

Call for Expression of Interest

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Undertake Advocacy Program on Social Assistance Issues in Iraq

Deadline for submission of proposals: 05 May 2023

I. Introduction:

Iraq's system of social protection, which is one of the oldest in the Arab world, covers mainly two distinct groups of the population: public employees and the poor. As for the first group, the public employees, the "State Employees' Pension Fund," regulated in the Unified Pension Law No. 9 of 2014, as amended by Law No. 26 of 2019 provides a relatively good level of social security protection for civil servants; the military and security forces as well as employees in state-owned enterprises. However, reports have pointed out to design issues that limit its long-term fiscal sustainability. For instance, the statutory retirement age of 50 is low, and the replacement rate is high with the minimum full-career pension obtained after 15 years of service. The second group covered by the social protection system in Iraq includes the poor and vulnerable Iraqis, who are targeted by several programs, most importantly the social safety net and the Public Distribution System. Despite of this many programs targeting the poor, reports highlighted the significant coverage limitation that resulted in many deserving poor not receiving the intended benefit. Apart from the two groups, coverage of other working adults and their families, including persons in the private sector especially those in unstable forms of wage employment and the self-employed, is not automatic. While the Social Security Law No. 39 of 1971 and amendments stipulates that all workers covered by the Labor Law No. 37 of 2015 should be members in the Pension and Social Security Fund for Workers, a small fraction is covered.

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

Recognizing the changes and challenges faced, a Social Protection Commission to manage social assistance in Iraq was established by the 2014 Law. The Iraq Social Protection Strategic Roadmap 2015-2019 was developed to support implementation of the 2014 law. Its vision is to have a comprehensive social protection system in Iraq that covers three main pillars: social safety nets, social insurance, and labor market policies. Further, the 2018-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy by the Government of Iraq and development partners identified the establishment of an effective social protection system has been recognized as a strategic priority.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with movement control measures, has exposed this coverage gap. In just a few weeks or days, hundreds of thousands have become unemployed as businesses are forced to shut down temporarily or permanently, or operate at minimal level, causing tremendous financial hardship especially for the daily wage and irregular wage earners. A study of the World bank and UNICEF showed a major spike in poverty that the existing safety nets were not sufficient to address the need for protection.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF WORK

Against this background, and to respond to these changes and to address the effects of these changes on poverty and inequality, there is a need to initiate an inclusive dialogue to build support and political capital in favor of effective social protection coverage that is extended to all Iraqis in need, while at the same time, ensure that these changes are within the fiscal envelop and sustainable in the long run.

The ILO Iraq has already initiated an advocacy program that aims at building political capital and wider support for the reform agenda of social security extension. It convened several roundtables for thought leaders to discuss and debate impediments and opportunities to extend social security coverage to those in needs. However, the scope of social security was limited to cash benefits (retirement, survivor, unemployment, maternity, sickness, disability). The health care protection, as part of the scope of social security, was not discussed. Further, given the visible discriminatory labor market in Iraq against female citizens, discussed earlier, there is a need to bring in thought leaders to discuss and provide ideas on how to make the social security arrangements more inclusive. In addition, the ILO would like to appeal to a wider population by thoughtfully employ Art in its advocacy efforts.

Specifically, the key works of the institution to deliver:

Inclusive Roundtables: potential bidder to take charge of organizing two roundtable discussions in Halabja and Diyala governorates. These roundtables will bring together policymakers, researchers, national thought leaders, and practitioners to discuss social policy in Iraq, both past and present. The bidder will be responsible for making logistical arrangements, such as reserving the venue and inviting the relevant individuals to attend the roundtables. The discussions will provide a platform to exchange ideas, knowledge, experiences, and views on social policy in Iraq. The participants will also have the opportunity to learn from local, regional, and international expertise. The main objective of the roundtables is to promote constructive dialogue that leads to policy messages for policymakers. The hope is that this initiative will encourage policymakers to prioritize resources for social policy in Iraq.

IV. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The institution will deliver the project outputs as per the proposal and workplan and will be delivering the activities within a period of 3 months.

V. DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENT:

The bidder is expected to deliver the specific deliverables as set out in the below table:

Activity / Output	Timeline/Deadline
1. Detailed workplan includes specific activities and costs (May 2023 till July 2023)	By May 15, 2023,
2. First 2-day Roundtable discussion: options to reform social assistance in Iraq	By June 15,16 2023
3. Second One-day Roundtable discussion: Social Protection and Public Works in Iraq	By June 22, 2023
4. Event reports submitted at the end of each activity	upon completion of each event
5. Final report	By July 30, 2023

Payment schedule

1. 20 percent upon the delivery of accepted comprehensive workplan 1
2. 30 percent upon completion of outputs/activities 2 listed above
3. 30 percent upon completion of output/activity 3
4. 20 percent upon completion of final report and all related sub-activities including the reports. 4 and 5

Required Expertise

- Reputable and well-established institution with a success record on implementing similar activities.
- The bidder must have previous experience in organizing inclusive platforms to discuss and debate policy issues, preferably with the ILO and/or the UN in Iraq
- Team members have relevant qualification to the assignment scope
- Knowledge of or experience in the region where events will take place
- Proven experience in writing reports for other similar programs

Supervision

The institution will perform the assignment under the supervision of Chief Technical Advisor for Social Security and the Social Protection National Officer, ILO Iraq.

Confidentiality and Intellectual Property Rights

All data and information received from ILO for this assignment are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference (ToRs). The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the express advance written authorization of the ILO. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these ToRs are assigned to the International Labour Organization. The intellectual property rights of the materials modified through the assignment remains with the International Labour Organization.

VIII. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Interested institution should submit their technical and financial proposals in English or Arabic that should clearly outline:

1. Cover letter, explaining why the bidder is suitable for the assignment.
2. Information about the bidder experience (CV) with registration acknowledgment. The information provided shall clearly show that the qualifications required are met.
3. Understanding of the task and approach/methodology suggested carrying out the assignment Description of and timeline for actions to be taken by the potential bidder to fulfil the partnership requirement.
4. The financial proposal should outline an estimated budget for the overall assignment including professional fees. Cost estimates with breakdown by necessary budget lines.
5. The application documents shall be submitted in Word Document format.

Please mention "**undertake advocacy program on Social Security Extension in Iraq**" in the subject of the email.

The technical and financial proposals together should not exceed three pages excluding annexes. Proof of similar assignment (incl. papers produced if possible) and CV(s) of people to be involved is required as an annex. Both documents are to be sent to farman@ilo.org and alkaram@ilo.org by COB on May.05. 2023, 1700 Baghdad time