

**Capacity Building to Reform the Public Distribution System and Strengthen Social Safety Nets for Vulnerable Groups in Iraq**

**MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE REPORT  
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM JUL. 2010 TO SEP 2012**

<p align="center"><b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b></p> <p>Programme Title: Capacity Building to Reform the Public Distribution System and Strengthen Social Safety Nets for Vulnerable Groups in Iraq          Programme Number: A5-31          MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00075707</p>	<p align="center"><b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</b></p> <p><i>Country/Region: Nationwide except Kurdistan Region</i></p> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results:</i></p> <p><i>Priority Area#2 Inclusive, more equitable and sustainable economic growth</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Participating Organization(s)</b></p> <p>World Food Programme (WFP)</p>	<p align="center"><b>Implementing Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), Ministry of Trade (MoT), Ministry of Planning (MoP)</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b></p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: US\$2.5 million          MPTF /JP Contribution: US\$2.5 million          Agency Contribution</p> <p>Government Contribution</p> <p>Other Contributions (donors)</p> <p><b>TOTAL: US\$ 2.5 million</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Programme Duration</b></p> <p>Overall Duration (<i>months</i>) 25 Months</p> <p>Start Date 02 July 2010          Original End Date 02 July 2012          Actual End date 30 September 2012</p> <p>Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system?    Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Expected Financial Closure date: 30 Sep 2013</p>
<p align="center"><b>Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</b></p> <p>Evaluation Completed  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No    Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>          Evaluation Report - Attached  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No    Date: <i>dd.mm.yyyy</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Report Submitted By</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name: Ahmed Zakaria (Zak)</li> <li>Title: Head of Baghdad Office</li> <li>Participating Organization (Lead): WFP</li> <li>Email address: ahmed.zakaria@wfp.org</li> </ul>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Joint Capacity Development Program aimed to assisting Government of Iraq (GoI) to Strengthen Social Safety Nets (SSN) and to reform the Public Distribution System (PDS) for Vulnerable Groups in Iraq through enhancing SSN ability in targeting, beneficiary selection and registration, conditionality, payments, fraud/corruption reduction, beneficiary verification, performance monitoring and impact evaluation as well as through supporting PDS Supply Chain Management.

Key Achievements of the project included Performance M&E System is in place and has been handed over to SSN Department within MoLSA, designed and tested M&E Targeting Tools to be used to exclude beneficiaries who live above poverty line from the SSN, conducted Field Operations trainings on the use of the M&E Tools for Social Workers, trained IT Programmers and Database Personnel from most governorates, conducted SSN Design workshops and trainings, extended WFP Recommendations to strengthen SSN to MOLSA through SSN Capacity Development for Vulnerable Groups in Iraq Report and conducted PDS Supply Chain management trainings and workshops to the Ministry of Trade (MoT) staff.

A Food Security, Living Conditions, and Social Transfers in Iraq Report was officially published as a joint effort between WFP and Ministry of Planning (MoP). The report provided different proposed scenarios to reform the PDS and SSN. Proposed scenarios are now being considered by the national level high PDS Reform Committee.

### **I. Purpose**

The project offers technical capacities to support government efforts to reform the Public Distribution System and design and implement efficient Social Safety Net programmes in Iraq.

#### **National Development Goal and Immediate Objectives:**

##### **National priority or goals (NDS 2007- 2010 and ICI):**

**NDS:** Pillar 3: Improving the quality of life

##### **ICI Benchmarks (as per the Joint Monitoring Matrix 2008):**

Benchmark 4.3.1.1: Phase out universal subsidies

Benchmark 4.4.1.1: Design and carry out specific policies including reforms and investments toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Benchmark 4.4.2.1: Undertake specific measure to strengthen the targeted safety net

##### **Sector Team and Integrated Programme/Project Outcome:**

Outcome 2: “GoI has national food assistance and hunger-reduction programmes in place”.

Moreover, this programme falls under the UNDAF Priority # 2 and is aligned to the UNDAF outcome 2.2 “Vulnerable people in Iraq are benefiting from means-tested social transfers which stimulate economic growth and reduce dependency”.

## II. Assessment of Programme Results

### i) Narrative reporting on results:

- **Outcomes:** In 2010, the government had endorsed a 5-year plan to reform the PDS and to improve the Social Safety Net targeting ability of vulnerable population. The council of Minister approved the formation of high steering committee for poverty reduction consisted of a permanent secretariat and technical committees.

UNDAF Priority Areas “Inclusive, more equitable and sustainable economic growth;” and with National Development strategic goals (2010-2014) “...Further, ensure basic social services to the poor by ensuring qualification and training in new job areas, particularly for high-risk groups like orphans, widows, and individuals with special needs.”

In accordance with the above, the main outcome of the project was “GoI has adequate national food assistance and hunger-reduction programmes in place.”

Project main focus was in supporting MOLSA Social Safety Net in enhancing its targeting ability to distinguish between vulnerable households who live below and around poverty line and the others who live above it to make sure that SSN assistance reaches the right groups. Such support was mainly done through several training sessions and workshops as well as designing and testing of several technical assistance tools, installing it and making it as self and sustained functioning managed by the MoLSA.

Furthermore, WFP also supported MoT Public Distribution System focusing mainly on enhancing its supply chain management through several workshops and training sessions.

- **Outputs:** The project outputs were focused on the two following areas:

#### A. Strengthened capacity to design and implement efficient Social Safety Net programmes

Provided technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the GoI to design and implement effective Social Safety Net (SN) programmes covering issues such as targeting, beneficiary selection and registration, conditionality, payments, fraud/corruption reduction, beneficiary verification, performance monitoring and impact evaluation.

In particular, the activities included training in the various aspects of the design of social safety nets (i.e. context analysis, determination of the SSN goals, targeting, conditionality, determination of size and limitations, determination of required resources), the field operations of social safety nets (i.e. beneficiary selection process, registration, verification and transfer of benefits) and performance monitoring and evaluation (i.e. M&E systems, information management system).

The outputs also included assessments on food security and vulnerability in Iraq and on the functioning of the social protection system.

In December 2012, the report on food security conditions among Iraqi households was published. The report linked the past with the future and answers very pertinent questions about the future of food security in Iraq, like:

- How will climate change affect both national and household food security in the next 5 to 10 years? And

- How will the reform of the Public Distribution System affect household food security amongst the poorest households? And
- What form of Social Transfer System is best placed to address food insecurity in Iraq during and post PDS reform?

The report Food Security, Living Conditions and Social Transfers in Iraq has, since its launch, become the major reference of on-going dialogue at the national High Committee level examining various suggested approaches for PDS Reform and Social Transfer.

## **B. Strengthened capacity to support efficient food supply chains management in Iraq**

Through the activities supporting this output, a number of MOT staff members were trained through intensive capacity building Training of Trainers (ToT) approach on critical aspects of the food supply chain such as procurement, shipping, commodity tracking and logistics (i.e. land transport and warehouse management).

The MoT trainers were expected to build the capacity for a team of Iraqi trainers to provide support services to the Iraqi private sector through business incubators and business support centers. To facilitate this process, a detailed training curriculum was designed and provided.

From the project implementation it can be concluded that most expected results of the planned activities were achieved and in several cases the number of trained staff exceeded the number that was originally planned. The training and capacity building of Ministries staff, along with the design, development, installation and practice of the M&E database, helped raising the level of knowledge and performance of the targeted social safety net workers, supply chain management staff and the IT programmers. Additionally, and most significantly, IKN food security report has given the national level policy makers some clear options to make concrete progress towards PDS Reform and Social Transfer.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

Strong and effective partnership with government counterparts as well as sister United Nations agencies and international organizations was essential for the success of the project. WFP has been requested to lead the United Nations in supporting the Government of Iraq in reforming and improving the Iraqi social protection system, specifically the social safety net and the PDS, in order to protect the wellbeing of the poor and vulnerable population.

To ensure national ownership of the project achievements, counterpart GoI ministries were in lead. For example, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) led the Social Safety Net related activities, the Ministry of Trade (MoT) led the PDS Reform and Supply Chain Management related activities and the Ministry of Planning (MoP) led the survey and production of the Food Security, Living Conditions and Social Transfers in Iraq Report.

The major source of data for this report was the Iraq Knowledge Network (IKN) survey, executed nationally by the Central Organization for Statistics (COS) of the Federal Ministry of Planning and in cooperation with the Kurdistan Region Statistical Office (KRSO) of the Kurdistan Region Ministry of Planning.

Planning and execution of the IKN survey was technically supported by WFP, UNDP and UNFPA in an inter-agency effort coordinated by the Inter Agency Information and Analysis Unit (IAU). The partnership was driven by a common vision with a goal to support the Government of Iraq to improve its policy analysis and planning processes through effective monitoring of socio economic trends.

## ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP**s - provide details of the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why.

	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	<b>Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)</b>	<b>Source of Verification</b>
<b>Outcome 1<sup>1</sup></b> GoI has adequate national food assistance and hunger-reduction programmes in place <b>Indicator:</b> <b>Baseline:</b> <b>Planned Target:</b>			
<b>Output 1.1</b> Strengthened capacity to design and implement efficient Social Safety Net programmes <b>Indicator 1.1.1</b> Number of GoI staff trained in SSN design <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target: 15</b>	21	The MOLSA requested to increase the number.	Training Report
<b>Indicator 1.1.2</b> Number of GoI staff trained in SSN Filed Operations <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target: 15</b>	22	More staff were nominated from the MoLSA.	Workshop Report
<b>Indicator 1.1.3</b> Number of GoI staff trained in SSN RBM <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target: 15</b>	7	Number of staff recommended from MoLSA	Training report
<b>Indicator 1.1.4</b> Number of GoI staff participating in SSN Budgeting and Finance workshop <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target: 13</b>	13		Workshop Report
<b>Indicator 1.1.5</b> Number of analytical reports and studies completed in household food security and vulnerability <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target: 1</b>	1		The Report - Food Security, Living Conditions and Social Transfers in Iraq

<sup>1</sup> Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlines in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

<p><b>Output 1.2</b> Strengthened Iraqi capacity to manage efficient food supply chains</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.2.1:</b> Number of GoI staff trained in Public Sector Procurement and import (**)</p> <p><b>Baseline: 0</b></p> <p><b>Planned Target: 10</b></p>	53	(**) WFP Logistics and the MoT have modified the indicator to accommodate more staff from Baghdad and from the governorates as more practical approach. Also number of staff targeted for other module e.g. shipping was included in the same training.	Training Report
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.2</b> Number of GoI staff trained in Logistics – warehouse /land transport/pipeline management</p> <p><b>Baseline: 0</b></p> <p><b>Planned Target: 30</b></p>	30	In addition to MoT staff, Ministry of Education (MoE) staff were also involved as they manage a large school feeding programme in Iraq.	Training report
<p><b>Indicator 1.2.3</b> Number of training curriculum developed i) procurement, ii) shipping, iii) commodity tracking and iv) logistics</p> <p><b>Baseline: 0</b></p> <p><b>Indicator: 4</b></p>	4	The international standard practices and curricula were adapted to Iraqi context and were translated into Arabic.	The Curricula

## **ii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

Monitoring of project activities and progress against planned targets were carried out through regular review process. This process included several coordinated approaches at the technical level, at the Deputy Minister level, at the Minister level and at the Steering Committee level. Additionally, direct periodic contact with the trained staff to follow-up on their practicing of the newly gained tools and skills were conducted. This assisted in keeping the staff engaged and focused on working with the tools and further enhance its capacity through practice. In some cases the trained staff have provided their feedback through brief survey questionnaires. Feedback obtained suggested that the staff who received training were satisfied and affirmed that it was relevant to real and practical needs in the areas of Social Safety Nets (SSN) and PDS activities particularly Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

Restrictions on access within Iraq due to security measures are found to cause significant delays in the preparation and completion of project activities. While this was foreseen during the project design phase, the time impact of the obstacles to implementation was under estimated. For example: i) restriction of movement limited staff capacity in more frequently required contact with the trained staff, ii) organizing various coordination meetings always posed a challenge and many time got delayed or cancelled, iii) venue for workshops and trainings was very limited – no such activity was able to conduct in any governorate. Amman and Erbil being two main choices, it was highly expensive. While several workshops/trainings took place in Baghdad, always it posed serious hardship for the participants from the governorates and many occasions, several of them will either drop-out or the whole workshop was cancelled in short notice.

The change in the Ministers in the end of 2010 brought about by the formation of the new coalition government following the elections in early 2010 required a significant amount of time for WFP to re-establish links with the top management of both the Ministry of Trade (MOT) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA). While the process was swift with MOLSA (the Minister was identified in January 2011 and the MOU was signed in March 2011) the Ministry of Trade remained without a Minister until March 2011 and effective engagement with the MOT was on hold until October 2011. This kind of uncertainties and transition within the ministries also delayed selection process of staff to be trained for different modules.

Trained staff from the governorates did not have enough resources and equipment to practice their newly gained knowledge and skills. This hampered perfecting their skills and it was visible when they were given some tasks on pilot basis – it emerged that further the governorates were, limited were resources and equipment resulted in average quality of work.

Despite all challenges - flexibility, patience, pursuance, perseverance, review, coordination and adjustments have helped project achieved its most results.