Terms of Reference

Midterm Internal Project Evaluation for "Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to Private Sectors in Southern Iraq – with a Focus on Green Business"

1. Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	Towards More and Better Employment through Enhanced Support to Private Sectors in Southern Iraq – with a Focus on Green Business
Project DC Code	IRQ/22/03/ITA (503059)
Type of evaluation	Midterm Internal Evaluation
Timing of evaluation	Midterm
Donor	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS); Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	RO-Arab States
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	DWT-Beirut
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work
SDG(s) under evaluation	SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
Budget	Euro 3,000,000
Project Start Date	09 March 2023
Project End Date	12 May 2026

2. Background information

Private sector development in Iraq is challenged by several factors as the economy is largely dominated by the oil sector and state-owned enterprises further impedes incentives for private sectors growth and diversification in the wider economy. Moreover, local firms struggle to become competitive within national and international markets and an abundance of cheap imports combined with low levels of investment have hindered the development of nascent domestic activities[1]. Iraq is also known for challenging business environment which makes it difficult for "start-up" and/or MSMEs' to flourish and expand their business in the formal economy and green businesses. According to World Bank report in 2020, Iraq is ranked 172 out of 190 countries for "ease of doing business"[2]. This is related in particular to the financial and time-related costs of setting up businesses, which the report estimated takes 26.5 days on average, and costs about 14.6% of income per capita.

Another factor that halts the private sector development is access to credit, where Iraq is ranked 186 out of 190 countries in the world. ILO research on financial inclusion from 2019 highlights several challenges to accessing credit and formal financing services[3]. the banking sector in Iraq is considered relatively small with limited capacity, leading to strong competition from informal financial service providers. The previous illiquidity of banks has also resulted in low levels of trust among the population in the banking sector, while private-sector banks consider many SMEs to be very high risk, thus reducing the likelihood of lending to what effectively represents most enterprises in Iraq. A survey conducted in 2020 by UNDP on MSMEs, covering Baghdad, Basra and Nineveh (where 20% of the nation's MSMEs are located) found that only 1 percent of micro-enterprises held bank accounts, rising to 2.6 percent among small enterprises and 16 percent among medium enterprises, while 30 percent of enterprises had attempted but failed to obtain financing, and 55 percent showed reluctance to borrow[4]. To support SME's access to finance, the Central Bank of Iraq initiated a "One Trillion Iraqi Dinars Initiative5" in 2014, but uptake was identified as low, partly related to the difficulty of finding bankable projects but also due to the lack of guarantee required by the banks from the MSMEs.

Lack of business management skills and financial literacy coupled with lack of access to credit and loan services even makes it more complex for entrepreneurs and enterprises to start up business in Iraq. Furthermore, Iraqis private sector is characterized by high rates of informality and decent work deficit.

Iraq is characterized by "demographic window of opportunity" with a very large young population and a working age population growing at a higher rate than the overall population but is currently unable to catalyse on this opportunity as job creation is not keeping up with the growing size of the workforce[6]. The situation is considered as a "jobs crisis of unprecedented proportions"[7]

Despite all the above-mentioned challenges, the sector has enormous potential for growth and job creation if there is enabling business environment for MSMEs. The ILO, having the expertise and experience globally, in the region and in Iraq, namely: building on its well-established business and financial management tools, and its previous agreement with the central bank of Iraq, aspires to achieve the following two objectives while creating more and better jobs through this project in two

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[1] UNESCO (2019), *Assessment of the Labour Market & Skills Analysis Iraq and Kurdistan Region-Iraq - Informal Sector, available here*

[2] World Bank (2020), *Doing Business Report*, available here

[3] ILO (2019), *Advancing Livelihoods Through Financial Inclusion in Iraq*, available here

[4] MOP, CSO, UNDP and USAID (2021) *Iraq MSME 2020 Survey*, available here

[5] Iraqi Economists Network, available here

[6] Rabi, Amjad (2022), *Generation 2050: Turning Iraq's Demographic 'Gift' into an Economic Window of Opportunity*, available here

[7] World Bank (2018), *Jobs in Iraq: A Primer on Job Creation in the Short Term*, available here, p. 1

governorates of Southern Iraq, Basra and Muthanna. These are: 1) Improve business ecosystem for MSMEs in Iraq to grow and thrive through policy options along with national and subnational dialogue amongst key stakeholders in the private sector development; and 2) Capacitate and empower national/subnational financial and non-financial institutions to better support entrepreneurs and MSMEs to unleash their full potential.

The ILO signed the development cooperation agreement with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) dated on 09 March 2023 to implement the project. The project intends to deliver the following three outcomes while aspiring to attain the aforementioned key objectives:

> 1. Enhanced business support ecosystem for MSMEs to grow and thrive with a focus on green economy.

> 2. Improved business and financial management skills on the meso and micro levels (institutional and individual).

> 3. Improved financial inclusion of start-up businesses and MSMEs with focus on green economy.

The logical framework and Theory of Change (ToC) which depict the underlying results chain, indicators, targets, sources of verification, and assumptions regarding each project objective can be found in Annex 1.

This project is designed to contribute towards the achievement of several objectives of the current Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Iraq (2019-2023). In particular, it contributes to the achievement of Outcome 4, which is creating more and better employment opportunities ensuring that private sector development supports much-needed creation of new jobs.

Moreover, it also contributes to the accomplishment of some important objectives of the ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) 2022-2023, that set out the strategic objectives and expected outcomes for the organization's work, Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work. It is also expected that the implementation of the project might contribute to the achievement of the Country Programme Outcomes (CPO) IRQ 126 and IRQ 127.

Most importantly, the project contributes to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the UNSDCF (2020-2024) for Iraq under strategic priority 2: Growing the Economy for All, especially in what concerns the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (SDG 8), targets 8.5 "achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value".

All proposed activities have been looked into through a gender and disability inclusion perspective and reinforce equal consideration of women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) while implementing the activities.

Project management set-up and implementation arrangement: The governance structure of the project is led by a project Steering Committee comprised of concerned Ministries from Government of Iraq (MoLSA, MoF, MoT, MoP), Social Partners (Workers' and Employers' organizations), Chamber of Commerce, CBI, MFI, and Trade Unions which was established in the early implementation phase of the project. The Steering Committee has been overseeing implementation, facilitating coordination

and communication with policy makers, central and local authorities, other service providers and donors. So far, the steering committee held two annual meetings to review project progress and capture lessons learned.

At local government level, the Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs, Directorate of Youth and Sport and Directorate of Environment are the main counterparts of the project. The ILO has also been extensively engaging with Business Development Service (BDS) providers, TVET centres, development partners and civil society organisations) to strengthen collaboration in the delivery of services through the centre.

The project is implemented under the overall guidance and supervision of the ILO Country Coordinator based in Baghdad with the project team based in Baghdad and Basra that includes Project Manager and National Senior Project Officer who are responsible for overall planning, technical guidance, activity implementation, coordination, monitoring and reporting of the project in close collaboration with local implementing partners.

Operational Support Unit (OSU) stationed in Erbil and Baghdad provide administrative and financial services to the project team. The project is backstopped by the Enterprise Development; and Employment Specialists of the ILO Beirut DWT. Programme Support Unit at Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) – Beirut provides administrative support to the project. ENTRPRISE and SECTOR departments at Headquarters provide technical support to the project.

Short-term International/National experts services were also provided for preparing technical support, guidelines, training materials and supervision and other required assignments.

3. Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation projects. Provision is made in the project that a midterm evaluation will be conducted within 18 months after the project officially kicked-off in accordance with the ILO evaluation policy and guidelines.

The project document states that the midterm evaluation will be the opportunity for an in-depth reflection on the Theory of Change, strategy and assumptions guiding the intervention, as well as the effectiveness of activities accomplished in the lives of targeted beneficiaries of the project. The midterm evaluation will be used to assess the progress towards the results, identify the main difficulties/constraints, assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project for the targeted populations, and formulate lessons learned and practical recommendations. The project management team will utilize lessons learned, recommendations and emerging good practices to make informed decision on how to proceed and implement the remaining activities of the project. The ILO shall use the findings of the midterm evaluation to design a second phase to scaleup and replicate the project in the selected and other governorates of Iraq. Furthermore, the midterm evaluation might be instrumental to provide an opportunity for an in-depth reflection on the strategy and assumptions guiding the intervention.

The midterm evaluation will examine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential emerging high-level results which could last longer beyond the closeout of the project. The evaluation will also identify strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation mechanisms as well as lessons learned and good practices.

Specifically, the evaluation will examine the following aspects:

- **Relevance and Coherence: Alignment with the country, constituents', and beneficiaries needs, changes in context and review of assumptions (relevance):** Is the project's design adequate to address the problems at hand? Were the project objective and outcomes relevant in relation to the context on the ground?
- **Effectiveness: Results in terms of outcomes and outputs achieved (effectiveness):** How has the project contributed towards project's goals? To what extent did it contribute to the ILO's Programme & Budget, Country Programme Outcomes, and more largely SDGs?
- **Efficiency: Use of resources in achievement of projected performance (efficiency):** How have the resources been used to fulfil the project performance in an efficient manner with respect to cost, time and staff?
- **Assessment of potential impact:** To what extent has the project contributed long-term intended and unintended impact?
- **Sustainability:** Will the project's effects remain over time? What can be done to replicate or scaleup results achieved in the targeted and other governorates of Iraq?

The midterm evaluation will comply with ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation[8], and the UNEG ethical guidelines[9] will be followed.

The midterm evaluation will cover the implementation period since the start of the project which is from 9 March 2023 up until 28 February 2025. The evaluation will examine achievements of the project outcomes and outputs to date. As cross-cutting themes, the evaluation will also take specific note of integration of gender mainstreaming[10], disability inclusion, International Labour Standard, social dialogue[11], and environmental sustainability as well as contribution to SDGs[12].

The evaluation will also provide due attention to how the project is relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and other relevant https://training.dss.un.org/user/loginnational development frameworks.

The primary clients of this evaluation are Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Environment, Basra and Muthana Governorates and the Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs in Basra and Muthana Governorates - Vocational Training Centre in Basra and Muthana Governorates, branches of Worker's and Employer's representative organizations in Basra and Muthana, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, ILO DWT-Beirut, ILO ROAS, ILO-Iraq. Project stakeholders and units within the ILO may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

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[8] ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations 4th Edition

[9] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866

[10] https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf

[11] https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746717.pdf

[12] https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf

4. Evaluation criteria and questions (including Cross-cutting issues/ issues of special interest to the ILO)

The evaluation utilizes the standard ILO evaluation framework and follows the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria:

Relevance

- Is the project relevant to the targeted beneficiaries needs?
- Are the project objectives aligned with the recently adopted national development plan (2024-2028)?
- Are the project strategies and structures coherent and logical?
- Does the project make a practical use of a monitoring and evaluation framework? How appropriate and useful are the indicators in assessing the project's progress? Are indicators gender and disability sensitive? Are the assumptions for each outcome and output realistic?
- To what extent did the project design take into account: Specific gender equality and non-discrimination concerns, including inclusion of people with disabilities?

Coherence

- How does the project contribute to the ILO's Programme & Budget (P&B) 2022-2023 and 2024-2025, Country Programme Outcomes, Decent Work Country Programme for Iraq 2019-2023, United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (2020-2024) and (2025-20029), and SDGs?
- To what extent was the project coherent with other similar ILO's Development Cooperation interventions such as PROSPECTS project and other development partners initiatives?

Effectiveness

- Is the project on track in achieving the overall objective, outcomes, and outputs?
- How has the project benefited direct and indirect beneficiaries?
- How did outputs and outcomes contribute to the DWCP (2019-2023) mainstreamed strategic priority areas?

Efficiency

- To what extent have project activities been cost-efficient? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the intended outcomes?
- To what extent can the project results justify the time, financial and human resources invested in the project?
- To what extent has the project been synergized with other ILO Development Cooperation Projects either at national or governorate level, in particular regarding to the establishment the new ILO Operation Support Unit arrangement to provide administrative support in cost sharing manner?
- How effective was communication among the project teams, the regional office RPU and the responsible technical department at ROAS? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?

Impact orientation

- What is the likely contribution of the project initiatives to the National Development Plan (2024-2028) objectives, UNSDCF (2025-2029) and ILO's Development and Programmes (2024-2025) outcomes?

- Is the project likely to produce long-term effects in terms of creating more and better employment opportunities through enhanced support of the private sectors development with a focus on green business in the selected governorates of Southern Iraq?

<u>Sustainability</u>

- To what extent was sustainability of impact taken into account during the design of the project?
- Are the results achieved by the project likely to be sustainable?
- What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project?

The evaluator may adapt the evaluation questions stated above, but any fundamental changes should be agreed with the Evaluation Manager while reflecting those changes in the inception report.

5. Methodology

This midterm evaluation is formative evaluation, and it includes examining whether the intervention's Theory of Change (ToC) holds true with particular attention on what can be done to improve the implementation of the remaining activities of the project, identification of assumptions, risks, and mitigation strategies, and the logical connect between levels of results against the targeted indicators stipulated in the project logical framework (see Annex 1) and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.

The midterm evaluation will use both primary and secondary data collection techniques and apply mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) data analysis approaches to respond to the evaluation questions and fulfil the purpose of the evaluation to capture intervention's contributions to the achievement of intended and unintended outcomes. Data collection and analysis methodology includes:

- **Desk review of existing documents:** The evaluator will conduct systematic analysis of existing documents and obtain existing qualitative and quantitative evidence prior to primary data collection. The desk review also facilitates assessment of the situation and available data to plan the evaluation and develop the inception report.
- **Key informant interviews (KIIs):** Online/in-person individual interviews will be conducted with a pre-agreed list of stakeholders, who have been engaged during the implementation of the project. Key informants should be identified purposively based on their familiarity and understanding of the project. Interview guide(s) and data collection instruments will be developed in relation to the identified evaluation questions and can be shared with the identified key informants prior to the actual KII to stimulate a better response during the discussions.
- **Focus group discussions:** Focus group discussions with direct and indirect beneficiary will be organized to collect their insights on the project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact and sustainability.
- **Preliminary finding briefing:** Upon completion of primary data collection, the evaluator will present preliminary findings to the project team including the Project Manager and Senior Officer in Basra, ILO's DWT Technical Specialist based in Beirut and Project Steering Committee for validation. Once a draft report is prepared, the evaluator will incorporate further insight and feedback coming from key stakeholders who are engaged in KIIs and FGDs feeding into the final report.
- **Triangulation:** To enhance the data quality and analysis as well as overcome bias that comes from single information sources, and the use of single methods or single observations; the evaluator is expected to employ data triangulation technique to ensure accuracy, robustness, and reliability of the evaluation results.
- **Data disaggregation:** Data gathered and analysed during the evaluation process should be presented with appropriate gender disaggregation. The data collection, analysis and presentation should also be responsive to issues related to diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues.

Limitation of the Evaluation: The evaluation manager foresees minor limitations that can be impediment to the evaluation process.

Access to primary and secondary data: Security issues and restriction of movements in the target governorates may create limitations to obtain primary and secondary data as much as the evaluation requires. Hence, the evaluator is expected to find out a solution for the existing limitation and present how the evaluation team intends to overcome such limitations in the inception report.

Detailed evaluation approach and methodology, including the evaluation workplan should be part of the inception report. Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with the Evaluation Manager and approved by the Evaluation Manager during the inception phase. The evaluator will make sure the involvement of key stakeholders in the evaluation process starting from the inception phase up until dissemination of the evaluation products.

Scope of Work and Detailed Assignment:

a) Kick-off meeting

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the evaluation manager, the project manager, senior project officer and relevant project team members as needed. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, agree on the evaluation questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final assessment report. The following topics will be covered during the kick-off meeting, including status of logistical arrangements, project background documents and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the inception and final report.

b) Desk Review

The evaluator will review project background materials before conducting interviews. Documents to review include but are not limited to project document including results framework, project progress reports, and project monitoring tools and systems, Cooperation agreement document, local implementation agreement, Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Iraq (2019-2023), ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) (2022-2023) and (2024-2025), the United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) - (2020-2024) and (2025-2029), and the National Development Plan (2024-2028).

c) Inception Report

The evaluator will draft an inception report, which should describe, provide reflection, and fine-tune the following issues:
- Project background
- Purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation
- Evaluation matrix, including criteria, questions, indicators, data source, and data collection methods
- Methodology and data collection tools (FGD, KII guiding questions and survey questionnaires)
- Main deliverables
- Detailed management arrangements and work plan

d) Primary Data Collection (Key Informant Interviews & Focus Group Discussions)

Following the inception report, the evaluator/international consultant will have remote interviews with stakeholders and targeted direct and indirect beneficiaries together with a national consultant supporting the process, if necessary. Individual or group interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders that include but not limited to Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Environment, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs in Basra Governorate - Vocational Training Centre in Basra Governorate, local employment service providers, project steering committee members and the ILO project team and ROAS technical backstopping units.

Focus group discussions will also be conducted with direct beneficiaries of the project by the national consultant who will be contracted separately if the international consultant is not able to conduct the discussion by her/himself in person.

e) Preliminary finding presentation

Upon completion of data collection, the evaluator will provide a briefing of preliminary findings to the ILO project team and the evaluation manager.

f) Midterm Evaluation Report

The evaluator will draft midterm evaluation report based on ILO's evaluation reporting template and submit to the evaluation manager to seek feedback from key stakeholders who participated in the KIIs and FGDs. Once the comments are compiled, it will be communicated to the evaluator to make some changes in the draft evaluation report and submit the final draft to the evaluation manager for endorsement.

6. Main deliverables

The main outputs of the evaluation consist of the following:

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report
- Deliverable 2: Draft midterm evaluation report (to be prepared within two weeks upon completion of interviews)
- Deliverable 3: PowerPoint Presentation on preliminary findings
- Deliverable 4: Final midterm evaluation report with separate template for executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices duly filled in as per ILO's standard procedure, the report will be considered final after quality review and endorsement of the ILO Evaluation Manager and Project Manager.

The final report will follow the format below and be in a range of **35-40 pages** in length, excluding the annexes:

1. Title page
2. Table of Contents, including List of Appendices, Tables
3. List of Acronyms or Abbreviations
4. Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations (in prescribed ILO template)
5. Background and Project Description
6. Purpose of Evaluation
7. Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions
8. Key evaluation findings (organized by evaluation criteria)
9. A table presenting the key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (intended and unintended)
10. Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible and the time and resource implications of the recommendations)
11. Lessons Learned (in prescribed ILO template)
12. Potential good practices (in prescribed ILO template)
13. Annexes (list of interviews, TORs, list of documents consulted, good practices and lessons learned in the ILO format, etc.)

The quality of the report will be assessed against the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) Checklists 4.2, 4.3, 4.4[13]. The deliverables will be submitted in the English language and structured according to the templates provided by the ILO.

7. Management arrangements and work plan (including timeframe)

Management Arrangements

The evaluator will report to the ILO's evaluation manager and should discuss any technical and methodological matters with him. The ILO project office in Basra will provide administrative and logistical support during the data collection. The evaluation manager will coordinate with the regional evaluation officer to endorse the final evaluation report.

The evaluator is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (ToR). She/he will:

- Review the ToR and propose any refinements to evaluation questions and methodology during the inception phase.

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[13] Link to Checklists can be found here: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_761031.pdf

- Review project background materials (e.g., project document, DC project agreement, project technical progress and financial reports, policy related document, assessment reports, SIYB and FE training reports etc.,).
- Prepare an inception report (including Evaluation Questions Matrix (EQM), data collection instruments, prepare list of stakeholders to meet/interview, work plan and others).
- Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions.
- Conduct preparatory consultations with the evaluation manager prior to the evaluation mission.
- Conduct key informant interviews and focus group discussions to collect information in relation to the predefined evaluation questions.
- Analyse findings from desk review, key informant interview and focus group discussions.
- Present preliminary findings.
- Prepare an initial draft of the midterm evaluation report with input from ILO project staff members, evaluation manager, project steering committee and key stakeholders.
- Prepare final midterm evaluation report incorporating all feedback from the ILO, donor and other stakeholders obtained from the draft report review.

The ILO Evaluation Manager in close consultation with the Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) is responsible for:
- Drafting the ToR.
- Finalizing the ToR with input from Project Manager and project steering committee.
- Review technical and financial proposal submitted by potential applicants and hire competent evaluator.
- Providing the evaluator with the project background materials and documents.
- Assisting the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review deliverables submitted by the consultant).
- Reviewing the inception report, initial and final draft reports, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluator on the inception report, draft and final evaluation report.
- Reviewing the final report in relation to ILO evaluation policy guidelines.
- Coordinating with the ROAS REO and ILO Evaluation Office for the publication of the final midterm evaluation report and submitting the relevant documentation for final uploading on *i-eval Discovery*.
- Disseminating the final report to stakeholders.
- Coordinating follow-up as required.

The Project Manager and Senior Project Officer are responsible for:
- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input.
- Providing project document including the ProDOC, logframe, workplan, progress reports, policy briefings, strategic documents, studies, assessment reports, training materials/packages, training evaluation reports, pre- and post-training test results, coaching reports from Master trainers, publications produced, and any relevant background notes.
- Providing proposed list of key stakeholders and master list of project target beneficiaries.
- Participating in the preparatory briefing prior to the actual data collection sessions.
- Scheduling key informant interviews and focus group discussions.
- Ensuring necessary logistical arrangements for the missions to conduct primary data collection.
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft midterm evaluation report.

- Participating in the debriefing on the preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Facilitating translation for any required documents: ToR, PPT, final evaluation report, executive summary of the final midterm evaluation report, summary of lessons learnt and emerging good practices, etc.
- Making sure appropriate follow-up action is taken including filling out the management response matrix.

Project steering committee and partners will be responsible to:

- Actively engage and participate in the midterm evaluation process (data collection, reviewing and provide comments on the draft and final reports, participate in debriefing and dissemination sessions, etc.).

Evaluation Tentative Timeframe

The evaluation is tentatively planned to commence on March 1, 2024, and will be completed on May 30, 2025. The following table describe the tentative timeline:

Responsible person	Tasks	Number of billable Working days	Indicative Date
Evaluator & Evaluation Manager	Kick-off meeting	1	3rd Mar 2025
Evaluator	Desk review of documents related to project, drafting inception report	6	3rd of Mar 2025– 10th Mar 2025
Evaluator	Submit inception report		10th Mar 2025
Evaluation Manager	Review of inception report		16th Mar 2025
Evaluator	Revise and resubmit inception report	1	20th Mar 2025
Evaluator with the logistical support of Project Manager and staffs on the ground	Interviews & focus group discussions	7	23rd Mar 2025 – 10th Apr 2025
Evaluator	Data analysis and drafting evaluation report	7	13th Apr 2025 – 25th Apr 2025
Evaluator	Submission of the draft report to the Evaluation Manager		25th Apr 2025
Evaluator	Presentation of the findings	1	30th Apr 2025
Evaluation Manager	Circulating the draft report with key stakeholders for review and feedback		
Evaluation Manager	Send consolidated comments to evaluator		7th May 2025
Evaluator	Revising draft final report	1	15th May 2025
Evaluation Manager	Review of Second Draft		22nd May 2025
Evaluator	Integration of comments and finalization of the report	1	27th May 2025
Evaluation Manager and ROAS REO	Submit the final evaluation report to EVAL for publication on ieval.		30th May 2025

Total estimated billable working days of consultant: 25 Days

Terms of Payment

  i.   10 per cent of the total fee against the submission of deliverable 1 upon endorsement by the evaluation manager and regional evaluation officer.
 ii.   30 per cent of the total fee against the submission of deliverable 2 and 3.
iii.   60 per cent of the total fee against the submission of deliverable 4, following the endorsement of the final evaluation report.

8. Qualification Criterion

The evaluator is expected to have the following qualifications:

- Proven experience in evaluation related to private sector development, MSMEs policy, green business development, Entrepreneurship, MSMEs development, business management enhancement projects.
- Prior experience in the region, particularly in Iraq, is asset.
- High professional standards and principles of integrity in accordance with ILO Evaluation Policy and United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.
- An advanced degree in Social Science or related fields.
- Proven expertise on evaluation methods.
- Understanding of the ILO Decent Work agenda and tripartite foundations.
- Very good command of English. Good command of Arabic is an advantage.
- Previous experience in evaluations for UN agencies is preferred, particularly ILO.

Given the current security restrictions, the consultant who conduct this evaluation may remotely work with a national interpreter, who will also provide the necessary support for data collection.

9. Legal and ethical matters

- This evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation guidelines and UN Norms and Standards.
- The ToRs is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluation "Code of conduct for evaluation in the ILO". The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.
- The consultant will not have any links to project management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

10. Evaluation Criteria for technical proposals (70%):

- 20% Technical compliance with the Terms of Reference.
- 25% the qualifications and experience of the consultant in project evaluation.
- 15% the proposed implementation and management plan.
- 10% Pervious experience with ILO, preferably in Iraq.

11. Evaluation Criteria for Financial proposals (30%):

- 30% overall cost based on estimated working days in the ToRs.

12. Submission

The bidding consultant is required to submit his/her proposals in two separate digital folders: one for the Technical Proposal and the other for the Financial Proposal. Each folder must be clearly labeled as "Technical Proposal" and "Financial Proposal," ensuring that financial information remains confidential until after the technical evaluation.

The subject of the submission email should be: " Midterm Internal Project Evaluation – ILO-AICS Project" Bidding is opened for individual consultants (Both National and International) Applications should be submitted via email iraq-procurement@ilo.org

The deadline for submitting the technical and financial proposals is **25 FEB 2024, by 12:00 midnight (Baghdad time).**

Both the technical and financial proposals must remain valid for 30 days from the submission date. Proposals will be evaluated based on the technical evaluation criteria outlined above (70%), in combination with the financial proposal (30%).

Annex 1: Logical Framework Matrix of the Project

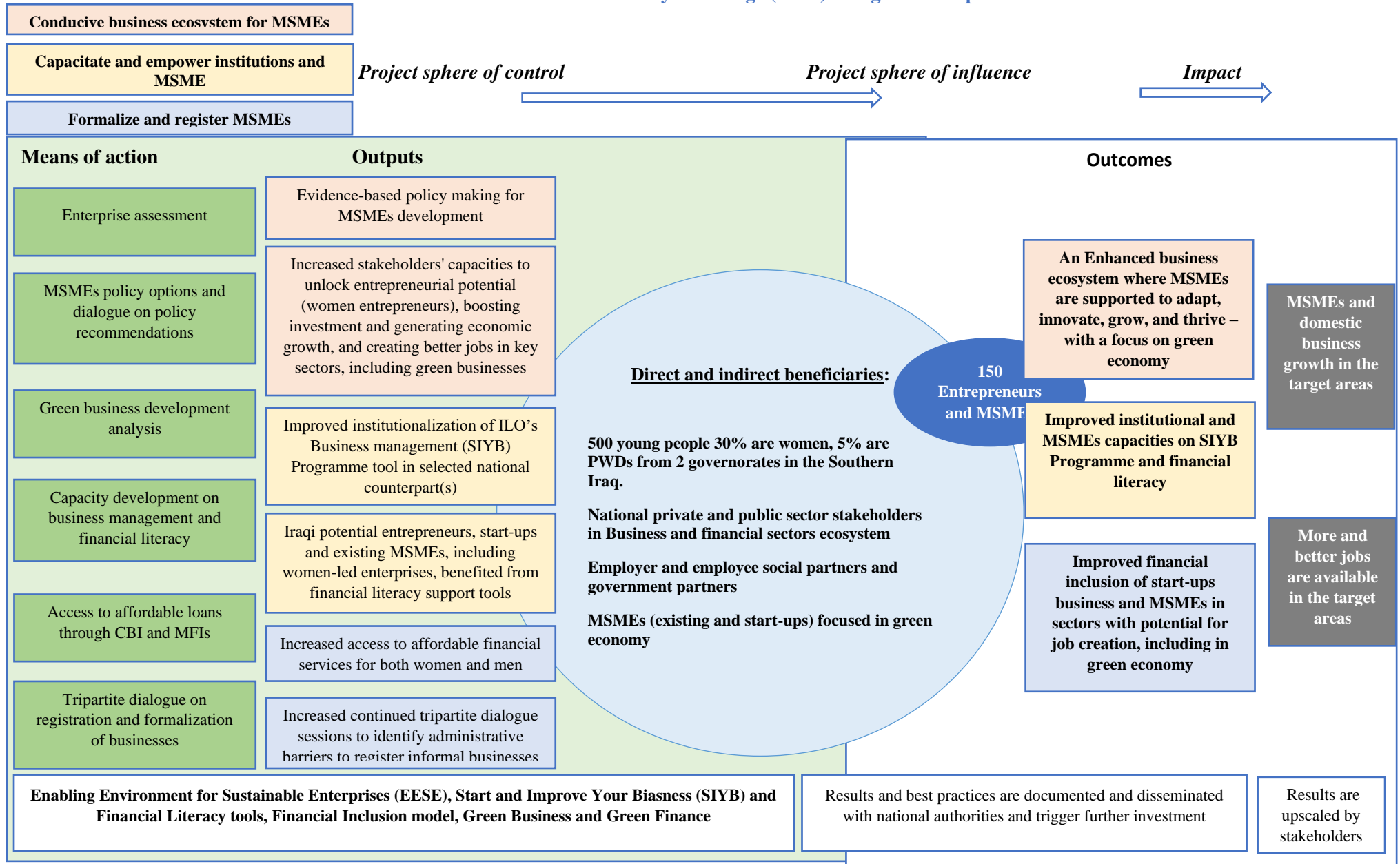| Results Chain	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Overall project objective (Impact): By end 2025 private sectors in Iraq are transformed and productive thereby create more and better employment opportunities.	-Number of unemployed young women and men benefiting from employment opportunities created by private sectors in the target area.	0	500 (of which at least 30% will be for women)	-MoLSA/MOP annual progress report/ record -Record from employment service centers -Project progress report	NA
	-Number of new enterprises established in the target area.	0	100 (of which 30% of the enterprises will owned by women)		
	-Number of people who benefited from improved jobs (higher income/better working conditions) in the target area. Disaggregated by sex, governorate	0	100 (of which 10% of the jobs improved will be for women)		
Outcome 1: An Enhanced business ecosystem where MSMEs are supported to adapt, innovate, grow, and thrive –with a focus on green economy.	-Status of foreign and local investors' satisfaction with support services by investment promotion agencies and the wider local ecosystem	Poor	Good	-Chamber of commerce/ Investment commission annual satisfaction report.	The GoI political will towards economic and institutional reform remains strong. Concerned ministries and private sectors collaboration and commitment towards creating enabling business environment will increase.

Results Chain	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Output 1.1: Evidence-based policy making for MSMEs development.	- Number of policy/directives drafted aimed at fostering ease of doing and setup business	0	2	-Policies/directives drafted -Policy-briefs -Attendance sheets -Project progress report/activity tracking sheet	*There is collaborative space between GoI institutions (such as CSO), Universities and think-tank groups in conducting research, studies and national surveys.*
	- Number of policy briefs prepared	0	2		
	-Number of consultative meetings	0	4		
Activity 1.1.1: Conduct enterprise assessment in the targeted governorates.					
Activity 1.1.2: Conduct series of national and subnational consultative FDGs, KIIs, workshops on the key challenges for sustainable enterprise development with government, private sectors and key stakeholders.					
Activity 1.1.3: Develop policy briefs with costed policy options to reform the business environment.					
Activity 1.1.4: Fostering dialogue between workers, employers and governments to reach shared policy recommendations.					
Output 1.2: Increased stakeholders' capacities to unlock entrepreneurial potential (women entrepreneurs), boosting investment and generating economic growth, and creating better jobs in key sectors, including green businesses.	-Number of public and private sectors capacities enhanced (disaggregated by type of stakeholders participating)	0	10	-Minutes record from joint stakeholders meeting -Project progress report -Activity implementation reports, attendance sheet	*-GoI and key stakeholders including the private sectors will be receptive to green business initiatives and will continue to collaborate to identify the root causes of issues related to private sector development in Iraq.*
Activity 1.2.1: Support stakeholders to identify the major constraints hampering business development in green economy.					
Activity 1.2.2 Fostering dialogue between workers, employers and governments to define cost recommendations on priority vertical policies to favour private sector development in green economy.					
Activity 1.2.3. Supporting the adoption of an effective action plan for expanding green businesses.					

Results Chain	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Outcome 2: Improved institutional and MSMEs capacities on SIYB Programme and financial literacy.	-Number of institutions adapting SIYB Programme and financial literacy tools -Number of existing MSMEs capacitated on SIYB and FE	*0* *0*	*5* *100*	-Institutional and MSMEs self-report -Project indicator tracking sheet -Project activity tracking sheet	*National institutions and MSMEs are receptive to new initiatives and tools and they will commit their effort to tap the opportunity.*
Output 2.1: Improved institutionalization of ILO's Business management (SIYB) Programme tool in selected national counterpart(s)	-Number of national and subnational institutions capacitated on SYIB (Disaggregated by governorates)	*0*	*10*	-Project activity monitoring tool	*National institutions will be willing to take part in the capacity building training.*

Activity 2.1.1: Conduct an SIYB Training of Trainers' workshop that will be delivered by certified ILO SIYB Master Trainers from the region. TOT duration ranges from 10-12 days and includes the provision of coaching/follow-up services.

Activity 2.1.2: Conduct training on Green Businesses.

Activity 2.1.3: Observe and coach the trainers by supporting them in the delivery of their training programme and follow-up services to entrepreneurs and potential ones (during the pilot testing of the material).

Activity 2.1.4: Conduct SIYB TOT refresher workshops and assess/evaluate the trainers to be certified.

Activity 2.1.5: Conduct SIYB (SYB, IYB) courses for end beneficiaries and equip start-ups with business plans for obtaining a funding opportunity. Coach businesses that require support and guidance.

Output 2.2: Iraqi potential entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing MSMEs, including women-led enterprises, benefited from financial literacy support tools	-Number of trained individual entrepreneurs and those coming from existing MSMEs (Disaggregated by sex and governorates)	*0*	*500 (of which at least 30% of them will be women)*	-Project activity monitoring tool	*Entrepreneurs and existing MSMEs will be willing to take part in the capacity building training.*

Activity 2.2.1: Train trainers from BDS, governorate chambers, and financial institutions as well as free-lance trainers from the targeted governorates on the ILO financial literacy tools, coach and certify them once certification requirements are completed.

Results Chain	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Activity 2.2.2: Deliver FE trainings to end beneficiaries (MSMEs, Start-ups) namely those who are looking to obtain credit from banks to prepare them to handle their relationship with them.					
Outcome 3: Improved financial inclusion of start-ups business and MSMEs in sectors with potential for job creation, including in green economy	-Number of businesses and MSMEs engaged in sectors with high potential for job creation and green economy	*0*	*50*	*GoI/Governorates investment registration recording system*	*CBI and other financial institutions will have good incentives for business that create job opportunities and those who commit to engage in green business.*
Output 3.1: Increased access to affordable financial services for both women and men	-Number of MSMEs accessing credit -Number of financial institutions providing loans -Total volume of finance availed for loan	*0* *-* *0*	*150* *5* *750 million – 1 billion dinars*	*-Financial institutions loan service record* *-Project progress report*	*Financial institutions will remain open to provide loans.*
Activity 3.1.1: Train newly selected commercial banks and/or micro finance institutions on the ILO's Making Finance Work package to ensure a strategic plan in place for serving MSMEs.					
Activity 3.1.2: Conduct a series of consultative workshops with CBI, ICBG and existing/new partner banks to review the SOPs already prepared and amend the product based on market needs and scalable sustainable lending. Review and sign the agreement with CBI accordingly.					
Activity 3.1.3: Provide training, coaching and capacity building for Banks and ICBG staff to be able to work with MSMEs and gain the skills of assessing SME applications, prepare feasibility studies for SMEs, eventually to lessen their perceived risk about SME sector.					
Activity 3.1.4: Support an enabling environment (awareness raising campaigns, advocacy, promotions) for MSMEs to access credit from financial institutions.					
Activity 3.1.5: Adapt financial inclusion model to the targeted governorates.					
Activity 3.1.6: Expand the collaboration with more banks or with the same banks in their branches in the south. Sign new agreements.					
Activity 3.1.7: Roll out the disbursement of loans through the banks (and maybe also MFIs					

Results Chain	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Output 3.2: Increased continued tripartite dialogue sessions to identify administrative barriers to register informal businesses	-Number of challenges identified, action plans and recommendations coming out from series of dialogue sessions that feed into the policy formulation -Number of dialogue sessions conducted	0 0	5 5	-Minutes record from dialogue sessions -Copies of action plans drafted -List of recommendations record -Attendance sheets	The government of Iraq and social partners are supportive for continuous and regular dialogues and committed for development of action plans.

Activity 3.2.1: Hold dialogue sessions with relevant government authorities (Chambers of Commerce, Ministry of Interior, etc.) to identify bottlenecks to registration of businesses and seek practical solutions/options for reducing those barriers.

Activity 3.2.2: Draft a guide for easy registration and formalization.

Activity 3.2.3: Conduct awareness raising campaigns to encourage registration and formalization.

Theory of Change (TOC) – Logic and scope of the intervention

Conducive business ecosystem for MSMEs

Capacitate and empower institutions and MSME

Formalize and register MSMEs

Project sphere of control　　　　*Project sphere of influence*　　　　*Impact*

Means of action

Enterprise assessment

MSMEs policy options and dialogue on policy recommendations

Green business development analysis

Capacity development on business management and financial literacy

Access to affordable loans through CBI and MFIs

Tripartite dialogue on registration and formalization of businesses

Outputs

Evidence-based policy making for MSMEs development

Increased stakeholders' capacities to unlock entrepreneurial potential (women entrepreneurs), boosting investment and generating economic growth, and creating better jobs in key sectors, including green businesses

Improved institutionalization of ILO's Business management (SIYB) Programme tool in selected national counterpart(s)

Iraqi potential entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing MSMEs, including women-led enterprises, benefited from financial literacy support tools

Increased access to affordable financial services for both women and men

Increased continued tripartite dialogue sessions to identify administrative barriers to register informal businesses

Direct and indirect beneficiaries:

500 young people 30% are women, 5% are PWDs from 2 governorates in the Southern Iraq.

National private and public sector stakeholders in Business and financial sectors ecosystem

Employer and employee social partners and government partners

MSMEs (existing and start-ups) focused in green economy

150 Entrepreneurs and MSME

Outcomes

An Enhanced business ecosystem where MSMEs are supported to adapt, innovate, grow, and thrive – with a focus on green economy

Improved institutional and MSMEs capacities on SIYB Programme and financial literacy

Improved financial inclusion of start-ups business and MSMEs in sectors with potential for job creation, including in green economy

MSMEs and domestic business growth in the target areas

More and better jobs are available in the target areas

Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (EESE), Start and Improve Your Biasness (SIYB) and Financial Literacy tools, Financial Inclusion model, Green Business and Green Finance

Results and best practices are documented and disseminated with national authorities and trigger further investment

Results are upscaled by stakeholders

Annex 2: Essential Documents/Weblinks

- Code of Conduct Form: http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-code-of-conduct.doc

- Checklist preparing the evaluation report: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165967.pdf

- Guidance Note on Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects, and UNEG documents: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165986.pdf

- Guidance Note on Evaluation lessons learned and emerging good practices: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165981.pdf

- SDG related reference material at: http://www.ilo.ch/eval/eval-and-sdgs/lang--en/index.htm

- Template for title page of the evaluation report: http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-titlepage-en.doc

- Template for evaluation summary:
 http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-summary-en.doc

- Lessons Learned (submitted by Evaluator):
http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-lesson-learned.doc

- Template: Emerging Good Practice (submitted by Evaluator):
http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-goodpractice.doc

- Guidance note 7 Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang-en/index.htm

- ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.2 on Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects

- Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: Practical tips on adapting to the situation https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_744068.pdf

- Protocol to collect evidence on ILO response to COVID-19 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf