



# EVALUATION BRIEF

13 April 2020

## MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PROJECT “CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF IRAQ THROUGH EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND REVITALIZATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIES”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

<b>Evaluation type:</b>	Internal Mid Term evaluation
<b>Evaluator(s):</b>	Rawaz ABDULRAZZAQ, National M&E Officer, IOM Iraq
<b>Field visit dates:</b>	Oct. to Dec. 2019
<b>Commissioned by:</b>	IOM Mission in Iraq
<b>Managed by:</b>	Bradley MELLICKER, RRU Coordinator

**Evaluation purpose:** To provide insights about the effectiveness of the programme, evaluate the program’s performance against the desired results as articulated in the project’s result framework, and to provide an analysis of possible challenges that the implementation is facing including lessons learned. Recommendations emanating from this evaluation will be used to improve current and future implementation of the program, adapt it to changes on the ground, and therefore, position IOM to achieve the desired results in the most sustainable, effective and efficient manner.

**Evaluation criteria:** Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact.

**Evaluation methodology:** Desk study, Key Informant Interviews, On-site observations, Focus group discussions, Beneficiary Interviews and surveys, Comparative non-beneficiary interviews and surveys.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The project was launched in 2019 to respond to the identified needs of the targeted communities with livelihood and employment support.

Through this project, IOM provides medium-long term response consisting of livelihood support at individual, community and institutional level, as well as, short-term response focusing on individual Cash for Work (CfW) interventions.

Livelihood support aims at the sustainable employment of individuals, including self-employment in business for those with particular skills or high potential in business.

Livelihood support also aims at revitalizing the economy at the community level by providing financial support to businesses to start, re-open and expand, thus, revitalizing the economy and creating new employment opportunities.

Securing employment or successful self-employment generates income, which the household can use to meet its needs.

Increased financial security within a target community contributes directly to the revitalization of the local economy, which in turn generates more economic opportunities for other community members.

## Project information:

**Geographical coverage:** Iraq, seven governorates with high number of IDPs and returnees: Diyala, Salah al Din, Baghdad, Ninewa, Anbar, Kirkuk and Dohuk

Project type:	Community Stablisation (CS)
Project code:	DS.0014
Gender marker:	N/A
Project period:	January 2019 to December 2020
Donor:	The Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
Budget:	10 Million Euro

## KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

**Relevance:** The use of a participatory methodology, the close coordination with local authorities and the information gathered in labour skills and market assessments, all ensured that the project is in line with local needs and priorities, making the services provided relevant and timely to the community. It was observed, however, that in some cases, the quality of the information collected in the household profiling form could lead to misinterpretation and possibly affect the beneficiary selection. As for the EDF, the due diligence processes are conducted consistently throughout the implementation, and it was observed that the investment committee stage represents a critical step in the due diligence process, which justifies the travel and presence of three staff members, including management and senior members of the field teams.

**Effectiveness:** All programme activities have met the mid-term targets according to the workplan. It is foreseen that IOM will be able to complete the remaining targets in line with the workplans and within the timeframe of the project. Generally, the delivery approaches for all project components were found to be effective, with some challenges observed in the implementation of the e-voucher system for the delivery of Individual Livelihood Assistance (ILA) packages. While the e-voucher system is effective in controlling that assistance is provided only to the selected individuals and for the amounts approved, the limited number of vendors enrolled in certain locations has the potential to limit price-negotiation and eventually lead to a price increase. However, the project team had identified this risk and put in place mitigation measures such as IOM staff being present when beneficiaries go to the vendor.

**Efficiency:** The alignment of the management structure gives insight to staff about the objectives they need to accomplish and focuses staff attention on both procedural details and the programmatic achievement. Staffing structures in each governorate appear to be adequate with the context in which the intervention is being implemented. Factors explaining differences in staffing structure include logistical and security accessibility of certain areas, the size of the IOM portfolio in the area, as well as the level of existing needs. IOM appoints central thematic teams and regional technical advisors, to take charge of quality assurance, improving the capacity of field teams, developing and providing the required procedures and guidance as well as to ensure effective use of resources.

**Sustainability:** Community and local authorities were involved throughout the planning and implementation of the project, and ownership of project results was promoted beyond the timeframe of the project. Throughout the evaluation, many indications on the connectedness as well as suitability of the services have been observed, including expanded social network of beneficiaries, beneficiaries planning to stay in their community; beneficiaries feeling confident that they will be able to cover their family expenses for the next three months; and an increased number of businesses that registered with the chambers of commerce or relevant ministries.

**Impact:** Cash for Work activities contributed in increasing in the monthly income of a household comparing with baseline, with a higher impact measured

on female and IDP beneficiaries. Through ILA, the employment rate of the selected beneficiaries improved, and the average net profits of their micro-businesses increased by 60% on average. This led to an average increased income of 89%. For EDF businesses, the increase in profit was considered as a preliminary indicator of impact. On average, profits increased by 55%, with further increase anticipated in a longer period

**Cross-cutting issues:** IOM has incorporated environmental and social standards in the programme in line with the KfW guidelines. The evaluation also shows that five gender mainstreaming principles were adhered to by the project.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Further expand the outreach of the EDF call for expression of interest to reach a wider audience;*
- *Address the quality of data collected in the household profiling forms by: 1) providing additional training and coaching to field teams; 2) reviewing the household profiling form to make it more user friendly and further develop the existing scoring mechanism to ensure accurate selection; 3) consider further centralization of key aspects of the selection process of ILA beneficiaries in order exercise more oversight and support the field teams more effectively;*
- *Ensure that sufficient staffing resources continue to be allocated to the EDF investment committees, with systematic participation of three staff members from management, senior field operations and technical teams;*
- *Whenever possible, the use of unrestricted cash modality for the delivery of ILA packages should be considered. This modality was successfully piloted, and it provides more flexibility in the choice of the items and leaves more room for price negotiation. In locations where the conditions are not suitable to unrestricted cash, the programme should continue strengthening the risk mitigation measures in place for the voucher system, including expanding the pool of vendors and have IOM staff present during the transaction;*
- *Consider further integration of the programme components to improve overall efficiency;*
- *Provide additional training or coaching to field teams in a specific location to improve their awareness and understanding of 'do no harm' principles and risk mitigation strategies;*
- *Conduct a gender analysis to identify gender-specific challenges and needs, and mechanisms to further facilitate women's participation in a way that is culturally acceptable.*