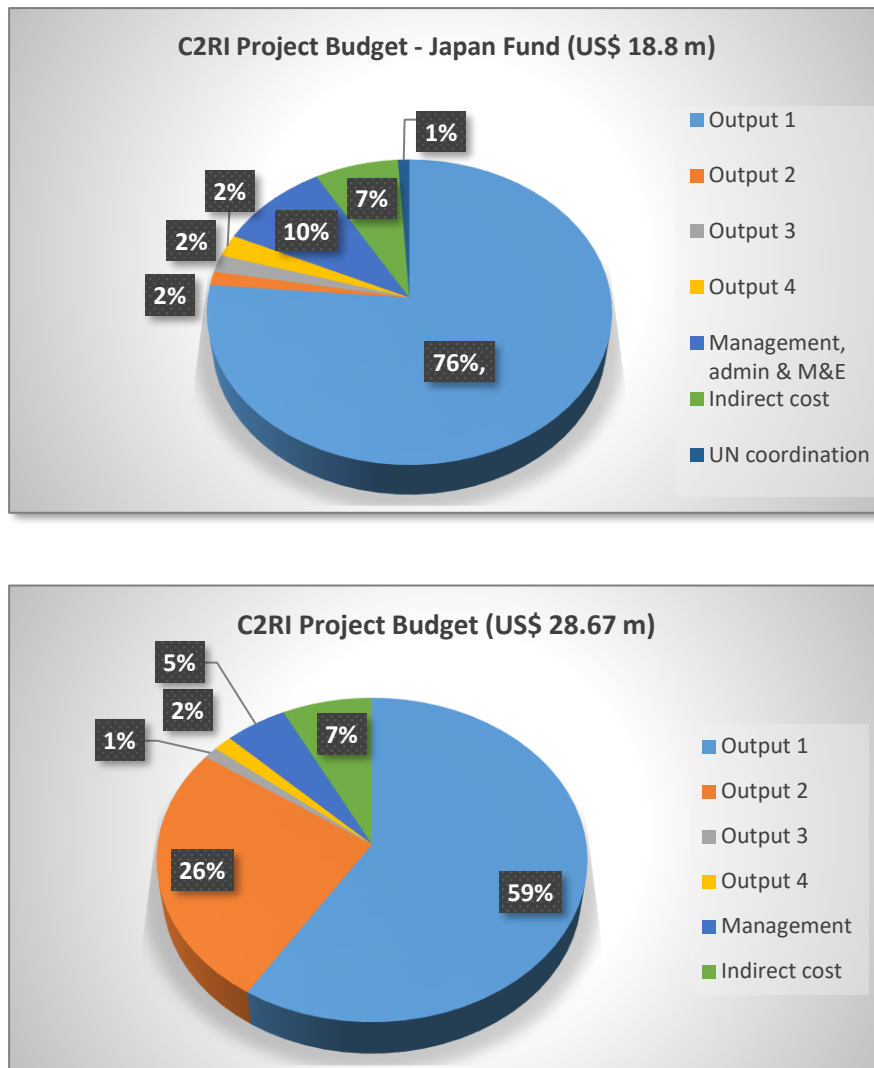


Figure 4: C2RI project budget

The highest portion of the budget went to Output 1 ‘Adults formerly associated and selected community members have received targeted reintegration support’ at 76 percent. The allocated budgets for Outputs 2, 3 and 4 was 2 percent for each, while 18 percent went to management, M&E and indirect project costs and UN coordination levy. Almost all interviewed implementing partners and stakeholders mentioned that the budget allocated for reconciliation and integration in communities is insufficient compared to the actual need within the communities, especially because the project has evolved to address livelihood needs and well-being of the target populations, as well as support infrastructure of their houses.

#### Administration and Procurement

The UNDP procedures were followed for the implementation of townhall meetings, trainings or any activities in terms of procurement and management of the processes. Of note is the change in the modality for the livelihoods grants shifted from the provision of cash into in-kind support, this UNDP policy is meant to ensure there was no mismanagement of resources. For each business grant proposal, a list of the tools, supplies and commodities was provided with the ceiling of US\$ 2,500 and UNDP directly handled the procurement. Through local market assessments, the staff ensured that the products are available in

the local market. Following actual procurement, implementing partners and field coordinators carried-out post-delivery confirmations.

### Livelihood Business Grants

Business grants were provided to 200 beneficiaries with the value of US\$ 2,500 each, against an initial business plan submitted to the implementing partner and based on the vulnerability level. The local authorities and target groups received information about the project business grants during the townhall meetings or through distributed posters and brochures. Selection of candidates to receive the grants was done by the LPCs and the implementing partners through a committee, selection covered both the returning IDPs and the host communities. Feedback during the evaluation shows that the grant value was sufficient and convenient to the small business ideas of the target beneficiaries and locations/ sub-districts. UNDP is now introducing a new modality for collective business grants instead of individual business ones, with strengthened market linkages.

### EQ 11: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?

Implementation of the project components was done through in different target areas. Human Relief Foundation (HRF), Mercy Hands and Iraqi Institution for Development (IID) for the MHPSS and livelihoods support components, whereas the rehabilitation stabilization component was implemented directly by UNDP's team. The implementing partners were selected based on a call for proposal taking into account their areas of expertise, field presence and access to target locations.

Implementing partners, HRF, Mercy Hands and IID, hired staff for livelihoods and social cohesion, PSS, M&E, HR and Finance. In their field offices, they hired coordinators and admin assistants. Implementing partners reported during the evaluation that they faced challenges on the human resources side because the number of staff was not enough and also the short duration of their contracts (10 months) caused a high level of turnover and loss of trained personnel and capacities at the field level. Another issue was the sensitive nature of the project that scared off some project staff due to security risks. For example, a project manager in Ayadia was changed three times, and the post was filled by another chosen from Mosul or Tel Afar. More challenges were reported working specifically in Ayadia, including the remoteness of the location, the ethnicity, and high percentage of perceived ISIL affiliation. UNDP field coordinators on the other side found that the capacities of the implementing partner staff were limited, yet they acknowledged that this improved as the project progressed.

Implementing partners also reported that LPCs supported in the implementation together with the field coordinators, who both were well trained by UNDP. They assisted in identifying beneficiaries and the integration efforts. While the staff of HRF and Mercy hands were trained on Information Counselling and Referral System, there was no specialized training on social cohesion although it is a new sector that engages different actors and stakeholders. Other capacity building needs for the staff included on livelihoods, PSS and project management.

### EQ 12: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

In the views of the three implementing partners, the timeframe of the project was not enough compared to the targets, including the number of people to be assisted. One interviewed staff mentioned: *"We had*

*to work really fast, and this could have affected the quality but if we had more time, we would have been more thorough*". A number of issues added additional strain on the timeframe, such as the time needed to receive approval by the Ministry of Health to work in the health centers. Beneficiary selection took a long time, especially that at the start of the project, the intention was to use an online application for the selection. The app took time to develop, however, due to the sensitivity of the beneficiaries, the project resorted to in-person selection, causing a delay to kick-off activities. Security related issues was a problem in certain areas, and finally the holy month of Ramadan was difficult to kick start activities. Despite the challenges, the three implementing partners are able to achieve the targets set in the project plan.

On the other hand, two out of three interviewed implementing partners indicated that there were no problems at all on the disbursement of funds from UNDP's side, which was done on time and with a high degree of flexibility for revisions and extensions as needed. However, with one implementing partner, there was delay because the financial set-up was to make the transfer through its headquarters office. Implementing partners have to submit financial reports against deliverables as a prerequisite for the transfer of instalments by UNDP.

**EQ 13: 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?**

The project has a Communications and Visibility Strategy developed at the start of the design phase to communicate ongoing work and key achievements to inform stakeholders and regional and global citizens at the national and international level. The strategy adopted a multi-media approach using online Iraqi influencers and human-interest stories to address the stigmatization of families with perceived ISIL affiliation and draw national and international attention to the C2RI project and emphasize the support by the Government of Japan.

Visibility and advocacy were core elements of the project. Implemented activities contributed to raising awareness about the project activities and the efforts by UNDP and the Government of Japan for the return and reintegration of families perceived to be affiliated with ISIL. It ensured that the outcomes of the community dialogues are broadly communicated within the selected areas and to local and national partners. As such, the evaluation accounts for the cost effectiveness of the project's communications and visibility strategy, the cost of which was integrated into the budget of the different activities, in addition to Activity 2.4 *'Define an Advocacy and Outreach Strategy to sensitise and create awareness in communities on the need for social cohesion and reintegration'*, with the budget of US\$ 225,000.

Examples of the effectiveness of the project's visibility activities include:

- A series of Townhall meetings (Activity 2.4) with high participation of stakeholders and community people was conducted, followed by news coverage. Feedback from implementing partners and beneficiaries reflected how the townhall meetings were very critical for acceptance by stakeholders and activities of the project and the implementing teams. They were useful in disseminating information about the project on one hand, and on the other hand it allowed the project teams on ground to get to know who the communities and beneficiaries are. It also paved the way for host communities to accept that families with perceived ISIL affiliation will be participating in the same activities as beneficiaries. An interviewed staff of implementing partner said: *"We benefited from the townhalls, at the beginning when we went alone, we were not*

*welcomed but the presence of UNDP helped open doors for us and facilitated our work, and even in other areas*". UNDP staff highlighted that they tailored their facilitation approaches during the townhall meetings differed from one area to the other depending on the local context, for example Tuz was the hardest.

- UNDP Iraq has published nine web stories, two infographics and two videos with focus on the interventions' impact on community members and returning of around 9,000 families, and on mediation and conflict transformation. The project also amplified the reach of the human stories through collaboration with the Global Coalition Against Daesh<sup>36</sup>, which published stories on its platforms with a wider reach. Interviews show that the media landscape around integration has changed over time, especially around women and children and the fact that victims and families are ones returning. Stigma is reduced, making community members comfortable to speak about their stories and being heard and not judged. They also spoke about what their needs are, which was also done through other project activities, including the MHPSS, livelihoods support and PVE, and what they need. I interviewed a lot of family members and many of them said they did not share their stories and that UNDP wanted to help them. Some videos were translated into Japanese language and shared on the platforms, during the evaluation, the Japan Embassy provided positive feedback on this matter and found that the visibility was important and naturally not accessible to Japanese people/ taxpayers; *"We need visibility within Iraq as well as in Japan to show why we are still helping Iraq and how the situation looks like"*.
- UNDP's Social Cohesion Programme has published its quarterly newsletter, detailing activities under its many projects, including the C2RI project. Additionally, an official press release was published highlighting the Government of Japan's contribution to support the C2RI project.
- Implementing partners also played a notable role in the visibility, they shared information about the project and sensitized communities during townhall meetings, at mosques and community centres. They distributed posters in target areas and opened their field offices to beneficiaries and remained accessible through their M&E numbers. It was also highlighted that working with the Government of Iraq and national stakeholders was not cumbersome, they approved the content and ensured the logo is included and that their role and ownership is reflected in the narrative

**EQ 14: 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?**

Tracking of project progress against the expected results was captured through monitoring activities which were planned during project design, and implemented as follows:

**Monitoring and reporting by UNDP**

<sup>36</sup> The Global Coalition against Daesh was established in 2014 with the commitment to degrade and defeat Daesh. <https://theglobalcoalition.org>



To assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs, the project management unit collected and analysed progress data against the indicators identified in the Results Framework for each output. Data was collected through regular field visits conducted by the UNDP team to the four project areas despite their far locations, each was visited one every 4-6 weeks. UNDP submitted bi-monthly reports on the project achievements and progress against each indicator, however, gender and age disaggregated data was not always included for all indicators. The evaluation accounts for the scarce data included in the progress updates, which account as a summary of achievements with no details. More reporting on cross-cutting themes should be included to capture the work done by the project in addressing the needs of women, people with disability, protection and other.

### Monitoring and reporting by implementing partners

Each implementing partner utilized a different monitoring approach and had its own field staff. They submitted regular monthly reports to UNDP highlighting the achievements against each indicator, as well as the challenges they faced and the next steps. However, similar to UNDP reporting, the evaluation finds that these reports did not capture sufficient qualitative data on the implemented activities and outputs. If it was done, they would have provided a rich source of knowledge about the context, lessons learned and good practices on what works and what not regarding the implementation approaches.

The three partners had hotline numbers for the project beneficiaries and a complaints box in their field offices. One had a template for suggestions. Some complaints were reported on the selection and response was provided through field teams. Also some suggestions were shared on the implementation of some business grants and people asking for specific types of business skills training. Referral between implementing partners was also reported. A post Distribution Monitoring exercise was carried out for the livelihoods business grants provided by IID revealed that the distribution process was done successfully and an overall satisfaction by the beneficiaries with the toolkits provided. Describing monitoring field visit, one implementing partner staff said: *“We have 200 businesses established and when we did the visits this was very good. A farmer now has a label in his farm. We have 600 beneficiaries ready to find jobs and also some benefited from temporary employment and social cohesion has increased as well”*. Furthermore, a business engagement survey conducted by HRF showed an acceptance to the idea of welcoming apprentices/ interns in businesses, confirming the positive outlook that Iraqis generally have towards entrepreneurship. However, the percentages of private sector willing to take on apprentices/interns is much higher than those willing to take on new employees, either part-time or full-time.

### The Information, Counselling and Referral System

The system is intended to systematically register personal and confidential information relevant for the reintegration of a person, as well as the type of support recommended and that received. A reintegration project participant will remain in the system until deemed sustainably reintegrated, which requires regular monitoring and counselling. By the time of this evaluation, the system ‘DREAM IT’ was in the final stages of its design and testing. It is now operational with more than a hundred beneficiaries having provided their details for the system, UNDP and implementing partners have begun collecting information from beneficiaries to populate the DREAM system via Kobo Toolbox, following a training to staff.

### Learning



The Knowledge products generated by the project add to the body of knowledge on integration and reconciliation in Iraq. Besides the information gained through the townhall meetings and interaction with beneficiaries. The project conducted two surveys that assessed the readiness of communities for the return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation in pilot area in August 2021 and on Mental Health and Psychological Support towards Integration in Iraq in September 2022. In addition to a study by the Policy Research Centre of the UN University on Managing Exits from Armed Conflict (MEAC), which seeks to build a common, robust knowledge base around what it means for children and adults to reintegrate back fully and sustainably into civilian society after being associated – or accused of association – with armed groups.

### Indicators

Some of the project indicators are not well-defined and not SMART, for example, they are not time-bound or not specific in what specifically is being assessed. Some indicators so not allow for gender or age disaggregation. In addition, the Results Framework does not include indicators to measure the quality of the activities or the targets.

### Evaluation

Mid-term and final evaluations are planned by the project. This report presents findings for considered as a final evaluation for the Japan-funded C2RI project, and as a mid-term evaluation for the overall UNDP project.

## 3.4. Effectiveness

**EQ 15: To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving planned objectives, outcomes, and outputs? EQ 17: What has been achieved thus far?**

The four project outputs were fully achieved or on track to be achieved (final figures to be adjusted at the end of the evaluation).

Activities that are not fully achieved has to do with: Target 3.1 '*A national roadmap and policy on reconciliation and reintegration formulated*', although a task force was established engaging different actors is favourable, however no concrete outcome was achieved as a result. Target 2.3 '*The rehabilitation and active use of 15 social and productive infrastructure*', this target is delayed as the units to be rehabilitated are not yet selected. Finally, target 2.4 '*holding 20 social and PVE activities in the targeted locations*', the project did not reach this high target of events, however the townhall ones were engaging.

Assessing some targets will be enabled upon completion of follow-up surveys to measure the percentage change in perceptions, including target 1.4 '*60 percent of beneficiaries reported positive changes in access to health, education, food*', and target 2.2 '*70 percent of community members reported positive change towards acceptance of return and reintegration*'.

**Output 1** '*Adults formerly associated and selected community members have received targeted reintegration support*'

- 1,800 people (900 women) have participated in cash-for-work activities by engaging in community initiatives, and personal protective equipment were distributed to all beneficiaries.

- 600 people (300 women) have participated in vocational training courses that aim to facilitate their access into sustainable employment opportunities. Further, 200 people (100 women) were provided with a 10-day business skill development training.
- An initial survey was conducted among livelihoods beneficiaries and a follow-up survey was conducted by IID for 25 beneficiaries assessing the increase in their households income.
- 1,987 people (1,262 women) have received MHPSS support through specialized or non-specialized group or individual sessions.
- The Information, Counselling and Referral System and 'DREAM IT' is developed and is active, staff from UNDP and implementing partners received pertinent training and are finalizing the population of beneficiaries' data to the system.
- A total of 698 housing units were rehabilitated by the project in Habaniyah, Tuz Khurmato, Al Qaim and Muhalabiya.

Output 2 'Increased community acceptance in the selected areas for the return and reintegration of children, young people and adults formerly associated'.

- Active engagement by LPCs in the target locations in the project's integration activities. They have routinely engaged in community consultations, supported in identifying damaged homes and livelihood interventions. LPCs have also played integral roles in the selection of beneficiaries due to its sensitive nature and has worked closely with the mayors of each location.
- Perception surveys were deployed to beneficiaries to measure any positive changes reported in the communities as a result of the project.
- Consultations are still ongoing with relevant parties including LPCs and local authorities to identify priorities have been held with interventions in the development stage. This has taken longer than expected due delays from the local authorities in this process.
- Two townhall meetings have been held in Al Qaim and Habbaniya, with the aim of raising further awareness and reducing stigma surrounding the return and reintegration of IDPs and promoting PVE. 155 local authorities, religious and community leaders, academics, CSOs, and women and youth leaders have participated in these town hall meetings.

Output 3 'National institutions, policies and strategies for reintegration strengthened and developed'.

- A task force on the reintegration was established under the Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. The task force brings the actors working on reintegration with the national government relevant institution.
- 20 local government officials and security leaders dealing with IDPs issues capacitated on reintegration support (In addition to additional 80 officials covered under the UNDP Funding Window.)

Output 4 'Local institutions and governance structures for reintegration strengthened'.

- 4 LPCs in the targeted areas continue to be instrumental in the facilitation of peace agreements in which persons formerly associated have returned to their communities.
- Eight community level mechanisms in the four locations receive regular support from UNDP and engage closely with their communities. They played key roles in the selection of beneficiaries and in the facilitating the return of families. Women Peace Groups and Youth Peace Groups play key roles in advocating for social cohesion and coexistence within their communities.

## **EQ 16: To what extent do the project's activities/management systems support the reintegration and reconciliation of persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, IDPs, returnees, and stayers?**

The project activities support the reintegration and reconciliation of persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, IDPs, returnees and stayers through community level and individual level preparedness, implemented in complementary to each other.

### **Livelihoods support**

Stigmatization and lack of social acceptance between the host communities and returnees is a major challenge, which often results in the economic and social exclusion of the latter. They face difficulties to find jobs or access services and livelihood opportunities. Output 1 of the C2RI project responded to a high extent to the needs of both target groups through livelihoods support activities either through cash-for-work activities, vocational trainings for increased employability or business grants for income-generation. Recognizing that the needs in the communities are huge, the project's rational is to enhance capacities of local and national partners to adopt the sustainable reintegration approach to meet those needs. The rational is to enhance capacities of local and national partners to adopt the sustainable reintegration approach to meet those needs. UNDP staff explained; *"Different context and needs in each areas made it necessary to have different interventions. Cash for work focused more on the needs and the same with the vocational training it was based on market needs and so we tried to customise depending on the context"*. Beneficiaries who received grants started their projects in sewing, livestock, electrical shops, water tanks, women accessory shop and car oils and filters.

### **MHPSS**

People affected by violence and conflict experience mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Many of the displaced women and children from families perceived with ISIL affiliation face additional challenges such as the threat of sexual exploitation and SGBV. Moreover, returnees face difficulties to access healthcare, PSS and protection services. The C2RI project focused on communal healing through capacity building was provided to social workers and psychologists in health clinics on provision of MHPSS, active listening and diagnosis of mental health cases. The training was however provided online, so this might have affected the effectiveness and learning of the trainees. They in turn extended MHPSS to beneficiary men and women who suffered from violence or traumatization. To ensure long-term emphasis on MHPSS as an essential component for the return IDPs, an Information, Counselling and Referral System was created by the project. UNDP also prepared two centres for MHPSS open to all segments of the society and also there was employment for about 650 persons with different directorates.

### **Housing rehabilitation**

Having no property or damaged houses are among the reasons why persons formerly associated cannot or do not want to return to their areas of origin. The project rehabilitated 202, 200, 199 and 97 houses in in Habaniyah, Tuz Khurmato, Al Qaim and Muhalabiya respectively.

### **Community acceptance**

Negotiations, mediation and reconciliation process for return of people with perceived affiliation to ISIL was relatively simple in few communities, yet, in other, it gets harder and time-consuming. Led by the

LPCs and supported and facilitated by the project, under Output 2, a comprehensive set of activities were implemented that enable community-based and led reconciliation and social cohesion processes. Although originally planned, the project did not yet work on the rehabilitation or construction of social and productive infrastructure. These actively engaged LPCs in the different steps of beneficiary selection, identification of houses to be rehabilitated and in consultations with local authorities and community leaders. Townhall meetings were held with the participation of a large number of local stakeholders, tribal leaders, media, activists, in addition to the returnees and host communities.

### Capacity strengthening

UNDP, with IOM, has been approached by the Community Co-existence and Peace Committee (CCPC) to assist in outlining a 'National Roadmap' for the reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation. Yet, this has not materialized due to the weak capacity of CDSP and the lack of national will before 2021, the file of return and reintegration of families perceived as affiliated with ISIL has been shifted to the Office of National Security Advisory and MOMD after the Iraqi government decision to repatriate the Iraqi families from Al-Hol camp Northeast Syria. As such, UNDP, with its positioning within this project on reintegration, has been approached by the government to support the returns from Al-Hol given that most cases are within some of the pilot locations of C2RI. Under Outcomes 3 and 4 of the C2RI project supported the establishment of a task force the reintegration under the Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration and government officials were trained. UNDP co-led and actively engaged in several coordination committees and working groups with the UN agencies and international organization, information-sharing and coordination of social cohesion and reconciliation activities in Iraq are enabled and supported. In addition, LPCs and local structures received capacity building and were supported to establish Women and Youth Peace Committees within different communities.

### EQ 18: To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?

The C2RI project mainstreamed considered different gender and women's empowerment strategies in its design, implementation and monitoring. The project embraced the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security<sup>37</sup> issued in 2020. The project contributes to the SDG 5 Gender Equality '*A world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment removed*'. The project is aligned with the commitments of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021<sup>38</sup>, leaving no one behind and ensuring human rights principles. It is also aligned with the Japan Development Cooperation and Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

### EQ 19: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?

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<sup>37</sup> UN Department of Information. 2005. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

<sup>38</sup> UNDP. 2017. UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021.

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202018-2021.pdf>

The C2RI project is informed by lessons learnt from UNDP's past work on stabilization, social cohesion and community reintegration and reconciliation since 2015. Examples of the data and best practices that provided lessons learnt guiding the design and implementation of this project included a political economy analysis that assessed the efforts at central level Iraq for social cohesion, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. An evaluation of existing LPCs was carried out in 2019 reviewing their model, structure, impact and achievements of these LPCs and drew lessons learned for establishing new LPCs and empower the existing ones. IRP project's reporting which presented narrative on faced operational and programmatic challenges and risks and their mitigation measures. The study 'Women and Girls in Iraq During the COVID-19 Pandemic' that looked at the impact of the crisis on women and provided recommendations that guided the project's response to support women during the crisis. Final project evaluations of previous IRP projects in Iraq that provided recommendations for future programming considered for this parogramme.

Most concrete aspects that were reflected in this project as a result of the lessons learned as accounted by the evaluation, include:

- Support national and local actors to transform the conflicts through a system that provides ongoing conflict and political economy monitoring and analysis. The information and analysis provided will allow adapting existing programmes and projects regularly, where necessary. In doing so, the project has conducted several perception and analytical studies on the reintegration, this included: Analysis on Pathways to reintegration in Iraq conducted in 2021 that puts forward the results of multiple assessments undertaken on UNDP's support for the returns of thousands of families, analysing the social and economic elements of their reintegration. In addition to Perception Surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021 under this project to assess community readiness for return and reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation in pilot areas. With the Policy Research Centre of the UN University, a study is underway on Managing Exits from Armed Conflict (MEAC), which seeks to build a common, robust knowledge base around what it means for IDP children and adults to reintegrate back fully and sustainably into civilian society. At the policy level, the project has supported the establishment of a task force that will formulate a national roadmap and policies on reconciliation and reintegration.
- Ensure greater impact and community engagement, the project has been working closely with implementing partners with strong field presence and engaging communities in different dialogue activities such as the townhall meetings. The project through its existing implementation mechanisms capacitated and worked closely with tribal and traditional community leaders organised in LPCs, local peace committees or similar structures.
- Of equal importance in driving opposition against reintegration are lacking economic opportunities for stayers and those formerly associated. As a driver for reconciliation and acceptance of returnees into the communities, the project has contributed to increasing access to sustained livelihood opportunities and employment through cash for work activities, trainings and business grants. This activity targeted both, returnees and host communities.
- The use of religious practice in reconciliation processes is important. It was noted during the interviews that religious leaders and traditional events were used as platforms for the promotion of awareness on reintegration and social cohesion.

- Sustainable reintegration requires supporting reintegration at multiple levels - the individual, family, and community. The theory of change of the project adopts this multi-level approach focusing on complementary individual and community level interventions. Notably is the the MHPSS support to women and men, the livelihoods support activities, as well as the rehabilitation of housing infrastructure. The project supported health clinics at the community level.
- The adoption of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000 reaffirms global experiences on the crucial role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The project supported Women and Youth Peace Groups.
- A UNDP Review on Local Peace Committees (LPCs) outlines various areas for their improvement. The project considered the recommendations in the activities designed with the more active engagement and role by LPCs, as well as focus on their capacity building.

**EQ 20: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?**

The project supported local governance structures by strengthening capacities of LPCs and peace groups through targeted capacity building on community well-being and social cohesion, and by maximizing their crucial engagement in facilitating dialogue, mediation and trust-building between different groups in the community. Feedback from UNDP and implementing partners show that acceptance of local authorities of the returning families was challenging. It was eased as the project adopted an implementation approach whereby, they were actively participating in the project implementation, for example, the selection of the beneficiaries and coordination between local actors.

A staff from implementing partner mentioned: *"When the government tells the families to return, returnees do not trust them, but it's the opposite if an LPC member who is respected gives them the guarantee they can come back peacefully"*. Not all members of the LPCs were active, for example in Qaim, only five out of twenty members are active, this may be attributed to the voluntary nature of the committee and that they are not being paid whether from UN or the government. This was additional effort on top of their regular work, some found that it affected their personal and career lives. Moreover, engaging the LPCs in livelihood and MHPSS activities reflected a closer insight by the LPCs into the challenges and hardships faced by the returning families. It was noted during interviews with LPCs and implementing partners that MHPSS as a topic was clearer than the social cohesion and reintegration. The project capacitated 20 LPC members in every location, who are able to coordinate with local actors and different community groups on integration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation into the host communities.

Feedback from LPC member reflected that they appreciated the project's that opened the door for them to play an active role in bringing support on infrastructure and to integrate as many families as possible. They mentioned holding meetings and discussions in different locations and benefited also from legal advice from the project when needed. Coordination between the LPCs and CSOs was also recognized as a key aspect to widen the reach and provide technical backstopping, led by the government, whereas CSOs



and UN take the backseat. A staff of one partner UN agency said that *“Local authorities seem very happy with the UNDP work in their communities. This has been almost unanimously”*.

Through a series of discussions and workshops with government officials, the project supported the formulation of a task force on the reintegration established under the Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. Additionally, the project trained 20 local government officials and security leaders on IDPs reintegration and support.

**EQ 21: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?**

The project has wide partnerships, including with UN agencies such as IOM and UNICEF. Partnerships with NGOs was mainly focused on the three implementing partners. It was seen as an area that could be strengthened by interviewed stakeholders by as bringing in more NGOs and CSOs who can work on the different areas, along with the social cohesion. Government partners at local and central level such as the Ministry of labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoMD), Office of National Security Advisory (ONSA). The TCC has been mentioned as a platform that could foster further partnerships for UNDP. It is perceived as the social cohesion working group of the Durable Solutions Technical Working Group (DSTWG). The UNDP is generally strengthening its partnerships with the international development communities and places emphasis on resource mobilization efforts to sustain the project results and continue working on the IRP activities.

### 3.5. Impact

**EQ 22: What has happened/changed as the result of the pilot phase in the targeted locations?**

A number of important results could be observed as a result of the interventions of the pilot project. In addition to the actual return of families to their areas of residence. It is clear that the perceptions of the host communities vis a vis the returnees have changed and there is a wider acceptance of returnees even the acceptance of those with perceived ISIL affiliations. During the evaluation mission in Iraq, the evaluator had an opportunity to compare the mind-set of communities where C2RI is planning to work over the coming months with that of communities where the activities have been ongoing or have been concluded. It is evident from observations and discussions with new communities that addressing the issue of reconciliation and return is challenging within Iraqi society which is governed by tribal norms and culture and where revenge is an issue of honour in many instances. The ability of individuals to return especially those with perceived ISIL affiliations marks a real shift in the mind-set and perceptions of host communities regarding the importance of peace building, social cohesion and integration of women and children within their original place of residences to promote peace and stability in Iraq. One member of the host communities interviewed during the evaluation explained; *“The return of the IDPs was difficult and the acceptance is even harder. The community believes that are ISIL families and the community suffered from ISIL so no one wanted them back”*.

*“Now after the project there is acceptance and the IDPs are fine”*, one of the government officials from Habbaniya interviewed during the evaluation explained that the discussion with the communities about the return of the families with perceived ISIL affiliation was not an easy endeavour even for local authorities themselves who have the power to facilitate the return; *“some of the stayers who were victims*



*of ISIL did not want to have these families return because their family members were perpetrators of violence”, however, the main achievement was the return of IDPs”. “We developed a committee with the tribal leaders, the security and the mayor where we held many meetings in many locations and raised the awareness of community leaders about social cohesion and so we were able to return the perceived ISIL affiliated families especially the women and children”, explained the government official.*

A second key visible result was the strengthening of the role of the LPCs as important local structures capable of promoting peace and reconciliation. UNDP has invested through previous projects in the capacity building and institutionalisation of the LPCs. Through C2RI, communities were able to recognise this role and to increase community trust in local authorities and structures. According to one government official interviewed during the evaluation from Tuz Khermato explained that the most important outcome of the project, in addition to the actual return of families and the physical rehabilitation of houses, is the empowerment of LPCs. *“I believe that the most important peace process in Tuz successful because of the presence of LPC. They were well trained and ready to work and so we can have peaceful coexistence”,* explained the government official pointing out that beyond reconciliation and return local authorities are now capitalising on the LPCs for other interventions and work within the community that might not necessarily be related to UNDP work.

A third important result that can be observed is the community acceptance of MHPSS as an important tool to strengthen reintegration and provide needed support to the communities. The C2RI project was able to change the perspective of people regarding return and reintegration. MHPSS activities focused on restoring some level of peace of mind of the host and returning families and increasing the sense of acceptance of the other, as well as self-confidence. Communities started to understand that in order to develop they need to have peace. The holistic approach of the implementation strategy of integrating returnees with host communities in MHPSS and livelihood activities increased interaction between community members and allowed for the establishment of new social relations that are necessary for living together. *“At the beginning of our work, host community families and returning families would not sit in the same room. By the end of our sessions, they started to accept each other more and exchanged more amongst themselves”,* explained one of the implementing partners of the project.

Support at the institutional level has put concerned actors on track to start concrete steps on the roadmap to durable and owned reintegration processes. This includes the digital case management and referral system, as well as the formulated task force on reintegration and reconciliation.

These results also confirm those of the MEAC Study by the UN University Centre for Policy Research<sup>39</sup> that found that UNDP’s efforts to increase community acceptance towards those with ISIL affiliation appear to have a positive impact. Those who have benefited from UNDP assistance are less likely to report receiving critical or negative perceptions due to their wartime experiences, suggesting that community attitudes may be changing as a result of UNDP’s social cohesion and reconciliation activities. Overall, UNDP appears to have effectively targeted its assistance towards the most economically vulnerable, those in greatest need of mental health and psychosocial support and who have less access to services than others. The

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<sup>39</sup> Centre for Policy Research, UN University. 2022. MEAC Iraq Case Study Report: Supporting the reintegration of families with perceived ISIL affiliation in Iraq

findings suggest that combining livelihood support and mental health support may be valuable for many UNDP beneficiaries.

**EQ 23: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?**

Testimonials from beneficiaries of the different activities implemented by C2RI in the four target locations indicate that real change has happened in the lives of women, men, and youth. One of the main differences in improved livelihood opportunities for those within the community. One of the female beneficiaries explained during the evaluation that now she is working as a result of the capacity building in livelihoods; *“The difference that this project made is that I have an income and I also have information. It is important to have ambition and it is better as a widow to support my family and this is very important. I have 2 girls and 2 boys. They are fine and they are young children. I try between the work and being at home to focus on the children and so on”*.

One male returnee interviewed explained that he used to live in a camp and the amount of destruction in his city was overwhelming. He recounted that the activities of the livelihoods especially the cash for work schemes helped increase community acceptance; *“I used to work in cash for work and this was useful. There were a lot of destruction, but UNDP helped with the reconstruction and there are different cleaning campaigns. This helped people and allowed them to have some funds as well”*.

**EQ 24: How many people have been affected by the project as of end of September 2022?**

According to C2RI database, by the end of September 2022 a total of 12,968 persons (7,004 females and 5,964 males) have directly benefited from the activities and interventions of the project. Community synthesisation and townhall meetings implemented by the project benefited a wider number of individuals that would be hard to estimate with accuracy. Additionally, the number of local authorities and LPCs that have benefited from capacity building and general institutional strengthening is also not accounted for. In terms of individuals who received direct support from the project tables 3, 4 and 5 provide an overview of beneficiaries by category of service as well as disaggregation by gender and status (IDP, returnee...etc.)

Table 3: Housing units rehabilitated per location

Housing	# of houses	# of people	# of men	# of women	# of PwD	# of WHH
Al Qaim	199	1455	737	718	22	34
Habbaniya	202	1590	827	763	33	38
Muhalabiya	200	1367	702	665	25	2
Tuz	200	1166	579	587	19	23
Total	801	5578	2845	2733	99	97

Table 4: People benefiting from MHPSS services

MHPSS	# of men	# of women	# of PwD	# of WHH	ISIL Affiliated
Non-specialized	425	687	5	35	5

Specialized	477	1221	6	641	97
Group sessions	916	1064	0	111	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>1818</b>	<b>2972</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>189</b>

Table 5: People benefiting from livelihoods support

Livelihoods	# of men (cash for work)	# of women (cash for work)	# of men (vocational trainings)	# of women (vocational trainings)	# of men (business trainings/SMEs )	# of women (business trainings/SMEs)	Returnee	IDP	Host community	# of WHH
Al Qaim	225	225	75	75	25	25	617	6	27	253
Habbaniya	225	225	75	75	25	25	641	8	1	161
Muhlabiya	225	225	75	75	26	24	115	93	442	72
Tuz	225	225	75	75	25	25	367	114	169	181
Ayyadiya										
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1740</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>667</b>

### 3.6. Sustainability

#### EQ 25: Have suitable strategies for sustainability been developed?

Strategies for sustainability have not been developed for this project. Sustainability was not given enough focus during its design and was only mentioned briefly in the project document based on the capacity building provided for the Government of Iraq on social cohesion, reconciliation and reintegration. The project's commitment to social and environmental sustainability were underpinned by the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES).<sup>40</sup> The project met the key elements of the SES, including Leaving no one behind, human rights, gender equality and women empowerment and sustainability and resilience, and accountability.

#### EQ 26: Has the project contributed to the expansion of knowledge on reintegration and reconciliation among government counterparts, local partners, and community members?

One of the core considerations of the C2RI was the generation of evidence and knowledge on integration and reconciliation through a number of surveys, studies and assessments (discussed in detail under EQ 19). Knowledge was also extended to local governance structures; LPCs and local authorities, through different activities, mainly the tailored capacity building on social cohesion and MHPSS. Training on MHPSS was however conducted online for a short duration and its effectiveness would need to be assessed along the ability of the social workers and psychologists to provide the services to the beneficiaries. Knowledge was also gained by LPCs and local authorities through the townhall meetings and community consultations, outreach and discussions, in addition to the active engagement in the project implementation.

Community groups of IDPs and host communities benefited from the latter, in addition to selected vocational trainings and life skills development that included elements on social acceptance and coherence. Project's visibility material and media channels also added to sharing information and

<sup>40</sup> UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES). <http://www.undp.org/ses>

knowledge (discussed in detail under EQ 13). Overall, on knowledge generation and sharing at different levels, UNDP has been the main player, as articulated by one development partner during the evaluation; *“UNDP is the most vocal in the country around this issue and they have been consistent with the national and local governments”*.

Feedback during the evaluation showed the need for a protocol between development partners on information sharing on a ‘need to know’ basis. Because access is sometimes restricted, some critical information would be very useful to partners such as the context in specific locations and LPCs. The evaluation also showed a need for a more comprehensive assessment for the outcomes of the capacity building efforts for the different target groups, as well as on social and behavioural change – beyond perceptions – on the different issues of concern among the returnees and host communities.

### **EQ 27: To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term following closure of C2RI?**

#### **Community-level**

Community ownership and durability were specifically considered in the C2RI’s work and were anchored around a number of elements. Firstly, the full engagement of local governance structures and authorities and building their capacities and knowledge. In the views of the interviewed LPCs, this suggests high likelihood for sustainability, assuming that the capacitated LPCs, social workers and NGOs will continue to promote acceptance and trust to allow for the returning of families with ISIL association into the host communities. However, the evaluation could not account for a distinct exit strategy in place yet for to allow for the transitioning into full national ownership on reintegration and reconciliation. LPCs are based on a volunteer membership who might not be able to pursue the same effort beyond the project on their own for financial and workload considerations.

Secondly, the impact of the outreach and advocacy activities is likely to continue to bear fruit even beyond the project, given the change in perceptions by the host communities and increased acceptance for the returning families, will be further confirmed through perception surveys. One LPC member clarified; *“there were no violence towards the returning families in the areas. There are some inter-marriages, which is very advanced for our society, also seeing a wife of ISIL and wife of police officer talking together. These stories that we were telling you are very important”*. And we have not heard about stigma or harassment. Thirdly, the rehabilitation of 608 houses’ infrastructure which is sustained as an individual and a community asset. Stronger sustainability would have been seen, had the project was able to rehabilitate target 15 social and productive infrastructure (target 2.3). It is not clear whether or not the rehabilitation was based upon a damage assessment of the community infrastructure or in consideration of environmental sustainability.

Feedback from national partners reflected that they believe that without the C2RI support, the government’s financial capacity would not have allowed for the rehabilitation of houses. Continuation of reconciliation and integration does not usually receive attention by the state in all locations. Local governance structures do not have the legal or financial authority to continue on their own. Outreaching and dialogue is based on personal relationship with the people, without structured support. When asked about sustainability if UNDP leaves, one local government official mentioned; *“I cannot continue with*

*stabilization and we need to continue projects in these areas, UNDP is continuing with us but if they leave, it will be difficult”.*

#### Individual-level

At the individual level, the project interventions had positive impact evident in the return of the families to rehabilitated houses and their facilitated access to services, as well as their improved reintegration into the communities. Their access to capacity and skill building, assets and income-generation increases the likelihood for them to maintain an increased income for sustainable livelihoods, not only for the returning families, but also for the vulnerable host communities. Increased access and benefit from MHPSS services improves the well-being and protection for the beneficiaries and for the community healing at large. Some of the positive feedback received from the UNDP field staff is the interest of other locations in replicating the same comprehensive experience in their community. Sustaining the MHPSS provision of services by the local workers is unlikely, given the outcomes of the provided training and their limited capacities that would not allow them to continue on their own.

#### Institutional level

Prospects of sustainability are more concrete with the project's institutional support to the Government of Iraq through the formulation of the task force on the reintegration established under the Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. The task force presents a formal and sustained mechanism in place to bring the actors working on reintegration with the national government together. Although premature to consider, the digital referral system DREAM IT might be another element with potential sustainability if the work that had started under this project gets completed by UNDP after its ends to track the returning families and check on their situation to provide the necessary assistance.

During the evaluation, implementing partners reflected that their capacities and profiles are strengthened, they apply for new projects giving due attention to every aspect based on their experience and what they learnt with this project. They recognize the need for a closer coordination with the donors and development partners.

As reported by UNDP staff, developing a national strategy for reintegration has been identified as a priority and announced during the development of this Mid-Term Evaluation Report through the Reintegration Task Force led by the government and UNDP and with membership of several UN and government counterparts.

**EQ 28: What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained? EQ 29: Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?**

Several external factors may jeopardise the likelihood of sustainability of the project at the different aforementioned levels. These include, primarily, the fragile security situation in Iraq and the limited access to and mobility between areas. Political changes, changing priorities and level of acceptance of the project's objectives and approaches is another risk in the face of all competing priorities and compound crises. Long standing social strife in the Iraqi context and the level of cohesion between communities who once had different affiliations or were subject to violence or at risk of revenge.

Moreover, the donors fatigue after having been supporting the crisis in Iraq for more than 10 years with different regimen. Sustainability of financial assistance to address social cohesion remains a risk, if funding priorities are shifted to address other crisis erupted over the past two years, including the COVID-19 and the military conflict in Ukraine. Donor partners interviewed during the evaluation explained that addressing root causes through the current funding streams is not sustainable, very few donors want to engage on long term development assistance in Iraq.

Gender social norms and stereotypes are taboos in most of the Iraqi locations and this affects meeting gender commitments for their economic, political and social participation and empowerment. Moreover, risks of climate change and shocks are high in Iraq, being one of the most vulnerable countries to climate breakdown worldwide, affected by soaring temperatures, insufficient and diminishing rainfall, intensified droughts and water scarcity, frequent sand and dust storms and flooding. Capacities to adapt or promote adaptation to climate change are limited.

### 3.7. Human Rights

**To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and/or marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project in the country?**

The C2RI project took into consideration human-rights approach, emphasis was given to IDP families with perceived ISIL affiliation who are in the most marginalised and vulnerable situations and who face barriers in realising their needs and rights . Community participation was assumed by most activities, including in outreach, dialogue, implementation and receipt of assistance. Accountability was considered by the UNDP and the implementing partners through the feedback mechanisms in place. A case management and referral system is underway. Non-discrimination and equality were promoted by the project at its essence for the social cohesion and reintegration.

### 3.8. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**To what extent have GEWE been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in GEWE? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?**

Gender is mainstreamed across the project's outputs addressing the specific needs of women and girls through the provided vocational and life skills training and the business grants/ projects, 50 percent of beneficiaries of these activities were women. Feedback during interviews shows that women were encouraged through awareness raising and specialized training to choose non-conventional projects, such as agri-business or digital and media. One implementing partner staff said: *"One of them was growing mushrooms and it had a good financial outcome. We also had cosmetics products and worked well as well. One bought smart sewing machine and it worked well"*. Also, through the MHPSS capacity building to female social workers and providing services to beneficiary women through psychoeducation, group and individual sessions, as well as availing other services for them at health clinics, community centres, field visits and the hotline.

It was not specifically clear, however, the level of participation by women under this project in the LPCs, nor the role that they played on targeting for the different activities, community consultation and dialogue. Four Women Peace Groups were established to advocate for peaceful coexistence and social cohesion within the communities. A challenge that was reported during the evaluation is that there is a limited number of women-led organisations because of discriminatory gender norms that affects women in the workplace. The project does not have a stand-alone gender analysis, however, emphasis on women and gender equality was given in the knowledge products conducted by the project, including the community perception surveys on reintegration in 2020 and 2021, the report on MHPSS activities, the Conflict Analysis in 2022, among others.

Implementing partners have gender policies that ensured they encourage female participation in project activities, they indicated during the interviews that the level of participation in each area differs depending on the social norms and religion, for example there was a high participation by women in Sinjar area, while it was low in Tel Afar. Generally, acceptance by women and children who are perceived to have ties with ISIL is more accepted than their male peers. Implementing partners also mentioned that they included more women in their implementation teams.

Gender social norms exist and are a major determinant of the design and implementation methodologies, as well as the results of some activities. For example, women's participation in peacebuilding efforts and pertinent project activities is subject to how traditions and religions is in the area. Social norms related to the economic participation of women, their autonomy to have their own income-generation projects and restrictions on mobility also manifested themselves as key issues under Output 1 on livelihoods support activities and the possibility to benefit women, which differed from one location to another maintaining an average of 50% target by the project. Women with previous ISIL affiliation insist on divorce, which the project advocated against through the LPCs.

#### **Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?**

A Gender Marker of 2 was assigned to the design of all project outputs.

### **3.9. Disability**

**Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in planning and implementation? What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities? What barriers did persons with disabilities face? Was a twin-track approach adopted? Do you think this is an area for improvement?**

The Federal Government of Iraq ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013. Persons with disabilities in Iraq have been disproportionately impacted by war, armed conflict, terrorism, violence and the economic hardship. Iraq has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in the world. Despite that, disability/ inclusion is an area of weakness for this project, with considerable need for improvement. It is not covered appropriately in project design; mentioned once on the project document. The evaluation found that the project included PwDs in some project activities as beneficiaries, including 99 living in housing units that were rehabilitated, as well as 11 benefiting from MHPSS services. The evaluation could not account of how many – or if – PwDs benefited from livelihoods training and business grants. Visibility also ensured being inclusive through used material. Integration of



PwD needs was seen as a weakness acknowledged by the project team during the interviews noting the more tangible work that needs to go into the inclusion of this target group; *“We could at least look at the centres for disability and make sure that they are part of the community dividends, we could rehabilitate and empower community infrastructure and disability centres”*.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1. Conclusions

#### RELEVANCE

- The C2RI project is aligned with the Iraq Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Reconstruction and Development Framework Plan 2018-2027, in which the government has made the return of IDPs a priority. Government stakeholders and international partners find that UNDP's efforts through the C2RI project are instrumental and appreciated.
- It also addresses key priority of the 2019 Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, and currently contributes to the National Plan to End Displacement and the UN durable solution framework under priority 5 of the UNSCDF and the UN Global Framework for UN Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees.
- The project design suggested an evolution in UNDP's work on reconciliation and integration, based largely on a scoping mission in 2020. Through this project, UNDP introduced an integrated approach that focuses on community preparedness, as well as on livelihoods and well-being of families.
- In 2021-2022, as part of the Global Framework for UN Support on Syria/Iraq, a 'Joint Scoping Exercise' took place in Iraq. It identified key gaps and needs prior to defining the scope of UN support that may be provided to a Member State.
- In 2021, the Government of Iraq decided to repatriate Iraqis displaced from Al Hol Camp. Given its credibility and long-standing partnerships in return communities, UNDP was well-positioned to support in facilitating community acceptance and reintegration.

#### COHERENCE

- The C2RI capitalised on UNDP's work through the IRP project which concluded in 2021 and uses the same implementation strategies. The project contributes to the UNDP Iraq Country Programme 2020-2024 and works in synergy with the Social Cohesion Portfolio; mainly with FFS and ICRRP.
- A Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) UN Joint Approach, chaired by UNDP and IOM, with membership from UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR and UNAMI, was established to coordinate reintegration and reconciliation support. The TCC served as a forum for unified messaging and advocacy for this politically sensitive but critical file.
- The project is part of the UN family's 'Joint Approach for community-based reconciliation and reintegration'. UNDP is well positioned to coordinate with actors engaged in reconciliation,

however mostly not structured to maximize impact, resources and knowledge sharing. UNDP co-chairs the TCC with IOM, and coordinate with all UN agencies in this file, discussions are currently ongoing for joint projects on juvenile rehabilitation and reintegration with UNODC and on child protection and reintegration with UNICEF.

## EFFICIENCY

- A main challenge is the insufficiency of the project teams on the ground compared to the amount of work required. Implementing partners also faced challenges on the staffing size, high level of turnover and security risks. Their capacities of their staff were limited and improved as the project progressed. Both, UNDP and implementing partners realize the need for advanced capacity building.
- The total resources required for the UNDP's C2RI project is US\$ 28,668,774, so far, only 29 percent were mobilized from the Government of Japan. Donors' funding for all social cohesion and reintegration projects is mostly short term for one-year, only the Government of Denmark gives a 4-year funding.
- The highest portion of the budget went to Output 1 'Adults formerly associated and selected community members have received targeted reintegration support' at 76 percent. Implementing partners find that the budget is insufficient compared to the actual needs on ground by the communities.
- The modality for the livelihoods grants shifted from the provision of cash into in-kind support to ensure there was no mismanagement of resources. Grant value was convenient for the small business ideas and locations. UNDP is now introducing collective business grants instead of individual business ones, with strengthened market linkages.
- LPCs were actively involved and supporting in project implementation, for example, identifying beneficiaries and housing units for rehabilitation, outreaching and community discussions.
- Visibility and advocacy were core elements of the C2RI project. Implemented activities contributed to raising awareness about the activities and the efforts by UNDP and the Government of Japan. It ensured that the outcomes of the community dialogues are broadly communicated.
- The project's visibility activities were effective, primarily the townhall meetings and the published web stories and videos. Implementing partners played a notable role in the visibility in terms of information sharing and receiving feedback from beneficiaries through their offices and hotlines.
- Tracking of project progress was done through regular field visits. Implementing partners submitted monthly reports to UNDP and UNDP submitted bi-monthly updates, however, these followed a template requested by the donor, hence were too brief to allow for capturing quality work or the consideration of the cross-cutting themes. Some of the project indicators are not well-defined and not SMART, some do not allow for gender or age disaggregation, and none measure the quality of the activities.

## EFFECTIVENESS

- The four project outputs were fully achieved or on track to be achieved, despite the limited timeframe given for implementation.
- Target 3.1 '*A national roadmap and policy on reconciliation and reintegration formulated*', although a task force was established engaging different actors is favourable, however no concrete outcome was achieved as a result. Target 2.3 '*The rehabilitation and active use of 15 social and productive infrastructure*', this target is delayed as the units to be rehabilitated are not yet selected. Finally, target 2.4 '*holding 20 social and PVE activities in the targeted locations*', the project did not reach this high target of events, however the townhall events were highly engaging.
- Output 1 of the C2RI project responded to the needs of returnee families who suffer from stigmatization and exclusion, and of host communities who also face socio-economic stressors. With this output, livelihoods were supported, housing units were rehabilitated and MHPSS services were provided. Capacity building on MHPSS to social workers and psychologists had limited results and their capacities to sustain the provision of services to individuals is not guaranteed.
- Negotiations, mediation and reconciliation process for return of people was provided under Output 2, led by LPCs. Although originally planned, the project did not yet work on the rehabilitation or construction of social and productive infrastructure. Under Outcomes 3 and 4 of the C2RI project supported the establishment of a task force the reintegration under the Global Framework on Persecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration and government officials were trained.
- The lessons learned from previous social cohesion efforts in Iraq was integrated in the design and implementation strategies of this project. This includes more emphasis on knowledge generation, community participation through NGOs, promotion of economic opportunities and supporting reintegration at the individual, family, and community levels.
- LPCs believe that the project has opened the door for them to play an active role in bringing support on infrastructure and to integrate as many families as possible. Coordination between the LPCs and CSOs was recognized as a key aspect to widen the reach and provide technical backstopping.

## IMPACT

- It is clear that the perceptions of the host communities vis a vis the returnees have changed and there is a wider acceptance of returnees even the acceptance of those with perceived ISIL affiliations. Rich and illustrative real-life stories on reintegration were shared during the evaluation that confirms this positive impact.
- The ability of individuals to return especially those with perceived ISIL affiliations marks a real shift in the mind-set and perceptions of host communities regarding the importance of peace building, social cohesion and integration of women and children within their original place of residences to promote peace and stability in Iraq.

- UNDP has invested through previous projects in the capacity building and institutionalisation of the LPCs. Through C2RI, communities were able to recognise the important role they play to increase community trust in local authorities and structures.
- UNDP, with its positioning within this project on reintegration, has been approached by the government to support the returns from Al-Hol given that most cases are within some of the pilot locations of C2RI.
- Community acceptance of MHPSS as an important tool to strengthen reintegration and provide needed support to the communities. Communities started to understand that in order to develop, they need to have some level of communal healing and peace.
- The holistic approach of the implementation strategy of integrating returnees with host communities in MHPSS and livelihood activities increased interaction between community members and allowed for the establishment of new social relations that are necessary for living together in peace.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

- The evaluation could not account for a distinct exit strategy in place. Community ownership was at the core of the C2RI's suggesting high likelihood for sustainability, given the change in perceptions by the host communities and increased acceptance for the returning families. However, LPCs are based on a volunteer membership who might not be able to pursue the same effort beyond the project on their own for financial and workload considerations.
- National partners believe that without the C2RI support, the government's financial capacity would not have allowed for the rehabilitation of houses. Continuation of reconciliation and integration does not usually receive attention by the state in all locations and unlikely to expand without UNDP's support.
- At the individual level, the project interventions had positive impact evident in the return of the families to rehabilitated houses and with facilitated access to services, capacity and skill building and income-generation. As such, the likelihood is high that they maintain an increased income for sustainable livelihoods. Sustaining the MHPSS provision of services by the local workers is unlikely, given the outcomes of the provided training and their limited capacities that would not allow them to continue on their own.
- As reported by UNDP staff, developing a national strategy for reintegration has been identified as a priority and announced during the development of this Mid-Term Evaluation Report through the Reintegration Task Force led by the government and UNDP and with membership of several UN and government counterparts.
- Prospects of sustainability are more concrete with the project's institutional support through the formulation of the task force on the reintegration and the digital referral system, which is yet premature.

- Several external factors may jeopardise the likelihood of sustainability of the project. These include the fragile security situation in Iraq and the limited mobility in some areas, political changes, competing priorities and compound crises. Further, sustainability of financial assistance to address social cohesion remains a risk, if donor funding priorities are shifted to address another crisis.
- Gender social norms and stereotypes are taboos in most of the Iraqi locations and this affects meeting gender commitments for their economic, political and social empowerment. Moreover, risks of climate change and shocks are high in Iraq and its vulnerability to climate breakdown.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

- The C2RI project took into consideration human-rights approach, emphasis was given to IDP families with perceived ISIL affiliation who are in the most marginalised and vulnerable situations and who face barriers in realising their needs and rights. Community participation and accountability were considered by the UNDP.

## GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- The project does not have a stand-alone gender analysis. Gender is mainstreamed across the project's outputs through the provided vocational training and the business grants, 50 percent of beneficiaries were women. The project encouraged women to choose non-conventional projects. MHPSS capacity building was offered to female social workers and provided services to beneficiary women. The level of participation by women in the LPCs was not clear. Four Women Peace Groups were established to advocate for peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.
- Social norms related to the economic participation of women, their autonomy and restrictions on mobility manifested themselves as key issues under Output 1 on livelihoods support. A challenge that was reported during the evaluation is that there is a limited number of women-led organisations because of discriminatory gender norms that affects women in the workplace.

## DISABILITY

- The project included PwDs in some project activities as beneficiaries, including 99 living in housing units that were rehabilitated, as well as 11 benefiting from MHPSS services. The evaluation could not account of how many – or if – PwDs benefited from livelihoods training and business grants. Integration of PwD needs was seen as a weakness acknowledged by the project team noting the more tangible work needs to go into the inclusion of this target group in future programming.

## 4.2. Recommendations

- 4.3. Recommendation 1:** Make adjustments to the M&E system, develop and use relevant tools to be used by UNDP and its implementing partners, which will allow for a more structured data collection and analysis at different levels. UNDP's work on integration has evolved into more resilience and development interventions, in parallel, M&E system needs to evolve as well. Indicators should be well-defined and SMART and to allow for measuring the quality of the activities. UNDP could invest more in the development of digital infrastructure and capacity

building for the M&E system to enhance accuracy and timeliness and data visualization for analysis, decision making and corrective measures.

- 4.4. Recommendation 2:** Develop a unified complaints and feedback mechanism across UNDP and implementing partners which would allow for two-way communication and flow of information. The attempts by implementing partners to establish hotlines and feedback set-ups are acknowledged, however could substantially be improved.
- 4.5. Recommendation 3:** Build on the achievement of the C2RI project on the digital case management and referral system DREAM IT, with clear plans for its institutionalization into Government information management systems, as well as possible sharing of information with UN and international partners, ensuring necessary technology devices and capacity building are provided to national systems for its adoption.
- 4.6. Recommendation 4:** Although the project is mainstreaming gender, it is recommended to conduct a comprehensive gender analysis prior to any future programming, which will enhance gender-transformative approach to re-integration and reconciliation efforts and address the varying needs of target groups, The analysis can also explore possible partnerships with focus on gender and women empowerment.
- 4.7. Recommendation 5:** Despite that UNDP works on ensuring linkages and building capacity of local and national partners , it is of value to clarify the transition plan for the different project outputs and deliverables to have a clear and long-term vision for the expansion and continuation of achieved results, through the national and local partners. A developed national roadmap on integration which UNDP has proposed to the government is a starting point.
- 4.8. Recommendation 6:** If possible, suggest adjustments to the donor’s reporting templates to allow for improving the technical/ narrative reported by UNDP and its implementing partners in a way that would allow for capturing quality data with sufficient level of detail for guiding implementation and documentation of results.
- 4.9. Recommendation 7:** Continue strengthening UNDP positioning as a lead to support the Government of Iraq on the development of a National Strategy for Reintegration, in addition to continuing support on facilitating return and reintegration of Iraqis from Al-Hol camp North-East Syria
- 4.10. Recommendation 8:** For future programming, discuss with donors and partners the possibility to consider a longer implementation timeframe, with the realization that the integrated approach adopted by UNDP for reconciliation and reintegration is unlikely to achieve desirable results within a short period; building resilience and human capital needs time.
- 4.11. Recommendation 9:** For future programming, and where possible establish a stronger alignment with existing national social protection graduation programmes. In doing so, UNDP can revisit the design of the livelihoods interventions across the four core pillars of safety nets, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion and social empowerment.
- 4.12. Recommendation 10:** Develop a resource mobilization strategy to ensure continuous sufficient funding for the C2RI overall programme, beyond the generous fund from the Government of Japan that ended September 2022.
- 4.13. Recommendation 11:** In future programming, ensure a concrete emphasis on inclusion and disability, with targeted interventions to address their special needs. A study looking at the

situation and needs of People with Disability and existing actors in the context of Iraq is necessary for an informed design of this component/ interventions.

## 5. REPORT ANNEXES

- Annex 1: Mid-term evaluation ToRs
- Annex 2: Evaluation matrix
- Annex 3: Stakeholders map
- Annex 4: Data collection guides
- Annex 5: Workplan

### ANNEX 1: ToRs of the Mid-Term Evaluation



## ANNEX 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Question	Specific Question	Data Source /Stakeholder	Data Collection Method	Indicator/Evaluability Criteria
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.				
EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How was the project designed?</li> <li>- How did the project interventions change overtime in response to changes in the country?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNDP Team</li> <li>- Government</li> </ul>	KIIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of conflict analysis</li> <li>Evidence of consultation meetings/community consultations and national consultations</li> </ul>
EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development 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>- How are the objectives of the project aligned with UNDP Strategic plan?</li> <li>- In What way do the objectives correspond or reflect SDGs? Which SDGs in particular?</li> <li>- How is the project aligned with GoI priorities and development plans?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Document review</li> <li>- UNDP Team</li> <li>- Government</li> </ul>	KIIs	Evidence of linkages between the project and other UNDP country documents
EQ 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>- What is the intervention logic of the project?</li> <li>- to what extent is the project contributing to wider UNDP Country programme in Iraq?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>- UNDP Team</li> </ul>	KIIs	Evidence of linkages between the project and other UNDP country documents
EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are cross-cutting issues such as GEEW and HRBAs reflected in the project document?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	KIIs	GEEW is reflected through indicators

empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?	- How is diversity reflected in the design and implementation of project activities?	Monitoring data Progress reports - UNDP Team		HRBAs are reflected in the design of the project Availability of diversity data
Coherence: the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.				
EQ 5: To what extent does the project address synergies and linkages to other projects under programme?	- What are the coordination and complementary approaches of this project with other projects implemented by UNDP in Iraq?	- Project Team - Other UNDP units	KIIs	Presence of coordination mechanisms Minutes of meetings Joint work plans Joint interventions
EQ 6: To what extent is the project aligned with the Iraq Country Programme Document?	- How does the project respond to the priorities and objectives of Iraq Country programme? - Which Objectives does the project specifically respond to?	- UNDP Team -	KIIs Document Review	Response to objectives and indicators in the country programme
EQ7: To what extent is the project aligned with interventions from other UNDP Iraq units?	- to what extent is the project supportive of other interventions implemented by UNDP in Iraq?	- UNDP Team -	KIIs Document Review	Meeting minutes between different units Joint activities between different units
EQ 8: To what extent is external coherence taken under consideration?	How was the project designed? - what is the role of stakeholders in the design of project activities? How are workplans developed?	- UNDP team - external stakeholders (UN family and others)	KIIs	Context analysis

EQ 9: How is this project consistent with other interventions by other actors?	What are the coordination mechanisms of the project with other UN actors, donors, CSOs?	- UNDP team - external stakeholders (UN family and others)	KIIs	Context analysis
Efficiency: the extent to which the project resources (funds, expertise/human resources, time, etc.) are optimally used and converted into intended outputs.				
EQ 10: 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?	What is the management structure of the project (organigram) how effective is it? What kind of technical support is provided to the project? By the project? How have resources been used (both financial and human resources) Have funds been disbursed regularly? Why/why not?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs,	KIIs FGDs	Clarity of project organigram and reporting lines. Coordination with other projects within UNDP Joint activities with other projects.
EQ 11: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	What has been the implementation process of the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs, UN actors	KIIs FGDs	Clarity of procurement system for partners Clarity of financial reporting for partners
EQ 12: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	What have been some implementation challenges? How were they overcome? What could be done differently in the future? How has coordination with other projects or other actors supported the efficiency of the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs, UN actors	KIIs FGDs	Availability of funds in timely fashion Evidence of Increased coordination between UNDP projects

EQ 13: 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 has the project developed a communication and visibility strategy? How effective has the strategy been? What are some of the results of this strategy?	UNDP Team Media Professionals Social media competition participants	KIIs FGDs	Presence of a communication strategy Products of the communication strategy (videos, brochures, et.al)
EQ 14: 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?	How were outcomes and outputs designed? How is data collected for the different indicators? How is data collected used for management decision making? Is data segregated to reflect diversity?	UNDP Team M&E officer	KIIs	Indicators are sex disaggregated # of women and men with disabilities and other vulnerable groups reported on Minority groups clearly referred to in reporting
Effectiveness: the extent to which the project's 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.				
EQ 15: To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving planned objectives, outcomes, and outputs?	What has been achieved to date? Why?	UNDP Team Government Direct and Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	Availability of indicator data
EQ 16: To what extent do the project's activities/management systems support the reintegration and reconciliation of persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, IDPs, returnees, and stayers?	What are the needs of the persons with perceived ISIL affiliations? The extent to which project activities responded to the various needs of the different target groups?	IPs Direct and indirect beneficiaries	KIIs FGDs	Needs assessments Perception surveys

EQ 17: What has been achieved thus far?	What are the tangible results/outputs of the project? How many studies have been conducted? How many conflict analysis? How many media reports? How many trainings? Awareness sessions? What do the indicators reflect in terms of achievements of the project? How do the stakeholders feel about the quality of the deliverables?	UNDP Team All Stakeholders	KIIs FGDs	Conflict Analysis Documents Research Papers published Media articles Positive and negative feedback from stakeholders
EQ 18: To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	What has been the gender approach of the project? Was it effective? Why/why not? What could be done differently? How has the project collaborated with other UN Actors to promote GEEW? What has been the outcome to date?	UNDP Team UN Actors Government Actors focusing on Gender Monitoring data	KIIs	Evidence of collaboration with UN Actors on GEEW Support provided to government departments working on women Overall number of women and girls in different committees
EQ 19: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?	How have the studies and monitoring data been used to inform project implementation? How often were conflict analysis conducted? What was implemented from the internal 2018 review? How has this affected project implementation?	UNDP Team	KIIs	Evidence that monitoring data helped change project approaches (note to file, emails, meeting notes...etc.)
EQ 20: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at	How do stakeholders feel about the project? How do stakeholders see the value added of the project in	Indirect Beneficiaries Government	KIIs FGDs	Positive or negative feedback from the stakeholders

the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?	terms of coordination and improved capacity? In what ways has the GoI supported the project? What could be done to strengthen political support at national and local levels?	UN Actors CSOs Local Government UNDP Team		
EQ 21: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?	To what extent was partnership building a key strategy of the project? How many partners does the project have? How does the project define partnership? How are partnerships nurtured? How has this affected or likely to affect sustainability?	UNDP Team UN Actors CSOs Government	KIIs	Number of project partners Type of partnerships Partnership modalities
Impact: analysing 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 local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. 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				
EQ 22: What has happened/changed as the result of the pilot phase in the targeted locations?	What change did the project make in the communities? What are the tangible results of the project? Are they uniform across locations? What explains difference?	UNDP Teams Government Indirect Beneficiaries Direct Beneficiaries UN Actors Partners	KIIs FGDs	Positive and negative responses from beneficiaries both direct and indirect; government; other stakeholders
EQ 23: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender	What changes did the project make in the life of its direct and indirect beneficiaries?	UNDP Teams Government Indirect Beneficiaries	KIIs FGDs	Positive and negative responses from beneficiaries both direct

considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?	How has the project affected young people? How has the project affected women? How has the project affected LPCs and government? How has the project affected CSOs, social workers, media students?	Direct Beneficiaries UN Actors Partners		and indirect; government; other stakeholders
EQ 24: How many people (gender disaggregated) have been affected by the project as of the end of September 2022?	Who was involved in the project? How does the project count direct and indirect beneficiaries? How is data collected and disaggregated? How is double counting avoided?	UNDP Team	Monitoring Data KIIs	Monitoring systems Evidence of absence of double counting
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				
EQ 25: Have suitable strategies for sustainability been developed?	Does the project have an exit strategy? How is sustainability mainstreamed within the project design and implementation modality? Is there local ownership of project interventions? What systems and structures have been developed or put in place by the project to support sustainability? How effective are they? To what extent there has been legal developments to support the continuation of project interventions and outputs? Are	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	Presence of a sustainability plan Presence of resource mobilisation process for local government and IPs



	other donors interested in continuing funding projects of this type?			
EQ 26: Has the project contributed to the expansion of knowledge on reintegration and reconciliation among government counterparts, local partners, and community members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What have been the capacity building strategy of the project?</li> <li>- What have been the outcome of the capacity building activities? How has this been measured?</li> <li>- The extent to which stakeholders have benefited from expanded knowledge on reintegration and reconciliation</li> </ul>	UNDP Team Government Local partners Community members	KIIs	Pre and post capacity building activity results Change in policies/approaches towards reconciliation and return
EQ 27: To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term following the closure of C2RI?	- what are the plans in place to continue the work and activities of the project?	Government Local Partners Community members	KIIs	Presence of government plans Presence of projects/funding opportunities/interests by IPs
EQ 28: 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 plans in place to continue the work and activities of the project?	Government Local Partners Community members	KIIs	Presence of government plans Presence of projects/funding opportunities/interests by IPs
EQ 29: Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?	What will happen at the end of the project? What will continue? What will stop? What explains potential continuity and risks of cessation? How would community structures continue to be sustainable? What is	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs	KIIs FGDs	Presence of government plans Presence of projects/funding opportunities/interests by IPs

	required over the coming months to strengthen sustainability?			
Cross Cutting Themes: Human Rights, Gender Equality, Disability				
Human Rights				
To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project in the country?	How have principles of inclusion and accountability been developed and implemented by the project and its IPs?	UNDP Team IPs Host Communities Returning Families	KIIs FGDs	Needs Assessment Monitoring Systems disaggregated
Gender				
To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality? To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?	How did the project design consider gender beyond a numerical representation? How has the project supported transformative approaches to gender equality? How did the project support the empowerment of women? What is the evidence?	UNDP Team IPs Host Communities Returning Families	KIIs FGDs	Change in perceptions about the role of women Adoption of transformative approaches by the project Change in IP policies/systems towards gender
Disability				
Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation? What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?	- How were people with disability consulted and considered in the project? - The extent to which the project and IPs made an effort to integrate	UNDP Team IPs People with disabilities (beneficiaries of the project)	KIIs FGDs	Disaggregated monitoring data

What barriers did persons with disabilities face? Was a twin-track approach adopted?	the needs and priorities of people with disability? - The extent to which the M&E system includes information on people with disabilities?			
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### ANNEX 3: STAKEHOLDERS MAP

Stakeholder Type	Specific Stakeholder
UNDP Team	Social Cohesion Team
	M&E Officer
	Communication and Media Officer
	Reintegration Officer
	Community Security and Reintegration Specialist
	External Consultant
	Rule of Law, Security, and Human Rights Expert
Implementing Partners	Human Relief Foundation
	Mercy Hands
	Iraqi Institution for Development
Direct Beneficiaries (Iraqi Citizens)	MHPSS Beneficiaries
	Vocational Training Beneficiaries
	Business Training/SME Grant Beneficiaries
	Returning Families
	Members of host communities
Government Partners	Mayors of 4 pilot areas
	ONSA
	LPCs in 4 pilot areas
UN and Other Partners	GIZ
	IOM
	UNICEF
	UNHCR
Donors	Government of Japan

## Annex 4: People Interviewed During Field Mission

	Stakeholder Type	Specific Stakeholder	Who
Sunday, 11 September 2022			
	UNDP	Social Cohesion Team	Nadia Alawamleh & Abdelmoneim Mustafa
			Miriam Pineau
			Alaa Alnajjar
Monday, 12 September 2022			
	Implementing Partner	Human Relief Foundation	Mustafa Nooraldeen
		Mercy Hands	Abdullah Kamil
	Consultant	External Consultant	Mara Revkin
Tuesday, 13 September			
	UN Agency	IOM	Islam El Ghazouly
		UNICEF	Junita Upadahyay & Katie Rice
		UNHCR	Valerie Svobodova
Wednesday, 14 September 2022			
	Donor	Japan Embassy	Mayuko Hori
	International Partner	GIZ	Dana Hurby
	UNDP	Rule of Law, Security, Human Rights - HQ	Glaucia Boyer
Thursday, 15 September 2022			
	Field Mission Muhalabiya	Returning families	Muhalabiya, Ninewa -

		MHPSS Beneficiaries	Muhalabiya, Ninewa -
		Vocational Training Beneficiaries	Muhalabiya, Ninewa -
		Business Training/SME Grant Beneficiaries	Muhalabiya, Ninewa -
		Local Government	Muhalabiya, Ninewa -
	Sunday, 18 September 2022		
		Iraqi Institution for Development	Rana Hassan
	UNDP		Nadia Awamlah Abdel Moneim
	<b>Monday, 19 September 2022</b>		
	National Stakeholders	Government partners, Maqams, LPCs	Ali Daoud Dr. Hassan Zeinabedin
	UNDP	Field Facilitators	Reem, Ayssar, Ali, Basem, Haitham
		Social Cohesion	Esam Kattab
	<b>Tuesday, 20 September 2022</b>		
	UNDP	Social Cohesion Team	Mohammad Alanakrih
	Beneficiaries from Habania and Tuz Kermato	Remote Meetings with beneficiaries	
	<b>Wednesday, 21 September 2022</b>		
	Iraqi Government	Said El Gayashi	

## ANNEX 5: Evaluation Tools

Interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders will be based on qualitative questions that will be open-ended, that is, the respondents will provide their responses in his/her own words, in order to get in-depth information about their perceptions, insights, attitudes, experiences, or beliefs regarding the project.

Interviews/focus groups will also be useful to follow-up with questions the evaluation may have after analysing data from other evaluation methods such as document review.

The evaluation may ask the same question to different individuals or informant categories to compare their responses and analyse how these individual differences may reflect on the project.

The items included on the interview guides are exhaustive, but generic. As the interview guides are intended to help the evaluation consultant develop semi-structured interviews/focus groups, they will be adapted depending on each context and set of interventions; the profile and attitudes of the respondent; and the results of previous interviews with other stakeholders; in order to help better focus each interview.

### Introduction to the interview

Thank you for participating in this interview. My name is <insert name>. I am conducting the Evaluation of the UNDP Project Integrated Reconciliation.

The purpose of this interview is to help us better understand the IRP, its results and effects in Iraq. In order to do so, I would like you to respond to some questions, based on your experience and perspective. Your answers will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Please remember you can refuse to answer any question, you have the right to stop the interview at any moment? No positive or negative feedback would have an impact now or in the future on any collaboration or engagement with UNDP Iraq. Do you agree to participate in this meeting?

The evaluator will ask the respondent to introduce him/herself and his/her role/participation in the project

Do you have any questions before we begin?



Stakeholders Type:

Demographic Info:

Date:

Interview location:

Interviewer Name:

Respondent Name:

Respondent Title (during life of Activity):

Respondent Institution (during life of Activity):

Sex of respondent:

Preface: What has been your role in the design/implementation of the IRP in Iraq? How long have you been in this role? Were there particular aspects of the IRP that you were involved in? What aspects?

EQ 1: To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to security, political, economic, institutional and other changes in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How was the project designed?</li> <li>- How did the project interventions change overtime in response to changes in the country?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNDP Team</li> <li>- Government</li> </ul>
EQ 2: To what extent was the project in line with the recovery, national development 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>- How are the objectives of the project aligned with UNDP Strategic plan?</li> <li>- In What way do the objectives correspond or reflect SDGs? Which SDGs in particular?</li> <li>- How is the project aligned with GoI priorities and development plans?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Document review</li> <li>- UNDP Team</li> <li>- Government</li> </ul>
EQ 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>- What is the intervention logic of the project?</li> <li>- to what extent is the project contributing to wider UNDP Country programme in Iraq?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>- UNDP Team</li> </ul>
EQ 4: To what extent does the project contribute to the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are cross-cutting issues such as GEEW and HRBAs reflected in the project document?</li> <li>- How is diversity reflected in the design and implementation of project activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Monitoring data</li> </ul>

empowerment? Especially, with regard to the target beneficiary groups including the return IDPs, youth, women, disabled persons, etc.?		Progress reports - UNDP Team
EQ 5: To what extent does the project address synergies and linkages to other projects under programme?	- What are the coordination and complementary approaches of this project with other projects implemented by UNDP in Iraq?	- Project Team - Other UNDP units
EQ 6: To what extent is the project aligned with the Iraq Country Programme Document?	- How does the project respond to the priorities and objectives of Iraq Country programme? - Which Objectives does the project specifically respond to?	- UNDP Team -
EQ7: To what extent is the project aligned with interventions from other UNDP Iraq units?	- to what extent is the project supportive of other interventions implemented by UNDP in Iraq?	- UNDP Team -
EQ 8: To what extent is external coherence taken under consideration?	How was the project designed? - what is the role of stakeholders in the design of project activities? How are workplans developed?	- UNDP team - external stakeholders (UN family and others)
EQ 9: How is this project consistent with other interventions by other actors?	What are the coordination mechanisms of the project with other UN actors, donors, CSOs?	- UNDP team - external stakeholders (UN family and others)
EQ 10: 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?	What is the management structure of the project (organigram) how effective is it? What kind of technical support is provided to the project? By the project? How have resources been used (both financial and human resources) Have funds been disbursed regularly? Why/why not?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs,

EQ 11: To what extent has the project implementation been efficient and cost-effective?	What has been the implementation process of the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs, UN actors
EQ 12: To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	What have been some implementation challenges? How were they overcome? What could be done differently in the future? How has coordination with other projects or other actors supported the efficiency of the project?	- UNDP Team - LPCs, WPGs, YGs, UN actors
EQ 13: 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 has the project developed a communication and visibility strategy? How effective has the strategy been? What are some of the results of this strategy?	UNDP Team Media Professionals Social media competition participants
EQ 14: 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?	How were outcomes and outputs designed? How is data collected for the different indicators? How is data collected used for management decision making? Is data segregated to reflect diversity?	UNDP Team M&E officer
EQ 15: To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving planned objectives, outcomes, and outputs?	What has been achieved to date? Why?	UNDP Team Government Direct and Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs
EQ 16: To what extent do the project's activities/management systems support the reintegration and reconciliation of persons with perceived ISIL affiliation, IDPs, returnees, and stayers?	What are the needs of the persons with perceived ISIL affiliations? The extent to which project activities responded to the various needs of the different target groups?	IPs Direct and indirect beneficiaries
EQ 17: What has been achieved thus far?	What are the tangible results/outputs of the project? How many studies have been conducted? How many conflict analysis? How many media reports? How many trainings? Awareness	UNDP Team All Stakeholders

	sessions? What do the indicators reflect in terms of achievements of the project? How do the stakeholders feel about the quality of the deliverables?	
EQ 18: To what extent are strategies for gender and women's empowerment incorporated?	What has been the gender approach of the project? Was it effective? Why/why not? What could be done differently? How has the project collaborated with other UN Actors to promote GEEW? What has been the outcome to date?	UNDP Team UN Actors Government Actors focusing on Gender Monitoring data
EQ 19: The extent to which findings of data analysis or project best practices are used for drawing lessons learned, and adjusting implementation?	How have the studies and monitoring data been used to inform project implementation? How often were conflict analysis conducted? What was implemented from the internal 2018 review? How has this affected project implementation?	UNDP Team
EQ 20: To what extent have the project's activities led to improved coordination, cooperation, and capacity as relevant at the National and/or Governorate and/or Municipality levels? To what extent does the project have the support of the government both at national and local levels?	How do stakeholders feel about the project? How do stakeholders see the value added of the project in terms of coordination and improved capacity? In what ways has the GoI supported the project? What could be done to strengthen political support at national and local levels?	Indirect Beneficiaries Government UN Actors CSOs Local Government UNDP Team
EQ 21: To what extent has the project been actively seeking partnership with relevant actors in view of strengthening project implementation and/or ensuring project sustainability?	To what extent was partnership building a key strategy of the project? How many partners does the project have? How does the project define partnership? How are partnerships nurtured? How has this affected or likely to affect sustainability?	UNDP Team UN Actors CSOs Government
EQ 22: What has happened/changed as the result of the pilot phase in the targeted locations?	What change did the project make in the communities? What are the tangible results of the project? Are they uniform across locations? What explains difference?	UNDP Teams Government Indirect Beneficiaries Direct Beneficiaries UN Actors Partners

EQ 23: What real difference have the activities made to the lives of beneficiaries (taking into account gender considerations, such as focus on women-headed households, as well)?	<p>What changes did the project make in the life of its direct and indirect beneficiaries?</p> <p>How has the project affected young people?</p> <p>How has the project affected women?</p> <p>How has the project affected LPCs and government?</p> <p>How has the project affected CSOs, social workers, media students?</p>	<p>UNDP Teams</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Indirect</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Direct</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>UN Actors</p> <p>Partners</p>
EQ 24: How many people (gender disaggregated) have been affected by the project as of the end of September 2022?	<p>Who was involved in the project?</p> <p>How does the project count direct and indirect beneficiaries?</p> <p>How is data collected and disaggregated? How is double counting avoided?</p>	UNDP Team
EQ 25: Have suitable strategies for sustainability been developed?	<p>Does the project have an exit strategy? How is sustainability mainstreamed within the project design and implementation modality? Is there local ownership of project interventions? What systems and structures have been developed or put in place by the project to support sustainability? How effective are they? To what extent there has been legal developments to support the continuation of project interventions and outputs? Are other donors interested in continuing funding projects of this type?</p>	<p>UNDP Team</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Indirect</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>CSOs</p>
EQ 26: Has the project contributed to the expansion of knowledge on reintegration and reconciliation among government counterparts, local partners, and community members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What have been the capacity building strategy of the project?</li> <li>- What have been the outcome of the capacity building activities? How has this been measured?</li> <li>- The extent to which stakeholders have benefited from expanded knowledge on reintegration and reconciliation</li> </ul>	<p>UNDP Team</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Local</p> <p>partners</p> <p>Community</p> <p>members</p>
EQ 27: To what extent are the project results likely to be sustained in the long-term following the closure of C2RI?	<p>- what are the plans in place to continue the work and activities of the project?</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Local</p> <p>Partners</p> <p>Community</p> <p>members</p>
EQ 28: What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will not be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?	<p>- what are the plans in place to continue the work and activities of the project?</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Local</p> <p>Partners</p> <p>Community</p> <p>members</p>

EQ 29: Are there any financial, social, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?	What will happen at the end of the project? What will continue? What will stop? What explains potential continuity and risks of cessation? How would community structures continue to be sustainable? What is required over the coming months to strengthen sustainability?	UNDP Team Government Indirect Beneficiaries CSOs
Cross Cutting Themes: Human Rights, Gender Equality, Disability		
Human Rights		
To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project in the country?	How have principles of inclusion and accountability been developed and implemented by the project and its IPs?	UNDP Team IPs Host Communities Returning Families
Gender		
To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality? To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?	How did the project design consider gender beyond a numerical representation? How has the project supported transformative approaches to gender equality? How did the project support the empowerment of women? What is the evidence?	UNDP Team IPs Host Communities Returning Families
Disability		
Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?	- How were people with disability consulted and considered in the project?	UNDP Team IPs People with disabilities

<p>What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?</p> <p>What barriers did persons with disabilities face?</p> <p>Was a twin-track approach adopted?</p>	<p>- The extent to which the project and IPs made an effort to integrate the needs and priorities of people with disability?</p> <p>- The extent to which the M&amp;E system includes information on people with disabilities?</p>	<p>(beneficiaries of the project)</p>
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## ANNEX 6: Workplan

Task / Activity	Level effort (No. of days)	Revised timeline
Inception Phase		
Desk review of qualitative and quantitative secondary data; consultations with UNDP staff	1	Draft Inception Report Submitted on September 4th
Preparation of: stakeholder mapping, data collection tools (interview guides and related protocols), refined evaluation methodology, finalized implementation plan	3	
Drafting and submission of Inception Report including the above-mentioned elements	1	
Reception of feedback on the Inception Report and finalization	0	Finalization of Inception Report Including Evaluation Tools by September 9th
Final validation of Inception Report	2	
Total number of working days – Inception Phase	7	
Data Collection Phase		
Remote interviews (Zoom/Skype/phone) with agreed stakeholders;	14	TBC – Probably September 10th -24nd
Debriefing session (immediately after completion of field data collection)	2	
Total number of working days – Data collection phase	14	
Analysis and Reporting Phase		
Field data cleaning and entry; data analysis; development and submission of the Draft Evaluation Report	18	Draft Report 1 week after conclusion of field data collection
Reception of feedback from UNDP		
Editing of the Draft Assessment Report and submission of the Final Evaluation Report	6	Final report 1 week after receipt of consolidated comments in draft report

Total number of working days – Analysis and Synthesis Phase	24
Total number of working days	45