

Quick Facts

► Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics – Independent Final evaluation

► **Date:** April 2022

► About the evaluation:

This is a final independent evaluation, which serves as a final evaluation for the Iraq RBSA funded Project. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess programme progress towards the achievement of key results and document key lessons learned and provide practical guidance and recommendations to improve similar programmes.

► About the Project

The project "Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics" is a result of a partnership between the ILO and the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and Kurdistan Statistical Organization (KRSO) in Iraq, to implement the first national labour force survey (LFS) in a decade and contribute to a better formulation and implementation of appropriate employment policies.

Evaluation methodology:

The evaluation was primarily qualitative in nature. Key methods included:



A desk review of available documents



An initial briefing with the Project team



Key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders



Data analysis and synthesis

KEY FINDINGS

1. Given the absence of an updated employment policy in Iraq, and the fact that the last LFS was conducted more than 10 years ago, the project and its objectives were found to be highly relevant to the context of Iraq and were based on the identified needs of the country.
2. The design of the project was found to be coherent and logical and was based on a sequential logic whereby the development of an employment policy came after the implementation of the LFS, in order to formulate an evidence-based policy. With regards to the COVID-19 response, the project was able to introduce various design readjustments to enable a continuation of work under a remote-work methodology implemented during the COVID 19 crisis and associated lockdowns.
3. In spite of the unique set of challenges faced by the project and the associated delays, the project was able to complete the LFS exercise and conduct capacity building activities with NSOs. However, the policy component of the project could not move forward at the intended pace. This ultimately affected the coordination efforts with higher level stakeholders and constituents, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and employers' and workers' representatives.
4. The project contributed significantly to the other ILO mainstreamed strategies of gender equality and labour standards.
5. One unintended positive outcome was the project's significant contribution in bringing both NSOs in Iraq closer together and strengthening their relationship.
6. The project, along with its achievements, is expected to have a significant positive impact on the future policy development process in Iraq, as it had set up the evidence-based groundwork for the coming development of policy.
7. The project had focused on conducting capacity building activities as a means to ensure the sustainability of results, but given the challenges faced by the project, much of this capacity building work was conducted remotely, and was not fully implemented as planned. A high level of ownership of this project was displayed by the NSOs.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support Iraqi policy makers in the development of the NEP.
- Continue providing technical support for the periodic production of LFS data based on latest 19th and 20th ICLS resolutions.
- Undertake proper institutional capacity assessments for project partners prior to project design.
- Develop proper guidance in case of force majeure, including a cloud depository for project progress documents, notes, and other information.
- Utilize the ILO Iraq office in any future work in Iraq.
- Enhance engagement with constituents throughout the project timeframe.
- Undertake a mid-term review whenever severe delays or challenges are encountered during implementation, to guide any design readjustments and provide the way forward for a project.
- Enhance the use of local skills and local language, especially during times when physical presence is not possible.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED:



The absence of a proper institutional assessment of beneficiary institutions (i.e. NSOs) led to various obstacles during implementation as a result of an overestimation of the capacities of national counterpart institutions during the design phase. This was identified as main challenge and led to considerable delays.



A low level of communication and cooperation with the ILO coordination office in Iraq prevented the project from leveraging ILO resources to overcome obstacles faced during implementation, especially following the COVID-19 crisis, and contributed to the minimal involvement of tripartite constituents in Iraq.



The absence of force majeure guidelines led to substantial challenges and delays following the passing away of the project manager, leaving a gap in the management and administration of the project which took significant time to fill.



The weak level of engagement with ILO constituents early on in the project, and the delays faced by the project, meant that ILO constituents in Iraq were not involved in most of this project's activities, which ultimately translated into a weak implementation of the policy component of the project and led to a weaker-than-expected level of national ownership from higher level policy makers and constituents.

GOOD PRACTICES:

The project strongly contributed to bringing both NSOs in Iraq (CSO & KRISO) closer together through its adoption of a unified LFS methodology for both NSOs, and through its provision of capacity building activities for both entities together. The project resulted in a higher level of cooperation and coordination between these two entities, and ensured that no one area is left behind in the project, adhering to the principle and commitment of 'leaving no one behind'.

Given that there was no time left in the project to implement the policy component (i.e. development of NEP), the project team is in the process of mobilizing other donor funds from another ILO project to continue with the provision of assistance to the policy development process, ensuring that efforts and resources spent on this project are built upon and continued, and ensuring that the NEP is based on updated LM data.

QUOTES

► CSO

"The project helped bring us closer to KRISO as we both implemented one methodology and we were trained together. The inclusion of the Kurdistan region was crucial to produce complete data for Iraq on the national level."

► KRISO

"We were able to work around the various challenges faced in this project through the continuous support of ILO colleagues."

► ILO staff

"Despite all these challenges, we are very happy with the results of the project. The survey was implemented according the latest ICLS 19 resolutions, with added modules on trade unions and disability. The topic of informality was also highlighted, which is the core of the next ICLS."