

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

|                      |                                                                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Project ID:          | 9745                                                                           |
| Project Name:        | Sustainable Land Management for Improved Livelihoods in Degraded Areas of Iraq |
| Countr(ies):         | Iraq                                                                           |
| Implementing Agency: | FAO                                                                            |

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## I. Overview

### A. Description

Project name

Sustainable Land Management for Improved Livelihoods in Degraded Areas of Iraq

Country

Iraq

GEF ID

9745

Implementing Agency

FAO

Executing Entity

Ministry of Health and Environment

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/6/2025

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2025 , 5th PIR

Objective

Project Objective: Reverse land degradation processes, conserve and sustainably manage land and water resources in degraded marshland ecosystems in Southern Iraq for greater access to services from resilient ecosystems and improved livelihoods.

### B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Highly Satisfactory

Overall risk

Low Risk

Project Financing

3,886,506.00

Cumulative Disbursement

2,812,790.06

### C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

4/3/2019

Agency Approval

7/29/2019

|                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Implementation Start<br>1/1/2020 | First Disbursement<br>2/12/2020 |
| Expected MTR                     | Actual MTR<br>4/1/2023          |
| Expected Completion<br>1/1/2026  | Actual Completion               |

## II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

### A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Recorded ecological and economic benefits as drivers of farmers' adoption of Conservation Agriculture (CA) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in southern Iraq, included the following factors.

- Water and Nutrients - Limited validation trial results from 41 FFS Demonstration Plots and 213 farmers' experiences recorded that considerable saving in water (15 - 33%) and nutrients are achieved with zero-tillage planting in laser levelled land planted crops under CA.
- Increased crop yields – In zero-tillage planted crops with crop rotations under CA, crop (wheat, barley and alfalfa) yields were invariably higher by 10-33% per unit of land, compared to conventional agriculture practice.
- Survey results of CA compared to conventional traditional agriculture, there were 1 080 farmers who reported reduction in cost of crop production under CA with its three main principles of (i) zero tillage (reduce cost on land preparation), (ii) soil cover/mulch (reduce cost on irrigation due to ecological benefits of improved soil and moisture conservation, reduce cost of weeding due to improved weed growth suppression by mulch/soil cover) and (iii) crop rotation (reduced cost of production with less incidence of pest and disease control, reduced cost of chemical fertilization due to ecological benefits related to improved soil fertility with soil organic matter built up and legume crop inclusion in the rotation). Profit margins were particularly high for producing wheat (33%, equivalent to 608 USD/ha), alfalfa (50%, equivalent to 760 USD/ha) and barley (20%, equivalent to 244 USD/ha) established under CA.

Furthermore, 40 (13% female) Ministry of Agriculture Extension Officers were trained on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques, and this knowledge was cascaded to farmers through training of 1003 farmers across 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology.

Consequently, 10 180 ha have been put under SLM across food production systems as farmers adopt CA in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates, southern Iraq. In that regard, a total of about 86 000 ha of greening land (degraded and under SLM) in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates which are undergoing ecological restoration as a result of the FFS programming was monitored and reported through the developed national Natural Resources Knowledge Management digital platform. Thus, leveraging to derive and record evidence-based solutions to SLM in Iraq.

To ensure sustainable project outcomes upon project exit, a national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030) was developed. This strategic document is planned for a national launch in July 2025 in Baghdad, by the Ministry of Environment.

## **B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities**

In southern Iraq, where the challenges of climate change induced water scarcity are most severe, farmers have long struggled with desertification, salinization and land degradation. Yet, a new chapter of hope is unfolding – a paradigm shift as farmers are adopting Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Improved Livelihoods. While the ecological and economic benefits of farmers' adoption of CA are being realized, the transition has not been without challenges. Farmers' adoption of CA practices requires high initial investment for specialized farm machinery, and this derailed farmers' adoption rates. Delayed in-kind distribution of agricultural inputs for 2 638 targeted farmers' support as co-financing of the project from the Government of Iraq remain a challenge. Thus, FAO in Iraq communicated through a formal letter to the Ministry of Environment (MOE), requesting the complete package of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, irrigation equipment and farm machinery) distribution to farmers. Furthermore, the project developed a national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026 – 2030) aimed at establishing a conducive policy environment to address challenges of the agricultural project cycle management to enhance sustainable food systems.

During the Need Assessment to inform the establishment of a Natural Resource Knowledge Management Platform for Iraq, the MOE representatives forgot to disclose that the MOE was developing a similar platform with other partners. This was leading to duplication of a deliverable and the plan to address this challenge caused delay on the development of the platform. In that regard, a gap analysis was later done to inform areas of collaborations on the existing platform with the MOE. Based on the gaps identified, FAO and key stakeholders (MOE, MOA, MOW) later developed a more complex platform with added value, addressing the prior identified knowledge gaps. This digital platform development further delays the production and publication of planned national SLM progress reports which are based upon information generated by GIS-based monitoring and the digital platform.

The FAO in Iraq faces challenges due to regional security dynamics, including increased community protests and instability, which on few occasions restricted access to project locations, hindering FAO staff ability to implement project activities. To overcome the challenge, FAO continued with a high frequency of remote project management through trained MOA Extension Officers and online meetings across the project locations to advance the delayed tasks and elaborate some key issues.

## **C. Stakeholder Engagement**

| Profile                 | Stakeholder name                                                      | Type of partnership                                                                        | Progress, results & Challenges on Stakeholder's Engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government Institutions | Ministry of Environment (MOE)                                         | Co-financing and implementing partner                                                      | MOE, Facilitated and chaired a project national Steering Committee (SC) meeting on 28 August 2024 in Baghdad. MoE members participated in national Project Management Unit (PMU) meetings in Baghdad (19 December 2024, 16 March 2025, 03 June 2025) and the governorate-level Local Project Implementation Unit (LPIU) meetings in ThiQar governorate (12 August 2024, 18 December 2024 and 28 April 2025) and Al Muthanna Governorate (12 August 2024, 17 December 2024 and 29 April 2025). MOE assigned a Natural Resource Expert to co-lead the development of a consolidated national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030), this strategic document will be launched mid July 2025. FAO communicated a reminder through MOE, the need for complete package of in-kind agricultural inputs required as GoI co-funding support to the targeted farmers. There is a delayed response to this communique from the MOE side. |
| Government Institutions | Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)                                         | Implementing partner                                                                       | Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. MoA members participated in PMU and LPIU meetings. 40 MoA Extension Officers were trained as facilitators on 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques. These trained Extension Officers provide extension service to farmers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Government Institutions | Ministry of Water Resources (MOW)                                     | Implementing partner                                                                       | Participated in a project national Steering Committee meeting. MOW members participated in PMU and LPIU meetings. MOW supported FFS Demonstration Plots with provision of irrigation water during the hot summer season when irrigation water was limited.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Government Institutions | National Centre for Water Resource Management                         | Member of Steering Committee                                                               | Implementation of the project's water management plan for SLM in partnership with MOW and MOA. Participated in a project Steering Committee and PMU meetings, steering the strategic direction on integrated water resource management. Stakeholders were continuously advised to remind farmers to avoid stream/river-bank cultivation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Government Institutions | The Sate Commission Authority for Groundwater                         | Member of Steering Committee                                                               | Participated in a project Steering Committee and PMU meetings. Stakeholders requested to remind farmers on the need for water permit for ground water extraction and to inform farmers avoid illegal watergronund extraction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Government Institutions | Department for Underground Water in Muthanna and Thi-Qar governorates | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level                       | Participated in the LPIU meetings. Stakeholders requested to remind farmers on the need for water permit for ground water extraction and to inform farmers avoid illegal watergronund extraction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Government Institutions | Al Muthanna Governorate                                               | Implementing partner                                                                       | Local authority within the project location at Al Muthanna governorate level. Chairs the LPIU meetings. Instrumental for project site level implementation in Al Salman district (Al-Shaweeaa) and Al-Rumaittha district (Al-Muthanna).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Government Institutions | ThiQar Governorate                                                    | Implementing partner                                                                       | Local authority within the project locations across ThiQar governorate level. Chairs the LPIU meetings. Instrumental for project site level implementation across all districts in ThiQar governorate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Government Institutions | Office of Forests and Combating Desertification                       | Member of the Steering Committee                                                           | Participated in a project Steering Committee and PMU meetings. Contributed to the development and reviews of the national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026 - 2030).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Government Institutions | Office of Agriculture Research                                        | Member of the Steering Committee                                                           | Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. Supported in the development and review of the national SLM Strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Government Institutions | Office of Agriculture Extension Services and Training                 | Member of the Steering Committee                                                           | Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. Trained Extension Officers at governorate level continue to serve as Facilitators of FFS training program. 1 003 famers were trained on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques for SLM.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Government Institutions | Centre for Restoration of Iraqi Marshlands                            | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level                       | Participated in the LPIU meeting for ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates. Urged stakeholders to continue guide farmers on marshland conservation techniques and avoid pollution of wetlands due to agricultural chemical applications.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Government Institutions | National Council for Seeds                                            | Member of the Steering Committee                                                           | Participated in a project Steering Committee meeting. Continued to support FAO with Seed quality analysis for Inspection, a pre-requisite for seed procurement meant distribution to farmers for FFS Demonstration plot planting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| NGOs                    | Association of Extension and Development for Iraq Women               | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner | Participated in the LPIU meetings at governorate level and delegated to promote and encourage females' participation in project activities. Encouraged Female MOA Extension Officers to be pro-active which resulted the project to register additional 138 female farmers during the reporting period.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| NGOs                    | Association of Agricultural Engineers                                 | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner | Participated in the LPIU meetings. Delegated to advise extension officers and to encourage farmers to adopt soil and moisture conservation technique of laser land levelling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| NGOs                    | Association of Veterinary Services                                    | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit                                            | Participated in the LPIU meetings. Delegated to inform extension officers and farmers on good practices grazing land management to avoid overgrazing and combat desertification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Private Sector entities | Association Private Sector Service Providers                          | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner | Participated in the LPIU meetings at governorate level and delegated to promote market linkages for mutual benefits between farmers and goods/service providers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Others                  | Iraqi Farmer's Association                                            | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner | Provide support in the development of Farmer Associations and cooperatives at the smallholder level. Attended all LPIU meetings and presented farmers request for agricultural input support. GoI through the MOE and MOA continue to delay in distribution of the requested agricultural inputs to the targeted farming households.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Government Institutions | University of ThiQar                                                  | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner | Participated in the LPIU meetings in ThiQar governorate. A source of technical knowledge on agricultural research in the region. Produce peer-reviewed research into the local capacity to support farmers adoption of Agroecology and Marshland Conservation techniques.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Government Institutions | University of Al Muthanna                                             | Member of the Local Project Implementation Unit at governorate level and Strategic partner | Participated in the LPIU meetings in Al Muthanna governorate. A source of technical knowledge on agricultural research in the region. Produce peer-reviewed research into the local capacity to support farmers on CA in arid and semi-arid environments and soil rehabilitation techniques to reverse salinization and soil degradation and improve yields.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Others                  | Smallholder farmers                                                   | Beneficiaries                                                                              | 1003 farmers (18% females) trained on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation for SLM. 25 FFS Demonstration Plots under Agroecology planted with selected vegetable crops.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## D. Gender Equality

| Category                                                               | Yes/No | Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources | Yes    | Forage and live fencing forest trees (Talh and Gum arabica) and fruits trees (pomegranate, date palm and olive) were planted around the 25 Farmer Field School (FFS) Demonstration Plots under Agroecology and Marshland Conservation for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Degraded Areas of southern Iraq. This is demonstrating to women, men and youths, the importance of crop-tree-livestock mixed cropping in forest gardens. Women are adopting this practice as they now own and control these beneficial trees at household level back yard forest gardens with vegetables, fruit and forage trees. In Iraq, the cultural norm is that women own and control small livestock like sheep and goats for dairy and meat. Forage trees planting is well accepted by women to supplement their livestock feed for sheep and goats, while fruits trees planting is contributing to household dietary diversity.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| b. Improving women's participation and decision making                 | Yes    | During the reporting period, additional 138 female farmers were registered and 589 female farmers are now targeted for the project. The project continues to promote women participation (29% increase) as compared from the last reporting period, where 451 females were recorded last year. During the reporting period, as the FFS training sessions were held across ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates, the project encourages married couples to attend with their wives. This is to improve participation by women who play a greater role in passing knowledge and skills to the future generation as women spend more time with children, daily after evening meals and during school holidays. With the FFS trainings on Agroecology and Marshland Conservation, female farmers were increasingly contributing to household income generation from sales of surplus vegetable produce. This suggested that the intervention project facilitate women economic empowerment, allowing women to play a more active role in financial decision-making at household level with improved household purchasing power. |
| c. generating socio-economic benefits or services for women            | Yes    | Informed by an end of cropping seasons assessment held in the first quarter of 2025. The assessment recorded that, 167 women (113% of the end-of-project target) who are agricultural producers (wheat, alfalfa, barley) reported higher economic returns based upon their participation in FFS SLM training and adoption of CA for SLM.<br><br>171 women (171% of the end-of-project target) who are marshland dependent vegetable producers reported higher economic returns based upon participation in FFS Agroecology and Marshland Conservation training program. Pending is an in-depth quantitative assessment to quantify profit margin among vegetable producers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Any other good practices on gender                                     |        | The assessment analysis recorded that as farmers adopt CA, 94.8% (n = 213) farmers believed the project was addressing equal opportunities for male and female farmers, while 5.2% (n = 213) explicitly stated no impact. The most significant impact of the project in relation to equal opportunities of male and female, were the reports of reducing labor demands for female farmers and creating more time for household chores and timely attend to school children after their return home from school. This indicated that many female farmers experienced relief from the physically demanding intensive farm labour under the conventional traditional agriculture practice, potentially improving overall quality of life for female farmers adopting the relatively less labour intensity associated with CA for Sustainable Land Management in southern Iraq.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## E. Knowledge Management

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Knowledge management and Learning (KML):<br>Does the project have a KML strategy?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| If YES, what is the implementation progress? In your answer, please describe how the project is fostering knowledge sharing and learning among stakeholders at national and sub-national level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| If NO, how does the project identify, collect and document good practices?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>FAO Natural Resource Knowledge and Management Information System Specialist in collaboration with GIS and Remote Sensing Experts from the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Water Resources lead the design and operationalization of the National Monitoring and Knowledge Management Platform to inform Sustainable Land Management (SLM) decision-making in Iraq. This team is developing a digital platform integrating selected land resources field data, remote sensing, and GIS technologies for mapping and analyzing land degradation status, land use-land cover changes and ecological restoration. The platform utilize Google Earth Engine (GEE) for scalable and real-time data which is uploaded for analysis, quantification, mapping, annual monitoring and reporting on land use-land cover changes based on various layers (degraded land, desert greening, vegetation cover, croplands, grazing lands, wetlands, ecological restoration and urbanization). A total of about 48 000 ha of agricultural land greening (degraded and under SLM), is monitored annually (ThiQar governorate: 39 000ha and Al Muthanna governorate: 9 000ha) as a result of the FFS programming and reported through the developed national KM system. Whereas, about 38 000 ha of marshland undergoing ecological restoration, is monitored annually (ThiQar governorate: 25 000ha and Al Muthanna governorate: 13 000ha) to promote SLM practices and is reported through the developed national KM system.</p> <p>Furthermore, the project registered within the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) portal. The GPS coordinates of the established 61 Farmer Field Demonstration Plots Conservation Agriculture, Agroecology and Marshland Conservation were entered into the FERM system to ensure comprehensive tracking and reporting of agroecosystem restoration efforts across Al Muthanna and ThiQar governorates. The portal integrates Earth observation data, geospatial tools, and a user-friendly dashboard to provide clear and detailed visualizations of project progress and achievements.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Please list good practices, including key-technical and/or institutional innovations, from the project thus far.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>FAO in Iraq is promoting Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices, Agroecology and Marshland Conservation which are universally applicable in all agricultural landscapes and cropping systems. An assessment done in December 2024 recorded that, about 66% of targeted 1 635 farmers adopted the principles of CA namely, (i) land preparation with minimum soil disturbances/zero tillage to improve soil structure, (ii) mulching/soil cover crops for soil moisture conservation, reduce run-off and erosion (iii) crop rotations or intercropping to improve soil fertility, break cycle of pest and diseases. The assessment results confirmed that farmers adoption of CA practices led to increased crops yield, which can be linked to improved household food security. Compared to conventional traditional agriculture practices, it was recorded that CA result in crop yield improvements which were evident across all major crops, with alfalfa showing the highest increase (33%), followed by wheat (20.7%) and barley (10%). This suggests that CA enhances soil health and resource efficiency, leading to more sustainable farm productivity with ecological benefits. With adoption of CA, trained farmers are dis-adopting land preparation of deep ploughing (+30cm soil depth) as this exposes the soil to the rain or surface flood irrigation causing erosion, whereas, deep ploughing also expose the soil to the sun-heat which exacerbate soil moisture loss through evaporation.</p> <p>FAO promotion of Agroecology practice and Marshland Conservation which target 1003 farmers in ThiQar and Al Muthanna governorates, demonstrate the importance of mixed farming which enhance biodiversity: Vegetable crop and fruit/fodder forest trees integration for Sustainable Land Management to improve livelihoods in degraded areas of southern Iraq. This good practice of crop-tree integration provides;</p> <p>(i) livelihood economic benefits (crops - fruit trees produce diversified food for home consumption and sale of surplus for household income generation, legume forest trees supplement fodder and income, diversified agriculture-based livelihood options), and (ii) environmental benefits (tree root system and tree canopy as wind-breaks combat soil erosion, legume forest trees improve soil fertility, wind-break trees provide micro-climate to the home garden and reduce moisture loss, growing trees is a mitigation measure on climate change as trees utilize excess carbon dioxide, thus, reduce greenhouse gas concentration from the atmosphere), (ii) Trained farmers are dis-adopting the practice of burning surface crop residues which contributes to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. This mitigates climate change by reducing the emission of greenhouses gases into the atmosphere. Burning of crop residues also contribute to loss of plant nutrients which can be otherwise recycled through proper crop residue management.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Communication strategy:<br>Does the project have a communication strategy?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this fiscal year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>FAO Iraq effectively increased the visibility of its GEF-funded Sustainable Land Management project through a combination of digital, field-level, and institutional communications. A key success was the publication of a compelling success story on the UN Iraq website for World Desertification Day, highlighting field-level impact—such as yield increases, water savings, and improved land productivity—with powerful visuals and direct farmer testimony. FAO Iraq's social media platforms actively showcased field activities, training sessions, and tangible results for farmers and restored land boosted by short key messages, field photos and videos. Additionally, the team produced a project factsheet and leaflet, and distributed branded visibility items and clothing to reinforce the identity of the project and its GEF/FAO partnership across events and local engagements. Noting that all publications are in arabic to reach local audience and english.</p> <p>However, challenges remain. Communications were fragmented across platforms, with no central online hub for project materials on FAO Iraq's website (Has been refurbished and put online soon). Limited engagement with local press because of the topic technicality reduced the visibility of results beyond the UN ecosystem. Addressing these gaps would significantly enhance communication impact.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Human-interest story:<br>Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits. | <p>Farmer Hashem Kuoti shared a success story of most significant change, "By adopting Conservation Agriculture practice of SLM, I was able to harvest one ton of alfalfa from just half a donum (0.13ha) of land. In comparison, same crop under conventional traditional agriculture practice used to yields a quarter of a ton for the same area. This difference in crop productivity and crop yield significantly impacts earnings as well. With adoption of Conservation Agriculture practice of SLM, I am now earning between 100-150 thousand Iraqi dinars per month, whereas with conventional traditional agriculture practice I used to just earn 60-70 thousand Iraqi dinars every two to three months. Encouraged by these economic benefits with alfalfa, I am now applying the same Conservation Agriculture practices to sesame and sorghum production in subsequent cropping seasons."</p> <p>The shift to Conservation Agriculture practices has also led to significant crop production cost reductions. "Conventional traditional agriculture practice tends to be more expensive due to its higher application rates for chemical fertilizers use, seed and irrigation water supply," noted farmer Issa Ramadhan. "As a result, Conservation Agriculture practice of SLM stands out as a more sustainable and cost-effective option. Crop production costs are significantly lower with Conservation Agriculture, making it a more attractive choice for long-term economic sustainability."</p> <p><a href="https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/stories/details/harvesting-hope--reversing-desertification-through-conservation-agriculture-for-sustainable-land-management-in-southern-iraq/en">https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/stories/details/harvesting-hope--reversing-desertification-through-conservation-agriculture-for-sustainable-land-management-in-southern-iraq/en</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Please provide links to related website, social media account                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <a href="https://mohsen-ramadan-ee.users.earthengine.app/view/land-degradation-monitoring-for-iraq">https://mohsen-ramadan-ee.users.earthengine.app/view/land-degradation-monitoring-for-iraq</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communication assets published on the web, if any.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p><b>Success Story</b><br/> <b>"Harvesting Hope: Reversing Desertification through Conservation Agriculture" (UN Iraq – 17 June 2025)</b><br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/en/296501-harvesting-hope-reversing-desertification-through-conservation-agriculture-sustainable-land">https://iraq.un.org/en/296501-harvesting-hope-reversing-desertification-through-conservation-agriculture-sustainable-land</a></p> <p><b>Press Releases</b><br/> GCF Approves \$39 Million for FAO-Led Project on Water Scarcity &amp; Climate Change<br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/en/282025-gcf-approves-39-million-support-fao-led-project-addressing-water-scarcity-and-climate-change">https://iraq.un.org/en/282025-gcf-approves-39-million-support-fao-led-project-addressing-water-scarcity-and-climate-change</a></p> <p>FAO and Ministry of Environment Develop Strategy for Sustainable Land Management<br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/en/277871-fao-and-moe-are-developing-national-strategy-sustainable-land-management-iraq">https://iraq.un.org/en/277871-fao-and-moe-are-developing-national-strategy-sustainable-land-management-iraq</a></p> <p>FAO Global – A Year of Impact (includes Iraq in GEF/GCF project mobilization)<br/> <a href="https://www.fao.org/climate-change/news/news-detail/a-year-of-impact/en">https://www.fao.org/climate-change/news/news-detail/a-year-of-impact/en</a></p> <p>FAO and the Ministry of Environment: Starting the implementation of a Comprehensive Training Program on Sustainable Land Management Policy formulation with Support from the Global Environment Facility<br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/en/260512-fao-and-ministry-environment-starting-implementation-comprehensive-training-program">https://iraq.un.org/en/260512-fao-and-ministry-environment-starting-implementation-comprehensive-training-program</a></p> <p>FAO empowers 40 extension officers to promote Agroecology and Marshland Conservation for SLM in southern Iraq<br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/en/284841-fao-empowers-40-extension-officers-promote-agroecology-and-marshland-conservation-slm">https://iraq.un.org/en/284841-fao-empowers-40-extension-officers-promote-agroecology-and-marshland-conservation-slm</a></p> <p><b>FAO in Iraq Newsletter</b><br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/FAOIQ%20Newsletter-NOVandDEC2024-EN.pdf">https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/FAOIQ%20Newsletter-NOVandDEC2024-EN.pdf</a><br/> <a href="https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/En-%20NEWSLETTER-JAN%26FEB-FV.pdf">https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/En-%20NEWSLETTER-JAN%26FEB-FV.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Tweets</b><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1602633212664188929">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1602633212664188929</a><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1602633054866096128">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1602633054866096128</a><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1862810891839824136">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1862810891839824136</a><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1797163865160978588">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1797163865160978588</a><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1757312082930741501">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1757312082930741501</a><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1757312089260015620/photo/2">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1757312089260015620/photo/2</a><br/> <a href="https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1677601850198032385/photo/1">https://twitter.com/FAOIraq/status/1677601850198032385/photo/1</a></p> |

### III: Minor Amendments

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CONTEXT                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Result Framework                              | Two initial planned strategic documents as per the ProDoc, namely, (i) national SLM Strategy and Action Plan and (ii) Agriculture and Marshland Conservation Action Plan, were consolidated into a single deliverable document namely, the national SLM strategy and Marshland Conservation Action Plan for Iraq (2026-2030). |
| Components and Cost                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Institutional And Implementation Arrangements |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Financial Management                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Implementation Schedule                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Executing Entity                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Executing Entity Category                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Minor Project Objective Change                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Safeguards                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Risk Analysis                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Co-Financing                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Location of Project Activity                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| others                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

### IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Um-Al-akaf    | 31.415676 | 44.890009 | 6776358    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Um-Al-akaf    | 31.39892 | 44.96811  | 6776358    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Um-Al-akaf    | 31.364962 | 44.941183 | 6776354    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Um-Al-akaf    | 31.369486 | 44.941183 | 6776354    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Al-Tar        | 30.883603 | 46.590027 | 7056354    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices and agroecology

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Al-Tar        | 30.865321 | 46.602056 | 7056354    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices and agroecology

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Al-Tar        | 30.902305 | 46.741358 | 7056354    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices and agroecology

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Al-Tar        | 30.936467 | 46.748853 | 7056354    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices and agroecology

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Shawya        | 30.534736 | 44.890009 | 6748668    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Shawya        | 30.441958 | 44.96811  | 6748668    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude  | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Shawya        | 30.462659 | 45.031907 | 6748670    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Shawya        | 30.57137 | 44.941183 | 6748670    |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

### Promotion of conservation agriculture practices

| Location Name | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|

|                     |       |       |  |
|---------------------|-------|-------|--|
| Thi Qar governorate | 31.25 | 46.25 |  |
|---------------------|-------|-------|--|

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Promotion of Conservation Agriculture and Agroecology

| Location Name      | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Al Salman district | 30.5     | 44.53333  |            |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Promotion of Conservation Agriculture

| Location Name       | Latitude | Longitude | GeoName ID |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Al-Rumaita district | 31.49777 | 45.29542  |            |

Location Description:

Activity Description:

## V. ANNEX

|                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Uploaded Document                     |                                      |
| Document Category<br>M and E Document | Title<br>GEFID_9745_2025PIR_FAO_Iraq |