



► Terms of Reference

Request for Proposals from NGOs: Organizing Monthly Focus Group Discussions with Workers

15/04/2025 - 14/04/2026

1. BACKGROUND

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in Iraq is seeking to better understand the working conditions of workers across various sectors in Iraq, including informal employment. To this end, the ILO invites proposals from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to organize and facilitate monthly focus group discussions (FGDs) with workers in Baghdad and other governorates as seem feasible by the ILO. These discussions aim to gather insights on working conditions (including social security), identify trends, and document challenges faced by workers.

2. OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the FGDs are as follows:

- Enable the Ministry of labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Trade Unions, Employers organizations, and ILO to be updated on existing working conditions and social security across different sectors (among both formal and informal workers) through direct interaction with workers.
- Enable labour and social security inspectors to gather more information about trends in individual labour relations and enhance their capacities to extend inspections to the informal economy.
- Identify and document key challenges and trends in working conditions, especially among informal sector workers.
- Provide structured feedback and insights through short preliminary briefs, monthly reports and a comprehensive final report.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The implementing partner is expected to organize monthly FGDs with workers. Under the close supervision of the ILO, they are expected to facilitate at least one FGD per month with a group of 15-20 workers from various sectors (sectors, and types of workers will be agreed in coordination with the ILO before each meeting and MoLSA when applicable). A total of 14 sessions is expected. The sessions are expected to be organized in Baghdad and at least 5 other governorates as discussed and duly agreed with the ILO, based on its programmatic needs. The implementing partner is also expected to develop FGD discussion guides/questionnaires tailored to the specific labour market situations of workers in the sectors or occupations concerned, in close coordination and supervision of the ILO.

Meetings/FGDs can be held at the ILO Training Centre in the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs, the NGO's premises, or at a field site proposed and secured by the NGO. Settings that contrast with the social-economic status of interviewed workers and/or can undermine workers' dignity and affect their physical and psychological wellbeing, and/or are linked in any manner to any workers' employers will be avoided (e.g. expensive hotels and restaurants).

The NGO can consider providing FGDs participants with a compensation of travel costs whenever participation in a FGD requires workers' travel. The NGO may also consider providing refreshments (water, tea, light snacks) to the FGD participants, particularly at the meetings conducted at the work sites. In both cases respective budgetary considerations should be made.

4. ACTIVITIES

The implementing partner is expected to submit a technical proposal outlining their approach to achieving these objectives and carrying out the following activities:

Activity 1. Identification and engagement of workers, sectors and locations for FGDs

The implementing partner will be responsible for identifying workers who will be involved in focus group discussions in the sectors and locations agreed with the ILO. The implementing partner will base the proposed selection of workers, sectors and locations on the below criteria:

a) Target Groups: diverse sectors (formal and informal), particularly:

Sector specific groups:

- Manual daily construction workers
- Specialised contracted construction workers (welders, masons, plumbers, electricians, etc)
- Migrant domestic workers
- Self-employed employees who are working in large commercial centres in Baghdad , including porters, street vendors, drivers, and other workers in these centers.
- Services sector workers by size of enterprise (small, medium, large) and type of business (etc. restaurants, hotels, beauty centres workers, private healthcare workers. etc.)
- Manufacturing workers by enterprise size (small, medium, large)
- Agricultural workers (excluding landlords)
- Platform workers (e.g. delivery services, taxi drivers)
- Informal contractors, middlemen in the construction sector, or in delivery sector
- Other groups as agreed upon with the ILO

Cross-cutting groups:

- Female workers in the private sector (both formal and informal);
- Young workers in the private sector (up to 24 years) (both formal and informal);
- Workers with disability in the private sector (both formal and informal);
- Other groups as agreed upon with the ILO

Note: It should be made clear to all invited non-worker participants through a session specific signed declaration by non-worker participants, that workers will not be held accountable or disciplined in any manner for saying or reporting anything. No direct or indirect supervisors of workers will participate. All conversations will be confidential unless ILO, on an exceptional basis, requests explicit authorisation from workers, on a case-by-case basis, in a separate meeting to do otherwise. Conversations are meant to be for ILO and invited constituents to understand working realities. At all meetings, workers should be encouraged to speak freely.

b) Geographical location of sessions: while most sessions are expected to be organized in Baghdad, the NGO should propose at least 5 sessions in other governorates one in KRI, one in Basra, Muthana or Kirkuk. Other governorates could also be considered and agreed with the ILO.

The implementing partner will also work on creating an outreach strategy that outlines the methods and channels they will use to reach the target groups, in line with the below requirement:

Outreach Strategies and criteria: objective, evidence-based and representative outreach strategies to identify and engage workers from the target groups.

- Gather a representative sample of workers within the specified sub-sector and section of the supply chain. For example, gathering workers from only one single enterprise, one specific location, one sub-contractor, or one organisation (e.g. a shelter) would generate homogeneity and bias in the sample.
- Highlight in advance possible differences and similarities among groups of workers being interviewed including income differences or similarities, composition of group by sex and age, migrant status and disability, position in supply chain or level of intermediation (e.g. sub-contractor position).
- Refer to existing published evidence, administrative data and/or literature to situate the sample of workers being interviewed.
- Collaborate with MoLSA, trade unions, employer organizations, intermediaries, academics, journalists, NGOs and other stakeholders to gather advise in identifying possible workers.
- Develop creative methods enabling effective outreach.
- Ensure that every sector specific session has different workers. Same workers should not be invited to multiple sessions unless ILO grants an exception on a case-by-case basis to be justified. This condition will not apply to cross cutting groups.

The final selection of workers, sectors and locations as well as FGDs schedules, and the development of the outreach strategy should be done in close coordination with the ILO.

Activity 2. Organization, facilitation and documentation of focus group discussions

The implementing partner should prepare a detailed schedule of FGDs to be organized in the course of this action, with the detailed number of workers from a specific sector and location to be involved, and the tentative FGD date and place. The total of 14 FGDs are expected to be organized, with at least 5 held outside of Baghdad, in other governorates.

Prior to each session, the implementing partner will prepare a short brief including where and how the workers were found, their position in the labour market or the supply chain, and general

information about the context of their work. Any existing published material on the workers that will be interviewed should be shared.

The implementing partner will reach out to workers in the specific groups, securing their participation in the FGDs at the time and place agreed in advance. The implementing partner is expected to security venue in line with the requirements specified above and provide other support (e.g. transportation, refreshment) to ensure workers' participation in the FGDs and their smooth running.

The implementing partner, in close coordination with and supervision of the ILO, will also develop the FGD guides in English and Arabic/Kurdish and/or other languages (e.g. Bengali, Urdu), depending on the specific FGD audience. The implementing partner will facilitate the FGD, lasting approximately 2 to 3 hours each. Interpretation support from Arabic/Kurdish (as applicable) to English should also be provided at the FGDs where ILO team would like to be present.

The implementing partner will document each session, including through the audio recording, key findings, quotes, and observations, and prepare session summaries and sector-specific reports. The summaries could be prepared in Arabic or English. The service provider will also submit sector-specific and worker-specific reports analysing key findings on labour and working conditions in the specific sectors or of a specific type of workers (e.g. females, youth, migrant workers or refugees).

Activity 3. Reporting on the observations from and results of the FGDs

The implementing partner will submit a comprehensive final report summarizing key findings, challenges, and actionable recommendations regarding working conditions and what worked or didn't in reaching out to workers from all the interviews. References to published material on interviewed workers should be shared in relation to each relevant session. The final report is expected to be produced in English.

5. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

The implementing partner is expected to fulfil the required tasks and submit the deliverables within the timeframe given below:

Deliverable	Indicative Deadline
Activity 1. Identification and engagement of workers, sectors and locations for FGDs	
Outreach strategy and selection criteria for identification and selection of workers, sectors and locations for the FGDs (in English)	Upon submission of proposal
Detailed plan of FGDs, inclusive of sectors, workers (number, type, criteria for selection and outreach), locations, risks and mitigation measures (in English)	May 2025
Activity 2. Organization, facilitation and documentation of focus group discussions	
FGD schedule and short briefs including where and how the workers were found, their position	June 2025 – February 2026

in the labour market or the supply chain, and general information about the context of their work. Any existing published material on the workers that will be interviewed should be shared (in English)	
FGD guides and questions for discussion (in English and Arabic/Kurdish and/or other language as required)	June 2025 – February 2026
14 FGDs, including at least 5 outside of Baghdad	June 2025 – February 2026
Session documentation, including audio recording, key findings, quotes, and observations, and prepare session summaries (in Arabic/Kurdish or English) and reports specific to sectors and types of workers (in English)	June 2025 – February 2026
Activity 3. Reporting on the observations from and results of the FGDs	
A final report in English summarizing all findings, challenges, and recommendations, including: (a) social economic characteristics of interviewed workers including positionality; (b) overview of working conditions across sectors including but not limited social security, (c) challenges in accessing workers and how they were overcome, (d) key recommendations for improving working conditions per sector, including but not limited social security, and conducting such outreach practices in the future.	March-April 2026
<i>Other deliverables related to the whole implementation agreement and not to a specific activity</i>	
Workplan detailing activities, timeline, indicators to measure the intervention impact	Upon submission of proposal
Technical and financial reports related to processing payments under the Implementation Agreement submitted in line with the ILO standard requirements	15 June 2025 for the period IA signature – 31 May 2025 15 November 2025 for the period 1 June – 31 October 2025 15 March 2026 from the period of 1 November 2025 – 28 February 2026

Final Technical and financial reports of the whole intervention (IA signature – 14 April 2026)	15 May 2026
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The NGO is expected to deliver the specific deliverables as set out in the below table, at the approval and satisfaction of the Chief Technical Advisor of the project and possible guidance from Regional Specialist.

If an NGO lacks the full capacity to produce coherent and comprehensive reports in English, appropriate arrangements must be made to ensure that the specific deliverables required by the ILO are translated into English. The translations must adhere to high-quality standards to ensure accuracy and clarity.

Notes:

- The deadlines mentioned in the table above will be more detailed in the work plan provided by the selected implementing partner in their technical proposal
- The reporting template will be provided by ILO upon contract signature with the selected implementing partner.

6. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The contract duration will be for one year (12 months), starting from the date of signing the agreement, which is expected to be 15 April 2025. The partner is committed to adhere to the set timeframe given the deadline of the official closure of the ILO programme.

The tentative payment schedule is provided below.

Instalment	Deliverable	% of payment	Activities deadline	Report submission deadline
1	Signature of the IA	15%	N/A	N/A
2	Submission of: outreach strategy, detailed plan of FGDs, and the 1st progress technical/financial Report to the satisfaction of the ILO	20%	31 May 2025	15 June 2025
3	Completion of the first 7 FGDs and submission of: FGD schedule and short pre-FGD briefs,	30%	30 September 2025	15 October 2025



	FGD guides and questions, session documentation, and the 2 nd progress technical/financial Report to the satisfaction of the ILO			
4	Completion of the second 7 FGDs and submission of: FGD schedule and short pre-FGD briefs, FGD guides and questions, session documentation, and the 3 rd progress technical/financial Report to the satisfaction of the ILO	30%	28 February 2026	15 March 2026
5	Completion of all working days and the submission of the final report summarizing all findings, challenges, and recommendations, and the final technical/financial Report to the satisfaction of the ILO	5%	14 April 2026	15 May 2026

7. REQUIRED BACKGROUND, QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

- Proven experience in mobilizing, guiding and facilitating worker interactions, including with informal workers and migrant workers, and/or studying workers' rights and working conditions in Iraq.
- Strong facilitation skills for FGDs and ability to communicate with diverse groups of workers, including informal workers, migrant workers, women, youth and workers with disability, both in Arabic and Kurdish.
- Knowledge of national and international labour standards, social security, occupational safety and health and informal economy issues in Iraq.



- Access to networks for outreach to target groups, in Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- Competence in documenting and reporting findings in Arabic and English, and conduct workers' outreach and FGDs in Arabic and Kurdish; or availability of alternative solutions to ensure efficient communications in English and Kurdish.

8. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The ILO invites local NGOs that meet the above-mentioned required qualifications to submit the following:

1. Technical proposal
2. Financial proposal

1. Technical Proposal

The technical proposal is expected to be submitted in English and/or Arabic by the implementing partner in the following structure:

- 1) **Proposal Narrative:** A brief description of the outreach strategy and selection criteria for identification and selection of workers, sectors and locations for the FGDs, including risk and stakeholder analyses, and mitigation methods. No more than 8 pages;
- 2) **Organization's profile and related experience:** The applicant should provide a brief about their profile, highlighting their capacity with relevance to this TOR and their local presence in Iraq. Applicants should mention their detailed description of relevant past work and relevant experience in labour, social security and formalization in Iraq, workers' outreach, qualitative data collection and analyses and knowledge management. No more than 5 pages;
- 3) **Detailed work plan** with a timetable related to the different activities. No more than 1 page;
- 4) **CVs of Team leader and staff involved** in the implementation demonstrating their capacity to conduct the assignment. No more than 5 pages.
- 5) **Institutional and financial capacities:** The proposal should also specify proposal of how the TORs will be executed within the partner's own environment, financial rules and regulations. No more than 1 page;

The proposals should be submitted in English or Arabic, in PDF format and be no longer than 20 pages.

2. Financial proposal

The implementing partners should provide a detailed earmarked output-based budget, with a clear distinction between direct action costs, overheads, and activity costs, personnel, and operational costs. It should be in line with the list of activities necessary to complete the agreement, providing the costing for each deliverable in the TORs.

The budget could be categorized into the following sections:

- Direct Project Costs
- Overheads

- Activity Costs
- Personnel Costs
- Operational Costs

Each category should further be broken down with a detailed line item, providing the units of measurement, quantities, unit price, and totals. The budget should be submitted in USD or IQD¹. The sample of the budget format is provided in the attachments.

The budget, deliverables and timelines should be presented in the same format which will be used for technical and financial reporting.

Financial proposals must be submitted in English in PDF format and excel formats, with each page duly signed and dated. The Financial Proposal should be valid for 90 days after the deadline for submissions.

3. Accepting Standard Terms and Conditions

By submitting the application, the Implementing Partner should accept the ILO's Standard Terms and Conditions, as well as donor specific conditions. A self-declaration form is also expected to be signed. All the forms and conditions are annexed to this ToRs.

9. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Interested NGOs should submit their applications comprising of technical , financial proposals and self declaration form to iraq@procurement@ilo.org with the subjects **"Facilitating FGDs with workers"** no later than **31 March 2025**. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Bidders should read the terms and conditions of the implementation agreement attached to this TOR.

10.EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by an Evaluation Panel, to determine compliance with the requirements specified in these Terms of Reference.

A two-stage procedure will be utilized in evaluating the Proposals, with evaluation of each Technical Proposal constituting 70 points being completed prior to any Financial Proposal which constitute 30 points being opened and compared.

Each Technical Proposal (70 points) is evaluated on the basis of its responsiveness to the Terms of Reference according to the criteria described below. The minimum passing score is 50 points:

1. Max 20 points for understanding of the Terms of Reference and the aim of the services to be provided, clarity of the proposal, overall methodological approach, appropriateness of workers groups selection, the coordination, the skills of facilitation and overall estimation of potential challenges and opportunities.
2. Max 15 points for feasibility of the implementation and management plan with a timeline,
3. Max 15 points for proven experience in similar activities and prior experience in mobilizing, educating, and studying the working conditions and the workers' rights in Iraq.

¹ In February 2025, the ILO official exchange rate is 1 USD = 1,310 IQD



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4. Max 10 points for competence of key personnels and coordination experience.
5. Max 10 points for institutional and financial capacity to carry out the programme/project activities and/or produce the outputs, and manage the funds entrusted to them;

During the second stage of the evaluation, the Financial Proposals (30 points) of all qualified NGOs which have attained at least the minimum score during the technical evaluation (50 points) will be compared. The maximum number of points – 30 points – will be assigned to the lowest Financial Proposal submitted by applicants. All other Financial Proposals will receive points in inverse proportion.

11. ANNEXES

1. Budget Template
2. Terms and Conditions
3. Self Declaration Form