



Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

**Evaluation Commissioned by UNDP IRAQ
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PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS

Project/Outcome Information

Project Title	Support the Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDG's Project	
Atlas ID	00111226	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDAF Outcome A1: Targeted Government Institution's capacities strengthened for accountability, transparency, and provision of equitable and quality services. • UNDAF Outcome A2: Government capacity at national and subnational levels enhanced for evidence-based decision-making. • CPD Outcome 2: Administrative and financial reform and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorate levels. 	
Country	Iraq	
Region	RBAS	
Date project document signed	12 July 2018	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	August 2018	December 2025
Total committed budget	USD 1,644,281.42	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 207,545.70	
Funding source	UNDP	
Implementing party	UNDP	
	Evaluation Information	
Evaluation type	Project Evaluation	
Final /mid-term review/ other	Mid-Term Evaluation	
Project under evaluation	Start	End
	August 2018	December 2025
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS	1
ABBREVIATIONS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	9
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION	10
2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT	10
2.2 UNDP SUPPORT OF SDGs TO IRAQ	11
2.3 EVALUATION INTERVENTION	12
3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES	13
3.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES	13
3.2 SCOPE OF EVALUATION	14
3.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS	14
4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS	17
4.1 TARGETED GROUPS	17
4.2 FORMAL EVALUABILITY	18
4.3 SUBSTANTIVE EVALUABILITY	19
4.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ADOPTED METHODOLOGY	19
4.5 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	19
CONCEPTUAL MODELS	19
DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND SOURCES	20
LIMITATIONS, DATA COLLECTION TOOLS, INSTRUMENTS, AND PROTOCOLS	20
FINAL SCHEDULE OF KEY MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	22
5. DATA ANALYSIS	23
6. EVALUATION FINDINGS	23
6.1 RELEVANCE /COHERENCE	24
6.2 EFFECTIVENESS	28
6.3 EFFICIENCY	34
6.4 SUSTAINABILITY	38
6.5 HUMAN RIGHTS	45
6.6 GENDER EQUALITY	45
6.7 DISABILITY	48
7. CONCLUSION	50
8. RECOMMENDATIONS	52
8.1 RELEVANCE/COHERENCE	52
8.2 EFFECTIVENESS	52
8.3 EFFICIENCY	52
8.4 SUSTAINABILITY	53
8.5 HUMAN RIGHTS	53
8.6 GENDER EQUALITY	53
8.7 DISABILITY	53
9. LESSONS LEARNED	54
Annex 1. Terms of Reference Mid-term Evaluation - Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project	55
Example of working day allocation and schedule for an evaluation (outcome evaluation)	70
Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix	88
Annex 3. Interview Guide	96
Annex 4. Conducting qualitative research using NVivo software	103
Annex 5. Checklist for Evaluation Requirements	104
Annex 6. Field Observation Guide	105
Annex 7. List of Interviews	106
Annex 8. Summary of Multi-Year Work Plan	109

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Challenges of Millennium Development Goals for the six governorates.....	11
Figure 2: Institutional framework for SDG implementation	12
Figure 3: The achievement percentages of SDG activities.....	30
Figure 4: SDGs Planned Budget by Year (US\$).....	35

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Schedule for Field Visits	17
Table 2: No. of answers to the evaluation process	18
Table 3: Number of Female-Male interviews by groups	20
Table 4: Time Table of Evaluation Activities, Place, Responsibility, and Cost.....	22

ABBREVIATIONS

ASGIS	Authority of Statistics and Geographic Information System
COMSEC	Council of Ministers Secretariate
COVID- 19	Coronavirus Disease 19
CSDN	Civil Society Sustainable Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ER	Evaluation Report
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOI	Government of Iraq
IR	Inception Report
IT	Information Technology
IDPs	Internal Displaced Persons
I WISH 2	Iraqi Women Integrated Social and Health Survey
KII	Kry Informant Interview
KRSO	Kurdistan Region Statistical Office
KR MOLSA	Kurdistan Region- Ministry of Labor Force and Social Affairs
KR MOP	Kurdistan Region – Ministry of Planning
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa Countries
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MOP	Ministry of Planning
NCSD	National Committee on Sustainable Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NVIVO	A package of Qualitative Analysis
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation Development / Development Assistance Committee
RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNAMI	UN Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	UN Development Program
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNFPA	UN Population fund
UNICEF	UN International Children’s Emergency

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNDP took the initiative to launch a project titled “Support the Government of Iraq for the implementation and Monitoring SDGs in partnership with the MOP in 2018”. This initiative is strategically positioned to aid the Government of Iraq in aligning national plans and monitoring frameworks with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and contributing to the country's sustainable development agenda. The project embodies a multifaceted approach encompassing capacity building, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and reporting, all geared towards enhancing the localization of SDGs and fostering inclusive development within Iraq. The primary objectives of the projects include aligning national plans with the SDGs, enhancing stakeholder capacity for SDG localization, improving data collection and reporting mechanisms, and promoting inclusive development.

The summary of project outputs is as follows.¹:

Output 1: Institutional and analytical capacity for aligning national planning and Monitoring frameworks with SDGs strengthened.

Output 2: Analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning (focusing on mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, Environmental mental sustainability, and Governance and peace) strengthened.

Output 3: Capacity development for SDG localization strengthened.

Output 4: The capacity for integrated SDG Monitoring and Reporting at national and local levels was strengthened.

Output 5: Accelerating the SDGs in Iraq

Output 6: Support the development of the National Human Development Report (NHDR).

After five years of implementing the project, it became necessary to comprehensively assess the UNDP project to ascertain its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation process adopted the criteria and Key Guiding Questions and utilized the OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability). The evaluation findings were derived from two main sources; desk reviews and fieldwork interviews, which will be followed by several recommendations.

The Scope of the SDGs evaluation covers interventions implemented under the SDGs’ UNDP Project from 2018 to 2023, in terms of strengthening analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning, capacity development for SDG localization, strengthening capacities for integrated SDG Monitoring and reporting at national and local levels, and informed policy-making. Geographically, the mid-term evaluation covers the project intervention areas of the federal governorates of Iraq, including Kurdistan Region governorates through a combination of online and in-person meetings with key stakeholders, in addition to the SDGs focal points of governorates; Baghdad, Anbar, Thi-Qar, Diala, Maysan, Basrah. The evaluation period spans the project implementation duration, from November 1, 2018, to December 31, 2023. Moreover, the evaluation examined the implementation of the projects through different stages, such as monitoring, implementation, and reporting.

The mid-term evaluation addressed the questions outlined in the Terms of Reference to assess the SDGs Project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights, gender equality, and disability. No changes have been made to the evaluation questions provided in the TOR. Some adjustments were necessary to better reflect the project’s context while maintaining the core intent of each question. The

¹ Terms of Reference (TOR), Mid-term Evaluation - Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project, UNDP, 2024, P.2

evaluation process mainly depended on the interviews, either in person, online, or offline meetings, with the following groups: **a.** Federal Government of Iraq, **b.** Kurdistan Region Government in Iraq, **c.** Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations, **d.** National Experts, and **e.** UNDP Stakeholders.

The main users of the evaluation are: the Iraqi government, local governments, NGOs' and UNDP to assess the progress of the project and to modify the plans accordingly.

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report presented number of conclusions and recommendations for each of the seven evaluation criteria as follows:

RELEVANCE/COHERENCE

The responses indicated that the project is well aligned with national development priorities, such as poverty reduction, and the SDGs, with the importance of strengthening partnership and government coordination, measuring the SDGs data gap, enhancing the role of private sector and civil society organization, especially at local committees, as sustainable development agenda players. Existing challenges such as gender quality issues and climate change problems, require rigorous and continuous assessments to ensure that goals are achieved. The analysis showed that UNDP has actively contributed to positive change in government policies, and in integrating 2030 agenda strategic documents, such as "Iraq Vision for Sustainable Development 2030"² and "Situation of Iraq Woman and the 2030 Agenda for Substation Development"³. CSOs representatives are now part of the technical teams and the national committee of SDGs.

EFFECTIVENESS

Observations indicated that the project has made remarkable progress in various areas, especially coordination between the central government and governorates and promoting sustainable development goals. And in capacitated The national SDGs committee in submitting the SDGs VNRs to the HLPF with the support of the project Iraq government was able to submit good quality VNR 2019 and VNR2 in 2021 which developed based on national wide consultations with different stakeholders along with the success in organizing side events on SDG16+ in the HLPF 2021 which was the first time with project support brought senior governmental representative with youth groups representative in the same table addressing SDGs 16 related targets and indicators.

EFFICIENCY

The UNDP project's implementation strategy was highly efficient and cost-effective. The expected results were achieved within the specified time frame while maintaining a strict commitment to control spending and maximizing the impact of available resources⁴. The Stakeholders and beneficiaries referred that was a lack of information about the project's cost and the resources used, making it difficult to assess the project's efficiency accurately. However, the project budget is coming from the CO resource.

² Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, "The Future we Want" Iraq Vision for Sustainable Development 2030", 2019.

³ Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, "Situation of Iraq Woman and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", 2019.

⁴ For more details, see "Financial Needs Assessment, Financial Gap Analysis of Agenda 2030 and SDGs in Iraq", final report, 2021.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project was established for its sustainability through the learning-by-doing approach. The capacities on SDGs reporting for MOP's team for example had been enhanced all related material and Guidance had been translated to Arabic and E-Library within the SDG Forum in MOP so it is used for a long time by national partners. the SDGs-related structure had been established on the National and sub-national levels, but more engagement for universities is important. In addition to establishing the SDGs data indicators platform in the statical office. still, the project needs to focus more on SDG 16+ reporting as empowering SDG based on Iraq content, take in consideration that UNDP is leading efforts globally on SDG16. Positive unintended effects, such as men's participation and education support, have occurred.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In the lead-up to the SDGs, and 2030 agenda the human rights community, along with civil society more generally, had engaged in the consultation process for the new development agenda at the country level. The Iraqi 2030 agenda with the support of UNDP adopted the Goals, which focus on sustainability, and acknowledge and the risk to all and especially the poorest people by climate change (SDG 13), and Similarly, the SDGs addressing gender equality (SDG 5)and sexual and reproduction health and rights (SDG 3.1, 3.7) have been dealt serious in the Iraqi vision especially nationally for SDG5 targets and indicators adoption and listening to the poorest women the most, But still the VNRs report need to adopt human rights based approach in more clear way.

GENDER EQUALITY

The responses showed a clear impact of the project on gender equality and women's empowerment. However, there are ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. Growing awareness of women's rights and changing as negative culture emerged as part of the progress. This requires overcoming social challenges and strengthening cooperation with government and partners to sustain efforts. The anti-gender backlash campaign impacted negatively the work in addition to the COR's adaptation of the PSL amendments which reflected the commitment to SDG 5 indicators.

DISABILITY

People with disability are around 4 million distributed in different places in the country, and many of them organized themselves in non-governmental groups and NGOs. The main partner in this group is the Iraqi Alliance for Disability IADO. this alliance advocated for the PWD agenda and needs. through this project the alliance where included in the SDG2030 network of NGOs, also they were fully engaged in all consultation processes of SDG reporting like in the VNR process. still, PWDs are not satisfied that their needs and priorities are integrated into general policies and governmental programs, and PWDs alliances and networks keep addressing that with the support of UNDP in all meetings with policymakers.

Recommendation's summary:

- To ensure continued relevance and technical support for SDGs at the local level, the Ministry of Planning (MOP) and UNDP should jointly engage with sub-national (governorate) SDG committees. It is also important to strengthen efforts to increase women's participation, for greater involvement and representation in decision-making processes.

- To ensure the effectiveness of the SDG project, it is essential to improve coordination among all stakeholders, raise awareness of the critical role data plays in achieving the SDGs, and provide technical support and training. Additionally, increasing private sector participation and leveraging national expertise over foreign consultants will be key to achieving the project's objectives efficiently.
- UNDP should prioritize collaboration with influential individuals and organizations capable of effectively disseminating ideas and shaping societal change. Budget allocation strategies should be optimized, and cooperation between local and international actors must be strengthened.
- To ensure project continuity and community acceptance, it is essential to enhance awareness efforts regarding project objectives within local communities. Sustainable financing and continuous evaluation must be prioritized to guarantee the project's enduring success.
- To promote equality and empowerment, national strategies should place a stronger emphasis on these issues, activate the participation of marginalized groups in designing appropriate solutions, and deepen the understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable groups in Iraq, particularly those related to disability
- Gender equality and women's empowerment must be integrated into every aspect of the project, with the implementation of clear strategies and measurement tools to ensure measurable and positive outcomes.
- To ensure inclusive sustainable development, it is recommended to strengthen partnerships with organizations representing persons with disabilities and to place greater focus on disability issues within UNDP initiatives. Additionally, the dual-track approach should be effectively applied to fully integrate persons with disabilities into the project.

1. INTRODUCTION

UNDP took the initiative to launch a project titled “Support the Government of Iraq for the implementation and Monitoring SDGs in partnership with the MOP in 2018”. This initiative is strategically positioned to aid the Government of Iraq in aligning national plans and monitoring frameworks with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and contributing to the country's sustainable development agenda. The project embodies a multifaceted approach encompassing capacity building, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and reporting, all geared towards enhancing the localization of SDGs and fostering inclusive development within Iraq.

Users of the evaluation are mainly the government and UNDP to assess; the relevance and alignment of the project with national development priorities, conduct a meticulous examination of the efficiency of resource utilization towards achieving project objectives, extent to which the project is achieving its objective and outputs and Identifying and analyzing challenges and bottlenecks that impede the smooth implementation of project activities, and evaluate the sustainability of project outcomes and determining the extent to which they contribute to strengthening institutional capacity and fostering inclusive development.

The evaluation aims to comprehensively assess the UNDP project "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs" to ascertain its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability. The mid-term evaluation was conducted to assess the level of achievement until the end of 2023, to make appropriate adjustments and avoid weaknesses. Therefore, the questions included in the evaluation were appropriate to reach a comprehensive evaluation of the aforementioned criteria.

It seeks to strengthen institutional capacity, promote gender equality, enhance environmental sustainability, and improve governance and peacebuilding efforts in Iraq through the implementation and monitoring of SDGs. Its primary objectives include aligning national plans with the SDGs, enhancing stakeholder capacity for SDG localization, improving data collection and reporting mechanisms, and promoting inclusive development.

The summary of project outputs is as follows:

Output 1: Institutional and analytical capacity for aligning national planning and Monitoring frameworks with SDGs strengthened.

Output 2: Analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning (focusing on mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, Environmental mental sustainability, and Governance and peace) strengthened.

Output 3: Capacity development for SDG localization strengthened.

Output 4: The capacity for integrated SDG Monitoring and Reporting at national and local levels was strengthened.

Output 5: Accelerating the SDGs in Iraq

Output 6: Support the development of the National Human Development Report (NHDR).

These outputs were designed to directly contribute to achieving all 17 SDGs. However, the project has a particular focus on goals related to:

- Goal 5: Gender Equality: Strengthening the capacity of the Women Empowerment Directorate and promoting women's participation in SDG implementation.
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Supporting improved governance and peacebuilding efforts.

- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals: By fostering collaboration between government, civil society, and the private Sector.

According to its plan, the project promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in several ways. It strengthens the capacity of the Women Empowerment Directorate, a key government institution responsible for advancing women's rights. It also encourages the participation of women in stakeholder consultations and capacity-building initiatives related to SDG implementation.

This report presents the methodology adopted for the project mentioned and the main data sources, both quantitative and qualitative as well as the key results distributed on the seven main evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights, gender equality, disability). It concludes with the key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The Key project partners are the MOP and line ministries with the UNDP. The stockholders and beneficiaries of this initiative are the Government of Iraq, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other key stakeholders involved in SDG implementation. The project receives funding from the UNDP as of \$1,644,281.42 along with technical assistance and in-kind support from partner organizations. Key partners involved in the project, including the Government of Iraq (specifically the Ministry of Planning and COMSEC), UN agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and other stakeholders, play pivotal roles in its implementation.

2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

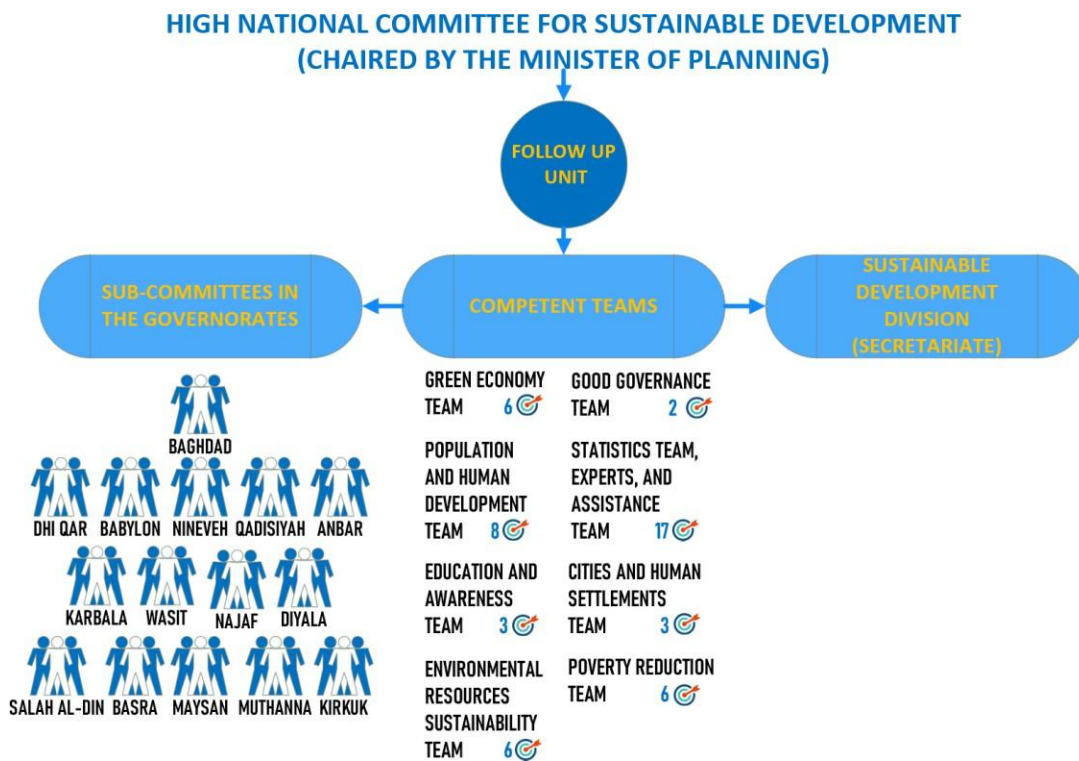
After 2003, Iraq sought to catch up with global development, which launched a package of Millennium Development Goals 2000-2015. However, the gap in achieving those goals remained significant after decades of war and economic blockade under which Iraq lived between 1990 and 2003.

As the MDG era ended in 2015, the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) in Iraq assessed the progress made at the governorate level. This evaluation showed that the governorates generally did not achieve a clear achievement towards the indicators set for each goal. Figure 1 indicates that the six governorates that were given priority in the project (Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs) namely, Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Maysan, Thi-Qar, and Salah al-Din, the results of the evaluation showed that they are still far from reaching the desired targets in 2015. The achievement realized towards the MDGs was very weak. At that time the report suggested further efforts should be made to reduce the gap in achieving the SDGs.

The "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs" project directly contributes to achieving all 17 SDGs. However, it has a particular focus on goals related to:

- **Goal 5: Gender Equality:** Strengthening the capacity of the Women Empowerment Directorate and promoting women's participation in SDG implementation.
- **Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Supporting improved governance and peacebuilding efforts.
- **Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** By fostering collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector.

Figure 2: Institutional framework for SDG implementation



However, with commitment and notable advances, there are several gaps and inter-related institutional and technical capacity challenges that need to be addressed for effective implementation of the SDGs in Iraq in a way that “leaves no one behind”, alongside continuous SDG awareness-raising across all segments of the Iraqi society. Some of these gaps are; a. variable alignment of national development frameworks and strategies with SDGs, b. limited capacities for integrated approaches to SDGs planning and implementation at the national and local levels, c. limited capacities for mainstreaming, implementing, and monitoring the SDGs at the regional level, and d. lack of an effective framework for SDG Data, monitoring dissemination, and reporting linked to national development priorities and for informed policy making.

2.3 EVALUATION INTERVENTION

The UNDP sought to conduct an independent and objective evaluation of the Support to the Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring the SDGs Project in its different aspects, whether in the extent to

which its goals are aligned with the UNDP and the government of Iraq’s goals or in the extent to which its programs are consistent and sustainable, in addition to evaluating the project’s efficiency, especially in the financial governance and transparency of procedures.

The project documents indicate that it has received around 1.7 million dollars in addition to technical and in-kind contributions from MOP⁶ like using the ministry facilitates. Part of the evaluation focused on the efficient use of these resources and their distribution to different sectors. It was essential to assess the views of key government partners, especially the MOP, its academic experts, UN organizations, civil society organizations, and stakeholders from vulnerable groups in society to reach realistic and transparent results. On the other hand, the evaluation sought to examine to what extent the targets and goals of the project document, including strengthening institutional capacity, promoting gender equality, enhancing environmental sustainability, and improving governance and peacebuilding efforts in Iraq, are clear.

Moreover, the evaluation was intended to examine the extent to which the government stakeholders, civil society organizations, and other parties were involved in implementing project activities. Did these activities support the goals and targets stated in the project document, and the activities related to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, whether in the institutional capacity building, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and strengthening governance and peacebuilding efforts? How successful was the project in Monitoring this? Has it achieved adaptability with development plans and SDGs, building the capacity for SDG localization and improving data collection and reporting mechanisms? These questions were derived through the review of documents and reports of the project over the years 2019-2023 mainly depending on the desk review of the UNDP and GOI official documents. This process helped to achieve its desired examinations.

Implementing the project⁷ A period exceeding 5 years requires building a clear structure for the work management to achieve its goals and ensure needed communication with the partners, especially MOP (see Figure 2).

After five years of implementing the project, it became necessary to comprehensively assess the UNDP project to ascertain its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation process adopted the criteria and Key Guiding Questions and utilized the OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability). The evaluation findings have been derived from two main sources; desk reviews and fieldwork interviews followed by several recommendations.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The mid-term evaluation is conducted by UNDP program management through an independent evaluator to assess the progress and achievements of the SDGs project meticulously. The principal objective is to furnish concrete evidence of UNDP's contribution towards the anticipated outcomes, substantial impact, and its pivotal role in the decentralization process within Iraq. The main objectives of the evaluation are⁸;

1. Assessing the relevance and alignment of the project with national development priorities,

⁶ Derived from the official MOP documents

⁷ Support to the Government of Iraq for the implementation and monitoring of SDGs, Project Document, Iraq, 2022, PP. 5-7.

⁸ TOR, P.4.

- particularly in the context of decentralization and SDG localization efforts.
2. Conducting a meticulous examination of the efficiency of resource utilization towards achieving project objectives and desired outcomes within the stipulated timeframe.
 3. Assess the extent to which the project achieves its objective and outputs, identify, and analyze challenges and bottlenecks that impede the smooth implementation of project activities, thereby proposing pragmatic solutions to enhance delivery.
 4. Thoroughly evaluate project outcomes' sustainability and determine how much they contribute to strengthening institutional capacity and fostering inclusive development.
 5. Ensuring robust mainstreaming of gender considerations, disability issues, and rights-based approaches throughout the project cycle, with a dedicated focus on promoting equality, inclusion, and empowerment.
 6. Delivering evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing learning, bolstering accountability mechanisms, and augmenting the overall impact of the SDGs project on sustainable development in Iraq.

The evaluation results are expected to benefit the UNDP, UNCT, and project management, as well as the government counterparts at the national and local government levels, as well as other development partners and donors, especially in terms of the level of coverage of the outcomes and outputs under this project.

3.2 SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The scope of the SDGs evaluation covers interventions implemented under the SDGs’ UNDP Project from 2018 to 2023, in terms of strengthening analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning, capacity development for SDG localization, strengthening capacities for integrated SDGs monitoring and reporting at national and local levels, and informed policy-making.

Geographically, the mid-term evaluation covers the project intervention areas of the federal governorates of Iraq and KRG through a combination of online and in-person meetings with key stakeholders, in addition to the SDGs focal points of governorates; Baghdad, Anbar, Thi-Qar, Maysan, Basrah. The evaluation period spans the project implementation duration, from November 1, 2018, to December 31, 2023. Moreover, the evaluation will examine the implementation of the projects through the different stages, such as monitoring, implementation, and reporting.

The evaluation comprehensively encompassed various facets of the "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs" project. It focused on pivotal components such as capacity building, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and reporting mechanisms. Target groups were meticulously considered encompass national and local government officials, civil society representatives, marginalized communities, and vulnerable groups especially the women who are leading families and IDP women across all 15 federal governorates of Iraq. Additionally, the evaluation rigorously assessed the coherence and effectiveness of specific project outputs regarding institutional capacity strengthening, gender equality promotion, environmental sustainability, and governance enhancement.

Five institutions are the project's direct beneficiaries: the MOP, the ASGIS, the Women Empowerment Directorate, the CSDN, and the 1325 Resolution Network. During the evaluation process, these institutions were interviewed.

3.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS

The mid-term evaluation addressed the questions outlined in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1) to assess the

SDGs Project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights, gender equality, and disability. No changes have been made to the evaluation questions provided in the TOR. Some adjustments are necessary to better reflect the project’s context while maintaining the core intent of each question.

The following questions are based on the (OECD – DAC) criteria. The evaluation matrix elaborates on the evaluation questions (Annex 2):

RELEVANCE /COHERENCE

- To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country program outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country program outcome?
- To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?
- To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the human rights-based approach?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

EFFECTIVENESS

- To what extent did the project contribute to the country program outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
- To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
- What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country program outputs and outcomes?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?
- Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
- To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

EFFICIENCY

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?

Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

- To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

SUSTAINABILITY

- Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social, political, or environment risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country program outputs and outcomes?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
- To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project’s long- term objectives?
- To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.
- HUMAN RIGHTS
- To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

GENDER EQUALITY

- 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?

DISABILITY

- Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?
- What proportion of the beneficiaries of a program were persons with disabilities?
- What barriers did persons with disabilities face?
- Was a twin-track approach adopted?

4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

4.1 TARGETED GROUPS

The evaluation process will mainly depend on the interviews, either in person, online, or offline meetings, with the following groups: **a.** Federal Government of Iraq, **b.** Kurdistan Region Government in Iraq, **c.** Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations, **d.** National Experts, and **e.** UNDP and UNDP Stakeholders by using the participatory evaluation approach⁹.

The five groups' interview questions covered the seven evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights, gender equality, and disability. The evaluator committed to a reasonable number of final evaluation questions, generally not exceeding 15 for each group of interviews. A few adjustments have been made to some of the questions, concerning each of the five groups before the field interview process to make the formulations more realistic. Table 1 Summarize the details of the interviews.

Table 1: Schedule for Field Visits

No.	Groups	Data-collection and Modality	Proposed Timeframe
Group 1. Federal Government of Iraq			
1.	Council of Ministers Secretariat, COMSEC	Online KII	Sep. 3 rd – Sep. 10 th
2.	MOP	In-person KII	
3.	Authority of Statistics and Geographic Information System, ASGIS	Offline KII	
4.	Line Ministries (Higher Education, Environment)	Offline KII	
5.	SDG’s Focal points of the involved Governorates	Offline KII	
Group 2. Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq			
1.	MOP, KRMOP	Online KII	Sep. 1 st – Sep. 2 nd
2.	Statistics Office, KRSO	Online KII	
Group 3. Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations			
1.	Non-governmental Organizations that were engaged in the SDG’s project activities.	In-person KII	Sep. 12 th – Sep. 15 th
2.	Women Society, Disable and Vulnerable groups	In-person FGD	

⁹ UNDP (2022), “METHODOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTALS FOR EVALUATIONS”, <https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/methods/methodological-fundamentals-for-evaluations>.

Group 4. National Experts			
1.	Voluntary National Report Experts	In-person KII	Sep. 16 th –
2.	Academic Professors	In-person KII	Oct. 10 th
Group 5. UNDP Stakeholders			
1.	Representative of the UNDP Office in Iraq	Offline KII	Sep. 12 th – Oct. 3 rd
2.	Project management Office	Offline KII	
3.	FAO, officer.	Offline KII	

The SDG’s evaluation was conducted closely with the UNPD project management. This section describes the main features of the evaluability analysis. Table 2 shows the number of answers per each of the seven evaluation criteria of which the total number was 444 responses. The responses of the FGDs represent groups rather than individuals. The total number of persons who participated in the three FGDs was 45.

Table 2: No. of answers to the evaluation process

Criteria of the Development	No. of questions	No. of answers per each criterion question (KII)				No. of answers per each criterion question (FGD)			Total
		Federal Government	Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations	National Experts	UNDP Stakeholders	Woman Group (9 Participants)	Disability Group (28 Participants)	Youth Group (9 Participants)	
Relevance	5	61	13	8	7	2	1	2	94
Effectiveness	10	64	16	11	5	2	4	2	104
Efficiency	7	60	11	8	6	1	1	2	89
Sustainability	10	55	21	9	6	3	1	2	97
Human Rights	1		3	2	1				6
Gender Equality	3	13	12	2	3	2		1	33
Disability	4	13		2	3		3		21
Total	40	266	76	42	31	10	10	9	444

4.2 FORMAL EVALUABILITY

The Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project has been designed to reflect formal and substantial approaches. Some of the formal aspects of the SDG’s projects involve clear outputs and indicators, and strong baselines adopted as a starting point for the evolution process because of the availability of data identified by the project documentation, including data sources. These points are considered valuable inputs for the project evaluation.

4.3 SUBSTANTIVE EVALUABILITY

The substantive aspects of the evaluability analysis consist of the general criteria related to identifying the problem addressed concerning the focus of intervention, to provide a road map for how SDG’s project activities are expected to contribute to its goal.

Moreover, the theories of change demonstrate pathways regarding how planned interventions will lead to the intended outcomes or results. For each theory of change, the evaluator tried testing evaluation questions that set out the key areas of research and assumptions. Each question has associated assumptions, which were also tested. However, the evaluability analysis should refer to clear outputs and indicators, and clear baselines in the results framework providing a starting point for evaluation. Moreover, the analysis has to identify the range of issues related to the focus intervention. It provides a roadmap for how the project’s activities are expected to contribute to its overall goal.

4.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ADOPTED METHODOLOGY

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach involving two main sources of data: secondary and primary data sources. Secondary data (Annex 3) was collected during the inception phase and continued throughout to understand the context in which the SDGs were implemented. This involves desk-reviewing of SDG’s strategic, program, and other relevant documents and data (including organizational policies, procedures, and strategies; program proposals, reports, and technical outputs; and Monitoring data related to aspects of the Iraq SDG’s programming and related policies, strategies, coordination, and programming being undertaken by the key stakeholders. All relevant documents sourced by the evaluation manager and SDG’s stakeholders were reviewed as the assignment progressed. Consultation with the evaluation management team also helped align the evaluation’s expectations and priorities. On the other hand, the primary data, depending on interviews (with representatives of COMSEC, MOP, ASGIS, Line ministers, SDG’s Focal points of the involved Governorates, KRMOP, KRSO, NGOs that were engaged in the SDG’s project activities, Women Society, Disable and Vulnerable groups, Voluntary National Report Experts, Academic Professors, Representative of the UNDP Office in Iraq, Project management Office, FAO-officer) was the second main source data (table 1). A series of monitory activities (monthly, quarterly, annually) were used to deal with SDG implement and monitoring¹⁰.

The success of a theory of change in implementing and monitoring the SDGs was examined in terms of several assumptions, such as political commitment, institutional capacity, Stakeholder engagement, and stable security.

4.5 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The SDG’s evaluation has been conducted using arranged methodologies to ensure that the information collected is valid, reliable, and sufficient to meet the evaluation objectives.

CONCEPTUAL MODELS

The evaluation was conducted using various participatory methods, including the UNEG norms and standards for assessment and the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation. The proposed data collection methods included document analysis using SDG documentation, key informant interviews, and FGD with various stakeholders.

The evaluation sought to use an evidence and analysis approach to ensure that the most appropriate sources

¹⁰ UNDP, Annual Work Plane Tables, 2023.

of evidence for answering the analytical framework/evaluation questions are used in a technically appropriate manner. Thus, the approach incorporated best practice evaluation criteria and principles for effective development assistance and norms and standards of the OECD/DAC.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND SOURCES

The following methods have been used to collect data:

- Documented data from project documents, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports, and Thematic Reports.
- Key informant interviews with various stakeholders.
- Focus Group Discussions with many stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Qualitative and quantitative data through various methodologies, including a desk review of documentation, key informant interviews in-depth interviews with stakeholders, and focus group discussions with beneficiaries, were collected qualitatively using one of the well-known thematic codes, the NVIVO package. Where applicable, quantitative data is also collected from published reports, survey reports, programme and project reports, and national statistical systems.

A gender responsive methodology was conducted smoothly, and most of women interviewed welcomed the meetings and were encouraged to participate. Below are the number of female- male responds;

Table 3: Number of Female-Male interviews by groups

Group	Female	Male	total
GOV	8	14	22
NGOs	3	2	5
Experts	1	2	3
UN	1	2	3
FGDs _ NGOs	6	2	8
_Disable	11	16	27
_Youth	6	3	9
Total	36	41	77
%	47	53	100

This means that 47% of the respondents were women compared to 53% of men. On the other hand, 27 respondents were disabled (11 women and 16 men).

LIMITATIONS, DATA COLLECTION TOOLS, INSTRUMENTS, AND PROTOCOLS

Some limitations were expected to arise during the evaluation process, mainly during the field visits. However, these limitations were minimal. The evaluator had no problems in obtaining secondary sources. The UNCT provided all the required documents and reports. As for the direct interviews, the only limitation was the inability to answer all the questions clearly, which required more effort in explanation and clarification on the one hand, and the failure to obtain realistic answers to a very limited number of questions on the other hand.

The data collection tools encompassed document analysis guides, such as NVivo guide (Annex 4), interview guide (Annex 5), focus group discussion guide, and field observation guide. The Field Observation Guide for the UNDP evaluation approach is to gather and analyze information through direct observation in the field.

Its primary purpose is to provide additional insights and contextual understanding that complement other evaluation methods, such as document reviews and interviews. The field observation methodology is informed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (UNEG, 2016)¹¹ and the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (UNDP, 2021)¹² (Annex 6). The methodology indicated how the perspectives and voices of diverse groups (men and women, the elderly, people living with disabilities, and other marginalized groups) must be sought and considered.

The evaluator followed the UN Ethical Guide for Evaluation in selecting interviewees, interacting with them, and respecting their personal and institutional rights. They were assured that no attribution would be made to them if they did not want to, they were chosen to ensure a fair representation of views to ensure a balanced perspective and, in the rare instances where potentially vulnerable groups will be involved. Informed verbal consent was sought from stakeholders before asking any questions related to the SDG’s project evaluation.

The main tools of data collection are:

- a. Desk review, secondary data, of relevant documents, and initial analysis of project documents including...
 - Project Document
 - 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 Annual Report – SDGs Project
 - Iraq Vision 2030.
 - A number of Iraq VNR reports and national and local SDGs.
 - The Innovative Role of NGOs in Deriving Informal Data.
 - Private Sector Engagement in SDGs, Tools and Approaches.
 - SDGs Data Gap Assessment Report.
 - Financing Gap Analysis Reports.
 - UNDP Gender Strategies.
 - A number of reports on gender equality and SDGs.

b. Sampling

The purposive sampling approach was used to select target groups and stakeholders to consult. The proposed list of target groups was designed to ensure adequate representation of beneficiaries, including the 5 benefiting institutions: MOP, ASGIS, Women Empowerment Directorate, Civil Society Sustainable Development Network, and 1325 Resolution Network.

The proposed schedule for field visits showed the main groups of stakeholders who have been included in the sample of the evaluation field visits:

- Deputy Ministry, MOP.
- Middle Euphrates Technical University, MOHE.
- National Directorate for Iraqi Women, COMSEC.
- General Directorate of Human Development, MOP.
- General Directorate of local and regional Development, MOP.
- General Directorate of the International Cooperation, MOP.
- ASGIS (Technical Affairs, Human Development, and IT departments).
- KRSO.
- A number of civil society organizations.

¹¹ UNEG. (2016). Norms and Standards for Evaluation. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

¹² UNDP. (2021). UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>

Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

- VNR experts from academic institutions.
- SDGs focal points of governorates; Baghdad, Anbar, Thiqr, Diala, Missan, and Basrah.

In addition to focus group discussions with a number of beneficiaries. It is worth noting that the evaluation was not limited to the capital Baghdad, although the main partners are from the capital. It included participants from other governorates representing northern Iraq (KR), central Iraq (Diyala, Anbar), and southern Iraq (Basra, Dhi-Qar, and Maysan).

The evaluator briefly explained the reasons and objectives of the evaluation, as well as the scope of the questions. Stakeholders have the right to refuse or to withdraw at any time. The evaluator also ensured the respondents' privacy and confidentiality. Comments provided during discussions have been aggregated to render the identification of specific stakeholders impossible.

FINAL SCHEDULE OF KEY MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Table 2 outlines the evaluation process timeline, including the main activities, the estimated number of days, the completion date, the Place of activities, and the Responsible Parties.

Table 4: Time Table of Evaluation Activities, Place, Responsibility, and Cost.

Activity	Estimated No. of working days	Completion date	Place	Responsible Party
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed)	1 Day	10 Jul. 2024	Remote	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the external evaluation		10 Jul. 2024	Via email	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated work including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	3 Days	10-17 Jul. 2024	Home-based	External evaluator
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	1 Day	1st Aug. 2024	Via email	External evaluator
Comments and approval of inception report		26 Aug. 2024	UNDP	Evaluation manager
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews, and focus groups	15 Days	1 Sep.-10 Oct. 2024	In country with field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages)	7 Days	18 Sep.–27 Oct. 2024	Home-based	External evaluator

Draft report submission		30 Oct. 2024	Via email	External evaluator
Team Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and the UNDP country office	3 Days	1-7 Nov. 2024	Home-based	External evaluator
Submission of the final evaluation report to the UNDP Country Office (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)		10 Nov. 2024	Home-based	External evaluator
Estimated total days for the evaluation	30 Days			

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Analyzing data is related to the nature of that data. Quantitative data is usually analyzed using traditional statistical indicators such as ratios, Proportions, etc.. Still, descriptive data is logically analyzed by linking to the basic characteristics of the respondents to identify the effects of those characteristics in the respondents' responses. Here, it is necessary to differentiate between two expected findings:

- In-depth interviews; answers often reflect deep knowledge in answering questions, from which key findings can be derived and then conclusions related to those findings. What is reached through the experts and specialists of this category often gives an assessment that should be considered in adopting certain findings. What distinguishes Key Informant is that it may include advanced competencies and qualifications in its job positions.
- Focus Group Discussions; These groups are usually characterized by representing a segment of people with similar characteristics in each group, such as the disabled, the active youth, or the feminist civil society organizations. Therefore, when each group is interviewed separately, their ideas and perceptions towards an SDGs project are similar and reflect the knowledge and attitudes of the group.

Their opinions may not be consistent with the directions and objectives of the project depending on the nature of each group. But anyway, it should be aware of and the importance of changing incorrect trends within future policies should be noted.

Sometimes, the triangulation of evidence was done to compare the responses of interviews with the documents. for instance, most of information on gender issues were close to the UNDP reports. However, due to the limited SDGs knowledge of responds, it was difficult to deal with triangulation.

NVivo is an effective and integrated tool for analyzing qualitative data and easily analyzing large amounts of text and visual data. To use NVivo in conducting qualitative research through interring data with Nvivo and dealing with coding process. With a number of procedures, the researcher can return to the data and modify the codes and categories as needed to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the analysis. NVivo provides tools to review and compare codes to verify consistency and accuracy.

6. EVALUATION FINDINGS

6.1 RELEVANCE /COHERENCE

1. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country program outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs¹³?

The respondents indicated the extent to which the project is compatible with the priorities of the National Development Plan, the strategic objectives of the UN Development Program, and the Sustainable Development Goals, where most of the respondents pointed to the effective communication with the Iraqi government and the MOP, with a focus on supporting institutional government frameworks to pursue and implement the sustainable development agenda.

There is a high partnership and coordination between the project and the Iraqi government, as work has been done with references to the participation of UNDP experts in harmonization processes to develop a roadmap commensurate with the sustainable development goals.

They emphasize that the challenges faced by the program, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, led to imbalances in implementation. Still, despite this, progress has been made in several indicators such as health, education, and equality. The importance of community participation in setting priorities and implementation was addressed, enhancing the project's feasibility and response to community needs. Respondents talked about the reports issued in 2019 and 2021 related to the reaction of the five-year plan to the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is emphasized that the program worked in several positive directions, focusing on strategic planning, making it an essential supporter of national plans and documents. Participants indicate that the program sought to harmonize national policies to be compatible with the SDGs. Several national and subnational reports have been produced by MOP and UNDP to monitor and evaluate the SDG's progress. The first and Second National Voluntary Review Report¹⁴.

The results indicate that the percentage of adaptation and localization of the SDGs in the plan was about 78%. In comparison, the rate of inclusion of the goals in the national voluntary report 2019 was 58%, indicating the program's relevance in integrating the goals into national policies. The project demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting participation and diversity, especially about minorities and the rights of persons with disability. This commitment aligns with national goals to provide an inclusive and equitable environment, where representatives from the disability community have been included in most meetings and activities.

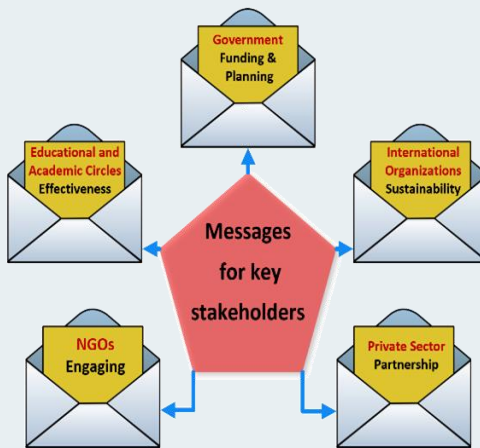
¹³ Please see the project document PP 8-12.

¹⁴ The Second National Voluntary Review Report on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, MOP, 2021. (See the following box)

The Second National Voluntary Review Report on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; Messages to activate the SDG Implementation

In cooperation with the UN Development Program UNDP, the Government of Iraq launched the First and Second voluntary Review reports on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2019 and 2021 to follow up the sustainable development agenda based on a participatory approach, monitor progress in achieving the national development plan and inform others about Iraq's experience in this field.

SDG implementation primarily depends on comprehensive and efficient financing frameworks, such as restructuring the federal budget, attracting foreign direct investment, involving and encouraging partnerships with the public sector, and integrating NGOs into the development process. Several messages for key stakeholders in sustainable development planning and implementation include;



The project is a key component of the outputs and outcomes of the UNSDCF in Iraq (CPD Outcome 3: Strengthened institutions and systems deliver people-centered, evidence and needs-based equitable and inclusive gender and age-responsive services especially vulnerable populations, with particular focus on advocating for women's leadership in decision-making processes), which enhances the integration of development objectives into approved policies and strategies.

The project seeks to adapt the SDGs to the plans and strategies adopted by national and international bodies. It also effectively contributed to formulating the National Development Plan 2018-2022 objectives, especially in the economic, social, and environmental fields.

2. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change (TOC) for the relevant country program outcome?

Theory of Change

The project's theory of change posits that by strengthening institutional capacity, promoting stakeholder engagement, and improving data collection and reporting mechanisms, the project will enable the Iraqi

government to effectively implement and monitor the SDGs. This, in turn, will lead to improved governance, greater social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic growth in Iraq, ultimately contributing to achieving the SDGs and national development goals¹⁵.

The project contributes to the achievement of the "TOC" of the results of the country programme. Through a set of points:

1. Highlight the success of UNDP in its projects and initiatives that have had a significant impact. The TOC is an important tool in measuring the effect achieved by projects, reinforcing the importance of localizing the SDGs in local communities. Due to the good awareness of the TOC. concept, participants indicate that projects have enhanced transparency and accountability by raising awareness of the importance of reporting on goals and challenges. This transparency contributes to strengthening trust between society and government to a reasonable level.
2. It was emphasized that the program contributed to changing some government policies, especially those related to climate change, as climate issues were integrated into the plans and reports issued by the MOP.
3. Statistical data and indicators help identify changes resulting from the project and its impact on the country program. The Iraqi government's development vision identified priorities that needed to be addressed.
4. It was confirmed that the project strengthened national capacities, especially in preparing reports on sustainable development and implementing training for cadres in the Authority of Statistics and various ministries.
5. some observations indicate that the project's contribution to the TOC is unclear, reflecting a lack of accurate evaluation or communication about expected results. However, the project significantly contributes to the TOC by identifying the country's needs using assessment and prioritization tools.

Secondary project data and follow-up reports indicate that there are serious roles for both women and men to actively participate in exchanging information and following up on progress in various committees, such as those presented by the institutional framework for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The project demonstrates a tangible impact on the outcomes adopted in the CPD, as it contributed to strengthening the community's resilience to economic and Social crises and pressures such as providing special services for people with special needs and working on the delivery of water to areas not serviced. The project supports. measuring the MPI and Woman MPI for the 2024-2025 in addition to developing policy paper responding to the multidimensional poverty index These initiatives reflect the project's commitment to address poverty and improve living standards.

On the other hand, the project supports programs responsive to climate change, which enhance environmental and land protection efforts. This aspect is an important part of global trends towards

¹⁵ TOR, PP. 1-2

sustainable development.

- 3. To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?**

There is consensus that the perspectives of men and women who can influence outcomes have been relatively well taken into account, as well as those who can contribute information or resources to achieve the identified results. This approach contributed to enhancing the comprehensiveness of project design and planning effectively. It has had a positive impact on supporting the achievement of project results. The active participation of these groups contributes to achieving the goals effectively, as they can express their needs and contribute to the project's success through the information and resources they provide. The Multi-Dimensional Poverty is one evidence from secondary data that reflects the perspective of men and women who played a significant role in designing the methodology as a part of the project¹⁶.

- 4. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?**

It was confirmed that the program contributed to promoting gender equality. Participants pointed out that the project contributed to strengthening the national trend towards women's empowerment, through the formation of a specialized department for women's affairs and the allocation of ministerial and administrative positions to women in the government. The project focused on the fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting the importance of raising awareness of gender equality issues in government cadres and civil society. The project's efforts in promoting awareness and education on women's empowerment issues were indicated, which led to wide support and community participation, resulting in the establishment of women's empowerment departments in various state institutions.

The respondents addressed the importance of strengthening the Monitoring of indicators of women's empowerment and gender equality. The need for a comprehensive assessment that includes quantitative and qualitative data and thorough analysis to determine the positive and negative impact of the project was emphasized. The project adopts integrated methodologies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including gender equality and women's empowerment.

It was emphasized that UNDP paid attention to issues related to women, as it participated in many workshops, dialogues, and discussions. Participants indicated their collaboration with UNDP and UNFPA in building the Second National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women, demonstrating the seriousness of work in these areas. They also pointed out the dominance of value and traditional systems, especially in rural communities, which hinders women's participation in economic activities and quality education. Focusing on the rights of persons with disability, the project prioritizes them in

¹⁶ UNDP, (2023), Empowering Women: Building a brighter future, together.

the response, referring to the human rights approach, even though disabled people believe that they are given less priority in the UNDP- SDGs project.

The project paid great attention to ensuring diverse participation, especially regarding gender balance. The project is committed to a minimum representation of women of 35%, reflecting its keenness to involve women in the effective design and implementation of activities. The respondents pointed out that the project promotes gender equality in various sectors by raising awareness of the provisions of SDG 5 and supporting government agencies and civil society organizations in integrating indicators of this goal into the broader SDGs framework¹⁷.

5. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

There are indications of a weak response to the needs of national constituents of men, women, and other groups, indicating a lack of effectiveness but the existence of challenges that need attention to shed light on. It was noted that periodic statistical reports showing the development gaps between men and women were issued, contributing to accurately identifying needs. It should be emphasized that the project encouraged the participation of different groups in the preparation of voluntary reports, but it was relative, indicating the need for more effort.

The project's success in responding appropriately to the needs of national components was emphasized, focusing on vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, the elderly, IDPs, and refugees. Assessing the project's success requires a rigorous analysis that considers the diverse needs of national components and the extent of community participation.

The project shows an appropriate response to the needs of different national constituents, including men, women, and vulnerable groups. The activities are designed to meet the needs of these groups, reflecting a good understanding of their reality. Provide support to enhance the participation of these components in achieving the SDGs, which has helped achieve positive results. The project shows flexibility in adapting to changes in partners' priorities, allowing activities to be carried out effectively and in line with changing needs.

6.2 EFFECTIVENESS

6. To what extent did the project contribute to the country's program outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?

The respondents pointed out that there is special attention paid to the outputs related to women, children, and vulnerable groups, based on human development reports supported by UNDP. Highlight the priorities and activities included in those reports, that resulted in positive outcomes. The competition between universities in achieving the SDGs reflects the growing awareness of the

¹⁷ For details see UNDP & MoP, (2022), National Progress Report of Iraq.

importance of these goals. Respondents believe that this topic also extends to the private sector and civil society organizations, requiring greater efforts and awareness.

A number of activities have been implemented to reach output 2: analytical capacity for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning, such as sporting gender seal activities, and promoting women's peace mediator initiative¹⁸.

It was pointed out that the national reports on the sustainable development goals prepared in some governorates contributed to the advancement of local communities, especially in giving attention to vulnerable groups, especially women. The localization of sustainable development goals within national development lines and Sectoral strategies was adopted. The MOP plays an essential role in monitoring the progress of the objectives, which enhances the project's ability to achieve the required deliverables. Effective work to localize goals within national strategies ensures the commitment of the concerned authorities to follow up on the achievement of the goals and it is a pivotal area for achieving significant achievements. However, a number of respondents indicated that the outputs were not as expected due to the continuous changes in the political and economic situation in Iraq. The SDGs were supposed to progress steadily, but these changes hindered the progress required. Even though the project included all target groups, whether men or women. This represents a success in ensuring diversity and inclusion. Some target groups have well responded, reflecting the project's positive impact on these individuals. Some of the target groups did not benefit from the project, because they were not invited or had no knowledge about the project, which negatively affected the results. Actual success in achieving results is linked to an individual's desire to change and reconcile with himself/herself.

To accelerate the SDGs in Iraq's output, three activities have been planned and implemented during 2023, Adapting and localizing the SDG push scenario for Iraq, developing SDGs data visualization for the data futures, and updating the social accounting matrix (SAM) for Iraq. These activities and outputs are part of Outcome 3: Strengthened institutions and systems deliver people-centered, evidence and needs-based equitable, and inclusive gender and age-responsive services, especially vulnerable populations, with a particular focus on advocating for women's leadership in decision-making processes.

7. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?

The respondents pointed to the effectiveness of the project in achieving sustainable development goals and providing the desired outputs, especially for men, women, and vulnerable groups. The following are the most notable observations; Many asserted that the project contributed to establishing an effective system for Monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the SDGs, as this system is linked to national and local plans and priorities, and enhances data collection and analysis (Figure 3)¹⁹.

Some participants pointed out that it is difficult to measure project outputs due to the lack of comprehensive administrative data from government agencies. This difficulty hinders assessing the project's direct impact on target groups, including men, women, and vulnerable groups. There is a

¹⁸ UNDP, (2023), Annual Work Plane.

¹⁹ UNDP, July 31, 2024, Excel Sheet of the achievement percentage of each activity.

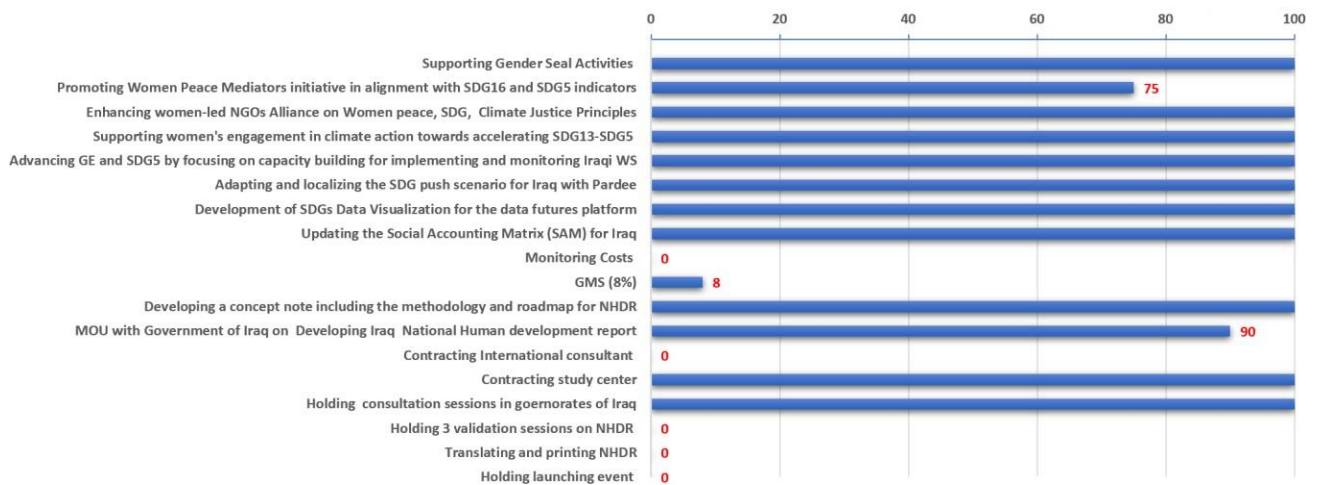
Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

consensus that the project has achieved some goals so far, as the governmental and non-governmental Sectors have been involved in achieving sustainable development. The perspective of women and vulnerable groups was also highlighted in the reports submitted.

Some expressed concerns that the project's outputs, especially for men, women, and vulnerable groups, have not been achieved as required. Some participants noted that the impact was evident only in certain activities such as reconstruction funds and seminars. Some indicated that the project has strengthened national plans, leading to providing subsidies and improved employment opportunities for vulnerable groups. the government program has heavily relied on the National Development Plan, which reflects the project's positive impact.

Several participants indicated notable progress in achieving goals for women and vulnerable groups, such as increasing women's participation in the labor force and improving access to health and education services. However, progress may be unbalanced due to rapid population growth and growing needs.

Figure 3: The achievement percentages of SDG activities



1. Insufficient attention by federal, regional, and local governments to the SDGs. For several reasons, including: preoccupation with securing the requirements to confront the Covid-19 pandemic, giving priority to supporting humanitarian needs, and returning the displaced after the end of military operations.
2. Lack of commitment negatively affected the project's outputs, especially about the target groups. 2-3 NGO respondents referred to lack of information about the SDGs program and the respected role of them.
3. Lack of adequate support from these actors requires more time to achieve the desired results.

8. What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, Intended UNDP Country programme outcomes and outputs?

Collection and analysis of data related to SDGs indicators is one of the areas where the project has achieved the least. Lack of financial resources: is one of the most prominent reasons that led to the lack of achievements in this field. Data collection and analysis was not a top priority for the national partner, represented by civil society organizations. These challenges can be overcome by increasing the financial resources allocated to this area. A long-term program focused on SDG data analysis should be developed and implemented, enhancing the project's ability to achieve tangible results. The National Commission for Sustainable Development should reassess priorities to include the areas of data collection and analysis, which helps raise the level of interest and resources allocated to these activities. UNDP has played a significant role in supporting the national efforts of providing SDG data²⁰.

9. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?

The localization of the sustainable development goals and enhancing the reporting capacities on SDGs and 2030 agenda are the project's greatest achievements, as the goals are linked to the reality of people. Participants focused on raising awareness and coordinating efforts with universities and academic centres to support sustainable development methodologies. Participants stressed that the project has achieved tangible social, economic, and service achievements. The project can accomplish greater achievements, such as education, where education is pivotal in transferring global experiences. Participants emphasized the importance of digital transformation and technology in collecting statistical data, which will improve the accuracy and speed of monitoring and follow-up reports.

The participation of the women was an important factor, as women contributed to the removal and awareness-raising processes, which helped achieve positive outcomes.

Supporting the economy and the private Sector is a main player in the SDGs and 2030 agenda adaptation in Iraq and an important area for achieving great achievements for the project. Please refer to the report assessment on private sector and SDGs in Iraq Simplifying government red tape, such as licensing companies, can create a more investment-friendly business environment, contributing to economic growth and job creation. Improve the business environment and increase technical support for small and medium establishment.

Respondents indicated that the project was managed and implemented in a participatory manner, involving a wide range of partners, including governmental and non-governmental agencies, reflecting the diversity of views and interests.

The responsibility for achieving the goals is not limited to the government but also includes public and private institutions and civil society organizations, which reflects the importance of inclusive participation of all population groups. This participation effectively achieved the goals, as each category contributed with its different capabilities and visions.

10. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?

²⁰ For details see “SDGS data gap assessment report for Iraq”.

The main area where was the fewest achievements within the project was on bridging the SDGs related data gaps and especially on SDG16+ related indicators, partially it was about lack of data availability in addition to the limited capacities in measuring and the technical capacities on analyzing methodologies. The project management in UNDP Iraq is working closely on 2024-2025 with Oslo office and the SDG16 technical team along with the statistical office in MOP to overcome this area of the project and to work on parallel approach: implementing SDG16 survey and enhancing capacities on this methodology by 2025.

Lack of funding and financial support was also one of the factors hindering the implementation of activities, which affected the project's financial sustainability.

mechanisms to disseminate information and awareness about the project's objectives contributed to insufficient access to the target groups. Another influential factor was the lack of logistical support and human resources in government institutions.

Strengthening cooperation between government agencies and civil society, developing more effective communication strategies to reach target groups, and organising awareness campaigns to disseminate information about the project's objectives and facilitate access to them can address these issues.

11. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?

the adaptation of institutionalization the efforts on SDGs strategic approach which could integrate national and international sustainable efforts, along with encouraging local university to establish SDGs units. Another alternative strategy is creating a job program for young people. IA's experience is cited as one example of rapid reassessment that can be applied in Iraq, demonstrating that there are successful models that can be inspired. The report produced after 2018, with the cooperation of the MOP on recovery, includes lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and reflects the importance of learning from past crises. Respondents pointed out that the MOP is one of the ministries most supported by UNDP, and cooperation mechanisms are transparent, flexible, and responsive to changes.

Partnership with stakeholders is a key approach to decision-making, enhancing the effectiveness of the project, there are no better alternatives than the current strategies being applied, which reflects their satisfaction with the approach adopted and indicates stability in the policies followed.

12. Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?

Most of the participants indicated that the project's objectives and outputs are clear and appropriately target groups, including women and vulnerable groups. Some also emphasized that the goals are flexible and practical. The importance of focusing on vulnerable groups is highlighted, noting that the project has achieved good participation but more attention should be given to these groups. Although some emphasised the clarity of goals, A small number of participants expressed that project outputs needed more clarity. This suggests the need to improve communication on project results. Participants pointed out that objectives and outputs are highly flexible, allowing them to meet the needs of all groups and components without exception.

Bureaucracy resulted in delays in many issues, placing an additional burden on coordination processes. The program has been described as highly effective and flexible, as it is built based on the nature of the

support and the community's needs. It was emphasized that the projects' objectives and outputs vary according to the local conditions and the changes in their relationship with the international community. Despite the challenges, participants showed a response to the objectives, varying according to the nature of the local situation. This indicates the program's ability to adapt to local conditions and the needs of communities. The respondents pointed out that the project's outputs were wonderful, with tangible results achieved in the governorates and local communities, especially in dealing with vulnerable groups. The support provided was responsive to the poverty reduction strategy, which reflects the project's ability to make positive changes.

13. To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?

Fruitful and good cooperation with partners, including civil society and the beneficiaries, were noticed. This cooperation has led to the effective implementation of project activities and achieving the desired objectives through continuous coordination. One of the factors contributing to the success of the collaboration is the constant coordination between the various parties and working in a harmonious manner, which enhanced the effectiveness of efforts and contributed to achieving tangible results on the ground. Also, there was adequate civil society including women and youth groups like SDG 2030 agenda Network and the SDGs Network in KRG participation, which has affected coordination and broader goal achievement.

Some partnerships with government agencies are effective, while there have been gaps in the parliament committee's engagement in the SDGs project. This cooperation discrepancy affected the project implementation's effectiveness.

UNDP-approved projects are built on consultations with all stakeholders, which reflects a commitment to participation. The inclusion of stakeholders with disabilities is a positive point, as participants were invited to present their challenges. Respondents point out that the selection of goals and priorities is based on reality and not fiction, which reflects the effectiveness of the process. Moreover, there is a high degree of participation in preparing the voluntary report, which indicates an improvement in the level of involvement.

14. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women, and vulnerable groups contributing towards the achievement of the project objectives?

The respondents addressed the extent to which men, women, and vulnerable groups participate in project management and its impact on achieving the project's objectives. The results showed several important points:

- Emphasizing that project management was participatory, where vulnerable groups participated in deciding on service projects needed by those groups.
- It was indicated that the participation of men and women was clear and that the participatory process contributed to achieving the project's objectives. However, there were some views indicating that vulnerable groups were not adequately represented in the process:
 - Participants demonstrated the importance of integrating target groups in the design and implementation of the project, which helped identify and meet the actual needs.
 - There is an indication that building the capacity of target groups ensures the sustainability of the

project's results even after its completion.

15. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

the project's objectives emphasized on its output and cross cutting all activities and indicators related to gender equality, women's empowerment, and ensuring human rights,.

There are indications that many contributions to empowerment are in place, especially regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, such as the fifth goal (gender equality) and the tenth goal (reducing gaps).

Working in a traditionally challenging environment is exceptional, with workers facing many difficulties. Despite the difficult circumstances, the responses confirm that the UNDP and the ASGIS have not stopped their activities, reflecting their continued commitment. The respondents pointed to the empowerment efforts that reflected positively on improving development indicators in Iraq, including educational indicators that serve decision-makers. Emphasizing that this work is a participatory effort between various parties, which enhances its strength and effectiveness.

A high contribution is made to preparing reports to follow up on the fifth goal, which reflects the interest in achieving gender equality and justice. Implement several projects to support the indicators of this goal, including supporting the Statistics Authority in providing the necessary data. The I-WISH survey is an example of joint efforts in this area, focusing on the importance of women's participation.

The respondents indicated support for the implementation National action plans of UNSCR 1325 /2000 (Women, Security, and Peace), which shows Iraq's commitment to enhancing the role of women in peacebuilding and decision-making. The activities implemented included supporting the training and rehabilitation of women, empowering them to participate effectively in society. The project positively promoted gender equality, as men and women were fairly involved in the activities and programs.

There was a focus on using SDG indicators, which helped spread awareness of these goals and how to be integrated into state institutions and universities. An example of this is the success achieved by trainers at Al-Muthanna University. Through training and programs provided by international organizations in cooperation with the network, the capacities of trainers in various sectors have been strengthened, which contributes to women's empowerment in particular.

Emphasize that the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that the project is working to achieve are closely linked to human rights. This reflects the project's interest in ensuring the application of these rights in the context of its activities.

6.3 EFFICIENCY

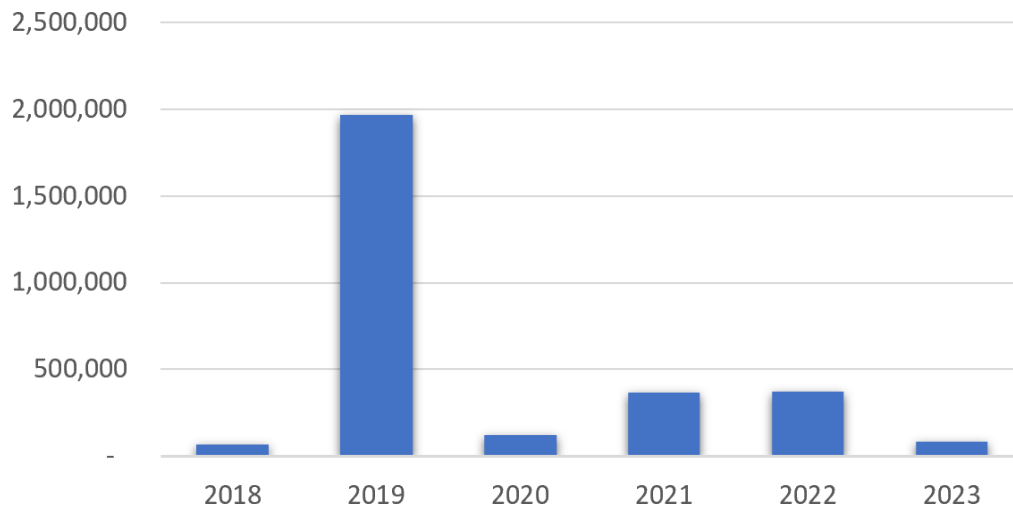
16. To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?

The project management structure is essential in achieving project objectives and results. The respondents pointed out that the success of implementing activities considerably depends on the coordination between the various administrative bodies and the administrative structure established to support the SDGs since 2015.

The administrative structure, which includes the follow-up team, the National Commission for Sustainable Development, the sectoral teams of the goals, and the Sustainable Development Section, has played an active role in achieving results. A number of follow-up reports have been produced at

national and local levels. This coordination facilitated the project's implementation effectively through the specified objectives. Figure 4 shows 2019 was given a high allocation compared to other years²¹.

Figure 4: SDGs Planned Budget by Year (US\$)



The National Directorate of Iraqi Women is an active partner in the SDGs project. The annual project reports refer to a large protestation of Iraqi women in different activities of “the Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”²².

17. To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?

Resources have been well utilized in addressing gender inequality issues, with a large proportion of resources allocated to ensure increased participation of women in project activities. Women's participation increased from 25% in the previous project to 35% in the current project, reflecting the project's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Allocations aim to raise the standard of living of the poor, with equal pay for women and men.

A training manual was prepared with the support of the UN Development Program (UNDP), and 25 certified trainers were trained in all governorates, which in turn succeeded in explaining the objectives and organizing workshops, forums, and lectures in the universities.

The respondents indicated that there was no waste in the use of resources, as the activities were carefully selected and were of value-added. Most sessions were also organized inside Iraq, which helped

²¹ Support to the Government of Iraq for the implementation and monitoring of SDGs, Project Document, Iraq, 2022, PP. 37-48

²² UNDP, (2019-2023), “Annual Project Report”.

reduce costs. The respondents also stressed the commitment to the controls of the UN Fund; not to travel outside Iraq to get financial resources. Resources were disbursed on time, and queries were effectively responded to through e-mail.

The lack of resources available from donors poses a challenge to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Continued financial support from UNDP is needed to support current efforts. One of the negative points mentioned by the respondents is that UN organizations do not always choose the most influential organizations, but rather cover the largest number of organizations, which may reduce the quality of services provided if the specific organization’s budget is limited.

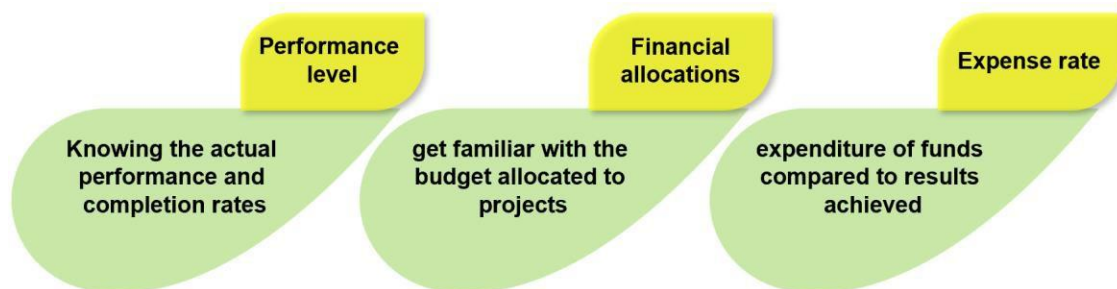
In addition to the national progress report of Iraq²³, a number of voluntary reviews on sustainable development goals 2030 for a number of governorates reflected capacity-building activities in addition to implementing thematic reports²⁴.

18. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

The respondents addressed the efficiency of the project in terms of cost and the financial and human resources used. Where a set of important points have been clarified:

There are calls for improved transparency in the management and allocation of funds, as transparency is believed to improve efficiency. Some participants indicated that resources were used efficiently in developing digital skills and controls, contributing to qualitative progress in statistical dissemination. Based on the UNDP follow-up reports, the spending rate of the programs’ execution is significantly high.

Local conditions and partnerships play an important role in determining project efficiency, with an example of efficiency’s impact on the final results. Price increases may negatively affect efficiency, making materials and resources more expensive. Respondents have positive experiences with UNDP-supported projects, as they did not notice any cases of corruption or delays. Continuous support to UNDP is demonstrated through its effective presence in covering various activities, which enhances confidence in the organization and its effectiveness.



²³ UNDP, (2022), National Progress Report of Iraq.

²⁴ For instance, see Basrah VR (2019) and Karbala VR (2019).

19. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?

Many participants lack information about the project's cost and resource details, making it difficult to accurately assess the efficiency of use. However, funds and cadres were well allocated to achieve the desired results, with examples of empowering women to hold government positions. Some participants indicated that financial and human resources utilization could have been improved to be more economically efficient. The use of human resources is often highly efficient, as employees in the international projects are highly committed.

Challenges related to the efficient use of international experts were indicated. Some believe that using local experts may be more efficient and less expensive, while some activities that require using international experts, increase the cost. The human element is recognized as a key investment element, although poor awareness of its importance may hinder its full utilization.

- Using financial and human resources very effectively, especially in many actions requiring specific expertise and competencies.
- Allocating financial resources in a way that ensures maximum benefit, and contribute to achieving the desired results with high efficiency.
- Distributing male and female human cadres in line with the needs and objectives of the project.
- Establishing a structure in each ministry and governorate to achieve sustainable development goals. These structures should have the necessary cadres and capacities to develop local plans.

The Iraqi government's approach largely relies on employment in the Public Sector, resulting in a significant waste of funds. Despite resource allocation, this reliance on inefficient employment reduces resource efficiency. The absence of clear mechanisms for evaluation or monitoring contributes to the continuation of these practices, which hinders the achievement of the desired results. UNDP needs to take this issue seriously.

The overall verification performed is estimated at 68% showing that around two-thirds of the total budget was spent actively up to 2023²⁵.

20. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?

The lack of accurate data on the project's cost hinders the ability to comprehensively assess resource efficiency. Some of the answers suggest that the resources were used efficiently and effectively in most activities. Despite the high efficiency in some areas, there are criticisms related to the inefficient use of resources in others, such as environmental expertise that was not as required.

Resources were used efficiently throughout the project, as they were strategically directed to maximize the impact of the activities.

The activities supporting the strategy were cost-effective, as planning and execution were carried out to ensure the optimal use of financial and human resources. This approach contributed to achieving the required results without exceeding the allocated budget, reflecting the efficiency of the project in managing resources.

²⁵ See Annex 8.

The SDGs project focuses on efficient resource use while monitoring spending to avoid potential waste. The strategy maximizes results using minimal resources, enhancing efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Despite limited financial resources, the project strategy has proven highly efficient. Financial and human resources (such as funds, staff, time, and expertise) were efficiently allocated, which contributed to the desired results. The strategy adopted was cost-effective, resulting in the activities being completed according to the established time plan. Economically managing resources with a focus on maximizing impact for minimal spending contributed to efficiently completing required activities.

21. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered promptly?

Many respondents indicated that the activities were carried out on time, which indicates efficient schedule management. There are delays, but they are attributed to external factors such as emergency or bureaucratic circumstances, rather than to the effective management of the project. Some participants reported that side events, such as activities related to Sustainable Development Week, were successful and effective. Some of the answers confirmed that the amounts provided for the project were good, which contributed to the implementation of the activities. It was emphasized that the focus is on specific Sectors such as agriculture, education, and health, which reflect strategic guidance in implementing activities.

22. To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Respondents indicated that UNDP cooperates with other international organizations such as UNESCO, the International Labor Organization, and the World Health Organization to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants highlighted how these partnerships contribute to focusing on specific goals, such as the fourth (education) and the seventh (energy) goals. Respondents showed that there is great interest in the monitoring process, which indicates the existence of an effective performance appraisal system. Emphasizing that monitoring is not neglected indicates a strong commitment to achieving the desired goals.

The UNDP relies on periodic evaluation and monitoring systems to ensure that activities are implemented according to project objectives, allowing for recognition of progress made towards expected results. These systems contribute to the identification of obstacles that may face the implementation of activities, which helps take the necessary corrective actions to ensure that the objectives are achieved effectively and on time. The project is managed efficiently and effectively. This allows resources to be better directed and ensures that desired results are achieved while addressing challenges that may hinder achieving goals. Through monitoring systems, informed decisions can be made based on the available data, which promotes effective project management and ensures efficiency in implementing activities.

The United Nations Development Programme has paid clear attention to monitoring aspects through many activities, including; Tracking results progress, monitoring & managing risk, learning, Annual project quality assurance, reviewing and making course corrections, project report, project review (project board), project (DIM) Audit, spot-checks for responsible parties. A number of monthly, quarterly, and annually evaluation reports are included in these activities²⁶.

6.4 SUSTAINABILITY

²⁶ UNDP, (2022), Monitory Program.

23. Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men, and vulnerable groups?

Yes, financial risks may threaten the sustainability of project outputs due to. lack of additional funding or alternative sources of support is a risk that may affect the continuity and benefit of the project for all target groups, including men, women, and vulnerable groups.

The financial challenge may significantly affect projects aimed at improving the situation of vulnerable groups, including women, men, and persons with disability. Project outputs related to gender equality and empowerment are exposed to significant financial, social, and political risks., the project's supporting mechanisms have effectively addressed these challenges and supported sustainability. Positive national policies have contributed to enhancing the sustainability of outputs, particularly in gender equality, human rights, and human development. The coordinated efforts between UNDP and the National Authority of Statistics have strengthened capacity and supported project continuity.

Crisis in the region, in general, can affect the sustainability of project outputs, as national priorities change according to the prevailing circumstances. However, vulnerable groups, including women and people with disabilities, remain among the project's priorities at all times, enhancing the chances of sustaining support for these groups.

24. To what extent will targeted men, women, and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?

Respondents pointed out the importance of following up and evaluating the objectives of the project achieved. Such follow-up will be useful in measuring the change and positive impacts of the interventions, thereby enhancing long-term sustainability.

There is an emphasis that enhancing vocational training can contribute to increasing employment opportunities and improving the standard of living of target groups. There is a need for sustainable strategies such as building community capacity and strengthening partnerships with the private sector to ensure these long-term benefits. To achieve positive and sustainable results, measuring the benefits using specific indicators such as employment rates and income increase is necessary, which will help assess the project's long-term success.

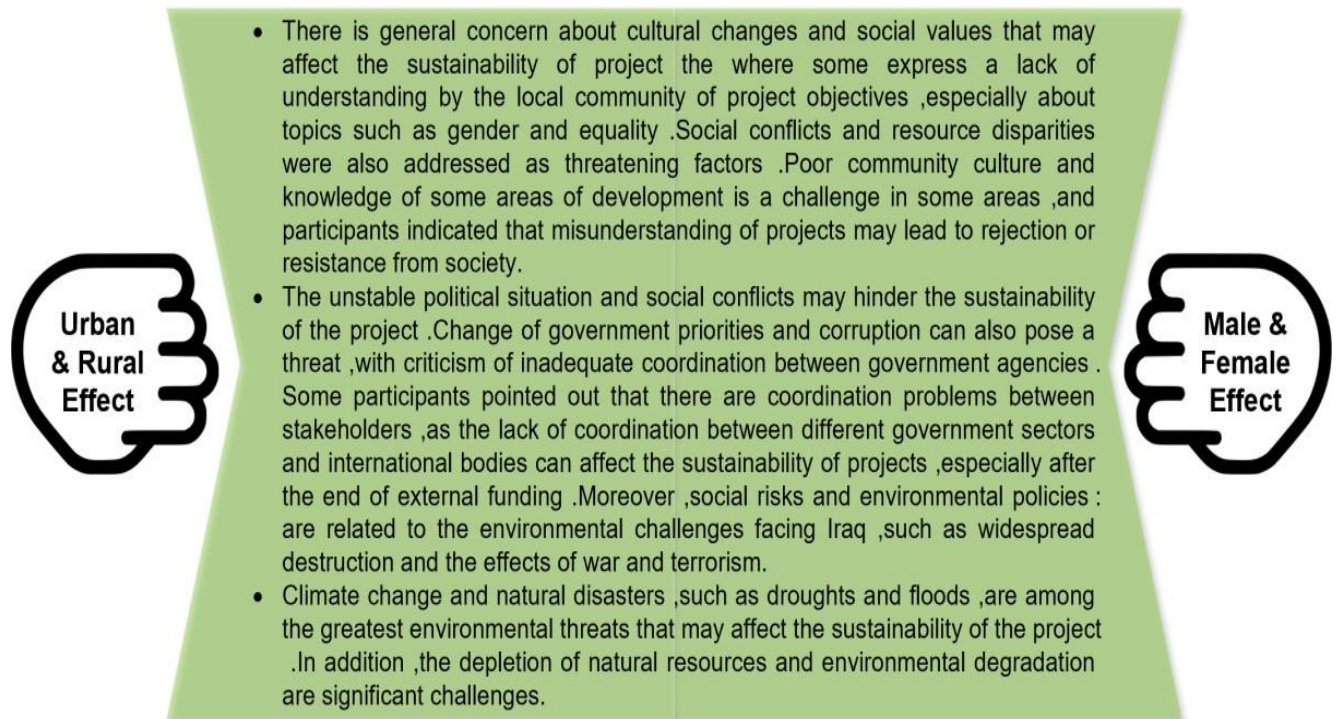
25. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?

It was pointed out that the continuity of UNDP activities in support of development issues and the Iraqi economy indicates sufficient resources to ensure the sustainability of activities and support for the Iraqi economy. Although the answer was not detailed about the project's sustainability, it suggests that infrastructure and support are in place to sustain development efforts in general.

Opinions indicated that the legal frameworks, policies, and governance under which the project is implemented do not threaten the sustainability of the project's benefits. On the contrary, these structures are supportive of the sustainability of the results and outputs that the project seeks to achieve. This is shown through the government's efforts to institutionalize the work through the establishment of sustainable committees and institutions that adopt the continuity of the implementation of the project's outputs. The current legal frameworks do not interfere with the sustainability of the project results, which means that the legal and organizational environment is conducive to the continuity of benefiting from the project outputs in the long term.

26. Are there any social, political, or environmental risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country program outputs and outcomes?

The responses showed a variety of opinions regarding the risks that may threaten the sustainability of projects related to sustainable development. The risks mentioned by the participants can be divided into three main pillars: cultural, social-political, and environmental.



Persisting between governorates, males and females, and rural and urban, hinders development efforts because Iraq still lacks the research, development, and innovation necessary to achieve sustainability. These factors negatively affect the stability of the economy, society, and politics, which may disrupt projects and limit their ability to achieve their goals.

27. Do the legal frameworks, policies governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits?

Some participants do not believe that legal structures and policies risk the project's sustainability. They also stated that high and good coordination leaves no room for legal or regulatory threats. Some pointed out that the legal frameworks did not conflict with the project, and those actions related to sustainable development proceeded well without intersections. Governance and corruption problems were also mentioned as factors that could undermine the sustainability of the project's benefits.

Some warned of complex administrative processes and inconsistent policies that may hinder the efficient implementation of the project, stressing the importance of legal sobriety and follow-up to ensure the project's continued benefits. few number of participants indicated that economic crises and financial conditions pose a major threat to the project's sustainability. When ambitious multi-phase plans are developed, any failure or deficiency in financial resources may lead to the interruption or delay of the

project's implementation, jeopardizing its sustainability. The need for institutional and legislative reform was highlighted, the participants stated that projects need support in reforming the administrative and legal systems to ensure their continuity. Change in the management positions and policies also constrains the project's sustainability, as frequent administrative and policy changes may affect the effective achievement of project objectives.

28. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) negatively? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow the project benefits to be sustained?

The respondents indicated a set of critical points to meet the challenges that could pose a threat to the sustainability of the outputs of the projects submitted by the UN Development Program:



The variety of partnerships that UNDP relies on is a strength that helps achieve sustainability. The program collaborates with the private sector, civil society organizations, government, and various bodies such as the MOP and the MOLSA. This diversity enhances its ability to meet various challenges and national priorities.

The SDGs project takes into account environmental dimensions when implementing activities. The project adopts practices aimed at minimizing negative environmental impact to ensure that activities do not threaten the environment or the beneficiaries of the project, whether women or men. These practices include implementing activities in an environmentally sustainable manner in line with the global sustainable development goals, especially in aspects of environmental conservation. By focusing on the environmental dimension, the program significantly reduces the likelihood of negative environmental impacts affecting the project's sustainability. Adhering to the environmental guidelines ensures a safe and healthy environment for the project's beneficiaries.

The program focuses on actively and continuously engaging local stakeholders and the Government of Iraq. Periodic meetings with key partners aim to align objectives and activities with national interests, increasing opportunities for local project ownership. Involving partners in designing and implementing activities increases the chances of continued benefits after the project ends. Increased local ownership enhances the sustainability of outcomes and outputs, as local partners become directly responsible for maintaining and expanding benefits.

29. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?

Some believe that mechanisms and procedures are well in place and support partners in achieving results related to gender equality and women's empowerment. This is reflected in the significant institutional support and active participation of women in leading positions, which enhances opportunities for women's empowerment. The partnership project appears to be supported by national policies that have dealt positively with the initiatives, leading to tangible results in equality and human development.

Several responses stressed the need to improve coordination between different entities, such as the Ministries of Education and Health, with a special focus on governance, emphasizing the importance of having a specialized body or coordinator to facilitate work in this area.

Changing leaders and officials in the concerned institutions may negatively affect the project's ability to achieve its sustainability, especially in light of some current leaders' lack of knowledge of the project's importance. One of the responses referred to the building of a societal culture that supports equality and women's empowerment so that these issues are part of society and institutions' awareness. This reflects the need for social-level awareness efforts to promote gender equality and justice.

Respondents pointed out ad hoc strategies and policies, such as the second 1325 plan, the National Strategy for Women until 2030, and the National Development Plans until 2028, which set specific roles for partners and align with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mechanisms and procedures are in place to help key partners move forward in achieving results related to gender equality, women's empowerment, and human rights. Many ministries, such as MOLSA provide women with financial support, and the Ministry of Education to empower women-educated fields, have worked to empower women through alternative policies and strategies.

Despite the successes achieved, women face challenges, including community resistance in certain activities and situations. Women are claiming their rights and seeking integration into work and education, which has led to confrontations with some social norms. Despite these challenges, some important achievements have been made in women's empowerment and gender equality, but work continues to address the challenges and make further progress.

30. To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?

Stakeholders have shown a commitment to participate in the project's activities and a willingness to cooperate in implementing plans and initiatives related to sustainability. This continuous support enhanced the project's impact and ensured the achievement of its goals related to sustainable development and gender equality. The private sector and government agencies support the project's objectives, targeting particularly vulnerable groups.

To increase partners' support of the project's long-term objectives, awareness should be promoted among all target groups and greater opportunities for direct participation in all project phases, from design to implementation. Partners (men, women, and vulnerable groups) support the project, especially those supporting vulnerable and marginalized groups. Emphasis is placed on these categories to ensure no one is left behind, a central goal of sustainable development efforts.

Although the MOP and some organizations had a clear role in supporting the project, committees formed in some provinces, such as Diala, were not influential. There is a lack of attendance and

participation from some academic bodies such as the University of Diala, which was supposed to have a key role. Some international organizations have positively interacted.

31. To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

UNDP produces periodic reports documenting the results achieved during the implementation of project activities. These reports include lessons learned from project experiences, allowing the project team to analyze challenges and successes and apply these lessons in future activities. Documenting these lessons on an ongoing basis helps improve the performance and sustainability of project outputs.

Directly involve stakeholders in documenting lessons learned, and sharing reports with them to obtain their feedback and opinions. This continuous interaction enhances collaboration between the project team and partners and improves future operations. Stakeholders' feedback is considered before the release and publication of final reports, ensuring that lessons learned reach the right parties who can benefit from them.

It is possible to focus on addressing some of the weaknesses that emerged in the previous projects, including weak involvement of civil society organizations, lack of funding sustainability, the need for sustainable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and the need for more relevance between the development projects and the environmental, security and political challenges.

32. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability to support Gender Equality.

The respondents indicated that UNDP interventions considering male and female issues are well-designed and planned. These strategies focus on promoting gender equality through women's empowerment and encouraging men's participation in implementing activities. They also addressed the integration of a gender perspective into the strategies of the UNDP, and the extent to which these strategies are strengthened to ensure the sustainability of gender equality. Some participants point out that UNDP pays great attention to gender issues in all its activities, by training specialized cadres on a male and female basis and using disaggregated data to assess the gap in sustainable development indicators. It was emphasized that, from a legal point of view, Iraq had equalized the gender in rights and duties some time ago, which helped to spread the culture of equality in society, as this culture was reflected in the programs of the UN.

Some believe that success in this area is not always guaranteed, due to cultural and social challenges that may negatively affect the implementation of programmes related to gender equality.

Many participants emphasized the well-designed and planned strategies of the UNDP while emphasizing the importance of periodic follow-up to achieve results.

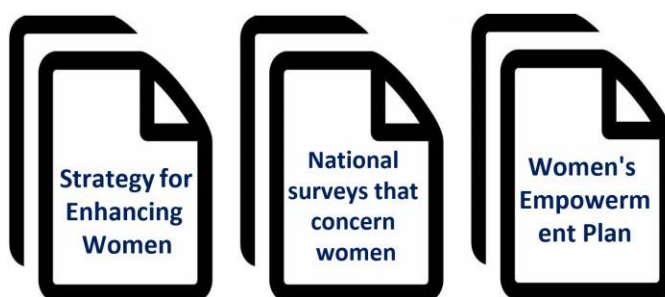
Some responses indicated that political commitment, institutional capacity, available funding, and the cultural and social environment may influence how gender perspective is integrated into strategies. There is a consensus that UNDP promotes gender equality by designing strategies that consider gender-related challenges.

To promote these strategies and ensure sustainability, several respondents suggested a set of measures: The program focuses on general frameworks such as localizing goals and capacity building.

One major criticism is that UNDP interventions are often temporary and short-term, with NGO employment contracts for short periods. The training provided focuses more on how to work with the program itself, rather than strategically empowering organizations to develop their capabilities over the long term. The program should adopt a long-term approach that includes strategic planning that can be continued after the end of cooperation contracts to promote sustainability.



UNDP supported several national documents on women, such as²⁷:



The respondents pointed out that some initiatives and programs cover people with disability, People with disabilities were also considered through the initiatives of youth and volunteer teams.

Suggestions for improving strategies:

- A focus on capacity building and learning from the experiences of other countries that share the same problems and challenges should be in place. New terminology and strategies should be adopted.
- Ensure that initiatives always include vulnerable groups and disabled people to ensure equality.
- Concerns faced by individuals when discussing gender equality and human rights issues should be addressed through awareness campaigns and greater community engagement.

²⁷ Summarized from UNDP progress report on women development and gaps 2020-2022.

6.5 HUMAN RIGHTS

33. To what extent have poor, indigenous, physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

Observations indicate that the poor and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, and men, benefit greatly from UNDP's work.

Despite Iraq's Vision 2030 being in place, the observations indicate that it lacks principles and objectives related to the equality and empowerment of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities. The focus seems more on the economic aspect, ignoring important social and humanitarian aspects. The lack of focus on strategies for vulnerable groups hinders achieving a tangible and sustainable impact on them. UNDP supports vulnerable groups in Iraq, including the poor, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups; men and women through;



The program empowers these groups through capacity building, enabling them to become effective social groups. It also promotes effective decision-making and community participation.

Human rights activities are being included especially in output2: Analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning (with a focus on mainstreaming of gender, Environmental sustainability, Governance, and peace) strengthened²⁸.

6.6 GENDER EQUALITY

34. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation, and Monitoring of the project?

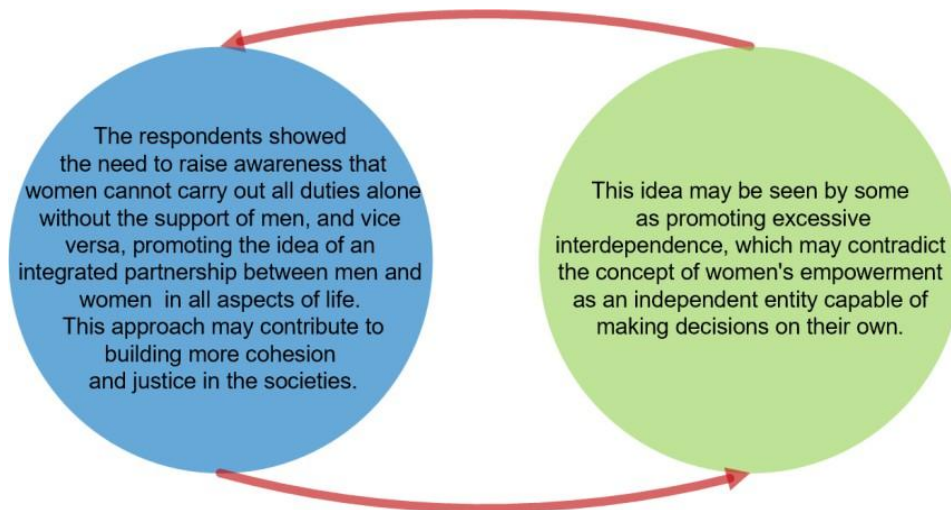
The project has effectively addressed gender equality and women's empowerment issues throughout the project, from design to implementation and monitoring. The principles of gender equality were integrated into project activities to ensure women's participation in various processes. This approach contributed to enhancing the role of women, highlighting their contribution to project activities, and developing mechanisms to monitor activities to ensure that women's empowerment is supported and that the project focuses on gender equality.

²⁸ UNDP, (2019-2023), “Annual Project Report”.

Participation of men and women in the evaluation and workshops:

- The United Nations is working hard to involve both men and women in all project phases, including the evaluation and workshops, promoting gender balance and providing an opportunity for everyone to contribute.
- Organizing sessions and workshops for women directly enhance their participation, helping them build their capacity and raise awareness about their important issues.
- Excessive emphasis on dividing activities between men and women may lead to gender isolation, limiting cooperation between men and women in some projects.

The expected role of Gender Equality Awareness:



35. Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?

The gender index contributed to 50% of change, meaning it has made some progress, but has not yet reached the level required to achieve full justice and equality. The project was keen to engage women and men in achieving the goals. It encourages gender collaboration in completing ideas and projects, creating harmony and complementarity.



Advantages

Women and men were allowed to express their opinions equally which promoted the active participation of both in the sessions and activities of the project.



Disadvantages

After July 2023, the implementation of equality declined, weakening the gender index, especially among civil society activists who noticed a decline in support and clarity in implementing development programs.

Diyala shows the cultural and religious challenges faced by the project. The SDGs have been criticized for their supposed conflict with Islamic law regulations. This reflects the impact of cultural and spiritual values on implementing gender goals in some areas.

36. 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?

The respondents evaluated the project's impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. They pointed to a set of observations:

- There is consensus that the project has significantly contributed to the culture of women's empowerment, but some participants argue that the activities did not considerably promote changes.
- Many participants indicated that women began to know and claim their rights, reflecting advances in cultural awareness.
- There has been a noticeable impact on young people, as the level of debate on gender equality issues between women and men has increased, contributing to the change of some negative cultures.
- the project contributed to changing the stereotype of women's education, work, and political participation was highlighted.
- Unintended impact assessment is an essential part of project evaluation, with the potential for positive impacts such as promoting social cohesion, or negative effects such as increasing social inequalities.
- There is a lack of knowledge about specialization equality and women's empowerment issues, which requires rebuilding training strategies and plans and benefiting from local expertise rather than relying on external experts.
- The current situation has created an environment of fear for women activists, leading to a decline in their participation in public debates about equality.

Respondents pointed out that the activities carried out by the UN organization have an impact on gender equality, with a special focus on the issue of violence against women.

6.7 DISABILITY

37. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?

The respondents addressed the participation of persons with disabilities in the planning and implementation of the project and whether the project authorities did so appropriately. Several participants confirmed that persons with disabilities have participated in several activities, where consultation sessions were organized with them, especially in the second voluntary report for 2021. They have been meaningfully involved in the planning and implementation of the programme.

There is a consensus that the project has engaged people with disability in a fairly acceptable way, although there are some reservations about how effective such participation is. Some participants pointed out that the involvement of persons with disability may be relative and not always adequate, as it is sometimes limited to seminars and consultations without being reflected in practice on the program's components or showing tangible results on the ground. One participant stated that there are significant challenges faced by persons with disability, despite the opportunities and facilities provided by the state, such as the law of assistance and purchasing facilities. However, disability conditions continue to be an obstacle to further partnership and integration.

It is emphasized that people with disability are an important part of society and should have wider opportunities to participate in and influence development programs.

The importance of involving persons with disabilities in a real and purposeful way was emphasized, as strong partnerships with the organizations that represent them must be built to ensure the achievement of the SDGs.

Persons with disability and stakeholders were consulted in a workshop to prepare a voluntary report and development plan. There was active participation in the workshop, where people with disabilities presented the challenges, they face and requested solutions to improve their situation,

The project ensures the meaningful participation of persons with disability by inviting specialists in this field and providing a supportive environment that meets their needs by equipping the required facilities and infrastructure, which enhances their active participation in activities. Persons with disability are focused on the planning process, where dedicated activities are directed that take into account their needs to improve their situation in various fields, reflecting the project's commitment to advancing the reality of this group.

38. Was a twin-track approach adopted?

The respondents referred to adopting the twin-track approach, which aims to include persons with disabilities in all stages of planning and implementation of project activities. Emphasis on equality, while considering the situation and capacities of persons with disability to ensure that they are properly supported within the framework of activities.

Voices of the voiceless



People with disability have formed an integral part of society, and they are human beings who enjoy all the rights and freedoms enjoyed by others. However, they face many challenges and obstacles to fully integrating into society. The FGD attended by disabled groups for the SDGs project evaluation sought to obtain the views of the participants in FGD the project "Supporting the Government of Iraq in the Implementation and Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"

To assess the achievements made and the challenges facing the project to help achieve the objectives of the project signed between the Government of Iraq and the UN Development Program. The interview included a number of voices and challenges criteria and several questions about each criterion, the main challenges raised by disabled participants are seen below;



These challenges outline UNDP's most important expectations of the disabled in addressing their problems and working to prevent them from being left behind.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 RELEVANCE/COHERENCE

The project is also in line with national development agenda and sustainable development goals, stressing the need to foster collaborations and partnership between the government and stakeholders. Challenges such as the continuation of the data gap and fund raising need to be continuously evaluated to ensure the successful completion of the goal. Stakeholder awareness workshops are used to facilitate alignment, exemplifying the commitment to sustainable and inclusive development of the project. However, bureaucratic barriers hinder coordination. UNDP has played a notable role in shaping governmental policy and in fostering gender equality, using the theory of change to advance community capacity, stability, poverty alleviation and environmental problems. Although work has been done to build up national ability, economic, institutional, and public awareness challenges restrict the project's impact and its full potential. Better linking the project to national priorities, improving evaluation instruments, and achieving better strategy implementation is needed so as to achieve tangible results. Gender equality (and in particular equality for marginalized groups) is a core element of project design and activities.

7.2 EFFECTIVENESS

The work demonstrated a degree of progress towards achieving the SDGs, but there are still problems in quantifying outputs and impacts. There is still a gap in the participation of men, women, and vulnerable ones in addition to data collection for impact evaluation. The project has also yielded positive results, such as its contribution to women and vulnerable groups of people and has been instrumental in the development of local policies. Despite political and economic challenges, the project made notable strides in mine clearance, war risk awareness, and youth empowerment, with potential for further expansion. The participatory approach and coordination between government bodies have enhanced its ability to promote sustainable development in Iraq, with responses aligned to local needs.

7.3 EFFICIENCY

Implementation of the project was effective in terms of time and resource use, yielding results in the time frame established and guaranteeing efficient use of the available resources. The project management structure positively impacted goal achievement, and collaboration with government bodies contributed to effective activity implementation. Financial resources were used efficiently to support gender equality and women's empowerment. However, there are challenges in optimizing financial and human resources and fully utilizing local expertise. UNDP's monitoring systems have enabled good project management, monitoring those of progress in order to pinpoint and overcome the constraints by which resources have been used and work has been achieved.

7.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Close collaboration with local partners and the government increases the likelihood of sustaining the project's benefits. Engaging stakeholders in documenting lessons learned fosters ongoing evolution and enhances long-term feasibility. Risks associated with sustainability, as social, economic, environmental,

political, were acknowledged, but the participatory nature of the project builds resilience and promotes long term success.

7. 5 HUMAN RIGHTS

UNDP focus on helping disadvantaged groups, especially poor and displaced women, is shown with interventions in livelihood and rebuilding activities. In order to further promote human rights and therefore improve living conditions of the especially disadvantaged groups, these endeavors are of the greatest importance.

7. 6 GENDER EQUALITY

Although project has achieved progress in gender equality and women's empowerment, implementation and monitoring have not yet reached the target results. Despite positive advancements, such as increased awareness of women's rights, challenges persist, particularly due to cultural and religious gaps. Advantages are in the creation of shelters and the delivery of legal assistance for women, e.g. Nevertheless, the use of local laws and guidelines (particularly relating to disability) hinders sustainability. The lack of some legal provisions has long-term consequences at the cost of success, although there have been positive, unforeseen, results such as improvement of male attendance and educational pre- and post-support.

7. 7 DISABILITY

There are different views on the participation of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of the SDGs project. Problems, such as lack of understanding, educational vocational constraints, and policy gap have been reported.

What are the strengths of this project's output?

- A significant contribution to providing technical support and international expertise, improving institutional capacities, focusing on data, and encouraging cooperation between different sectors.
- The program's cooperation with the Iraqi government has resulted in a number of strengths ,perhaps the most important of which is ensuring the continuation of the planning approach that considers the human rights approach and sustainability in the preparation of development plans and programs.
- Focusing on local dimensions and enhancing local understanding of the importance of sustainable development goals, although its scope has not been expanded as planned to include all governorates.
- Wide diversity in the targeted areas includes many issues including education ,health ,energy ,environment ,equality ,and infrastructure.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships in the implementation of project activities and give NGOs a strong role.

National Voluntary Reports Expert

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 RELEVANCE/COHERENCE

- ✚ To enhance the relevance and impact of the SDGs project, it is crucial to implement national awareness campaigns and periodic reporting, while increasing consultations with local communities, particularly focusing on the needs of women and marginalized groups. The government and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Planning and UNDP Iraq, should work together to sustain technical support for SDGs local committees at the sub-national level. Additionally, platforms for open dialogue should be established to allow all social groups, including women, girls, and marginalized communities, to voice their needs. Strengthening women's participation should be a priority, building on existing progress and ensuring more inclusive involvement.

8.2 EFFECTIVENESS

- ✚ To ensure the effectiveness of the SDG project, it is essential to improve coordination among all stakeholders and raise awareness of the critical role data plays in achieving the SDGs. The project should build on current achievements by strengthening cooperation with the Ministry of Planning (MOP) and other key stakeholders, providing technical support and training to ensure long-term sustainability. Additionally, increasing private sector participation and leveraging national expertise over foreign consultants will be key to achieving the project's objectives efficiently.

8.3 EFFICIENCY

- ✚ To enhance resource efficiency, UNDP should prioritize collaboration with influential individuals and organizations capable of effectively disseminating ideas and shaping societal change. Additionally, budget allocation strategies should be optimized, and cooperation between local and international actors must be strengthened to achieve the best possible outcomes and maximize the impact of the SDG project.

8.4 SUSTAINABILITY

- ✚ To ensure project continuity and community acceptance, it is essential to improve coordination between stakeholders and enhance awareness efforts regarding project objectives within local communities. Sustainable financing and continuous evaluation must be prioritized to guarantee the project's enduring success. Efforts should be made to better target underserved groups, such as children, while continuing to address the needs of vulnerable populations like IDPs, returnees, and women, with a particular focus on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment as outlined in the fifth SDG.

8.5 HUMAN RIGHTS

- ✚ To promote equality and empowerment, national strategies should place a stronger emphasis on these issues, while developing tailored programs that ensure the active participation of marginalized groups in designing appropriate solutions. Additionally, there is an urgent need to prioritize information gathering and deepen the understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable groups in Iraq, particularly those related to disability, to ensure their needs are effectively addressed.

8.6 GENDER EQUALITY

- ✚ Gender equality and women's empowerment must be integrated into every aspect of the project, with the implementation of clear strategies and measurement tools to ensure measurable and positive outcomes.

8.7 DISABILITY

- ✚ To ensure inclusive sustainable development, it is recommended to strengthen partnerships with organizations representing persons with disabilities and to place greater focus on disability issues within UNDP initiatives. Additionally, the dual-track approach should be effectively applied to fully integrate persons with disabilities into the project, addressing their specific needs and promoting equal participation to achieve inclusive benefits for all.

What weaknesses can be avoided when preparing a new project after 2025?

- It is possible to focus on addressing some of the weaknesses that emerged in the previous projects, including weak involvement of civil society organizations, lack of funding sustainability, the need for sustainable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and the need for more relevance between the development projects and the environmental, security and political challenges.
- The programs and plans of the ministries active in the development scene ,especially those of finance and planning ,are weakly coherent.
- They are creating stable institutional structures that support the intended development ,similar to the executive management of the poverty alleviation strategy ,and the women's affairs units in the ministries and their formations.
- Weak focus on the innovation and technology required to improve the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- There is geographic variation in the distribution of development projects between governorates and within the governorates themselves ,especially between centres and remote areas.
- Lack of accurate and up-to-date data on the implemented activities and projects and their impacts.

National Voluntary Reports Expert

9. LESSONS LEARNED

- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals Project is a major challenge for those undertaking the evaluation process since the evaluation depends on two sources: official documents and field sources from the project's participating and beneficiary entities.
- The candidates for meetings are government officials. It was not easy to manage the sessions because it depended on the availability of an appropriate time.
- The response to the meetings with the evaluator was not easy and available. Despite the long efforts made by the evaluator, it was not possible to organize all the planned sessions.
- It is emphasized that the issues of vulnerable groups in Iraq are complex and overlap in several aspects, making dealing with them a major challenge.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference Mid-term Evaluation - Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project

1. Background and context

Country Context:

Iraq faces numerous challenges in achieving sustainable development. Years of conflict have left deep scars on the country's infrastructure, economy, and social fabric. The project acknowledges these challenges and recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to development that addresses governance, social inclusion, environmental protection, and economic growth.

Government Priorities:

The project aligns with several key government priorities outlined in Iraq's National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2022) Strengthening Institutional Capacity, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. For example, the project's focus on strengthening institutional capacity for SDG implementation supports the NDP's objective of improving public service delivery. Additionally, the project's emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment reflects the government's commitment to achieving social inclusion.

Link to SDGs:

The "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs" project directly contributes to achieving all 17 SDGs. However, it has a particular focus on goals related to:

- **Goal 5: Gender Equality:** By strengthening the capacity of the Women Empowerment Directorate and promoting women's participation in SDG implementation.
- **Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:** By supporting improved governance and peacebuilding efforts.
- **Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** By fostering collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

The project actively promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in several ways. It strengthens the capacity of the Women Empowerment Directorate, a key government institution responsible for advancing women's rights. It also encourages the participation of women in stakeholder consultations and capacity-building initiatives related to SDG implementation.

Theory of Change (Annex)

The project's theory of change posits that by strengthening institutional capacity, promoting stakeholder engagement, and improving data collection and reporting mechanisms, the project will enable the Iraqi government to effectively implement and monitor the SDGs. This, in turn, will lead to improved governance, greater social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic growth in Iraq, ultimately contributing to achieving the SDGs and national development goals.

Project evaluation:

The evaluation aims to comprehensively assess the UNDP project "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs" to ascertain its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability. This initiative is strategically positioned to aid the Government of Iraq in aligning national plans and monitoring frameworks with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby contributing to the country's sustainable development agenda. The project, which commenced in 2018, embodies a multifaceted approach encompassing capacity building, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and reporting, all geared towards enhancing the localization of SDGs and fostering inclusive development within Iraq.

Named "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs," the project is driven by a clear purpose and objectives. It seeks to strengthen institutional capacity, promote gender equality, enhance environmental sustainability, and improve governance and peacebuilding efforts in Iraq through the implementation and monitoring of SDGs. Its primary objectives include aligning national plans with the SDGs, enhancing stakeholder capacity for SDG localization, improving data collection and reporting mechanisms, and promoting inclusive development. Beneficiaries of this initiative include the Government of Iraq, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other key stakeholders involved in SDG implementation. summary of project outputs are as follows:

Output 1: Institutional and analytical capacity for aligning national planning and monitoring frameworks with SDGs strengthened.

Output 2: Analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG based planning (with focus on mainstreaming of gender equality and women empowerment, Environmental sustainability and Governance and peace) strengthened.

Output 3: Capacity development for SDG localization strengthened.

Output 4: Capacities for integrated SDG Monitoring and Reporting at national and local levels strengthened.

Output 5: Accelerating the SDGs in Iraq

Output 6: Support development of national human development report (NHDR).

The scale and complexity of the intervention are notable, comprising various components such as capacity building initiatives, stakeholder consultations, data analysis, and communication strategy development. It caters to diverse populations across Iraq, including national and local government officials, civil society representatives, marginalized communities, and vulnerable groups. The project operates nationwide, covering all governorates of Iraq, and addresses a myriad of challenges related to governance, gender inequality, environmental degradation, and social inclusion, with particular attention to conflict-affected and marginalized areas.

With regard to resources, the project receives funding from the UNDP as of \$1,712,895,000 along with technical assistance and in-kind support from partner organizations. The total resources required, including budget allocations and expenditures, will be meticulously examined during the evaluation. Key partners involved in the project, including the Government of Iraq (specifically the Ministry of Planning and COMSEC), UN agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and other stakeholders, play pivotal roles

in its implementation.

Observations of changes since the inception of the project will be meticulously analyzed. This analysis will encompass enhancements in institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, data availability, and awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Factors contributing to these changes, such as political, economic, social, and environmental dynamics, will be thoroughly scrutinized to understand their impact on project outcomes. The direct beneficiaries of the project include five institutions: the Ministry of Planning, the Central Statistics Bureau, the Women Empowerment Directorate, the Civil Society Sustainable Development Network, and the 1325 Resolution network.

Furthermore, the evaluation will assess the project's alignment with the strategies and priorities of the Government of Iraq, international development goals (including the SDGs), UNDP corporate objectives, and regional development frameworks. It will also consider the socio-economic context of Iraq, including relevant economic policies and trends that may influence project implementation and impact.

Incorporated within the broader evaluation cycle of UNDP projects in Iraq, this evaluation aligns with ongoing and previous evaluations related to sustainable development, governance, and peacebuilding. Leveraging existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, it aims to provide comprehensive insights into the project's performance and inform future programming decisions. Moreover, notable achievements of the project include the development of the first and second Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), the SDGs Progress report, the SDGs financial gap report, and the private sector engagement in SDGs strategy. Additionally, the project has contributed to the development of Iraq's 2030 vision and the establishment of the SDGs data online platform.

Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

Basic project information can also be included in table format as follows:

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION	
Project/outcome title	Supporting the Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs
Atlas ID	00111226
Corporate outcome and output	<p>UNDAF Outcome A1: Targeted Government Institutions' capacities strengthened for accountability, transparency, and provision of equitable and quality services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDAF Outcome A2: Government capacity at national and subnational levels enhanced for evidence-based decision-making. • CPD Outcome2: Administrative and financial reform and devolution policies adopted and implemented at federal and governorate levels.
Country	Iraq
Region	RBAS
Date project document signed	12 July 2018
Project dates	Start
	Planned end
	August 1 st 2018 December 31 st 2025
Project budget	USD 1,644,281.42
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	
Funding source	UNDP
Implementing party¹²	UNDP

2. Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

This mid-term evaluation is being conducted in accordance with UNDP program management requirements to meticulously assess the progress and achievements of the SDGs project. The principal objective is to furnish concrete evidence of UNDP's contribution towards the anticipated outcomes, substantial impact, and its pivotal role in the decentralization process

¹² This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan

Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

within Iraq. Aligned with the program unit’s evaluation plan for 2024, as per UNDP's comprehensive guidance on decentralized evaluation, this mid-term evaluation is strategically positioned to provide a robust, evidence-based, and consultative reflection on the SDGs project. Its primary aim is to foster enhanced learning and bolster accountability mechanisms. The insights gleaned and recommendations formulated will serve to enrich ongoing project activities and ensure their continual improvement.

Geographically, the mid-term evaluation will meticulously scrutinize actions undertaken within the project intervention areas, covering all 15 federal governorates of Iraq. This will entail a comprehensive assessment through a combination of online and in-person meetings with key stakeholders.

The evaluation period spans the duration of project implementation, from November 1, 2018, to December 31, 2023.

Aspects of the Intervention Covered by the Evaluation:

The evaluation will comprehensively encompass various facets of the "Support to the Government of Iraq for the Implementation and Monitoring of SDGs" project. It will specifically focus on pivotal components such as capacity building, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and reporting mechanisms. Target groups to be meticulously considered encompass national and local government officials, civil society representatives, marginalized communities, and vulnerable groups especially the women who’s leading families and IDP women across all 15 federal governorates of Iraq. Additionally, the evaluation will rigorously assess the coherence and effectiveness of specific project outputs pertaining to institutional capacity strengthening, gender equality promotion, environmental sustainability, and governance enhancement.

Primary Issues of Concern and Objectives of the Evaluation:

The evaluation endeavors to address critical concerns and achieve specific objectives that are tailored to meet the needs of project stakeholders. These include:

1. Rigorously assessing the relevance and alignment of the project with national development priorities, particularly in the context of decentralization and SDG localization efforts.
2. Conducting a meticulous examination of the efficiency of resource utilization towards achieving project objectives and desired outcomes within the stipulated timeframe.
3. Assess the extend to which the project is achieving its objective and outputs and Identifying and analyzing challenges and bottlenecks that impede the smooth implementation of project activities, thereby proposing pragmatic solutions to enhance delivery.
4. Thoroughly evaluating the sustainability of project outcomes and determining the extent to which they contribute to strengthening institutional capacity and fostering inclusive development.
5. Ensuring robust mainstreaming of gender considerations, disability issues, and rights-

based approaches throughout the project cycle, with a dedicated focus on promoting equality, inclusion, and empowerment.

6. Delivering evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing learning, bolstering accountability mechanisms, and augmenting the overall impact of the SDGs project on sustainable development in Iraq.

By meticulously addressing these primary issues and objectives, the evaluation will offer invaluable insights and recommendations to facilitate informed decision-making and action planning by the project Management for the continued success and effectiveness of the project.

3. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

Criteria and Key Guiding Questions for Evaluation: The mid-term evaluation will utilize OECD DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability). Key guiding questions include, but are not limited to:

Relevance/ Coherence

To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?

To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?

To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?

To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?

To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?

To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?

What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country programme outputs and outcomes?

In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?

In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?

What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?

Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?

To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?

To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?

To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

Efficiency

To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?

To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?

To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?

To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?

To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability

Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?

To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?

To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?

Are there any social, political, or environment risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?

Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within

Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”
which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?

To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?

To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?

To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project’s longterm objectives?

To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.

Evaluation questions on cross-cutting issues

Human rights

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

Gender equality

All evaluation criteria and evaluation questions applied need to be checked to see if there are any further gender dimensions attached to them, in addition to the stated gender equality questions.

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?

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?

What barriers did persons with disabilities face?

Was a twin-track approach adopted?¹³

¹³ The twin-track approach combines mainstream programmes and projects that are inclusive of persons with disabilities as well as programmes and projects that are *targeted* towards persons with disabilities. It is an essential element of any strategy that

The questions could be refined by the evaluation team and agreed with UNDP evaluation stakeholders.

4. Methodology

The Consultants will propose an appropriate methodology, considering a "theory of change" approach. The evaluation will adopt a mixed-method approach involving qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools. The methodology will be participatory and collaborative, involving continuous engagement with the evaluation management team, implementing partners, and beneficiaries.

Approach:

The approach for conducting the mid-term evaluation shall be to understand what was achievable under the circumstances and include a qualitative assessment approach that fosters active participation of project staff, donor, stakeholders and beneficiaries (men and women). The evaluation consultant will develop the evaluation methodology in accordance with the evaluation approach and design tools to collect appropriate data and information as strong, evidence-based answers to answer the overall evaluation questions. Collected data need to be triangulated and analysed using the appropriate methods (coding, ..etc) and instruments (excel or specific software..etc). The evaluation approach (e.g contribution, theory of change approach or other) should be detailed in the inception and evaluation reports. The selected approach should incorporate a gender lens, and it is expected to be well reflected in the different report sections including the methodology section. The methodological design will include: an analytical framework; a strategy for data collection and analysis; specially designed tools; stakeholders mapping; an evaluation matrix; and a detailed work plan. The consultant is ultimately responsible for the development of the overall methodological approach and evaluation and is expected to propose methodologies that the consultant considers most appropriate to achieve the aims of this evaluation. Citation to evidence is required in the reports and in alignment to the UNEG ethical guidelines. The quality guidelines require review/ reconstruction of the theory of change which will support developing the methodology and reviewing the evaluation questions.

The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group’s Norms and Ethical Standards, OECD/DAC evaluation principles and guidelines and DAC Evaluation Quality Standards, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and UNDP Evaluation Policy.

The evaluation would use a diverse mixed set of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and tools including the below (to be elaborated in the evaluation inception report):

1. Desk review of key-documents, including the project document, the quarterly and annual reports. The evaluator will collect secondary data and review the project document including results framework, assessment reports, progress quarterly and annual reports,

seeks to mainstream disability inclusion successfully. Also, see chapter 9 of the Technical Notes. Entity Accountability Framework. United Nations Disability and Inclusion Strategy: <https://www.un.org/en/disabilitystrategy/resources>

workshop report, minutes of board meetings, financial reports and any other relevant documents.

2. Sampling and geographical scope:

The purposive sampling approach will be used to target groups and stakeholders to be consulted. It is expected that the proposed list of target groups will ensure adequate representation of beneficiaries, including the 5 benefiting institutions, including Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Bureau, Women Empowerment Directorate, and Civil Society Sustainable Development Network, and 1325 Resolution network. The selection will be informed by the portfolio analysis and stakeholder mapping undertaken during the inception phase of the evaluation. This analysis will yield information on the relevant partners to be part of the evaluation including UNDP, donors. The evaluation consultant should clearly outline the sample selection criteria and process and identify any potential bias and limitations, including the steps towards addressing the limitations.

The sampling technique should ensure that the selected samples adequately reflect the diversity of stakeholders of the intervention and pay special attention to the inclusion and participation of the stakeholders with gender considerations as well. This process will enhance the credibility and technical adequacy of the information gathered.

3. Interviews, meetings and other quantitative and qualitative assessment techniques (including, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, story of change documentation, and others as appropriate). All interviews with men and women should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals or include photos of people.

The consultant is expected to travel within Iraq to conduct the field data collection phase of the evaluation in person. The geographical scope of the evaluation will be Baghdad, Thiqr, Dyala, Maysan, Anbar and Basra governorates.

The evaluation shall utilise the following main steps:

Inception phase, field phase, first report phase, management response and final report phase.

a) Inception Phase:

The inception phase shall ensure that the evaluator’s detailed approach and plan to achieve a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the project’s activities and results. The inception phase includes:

- Kick-off meeting.
- Planning of the evaluation activities and timing.
- Desk review of relevant documents and initial analysis of project documentation.
- Stakeholders mapping, evaluation design, methodology development and sampling
- Formulation of the evaluation work plan.
- Finalization of the inception report.
- Review and approval of the inception report.

b) Field Phase (in-person)

This stage follows the approval of the inception report and should not be started before

agreement and approval. In this phase, the evaluator shall gather detailed, primary research into the agreed evaluation questions through KIIs and/or focus groups with key stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries depending on the sampling size.

The data collection phase shall include KIIs including project team, UNDP Senior management, other relevant UN staff, donors, and key governmental counterparts.

The evaluator shall take detailed notes of these interviews, always respecting informant confidentiality, and use the data from the interviews in subsequent stages of the evaluation.

Government entities: Baghdad, Thiqr, Dyala, Maysan, anbar and Basra. Donor: UNDP
UN: UNDP project team, UNDP senior management,
Debriefing meeting

c) First Reporting Phase

The focus of the reporting phase is to analyse the data gathered from field research and analysis of documentation against the evaluation framework.

The evaluator shall:

Draw together and synthesise its findings from field research and survey and document analysis. Analyse the collected data in the context of the evaluation criteria and the evaluation framework. Draw conclusions and prepare a set of learning/recommendations intended to be of specific value to UNDP and INL(donor).

- a) Prepare the first draft evaluation report complying to the UNDP quality requirements, demonstrating how conclusions and recommendations are drawn from the research. Management Response Phase After the first draft evaluation report has been completed, it shall be submitted to UNDP to seek its oral and written feedback.
- b) Final Report Production Phase Upon receipt of the feedback from UNDP on the draft evaluation report, the evaluator shall prepare and submit his/her final evaluation report incorporating the comments.

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

1. Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages). The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit.
2. Evaluation debriefings. Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
3. Draft evaluation report. The first draft evaluation report shall not exceed 40 pages (without counting annexes) and include a comprehensive executive summary as it will be translated to ensure wider utilization of the evaluation. The draft report should comply to the UNDP quality requirements.
4. Evaluation report audit trail (management review). The programme unit of UNDP and the donor shall be given the opportunity review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.

5. Final evaluation report addressing the comments.
6. Presentation of Findings to UNDP and donor. UNDP and the donor may ask the evaluator to present the findings of the evaluation.

Standard templates that need to be followed are provided in the Annexes section. It is expected that the evaluator will follow the UNDP evaluation guidelines and UNEG quality check list and ensure all the quality criteria are met in the evaluation report. It is suggested that the evaluator quality assures his draft evaluation report against the quality check list as part of quality assurance before submitting to UNDP. Please note that all evaluation reports commissioned by UNDP go through a Meta- evaluation quality assessment process by UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) through a pool of expert quality assessment reviewers after the finalization and submission of the final report.

This is important for the organization to ensure the quality and utility of the final evaluation product.

Feedback on Deliverables: All deliverables are subject to UNDP's approval before considered final. Feedback will be provided within ten working days of submission, and the Consultants are expected to consider comments and submit revised versions promptly.

6. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

Team Composition and Required Competencies: The mid-term evaluation will be led by an Evaluation Team Leader (National Consultant). The Evaluation Leader will have overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of draft and final evaluation reports. Responsibilities include leading and managing evaluation missions, developing inception reports, conducting the evaluation in line with guidelines, managing the team during missions, drafting and presenting reports, and finalizing the evaluation report for submission to UNDP.

Qualification Requirements:

Education:

- Advanced degree (Master's or equivalent) in development studies, social sciences, economics, public policy, international relations, or a related field.

Experience:

- At least 7 years of progressively responsible experience in project management, monitoring and evaluation, with a focus on sustainable development, governance, or related fields.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting mid-term evaluations or similar assessments, preferably in conflict-affected or fragile contexts.
- Proven track record of engaging with diverse stakeholders including government counterparts, civil society organizations, and development partners.
- Experience in gender mainstreaming and integrating human rights considerations into project design and implementation.
- Familiarity with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implementation at national and sub-national levels.
- Experience working with the United Nations or international organizations is desirable.

Mid-term Evaluation of the “Support Government of Iraq in Implementing and Monitoring SDGs Project”

Skills and Competencies:

- Excellent analytical and critical thinking skills, with the ability to synthesize complex information into clear and concise recommendations.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to facilitate consultations and effectively engage with stakeholders at various levels.
- Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team, managing multiple tasks under tight deadlines.
- Fluency in English is required, knowledge of Arabic is an asset.

Other Requirements:

- Willingness and availability to travel to project intervention areas in Iraq as required.
- Commitment to upholding ethical standards and ensuring the confidentiality of evaluation data and findings.

Important to note that:

1. Evaluators will recuse themselves from evaluating: (i) any project, program, or activity that they worked on or had line responsibility for the work on, including preparation, appraisal, administration, and completion reporting, or that they had a personal influence or financial stake in, in a previous capacity; or (ii) an entity that they had a significant decision making, financial management or approval responsibility for or personal influence or financial stake in, or in which their future employment is a significant possibility.
2. Evaluators will similarly recuse themselves when there is such involvement in a project, program, activity, or entity on the part of immediate family members. They should inform the CO management of any such potential conflict of interest, or potential perception of conflict of interest, before evaluator assignments are finalized.
3. If a former staff member or consultant is being considered for a consulting assignment in an CO evaluation, particular care will be exercised by the concerned professional staff to ensure that the concerned person was not involved, directly or indirectly, in the subject of the evaluation during his/her past term as staff or consultant of the CO.

7. Evaluation ethics

Standard text includes:

“This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

8. Implementation arrangements

For the mid-term evaluation of the SDGs project, an Evaluation consultant will oversee all aspects of the evaluation process:

The project evaluation is commissioned by UNDP. The Evaluator shall liaise on a day-to-day basis with the focal point assigned by the SDGs Project Manager. The focal point will be supported by the Programme Management Support Unit (PMSU) which includes the evaluation manager. Together, the focal point will serve as the focal points for providing both substantive and logistical support to the Consultant. Assistance will be provided by the Programme Management Support Unit (PMSU) and the SDG project team to make any refinements to the work plan of the selected Consultant i.e., key interview partners; organize meetings; and conduct field visits (if necessary and if the security situation permits). The evaluator will take responsibility for conducting the meetings, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report. The project team will refrain from participating in the meetings between the evaluator and the evaluation participants.

The Evaluation Manager will convene an Evaluation Reference Group membered by technical experts from UNDP, donors, and implementing partners. The reference group will review the inception report and the draft evaluation report to provide detailed comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis and reporting. The reference group will also advise on the conformity of processes to the UNDP and UNEG standards. Detailed comments will be provided to the lead evaluator in an audit trail within the agreed timeframe. Comments and changes by the evaluators in response to the draft evaluation report should be retained by the evaluators to show how they have addressed comments.

The final report will be approved by the evaluation commissioner. UNDP, with the support of relevant stakeholders,

This Terms of Reference (TOR) shall be the basis upon which compliance with assignment requirements and the overall quality of services provided by the Consultant will be assessed by UNDP. These streamlined arrangements focus on maximizing the effectiveness of the Evaluation Team Leader while fostering collaboration and accountability among stakeholders.

As part of the assignment:

UNDP will provide office space with access to the internet and a printer when in-country in Erbil or Baghdad, Iraq.

UNDP will provide logistical and transportation support for meetings, if needed.

UNDP will provide the following list of documents to the selected Consultant:

- Project Documents. ○ Progress Reports.
- Baseline Assessment Report within the Framework of the Project, ○ UNDP, Policy Paper relevant to the project.
- Training materials. ○ Other relevant documents as required. ○ Contact Details of Stakeholders and Partners.
- Programme Beneficiary Details.

The Evaluation Consultant is expected to:

- Have/bring their laptops and other relevant software/equipment.
- Use their own mobile and personal email address during the consultancy period, including when in-country.
- Make their own travel arrangements to fly to and in-country and transportation arrangements outside work hours.
- Fulfil the contractual arrangements under the TOR.
- Develop the evaluation inception report, including an evaluation matrix and a gender responsive methodology, in line with the TOR, UNEG norms and standards and ethical guidelines.
- Conduct data collection and field visits according to the TOR and inception report.
- Produce draft reports adhering to UNDP evaluation templates, UNDP Evaluation guidelines including the required quality criteria and brief the evaluation manager, programme/project managers and stakeholders on the progress and key findings and recommendations.
- Consider gender equality and women’s empowerment and other cross-cutting issues, check if all and respective evaluation questions are answered, and relevant data, disaggregated by sex, is presented, analysed and interpreted. The evaluator needs to ensure that all the evaluation sections are gender responsive.
- Finalize the evaluation report, incorporating comments and questions from the feedback/ audit trail. Record own feedback in the audit trail including those of the members of the team, the evaluation manager, the commissioning programme unit, and key stakeholders.

9. Time frame for the evaluation process

The evaluation timeline spans please correct this days across July, August, and September 2024. This phased approach allows for comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting while ensuring thoroughness and accuracy. Throughout this period, the Evaluation Team Leader will diligently oversee each phase of the evaluation process, from inception to final report submission. By distributing the workload over three months, sufficient time is allocated for meticulous examination of project activities, stakeholder engagement, and synthesis of findings, resulting in a robust evaluation outcome that informs decisionmaking and enhances project effectiveness. The final report needs to be finalized and submitted no later than end of July. The table below lists and describes all tasks and deliverables, including timelines for which evaluator will be responsible and accountable, as well as those tasks involving UNDP Iraq.

Example of working day allocation and schedule for an evaluation (outcome evaluation)

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed)	1 Day	At the time of contract signing 1 July 2024	remote	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team		At the time of contract signing 1 July 2024	Via email	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology, and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	3 days	Within two weeks of contract signing 1 – 15 July 2024	Home-based	Evaluation Team
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	1 Day	Within two weeks of the contract signing 30 July 2024	Via email	Evaluation team
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report 10 August 2024	UNDP	Evaluation manager
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews, and focus groups	15 days	Within four weeks of contract signing 10 to 15 August 2024	In-country With field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc.
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages)	7 days	Within three weeks of the completion of the field mission 30 August 2024	Home-based Via email	Evaluation team
Draft report submission	-		Home-Based	Evaluation team
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and the UNDP country office	3days	15 September 2024		Evaluation team
Submission of the final evaluation report to the UNDP country office (50	-	30 September 2024	Home-based	Evaluation team
Estimated total days for the evaluation	30 days			

10. Application submission process and criteria for selection

Interested qualified and experienced individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications and interest:

1. Letter of Confirmation of interest and availability using the template provided by UNDP; please see attached template.
2. Most Updated Personal detailed CV including past experience in similar assignment and at least 3 references.
3. UN P11 Form (“CV Form”);
4. A detailed methodology on how the candidate will approach and conduct the work and
5. Two samples of evaluation reports done/authored within the past two years.

Note: Applicants must not have worked in the design or implementation of this project or in an advisory capacity for any of the interventions, directly as consultants or through service providers.

Submitted proposals will be assessed using Cumulative Analysis Method. The proposals will be weighed according to the technical proposal (carrying 70%) and financial proposal (carrying 30%). Technical proposals should obtain a minimum of 70 points to qualify and to be considered. Financial proposals will be opened only for those application that obtained 70 or above in the technical proposal. Below are the criteria and points for technical and financial proposals.

Evaluation Criteria		Max. Point 100	Weight
Technical	<p>Criteria A: relevance and responsiveness of candidate’s past experience, Qualification based on submitted documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University or college degree in Economic, Gender Studies, strategic planning or other relevant subject areas. (10 points) ○ At least 5 years of experience in conducting external evaluations of projects in post-conflict context. (20 points) ○ Minimum of 1 similar assignments as external evaluator of projects. (20 points) 	70 Points	70%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional experience in evaluating projects addressing the development and delivery of training courses of SDGs considered a strong asset. (10 points) ○ Experience in working for the UN or other international development organization would be an asset. (10 points) <p>Criteria B: relevance and responsiveness of candidate’s approach, technical proposal and submitted work plan and Methodologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time plan, methodology on how the consultant will conduct the required tasks (30 points) 		
Financial	<u>Lowest Offer / Offer*100</u>		30%
Total Score = (Technical Score * 0.7 + Financial Score * 0.3)			

Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
Relevance					
1. To what extent was the project aligned with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?	Effectiveness of the project in addressing the specific needs of target beneficiaries. Alignment of the project's activities and outputs with beneficiaries' priorities.	The number and type of outputs and outcomes responded to the national priorities	Project reports, and stakeholder interviews.	Document review, key informant interviews.	Thematic content analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
2. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?	Validity of the project's assumptions considering Iraq's current political, economic, and security situation. Impact of changes in the external environment on the relevance of the project's assumptions. Project alignment with the overall theory of change for the country program.	Indicators of outputs align with TOC.	Project documents, and national development plans.	Document review.	Comparative analysis.
3. To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?	Integration of gender considerations in project phases. Accuracy of the project's gender marker.	- Degree of alignment between men and women in terms of beneficiary needs. - Gender beneficiary satisfaction.	Project documents.	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Thematic content analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
4. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities.	Relevance of the project in addressing the needs of different constituents.	Degree of alignment between project objectives and beneficiary needs Beneficiary satisfaction with project activities and outputs	Project documents, beneficiary interviews.	Document review.	Thematic content analysis.
Effectiveness					
1. To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?	Alignment of project logic with targets and objectives. Relevance of the project approach to the context and needs.	Number of outputs with clear, measurable definitions.	Project reports, national development reports.	Document review, key informant interviews.	Content analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
2. What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country programme outputs and outcomes?	Progress towards achievement of specific project results. Identification of unintended results.	List of identified risks and their potential impact. Status of risk mitigation measures.	Project reports, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, key informant interviews.	Content analysis, Risk analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
3. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?	Internal and external factors that have supported the achievement of results.	List of factors and good practices supported the implementation of the project.	Project reports, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews and focus group discussions.	Content analysis, Quantitative analysis.
4. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?	Identification of internal and external risks. Challenges, Risk mitigation strategies and their effectiveness.	Identification of difficulties during the project implementation.	Project reports, Key informant interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Content analysis, Risk analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
5. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?	Alternative approaches are strategies.	Percentage of progress, resource utilization and stakeholder feedback	Project reports, Monitoring reports.	Document review.	Thematic content analysis.
6. Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?	Effectiveness of the project on women, and vulnerable groups. Practicality and feasibility of project objectives and outputs within its frame.	Number of outputs with clear, measurable definitions.	stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews and focus group discussions.	Content analysis, Partner feedback analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
7. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?	Identification of the project outputs achieved in terms of gender, vulnerable groups.	Number of outputs achieved for men, women, vulnerable groups	Project reports.	Document review.	Comparative analysis, content analysis.
8. To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?	Mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. Extent of stakeholder input in project phases. Satisfaction of stakeholders with their level of involvement.	Number of activities involved by different stakeholders.	Project reports, national development reports, key informant interviews. M&E reports	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Impact analysis, contribution analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
9. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?	Satisfaction of stakeholders with their level of participation and contribution.	- Examples of participatory approach. - Correspondence between project approach and achievement of objectives.	UNDP operational documents.	Document review.	Thematic analysis, content analysis.
10. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?	Effectiveness of the contribution of men and women. Effectiveness of the realization of Human Rights.	Number and percentages of men and women activities.	Project reports, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews, focus group discussions.	Thematic gender analysis.

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
Efficiency					
1. To what extent was the project management structure, as outlined in the project document, efficient in generating the expected results?	Analysis of the program's alignment with the main goals	Percentage of outputs achieved on time.	Project documents, project reports.	Document review.	Thematic analysis.
2. To what extent were resources used to address inequalities and inequalities between men and women?	Efficiency of Mobilizing resources to align with gender equality requirements	Percentages of resources allocated (men, women)	Project reports, National development reports.	Document review, Final reports.	Thematic analysis, content analysis.
3. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?	Efficiency of resource mobilization. Effectiveness of resource utilization.	Efficiency ratio (cost-effectiveness). Deviations from the budget and reasons.	Project documents.	Document review.	Thematic analysis.
4. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?	Identification of delays and their causes. Evaluation of the impact of delays on project outcomes. Assessment of corrective actions taken.	Comparison between planned and real financial and human resources.	Project documents, stakeholder interviews, national development reports.	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Thematic financial analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
5. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?	Analysis of cost per output/ outcome.	Efficiency ratio cost-effectiveness.	Project reports.	Document review.	Content analysis, Financial analysis.
6. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	Comparison of planned vs. actual expenditure and timely manner.	Percentage of activities delivered timely. Percentage of funds delivered timely	Project reports, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Content analysis, Quantitative analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
7. To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure	Comparison of planned vs. real achievement WRT cost efficiency.	Comparison of planned vs. actual activities.	Project reports.	Document review, Monitoring reports.	Thematic analysis, Monitoring analysis.

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
effective and efficient project management?					
Sustainability					
1. Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?	Identification of final deficiency WRT the project outputs	List of financial risks affecting women, men and vulnerable groups activities	Project reports.	Document review.	Thematic analysis, risk analysis.
2. To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?	Assessment of the sustainability of program benefits.	Number of beneficiaries from project interventions	Project documents, Project reports.	Document review.	Thematic analysis.
3. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?	Evaluation of financial sustainability. Assessment of programmatic sustainability.	Availability of researches.	Project documents.	Document review.	Thematic financial analysis.
4. Are there any social, political, or environment risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?	Identification of factors negatively affected the implementation of program outputs.	Risk analysis for socio-political and environmental that may jeopardize sustainability.	Project reports, Stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Thematic analysis, Risk analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
5. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?	Identification of political governance difficulties during the period.	Degree of alignment of legal framework.	Project documents, project reports.	Document review	Thematic analysis.
6. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project	Listing the most environmental threats sustainability of project in Iraq.	Degree of alignment of UNDP actions to meet environmental difficulties.	Project reports, national development reports,	Document review, Key informant interviews, focus group discussions.	Thematic environmental analysis.

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?			stakeholder interviews.		Thematic coding of interview data.
7. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?	Assessment of national partner's commitment and capacity.	Examples of mechanisms and policies to respond to gender equality and empowerment.	Project documents, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews, focus group discussions.	Thematic gender analysis, content analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
8. To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?	Quality of cooperation.	Percentage of stakeholders support the project's long – term objectives.	Stakeholder interviews.	Key informant interviews, focus group discussions.	Content analysis, gender analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
9. To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?	Listing of lessons learned derived from the evaluation process.	Level of lessons learned documented continuously.	Project reports, Stakeholder interviews.	Document review, key informant interviews.	Thematic analysis, Monitoring analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
10. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen these strategies and sustainability in order to support gender equality.	Evaluation of intervention design and exit strategy effectiveness.	Examples of well-designed and well - planned interventions adopted by UNDP.	Project documents, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews, focus group discussions.	Thematic gender analysis. Thematic coding of interview data.
Human rights					

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
1. To what extent have poor, citizens and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?	Level of improvement in access to services and rights for targeted groups.	Percentage of poor citizens and physically challenged groups benefit from the UNDP project.	Focus group discussion interviews	Focus group discussions.	Poor and marginalized group analysis. Thematic coding of FGD interview data.
Gender equality					
1. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and Monitoring of the project?	Integration of gender considerations in project phases. Impact on gender equality.	Distribution of design, implementation and Monitoring of the project according to men and women.	Project documents.	Document review.	Thematic analysis.
2. 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?	Effectiveness of the project in addressing women's needs and priorities. Implementation of specific activities or interventions to promote women's empowerment. Presence of unintended gender-related outcomes. Accuracy of the project's gender marker.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of improvements in gender equality and the empowerment of women. - Examples of difficulties. 	Project documents, Stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant analysis.	Thematic gender analysis. Risk analysis. Thematic coding of interview and FGD data.
Disability					
1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?	Specific benefits realized by disabled groups	Examples of disabilities consulted.	Project reports, Disabled focus group discussion interviews.	Document review, Focus group discussions.	Thematic poor and disabled group analysis. Thematic coding of FGD interview data.
2. What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?	Relative importance of special programs for disabled group	Percentage of persons with disability benefiting of SDGs programs.	Project document, stakeholder interviews.	Document review, Key informant interviews.	Thematic content analysis. Thematic coding of FGD interview data.

Evaluation Questions	Assumptions to be assessed	Indicators	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
3. What barriers did persons with disabilities face?	Identification of barriers disable groups face	Identified barriers disabilities face.	Disabled and poor focus group discussion interviews.	Document review, Focus group discussions.	Content and thematic poor and disabled group analysis. Thematic coding of FGD interview data.

*The content of the EM may be changed or adjusted based on the interview results and the data analysis.

Annex 3. Interview Guide

Key Informant Interviews

Group 1: Federal Government of Iraq

Relevance

1. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country program outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
2. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country program outcome?
3. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
4. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
2. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
3. Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
4. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?

Efficiency

1. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
2. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
3. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
4. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

Sustainability

1. Are there any social, political, or environment risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country program outputs and outcomes?
2. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
3. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
4. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.

Gender Equality

1. 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?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?

Group 2: Kurdistan Regional Government

Relevance

1. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country program outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
2. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country program outcome?
3. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
4. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
2. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
3. Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
4. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?

Efficiency

1. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
2. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
3. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
4. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?

Sustainability

1. Are there any social, political, or environment risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country program outputs and outcomes?
2. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
3. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
4. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.

Gender Equality

1. 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?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?

Group 3: Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations

Relevance

1. To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?
2. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
3. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
2. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
3. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
4. To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
5. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

Efficiency

1. To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?
2. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
3. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?

Sustainability

1. Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?
2. To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
3. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
4. To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?
5. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.

Human rights

1. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

Gender Equality

1. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
2. 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?

Group 4: National Experts

Relevance

1. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country program outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
2. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country program outcome?
3. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent did the project contribute to the country program outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
2. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?
3. Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
4. To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
5. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

Efficiency

1. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
2. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
3. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
4. To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability

1. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
2. Are there any social, political, or environment risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country program outputs and outcomes?
3. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
4. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
5. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.

Human rights

1. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

Gender Equality

1. 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?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?

Group 5: UNDP Stakeholders

Relevance

1. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country program outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
2. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country program outcome?
3. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent did the project contribute to the country program outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
2. What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country program outputs and outcomes?
3. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
4. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
5. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?

Efficiency

1. To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
2. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
3. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
4. To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability

1. Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?
2. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
3. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
4. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
5. To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

Human rights

1. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

Gender Equality

1. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
2. 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?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?
2. Was a twin-track approach adopted?

Focus Group discussions

Disabled Group

Relevance

1. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
2. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
2. Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
3. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
4. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

Efficiency

1. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

Sustainability

1. To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?
2. What proportion of the beneficiaries of a program were persons with disabilities?
3. What barriers did persons with disabilities face?
4. Was a twin-track approach adopted?

Woman Group

Relevance

1. To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?
2. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
3. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent did the project contribute to the country program outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
2. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

Efficiency

1. To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?

Sustainability

1. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
2. To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?
3. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension? And what could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support Gender Equality.

Gender Equality

1. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
2. Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?
3. 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?

Youth Group

Relevance

1. To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during project design processes?
2. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?

Effectiveness

1. What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country program outputs and outcomes?
2. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
3. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?

Efficiency

1. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?

Sustainability

1. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?

Human rights

1. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

Gender Equality

1. Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?

Disability

1. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in program planning and implementation?
2. What proportion of the beneficiaries of a program were persons with disabilities?
3. What barriers did persons with disabilities face?

Annex 4. Conducting qualitative research using NVivo software

NVivo is an effective and integrated tool for analyzing qualitative data and easily analyzing large amounts of text and visual data. To use NVivo in conducting qualitative research through;

1. Data collection: Qualitative data that can be entered into NVivo includes interview transcripts, field notes, documents, audio files, and videos.
2. Data entry into NVivo: After the data is collected, it is imported into NVivo. The researcher can organize the data into folders and projects for easier access later.
3. *Data Coding: The coding process begins with reading the data carefully and identifying the initial codes that express important topics or ideas. These codes are distributed into text paragraphs or pieces of data using NVivo's coding tools.
4. Develop categories and topics: After initial coding, similar codes are grouped to form major and minor categories or topics. Advanced NVivo tools help in easily grouping codes and creating categories hierarchies.
5. Pattern and relationship analysis: NVivo uses advanced analytical tools like network analysis and visual models to examine patterns and relationships between categories. It can also create graphs and charts to display relationships visually.
6. Interpretation and Reporting: Depending on the patterns and relationships identified, the researcher can interpret the data and write a comprehensive report that presents the results. NVivo's export tools can also generate detailed reports and transfer the results to other programs, such as Microsoft Word or Excel.
7. Review and improve analysis: The researcher can return to the data and modify the codes and categories as needed to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the analysis. NVivo provides tools to review and compare codes to verify consistency and accuracy.

Annex 5. Checklist for Evaluation Requirements

#	Document / Description	#	Document / Description
2019		2022	
1	2019 Annual Report- SDGs Project Annual Report.docx	1	2022 SDGs Annual Report.docx
2	Iraq Vision 2030.pdf	2	AWP 2022_SDG Project_112936-111226.xlsx
3	SDG Data Gap Assessment Report Iraq.docx	3	IRAQ_SDG Project document_.pdf
4	Iraq_VNR_2019_final - AR HS.pdf	4	KRIVision2030_Final_English_2022.pdf
5	SDG Project-AWP-Singed.pdf	5	SDG 16 Report_Iraq.pdf
6	SDG5 report final-Jan-En.pdf	6	Private Sector Engagement in SDGs Tools and Approach.pdf
7	Local SDGs Reporting Guide.pdf	7	SDG5 Booklet5.b Final.pdf
8	Karbala VNR.pdf	8	Financial gap analysis report.pdf
9	Anbar VNR - 2019.pdf	9	IRAQ_Progress Report_2022.pdf
10	Basra VNR - 2019.pdf		
12	The Innovative Role of NGOs in Deriving Informal Data.pdf		
2020		2023	
1	2020 Annual Report SDGs.docx	1	2023 Annual report- SDGs.docx
2	AWP 2020 _SDGs Project.pdf	2	AWP2023_SDGs project_112936-111226 OPS team.xlsx
3	SDGs Data Gap Assessment Report Iraq.pdf	3	SDGs ProDoc updated.pdf
2021			
1	2021 SDGs Annual Report.docx		
2	Financing Gap Analysis - 2021.docx		
3	VNR_Report_Iraq_English.pdf		
4	ICRRP Gender Strategy (Final).pdf		
5	SDGs_112936_111226_AWP 2021.xlsx		
6	Responsive Recovery Report- Covid19.pdf		

Annex 6. Field Observation Guide

The Field Observation Guide for the UNDP evaluation approach is to gather and analyze information through direct observation in the field. Its primary purpose is to provide additional insights and contextual understanding that complement other evaluation methods, such as document reviews and interviews. The field observation methodology is informed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (UNEG, 2016)¹⁴ and the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (UNDP, 2021)¹⁵. Here's a concise overview of what this guide typically includes:

Purpose

The guide is designed to help

- Collect contextual information and insights relevant to the evaluation criteria.
- Assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Methodology

The observations are guided by standards and norms, including:

- Impartiality: Observing without bias or prejudice.
- Credibility: Ensuring observations are based on reliable and verifiable evidence.
- Utility: Focusing on gathering information directly relevant to the evaluation criteria.
- Transparency: Documenting and sharing the methodology and protocols clearly with stakeholders.

Observation Protocols

- Project Activities: Observing and evaluating training sessions, workshops, and meetings to assess their quality and effectiveness.
- Stakeholder Interactions: Monitoring stakeholder interactions to gauge collaboration, communication, and inclusivity.
- Institutional Settings: Examining the environments of key partners (like law enforcement or judiciary) to understand their capacities and constraints.
- Contextual Factors: Observing the broader socio-political and security context to assess the project's relevance and adaptability.
- Informal Conversations: Engaging in informal discussions with stakeholders to gain additional insights, while respecting confidentiality and consent.

Documentation

- Field Notes: Detailed records of observations, organized by date, location, and activity.
- Review and Expansion: Reviewing and expanding notes post-observation to ensure completeness.
- Synthesis: Regularly synthesizing notes to identify emerging themes and patterns.

Data Analysis

- Qualitative Methods: Analyzing data through content analysis and thematic coding.
- Coding: Developing and applying a coding scheme based on evaluation criteria.
- Pattern Identification: Identifying patterns and relationships in the data.
- Triangulation: Cross-checking findings with other data sources to enhance validity.

Limitations

- Field observations may be influenced by observer bias and limited to observed activities. To mitigate these limitations, evaluators triangulate observations with other data, seek diverse perspectives, and reflect critically on their biases and assumptions.
- This guide ensures that field observations contribute effectively to the overall evaluation process, providing a comprehensive view of the project's performance and impact.

¹⁴ UNEG. (2016). Norms and Standards for Evaluation. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

¹⁵ UNDP. (2021). UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>

Annex 7. List of Interviews

A. Key Informant Interviews

Sq.	Position	Entity	Sex
GOVs.			
1.	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Female
2.	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Planning	Male
3.	Deputy Minister	Kurdistan Ministry of Planning	Male
4.	Head of Authorization of Statistics and GIS	Ministry of Planning	Male
5.	Chief of University	Middle Euphrates University	Male
6.	DG. of Human Development Department	Ministry of Planning	Female
7.	Director General	Directorate of Iraqi women	Female
8.	DG. of International Cooperation Department	Ministry of Planning	Male
9.	DG. Of Regional Development Department	Ministry of Planning	Male
10.	Manager of Database & Systems/ IT Department	Ministry of Planning	Male
11.	Senior Researcher	Ministry of Environment	Male
12.	Specialized in sustainable development	Ministry of Planning	Female
13.	Manager of Human Development Department	Ministry of Planning	Female
14.	DG. Of Planning Department / Basrah	Ministry of Planning	Male
15.	DG. Of Planning Department / Muthanna	Ministry of Planning	Male
16.	DG. Of Planning Department / Maysan	Ministry of Planning	Male
17.	Manager of Dissemination and Public Relations relations	Ministry of Planning	Female
18.	Manager of Sustainable Development Section	Ministry of Planning	Female
19.	DG. Of Planning Department / Baghdad	Ministry of Planning	Male
20.	DG. Of Planning Department / Anbar	Ministry of Planning	Male
21.	DG. Of Planning Department / Diala	Ministry of Planning	Male
22.	DG. Of Planning Department / Thi-Qar	Ministry of Planning	Female
NGOs			
1.	Civil Society resolution 1325	Hawa Organization for Relief and Development /	Female
2.	Consultative trainer	- Al-Araqah Foundation Iraqi	Female
3.	Director	Shareteah Humanitarian Organization	Female
4.	Executive Director	Kurdistan Human Rights Watch	Male
5.		Um-Alyateem Foundation	Female

Sq.	Position	Entity	Sex
National Experts			
1.	Expert	Ministry of Higher Education	Male
2.	Expert	Ministry of Higher Education	Female
3.	Expert	MOP	Male
UNDP Stakeholders			
1.		UNDP	Male
2.		UNDP	Female
3.	Expert	FAO	Male

B. List of FDG Respondents

1. FGDs carried out with women and human rights NGOs, organized by Iraqi Statistical Association

Sq.	Name of NGO	Sex
1.	Al-Araqah Foundation, Iraqi woman and Future Organization	Female
2.	Al-rahma Organization for human rights	Female
3.	Women Association for Khair Al-Iraq	Female
4.	Al-Thara’a Althaqafi Institution	Female
5.	Al-Ola Organization for Youth Development	Male
6.	Al-Ola Organization for Youth Development	Male
7.	Jabal Al-Khairat for Women	Female
8.	Women & Childhood Association	Female

2. FGDs carried out with disable groups, organized by Iraq Disable Group, CSOs

Sq.	Sex	Name of NGO
1.	Male	Iraqi Alliance of Disability (IAD)
2.	Male	IAD
3.	Male	IAD
4.	Female	IAD
5.	Male	IAD
6.	Female	IAD
7.	Male	IAD
8.	Male	IAD
9.	Male	IAD
10.	Male	IAD
11.	Female	IAD
12.	Female	IAD
13.	Male	IAD
14.	Female	IAD
15.	Female	IAD
16.	Male	IAD
17.	Male	IAD
18.	Male	IAD
19.	Male	IAD
20.	Male	IAD
21.	Female	IAD
22.	Female	IAD
23.	Female	IAD
24.	Female	IAD
25.	Male	IAD
26.	Male	IAD
27.	Male	IAD

3. FGDs carried out with youth society, organized by Um-Ulyateem Foundation, NGO.

Sq.	Sex	Name of NGO
1	Male	Om- Alyateem Organization (OAO)
2	Male	OAO
3	Female	OAO
4	Female	OAO
5	Female	OAO
6	Female	OAO
7	Female	OAO
8	Female	OAO
9	Female	OAO

Annex 8. Summary of Multi-Year Work Plan

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	Planned Budget by Year (US\$)						Responsible Party	Planned Budget	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		Funding Source	Amount
Output 1 Institutional and analytical capacity for aligning national planning and monitoring frameworks with SDGs strengthened	22,800.00	20,000.00	25,000.00	45,000.00	46,296.30				159,096.30
Output 2: Analytical capacities for integrated approaches to SDG-based planning (including mainstreaming of gender, Environmental sustainability, and Governance and peace) strengthened	2.1. Capacity for integrated approaches to SDG/gender mainstreaming strengthened								
	10,000.00	17,000.00	-		117592.59		-		144592.59
	2.2. Capacity for integrated approaches to mainstreaming Environment strengthened								
	25,500.00	10,000.00	5,000.00	24,000.00			-		40,000.00
Sub-Total for output 2	35,500.00	67,000.00	15,00.00	55,000.00	117592.59				234,592.59
Output 3: Capacity development for SDG localization strengthened									
Sub-Total for output 3		35,000.00	20,000.00	91,000.00	65000.03		-		211,000.03
Output 4: Capacities for integrated SDG Monitoring and Reporting at national									
Sub-Total for output 4	8,000.00	75,000.00	60,000.00	1,560,000.00	18518.52		-		317,518.52
Output 5: Accelerating the SDGs in Iraq									
Sub-Total for output 5					125000		-		12,500,000.00
Output 6: Developing Iraq's third National Human development report									
Sub-Total for output 6					165000	85000			250,000.00
Total	65,800.00	1,970,000.00	120,000.00	367,000.00	372,407.44	85,000.00			1,122,207.44