

Terms of Reference

National Consultant on Research, Liaisons and High-Level Advocacy for Social Security and National Public Works Programme Roadmap Development

ILO Iraq, May 2024

1. Background

Over the past few decades, Iraq has enjoyed a favourable demographic profile characterized by the working-age population expanding at a higher rate than the general population, widely referred to as the “demographic window of opportunity”. While the expansion of the working-age population, and the concomitant enlargement of the labour force, can be the driver for sustained economic growth, Iraq inability to create sufficient jobs to absorb the rapidly growing labour force has led to waves of social unrest. Youth unemployment is especially alarming estimated at 22 percent and 66 percent for male and female labour force participants, respectively. This age and gender dimension to the unemployment ratios in Iraq is coupled with the low participation rate of female citizens in the labour market, currently at only 11.76 percent in comparison of male labour for participation at 74 percent (ILOSTAT, 2021). The discriminatory labour market in Iraq has resulted into unequitable outcomes and differential coverage rates between male and female labour force participants. For instance, reports indicated that for every 100 males covered by the Pension and Social Security Fund for Workers, only 8.7 females are covered.

The lack of decent jobs in private sector that can absorb the growing working age population results in high informality. The 2021 Labour Force Survey shows that the number of persons with informal jobs was 5,734,000, representing almost two-thirds (66.6 percent) of total employment. Of these, about 4,723,000 were employed in the informal sector, corresponding to about 54.8 percent of total employment, but there were also a significant number of persons with informal employment in the formal sector (1,011,000 persons). An example of this category of persons is an employee working in a large private corporation or a government agency with a short-term contract without social security contribution by the employer. Men are more likely than women to hold informal jobs (68 percent compared to 44 percent, which may result from the higher share of women in public employment, compared to the share among men), so do non-citizens over citizens, less educated over more educated, those engaged in agriculture than those engaged in industry or services.

2. Rationale for Consultancy

Following four decades of conflict which devastated Iraq’s economy resulting in the destruction of infrastructure, deindustrialization, high unemployment and emigration, the Government of Iraq in its reconstruction efforts has signaled the creation and roll-out of a National Public Work Programme as a development priority as public works are seen as a means of creating sustainable employment opportunities for low-income households with low wages or unemployed, and as a way of contributing to local development and infrastructure rehabilitation through small, locally defined projects.

While public works programmes can sustainably transform the economy and reduce poverty, they can also fail as a result of elite capture and corruption. The design of public works programmes is therefore of critical importance, with several considerations to be factored in. It is hence appropriate to develop a Road Map to support Government as it seeks to establish a National Public Works Programme for Iraq through this consultancy.

Related to that is the ongoing work on the extension of social security coverage and formalization in Iraq. The lack of private sector jobs ultimately leads to increased vulnerability to lifecycle risks by the working-age population as well as their dependents, particularly children, elderly and persons with disability. While public works may serve as a pathway to sustainable employment, it must be ensured that the jobs created within the programme provide access to social security and support formalization efforts. The adoption of the new Pension and Social Security Law in Federal Iraq in 2023 marks new possibilities for the extension of social security coverage to workers in the private sectors, including wage workers, self-employed and own account workers, both in formal and informal sector, thus facilitating their transition to formality.

The Government of Iraq is, therefore, seeking to continue the discussions on the extension of social security coverage, with a particular focus on workers in the informal economy, in a broader context of transition to formality, for which public works could serve as one of the leverages. As part of these discussion, the Government seeks to conduct the National Conference on Formalization to source information, data and ideas for the development of the National Strategy on the Transition to Formality, which would include a roadmap on the extension of social security coverage to workers in the informal economy.

3. Overall and specific objectives of consultancy

Under the EU-funded Programmes “Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform” and “Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT)”, the ILO seeks to hire a national consultant to support research and evidence generation efforts, high-level liaison and policy advocacy on social protection, transition to formality and public employment.

Specific objectives of this consultancy are four-fold:

1. Supporting an international consultant recruited under BEIT programme in preparing the road map to support the national entities' efforts in developing and launching a National Public Works Programme;
2. Facilitating policy level discussions on the extension of social security coverage and transition to formality in Iraq in the context of developing national policy on formalization;
3. Strengthening ILO relations with national stakeholders, including the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs;
4. Contributing to a better coordination of policy and advocacy efforts under Social Protection and BEIT programmes, ensuring their alignment and complementarity for maximized results.

4. Tasks description of consultancy

Social Protection Programme for Iraq: Leveraging Effective Response and Accelerating Reform Project

Under the overall supervision of the ILO Iraq country coordinator and a direct supervision of the Chief Technical Advisor on Social Security, the consultant will carry out the below tasks during the period of 15th of June 2024- 31 December 2024:

1. Serve as a **member of the research committee** for the National Conference on the Transition to Formality, the Conference on Migration and Decent Work and any other conferences or roundtables on formalization and extension of social security to informal workers held by ILO in 2024.
2. **Draft pieces of research**, concept notes and position papers for key roundtable and conferences on formalization and extension of social security to informal workers that are planned by ILO in 2024.
3. Support the ILO and national stakeholders with **sourcing ideas and drafting a comprehensive National Strategy on the Transition to Formality** that will embrace workers' and enterprise angles, and has a strong social protection focus.
4. Coordinate and facilitate the work of the **Technical Working Group (TWG) on Formalization and Social Security**, including by drafting concept notes and terms of reference for the upcoming meetings, arranging and facilitating meetings, compiling and validating minutes, and ensuring due follow up.
5. Serve as an **ILO focal point for the Institutional Capacity Assessment** exercise on social security, supporting the liaison and exchange of information with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Planning, including by requesting the data, validating findings, seeking clarifications, when required.
6. Support and maintain **ILO engagement with the Ministry of Planning** on the developmental issues in Iraq, including formalization of workers and enterprises, extension of social security and decent public employment, and assist ILO to position its support and align it with Iraq's development vision.

7. Initiate and **create linkages between the ILO and Iraqi research institutions, academia, think tanks**, policy makers, and thought leaders so the ILO will become increasingly part of the intellectual scene to exchange ideas, knowledge, experiences and views on inclusive social policy and economic development in Iraq.
8. Position the ILO as a **though leader promoting Universal Social Protection and Decent Work**. This includes, among others, arranging one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders, including outside the immediate social protection audience, such as the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture, and brokering ILO participation in key research, policy and advocacy events at the national, regional and local level.
9. **Present the position of the ILO on key social security and formalization reforms at high-level fora** in Iraq by disseminating the findings of research and evidence generated by the ILO. The aim of the key findings' presentations is to stimulate constructive dialogue and bring the attention to key issues that face the Iraq's aspiration to become socially inclusive and economically productive nation in line with the vision stipulated in the White Paper as well as the SDGs agenda.

Building Equitable and Inclusive Transformation (BEIT) Project

The following tasks are foreseen, in providing support and input to the international consultant on Public Works:

1. **Support a National Consultation Workshop** with constituents and stakeholders on the relevance of a Public Works or Public Employment Programme for Iraq (tentative date: 30 July or 01 August 2024).
2. **Desk review of legal and administrative framework for a National Public Works Programme.** This will include reviewing available statistics of the Ministry of Planning, reviewing the Iraq federal budget for the years 2023-2025 as well as national instructions relating to the public works and contracting according to Iraq Civil law. Consultants will identify regulations and procedures that need to be developed to support the legal and administrative framework for public works leading to the establishing the National Public Works Programme.
3. **Organize three national consultations, and regional / sectorial focus group discussions** with different stakeholders including the Ministry of Labour and Social Assistance (MoLSA), the Ministry of Housing , the National Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NCOSH), Unions, Employers federations (the federation of contractors , the Iraq Federation of Industries (IFI) , and the Iraq Chamber of Commerce), the Iraqi Bar Association, the National Board of Investment, the Ministry of Planning, Iraqi Universities, and the Iraqi Engineers Unions. Consultations should identify priority sectors, shelf of works and other strategic priorities of a National Public Works Programme in selected Governorates. Following consultations, the consultants will prepare a first draft of the Comprehensive Report recommending sectors to focus on, shelf of works, material and labour cost ratios for different types of works, governance of prioritization and contracting, draft organigramme including potential linkages with other existing and relevant services and programmes, particularly social security and care services, and operational guidance note of programme.
4. **Support in information gathering, data analysis, and provision of local context** in regard to information related to the road map processes.
5. **Support establishment of a National Public Works Programme Design Committee** including main ILO constituents. Consultants will draft terms of reference to support the committees work, identify and propose agenda items, and prepare other committee documentation.
6. **Support the organization of a study visit abroad** for the Public Works Programme Design Committee and key Government decision makers. The international consultant will liaise with key stakeholders in country to be visited and prepare the study programme. The consultants will submit a study visit report.
7. **Organize an official launch** of the National Public Works Programme. Consultants will present: (1) the work of the design committee meetings, (2) a Study Visit Report, (3) the draft Final Report, and (4) draft Regulations and instructions.

List of deliverables and number of days

Deliverables under Social Protection project	Number of days	Tentative timeline for engagement
Minutes/report on proceeding from at least 8 high-level forums, conferences and roundtables at the national, regional or local level where relevant ILO research and findings are presented	• 5 days	July – December 2024
2 pieces of research/position papers prepared for the two main conferences planned	• 20 days	June – October 2024
Minutes/report on proceeding from at least 6 meetings representing the ILO in the research committee guiding the two main conferences	• 3 days	June – October 2024
Minutes/report on proceeding from at least 8 high-level forums, conferences and roundtables at the national, regional or local level where relevant ILO research and findings are presented	• 5 days	July – December 2024
Minutes/report on proceeding from at least 3 regular sessions on the issues agreed prior with the ILO with the Ministry of Planning and at least 3 one-to-one meetings with the officials at the Ministry of Planning	• 5 days	July – November 2024
Minutes/report on proceeding from at least 3 selected high-level meetings attended together with the ILO management	• 2 days	July – November 2024
Minutes/report on the organization and proceeding of at least 2 Technical Working Groups on Formalization and Social Security are organized and facilitated	• 3 days	August – December 2024
Draft report/minutes sheets on the coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the Institutional Capacity Assessment	• 15 days	October – December 2024
Draft inputs to the draft National Strategy on the Transition to Formality	• 10 days	October – December 2024
Total number of days under Social Protection project	63 days	

Deliverables under BEIT project	Number of days	Tentative timeline for engagement
Information Gathering and Support	• 2 days	June-July 2024
Comprehensive report on national consultations and desk review	• 6 days	July-August 2024
Study visit report	• 4 days	August-September 2024

Draft regulation, instructions and other procedural documents	• 4 days	September 2024
Launch of National Public Works Programme	• 2 days	October 2024
Final report	• 2 days	October - November 2024
Total number of days under BEIT project	20 days	

Contract duration

The total number of days of this assignment is **83 working days** (63 days under Social Protection Programme and 20 days under BEIT programme). The assignment will last from **15th June 2024 to 31 December 2024**.

Modalities for payment of fees

Payments will be made upon the submission of the specified deliverable to the satisfaction of the ILO along with the timesheets confirming the number of days spend on the specific deliverable under the BEIT or Social Protection project. A consultant must keep careful record of time spend on the specific deliverables under each project.

Location and Missions

Consultant is expected to travel to work within the scope of the project activities and travel expected **around** Iraq during the period of assignment. He will be expected to facilitate, moderate and provide presentation in several workshops. Travel costs for the expected missions will be born by the ILO, and are not expected to be included in the consultancy fees.

Coordination

Consultant is expected is expected to closely coordinate with the Chief Technical Advisors of Social Protection and BEIT programmes to avoid overlap in activities, and with the international consultant on public works under BEIT programme.

Qualification requirements

The applicant for this national consultancy should have an advanced degree in Law, Social Work, Social Services, Public Administration, Business Administration, Economy or related field and have at least 10 years of experience in working on high-level policy coordination and advocacy, research and evidence-based public policy development in the area of social protection, labour market policies, public employment or transition to formality in Iraq and/or MENA regions.

Having a track record of relevant publications or verifiable experience of contributing to designing and implementing evidence-based social protection or labour market policies would be an asset. Excellent knowledge of Arabic, and good knowledge English is required.

Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications in English, comprising of a motivation letter specifying their daily rate expectations in USD, CV and a detailed workplan, with a subject "National Consultant on Research, Liaisons and High-Level Advocacy for Social Security and National Public Works Programme Roadmap Development", to iraq-procurement@ilo.org with a copy to alkaram@ilo.org, uriyo@ilo.org and levina@ilo.org by 30 May 2024. Applications that do not meet the submission criteria will not be considered.